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**A PARADISE LOST:
PLACING HAWAI'I ON THE LITERARY MAP**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Hava-iti, as the first Polynesian settlers called the newfound Big Island of Hawai'i, meant "the Realm of the Dead" or, more simply, "Paradise" in their ritualized language.¹ Hawai'i is a place that has fired the imagination since its discovery by James Cook in 1778. Whoever came - explorers, whalers, missionaries, planters, laborers, tourists, land developers, and authors - was fascinated and allured by the North Pacific islands. And yet, right from the beginning there is a sense in the descriptions and recollections of a paradise found that was already lost. As time moved on, the feeling of loss became prevalent, however coated over by glossy marketing campaigns it might be today. People from all professions, backgrounds, and races arrived, making Hawai'i what it is today: tourist paradise, meeting point of East and West, 50th State and strategic outpost of US military as well as ideology, or simply "the loveliest fleet of islands that lies anchored in any ocean," as Mark Twain coined.

Writers have been and still are the ones that created the lost paradise that I will try to locate in this thesis. By means of a survey, I want to show and prove that there is a distinguishable Hawaiian literature, its traits and markers growing stronger and more explicit as time moves on, but its foundations already laid in early accounts and descriptions. After touching on the problems of categorization, I will deal briefly with important historical steps that shaped and changed Hawai'i towards the current situation. Next, I am going to display what has been written about and from Hawai'i, giving a chronological overview of the diversity and richness of literary texts dealing with the Hawaiian Islands. After an introduction to the so-called 'Hawaiian Renaissance,' I will sidestep and portray traditional ways of literary expression as well: chant and *hula* and their contemporary remnants. Dealing with newer literature, I will apply contemporary concepts such as post-colonialism, post-modernism, questions of race and identity, and the re-evaluation of history to the texts from Hawai'i, attempting to link them to other

¹ See Garrett Hongo, *Volcano: A Memoir of Hawaii*, New York 1995: 3. Please note that the hyphenated spelling of Hawaiian words is used to enable correct pronunciation: each vowel is pronounced separately, e.g. [hawai-i]. If the words are inflected, as in 'Hawaiian,' the hyphen is deleted, and they are pronounced according to English rules.

literatures, and thus establish a framework in which the island issues can be mapped. The overall intent of this thesis is to provide answers to the following questions: why should Hawai'i be included in the current research of ethnic and post-colonial literatures? What makes Hawaiian texts different from others; why are they Hawaiian and not simply (Asian) American? Giving an overview of both literary production and theoretical discourse on the islands, I want to establish a space for Hawai'i on the literary map.

II. WHAT IS HAWAIIAN LITERATURE? PROBLEMS OF CLASSIFICATION

How can we find and determine boundaries when talking about a specific literature? Do the authors have to be born in a place; do they have to live in it? Can we count on race as a delimiting factor? Is language the definitive criterion? These questions have been raised when trying to categorize any literature that cannot simply be termed 'national.'² In the case of the Hawaiian Islands, we have to consider several races, and hybrids of them. We have to deal with Standard English, Pidgin or Hawaiian Creole English (HCE),³ and with several Asian languages. People who were born in Hawai'i frequently had to leave for education or to work on the mainland, whereas visitors often stayed and made the islands their home. There are many aspects that make it difficult to decide whether an author or a piece of literature can be considered 'Hawaiian.' In this context, it is interesting to note that so far Pacific Islanders have been included in the United States government's census category of Asian Americans. They will only be officially severed in the year 2000. Authors with a Japanese, Chinese, or Korean background are considered Asian American, though Lois-Ann Yamanaka, Garrett Hongo, or Cathy Song are clearly local voices. So are the *haole*⁴ writers, missionary descendant or not, like John Dominis Holt, Graham Salisbury, or Marjorie Sinclair. Moreover, the texts that writers like Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, or Jack London wrote when in Hawai'i are just as firmly embodied in the canon of American classics. And yet, there must be something that can be taken as an indicator of a specific Hawaiianness in texts

² See for example in Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind*, London 1986: 6. The Kenyan author recites a similar catalog of questions that were intended to clarify what 'African literature' is.

³ Although HCE is clearly a Creole, the locals themselves call their vernacular 'pidgin.'

⁴ Hawaiian for white, Caucasian.

that are as diverse as the people who make up the population of Hawai'i. There must be a common denominator, if the establishment of a category called Hawaiian literature is to be justified.

I would argue that the signifiers of Hawaiianness are such things as the profound sense of loss, the depiction of a racial experience, or more often, of an experience of mixedness, hybridity, the use and significance of both the Hawaiian language and the pidgin, or "local talk," the importance of history and genealogy, and lastly, the creation of a place through writing: whaler's recreational haven or missionaries' depraved den of sinners, tourist paradise or concrete jungle - Hawai'i is and has always been a paradise lost. In addition, Hawaiian literature fundamentally is a literature of place, be it a work of natural history, describing and praising the natural beauty and sublimity, be it any kind of text that deals with the spell of the islands, with their enchanting and awe-inspiring features, palm-lined beaches and spattering volcanoes, exotic greenery and immense *pali*⁵ cliffs. Texts convey an *aloha'aina*, love of the land. Furthermore, they might accuse and put blame for the natives' loss of land, they might be manifests to preservation or compensation. Especially in the last decades, island literature has often had a political purpose, has aimed at a re-evaluation of local history. Let us take a look at this unique history and its problematic implications.

III. IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF HAWAIIAN HISTORY

The Hawaiian islands have been discovered twice: the first Polynesian navigators reached the archipelago in the 4th or 5th century A. D., but Western visitors and scientists did not believe this until only recently, when archaeological data proved native claims to a 1500-year-long residence.⁶ The main aspects of native life before Western contact seem to be communal and collective subsistence usage of resources and profits, and the division into a commoner class and a ruling chiefly class, the *ali'i*, whose genealogical descent together with their genuine abilities, or *mana*, meaning power, charisma,

⁵ I.e.: precipice, cliff.

⁶ See Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii*, Honolulu 1999: 117. In general, the following information was gathered from Trask, Gibson, Emerson, and Daws (see bibliography).

authority, justified their reign. A priestly class, the *kahuna*, functioned as keepers of traditions and genealogical chants, conductors of worship and sacrifice, and guardians of culture and knowledge. All aspects of life were regulated with a system of do's and don'ts, the *kapu*, or taboo. Hawaiian culture and history were perpetuated and passed on orally, in chants and dance, the *hula*. The smallest social unit was the *ohana*, or extended family, but members did not have to be directly related to form an *ohana*. For example, children were adopted and shared freely to distribute profits and responsibilities evenly. It is important to note that no private property in the Western sense existed; the land did not belong to the chiefs, they were merely accepted as "stewards" of it due to their *mana* and genealogical divinity.⁷ I want to stress this because even today, the 'accepted' history of the Hawaiian Islands describes pre-contact culture as an oppressive feudal system, thus portraying discovery, Christianization, and finally Americanization as the laudable resurrection of a backward people. The Hawaiian world has been seen through Western eyes and described in Western discourses for over two hundred years, since its second discovery by Captain Cook in 1778.

Once the 'Sandwich Islands' had been discovered changes took place at an overwhelming speed. Diseases (venereal and other) were introduced with the first shipload of sailors; sexual openness was exploited in the usual manner: the prostitution of native girls for cheap trinkets was the common practice with sailors. Iron, guns, and alcohol were introduced, and an inevitable sense of inferiority was realized in the face of giant ships and technical items. Environmental distortions and destruction took place from the very beginning, when of course they were no issues yet. There are countless examples of how the careless and often well-intended introduction of a foreign species led to the extinction of a native one.⁸ In the aftermath of Cook's discovery, whalers and merchants quickly followed. By 1820, the first Congregational missionary party arrived. Subsequently, Christianization and civilization through education were the agenda. Historians never tire of stressing that members of the *ali'i* class themselves had already abolished their *kapu* system when the missionaries arrived, insinuating that they were

⁷ For this assertion, see Trask: 115 and elsewhere.

⁸ Daws gives the example of one barrel of bad water dumped on shore at Maui. The water contained mosquitoes that carried a kind of malaria that eventually killed the native honeycreeper bird. He mentions

waiting for somebody to introduce them to the ‘real’ god. As Daws puts it, “the Hawaiians had done something so singular that there does not seem to be a parallel anywhere in the civilized world. They had given up their religion in favor of nothing, nothing at all. And so they went on into the nineteenth century, without divinity to sustain them, haunted at every turn by ghosts from the past and omens of alienation.”⁹ The question is, would they have done so if there had been no contact? Cook’s crew had violated *kapu* times for work, and obviously none of them was struck down by the gods for it; this alone could have served as food for radical thought. It is arguable if the resulting changes were for the better. The unification of the Hawaiian Islands under Kamehameha I (who reigned as king Kamehameha the Great from 1795 to 1819) is to be viewed with the same ambiguity: before the arrival of whites, no similar conquest for autocracy had taken place. Probably, the foreigners’ insinuations and superior weapons had their share in convincing the aspiring chief that he should aim higher. These assumptions are mere indicators for the delicacy of assessing historical developments.

White guests, mostly the Yankee missionaries, urged for fee simple land tenure, among other things. In 1848, the ruling chief, Kamehameha III, agreed to a land division, the “Great Mahele.”¹⁰ The beneficiaries were white people, now able to lease or buy large tracts of land. Sugar plantations, whose owners were mostly related to the missionary group, emerged. Their growing size together with the decimation of natives through epidemics called for foreign labor, which was recruited successively from China, Japan, the Philippines, and Korea. White influence increased, in the government as well as in every other realm. In 1887, the convivial monarch Kalakaua was forced to sign the “bayonet constitution,” agreeing to “reign, not rule.” The way to 1893’s overthrow of the monarchy was paved. The strategic position of the islands was one of the incentives of American annexation in 1898.¹¹ For the next forty years, the islands were virtually in the hands of the sugar barons. Only the war, starting for Hawaiians and Americans alike in December 1941 with the infamous Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, could change that in

cattle, rodents, insects, plants, each an agent of disruptive and fatal change (see Daws’ article “Tides” in Joseph Stanton, *A Hawai’i Anthology*, Honolulu 1997: 120-130).

⁹ Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands*, Toronto 1968: 34.

¹⁰ *mahele* = portion, division.

¹¹ The Spanish-American war in the Philippines increased Hawai’i’s strategic value for the US.

the long run. Although statehood for Hawai'i was delayed by racist fears of its mixed population, it was finally 'granted' in 1959, with no alternatives offered on the ballot.

Available written histories of Hawai'i are often biased and marked by discourses of power. Imperialism, neo-colonialism, and racism are the reproaches that politically conscious Hawaiians put forward against historians.¹² History books appear as justifications of missionary history and/or United States imperial history. Therefore, one of the currently important issues for Hawaiians, or more general, for many people living on Hawai'i, is a re-evaluation and a rewriting of history, a challenge to the discourses of power. This puts Hawai'i in the larger context of both post-colonialism and post-modernism. But how did the change of awareness take place in the islands?

It is interesting that most of the criticized history books end with statehood: another Frontier has been closed, the 'Manifest Destiny' concept has conquered Hawai'i, and now a 'Golden Age' is about to begin. In reality, what was about to begin was a vital mixture of native consciousness, cultural revitalization, and challenging resistance towards assimilation and total acculturation. Native Hawaiians (and other locals) refused to be cast into the 'melting pot.' Instead, they started reasserting identity, eventually linking their case to other similar movements. I want to stress here that this process of 'decolonization' was triggered and enabled exactly by the transformation of Hawai'i into a US state, a point that neither pro-Americans nor local critics have acknowledged so far. I will come back to this assertion when dealing with the post-statehood period, consisting of the so-called Hawaiian Renaissance and the present situation. But before, I want to present the literary production that is relevant for Hawai'i up to 1959.

IV. FROM COOK TO STATEHOOD: OUTSIDERS AND *HAOLES*

How is the discovery of the 'Sandwich Islands' depicted? As in the case of any discovery, explorer's journals are the windows through which we can still see what the first whites saw when they came upon islands heretofore uncharted: the accounts of James T. Cook and his lieutenants contain mostly matter-of-fact descriptions and observations. The 1778 discovery, the first landfall, being treated as a local god, even

¹² For a critical analysis of available histories, see Trask, especially 113-135.

Cook's violent death in 1779 at the hands of enraged natives – events and people are depicted in a completely sober way. George Vancouver's mate Thomas Manby, in contrast, seems to have been the first one enchanted. He came to Hawai'i in 1793, and described chief Kamehameha, then in the midst of conquering the islands, in vivid and sympathetic terms. When portraying the standard visit of willing native girls to the British ship, he mused about:

“the choicest part of creation, the female sex. It is them alone that can harmonize the soul, banish sorrows from the mind, and give to mankind true felicity; even the uncivilized brunette in a state of nature can do all this, and convinces that happiness is incomplete without them. [...] Our bark instantly became a scene of jollity and all was pleasure and delight.”¹³

We can be sure that he idealized what he saw, what he was part of, and he was not the last one for whom sex was part of the Pacific spell. His evaluation of the Hawaiian character would also last well into the present time:

“Before we became acquainted with these people we considered them as a ferocious and turbulent set of savages. This character they are by no means entitled to, as they are mild and tractable; uncivilized, unpolished, and in a true state of nature, they possess great courage, and will not tamely bear an insult or an injury. Their few laws are strictly adhered to, [...] To each other they are free, easy, and cheerful, and show more real good nature than I have seen in your better regulated societies. During the whole of my stay I was never witness to a quarrel: they delight in jokes, which were never known to produce an angry brow or an uplifted arm.”¹⁴

How contrary read the journals of Hiram Bingham,¹⁵ uncompromising leader of the first congregational missionary party, which arrived in 1820, sent out from Boston by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. His writings tell of endless struggles with stubborn savages who were clinging to incest and paganism as well as with unruly sailors who refused to stop drinking, fighting, and fornicating. Other missionary

¹³ Thomas Manby, “With Vancouver at Kealakekua Bay,” in A. Grove Day / Carl Stroven (eds.), *A Hawaiian Reader*, New York 1959: 37-51, here 39-40.

¹⁴ Manby in Day / Stroven 1959: 47.

journals -especially the wives'- sound more human in that they show sympathy for the people they deal with, and in describing the beauty of the islands in reverent terms: "Can anything so fair be defiled by idol worship and deeds of cruelty?"¹⁶ Planter, merchant, and journalist James Jackson Jarves has his critical bit to say about the transition phase between "heathenism and missionaryism," which he experienced when living on Oahu between 1837 and 1846:

"A polka or waltz was proscribed as a device of the devil. Theatricals were something worse. Horse races were no better than hell's tournaments. Even smoking was made a capital sin, and tattooing was the mark of the beast. National songs and festivals all smacked of eternal damnation. There was absolutely nothing left to the poor native for the indulgence of his physical forces, or the development of his intellectual, but that which he hated most, hard labor and theological learning. [...] The most rigid principles of the most rigid of Protestant sects were made the standard of salvation for the most sensualized of races."¹⁷

To be sure, this adroit observer was on the missionaries' side. Subsequent visitors saw and described all kinds of places, real and imaginary, in the Hawaiian Islands. The first travelers seeking pleasure, adventure, or health arrived in the mid-19th century; the first tourists, one could argue.

In 1866, the "insatiable sightseer"¹⁸ Mark Twain, then reporter for the *Sacramento Weekly Union*, spent four months in the islands, visiting Honolulu on Oahu, Iao valley and the Haleakala volcano crater on Maui, and the Kona coast and Kilauea volcano district on the Big Island. His detailed and often humorous depictions of his 'tours' are a good read and have definitely served as a starting point for the growing interest and fascination with the islands for mainland Americans. Whereas the "Equestrian Excursion

¹⁵ Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands*, New York 1847. Excerpts in Day / Stroven 1959: 61-68.

¹⁶ From Laura Fish Judd, *Honolulu: Sketches of the Life, Social, Political, and Religions, in the Hawaiian Islands from 1828 to 1861*, in Day / Stroven 1959: 69-81, here 70.

¹⁷ James Jackson Jarves, "Between Heathenism and Missionaryism," in Day / Stroven 1959: 82-88, here 84. Jarves also wrote the first novel with a Hawaiian setting, *Kiana*, published in 1857 and no longer available in print.

¹⁸ Day / Stroven 1959: 100.

to Diamond Head”¹⁹ is full of hilarious irony, the awe-inspiring visit to the Big Island’s volcano Kilauea is described in a more serious vein than usual:

“Shortly the crater came into view. I have seen Vesuvius since, but it was a mere toy, a child’s volcano, a soup kettle, compared to this. [...] Here was a yawning pit upon whose floor the armies of Russia could camp, and have room to spare. [...] You could not compass it – it was the idea of eternity made tangible – and the longest end of it made visible to the naked eye! [...] Imagine it – imagine a coal-black sky shivered into a tangled network of angry fire!”²⁰

The experience must have been overwhelming; the volcano’s vastness made the well-traveled writer feel small. Only by trying to describe its sublimity could he get the better of it. Twain always yearned to return to the islands. His 1889 confession “no other land could so longingly and so beseechingly haunt me, sleeping and waking, through half a lifetime, as that one has done. [...] For me its balmy airs are always blowing, its summer seas flashing in the sun; the pulsing of its surf-beat is in my ears; [...] in my nostrils still lives the breath of flowers that perished twenty years ago”²¹ invariably creates connotations with an earthly paradise. And the writer was banned from it; when planning to return during a world tour in 1895, a cholera epidemic prevented the ship from docking in Pearl Harbor: His paradise was lost to him.²²

Robert Louis Stevenson had several reasons to come to Hawai’i. Being a friend of the San Franciscan²³ Charles Warren Stoddard, he had listened to the other one’s experiences, had read the fellow author’s books, the graceful and carefree *South Sea Idylls*, and the rather serious *Lepers of Molokai*.²⁴ He came to be an admirer of Melville’s

¹⁹ Mark Twain, From *Weekly Union*, Sacramento, California, in Day / Stroven 1959: 100-108.

²⁰ Mark Twain, From *Roughing It*, in Day/Stroven 1959: 109-116, here 109-111.

²¹ Arrell Morgan Gibson, *Yankees in Paradise: The Pacific Basin Frontier*, Albuquerque 1993: 393-4.

²² In the 1880s, he began a novel about Hawai’i, but never completed it. Some literary scholars believe that he transformed the theme into *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, inspired by the clash between New England missionaries and Kamehameha’s ‘feudal court’ he had witnessed in Hawai’i. For this assumption, see Gibson: 394.

²³ Mark Twain had been the first one to portray San Francisco as the gateway to Hawai’i, stressing the economic significance of the California port. But the city’s literary circle constituted a different gateway to the islands: among bohemian hedonists, tales of the South Pacific inspired various (would-be) authors to set sail. Moreover, a succession can easily be established: Stoddard followed Melville’s footsteps, Stevenson was inspired by both, and London set sail as a great admirer of Stevenson (See Gibson: chapter 16).

²⁴ Charles Warren Stoddard, *South-Sea Idylls*, Boston 1873 & *Lepers of Molokai*, Notre Dame, IA 1885.

Excerpts in Day / Stroven 1959.

Omoo and *Typee*,²⁵ set in the South Pacific. Both Melville and Stoddard had been thoroughly enchanted by the South Seas, and their spell seemed to be contagious. The islands lured Stevenson; their lore and peoples had fascinated him since his mid-twenties. The imminent reason to set sail in 1888, though, was his precarious health: he suffered from violent colds, then consumption. Sea climate and warm weather seemed apt to afford his weakened body ease. First, he sailed to the Marquesas, Paumotu, and Tahiti. He showed a deep interest in the natives' way of life and of thought. He fell in love with Polynesia right from the first encounter. However, he soon realized that "Polynesia was not a garden of Eden."²⁶ In 1889, Stevenson reached Honolulu, accommodating himself in quiet Waikiki. Oahu's capital already was a 'modern town,' boasting four hotels, electric street lights, mule-drawn tramcars, an opera house, library, hospital, as well as several newspapers. The author met and made friends with the ruling king, Kalakaua, his wife Kapiolani, and his sister and heir-apparent Liliuokalani. Stevenson started learning Hawaiian, and made a week's trip to the Kona coast of the Big Island that inspired his famous short story "The Bottle Imp," which he probably wrote while there:²⁷ Although the plot was a borrowed one, its telling is typically Polynesian.

Enjoying a week of perfect peace and ease on the Big Island, Stevenson also witnessed the tragic case of a young fugitive leper who was captured and sent to the leprosy lazaretto on Moloka'i, a place which had haunted his imagination for years. A month later, he finally visited the grim settlement of Kalaupapa, where he was deeply impressed by the love and care the Catholic sisters exerted on their patients. He even pondered staying as a *kokua*, meaning helper, or, in this context, a healthy person who lives with the lepers. He inquired about the late Father Damien, a Belgian priest who had converted the former human dumpsite into a humane place that enabled a life and a death in dignity for the incurably ill and brutally disfigured lepers. After visiting other parts of Moloka'i, he returned to Oahu, sending back a piano as a gift for the patients. A short while later, he left for the South Pacific again, working on "The Wrecker," a story inspired by a newspaper article he had read while in the islands. The next year, when he

²⁵ Herman Melville, *Typee, Omoo, Mardi*, edited by G. Thomas Tanselle, New York 1982.

²⁶ Sister Martha Mary McGaw, C.S.J., *Stevenson in Hawaii*, Reprint Westport, CN 1978: 22.

was staying in Sidney, he read a letter defaming Father Damien, and thus preventing the erection of a memorial to the priest. He published an answer, full of scorn and indignation at its Protestant author, the Honolulu reverend Hyde. The memorial was built, the letter made both Damien and Moloka'i famous, and the royalties of its publication went to the leper fund. Stevenson had been well aware of the danger of a lawsuit from Hyde, but his convictions were stronger.

Having made his permanent home in Samoa in the meantime, Stevenson returned to Oahu once more in 1893, shortly after the overthrow of the monarchy. Sick again, he had to stay longer than he had intended to. When the writer left for Samoa the same year, he had but one more year to live. However, his stepgrandson Austin Strong adds to the 'Stevenson experience' with his delightful childhood reminiscence "His Oceanic Majesty's Goldfish," being in perfect unison with the general portrayal of Kalakaua as a benevolent and convivial monarch: having stolen a Japanese goldfish from the royal pond, little Austin fears for his life when the king's carriage offers to escort him home.

"The officer deposited me, dirty and damp, on the spotless cushion beside the king. [...] His Majesty began to question me tactfully, trying, as is the way with kings, to put his guest at ease, but the fish was too much on my mind and head. [...] I was rolled home in triumph, fast asleep against His Majesty's protecting shoulder, [...] It was a royal grant to one Master Austin Strong, giving him permission to fish in Kapiolani Park for the rest of his days."²⁸

Here, life in Hawai'i is portrayed as a fairy tale, a child's paradise where even the king takes you seriously and becomes your friend.

Although Jack London is better known for his 'Northern' tales of heroism, he also wrote many short stories set in the Pacific, two volumes alone with a Hawaiian setting.²⁹ In 1907, during his famous cruise aboard the yacht *Snark*³⁰ he spent four months on Oahu. He returned at the height of fame in 1915 to stay another year. He was the first visiting author to experience the islands as an American territory, not as a kingdom.

²⁷ To support this hypothesis, author Sister Martha compares the story's depiction of several islands Stevenson had already seen when on Hawai'i to the colorless description of Moloka'i which he was to see only later the same year (See McGaw: 77-79).

²⁸ Austin Strong, "His Oceanic Majesty's Goldfish," in Day / Stroven 1959: 158-166

²⁹ Jack London, *The House of Pride*, New York 1912 & *On the Makaloa Mat*, New York 1919.

³⁰ The author wrote a journal of his travels: Jack London, *The Cruise of the "Snark,"* New York 1911.

Being an ardent socialist, he probably approved of the overthrow of the monarchy, at least in theory. Be that as it may, he was hosted by the leading figures of the revolution and territorial government. But he also met the deposed queen, as well as all the in-people of Honolulu's society. London's stories from Hawai'i incorporate real people, the ones he met as well as the ones he heard of. Honolulu was big in gossip, and the whole of the islands was big in lore, legends, and yarns. London drew freely on these sources, fictionalizing actual characters and events to emphasize his favorite theme: man against fate, facing life alone and with courage, human weakness and strength.

He had a precise sense for stories that could take place only in Hawai'i. His most famous Hawaiian story, "Koolau, the Leper," argued by many as his best, deals with the actual case of a proud Hawaiian who refused to succumb to authority when afflicted with leprosy. Instead of retiring to the Moloka'i leper settlement, he hid with other victims in the jungles of Kaua'i, fighting police, soldiers, headhunters. He succeeded in dying a free man. Already a local legend, London made Ko'olau a righteous and philosophical fiction hero, fighting to his last for his freedom.³¹ Invoking the Hawaiian experience of being cheated, disenfranchised, marginalized by the whites, London's Koolau is a symbolic figure, and leprosy a dramatically effective image of all the diseases and calamities that befell the islands' natives: the Hawaiians may die out, the story seems to say. But if they do, they will die dignified and free. London seems to bow to Polynesian courage and dignity.

In general, it is rather difficult to assert London's opinions: his narrators and main characters vary from righteous white patriarchs to proud and clever Hawaiians of ancient nobility, from shrewd Chinese businessmen to nostalgic half-castes and fourth-castes, and he alternately approves of them all. There definitely is a strain of imperialism in his attitude, a belief in the superior ability of leadership in Caucasians. And yet, London could not help admiring the courageous, dignified, and manly traits of the Polynesians. At the core, the writer cared for human virtue, strength, and bravery, not for race. His

³¹ Leprosy is a recurring topic in London's stories from Hawai'i. He was as fascinated with the sickness and with the Moloka'i settlement as Stevenson had been; a visit convinced him of the humanity of the place. Local authorities criticized him harshly for exploiting this blemishing aspect of the islands, calling him a sensationalist who discredited Hawai'i with his writing. However, a dread disease, the inevitability of death, the separating and unifying fear of contagion, were simply elements against which London could

descriptions of the swimming, diving, and surfing capacities of Hawaiians display his admiration for the physical; and his ode to surfing, “a royal sport,” reveals his eager wish to emulate the “bronze gods of the sea, brown Mercurys with winged heels.”³² To London, the islands were a place well worth visiting (and his writings surely pushed the tourist economy), but they were much more than a mere port of recreation. He saw the faults and problems just as clearly as the beauties, and yet, here he had found his personal paradise:

“Somehow, the love of the islands, like the love of a woman, just happens. [...] Truly, Hawaii is a woman beautiful and vastly more persuasive and seductive than her sister sirens of the sea. [...] When Hawaii was named the Paradise of the Pacific, it was inadequately named. The rest of the seven seas and the islands in the midst thereof should have been included along with the Pacific. “See Naples and die” – they spell it differently here: *See Hawaii and live.*”³³

He inhaled and drank the beauty of the islands: “Then it came, the first feel of the mountain wind, faintly balmy, fragrant and spicy; and cool, deliciously cool, a silken coolness, a wine like coolness – cool as only the mountain wind of Kona can be cool.”³⁴

Whereas most of his stories focus on some kind of human heroism, some of the Hawaiian tales are endowed with a fine irony and a warm, sympathetic humor. It seems that the Hawaiian spirit and its carefree *aloha* must have found their way onto London’s pages like the plaintive notes of local music which lingered everywhere. It is important to stress that the stories have something in common beyond scenery, myths, and other obvious Hawaiian traits: they all point backwards, into the past, reminiscing and nostalgic. The prevalent motive of looking back, recalling, and remembering conveys the impression that London was another one who knew that his paradise was already lost, that it had maybe never existed as such. In a way, his case is similar to Stevenson’s: he was ill, the admired physical was failing him, and he had but a short time to live when he left Hawai’i.

portray the human traits he cared for; courage, dignity, poise. The Ko’olau legend has been taken up recently by local author W. S. Merwin in his 1998 epic poem *The Folding Cliffs*.

³² See A. Grove Day (ed.), *Stories of Hawaii by Jack London*, Honolulu 1965: 265-66.

³³ Jack London, “My Hawaiian Aloha,” in Day 1965: 276-282.

³⁴ Jack London, “The Sheriff of Kona,” in Day 1965: 90-104, here 92.

There were other authors who let themselves be inspired by the lore of the islands. Whoever visited or stayed and happened to be a writer inevitably had something to say about Hawai'i: William Somerset Maugham, for example, passing through during his World War I occupation as British secret agent. Clifford Gessler, who came as a newspaper editor, Eugene Burdick, dealing with his World War II experiences, or John Phillips Marquand, creating the famous detective Mr. Moto when residing in Honolulu.³⁵ Many of them simply selected aspects of Hawaiian life and centered their stories on these, or they used Hawai'i as a stunningly beautiful backdrop for their plots. The next one to draw the world's attention to the islands was James Jones, author of 1951's best-selling novel *From Here to Eternity*. The 800-page army epic had already sold 6.5 million hardcover copies when published in paperback in 1975, and the 1953 star-studded motion picture was a crowd pleaser as well. However, Jones also used Hawai'i as a mere backdrop, a hot and exotic place in which tempers are bound to flare. What lingers in the minds of readers (or moviegoers) are the bars and prostitutes of Hotel Street, the actual attack on Pearl Harbor, and the one lonely beach that was witness to a secret love affair. Nevertheless, one has to acknowledge the immense effect of both novel and film on the American public: Hawai'i was made the scene of an American military and human drama, turning it into an American place in the minds of the audience. On one level, the novel seems to mark the final step in the gradual appropriation of the foreign and exotic place into American dominion, although statehood was still some years ahead.

All texts and authors mentioned so far have one thing in common: they are participants in the advancement of the American Frontier, in the movement West, in the fulfillment of the 'Manifest Destiny' concept. They are the pioneers and settlers of a literary Frontier that ran alongside the actual, physical one. Maybe unconsciously, or even unwillingly, these writers have nevertheless become stepping stones for the masses that followed in their wake, businessmen as well as tourists and other writers. Furthermore, their works have formed the mainland's perception of Hawai'i, creating both the place and its people in much the same way as Crèvecoeur created American identity with his famous *Letters from an American Farmer* in the late 18th century. There

³⁵ Examples of their versions of Hawai'i can be found in the two *Hawaiian Readers*, edited by Day and Stroven.

was no native literary voice yet, thus Hawaiian identity and the myth of an earthly paradise were established by ‘outsiders.’³⁶ Contemporary writers are still confronting and challenging these US-American conceptions of what constitutes Hawai’i and the Hawaiian.

With former University of Hawai’i professor and writer Marjorie Sinclair we come back to the various notions of paradise. Sinclair has written two historical novels, poetry, short fiction, and the biography of a chiefess.³⁷ Furthermore, she published a volume of translations from the Hawaiian. Sinclair came to Hawai’i in the 1930s, teaching at the English department for more than 40 years. As her writing spans half a century, it is difficult to decide whether to include her in the pre- or post-Hawaiian Renaissance section. Her two republished novels that have been enjoying a wide readership belong to the pre-statehood period, but may be said to point ahead. Her first book, *Kona*, was published in 1947, and is set mostly in the 1930s. It deals with the difficult marriage between a woman of Hawaiian and Scottish descent and a stern Yankee from missionary stock. Sinclair captures a certain period of Hawaiian life quite accurately, but sometimes at the expense of movement and progress of the novel: her characters are tableau-like, strangely out of time. Her exclusive concern is the inner conflict of the *hapa-haole*³⁸ woman, the struggle towards a decision for one part of her. The focus on that struggle suspends outside history. It takes place, but it is of no real importance to the heroine: The girl from Kona married and went to Honolulu; she lost her childhood paradise where life had been simple and beautiful. Moreover, she knows that even returning would not bring it back. Her Kona Eden existed within her, so now she has to create a new inner haven to bear life. She imagines an inner room where she can be her Hawaiian self, whereas to the outside world and to her husband, she is the perfect wife he wants. A partial reconciliation to this sad inner emigration is the description of the couple’s daughter returning to the Hawaiian way of life. In her foreword, Sinclair elaborates on the real people of the period she describes: “Especially poignant was the

³⁶ It is noteworthy that Crèvecoeur had been an ‘outsider’ too, a Frenchman who had fought the battle of Quebec. He simply changed his name and settled in New York State, leaving his former life behind to become an American. He is seen today as one of the creators of the American Dream, another myth of identity.

³⁷ Marjorie Sinclair, *Nahi’ena’ena: Sacred Daughter of Hawai’i*, Honolulu 1995.

³⁸ I.e.: half-white.

desire to return to an earlier time [...] My story seems much longer ago than it was because of the remarkable and nearly overwhelming changes that have come about in Hawaii. It is almost a dream world, perhaps an edenic or golden age. But it was real.’³⁹ *Kona* abounds in references to an unattainable paradise.

Sinclair’s second novel, *The Wild Wind*, was first published in 1950. Again, a mixed marriage is the main topic, this time between the granddaughter of a New England missionary, returned from the mainland, and a full-blooded Hawaiian. He has attended college but has then decided on the simple life of a Maui cowboy that she shares now. This time, it is the husband who struggles for his identity, who feels torn between two worlds. Through the eyes of the wife, who rests safe in her decision, we witness the competing influences on the native husband: his grandmother, a *kahuna*,⁴⁰ stands for an exclusive Hawaiianness, for traditions, and native pride. His college education and common sense tell him that there is more than one way to live, but a secret sect that dabbles with the remnants of the ancient religion, his grandmother, and his former lover seem to conspire to alienate him from his ‘outsider’ wife. Their elitist pride is a guise for their insecurity, for the fear of being completely absorbed in white culture. This idea had and has strong correspondences to the real situation in Hawai’i. The husband is torn between the two things he loves, his wife and his people: ‘His wish was to preserve them -and himself- from the hurt of disenchantment.’⁴¹ It takes him long to realize that he can love and care for both. To me, the most interesting thoughts in *The Wild Wind* are the ones related to the chances of mixedness, hybridity. Here, Sinclair seems to be well ahead of her time, when statehood for Hawai’i was delayed in congress due to its hybrid population: ‘children who with their mingled white and Hawaiian blood would know how to blend the old and the new, who would understand the subtle, complicated forces of the modern world, itself suffering from the clash of cultures. [...] She would break down the racial barrier, and chart a faint little trail toward the world of harmony that might be.’⁴² Her more recent texts have not lost that quality of optimism, maybe naivete that can be felt in her early novels. I would argue that Sinclair as a writer is not a post-

³⁹ Marjorie Sinclair, *Kona*, Honolulu 1986: 4.

⁴⁰ I.e.: priestess, healer, keeper of traditions, sorceress.

⁴¹ Marjorie Sinclair, *The Wild Wind*, Honolulu 1986: 156.

⁴² Sinclair 1986: 69, 227 & 248.

colonial, but a believer in the Hawaiian paradise, albeit one of the past and of the mind. It might still surface momentarily, and Sinclair's writings try to capture the moments when it does.

When looking for literature about Hawai'i, one cannot help stumbling onto another big stepping stone, namely James A. Michener's bulky bestseller *Hawaii*.⁴³ The novel may at times be lengthy and trivial, and it may be inaccurate when describing pre-contact Polynesian manners and life-style. However, it can be termed the most comprehensive and inclusive historical novel about the islands written so far. The author thoroughly researched the events and people he wrote about: the arrival of the missionaries after strenuous oversea travel, their efforts towards Christianization and their families' subsequent business enterprises, whaling, the decimation of natives through epidemics, Chinese laborers, leprosy and the development of the lazaretto on Moloka'i, sugar and pineapple, the declining monarchy and its overthrow, the conservative republican government and Wilcox' revolution against it, annexation, the plague epidemic and subsequent Chinatown fire, Japanese labor, picture brides, the first strikes, English Standard schools, the fear of a Japanese superiority in number, the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese American soldiers that proved their bravery and patriotism. When describing post-war Hawai'i, he mentions an aspect that is missing in official history: the existence of mentally ill descendants of the intermarrying leading *haole* families.⁴⁴ He also mentions the beginning association of different Asian groups, the devastating tsunamis which hit the Big Island, the growing influx of mainland companies, the great strike for labor unions, the first Japanese-American senator, the beginning of mass tourism. He had finished his epic history before statehood for Hawai'i was granted, but his optimistic close, painting the picture of glorious "Golden Men," anticipates this move quite clearly.

The section of his book that is dedicated to some liberal Polynesian 'dissenters' on Bora Bora is maybe the least satisfying part. He speculates, paints a rather primitive-

⁴³ James A. Michener, *Hawaii*, New York 1959. The author had written several texts about the South Pacific before, drawing on his travels as a US naval officer. After the war, he made his permanent home in Honolulu.

⁴⁴ It is hard to find proof for these passages, but the exclusive circle of few families could well have reminded the author of European nobility faced with the same problems of inherited imbecility. Maybe

thinking society with some members drastically ahead of their time: these few are his voyagers, his first settlers of Hawai'i. The beginning of the novel though, a kind of prologue, which deals with the evolution of the Hawaiian islands, is the most lyrical, insightful, and expressive passage of the whole. Here, he conveys an impression of the uniqueness of these tiny patches of paradise:

“For nearly forty million years, an extent of time so vast that it is meaningless, only the ocean knew that an island was building in its bosom, for no land had yet appeared above the surface of the sea. [...] Stubbornly, inch by painful inch, it grew. In fact, it was the uncertainty and agony of its growth that were significant. The chance emergence of the island was nothing. [...] Locked in fiery arms, joined by intertwining ejaculations of molten rock, the two volcanoes stood in matrimony, their union a single fruitful and growing island. [...] and what a heavenly, sweet, enchanting island it was [...] These beautiful islands, waiting in sun and storm, how much they seemed like beautiful women waiting for their men to come home at dusk, waiting with open arms and warm bodies and consolation.”⁴⁵

How coincidental, and at the same time how purposeful the emergence of the islands is described. How obviously *created* they are in his eyes. Michener's prologue is also the key to the understanding of the whole novel: as A. Grove Day states, for the author “paradise” is not a place which one may discover, but a stage that can serve as a “crucible of exploration and development.”⁴⁶ Michener invites everyone to populate his Hawai'i, in which the American Dream can be realized liberally: “Bring your own food, your own gods, your own flowers and fruits and concepts. [...] if you are willing to work until the swimming head and the aching arms can stand no more, then you can gain entrance to this miraculous crucible where the units of nature are free to develop according to their own capacities and desires.”⁴⁷

We will take a look at the validity of his assumptions in more recent texts. But first, I want to present a cluster of events that came to be called the Hawaiian

Michener simply wanted to hit at the descendants of missionaries who once condemned the natives for brother-sister marriages, and who then did no better for the same motives: to keep the blood lines pure.

⁴⁵ From James A. Michener, *Hawaii*, in Day / Stroven 1998: 3-20.

⁴⁶ Day / Stroven 1998: 3.

Renaissance, and that marks a shift in public awareness as well as in literary production in the islands.

V. THE 'HAWAIIAN RENAISSANCE'

Professor for Hawaiian Studies and political activist Haunani-Kay Trask dates the starting point for the political as well as cultural movement in 1970, when a typical eviction struggle in Kalama valley on Oahu led to a public debate on land use and land claims that is still going on.⁴⁸ Rural Hawaiian communities, which had remained relatively untouched during the plantation period, fell victim to rapid development of their agricultural areas beginning in the early 60s. These communities were realized to be the last repositories of a vital Hawaiian language, and of cultural and social traditions retained from pre-contact times. For Trask, the logical consequence was that the native rights movement “would begin and flourish in rural areas, where the call for a land base would be the loudest.”⁴⁹ The statement of a Hawaiian on evictions from native lands can be taken as an indicator of the political awareness of the time, 1970:

“Our country has been and is been plasticized, cheapened, and exploited. They’re selling it in plastic leis, coconut ashtrays, and cans of ‘genuine, original Aloha.’ They’ve raped us, sold us, killed us, and still they expect us to behave.... Hawai’i is a colony of the imperialist United States.”⁵⁰

The goals that emerged out of the land issue were and are sovereignty and the ‘decolonization of the mind,’ as African writer Ngugi wa Thiong’o called the necessary process towards a native identity, starting with the reclamation of one’s mother tongue.⁵¹ A revitalization of the Hawaiian language and a reclamation of the authentic culture are still being seen as the most important steps in this direction. In the meantime, economic

⁴⁷ Michener in Day / Stroven 1998: 20.

⁴⁸ Trask: 67. The following information is taken from Trask’s book, whose main emphasis is on politics, as well as from Elizabeth Buck, *Paradise Remade: the Politics of Culture and History in Hawaii*, Philadelphia 1993, which rather deals with the cultural aspects.

⁴⁹ Trask: 66. Her reading of Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* probably informed her train of thought here.

⁵⁰ Trask: 1-2.

⁵¹ See Trask: 90. Thiong’o is a Kenyan author of various plays, essays, and novels. To make a statement, he relinquished English as a medium of communication in favor of his first languages, Gikuyu and Kiswahili.

interests and the tourist industry's marketing machinery pose challenging blocks in the natives' path towards any kind of independence.

Contemporary Hawaiian culture, in effect, is a subculture, but residual in its ties to the past and oppositional in its critique of the existing social structure. Since the 70s, there has been a revival not only of local music, chant, and authentic *hula*, but also of such unique sports as outrigger canoeing (leading to voyaging expeditions in the footsteps of ancient Polynesians) and, of course, surfing, the royal sport of the *ali'i*. Legends, chants, proverbs, and folktales have been collected, translated, and annotated.⁵² Demands have been made for Hawaiian language teaching, resulting in language immersion schools. A department of Hawaiian Studies has been established at the University in 1987, and demonstrations against land development have acquired new qualities of voice and argument by reference to universal human and indigenous rights declarations.⁵³ Most demands were and are related to the preservation of lifestyle and culture, and to the control of the land. The call for sovereignty is mostly about land control; few expect a totally independent state. Suggestions include a nation-within-nation, following the example of American Indian nations.

One problematic aspect of the native rights movement is its exclusive attitude to everything non-native. Given that decolonization and reassertion need to focus on indigenous culture and society, other locals' works and cultures will have to be realized as co-constituting Hawai'i. Especially Asian American residents share a post-colonial consciousness. Hence, a more inclusive, common cause could be established. In the long run, majorities might be shifted. Maxine Hong Kingston, a California-born writer of Chinese ancestry, has lived in Hawai'i for several years in the 70s. She taught high school and wrote, among other texts, a volume of essays entitled *Hawai'i One Summer*.⁵⁴ The small pieces are interesting in that they are set and written in the new period when the islands' 'renaissance' began to have effects, when a kind of post-colonial consciousness was evolving. Kingston's essay about "Talk Story: A Writers'

⁵² Some writers and scholars who have worked in this area of study are Mary Kawena Pukui, Alfons Korn, and Samuel Elbert, sensitive translators and ardent collectors who compiled a dictionary and various volumes of songs and folktales, each of them conveying the value and quality of the Hawaiian language and culture in their own way. Examples of their work can be found in Stanton: 68-102.

⁵³ See Trask: 25-40 & 197-210

⁵⁴ Maxine Hong Kingston, *Hawai'i One Summer*, Honolulu 1998.

Conference” deals with her feeling of being an intruder, faced with outpourings against the mainland ‘outsiders’: “I felt scolded, a Captain Cook of literature, plundering the islands for metaphors, looting images, distorting the landscape with a mainland -a mainstream- viewpoint.”⁵⁵ But she immediately reasserts her conviction that literary capability cannot be replaced by simple lifelong residence when writing about a place.

In general, it is necessary to point out that it were essentially statehood and the total incorporation into American dominion that enabled the current development of criticism and resistance: Hawaiians were not only exposed to US mass culture and mass tourism, but also to the American university system and to civil rights movements, all of which provided them with a pattern of action to apply to the Hawaiian situation. Ardent critic Trask went to the mainland for education (as did many other local writers and intellectuals), and she mentions Malcolm X and the Black Civil Rights Movement as examples for the shape of her struggle. Moreover, she acknowledges the university’s role as birthplace for awareness, resistance, and ‘civil disobedience.’⁵⁶ Trask is not the only Hawaiian whose thinking and writing are unquestionably shaped by exposure to US-American ideas and concepts, no matter how much emphasis is drawn to her indigenous side. There are other influences and associations, to be sure: native cultures in all corners and on the rim of the vast Pacific Ocean, the various struggles of former colonies, especially the writings and concerns of the Caribbean. I will return to the West Indies in my conclusive attempt to link Hawai’i to other places on the literary map.

Coming back to the effects of the Hawaiian Renaissance, I will deal with traditional ways of ‘literary production’ in Hawai’i next. The revitalization and reclamation of Hawaiian culture justifies a comprehensive survey of this fascinating manner of artistic expression. So does the practice of travesty and prostitution of Hawaiian art forms by the tourist industry.

VI. THE OTHER LITERATURE: CHANT, *HULA*, AND CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

⁵⁵ Kingston: 47.

⁵⁶ Trask: 186.

Hawaiians had no written language until the missionaries transcribed their melodic clusters of vowels. Their culture was an oral one. Their medium of transmitting and communicating history, genealogy, religion, art, and entertainment was a combination of song and dance, chant and *hula*. Chant can be seen as poetry, historiography, formalized worship of the gods, and finally, entertainment. Instrumentation and *hula* accompanied the chanter in public presentations, underscoring the meaning of the chants. The words always came first, rhythm and dance being added after the composition of the poem, partly for mnemonic purposes. Ethnologist Nathaniel Emerson has described the composition of a *mele*, or song, as follows: “First came the poem, then the rhythm of the song keeping time to the rhythm of the poetry.”⁵⁷ Especially early visitors failed to evaluate chant and *hula* for what they really were. They held the music in contempt or were unqualified to describe it, mainly because they viewed it as lacking variety, melody, and range. Furthermore, our scale does not allow for the display of ancient Hawaiian chant. Hence, whereas the lyrics have frequently survived, music has been replaced under foreign influence.

One significant piece of oral literature that we still have is the *Kumulipo*, or chant of creation. The Hawaiian creation myth is outstanding in this widespread genre, for it presupposes some kind of spontaneous generation and evolution, not a Divine Cause for the creation and development of the earth and its inhabitants. In 1981, Rubellite Kawena Johnson published an explanative translation. Well-researched and sensitive, the text offers fascinating insights into both pre-contact conceptualization of the world as well as into the nature of a Hawaiian chant:

“When space turned around, the earth heated
 When space turned over, the sky reversed
 When the sun appeared standing in shadows
 To cause light to make bright the moon,
 When the Pleiades are small eyes in the night,
 From the source in the slime was the earth formed [...]
 Born the coral polyp

⁵⁷ Nathaniel B. Emerson, *Unwritten Literature of Hawaii: The Sacred Songs of the Hula*, New York 1909: 159.

Born of him a coral colony emerged [...]

Born the *coral-dwelling sea urchin*

Born of him a *short-spiked sea urchin* emerged.”⁵⁸

Listing plants and animals from sea and land, and gods only afterwards, the chant is naturally very repetitive in its choice of words and its syntax. Its *kahuna* composers had no intention of explaining the universe; their purpose was to relate a newborn high chief to his ultimate origins in earth's very beginnings. A genealogy chant was sacred to the family; hence, these poetic pieces have often proved resilient to outward changes.

In pre-contact times, hula schools, called *halau*, were places of instruction, memorization, performance, and worship. They were surrounded by *kapu*, taboos, to keep order and discipline, and because they were sacred places, chant and *hula* being “the ideological center and the primary reservoir of social knowledge and history.”⁵⁹ In the oral society of pre-contact Hawai'i, *hula* performances established and perpetuated the hierarchical structure with their chants about the divine descent of the ruling *ali'i* class, and they were prime social entertainment. *Hulas* and chants varied from heavily ritualized, formalized, and taboo-laden sacred dances to light presentations of gossip, “shifty talk,” and funny stories. There even was a marionette dance, the *hula ki'i*, featuring light contents and puppets with elaborately carved heads.

In his 1909 ethnological book on chant and *hula*, from which we still gather most of the references to the authentic song and dance of old Hawai'i, Nathaniel B. Emerson collected lyrics and dances, and listed such things as song topics, instruments, and common *hula* gestures. A crucial aspect of the Hawaiian language is that it lends itself to allegories and figurative speech, that words frequently have several meanings, and that Hawaiians have always loved punning and metaphor. The style of the *mele* is floral and excessive, and a mere literal reading would do these complex compositions no justice: allegory and codification are to be found everywhere, and local allusions color the descriptions. Places are evoked, as well as whole legends, with the mentioning of one word that triggers a greater concept. Though sometimes patronizing in attitude, Emerson acknowledges the textual richness of the Hawaiian *mele*, and his translations of some of

⁵⁸ Quoted from Joseph Stanton, *A Hawai'i Anthology*, Honolulu 1997: 55-56.

⁵⁹ Buck: 102.

them attempt to convey this complexity. He also mentions the obstacles to a proper understanding: the localness of most of the symbols and the loose seeming connection of the metaphors force the listener to conjure a deeper correlation to find out what could be the intended meaning. It is difficult to judge if that is a deliberate obscurity in the *mele*, or if it only seems so to our foreign minds.

Native instruments included nose flutes, bamboo rattles, gourd rattles, big *pahu*⁶⁰ drums, *ti* leaf pipes⁶¹, sticks and pebbles, and a kind of wooden xylophone. The character of each *hula* was determined by the kind of instrument that provided its rhythm, some sounding grave and dignified, some delicate, some crude and trivial. However, when Emerson wrote his book, he had to rely on the testimony of native elders, who performed for him the *hulas* and chants they could remember, and who provided him with the necessary background information. Hence, we cannot be sure if all the instruments were devised before contact, nor if their sound qualities were valued in the same way. The same uncertainty applies to his list of *hula* gestures: progression and traveling, obstacles and surmounting, open level space, cover, protection and clothing, union or similarity, disunion or contrariety, death, mimetic and imitative gestures of occupations, facial expressions, flourishes and ornaments. In many of the gestures he sees mirrored that Hawaiian is a language of hospitality and invitation.

This fact has not always been viewed favorably, and can partly account for the missionaries' repulsion of *hula* as a promiscuous and heathen display. There were *hulas* that praised the fertility of *ali'i*, vividly describing their genitals. What the pleasure-seeking whalers must have loved as foreplay, the missionaries fought to eradicate. Both vulnerable and resilient, *hula* was turned down by the Calvinist missionaries as being licentious and lewd. But then, singing anything but religious hymns was an offense to them.

From the nineteenth century, we have sparse information about the development of chant and *hula*. As Western culture rapidly became the "natural social authority,"⁶² only big events in Honolulu and Lahaina were considered at least worth noting down.

⁶⁰ I.e.: drum, barrel, chest.

⁶¹ *ki*, or *ti*, is a plant with big leaves for various uses. It is widespread on the Pacific Islands and its English name is *Cordyline*.

⁶² Buck: 104.

Contact brought new cultural forms to Hawai'i such as sailors' tunes, missionary hymns, and later forms of entertainment imported by the New England-derived middle class: European classical music, English literature and drama. There was an explicit attempt to bring culture to the 'primitive' islands. With the firm establishment of Western capitalism, performance was becoming a paid-for commodity to be consumed, in contrast to the former patron system and communal practice of chant and *hula*. During the nineteenth century, both survived mostly outside the commercial culture, being recited in private in the *ohana*, the extended family, or in small rural communities. Thanks to the native Protestant convert David Malo, who wrote a bulky volume of Hawaiian antiquities, we have a wealth of information on what Hawai'i's culture was like before Christianity – in Hawaiian. The zealous pupil of the missionaries never brought himself to speak English, though he helped translate the Bible into Hawaiian and died an ordained minister.

With the reign of King David Kalakaua (1874 to 1891), traditions and native culture experienced a revival. Intending to rekindle national pride, the king employed them as symbols of sovereignty. Only when *hula* became a marketable commodity for tourists by the turn of the century, attempts to appropriate them for profit were made. Chant was displaced into a mere accompaniment for *hula*, and *hula* became an independent form that could be performed to any kind of music. As an effect of the decline in population, cultural forms died out with their last performers. The less formalized forms survived, but the institutionalized ones could not do so without the underlying institutions of *ali'i* and priesthood. Cosmological and genealogical chants for specific *ali'i* had been affirmations of the distribution of power. Their multiple layers of meaning, called *kaona*, could be termed with Elizabeth Buck as an "overcoding of reality."⁶³ When the principles of religion and language were undermined and taken away, the result was a spreading loss of the facility of the creative use of Hawaiian. 'Literary' Hawaiian began to disappear rapidly, as no one taught nor wanted to be taught the layered meanings and subtleties of the language anymore. English was the language of power, of literacy, of the God the missionaries taught about, and finally, of commerce. Kalakaua's reign brought a revival of native language and culture, but both poems and

⁶³ Buck: 109.

dances already had to be simplified to enable the English-speaking majority to understand them. Still, songs tended to cling to allegory and ambiguity of meaning. With the overthrow of the monarchy in 1893, chant was completely deprived of its political basis.

In the 1920s and 30s, ethnomusicologists tried to record what they held to be “the last surviving artists of a dying cultural practice.”⁶⁴ Whereas ancient *hula* had been “poetry in motion,” it was by then deritualized, isolated from its former functions, and focused on body movements of exotic and erotic effect. Today, the distinction is being made between the *hula kahiko*, the ancient dance, accompanied by traditional instruments, and the *hula ‘auana*, the modern dance with a Western influence in instrumentation and melodies. Influential composers besides Kalakaua were Queen Liliuokalani who wrote over one hundred songs, including the world famous “Aloha ‘Oe,” and the German Henry Berger who led the Royal Hawaiian Band. At times, traditional culture proved its resilience: in the 1920s, it was still possible for a local politician to campaign with chants, modeled after the old hymns to the ruling class. But by then, hybrid song forms had evolved, based on traditional fixed chant forms and tropes, and on regular lyrics with Western melodies. The new song form did not lend itself to narrative as the old ones had done. The all-encompassing nature of ancient chant and *hula* had vanished, and only fragments had remained.

It is noteworthy that with the advent of tourism in the twentieth century musical performance was one of the few vocational options for Hawaiians; they were valued as “entertainers and an exotic presence that added to the lure of the islands.”⁶⁵ In the 20s and 30s, Hawai‘i’s *hapa haole* (= half white) music outsold all other genres in the United States. Only with the advent of Rock’n’Roll in the late 50s, this huge interest in island music faded. Then, as one of the manifestations of the Hawaiian Renaissance, the music production rapidly increased in the mid-70s and acquired a more unique face again. Relatively cheap recordings were made possible by the advent of Audio cassettes, and thus small local record companies were enabled to produce local artists. Singers such as the Cazimero Brothers or Gabby Pahinui became famous with their combination of folk, rock, country, and Hawaiian elements. Local musicians were of course affected by

⁶⁴ Buck: 112.

⁶⁵ Buck: 173.

market forces and had to adjust to popular tastes, but their music often managed to maintain that little difference. The local industry had its peak in 1978 with 110 released albums, and after a slowdown in the 80s has assessed its vitality again during the 90s. Hawai'i's record industry has achieved what the musicians in many other small countries wish for: it is locally owned, and it provides relative independence from mainstream demands as well as an outlet for traditional styles. However, tourist music satisfies and reinforces popular images of the islands as a paradisiacal place, a tropical retreat, full of friendly and beautiful people. Hawaiians continue to be portrayed as lazy, good-natured, happy, and carefree. Tourism generates close to forty percent of the state's gross product, and one third of the jobs are generated directly or indirectly by it, but except for a few big-name long-term entertainers (such as Don Ho at the Hilton Hawaiian Village or the Brothers Cazimero at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel), local musicians are poorly paid and intermittently employed.

We can summarize that pre-contact chant and *hula* represented the religious and political totality of Hawai'i. To early visitors such as Cook and Vancouver, they were signifiers of an exotic culture. To the missionaries, they were emblems of sin and signs of the need for civilization and the Christian religion. Kalakaua turned them into symbols of pride and sovereignty. For the tourist industry, they became commodities to sell and market. For the tourists, they were evidence of an experience in paradise. Since the 70s, music has become a political symbol in Hawai'i. In the 90s, local music expresses the people's frustrations, and the aspirations for land control. Music is a vehicle for public protest, a voice for sovereignty. The new generation of singers feels responsibility for its heritage, and wants to make a difference in a peaceful way.

I would like to offer the lyrics of a few exemplary songs from the late 80s and early 90s, hinting at the impact that popular music has, especially on younger people. Whereas you cannot force ignorant or disinterested people to read novels, poems, or essays that might make them aware of injustices and local concerns, music finds its way into people's heads in a natural way, striking immediately at their consciousness. Just as saccharine melodies and kitschy lyrics about pink sunsets and palm trees reinforce tourists' notions of their tropical paradise, critical songs can undermine and defy these notions effectively:

BUTCH HELEMANO: IN A BUSH⁶⁶

Come and listen to a little story, a story sad but true
 About the chain of tiny islands located in the Pacific Blue.
 Long ago, my daddy told me, son, come sit up on my knee,
 Way long ago, before the concrete jungle grew up in Waikiki.
 He said, son, did you know, long ago they put that queen in jail
 Without no litigation, even without no bail.
 And he said me, come with me, come with me, we go sit up in a bush...
 Let me, let me tell y'a story, a story sad but true
 About the concrete jungle, my brothers, what it's doing to me and you.
 Every time I go down to the ocean, I really want to cry:
 There is so much pollution, my brother, it seems like the fish all died.
 So come with me, come with me, come with me, we go sit up in a bush...
 Mr. poli- Mr. politician, Mr. politician man,
 Now there's something, there's something that you're doing
 That I just don't understand:
 Me and my brothers and sisters,
 Well, we're thinking this is not more fun,
 Because you're leasing off our land and selling it to the House of the Rising Sun.⁶⁷
 So come with me... / Long ago...
 Yes they robbed us of our culture and our land,
 What I just don't understand,
 How they're waterin' their golf courses
 And selling it to the House of the Rising Sun.
 So come with me...

The reggae song addresses the necessity of relating history in order to understand the present. The father 'talked story' with the son, conveying the injustice of the overthrow

⁶⁶ From his 1980 album *Reggae Block Party*, currently out of print.

⁶⁷ I.e.: Japan.

of the Hawaiian monarchy. Now the singer ‘talks story’ with his audience, presenting today’s problems (‘concrete jungle,’ pollution, land speculation, loss of culture and land) as the ultimate result of overthrow and annexation. Listeners are to realize that American dominion is not at all beneficial to Hawaiians. The next song hits at a similar point and at an actual if concealed problem: especially 20th century mass tourism is corroding the once beautiful islands, and resources won’t last much longer, if more than 6.5 million visitors continue to flood the islands each year.

BROTHER NOLAND: LOOK WHAT THEY’VE DONE⁶⁸

Come down with me, have you ever tripped through reality?
 Come down and see, see what they’ve done to Waikiki.
 And ask me why, won’t you open your eyes,
 Can’t you see we lost our paradise?
 There’s too many people - not enough sand
 Can’t they see we want our land? And why do I grumble?
 ‘Cause of concrete jungles in a place where people were once humble.
 Too much one-way-signs, you know I think they’re blind:
 They can’t even recognize a Don’t-Walk-sign.
 Too much hotels, god, it looks like hell - no more ‘Hawaiian style.’⁶⁹

My last example is no lament, but a strong assertion of local pride:

ISRAEL KAMAKAWIWO’OLE: MAUI HAWAIIAN SUPPA MAN⁷⁰

Oh, tall is the tale of The Mischievous One
 Who fished out all the islands and captured the sun
 His deeds and tasks I will unmask, so that you’ll understand
 That before there was a Clark Kent
 There was a Hawaiian Superman!

⁶⁸ From his 1990 album *Brother Noland: A Collection of His Greatest Hits*.

⁶⁹ I.e.: with love, with the spirit of *aloha*.

⁷⁰ From his posthumously published 1998 album *IZ in Concert: The Man and His Music*.

He fished out the islands with his magical pole
 There would have been more if somebody looked
 He pulled morning sky, the sun he entwined
 Slowed down his flight, so *kapa* could dry, heh-yeah.
 Mischievous, marvelous, magical Maui, hero of this land,
 The one, the only, the ultimate Hawaiian Superman
 Maui, oh Maui, oh Maui, da Hawaiian Suppa Man,
 Maui, oh Maui, oh Maui, da Hawaiian Suppa Man.
 The secret of fire was locked somewhere in time
 So when the *ahi* died in the *hale kuke*, no way to re-ignite
 Off he goes in search of those who hold the information
 So fire could be used by all the future generations.
 He found out that *Alae* held the fire connection
 But his plan of deception fell short from perfection
 We know he had no choice but to get mean
 So he squeezed *Alae*'s throat 'til she screamed the secret...

Some explanations can shed light on the particular significance of this 'ode to Maui': the song recalls parts of the legend of the Hawaiian demigod Maui, equal parts trickster and Prometheus. *kapa*, or *tapa*, is a native cloth made out of mulberry bark. In the legend, Maui wanted to help his mother with her task of making *kapa*, and so he forced the sun to move slower -at its present speed- so that the cloth had time to dry. The *ahi* in the *hale kuke* is the kitchen fire, and the *Alae* is a black bird, the mudhen, who here knows the secret of how to create fire with sticks. The legend is still common knowledge in the islands, and the song wants to offer a native alternative to American heroes, identification figures like comic strip Superman Clark Kent. The message is that Hawaiian culture has its own figures to be proud of.

The trickster or even underdog quality of the legendary character links Maui to heroes of other native cultures, such as the various trickster characters in American Indian myths and stories, or the spider Anansi of Afro-Caribbean tales. It seems that ambiguous, two-faced characters of native tradition are claimed and revitalized as logical

metaphors for their position in the colonial and post-colonial world. One other important aspect of Kamakawiwo'ole's song is the use of Pidgin in his chorus: Today, this use is a political statement and a symbol of pride, subverting the Western assumption that Pidgin is a bad or even wrong form of language.

After having dealt in detail with the islands' oral and 'physical' literature, I am now coming back to the written texts. I am going to present contemporary literature from Hawai'i, including the trailblazing texts and authors of the 70s and 80s.

VII. EXILES AND LOCAL KIDS: CONTEMPORARY HAWAIIAN LITERATURE

Today, the Hawaiian literary scene is lively, diverse, and growing. Since the 1970s, competitions, a quarterly, and various other forums have been created; a few novelists and poets have won critical acclaim as well as a larger audience. Local publishers include Mutual Publishing, producer of affordable paperbacks and reprints, and the University of Hawai'i Press with its dedication to local literature, history, and sciences. Founded in 1978, Bamboo Ridge Press, a collective with the purpose of publishing literature by and about Hawai'i's people, has been providing an important platform for local authors and concerns. Poetry and Short fiction by writers from all kinds of backgrounds find their voice in its magazine, *Bamboo Ridge, The Hawaii Writers' Quarterly*, its editors Eric Chock and Darrell H.Y. Lum being writers themselves. Authors such as Cathy Song or Lois-Ann Yamanaka were published in *Bamboo Ridge* before achieving greater fame and more than local recognition. In many cases, publishing in *Bamboo Ridge* also means belonging to a writers group, circulating ideas, stories, and drafts, sharing work and criticism. As Lois-Ann Yamanaka describes the community: "We're a big dysfunctional family because we squabble and fight, but in the end, like families, we make up and move forward."⁷¹

Editor Darrell Lum's Introduction to the 1986 issue *The Best of Bamboo Ridge* recapitulates the evolution of the collective out of the 1978 writers conference "Talk

⁷¹ Quoted from Renee H. Shea, "Lois-Ann Yamanaka. Pidgin Politics and Paradise Revised," in *Poets & Writers Magazine* September / October 1998: 32-39, here 35.

Story: Words bind, words set free,” initiated by Steven H. Sumida, Arnold Hiura, and Marie Hara. After the conference, which has been described in vivid terms by attendant Maxine Hong Kingston,⁷² *Talk Story: An Anthology of Hawaii’s Local Writers* was published, and Bamboo Ridge Press was founded. Lum views these steps as “instrumental in helping define local literature,” and touches on the problem of terminology: “No wonder a number of Hawaii writers choose to describe themselves as local writers of “local literature” (as opposed to “Asian American” literature, largely a mainland term, or “Hawaiian” literature, which the locals know means native Hawaiian literature).”⁷³ The whole ‘naming is claiming’ issue surfaces in this distinction.

Lum’s delineation of what constitutes “local literature” perfectly matches the ‘Hawaiian traits and markers’ I have tried to formulate in my introduction: “a distinct sensitivity to ethnicity, the environment (in particular that valuable commodity, the land), a sense of personal lineage and family history, and the use of the sound, the languages, and the vocabulary of island people.”⁷⁴ Moreover, he voices the shift in awareness and viewpoint from Michener to post-Hawaiian-Renaissance writers: “Forget the “Golden Man” or “melting pot” myths.” His Co-editor Eric Chock mentions the problems which local authors continue to face: “we in Hawaii are expected to believe that we are subordinate to the mainland [...] We are asked to accept mainland literature as the norm. In the process, our own literature loses its cohesiveness, our writings are categorized according to the framework of mainland, mainstream literary history, if at all.”⁷⁵ *Bamboo Ridge* and its affiliated writers do everything to dissuade such limitations. The quarterly displays the diversity, variety, and overall quality of literature produced in Hawai’i. A special concern of the editors is to show that the Asian immigrant population has always contributed richly to the islands’ body of literature, but that this body cannot be incorporated into mainland canons.

Not every piece written by a ‘local’ necessarily contains signifiers of Hawaiianness, and yet, it is often one line or a single verse that unmistakably marks the islander:

⁷² See Kingston: 47-51.

⁷³ Darrell Lum, “Local Literature and Lunch,” in Eric Chock and Darrell H. Y. Lum (eds.), *The Best of Bamboo Ridge, The Hawaii Writers’ Quaterly*, Honolulu 1986: 3-5.

⁷⁴ Lum in Chock / Lum: 4.

“All through my body is the ache of the sea,”⁷⁶
 “Your blood runs free
 From the redness of soil,”⁷⁷ or
 “and we learned to love it
 like a man who loves some thing in gold or silver
 But these islands are made of lava and trees and sand.”⁷⁸

The anthology features such gems as Diane Kahanu’s assertion “Ho. Just Cause I Speak Pidgin No Mean I Dumb,”

“Pidgin short.
 Fast.
 Match. [...]
 Pidgin safe.
 Like Refuge, Pu’uhonua,
 From the city,”⁷⁹

or a collection of Japanese *haiku* written in American internment camps during World War II:

“As if to relish
 Each step I take
 On this great earth,
 I walk –
 To the mess hall.
 The only walk allowed.”⁸⁰

It also contains some of Cathy Song’s poems. The 1982 winner of the Yale Series of Younger Poets competition is of Korean descent; her grandparents immigrated to Hawai’i. However, her frequent references to Japan and China indicate that she views herself within the larger framework of the Asian American community. Local images and

⁷⁵ Eric Chock, “On Local Literature,” in Chock / Lum: 8.

⁷⁶ Jan Day Fehrman, “Songs from the Ancient and Modern,” in Chock / Lum: 27.

⁷⁷ Juliet S. Kono, “Yonsei,” in Chock / Lum: 52. A *yonsei* is a third-generation Japanese-American, the grandchild of an immigrant.

⁷⁸ Eric Chock, “Poem for George Helm. Aloha Week 1980,” in Chock / Lum: 21. Helm was a musician who drowned when protesting against nuclear bomb testing on the island of Kaho’olawe in 1976.

⁷⁹ Chock / Lum: 43. *pu’uhonua* = refuge, asylum.

⁸⁰ Muin Ozaki, “At the Volcano Internment Camp,” in Chock / Lum: 68.

representations show her sense of belonging to Hawai'i. Her poems are full of atmosphere and sensual experience, probing the past, evoking memories, linking small present events to whole histories. Tableau-like, she presents events, people, and feelings that are long gone: childhood, the former generations, things past. Whatever Song describes is already lost, and yet, her memory and imagination capture it, put it on paper. That seems to be her way of being able to accept, to let go:

“You remember your mother
 who walked for centuries,
 footless-
 and like her,
 you have left no footprints,
 but only because
 there is an ocean in between,
 the unremitting space of your rebellion.”⁸¹

Acceptance, patience, and sensibility are the gifts which enable Cathy Song to present her Hawaiian world as a small paradise of childhood vignettes, full of siblings, grandparents, Easter egg-hunts, and steady rain.

The anthology's last piece is a 1981 essay by Stephen Sumida in which he labors to prove that there have always been significant contributions to Hawaiian literature by Asian immigrants and their descendants; they have only been ignored and left out in former anthologies and surveys such as the Day / Stroven collections which I dealt with earlier. Today, confronted with the sheer multitude (and with the success) of recent works by 'Asian-Hawaiian' authors, nobody would deny their impact or relevance, but when *Bamboo Ridge* commenced its work, there were still many prejudices to invalidate: “Told all my life that Hawaii's Asian Americans did not write –and were not verbally skillful enough even to understand– imaginative literature, I frankly was astounded by what I found,”⁸² Sumida admits.

⁸¹ From: Cathy Song, *Picture Bride*, New Haven / London 1983: 53. The title of this poem is “Lost Sister.”

⁸² Stephen Sumida, “Waiting for the Big Fish: Recent Research in the Asian American Literature of Hawaii,” in Chock / Lum: 317. Sumida, now president of the reinstated Association of Asian American Studies (AAAS), has written a comprehensive survey entitled *And the View from the Shore: Literary Traditions of Hawaii* (Seattle 1991) based on his extensive research.

Bamboo Ridge Press has published several other anthologies, like *Sister Stew. Fiction and Poetry by Women*, and the fantastic collection *Growing up Local* which features texts written by high school students next to poems and short stories from local authors.⁸³ The introduction of this anthology of childhood and teenage reminiscences mentions the common factors shared by the diverse pieces: “honesty of voice, a strong and sure sense of place, and a sense of genealogy.”⁸⁴ Here, we have some of the ‘markers of Hawaiianness’ again. High school teacher and co-editor Bill Teter adds to these in his afterword to the collection, listing what his students stated as defining the ‘local’: love of the land, of food, of diversity, of pidgin.⁸⁵ The anthology raises one other issue which is probably related to such listings:

“Sharing a common enemy, local culture has often been characterized as a culture of resistance against the dominant white culture [...] This cultural accommodation on the part of native Hawaiians and immigrant labor was born out of a tradition of hardship, struggle, and conflict that counters the romantic notions of blended cultures, the melting pot, or a multiethnic Hawai’i based on a democratic sharing of cultures.”⁸⁶

Are these conceptions of Hawai’i mere myths then, to be deconstructed and overthrown? Let us take a closer look at some of the islands’ authors of the last decades, those who have given their visions and feelings to the islands, to celebrate their beauty, to mourn their defilement, and to voice the experiences that paradise was witness to:

O. A. Bushnell, first winner of the Hawai’i Award for Literature in 1974, is professor of microbiology and medical history, and a writer of historical novels. The descendant of Portuguese and other European immigrants always attempts to combine telling a good story with capturing complex and problematic historical situations. It seems that “Ozzie” is seen as a model figure for Hawaii’s literary community; he is often quoted for having called for the writing of some kind of ‘Great Hawaiian Novel,’ and for

⁸³ Juliet S. Kono / Cathy Song (eds.), *Sister Stew: Fiction and Poetry by Women*. Honolulu 1991 & Eric Chock / James R. Harstad / Darrell H. Y. Lum / Bill Teter (eds.), *Growing up Local: an Anthology of Poetry and Prose from Hawai’i*, Honolulu 1998. Because *The Best of Bamboo Ridge* had been used as a classroom reader for local literature, the editors designed *Growing up Local* mainly for a secondary school audience.

⁸⁴ Chock et al.: 12.

⁸⁵ See Chock et al.: 348-9.

⁸⁶ Chock et al.: 12.

warning that if “us local kids” will not write it, “the outsider” surely will.⁸⁷ His novels, written mostly in the 70s and early 80s, deal with aspects of Hawaiian history such as its discovery by Cook, the period of growing white influence caused by 1848’s Great Mahele, or the establishment of the leper colony in the 1860s.⁸⁸ Bushnell is seen as a trailblazer for aspiring local writers.

So is Milton Murayama. He was the first to thematize the Japanese plantation experience in his 1975 novel *All I Asking for Is My Body*, set in the 30s. Having grown up in a Maui sugar plantation camp himself, he authentically relates the appalling living conditions, the poor pay, the strict hierarchy, and the striking racial segregation which was perpetuated by the workers: Filipinos went on strike, Japanese went to work as strike breakers; the different groups stayed by themselves and never intermarried. Protagonist Kiyō and his older brother Toshio have to deal with the conflict of filial duty, being expected to help pay off the family’s huge debt, and the desire to get out of the plantation system and establish a life of their own. Toshio rages and fights with his parents, begging for a chance: “I’d be going to high school and college instead of slaving in the cane fields. [...] Shit, all I asking for is my body.”⁸⁹ He is the first to realize that his generation will have to choose their loyalties: “We have to cut off all our ties with Japan and become American.”⁹⁰ But it is quiet Kiyō, the second son, who in the end manages to break the vicious circle of fatalism and hollow traditions. First, he tried boxing as a way to make money just like Toshio had done, but he has had to realize he could never be good enough, fighting only himself, his mother’s overworry, his brother’s bullying. Surprisingly enough, the war becomes his liberation. It happens like an initiation: After sons have been told all their lives not to bring shame to the Japanese race, the attack on Pearl Harbor in turn has Japan bring shame on each of them. Subsequently, Japanese values can finally be questioned. Kiyō signs up for the army, postponing his filial duty: “Everybody in Kahana was dying to get out of this icky shit-hole, and here was his chance delivered on a silver platter. Besides, once you fought, you earned the right to

⁸⁷ See Kingston: 47.

⁸⁸ O. A. Bushnell, *The Return of Lono, Ka’ā’awa & Molokai*. Unfortunately, all of Bushnell’s novels are currently out of print. I was only able to obtain excerpts (in Joseph Stanton (ed.) *A Hawai’i Anthology*, Honolulu 1997: 131-140) and background information about the author.

⁸⁹ Milton Murayama, *All I Asking for is my Body*, Honolulu 1988: 42 & 48. The author wrote a second novel about the same Japanese family in 1980, *Five Years on a Rock*.

complain and participate, you earned a right to a future.”⁹¹ In the training camp on Oahu, Kiyō wins enough money to pay off the debt in a single gambling bout: “Go for broke. Have absolute faith in the odds. I wasn’t fighting myself anymore.”⁹² Finally being out of the plantation treadmill has enabled Kiyō to take the next step towards personal freedom: a refusal of plantation as well as of family paternalism, and an adoption of Americanism at the same time. Murayama’s book makes it clear that the *nisei* AJA’s⁹³ had no choice but to embrace America. Their adoption freed them from the bondage of traditions. Murayama can be said to have paved the way for the contemporary Hawaiian novel, setting the theme, local history, and employing pidgin, local talk, to convey atmosphere and authentic flavor. Meeting with resistance from commercial publishers to his innovative presentation of plantation voices, he eventually published his novel himself. Today’s local authors are indebted to his bold usage of non-Standard English.⁹⁴

One of them is Lois-Ann Yamanaka, the most controversial contemporary Hawaiian author, but at the same time one of the most successful. Her novels, published by a large mainland company, have won her an audience that reaches far beyond the islands. Critical acclaim as well as various grants and awards are countered by harsh words at home. “Poverty, squalor, and violence mark the ‘anything but paradise’” she creates, says critic Jamie James in his *Atlantic Monthly* review⁹⁵ of her most recent novel, *Heads by Harry*. He also mentions her “disturbing realism and peppery black humor.” And he relates the controversies that have arisen when she was presented with the literature award of the Association of Asian American Studies (AAAS) in 1993 for her collection of poetry, *Saturday Night at the Pahala Theatre*.⁹⁶ Her first novel was nominated in 1996 for the same award, but some members of the board took offense at

⁹⁰ Murayama: 37.

⁹¹ Murayama: 98.

⁹² Murayama: 101.

⁹³ I.e.: second-generation Americans of Japanese ancestry.

⁹⁴ Again, what locals call ‘pidgin’ is really a Creole, Hawaiian Creole English (HCE), which evolved out of the attempts at intercommunication among the multiethnic plantation laborers. Hence, Hawaiian writers frequently have at least three ‘mother tongues’: Standard English, HCE, and Hawaiian or an Asian language.

⁹⁵ Jamie James, “This Hawaii Is Not for Tourists,” in *The Atlantic Monthly* Volume 283, No.2 (February 1999): 90-94. Online version: <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/99feb/hawaii.htm>

⁹⁶ Lois-Ann Yamanaka, *Saturday Night at the Pahala Theatre*, Honolulu 1993. Her novels, all published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, are *Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers* (1996), *Blu’s Hanging* (1997), and *Heads by Harry* (1999).

her depiction of Filipinos. They accused her of sensationalist racism. The committee decided to issue no prize that year. When her second novel was awarded in 1998, critics virtually ran amok, and the board of the AAAS broke up in the course of events. The award was rescinded. James in turn criticizes these critics who were mainly ethnic studies, not literature scholars. He invokes the concepts of art for art's sake, and the ancient idea that painful descriptions are intended for the catharsis of the audience, both apparently overlooked in a time and place where art is being forced to be a political statement (a politically correct one, at that). He calls for the freedom of artistic expression, and ends his article with praise for Yamanaka, "a trenchant observer and one of the most original voices on the American literary scene" who shows readers "a world more mysterious and exotic than the illusory idylls of Hawaii painted by outsiders." The author herself states that she will not bear self-censorship; neither do her narratives have a claim to universal truth: "I am only one writer telling one story."⁹⁷

Her main characters are girls, merely adolescent, that have to deal with a world that is cruel and frightening. The author explores themes such as poverty, prejudice, peer pressure, puberty, sexual harassment, and the realization of self: in *Wild Meat*, protagonist Lovey wants to be everything she is not: rich, *haole*, popular, a boy. In *Blu's Hanging*, Ivah is caught between her mother role for the younger siblings and her wish to establish an identity, a life of her own. The coming-of-age novel has turned drastic and Hawaiian. The bleak and prospectless Hawai'i Yamanaka presents is one that most would like to be fiction. It provides a bitter antidote to Michener's American Dream of equal opportunity forty years before.

The author's formal strategies include the child's viewpoint, and the natural and authentic use of pidgin, "cultural identity and linguistic identity being skin and flesh to my body."⁹⁸ In her work, the significance of pidgin becomes clearest: "I heard this my whole life," Yamanaka says. "Pidgin is a hindrance to island children. Contributes to low SAT scores. A handicap. A bastardization. Going nowhere. Being nothing." The author is not the first one to invert these attitudes, turning pidgin into both hallmark and assertion of local culture and pride. Moreover, "she thinks that the negative reception to pidgin

⁹⁷ Shea, "Pidgin Politics:" 34.

⁹⁸ Shea: 32.

reflects a plantation mentality that is still very much imbued in a lot of people.”⁹⁹ This goes together with her motivation for exploring issues of race, gender, sexuality, class, and culture: to her, the problems and prejudices existing in the islands today are effects of colonization, permeating every level of society. The author believes that intracommunity violence stems from “the way the plantation owners pitted people against each other.”¹⁰⁰ Racial hierarchies that have been established in plantation times seem intact up to the present day. Yamanaka’s novels are a tough read; the hurts that her protagonists encounter hurt the readers as well, because hers is a voice that is mercilessly honest, heartfelt: “but I grit my teeth, say no, no, no, no, will not, will not, will not. Which is when I taste the blood in my mouth. [...] the blood that leaves a taste so bitter not even a cold glass of water can wash it away.”¹⁰¹ The more triumphant feelings are rendered with the same kind of immediacy: “I can say ‘I love you, Jerry,’ and mean it. All of this without rhymes or cute stickers or nonsharpening pencils. I can mean it straight without lip gloss or hearts. I can say it without perfect teeth.”¹⁰²

Graham Salisbury’s adolescent heroes are confronted with an unintelligible adult world too, but their Hawai’i is still a place of hope. The descendant of missionary stock was born on the Big Island and lives in Oregon today. He explicitly writes for adolescents, so here we face the question of who and what to include in a survey of Hawaiian Literature again. I would argue that texts with a linguistic and atmospheric quality that can be appreciated by adult readers have to be considered. Certainly, Salisbury’s novels are ‘local,’ and deserve to be included into the canon, if one is to be established.

Blue Skin of the Sea, for example, is an episodic coming-of-age novel, dealing with an inner struggle for strength and courage as well as with the need for a personal history, a genealogy. Knowing where he comes from in the end, the young protagonist is able to face his fears and insecurities. The presence of the vast and open sea commands the text’s development as well as its imagery. *Under the Blood-Red Sun*, Salisbury’s novel about wartime in Hawai’i, is a tighter, more touching bit of local history: the

⁹⁹ Shea: 33.

¹⁰⁰ Shea: 34.

¹⁰¹ Lois-Ann Yamanaka, *Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers*, New York 1996: 116.

¹⁰² Yamanaka 1996: 194.

Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor is at the center of the story, and 13-year old Tomi Nakaji has to deal with being a Japanese-American. The difference of attitude in first-, second-, and third-generation residents is explored as well as the conflict between Japanese calmness and American pride. Tomi's initiation into the cruel world comes right after the bombing: Together with his grandfather, he has to kill his father's pigeons because a neighbor has falsely reported them as messenger birds.

“Without a word, Grampa and I reached in and removed the pigeons one by one and silently bled them to death with quick, clean slits across the throat. [...] The memory of the gentle cooing of thirty-five silky-feathered pigeons slowly died away, faded away, bled away... and, finally, in silence, flowed down into the earth forever.”¹⁰³

Tomi's consolation are his loyal friends, a mixed bunch of Portuguese, American, and Japanese youngsters, united by their passion for baseball. Their preoccupation with the game displays their inner Americanness. Although Salisbury sends his hero through many unpleasant experiences and confusions, the message of the book is clear and positive: Hawaiian residents of all races stand together in the end, realizing the American 'melting pot' metaphor completely. Obviously, Michener's Hawaiian Dream has not been altogether abandoned yet.

Another missionary descendant who wrote about adolescence was the late John Dominis Holt, a part Hawaiian. His novel *Waimea Summer*, republished in 1998, thematizes the elitism of the old *hapa* (Hawaiian-white) families in the 1930s: “They were totally inimical to the present.”¹⁰⁴ Hawaiian superstition and white elitist thinking characterize the people that live in remote Waimea on the Big Island, and young Mark, visiting from Honolulu, is torn between the old and new: “Spirits did not thrive in my world of bright lights, clanging streetcars, and modern plumbing, where scientific education continually refuted the lore which still clung, like coral clusters on reefs, at the outer edges of memory.”¹⁰⁵ But the isolated place influences the big city kid: “I had the sense that the gods had blessed Waimea as once the God of the Old Testament had bestowed magical, extravagant beauty upon Eden. [...] Waimea weather has the power

¹⁰³ Graham Salisbury, *Under the Blood Red Sun*, New York 1994: 127.

¹⁰⁴ John Dominis Holt, *Waimea Summer*, Honolulu 1998: 10.

¹⁰⁵ Holt: 48.

and violence of the volcanic peaks, the luxuriance of the wet upland forests: an atmosphere too rich, too dramatic for the human scale.”¹⁰⁶ This paradise is dangerous, it suffocates you with its dusty mansions and backward attitudes, or it drowns you in superstitions and rain. Mark manages to break free from the past, to run from the lure of Waimea. He has realized that the ferocious clinging to a glorious and noble past that is not even discernible anymore keeps the Waimea people in their self-made paradisiacal prison:

“Hawaiian songs too often were a harkening to the past, to your people, reminding you always of breakdown and defeat. [...] Perhaps we all needed to be a little more indifferent; we whose lives were rooted in the indigenous compost heap of island history. [...] A pagan air, lingering on from earlier days, seemed to surround us. We had stepped out of time, were really phantoms skittering perilously close to the outer edges of reality in our play.”¹⁰⁷

I find Holt’s book very interesting because of its different interpretation of ‘paradise,’ more in terms of the Celtic land of the fairies which is beautiful and bountiful but imprisons you forever. Another advantage of Holt’s book is his devotion to language: he aptly uses and explains Hawaiian expressions, highlights the idiosyncrasies and the pictorial vividness of the language, lets his characters speak in different registers of pidgin, more or less standard English, and the stilted English of the ghostly and backward upper class.

There are different, explicitly female ways of entering the adult world, too. Kathleen Tyau writes of her Chinese-Hawaiian local background in her 1995 novel *A Little Too Much Is Enough*, each chapter describing the making of a local dish, and the foods indicating the islands’ diversity. A young girl is initiated to the secrets of cooking by various members of her *ohana*, each recipe being interspersed with advice or family history. Thus, the kaleidoscope of dishes makes up a coming-of-age potluck for the protagonist, culminating in her mother’s farewell words when she leaves for the mainland for her college education: “When I was in San Francisco, all I could think about was Hawai’i. Now that I am here, I cannot forget San Francisco. I have to remind myself that I have not lost it. It is still there, just like Hawai’i will still be here when you are in

¹⁰⁶ Holt: 11 & 140.

¹⁰⁷ Holt: 90 & 95.

Oregon. Whatever is lost, you will remember. You will always hold it in your heart.”¹⁰⁸ Tyau, still living in Oregon today, has formulated the longing for a childhood paradise, an Eden of the mind, as well as the need to free oneself from it and grow up, from a different perspective: temporary or even permanent ‘exile’ from the islands for a college education or because of the lack of employment opportunities is a common occurrence for locals.

Novelist Kiana Davenport could be said to have followed Bushnell’s call for the ‘Great Hawaiian Novel.’ The author is of Hawaiian and Anglo-American descent and lives in Boston and Hawai’i. She has written five novels and several awarded short stories. When asked for her sources of inspiration, Davenport says: “What fascinates me most is our inexhaustible human will to survive, how we rescind grief and horror by retreating into memory, imagining.”¹⁰⁹ She artfully explores this human capacity in her epic 1994 novel *Shark Dialogues* which is a family history spanning six generations.¹¹⁰ The intricate story of a Hawaiian genealogy belongs to the post-modern genre of historiographic metafiction, in that it provides us with a narrative that challenges the accepted ‘factual’ accounts of Hawaiian history, at the same time being consciously ‘fictional.’ It unfolds events in a puzzle of retrospectives, conversations, “talk story” times, dreams, and visions, thus blending past, present, and sometimes future into a complex whole that cannot be fully disentangled. The protagonists’ (as well as the readers’) task is the reordering of events into a coherent history.

As already stated, the importance of genealogy dates back to pre-contact Hawai’i: the ruling *ali’i* justified and maintained their status through family genealogies that traced back to divine ancestry. One of the tasks of the *kahuna*, the priests, was to memorize, recite, and alter, if necessary, these genealogies.¹¹¹ Hawaiian identity and status within the community was (and still is) strongly based on family history. Hence, the underlying structure of Davenport’s novel is a contemporary struggle to establish links to the ancestry, to reclaim one’s genealogy, and thus, one’s history, one’s personal pride, and racial, as well as national identity.

¹⁰⁸ Kathleen Tyau, *A Little Too Much Is Enough*, New York 1995: 342. Her second novel, *Makai* (Hawaiian for ‘towards the sea’), has just been published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York.

¹⁰⁹ From an online author’s portrait. See <http://www.allen-unwin.com.au/publicity/apkiana.htm>

¹¹⁰ Kiana Davenport, *Shark Dialogues*, New York 1994.

Due to literacy, the ‘Western’ branch of the family’s pedigree can be fixed in specific dates, proven by documents: Mathys Coenradtsen, orphan, born in 1639 in Amsterdam, was sent to the New World to “increase the population of New Netherland.”¹¹² His descendant Mathys, born in 1817, still lives in the same small farming community until he hires on to a whaling ship, and experiences all the perils, horrors, and beauties of that trade in the 1830s.¹¹³ Half starved and half insane, he finally strands in Lahaina, Maui, the whaling capital of the time. After fleeing into the island’s interior jungle, vegetating there on a mere animal level, he tries to end his wretched life by throwing himself into the sea. Yet he is saved and nursed by a young Tahitian princess, Kelonikoa Pi’imoku Kanoa, who has fled an arranged marriage, hiding on the island, and is thus as much an outcast as he. Together, they recover, and finally decide to return into civilization. With her black pearl dowry, they finance Mathys’ livery stable and ship carpenting business, then his saloon. Wealth and land accumulate, but their private lives are overshadowed by the deaths of their first three children from measles and smallpox, common diseases at the time, due to the natives’ missing immunity. In the mother’s reactions, Polynesian beliefs concerning sickness, death, and religion can be observed.

When the whaling industry declines, Mathys turns to “King Sugar,” and makes money importing Chinese labor. Davenport conveys the slave conditions of the plantation system with much less words than Michener did in his novel *Hawaii*. The growing family prospers, but the couple’s relationship cools off. Kelonikoa has a Russian admirer who presents her with a precious gift, an ancient Japanese diary made out of jade, accompanying it with one of the novel’s mottoes: “Perhaps she wrote that life is really lived through dreams and intuition, not fate and circumstance.”¹¹⁴ Their children display a confusion of ethnic identities in their alternating attitudes of love, rivalry, and side-taking. The oldest dresses as a *haole*, pays attention to speaking proper English, whereas

¹¹¹ See Buck: 34.

¹¹² Davenport: 26.

¹¹³ In this part of the book, Davenport pays reverence to one of the writers she admires, Herman Melville. Her echoing of *Moby Dick*, viewed as the ‘Great American Novel,’ forms a nice embellishment to my high evaluation of her accomplishment with *Shark Dialogues*.

¹¹⁴ Davenport: 58.

the second son goes barefoot, speaks pidgin, and eats *poi*¹¹⁵ with his fingers. This kind of ambiguity will go on and increase in the coming generations as more races are introduced into the pedigree. In many ways, Davenport's characters are representatives or even symbols for Hawai'i. Their lives are interwoven with the course of history, influenced and determined by the events, as is displayed best when the monarchy is overthrown and a counterrevolution is planned by Kelonikoa in Mathys' own house. This again shows that Davenport tells her family history as both exemplary and metaphoric. In other words, her characters both represent the 'typical' Hawaiian, and at the same time they are symbolic figures, 'larger than life,' serving as almost mythical explanations of a development that led to the present conditions. They seem to be more means of illustrating an argument, a viewpoint on history, than real people.

Before Kelonikoa commits suicide, she tells the story of her life to her closest daughter Emma, and gives her the Japanese diary. Then she swims, returning home, "stroking for her birth sands."¹¹⁶ Emma obviously inherited some of her mother's spiritual powers, as she wakes screaming, knowing her mother is dead. She dies of the bubonic plague in the 1900 epidemic, leaving a daughter behind who in turn gives birth to the most fascinating character of the novel in 1910: Lili's baby displays her extraordinariness and spiritual power right after her birth, when she declares herself *Pono*,¹¹⁷ being only a few days old. The psychic strain in Lili's family is probably reinforced by a similar inheritance from her husband's side: "Pono my *tutu*'s name. She plenny smart, tell future."¹¹⁸ Even the simple-minded father foresees a lonely life for his strange daughter: "Pono need find one strong man, [...] Or one simpleminded one."¹¹⁹ As a teenager, Pono is rejected by her own mother: "You see the future. How could we control you? We want a simple life, a quiet life..." Weighed down, she leaves to live on the sale of her clairvoyant dreams, "Kin, blood, history, snatched from her grasp in a breath."¹²⁰ Loneliness and the inability to read her own warning dreams lead her to a short marriage with a crook.

¹¹⁵ I.e.: taro pudding, the main staple in the Hawaiian diet.

¹¹⁶ Davenport: 73.

¹¹⁷ Meaning 'goodness, morality.'

¹¹⁸ Davenport: 80. *tutu* = grandmother.

¹¹⁹ Davenport: 81.

¹²⁰ Both quotations from Davenport: 91.

Her affiliation with the sea surfaces when she swims with fish and kills a predator away. And, after eating hallucinogenic seaweed, she has her first experience of the transformation into a shark, described beautifully and in an ambiguous way, so that it is left to the reader to decide whether it was a drug trip or a real metamorphosis. First enjoying her 'second nature,' she then feels confined, unable to walk. "Then she remembered she was asleep, that her shark form was imagined." And yet, when she wakes up on the sand, she watches her body take its familiar human shape, and she still tastes blood and raw fish in her mouth. "And, though she was in the world of humans, she was no longer wholly of that world."¹²¹

In this way, she meets the man who will be her life-long love, and his thought that "*She came to me from the sea*" echoes Mathys' encounter with Kelonikoa three generations before. The impression of a cyclic nature of their world, a sequence of recurring patterns (such as all-encompassing love, running and hiding in the islands' jungles, the spiritual gifts, the sea as a healer, or more general, the strong female) seems to underlie the whole novel, and it will surface again and again. Duke Kealoha takes her home to his coffee plantation, where he remains the last of a dignified family that died of leprosy. In his character, the symbolic nature of Davenport's figures is most obvious: he definitely seems larger than life, entirely fictional, as he is on the one hand a pure and physically strong Hawaiian who still knows and employs the 'old ways,' surfing and fishing, reminding of the ancient race of warriors that is almost extinct. On the other hand, he possesses scientific and geographical knowledge, a general learnedness, an artistic mind, a practical sense, a commanding aura, and, of course, great beauty. He knows three foreign languages, has traveled the world, studied at the Sorbonne. Probably he has to be the sum of a hero of romances in order to push his coming fate to the utmost height of tragedy. Their love has the rare quality of seeing each other as equals; Duke passes all his knowledge on to her, reads her poetry, drama, art books, plays music, thus fortifying her for the life to come. When leprosy finally begins to mark his features, they turn to hiding in ancient Waipio valley, legendary home of the *menehune*,¹²² like many other lepers. Struggling for bare survival, their experiences again echo those of the two

¹²¹ Davenport: 102.

¹²² I.e.: legendary 'little people,' believed to be a race that settled the islands before the Polynesians.

outcasts that had been Pono's great-grandparents. After a year in the jungle, they are found and caged, bound for the leper colony on Molokai. Whereas Pono escapes, natives mourn Duke's departure as the loss of a symbol of their ancient dignity: "A lion had got up and left the land."¹²³

Hiding in the jungle, Pono gives birth to a daughter, *Holo*,¹²⁴ and motherly feelings only come when she sees a resemblance to the father. Then and again later, it seems as if she is unable to spare love for anyone except him. When working on a sugar plantation, she is raped by the *luna*,¹²⁵ manages to kill him and run, and gives birth to his child only to drown it immediately in the sea: "This would be Holo's memory. Terror. And motherly love. And running."¹²⁶ Meanwhile, the depiction of Duke's fate supplies the reader with the history of Kalaupapa, the leper settlement, the reality of the disease, the ugliness, the cruelty, the medical experiments. Only the gorgeous nature that surrounds the lazaretto sustains him, until Pono is smuggled in, and they make love again, the act coming across as breathtaking, horrific and beautiful at the same time. Davenport's stylistic device here, used various times in the novel, is the employment of a stream-of-consciousness-like sentence, without punctuation, going on over half a page, relating events, atmosphere, and feelings in a one-breath whole which lends these passages a curious immediacy. The narrative technique is used for overwhelming experiences in which the person loses herself and is all moment, out of time.¹²⁷ This experience was watching whales mate for Mathys, it will be smoking Dragon Seed for Pono's granddaughter Ming, and refined lust for her other granddaughter Rachel, but for Pono and Duke, it happens when they are reunited and make love again on Moloka'i. Against Duke's will, Pono conceives three more children during her secret visits, while trying to lead a normal life in the outside world, as a seamstress, dream-teller, and cannery worker.

¹²³ Davenport: 115. This curiously corresponds to the Caribbean Rastafari culture whose heroes are emblemized as lions with their manes.

¹²⁴ Meaning 'to run.'

¹²⁵ I.e.: overseer.

¹²⁶ Davenport: 130.

¹²⁷ In my eyes, this seem to be experiences that epitomize for the person something like the Goetheian concept of the 'eternal moment,' an instance in which his *Faust* would not mind dying because he could live this moment forever, not wishing for anything more. Maybe that connection goes too far, but in any case, these passages indicate moments in the persons' lives when nothing matters except the instant, neither past nor future.

Then, the reality of wartime hits Hawai'i, and a dream of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor has the family seeking refuge in the sea, diving into the ancestral realm of their shark *amakua*.¹²⁸ Getting to Moloka'i becomes almost impossible, but Pono finds ways to see Duke almost every half year, hope growing in her as a new sulfone drug promises cure for leprosy. However, when the war is over and Pono meets her lover in broad daylight for the first time in years, she is stunned at how advanced the disease is, how disfigured Duke already is: "She had resisted God by not believing. And God had paid her back."¹²⁹ Returning, she is less able than ever to be the mother her children need. This makes the youngest run away from home at fourteen, turns the second into a 'taxi dancer' who gets pregnant and marries a Filipino, and has her oldest, Holo, fall in love with a Chinese war-returnee whom she knew as a child. Each time, Pono goes berserk over one of her daughters' leaving her, disagreeing with their choices of non-Hawaiian husbands. When the dearest elopes with a white soldier, Pono's rage seems biblical, satanic. Running from her wrath, Emma calls her mother "Killer."

Davenport lets Pono's only friend RunRun bridge the years with her pidgin account of how they moved back to Duke's Big Island coffee plantation, slowly working it back to life, how she secretly contacted the daughters, finally managed that they met. By then, it was too late for a real reconciliation; that would have to wait for the next generation. Although there were several grandchildren, only one girl of each of Pono's daughters felt strangely drawn back to their home, their past, their mysterious grandmother, for whom they have always had ambiguous feelings of terror, belonging, fear, and curiosity. They came back almost every summer, "*like dey addicted to Big Island. What I t'ink is, dey addicted to Pono, like swimmers addicted to the sea. Yeah, shoah, sea da mot'er of us all.*"¹³⁰

Even in the Present, when they are in their forties, the women follow Pono's call with mixed emotions: they are looking for the clue, the key to live by in her. Now their lives up to that moment are remembered, and related in retrospectives, dreams, and other

¹²⁸ I.e.: ancestral gods.

¹²⁹ Davenport: 165.

¹³⁰ Davenport: 179. One more curious aspect is RunRun's religious concept of "Mot'er God", who resembles many other female goddesses, giving and taking like blind fate, and being cruel sometimes. In Emerson's book, I found some hints in the 'hula Pele' at the mother of that volcano goddess, named *honua-mea*, 'sacred land,' which would link her to conceptions of Mother Earth (Emerson: 188-190).

accounts: Ming (Chinese-Hawaiian) is defined by her arthritic illness, *lupus*, and by her use of the drug Dragon Seed which she smokes to keep her violent pain attacks at bay. Vanya (Filipino-Hawaiian) has studied law and works as an advocate of native rights throughout the Pacific. She has grown up feeling inferior, colored, “mixed-marriage mongrel.”¹³¹ Her rage and hatred lead her to join a hopeless bunch of would-be revolutionaries later on. Jessamyn (*hapa-haole*) has lived as a veterinarian in New York, always feeling a need to make up for her mother’s humiliation of being rejected by her white in-laws, looking for a cause to join and support. Rachel (Hawaiian-Japanese) never knew her father, and has thus replaced him with a mysterious *Yakuza*,¹³² twenty years her senior. She has led a life of luxury, refinement, and waiting, culminating in the short and intensely sexual visits of her gangster husband.

Their mixed-bloodedness continues to be a challenge to a solid identity for each of them, although for RunRun, things are simple: “They were her little tribe of ‘many kine colors’, skin different-hued, but underneath, what she called ‘best kine blood, Hawaiian.’”¹³³ As the story develops into the present, the early 1990s, all their lives are being further interwoven into a whole, into a kind of structure, maybe into an allegory of Hawai’i. Davenport’s Hawai’i, to be sure. Whereas the family’s past was bound closely to actual historic events, and was thus retrievable along a time-scale, the further unfolding of the narrative is even more complex, more fictional, and brings more places, facets, and events simultaneously before the reader. The ‘timeless moment’ passages abound.

Ming is about to die. Thinking about the additional probability of Pono’s approaching death, Jess “lay in bed shaking. Overwhelmed by this sick, doomed tribe she was part of. She wanted to pack, run, get clear of this place of sleeplessness, conspiracies and whisperings, and pain. In that moment she wanted to break all ties to this scraping, lacerating nightmare-link of family handcuffed to her wrist.”¹³⁴ Ming has exerted Pono’s promise to tell the others her secrets, and so they go to Moloka’i to take Duke home:

¹³¹ Davenport: 192.

¹³² I.e.: member of the Japanese Mafia.

¹³³ Davenport: 186. In general, the pidgin inserts of RunRun’s thoughts do not only bridge elapsed time, but their simple-minded spoken-language immediacy draws the reader closer into the story, makes the subsequent account of the present more ‘real,’ just like the traditional device of a first-person narration with direct address to the reader.

“They held his gaze, each one, looking deep beyond the scars, the mutilation, looking deep within at who he was, and who they were.”¹³⁵ They may be a doomed tribe, but a proud one with a heroic history, to which they can finally link themselves.

Next, Vanya gets into serious trouble, bombing a tourist resort and killing a FBI agent on her flight. With her Australian lover, she hides in Waipio valley. Again, events seem to recur. They share one of the timeless moments when their own mating seems to be a mating with the land, the soil, nature itself. Their life in the valley is quite similar to that of Mathys and Kelonikoa before they returned into civilization, about 160 years earlier, absorbed in nature, desperate, out of time. Later, she nurses her lover until he dies of skin cancer, the symptoms curiously resembling those of leprosy.

Meanwhile, Jess settles more and more into Pono’s former position, seeking solace, peace, and advice in the ocean, working hard on her plantation and as a vet, and starting to have dream-visions. Yet, even if secrets are revealed, even if links are established, generations -or people in general- can never fully understand each other, and ambiguousness or double-edged conflict are the core of their ties: “Mothers are the last riddle, the worst horror, the only consolation,” acknowledges Pono. The fragile identities of mixed races, of an endangered race magnify the insecurity of her granddaughters. Duke tries to turn the blemish into a reassurance: “You’re hybrids, all of you. You’re what the future is.”¹³⁶ Then, one night, the elders paddle out to Shark Bay, their ancestral ‘gateway,’ to join the dead relatives. They drown and are eaten by sharks.¹³⁷ Jess’ task now seems to be to remember and preserve their history for their offspring. Therefore, she starts writing the family’s story down, and thus the novel’s end leads back to the beginning, and the cycle is closed.

Davenport’s text is essentially post-modern in that it offers no solution, no answers at its ending, and in its genre, historiographic metafiction, which is defined by its self-conscious display of historiography as narrative, by its presentation of a different, a unique version of history, revealing in turn discourses of power. Moreover, in

¹³⁴ Davenport: 286.

¹³⁵ Davenport: 342.

¹³⁶ Both Davenport: 371.

¹³⁷ As to the significance of the family’s shark ancestry, Emerson notes that sharks were worshipped as demigods, and that these animals were likely to be inhabited by the souls of departed relatives who could change back into human form (Emerson: 221).

Davenport's case the history presented can be fashionably termed a 'herstory': although men like Mathys and Duke are important, the family tree displays a predominance of women, and the inheritance of knowledge, of spiritual gifts, of the pearls, and of the jade diary follows the female line. I have dwelt on *Shark Dialogues* in great detail because in my eyes the novel can be seen as the epiphany of Hawaiian literature. Moreover, all the issues mentioned before seem to culminate and fall into place in Davenport's book. Its success is not the least reason for emphasizing the novel's significance: by reaching a wide audience, the text transmits the islands' situation and advocates local culture across the world. Given all that, *Shark Dialogues* has one more distinguishing quality: unquestionably belonging to Hawaiian literature, it is the clearest case of liberation from local limitations, of a transcending of local themes.

Poet W. S. Merwin, in turn, attempts to follow the example of the ancient Hawaiians to capture the spirit of the islands. New York born and well-traveled, Merwin made his home on Maui in the late 70s and started writing chant-like, mythical poems that deal with historical figures and, constantly, with the islands' beautiful, mysterious, and endangered nature. His most recent work, the epic poem *The Folding Cliffs*, draws on the Ko'olau legend. Another one who senses the ubiquitous loss, Merwin's texts mourn and warn forgetfulness and carelessness. In "Manini," he lets an early immigrant, the notorious Don Francisco de Paula Marin, describe his attempt at the creation of an earthly paradise:

"I wanted the whole valley for a garden
and the fruits of all the earth growing there
I sent for olives and laurel endives and rosemary
the slopes above the stream nodded with oranges
lemons rolled among the red sugar cane
my vineyard girt about with pineapples
and bananas gave me two harvests a year
and I had herbs for healing since this is not heaven
as each day reminded me and I long still for a place
like somewhere I thought I had come from."¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Quoted from Stanton: 109.

The Spaniard cultivated his own Eden, knowing that his efforts were vain. In Merwin's words, the sweep of a life and of history mingle with the rare moments of deep insight into what drives people forward.

One more writer who is dedicated to language and gifted with talent is Garrett Hongo, a poet of Japanese ancestry with two published collections to his name.¹³⁹ Yet, his best work in my opinion is written in prose: *Volcano. A Memoir of Hawai'i* is, as the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote in its review, simply "eloquent."¹⁴⁰ Disregarding the contents, its wordy and knowledgeable style is remarkable. In contrast to writers such as Murayama or Yamanaka who assume a simple and uneducated voice in their characters, Hongo nonchalantly displays his familiarity with both Asian and Western literature, history, and philosophy, showing off that he is truly well read. Still, when he talks about the 'local' experience, he inserts explanations of customs, translates pidgin and Hawaiian, and captures the mood of a 'talk story' session accurately. His passages about local plant life are detailed and correct, his descriptions of all the facets of the volcano almost obsessed with precision and completeness. His images and metaphors are witty and true.

But Hongo is more than a minute observer and an artist with words: *Volcano* is the attempt to establish links to one's personal history, to see one's place in the general history, to deal with the hurts and injustices of the past, "to make art out of his alienation."¹⁴¹ Hongo was born in Hawai'i, grew up in California, and is a professor in Oregon today. Driven by the wish to fill his genealogy with life, the author went to the Big Island village in which he was born. Hongo wanted to understand his forebears' motives and feelings. He was looking for a place to which he could feel a sense of belonging, in short, a home. What he found were pieces of memory and story, and a place that was beautiful, mysterious, captivating: "It was a visual sonata, lavished and detailed as any jungle fantasy painted by Henri Rousseau."¹⁴² A place out of natural history books, a tableau. Something addressing his fancy as well as calling for his poetic abilities:

¹³⁹ Garrett Hongo, *The River of Heaven*, New York 1988 & *Yellow Light*, Hanover 1982.

¹⁴⁰ Quoted from the front cover of the book. Garrett Hongo, *Volcano: A Memoir of Hawaii*, New York 1995.

¹⁴¹ Hongo: 241.

¹⁴² Hongo: 7.

“a world of faery and imagination where the dead might dance in the right light, where the milky river of stars and the swallow-bridge of heaven might set down and be a passageway between this and the afterlife [...] It was obvious to me that here was both inspiration and difficulty brought together in a relentlessly spectacular landscape [...] I wanted to know the place and I wanted to tie my name to it, to deliver out of the contact a kind of sacred book – a book of origins.”¹⁴³

His book is the manifest of how he put the pieces together, how he finally created himself a home. It may be seen as a guide to linking oneself, making a place one’s own. Thus, it impressively displays the power of imagination, the power of words. And how much does Hongo command language:

“I could feel the earth’s turning under me, the escape of the planet from under its own aging skin, spouting itself away in gouts of rock and flattering incandescence. I thought of weather like a sailor’s words carried on the wind, to the memory of a lover trailing the wake of the moving ship like a flock of white birds dipping and wheeling and dancing alongside a green shadow furling over mutable water.”¹⁴⁴

Hongo’s interpretation of Hawai’i is clear: “The village was thus a living form of heaven, an afterlife that I stepped into and took lessons from. Its villagers were to me all prophets and angels. And I a traveler in their paradise.”¹⁴⁵ Here, we have the clearest case of a self-made paradise, an inner haven, and of the attempt of a reclamation of everything that has been taken away.

On the spiritual level, Hongo succeeds, finding reconciliation, peace of mind, and the words to chant his genealogy. But there is also the actual material loss that his family had to suffer: His parents were tricked out of their store inheritance, and subsequently left the Big Island; in the end, they left Hawai’i as a whole behind. The author describes himself circling the store, in person as well as in told episodes from the past. He finally visits his step-grandmother, the person responsible for the family’s expulsion. Finding a frail old woman, fearful and somehow unattainable, he lets go of the past, the inheritance,

¹⁴³ Hongo: 16, 22 & 27.

¹⁴⁴ Hongo: 149.

¹⁴⁵ Hongo: 291-2.

and the question of blame. Did he intend a parable, an example of the pan-Hawaiian experience of loss of land, going together with the devaluation of culture, the quest for identity that all colonized races have faced? It seems that for Hongo going to Hawai'i was a way of tackling, of overcoming the Asian silence about the past that he had suffered at home. His assumed Hawaiinness provided him with the means to establish a realm in which questions could be posed and answered, in which untold stories could be related and even altered.

His reflections on being a post-colonial, dislocated, surrounded by silence about the past, are deep and representative:

“a *postcolonial* – one absented from the blindered repose of an innocent belonging to a conquered place and a people. A stolen child [...] We *fear* something. Without the larger family, without root in time and place, without the oracle bones of ancestry, we rage. [...] panicking, feeling the uncontrollable confusion, the fear of being *found*, the fear of being *lost*, the revulsion of being *nothing* to this world, a no one without place, without people, without history.”¹⁴⁶

In this context, Hongo's references to the Caribbean experience, to Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, and V. S. Naipaul¹⁴⁷ are evidence of a realization of common factors. Before I dwell on these in the next chapter, I let Hongo once more return to his rediscovered paradise: “and I feel the soul in me fall to its knees almost every time. [...] I had luggage to retrieve, and I did so, but, I tell you, my heart gave itself over to the roiling cloud of feeling of that moment. I think I gave up detachment.”¹⁴⁸

VIII. HAWAI'I AND THE CARIBBEAN: AN APPROACH

Several Hawaiian writers, including poet Garrett Hongo and activist Haunani-Kay Trask, explicitly perceive themselves as belonging to a post-colonial culture. Today, the term is claimed for or imposed on various places and their respective literatures, such as India, South Africa, Canada, and the Caribbean. A colonial history is one requirement, but the notions of when the *post-colonial* period starts, are varied. Political independence

¹⁴⁶ Hongo: 334-35.

¹⁴⁷ Hongo: E.g. 187, 259 & 290-91.

¹⁴⁸ Hongo: 338-39.

cannot be the decisive factor, as colonial influence lasts longer than the ceasing of a foreign government. One definition of a post-colonial literature would be a body of texts that have assisted in the process of decolonization. The label 'post-colonial' is arguable, but critic Dennis Walder thinks that this in itself is positive, since the term raises questions, deals with shifts of power relations, and produces awareness for the colonial inheritance.¹⁴⁹ It is a marker of historical and cultural change. Post-colonial literatures question and challenge established canons.

Usually, 1947's Indian independence is said to mark the beginning of the post-colonial era. A widespread theory of literary scholars is that "the Empire writes back," which is the title of an influential book, written in 1989. Its authors argue that post-colonial literature means writing texts aimed at the 'center,' in this case, England. Walder thinks this view has to be supplanted by a wider understanding of texts from former colonies, written within their own sphere. He argues for a reversal of perspectives, a shift from the margins to the center: new canons are bound to include or even focus on colored, non-European, working class, and female perspectives. Disagreeing with the notion of 'writing back' as well as with earlier limited labels such as 'Commonwealth literature,' Walder proposes to (re-) turn to the ideas of Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire, two Caribbean intellectuals that Hawaiian writers have also referred to. In my opinion, a comparison of the two island cultures - one Atlantic, the other Pacific - can serve to underline my claim for the study of Hawaiian texts.

Obviously, Hawaiians share several qualities with West Indians, such as strong retentions of pre-contact and oral cultures due to island locale, a culture dominated by the exploitative plantation system (even the ethnic diversity is due to this era), a language mix including indigenous and Creole languages, and an identity historically imposed by a foreign culture. Socially speaking, some of the common values of both island groups are the importance of the extended family, the community, and of the elders as repositories of knowledge. Literary production has similar aspects too: island writers tend to have a small audience, a small publication market, a 'small scale' of literature, and a language dilemma (how can one express a Creole experience in Standard English versus who will

¹⁴⁹ See: Dennis Walder, *Post-colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory*, Oxford 1998, here especially chapter 1.

buy, understand, and appreciate texts written in one's local vernacular). The oral traditions influence written literature, as do traditional art forms such as song and dance; chant and *hula* in Hawai'i, slave songs, Calypso, and Reggae in the West Indies.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, Caribbean literature is seen as one of place, not of people, just as it is in Hawai'i. The same goes for culture. Inhabitants of the West Indies are 'Creole' not because of their citizenship, but due to their place of birth. In Hawai'i, a similar idea is that of the 'local,' or *kama'aina*, meaning the old-timer: you belong to the place, not to one people, as Hawai'i hosts many peoples and hybrids of them side by side. However, the Hawaiian concept appears to be one more open towards interpretation; the society or group decides who is an insider, a true 'local,' whereas in the case of the West Indies someone is either born a Creole or he is not. There are other distinctions to be made; Hawai'i's planters relied on indentured labor, but not on slavery. The oral cultures show differences of expression, probably due to their different origins and time frames:¹⁵¹ whereas Caribbean culture is perceived as talkative, even quarrelsome, requiring quickness of mind, expressing itself in verbal barbers and fights, and texts traditionally include participation by the audience and the repetition of speech fragments (as in Baptist churches), the Hawaiian conception emphasizes wordplay, metaphor, the ambiguity and suggestiveness of language, its melody and beauty.

Both literatures have produced a striking number of coming-of-age novels, tales of initiation.¹⁵² The adolescent hero/ine who is on the verge of discovering her identity, her place in society, who often has to fight for her ideas and dreams, who usually faces a disappointment, disenchantment when entering the adult world is used frequently as a metaphor for the experience of a post-colonial culture: she is a type specimen for depicting insecurity, inferiority, marginalization, but also for relating the urge for emancipation, identification, self-determination. On another level I would argue that the

¹⁵⁰ In this context, it is interesting to note that Hawaiian musicians have adopted Reggae melodies and looks since the early 1980s. This musical style has been termed 'Jawaiian' (for the mixing of Jamaican and Hawaiian elements). Local hero Bruddah Walta, for instance, wears dreadlocks and has released his own versions of songs like "No Woman No Cry."

¹⁵¹ In the Caribbean, we find various African influences, brought in as late as the slave migrations, and almost no traces of the extinct Carib or Arawak Indians, whereas the Hawaiian culture is related to other Polynesian ones and has been established in ancient times.

¹⁵² E.g.: Olive Senior, *The Arrival of the Snake Woman*, New York 1989, Edwige Danticat, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, New York 1998 & George Lamming, *In the Castle of My Skin*, Ann Arbor 1991, for the Caribbean; the mentioned novels of Murayama, Yamanaka, Holt, Salisbury, or Tyau for Hawai'i.

character of the kid, just about to grow up, is a result of and a reflection on the label ‘children of nature,’ the imperial and patronizing attitude that both island cultures have been facing since their respective discoveries. Thus, ‘coming of age’ becomes a metaphor for the coming-of-age of cultures. The adolescent quest for identity can be read as the search for a cultural, a literary identity.

In respect to the applicability of Caribbean post-colonial concepts to the Hawaiian situation, the Martinician poet and politician Aimé Césaire, referred to by Hongo, is especially interesting. His island, despite all its differences, shows the same paradox that can be observed in Hawai’i:

“Politically, economically, and institutionally, she is part of France; geographically and psychologically, she is Caribbean. [...] Most islanders appreciate the benefits, the security, and the prestige which the relationship with France affords, but the classical inequities of the colonial exploitation have not been erased and the self-evident, non-European ancestry of the vast majority of Martiniquais is everywhere apparent to the naked eye.”¹⁵³

Hawai’i is a US state, but its inhabitants live on Pacific islands whose heritage is Polynesian, whose population has been imported to a large extent. To be sure, looking at the respective histories, French colonial policies differ from American territorial ones, and a black slave and mulatto dominated population is different from an Asian American and *haole* one. Still, Martinician ideas about colonialism have spread over the world; ‘négritude’ and ‘Black Pride’ are concepts that emerged from here, and Césaire’s writings can shed light on Hawaiian matters as well.

The author shares the duality paradox with his native island: his eloquent 1937 poem “Cahier D’Un Retour Au Pays Natal” reveals him to be “a fine product of the very cultural assimilation process which he deplors.”¹⁵⁴ The text was a scandal, way ahead of its time, in proclaiming pride and beauty in being black. The ‘négritude’ concept introduced by the poem formed basis and core of all colored movements since after World War II. Then, Césaire turned to communism. His 1955 essay “Discours Sur Le

¹⁵³ Susan Frutkin, *Aimé Césaire: Black Between Worlds*, Miami 1973: 2 & 4.

¹⁵⁴ Frutkin: 17.

Colonialisme”¹⁵⁵ has been influential for post-colonial studies, as it challenges the equation of colonization and civilization, arguing that colonialism has only produced dehumanization. He weighs the ‘progress’ that defenders claim against the innumerable losses of indigenous peoples, intending their apology. Praising pre-contact societies as anti-capitalist, democratic, cooperative, and fraternal, he does not advocate a return but mourns the way contact took place and relations to European powers developed. He stresses that material progress cannot legitimize colonization a posteriori because no one can say how the countries in question would have developed independently or under different circumstances. To him, the perpetuating factors of colonialism are paternal attitudes, ruminated racial prejudices, and imperialist chauvinism. These accumulate in the traditional saying that ‘negroes are big children.’

Césaire’s thoughts, stripped of the French or black context, are not so far from Yamanaka’s analysis of what the plantation system did to Hawai’i, or from Hongo’s feelings about being a post-colonial. Trask’s identification of the colony Hawai’i and the imperialist United States also echo Césaire’s reflections closely: among his goals were retracing his island’s cultural heritage, including the slave trade, and reviving cultural pride. With his writings, he intended to provoke a new consciousness and, subsequently, a black identity. The practical application of his ideas in Martinique resulted in a Creole dialect school and a municipal school for dance, music, and art. All this corresponds to the development of the Hawaiian Renaissance. In addition, Trask frequently refers to Frantz Fanon, the author of *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*.¹⁵⁶ The books deal with the psychological as well as the political implications of colonialism, and again, with questions of power and identity. Walder thinks that *The Wretched of the Earth* “has spoken more directly, profoundly, and lastingly than any other single anti-colonial work on behalf of and to the colonized.”¹⁵⁷ It seems so with Trask; Fanon’s thoughts have shaped her strategy for the decolonization of Hawai’i. Moreover, in her argumentation we find the same limiting exclusiveness that was introduced to Caribbean writing with the politicization of literature in the 60s and 70s: artists that were not

¹⁵⁵ Aimé Césaire, *Ueber den Kolonialismus*, Berlin 1968. The following summary is based on this German edition.

¹⁵⁶ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, London 1986 & *The Wretched of the Earth*, London 1967, both translated from earlier French versions.

deemed 'black' enough were subject to harsh criticism and assaults. As the example of Yamanaka's rescinded award shows, the debate about matters of local literature is still heated in Hawai'i.

IX. CONCLUSION: PARADISE ON A MAP

Having boldly proposed an (incomplete) canon and its flagship texts, I want to conclude my thesis by reiterating Hawai'i's location on the literary map. Although there are various associations, such as with other indigenous, immigrant, Asian American, mainland American, as well as with Caribbean literatures and cultures, Hawai'i's writers reject inclusion and labeling, claiming uniqueness and their own space. And rightly so, as I hope to have shown in my survey.

The most consistent point in the diverse pieces that have been written about and from Hawai'i is the notion of a Pacific paradise. First, paradise has been created by those fascinated by the "loveliest fleet of islands that lies anchored in any ocean." This led to an immense influx of people in search for something, a haven, a port, a home, a dream. The effects of this influx are arguable; today's Hawai'i is facing problems that are rooted in its turbulent history. At any rate, after the transformation into a US state, local consciousness developed through the Hawaiian Renaissance into the current self-perception of a hybrid, post-modern, and post-colonial people. Hence, Hawai'i's contemporary authors explore, analyze, and play with the paradise concept, alternately deconstructing, reconstructing, defying, or newly embracing it.

In their writings, contemporary authors confront and explore the tension inherent in a highly complex social structure. Though the individual experiences are dissimilar, many of Hawai'i's writers share similar histories of cultural dislocation, economic hardship, and various experiences of loss. Probing the complexities of cultural identity, or identities, they redefine values, traditions, history, and language. Thus, discourses of power are laid bare: the power of language, as both a tool of domination and an instrument of self-definition, has been a significant social issue in Hawai'i for most of

¹⁵⁷ Walder: 57.

this century. Hawai'i's writers work at communicating their experiences through several languages, including Standard English, Hawaiian Creole English, Japanese, Chinese, and Hawaiian; they aim at enhancing the status of local identity, of a hybrid, hence powerful and promising body of people.

Moreover, a striking number of the authors discussed is or was faculty at the University of Hawai'i, and/or a participant in the long-running "poets in the schools" program. Together with the example of *Bamboo Ridge* and its associated writers group, this hints at a general conception of creative writing as a communal and social practice rather than a lonely, individual one. Writers are experienced as encouraging both students and fellow teachers to follow their example, to add their voice to the song, to share in the ode or elegy to the islands, the lost paradise. This would constitute a strong retention of ancient ways of literary production, even ancient ways of life, working and sharing as a community. To be a local writer, then, is to belong to an extended family, *ohana*, rooted in the Hawaiian soil. On another level, this conception is reinforced by post-modernism in that such concepts as intertextuality or the inevitability of enunciation and redundancy presuppose a communally shared body of literature to work on and add to.

Especially the cursory comparison with the Caribbean shows that Hawaiian literature deserves the critical esteem and treatment that other post-colonial bodies of literature have been enjoying in the last decades. It is about time that the islands' writers are perceived as an own group, a distinctive entity, not to be dispersed and classified within existing categories. Instead, a new category has to be established in order to enable further interpretation. Only after Hawaiian literature will be well defined, comprehensive readings can do justice to local texts, and the richness and uniqueness of island voices can be fully appreciated. I hope that my thesis is a step into that direction. I have tried to give directions, to provide a map for your orientation. Now, the space for further discoveries within the realm of Hawaiian literature is open.

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XI. APPENDIX I: HAWAIIAN HISTORY IN DATES

4th-5th century A. D.: The earliest settlers, possibly from the Marquesas Islands, begin arriving.

1778: Captain James Cook sights O'ahu, Kaua'i, and Ni'ihau. Cook names his discovery the Sandwich Islands in honor of his patron, the Earl of Sandwich.

1779: Cook and his ships arrive at Kealahou Bay on the Big Island.

Cook and four of his marines are killed ashore by the Hawaiians.

1782-1810: Kamehameha I, a Big Island chief, conquers Maui, Lana'i, Moloka'i, and O'ahu. Lastly, Kaua'i is ceded by its chief. The Hawaiian Islands are unified under a single leader.

1816: Otto von Kotzebue, Captain with the Russian navy, visits Hawai'i.

1819: Kamehameha I dies. His son Liholiho is proclaimed Kamehameha II. Louis de Freycinet, French, visits Hawai'i. The first whaleships arrive in Hawaiian waters. Kamehameha II and his advisors order the destruction of *heiaus* (temples) and proclaim an end to the *kapu* system, thus overthrowing the traditional Hawaiian religion. The king's wives had urged him to break the taboo of gender-separated eating, thus enhancing the status of women.

1820: The first protestant missionaries from Boston arrive at Kailua, Hawai'i.

1823: Keopuolani, the queen mother, receives a Christian baptism (the first Hawaiian to be so baptized) on her deathbed. Kamehameha II and Queen Kamamalu sail for England aboard an English whaleship.

1824: Queen Kamamalu and Kamehameha II both die in London. High Chiefess Queen Kapiolani visits the volcano Kilauea and defies its goddess Pele by descending into the crater.

1825: The first sugar and coffee plantations are started in Manoa Valley, Honolulu.

Kauikeaouli is proclaimed king as Kamehameha III, under the regency of queen dowager Kaahumanu.

1826: The first American warship visits Honolulu.

1827: Catholic missionaries arrive in Hawai'i.

1830: Mexican and Californian cowboys arrive on the Big Island to teach Hawaiians the cattle business.

1834: The first newspaper in the Hawaiian language, *Ka Lama Hawaii*, is run off the Lahainaluna Seminary press (missionary school).

1836: Hawai'i's first English-language newspaper, the *Sandwich Island Gazette*, is published in Honolulu. A treaty is negotiated between Great Britain and the Sandwich Islands.

1837: The first public streets are laid out in Honolulu.

1839: Printing of the first edition of the Hawaiian Bible. Kamehameha III proclaims a Declaration of Religious Rights.

1840: U.S. Exploring Expedition, with Commodore Charles Wilkes arrives in Hawai'i. Kamehameha III proclaims the first constitution of Hawai'i.

1842: The United States recognize the Kingdom of Hawai'i.

1843: Lord George Paulet demands provisional cession of Hawai'i to Great Britain. Admiral Richard Thomas rescinds the cession under Paulet and restores sovereignty to the Islands. Kamehameha III, in his restoration day speech, recites a phrase that is to become Hawai'i's national motto: *Ua mau ke ea o ka aina i ka pono* ("The Life of the Land is Perpetuated in Righteousness"). England and France recognize the independence of the Sandwich Islands.

1846: Whaleship visits to Hawai'i peak with 596 arrivals. Over two thirds anchor off Lahaina, Maui.

1848: The "Great Mahele" (land division) is conducted. A communal and collective usage of the land, stewarded by the ruling *ali'i* class, is replaced by fee simple land tenure. An epidemic of measles, whooping cough, and influenza takes the lives of about 10,000 people. Most of the victims are native Hawaiians. The twelfth (and last) company of American Congregationalist missionaries arrives.

1850: The legislature authorizes contract labor system to recruit foreign workers for Hawai'i's plantations. The first permanent Mormon missionaries to Hawai'i arrive.

1851: Kamehameha III signs a secret agreement that places the islands under the protection of the United States.

1852: Chinese contract laborers arrive.

1853: A smallpox epidemic lasts eight months and takes 5,000–6,000 lives.

1854: Kamehameha III dies and is succeeded by Alexander Liholiho, Kamehameha IV.

1863: Kamehameha IV dies and is succeeded by Lot Kamehameha, his older brother, who becomes Kamehameha V.

1864: Kamehameha V decrees a new constitution that is meant to strengthen his rule.

1866: The first leprosy patients are taken to Kalawa'o, Moloka'i, on the Kalaupapa Peninsula.

1868: The first Japanese contract laborers arrive.

1872: Kamehameha V dies.

1873: William Lunalilo, nicknamed "Whiskey Bill," is elected king by the legislature after sweeping a plebiscite. Father Damien de Veuster from Belgium is sent to Kalaupapa to work with the leprosy patients.

1874: King Lunalilo dies. David Kalakaua is elected king by the legislature. King Kalakaua and his party depart for San Francisco for a goodwill tour of the United States.

1875: A reciprocity treaty is finally signed, allowing sugar and other Hawaiian products to enter the United States without customs duties.

1878: Portuguese contract laborers arrive.

1879: On Maui, the Kahului-Wailuku Railroad, running from Kahului to Paia, is opened. This is the first common rail carrier in Hawai'i.

1880: An eruption of Mauna Loa threatens Hilo. Princess Ruth Ke'elikolani asks the gods to spare the town and the lava flow stops.

1883: King Kalakaua and his queen, Kapiolani, hold a coronation ceremony in front of the recently completed Iolani Palace. A statue of Kamehameha I is unveiled.

1887: After several corruption and misappropriation scandals, King Kalakaua is forced by the Hawaiian League, a group favoring a more liberalized constitution, seen today as a 'haole junta,' to sign the "bayonet constitution," agreeing to "reign, not rule".

1889: Robert Wilcox leads an unsuccessful revolt against the Reform Government. Father Damien dies of leprosy.

1891: On his last tour, King Kalakaua dies in San Francisco and his body is brought back to Hawai'i. His sister Liliuokalani is proclaimed queen.

1893: Queen Liliuokalani is deposed; a provisional government is established under Sanford B. Dole.

1894: The Republic of Hawai'i is established. Sanford B. Dole becomes president of the republic.

1895: Robert Wilcox fails in his attempt to lead a revolt to restore the monarchy. Liliuokalani abdicates the throne and is forced to pledge allegiance to the republic.

1898: Spain declares war against the United States. Troops are temporarily stationed near Diamond Head. President McKinley signs a joint resolution of Congress that annexes Hawai'i to the United States.

1900: A fire intended to purify Honolulu's Chinatown of the epidemic of bubonic plague flames out of control and destroys 38 acres. Thousands lose their homes and businesses. President McKinley signs the Organic Act, and the Territory of Hawai'i is inaugurated.

1907: Fort Shafter, headquarters for the army, becomes the first permanent military post in the territory. The College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (today the University of Hawai'i) begins with twelve faculty members and five students.

1912: Duke Kahanamoku wins a gold medal in the 100-meter swim at the Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden.

1913: The Library of Hawai'i, the first public library in Hawai'i, opens in downtown Honolulu.

1917: Former Queen Liliuokalani dies, and a state funeral is held.

1919: Pearl Harbor drydock is formally dedicated.

1921: Reclamation of Waikiki swamplands begins.

1922: Prince Jonah Kalaniana'ole, last titular prince of the monarchy and a delegate to the U.S. Congress from Hawai'i, dies at Waikiki. Washington Place, former home of Queen Liliuokalani, opens as the official residence of Hawai'i's governors.

1924: The U.S. Congress passes Hawai'i's "Bill of Rights," which asked for higher appropriations of federal funds. Pablo Manlapit leads an eight-month strike of plantation workers on Kauai.

1927: The first successful nonstop air flight from the mainland (Oakland) to Hawai'i (Wheeler Field) is flown by two U.S. Army officers in a tri-motored Fokker monoplane named "Bird of Paradise."

1935: Pan American Airways Clipper flies from Alameda, California, to Honolulu.

1941: Japanese planes attack the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor on December 7.

The U.S.S. Arizona and other ships are sunk. More than 2,500 lives are lost. The appointed military governor of Hawai'i declares martial law.

1944: Martial law in Hawai'i is ended.

1946: Following a submarine earthquake in the Aleutian Islands, three tsunamis (large tidal waves) hit the windward shores of the Hawaiian Islands. Hilo suffers the worst damage and 159 lives are lost.

1949: Jack Hall leads a six-month strike by the International Longshoreman's and Warehouseman's Union.

1950: The House Committee on Un-American Activities convenes to conduct hearings on Communist influence in Hawai'i's labor organizations.

1953: Jack Hall and six codefendants are convicted under the anti-Communist Smith Act.

1959: Alaska is officially proclaimed the Forty-ninth State. After several unsuccessful attempts (since 1944), statehood for Hawai'i is finally approved by the U.S. Senate and house.

1960: Tsunami waves hit the Big Island and 61 lives are lost. The fiftieth star is added to the U.S. flag on July 4.

1967: Hawai'i attracts one million tourists in a single year.

1969: The Civil Aeronautics Board awards seven airlines domestic routes from Hawai'i to 35 cities on the mainland.

1972: Hawai'i attracts two million tourists.

1974: George Ariyoshi, the country's first governor of Japanese ancestry, is elected.

1976: *Hokule'a* ("Star of Gladness"), a double-hulled sailing canoe sails from Hawai'i to Tahiti in a month's time. The voyage is meant to symbolize a cultural renaissance in the Hawaiian Islands and recalls ancient canoe contact between the two Polynesian groups.

1979: Hawai'i attracts four million visitors during the year.

1982: Hurricane Iwa strikes Kaua'i causing an estimated \$234 million in damages. It is the most destructive storm to hit Hawai'i in historic times.

1983: The volcano Kilauea on the Big Island erupted and has been continuously erupting ever since.

1986: John Waihe'e becomes the first elected state governor of Hawaiian ancestry.

1987: A department of Hawaiian Studies is established at the University of Hawai'i.

1990: A statue of Duke Kahanamoku is erected at Kuhio Beach in Waikiki.

1992: Hurricane Iniki causes massive devastation on Kaua'i. It is the most destructive hurricane in the recorded history of the state. Dole Foods Co. closes down Lana'i Plantation. Voyaging canoe *Hokule'a* returns from a 5,500 mile-long voyage, including a first-time voyage to Rarotonga.

1993: 100th anniversary of the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Rev. Paul Sherry, president of the United Church of Christ of the United States, formally apologizes to native Hawaiians for the church's role in the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. The United States Senate apologizes to Hawaiians for the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893. President Clinton signs a Congressional Resolution acknowledging the illegality of the overthrow. A statue of the controversial Robert William Kalanihiapo Wilcox is unveiled in Wilcox Park in Downtown Honolulu.

1994: The first regularly scheduled Hawaiian-language news broadcast is presented on public radio. The radioactively damaged island of Kaho'olawe is returned by the federal government to the state of Hawai'i.

1998: About 6.5 Million tourists visit Hawai'i.

XII. APPENDIX 2: GLOSSARY OF HAWAIIAN AND JAPANESE WORDS USED

a) HAWAIIAN WORDS USED

ahi	fire
alae	mud-hen
ali'i	head man, chief,
aloha	affection, sympathy, greeting
aloha'aina	love of / for the land
amakua	ancestral god (makua = parent)
halau	school (of hula and traditions)
hale kuke	kitchen (literally cook house)
haole	white, foreign
hapa; hapa-haole	fraction, part; half-white
holo	to run, move, sail
honua; honua-mea	Earth, flat land; sacred land
hula	dance, to dance to a rhythmic song
hula 'auana	modern hula
hula kahiko	ancient hula
hula ki'i	marionette dance (ki'i = idol, statue)
kahuna	sorcerer, healer, priest, expert
kama'aina	native born, today: old-timer
kaona	import, implication
kapa, or tapa	cloth (of beaten mulberry bark)
kapu	forbidden, sacred
ki, or ti	ti-plant, Cordyline
kokua	help, helper
kumulipo	title of the chant of creation (kumu = origin, lipo = bottomless as the ocean)
mahele	division

makai	seaward
mana	authority, power, might
Maui	legendary demigod with trickster features
mele	song
menehune	legendary "little people," guessed to be a race that settled before the Polynesians
'oe	you, thou
ohana	(extended) family, clan
pahu	drum
pali	cliff, precipice
Pele	volcano goddess
poi	taro pudding
pono	goodness, uprightness, morality
pu'uhonua	refuge, asylum
tutu (actually kuku)	grandmother

b) JAPANESE WORDS USED

issei	1 st generation Japanese (immigrants)
nisei	2 nd generation Japanese (born abroad)
yakuza	member of the Japanese mafia
yonsei	3 rd generation Japanese (often ignorant of Japanese ways)

luna	overseer on a plantation (Portuguese?)
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Information from the *Handy Hawaiian Dictionary*, and out of the texts dealt with.