Mestiza, Hapa Haole, and Oceanic Borderspaces

Genealogical rearticulations of whiteness in Hawai‘i

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We in the United States are living in a time of heightened racial awareness, tension, and conflict. One relevant area of research focuses on developing a more sophisticated understanding of whiteness, white identities, white privilege, and white supremacy. This essay is part of a larger project in which I analyze haole (whiteness and white people in Hawai‘i) as a neocolonial American form of situated whiteness. Here I explore some possible elements of a genealogical stance toward haole, understanding genealogy both in the indigenous sense of connection to people and place with its temporal and spatial fluidity, and in the poststructuralist sense of remaining attentive to our will to power, cautious of truth claims, and privileging of nondominant perspectives.

I weave intersectional and Chicana feminist theories with pieces of my own personal story, and hapa haole identity, putting theory to work troubling unified notions of haole. I discuss ‘home’ and ‘homeland’ as they relate to Hawai‘i and desires to belong. Mobilizing genealogy, I argue, remakes both haole and Hawai‘i as more verb than noun, opening up new possibilities for building social change. A genealogical orientation toward haole is not the final ground upon which haoles can solidly stand, rather it offers strategies for imagining and performing haole in more historicized, relational and contextualized ways.

We in the United States are living in a time of heightened racial awareness, tension, and conflict. Barack Obama’s election is heralded as the beginning of a ‘post-racial’ society at the same time the organizing of white supremacist hate-groups is on the rise, along with popular discourses of white victimhood. Fears about immigration, rhetorics of ‘terrorism,’ impacts of the economic crisis, criminalization
of communities of color, and the ‘browning’ of the population are all contributing factors. Understanding this current climate is critical and requires work on many different levels. One area of research focuses on developing a more sophisticated understanding of whiteness, white identities, white privilege, and white supremacy in the United States.[1] Particularly useful in this quest are those specific locations where whiteness has been embattled and/or non-normative for some time, either because of colonial histories, immigration, and/or racial segregation. Hawai‘i is one such place.

This essay is part of a larger project in which I analyze haole (whiteness and white people in Hawai‘i) as a neocolonial American form of situated whiteness. To show how haole is produced requires attention to a complex assemblage of subjectivity, ideology, culture, historical hegemony, and performance. Haole was forged and reformed in over two centuries of American colonization, and needs to be understood through that history.

Precontact Hawai‘i was governed through an elaborate system of power distributed between chiefs, commoners, and gods that recognized complex interdependence within strict hierarchies. By 1840, under pressure from the West, Hawai‘i had become an independent nation ruled by a native Hawaiian constitutional monarchy. In 1893 a group of haole businessmen overthrew the government in a premeditated coup with the assistance of the U.S. military. Hawaiian nationals protested vehemently, taking their case all the way to Washington D.C., but were ultimately out-lobbyed by business and military interests (Silva, 2004). Hawai‘i was illegally annexed by the United States in 1898 and became the fiftieth state in 1959.

The colonization of the islands, however, started with a vengeance in 1820 with the influx of missionaries who, as the saying goes, ‘came to do good and made good.’ The missionaries stepped into a power void created by the decimation of the native population by foreign diseases brought to the islands beginning with Captain Cook’s landing in 1778 (Osorio, 2002; Stannard, 1989). They quickly gained political and economic power, forming the backbone of a haole oligarchy that kept a stranglehold on power for nearly a century (Kent, 1983). Haoles, many of them former missionaries, ran the sugar and pineapple industries that dominated the economy by mid-century, requiring huge numbers of laborers brought from Asia and the Pacific Islands.

Colonization and racialization go hand in hand, thus today there are three dominant racial categories in Hawai‘i: Kanaka Maoli (native Hawaiians); locals; and haoles. Kanaka Maoli are indigenous to the islands, Hawai‘i’s ‘first peoples.’ ‘Locals’ are not simply residents because the term has a different meaning in the islands. Local identity and culture emerged primarily from the experience of laborers on plantations and is an amalgamation of Asian-Pacific immigrant cultures and native Hawaiian culture. The language of the local is
Hawaiian Creole English (HCE), popularly known as ‘pidgin.’ ‘Haole’ is originally a Hawaiian word that meant ‘foreign’ and has come to mean both white people and performative whiteness in the islands, a certain conglomeration of attitude and behavior that is distinctly out-of-sync with Kanaka Maoli and local values and social norms. Similar to ‘gringo’ or ‘yankee,’ ‘haole’ can be thought of as a type of counternarrative that calls out and challenges whiteness. While haoles maintain considerable political and economic power, it is local culture that is normative in the islands (although this is changing as I discuss later). This means haole is not the ‘invisible norm’ or the ‘unmarked center’ often referenced in generalized whiteness scholarship. In Hawai‘i whiteness/haole is marked and questioned.

In light of this history, it makes sense that whiteness is challenged in the islands and this essay is part of my attempt to take that challenge seriously. Rather than try to deny, defend, or appropriatively refashion haoleness (e.g. ‘go native’)—all of which are common responses to being challenged or marked as haole—I think it is more productive to confront, interrogate and unpack haole. Once haole is better understood in this historical and political context, I am hopeful that we might be able to rethink it and rearticulate it. Since I have written elsewhere about the former, the goal for this essay is to explore possibilities for rearticulation, to make space for thinking about becoming haole more carefully and consciously.

Within whiteness scholarship there are two dominant, and polarized, approaches to the question of what to do with white identities. On one end of the spectrum are the white abolitionists or self-described ‘race traitors,’ who want to implode whiteness by refusing to identify as white and refusing white privilege (Ignatiev and Garvey, 1996). On the other end are scholar-activists who seek to create a ‘positive,’ ‘attractive,’ anti-racist model of whiteness, one in which white people can again be ‘proud’ of their ‘heritage’ (Kincheloe, 1999). Neither of these are my objective: I am not interested in abolishing haole, nor in reconstructing it into some sort of panacea, a new improved Great White Hope. I do not believe either project is possible, much less desirable.

My goal here is less grandiose, less neat and complete, more tentative. I intend to explore some possible elements of a genealogical stance toward haole. One of the big tensions here is finding a way to vision a new orientation toward haole without suggesting that one can ever comfortably rest in haole. A related paradox that nearly paralyzes many whiteness scholars is the fear of reinscribing, rather than decentering, whiteness by making it the subject of analysis. A genealogical orientation toward haole is not the final ground upon which haoles can solidly stand, rather it offers strategies for imagining and performing haole in more historicized, relational and contextualized ways. If we can begin to figure this out with regard to whiteness in Hawai‘i, maybe some of what we learn will be applicable to other places as well.
In this essay I weave intersectional and Chicana feminist theories with pieces of my own personal story, and ideas about hapa haole identity, putting theory to work troubling unified notions of haole. I use narrative, or what in Hawai‘i is termed ‘talking story’ to demonstrate and build my analysis. I discuss ‘home’ and ‘homeland’ as they relate to Hawai‘i and desires to belong. I see a genealogical stance toward haole as striving toward the indigenous sense of connection to people/place[2] with its temporal and spatial fluidity, and in the poststructuralist sense of remaining attentive to our will to power, cautious of truth claims, and privileging of nondominant perspectives. Mobilizing genealogy, I argue, remakes both haole and Hawai‘i as more verb than noun, opening up new possibilities for building social change.[3]

I want to share a relevant story. A while ago I attended a multiculturalism workshop at a women’s conference. The facilitator put up a chart showing some ‘target’ and ‘non-target’ groups for different oppressions (i.e. disabled/able-bodied, gay/straight, etc). She said that almost everyone could come up with at least one category in which they are in the target group, but she wanted us to identify the ‘non-target groups’ we fell into (i.e. to name our privilege). At first there was dead silence in the room. Then someone nervously asked for clarification. I decided I should speak, so palms sweating and heart-pounding, I said something about being a white woman from Hawai‘i and struggling to understand my position and responsibility vis-à-vis the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. The facilitator thanked me for sharing and said I should pay attention to what Hawaiians think my role might be. She then added that she was glad I had identified myself as white because she would not have necessarily recognized me as such; she might have thought I was ‘Chicana.’

This stunned me, and I immediately wondered what I was wearing. I am often (mis)recognized as a boy/man—an encounter I usually take pride in and sometimes seek to facilitate through dress and body language—but I had never, to my knowledge, been thought to be anything other than haole or white. I realized that having grown up in Hawai‘i, I recognized myself as haole, both in Hawai‘i and on the continent. I had translated myself seamlessly to white on the continent without really giving it a second thought. Yet, much is lost in translation since haole is a specific kind of whiteness that loses its salience outside the islands. One could think similarly about ‘yankee’ in the south or ‘gringo’ in Mexico and what was formerly Mexico.

Clearly I was recognized as white by others, and benefiting from white privilege, but could I also be (mis)recognized as Chicana in certain situations outside of Hawai‘i? I began to wonder if I would have had a stronger Chicana identification (and thus, performance) had I grown up in California or Arizona and known my mother’s Mexican side of the family. My mother—the child of a Mexican waitress and Greek cook who took pride in their immigration stories, assimilation and subsequent American citizenship—never conveyed strong ‘ethnic'
cultural bonds (the reasons for this are complicated, but certainly include the fact that this would have been difficult in rural Hawai'i in the 1970s). Yet, she told me family stories, fed me frijoles and tortillas that we made from scratch, and helped me struggle through high school Spanish classes.

Perhaps I was a ‘Chicana falsa’ to use Aimee Carrillo Rowe’s adaptation of Michelle Serros’ book title to describe having Chicana ancestry but not feeling ‘authentic;’ being the ‘impure subject of belonging’ (Carrillo Rowe, 2008: 209-10). Had I, in becoming haole and in developing anti-racist politics, somehow come to deny my ancestry, my grandmother in me? To whom, with whom, and where did I belong? Had I allowed one set of belongings to supersede others? I began to wonder whether I could bring my Chicana side in theoretically (to do so culturally feels appropriative, ‘false’), and use it to produce myself as a more nuanced, intersected haole. I began to think I needed to, in the words of James Baldwin, ‘do my first works over:’

To do your first works over means to reexamine everything. Go back to where you started, or as far back as you can, examine all of it, travel your road again and tell the truth about it. Sing or shout or testify or keep it to yourself: but know whence you came. (Baldwin, 1985: xix).

If there is hope for haole, I think it comes in the recognition that, thankfully, one is never just a haole. I have been fingering this problem since 1996 when I wrote an article about growing up as a haole girl (Rohrer, 1997), in which I attempted to complicate my haole identity with my lesbianism using the work of women like Minnie Bruce Pratt (Pratt, 1984) and Mab Segrest (Segrest, 1994). I felt there had to be something useful in my queer experience that I could recognize and articulate in my process of becoming haole. For, as intersectional feminist scholarship suggests, it is not about adding queer to haole and stirring. Rather, it is about recognizing those subjectivities as always already in relation, though never relating in exactly the same way (Brown, 1997; Ellsworth, 1997).

This experience of (mis)recognition as a Chicana pushed my thinking a step further. If I was seeking to rearticulate haole in a less oppressive way, could I draw both from my lived experience as a lesbian and whatever small amount of racial fluidity I had stumbled upon at that conference? Could I use those interrelations as ways in, as wedges to crack the seemingly impenetrable monolith of my haoleness? These experiences do not form any sort of truth, but they do provide an opening for theorizing. ‘It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience becomes … not the origin of our explanation … but rather that which we seek to explain’ (Scott, 1999: 83). How had I been constituted as a queer haole girl in Hawai'i? (As a Chicana falsa in California?). How might I explain both ‘queer’ and ‘haole’ as interrelated processes, as avenues of becoming, as verbs?
Mestiza Consciousness, Hapa Haole, and My Grandmother

In an effort to theorize these experiences, I turn to Gloria Anzaldúa, who among other things, identified as Chicana and lesbian, and whose concept of hybridity and mestizaje offer fruitful opportunities for a rearticulated haole:

They would chop me up into little fragments and tag each piece with a label. You say my name is ambivalence? Think of me as Shiva, a many-armed and legged body with one foot on brown soil, one white, one in straight society, one in the gay world, the man’s world, the socialist, and the occult worlds... Who, me confused? Ambivalent? Not so. Only your labels split me. (Anzaldúa, 1983: 205)

Anzaldúa refutes the idea that living with so many complex and contradictory identities makes her ‘confused’ or ‘ambivalent.’ At the same time, she does not seek to transcend her subjectivities or to bring them together in a neat, ordered stasis. She is finding a way to live in the in-betweeness—to be many places and to be herself a new place, what some call ‘a third space.’ There is ambiguity and hybridity here, but Anzaldúa is resolutely unambivalent. She refuses a politics that insists she be one thing and not another—she will not be split, nor will she be whole. Shane Phelan discusses Anzaldúa’s ability to construct mestizaje not as an essence but a ‘point of departure’:

The strength of mestiza consciousness is a result of its multiplicity and ability to sustain contradiction and ambiguity... The revolutionary force of the mestiza is the ability to refuse the reifications of cultural nationalism without abandoning the nation entirely, and to provide links to class-based movements without becoming subsumed within them. Because she never simply ‘is’ any one element of her blended being, the mestiza cannot be captured in the oppositions that are presented as inevitable; class or nation, sex or race, or any other reified opposition. The mestiza does not dispute the historical or contemporary reality of these designations, but she does operate constantly to undermine their unitary solidities. (Phelan, 1994: 74-75, emphasis mine)

There are many who would like to claim Gloria Anzaldúa as theirs, but Phelan reminds us that she would not, will not, be captured. Rather than rank her subjectivities as though they were ‘unitary solidities’ or ‘inevitable oppositions,’ Anzaldúa lived among and between them, struggling to make that a productive ever-changing hybrid space of cultural translation. Significantly there is nothing innocent about this in-betweeness. Contradiction and paradox is not a space from which one self-righteously launches the revolution. There is too much awareness of complicity, recognition of ‘the enemy within.’

Angie Chabram-Dernersesian also relies heavily on Anzaldúa in her discussion of native constructions of whiteness. Chabram-Dernersesian critiques Mexican nationalist constructions of whiteness
as essentializing and flattening and therefore sees great potential in the mestiza:

Anzaldúa disrupts the kind of binary (Mexican white) that is evident in the gringo/Mexican Indian split by peopling the borderlands with other social identities (sexual, ethnic, gender), by contemplating the complicity of the natives in their oppression and by suggesting a third space of ethnic identification that overwrites whiteness. (Chabram-Dernersesian, 1999: 122)

By ‘peopling the borderlands’ with other identities, Anzaldúa demands space for the complexity and ambiguity of lived experience on the margins, no matter how uncomfortable or politically problematic. Marginality and oppression are not flattened by valorization or condemnation; they simply are, and they are always in motion.

I think about how this mestiza consciousness works with and troubles what I know about whiteness and haole. Clearly it emerges from the specificity of the Mexican-American border and cannot be overlaid directly on Hawai‘i. Still, it offers a theoretical model that is useful for thinking through haole. It encourages me to allow for partialities and pluralities, convergences and ‘contradiction and ambiguity,’ as well as excesses, for which there is no accounting. Regarding haole subjectivity, it suggests that I ‘not dispute the historical or contemporary reality’ of that designation, but that I ‘operate constantly to undermine’ its ‘unitary solidity.’ I take heart that I never am simply haole, at the same time I acknowledge the weight and responsibility of never escaping haole.

Many of the contributors to This Bridge We Call Home (the sequel anthology to This Bridge called my Back, also co-edited by Anzaldúa), build on the call for a mestiza consciousness:

We must learn to make peace with contradiction and paradox, see its operation in our own lives’ uneven structures, and learn to sense, taste, and understand paradox as the motor of things... living contradiction is necessary if we are to create the asylums of identification and solidarity with and for one another, without which our lives will surely wither. (Alexander, 2002: 89)

‘Making peace with contradiction and paradox’ includes learning to live all our subjectivities as they shift and flow, cascade and eddy. It means being able to recognize pieces of ourselves in others and others in ourselves. It means embracing a society that recognizes and celebrates multiplicity and difference so that we might ‘create asylums of identification and solidarity.’ James Clifford asks, ‘Is it possible to locate oneself historically, to tell a coherent global story, when historical reality is understood to be an unfinished series of encounters? What attitudes of tact, receptivity, and self-irony are conducive to nonreductive understandings’ (Clifford, 1997: 13)?
‘Locating oneself historically’ using the ‘motor of paradox,’ ‘tact, receptivity, and self-irony’ to forge ‘nonreductive understandings’—what could that possibly look like? I recognize myself as the haole auntie of a young niece and nephew who are (part)Hawaiian and already more local than I could ever be. I recognize myself as a Punahou graduate who luckily went first to Kōloa Elementary School, Kaua‘i High and Roosevelt High.[4] I recognize myself as the hippie child forced to choose between the equally humiliating options of raising my hand in homeroom for a ‘free lunch’ or bringing squished banana sandwiches and carob cookies. I recognize myself as able to play in the Po‘ipū Sheraton pool undisturbed with my haole friends (regardless of how disruptive we were to paying guests), but being kicked out if our group included any of my local friends. I recognize myself doing my small part queering a nation while I also support recognition of native Hawaiian political sovereignty.

Consideration of hapa haole identity (meaning part, usually half, haole) can provide a useful entry point to this multiplicity. Hapa identity is dealt with in various conflicting ways. Hapa can be used as an escape route out of haole. Certainly, for those who value local identity, being hapa haole is better than being just haole. But what about those who can pass for just local, do they consider themselves hapa? Or those who are culturally Hawaiian and support sovereignty? Or those who look haole and not local at all?

In a Bamboo Ridge[5] collection, I found a short story about a hapa woman (Hawaiian-Chinese-Irish) named Stephanie Keke‘oke‘omaiokanalu Yap coming home to be with family during the death of her grandmother. Stephanie grapples with being identified as ‘a minority’ on the continent (where her last name becomes the signifier), and haole in Honolulu. It pains her that, when she gets lost while driving home from the airport, a local guy calls her a ‘stupid haole.’ She admits to being in a rental, dressed like a haole, and no longer familiar with the landmarks—but she still does not feel she is a haole:

I spent twenty-two years as a local girl before I went to Yale. Eleven years in New Haven didn’t turn me into a talk-too-much, talk-too-loud, no-mo-sense mainland haole, and even though the seven years I taught at Harvard gave me plenty of excuses to talk too much and talk too loud, still I resisted, frequently reminding myself who I am and where I come from. (Kearns, 1999: 122)

She does not act haole. She knows where she came from. She discusses her consternation with her grandmother who asks her if she knows what her name means. Stephanie says her Hawaiian tūtū (grandmother) who named her told her it meant ‘the foam of the breaking waves.’[6] Her Chinese grandmother responds,

Maybe so, but dat not why she wen call you ke ke‘oke‘o. I was in da hospital, too, you know. She wen pick you up, no mo clothes on you…and she say, ‘No look like one Kanahele, dis kaikamahine, no
Stephanie protests and her grandmother asks her to look in the mirror and tell her what she sees. She finally relents, ‘a stupid haole.’ Her grandmother responds again, ‘Nah! I see Doctah Stephanie Keke’oke’omaioikanalu Yap, my akamai granddaughtah who wen come home so her popo can see her face one mo time’ (Kearns, 1999: 131). Her grandmother does not resolve the contradiction she is living. In fact the story about her naming is intended to explain to Stephanie that even her family saw her as haole originally, and then as hapa-haole, but never as simply local. Her name means white, like the foam of waves—and it is not wrong. In the end, the grandmother indicates that even if Stephanie presents as haole, she knows other aspects of Stephanie’s identity—her name that ties her to her genealogy, her academic achievement which makes her family proud, and her family loyalty in coming back to see her dying grandmother.

In contemporary Hawai‘i politics, this haole paradox is evidenced by the lack of Kanaka Maoli activists who proudly claim mixed or hapa ancestry, and who can blame them? The politics of identity is complicated enough without having to admit to the colonizer inside. Yet, it is hard to see how healing or coalition can happen if people are bent on denying their haole ancestry. Closeted, I worry it only gains more negative strength. I turn again to Anzaldúa:

To live in the Borderlands means you

are neither hispana india negra española
ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata, half-breed
caught in the crossfire between camps
while carrying all five races on your back
not knowing which side to turn to, run from;

...To survive the Borderlands
you must live sin fronteras
be a crossroads.

(Anzaldúa, 1999: 194-95)

Living in the borderlands or sin fronteras (without borders) means ‘carrying all five races on your back’ unable or unwilling to deny any one. The borderlands make strong nationalist claims and blood logics impossible. Hawai‘i tends to be relatively open to thinking along the lines of inclusion (both/and) rather than exclusion (either/or). It never had an anti-miscegenation law and has led the country in interracial marriages. It came so close to legalizing gay marriage that the opposition had to fly in heavy-hitting evangelists and funds from
continental homophobes to defeat the measure. In general, local people are proud of their ‘mixed plate’ or ‘poi dog’ ancestry and tend to have progressive social politics, if for no other reason than, more often than not, the person standing in line behind you at Longs[7] is either a relative or a cousin’s friend from high school. I argue elsewhere that Barack Obama’s articulation of his biracial ancestry, astute racial politics, and jokes about being a ‘mutt’ are clearly influenced by his Hawai‘i upbringing (Rohrer, 2010b). This is not to idealize social relations in the islands but to suggest that, if it is possible for any persons to aspire to ‘live sin fronteras,’ it should be possible in Hawai‘i.

Let me relate another story. My grandmother, Estella Acevedo, was born in Cuidad Obregon, Sonora, Mexico in 1908 and went to school there through the sixth grade. Her father, who was a farmer and storekeeper, died when she was still a young teen. Estella, her younger sister, older brother, and mother moved to Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. Some years later, when her brother left to join the U.S. army, Estella crossed the border every day to Nogales, Arizona, U.S.A. to work as a waitress. She met my grandfather, George Kasnetsis, when he began to cook for the restaurant. George was seventeen years older and had emigrated to the U.S. as a young Greek with very little education. This was during the depression and George was one of many migrant workers scratching out a living for himself and his young son (his first wife died young of tuberculosis).

As the story goes, they fell in love and George proposed, but Estella turned him down because she was supporting her mother and her sister. George was so upset that he left his job, and Nogales, only to come back some time later to propose again when he heard through the grapevine that Estella's mother had passed away and her sister had gotten married. Estella accepted this time (the first ‘interracial’ marriage in her family) and made the familiar journey across the border, but this time as an immigrant. She and my grandfather settled in Prescott, Arizona and had one child together, my mother, Georgia Estella Kasnetsis, for whom they wished all the best ‘America’ could offer.

Nogales is now a militarized zone—a city with the unfortunate luck of transgressing what is now a very important boundary to some very powerful corporate and governmental interests. This border, that my grandmother walked back and forth across each day ninety years ago, is now demarcated by a huge wall, razor wire, dogs, flood lights, border patrol, and lots and lots of guns. Some of my grandmother’s relatives…my relatives, die or are captured each day trying to make the crossing for the same reason she originally did, economic survival. In my grandmother’s lifetime, love could more easily cross and recross sin fronteras; love for family, love for a partner. And now? As we reinforce boundaries between countries, so too do we build walls between kin and within ourselves.
My grandmother died of an aneurysm when I was only seven, shortly after my family moved to Hawai‘i. I never got a chance to talk with her about her life in Nogales, and she never made it across the Pacific to visit us on Kaua‘i. What would she have thought about making that particular crossing? What would I eagerly have shown her of my new life, so different from hers? How would she have understood Hawai‘i? How would Hawai‘i have understood her? How would I have understood her? My mother says I look like Grandma Estella, and yet, I have trouble recognizing her in me.

I relate this story as a way of thinking about identities and borderspaces, as a way of putting the past in front of me as suggested by indigenous cultural practitioners and scholars, and as a way of honoring my grandmother and creating ‘points of affiliation with the women left behind’ (Chabram-Dernersesian, 2004). I could not write but for the love, the labor, and determination of my grandmother, and my mother after her. Chabram-Dernersesian suggests that in all the talk in the academy of transnational feminism, sometimes working-class women of color are invisible. As women academics move across class into the academy, mothers, sisters, grandmothers are ‘the women left behind.’ She suggests that we find ways to ‘dignify and write of this convergence’ (Chabram-Dernersesian, 2004)—to name the ways, in the words of the old political slogan, ‘we are here because they were there.’

Home, Homeland, and Living Sin Fronteras

Living sin fronteras means rethinking home, a place of comfortable belonging whether it is a physical place or Benedict Anderson’s ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1983). Shane Phelan believes mestiza consciousness teaches us to resist the desire to belong:

It is tempting to think that we must fully belong somewhere, but the temptation must be resisted. The ideal of full and uncomplicated belonging rests on the ideal of the unitary, harmonious self, thus demanding that we seek out and eliminate the obstacles to this harmonious unity. (Phelan, 1994: 67).

Similarly, Julie Wuthnow warns that haoles, can only ever be ‘in recovery from colonization’ because ‘the craving for home will always be there’ (Wuthnow, 1994: 49). I have explored elsewhere how haoles have sought to make home for themselves in Hawai‘i—rewriting colonization as civilization, remapping physical and social geographies, resisting indigenous claims, and producing a naturalized discourse of haole in Hawai‘i (Rohrer, 2010c; 2008). Haole resistance to being labeled ‘haole’ is partly fueled by the desire to belong. Whatever else it does, ‘haole’ continues to mark otherness, being of foreign origin, or not of a place, which is the original meaning of the Hawaiian term. This is why the protagonist in the short story did not want to be labeled haole. And yet, her grandmother insisted she acknowledge both her haoleness and her localness, in all their
messiness, rather than continue striving for some ideal ‘harmonious unity.’

One cannot talk about ‘home’ and Hawai‘i without talking about the Kanaka Maoli claim to ‘homeland.’ This is an indigenous claim based on continuity of habitation and aboriginality, being the first people of a place. Aboriginality is recognized in national and international laws and as such, claims to a ‘home’ and a ‘homeland’ do not exist on the same plane. The Hawaiian sovereignty movement in simplest terms is a struggle for return of a homeland and self-determination for Kanaka Maoli. The movement encounters resistance from both haoles and locals who see it as threatening their claims to ‘home’ in the islands.

The local claim to home and belonging is based in generations of inhabitants, shared exploitation in the plantation system, and local culture. There is a strong vein within local discourse that is specifically about land and place revolving around having toiled in the earth, planted one’s roots in the soil, ‘paid dues’ required for making claims to place, and feeling love for the islands. The late Ronald Takaki offers an expression of this narrative in *Pau Hana*, his classic book on the plantation system:

Gradually, in the plantation camps, far away from their homelands, they created new communities. Over the years, they came to feel a love for the land, the ‘āina, and accepted Hawaii as a place to settle and raise their families. No longer sojourners, no longer strangers in the islands... (Takaki, 1983: 178)

Takaki ends the book in a poetic imagining of a visit to a plantation cemetery by a relative today whispering to the wind ‘this is home, our home...’ (Takaki, 1983: 181). The question being asked more recently is how this claim to home intersects with the Kanaka Maoli claim to homeland. Are they mutually exclusive? Is there any literal and/or figurative commonground?

In the last decade a number of local and Kanaka Maoli scholars have deconstructed nostalgic immigration and ‘plantation days’ narratives and challenged the local community to admit its complicity in the dispossession of Kanaka Maoli (Fujikane and Okamura, 2008). These scholars resituate the local community not as immigrants, but as a settler population. The term ‘settler’ in this context is meant to disrupt the heroic local narrative by emphasizing locals as settlers, a people not originally from a place occupying it even though it belongs to others. A leading scholar in this area, Candace Fujikane writes:

For many people in Hawai‘i, local identity is based on having a history on this land and a commitment to the peoples and cultures of this place. With the important gains made by the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, however, locals who claim Hawai‘i as home often do not understand Native Hawaiian nationalists who claim Hawai‘i as homeland, and as non-Hawaiian locals, we need to ask
ourselves what our commitment to Hawai‘i and its peoples really means. (Fujikane, 1997: 43)

There has been a tendency in the dominant discourse on local identity to smooth over distinctions between Kanaka Maoli and local. Local was, and is, often conceived of as the space where everyone but the haole gathers in a cultural amalgamation and political solidarity. Local scholar John Rosa contends local identity ‘conveniently allows current residents to imagine a romanticized past, one where Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians joined in struggle against haole oppressors’ (Rosa, 2000: 102).

The strongest critique to local claims to home comes, not surprisingly, from Hawaiian nationalists. In an article (based on a previous speech) entitled ‘Settlers of color and ‘immigrant’ hegemony: ‘locals’ in Hawai‘i,’ Haunani-Kay Trask writes that ‘‘locals’ have no indigenous land base, traditional language, culture, and history that is Native to Hawai‘i’ (Trask, 2000: 6). She continues:

The issues before Hawaiians are those of indigenous land, cultural rights, and survival as a people. In contrast, the issues before ‘locals’ have merely to do with finding a comfortable fit in Hawai‘i that guarantees a rising income, upward mobility, and the general accoutrements of a middle-class ‘American’ way of life. (Trask, 2000: 20).

While this critique may be harsh and unnecessarily polarizing,[8] it does resonate with recent dilution and depoliticization of the local.

In a short but provocative interview in Honolulu Magazine, Jonathan K. Okamura, another leading scholar on local identity, addresses the question of whether Hawai‘i is experiencing ‘The End of Local?’ Like Trask, Okamura worries about the impacts of global corporate capitalism on the islands. ‘In Hawai‘i, beloved pidgin English has been diluted by hip-hop jargon, community activism is nearly dead and the sense of controlling one’s own destiny is part of ancient history’ (Okamura as quoted in Choo, 2003). He laments about local ‘losing cultural distinctiveness’ and political edge, and points to the zenith of local as the grass-/taro-roots struggles against development in the 1970s.

If local claims to home are being eroded through depoliticization and globalization and challenged by sovereignty advocates, haole claims seem to be undergoing a retrofit. High profile legal cases like Harold F. Rice v. Benjamin J. Cayetano 528 U.S. 495 (2000) position haoles as victims of discrimination who have as much claim to Hawai‘i as anyone else.[9] The state has a Republican haole governor (who, to claim legitimacy, has to emphasize some localness) for the first time since the ‘democratic revolution’ of 1954 when the Democratic party, lead by powerful AJAs,[10] seized power from the haole Republican oligarchy. According to the 2000 census, haoles are now the largest population in the state (40%), displacing a huge Hawaiian diaspora.
living on the continent (40% of native Hawaiians in the U.S. live outside Hawai‘i) (State of Hawai‘i Department of Business, 2004), and another ‘internal’ diaspora living in prison (Hawaiians are 20% of the state’s population and over 40% of those in prison) (Keahiolalo-Karasuda, 2008). Speaking of the continental diaspora, J. Kēhaulani Kauanui writes, ‘the traffic between Hawai‘i and the U.S. continent sometimes resembles a two-lane road, with disenfranchised Native Hawaiians leaving to look for opportunity and rich white Americans arriving to retire in paradise’ (Kauanui, 1993).

Nevertheless, haole claims continue to be challenged by both locals and Kanaka Maoli. The slogan ‘haole go home’ still has salience no matter how hard haoles try to imagine, and convince everyone else, that we are, in fact, home. In Hawai‘i, haole is simultaneously emulated and decentered; invited in and asked to leave. Further, many haoles have one foot in Hawai‘i and one on the continent and manage those cultural translations with varying degrees of success. Rethinking the desire to belong, the desire for completeness, may be a key to hope and the beginning of justice. ‘Categories of either identity or nature, like coalitions themselves, are temporary, fragile, delicate, and highly political. They must be maintained and lived carefully rather than comfortably’ (Bartsch, DiPalma, and Sells, 2001: 163). How might haole begin living ‘carefully rather than comfortably’ in Hawai‘i?

‘The Ocean is in Us’; Rearticulating Haole

Here I sketch some elements of a genealogical stance toward haole pulling from indigenous understandings and poststructuralist frameworks. From indigenous genealogies comes a strong connection to peopleplace with its temporal and spatial fluidity. In Hawaiian cosmology, all things are interrelated and the Hawaiian people are direct descendants of Wākea and Papa, the sky-father and earth-mother. ‘Hawaiian identity is, in fact, derived from the Kumulipo, the great cosmogonic genealogy. Its essential lesson is that every aspect of the Hawaiian conception of the world is related by birth, and as such, all parts of the Hawaiian world are one indivisible lineage’ (Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992: 2). This interrelation is the basis for the concepts of aloha ‘āina, love of the land, and mālama ‘āina, caring for the land. Within this understanding, exact time and place are less important than the people or elements involved and the sequence of events. ‘The genealogies are the Hawaiian concept of time, they order space around us. Hawaiian genealogies are the histories of our people’ (Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992: 19).

Poststructuralist genealogical perspectives call attention to our will to power, question truth claims, destabilize projects of mastery over nature, excavate nondominant discourses, and privilege beginnings over origins. They caution us that ‘to expect one’s understandings of the world clearly and neatly to specify value and actions, to expect some sort of deductive link between what is, what ought to be, and
what must be done, is a kind of will to truth’ (Ferguson, 1993: 29). Poststructuralist scholarship has not generally embraced indigeneity and visa versa. Rather than insist on one or the other or some happy marriage of the two, I find it more useful to explore their convergences as well as their tensions. These frictions produce the spark enlivening a posture of riding temporarily on the smooth unions and choppy intersections of these two perspectives. One of the most productive frictions is between indigenous connection and subsequent commitment to specific place (as seen in Trask’s work), and a poststructuralist suspicion of all ties or commitments as part of self-generated truth claims.

James Clifford offers an analysis of this tension in his discussion of Stuart Hall’s articulation theory. ‘Land...signifies the past in the future, a continuous, changing base of political and cultural operations. Articulation theory, which sees every thing as potentially realigned, cut, and mixed, has difficulty with this material nexus of continuity’ (Clifford, 2001: 482). Land, or really, place, constrains the unending contingency of poststructuralist theory. At the same time, Clifford writes, ‘Nativism, the xenophobic shadow of indigeneity, values wholeness and separation, pure blood and autochthonous land. It denies the messy, pragmatic politics of articulation’ (Clifford, 2001: 483). The type of located genealogical stance I am suggesting does not resolve these conflicts but finds ways to hold them in tension, to ride their upsurges and patiently bob in their backwater.

Indigenous genealogy suggests that we look to the past to guide us in the future and that we attend to interrelations. Poststructuralist genealogy suggests putting more focus on questions than ‘answers,’ and thinking about how our desires and positionality shapes both our questions and our answers. Rearticulating haole involves rethinking both Hawai’i and haole as more verb than noun, more ambiguous than settled, more paradox than paradise. It means understanding haole as ‘never just one thing’ and ‘never the same thing twice’ (Ellsworth, 1997), it means rethinking haole as a historicized animated social assemblage.

It is useful to think about how Hawai’i might be reconceived as more of a borderspace than a comfortable home. Such a gesture is necessary to loosen neocolonial impulses that reterritorialize place through capitalist enterprise, nationalist ideology, and exoticized desires. The boundary between Hawai’i and the continental U.S. is contested in some ways similar to the Mexico-U.S. border, most significantly as relates to geopolitics, nationalism and national identity. Chicana feminist theories successfully mobilize images of fences, walls, and barbed wire in representing the U.S.-Mexico border as a borderland, at the same time they suggest that the border also lives within, is carried on one’s back.

But perhaps the metaphor of borders is not so useful in Hawai’i because borders suggest landedness. Perhaps, following native
Pacific scholars, it would be more productive to think of Hawai‘i as nonterritorialized, as part of a region where the ocean, not the land, is paramount. Nation-centered Western geography has not presented Hawai‘i in this way. A good example of the violence of cartography is the way a standard map of the United States squeezes Hawai‘i into remainder space in a bottom corner, severed from its ocean, artificially sutured to the continent. Fijian scholar, Epeli Hau‘ofa writes, ‘the sea is our pathway to each other and to everyone else, the sea is our endless saga, the sea is our most powerful metaphor, the ocean is in us’ (Hau‘ofa, 1998: 409). Hau‘ofa’s conception is intensely relational. ‘The sea is our pathway to each other,’ rather than a barrier or empty space on a map. ‘The ocean is in us’ making our internal borderlands suddenly fluid.

Oceanic metaphors for Hawai‘i literally destabilize any easy conceptions of home; there is no solid ground upon which to lay a concrete foundation, there is only movement. There is no way to stake a claim, to mark off a boundary, to grab and horde—all slips out between greedy fingers. A borderland, marked by a wall, is unmoving, impenetrable, and silent. A borderspace, encompassing the ocean, is never still and never silent, always multiple and dynamic, full of attitude and life. The ocean is seemingly limitless and unfathomable; it can never be fully known, never wholly contained by objective knowledge, never completely captured by map or grid. It always retains its own agency, shifting just when we think we have it, expanding beyond our capacity to grasp, spilling over beyond our horizons.

And yet, this metaphoric conception, however poetic, does not quite get us where genealogists like Donna Haraway or Epeli Hau‘ofa are going. In loosening barriers between human and natural categories and reaffirming agency for nature, Haraway is clear that ‘nature’ is not simply for us. In *Companion Species*, Haraway argues that ‘dogs are not surrogates for theory; they are not here just to think with. They are here to live with’ (Haraway, 2003: 5). As native Pacific theorists such as Hau‘ofa have been saying, the ocean is ‘here to live with’ as well. Haraway insists that we not simply theorize on the backs of our ‘companion species’ or any other natural assemblage. Instead we need to recognize our complicated interdependence. Using Haraway’s theorizing to analyze the politics of wetlands in Florida, Bartsch, DiPalma and Sells write, ‘relationality with nature recognizes human connectedness with nature as a fluctuating, tense, and responsible interdependence, construed along the vectors of power that define civic life’ (Bartsch, DiPalma, and Sells, 2001: 149).

Indigenous genealogies are built around the concept of living in, with and through the natural environment since there are no static barriers between people and place. People become place, place embodies people, the movement back and forth is continuous and without closure. Eva Marie Garrouste writes about Peruvian-based nongovernmental organizations that have refocused themselves from
international development models to local models: ‘They speak of the Andean world, not as judging outsiders, but as ones bonded to that world... They write of the Andean world, not primarily as a world to know, but as a world to live in, to participate in, to be part of, and to collectively make’ (Garrouste, 2003: 145). This close interrelationship with place is reflected in Hawaiian culture and spirituality in which the ‘āina is alive with wisdom, personality, and needs. The poetry of Haunani-Kay Trask is a good example:

This night I crawl
into the mossy arms
of upland winds,

an island’s moan
welling grief:

Each of us slain
by the white claw
of history: lost
genealogies, propertied
missionaries, diseased
haole.

Now, a poisoned pae ‘āina
swarming with foreigners

and dying Hawaiians.

(Trask, 2002: 12)

Reconceptualizing Hawai‘i as dynamic and oceanic through the convergence of indigenous and poststructuralist genealogical thought encourages that we swim lightly there (as opposed to ‘step’ or ‘tread’). Rather than ‘resisting’ the desire for home as Phelan and Wuthnow advocate, swimming lightly suggests an approach less interested in vesting in an individualized notion of home, than in building commitment toward an interdependent, historicized, respectful partnership with place. ‘Resisting’ is too disciplinary for poststructuralists, echoing the white abolitionists’ rhetoric and leading to a politics of negation that has no long-term sustainability and little attraction. This is in no way to suggest that non-Hawaiians can have equivalent relationships to Hawai‘i as Hawaiians. Those relationships are produced and constrained differently by the intermingled histories of indigeneity and colonialism.

Following the same model, liberating haole from the constraints and problematics of its existence as noun and into the vibrant world of verbs is a genealogical move that opens possibilities for new becomings. Haole as a noun limits the discourse to persons or groups, fixed quantities that only move in two-dimensions. Conceived of as a thing, one can be more or less haole, one can ‘fasten and unfasten’ haoleness (Reed, 2001), or one can use an adjective to qualify haole, such as ‘local haole,’ ‘mainland haole,’ ‘stupid haole,’
and so forth. Such language however is inadequate for describing the multiplicity, fluidity, contingency and ambiguity of identity. As Stuart Hall reminds us, ‘identity is not the past to be found, but the future to be constructed’ (Hall, 1995: 14). Constructing the future is about doing and becoming—it moves, it is a process in which you never arrive but are always traveling, perhaps swimming.

At the risk of being too prescriptive, I offer what might be some core elements of a Hawai‘i-located genealogical stance toward haole-ing differently: embracing kuleana; participating in local culture; supporting Kanaka Maoli self-determination; striving toward ‘situated knowledges’; and building temporary coalitions from partial convergences. The idea of ‘embracing kuleana’ is clearly guided by native Hawaiian culture, which roughly translates ‘kuleana’ as privilege and responsibility. ‘We have certain privileges, and those privileges also carry responsibility. The word ‘kuleana’ expresses the relationship between privilege and responsibility in a way that you cannot detach one from the other’ (Dudoit, 1998: 1). There are all sorts of privileges (or gifts) that come from living in Hawai‘i, and there are different privileges (or unfair advantages) that come with being haole (depending, of course, on the context). To recognize that haoles benefit, however unevenly, from both types of privileges, and to bear the associated responsibility, is embracing kuleana.

It is not hard to understand why participating in local culture is important. This means more than the simple ‘when in Rome’ adage, or the donning of an aloha shirt and slippers. Acculturating to Hawai‘i takes time and considerable effort for most continental haoles. Afraid of failing, assured of their cultural superiority, or simply indifferent, many do not even try, refortifying the dominant local construction of haoles as arrogant and ignorant. Acculturating is easier to talk about than do. Some survival strategies for participating in local culture include learning how to take a joke (not taking oneself so seriously), educating oneself on local food ways, being willing to make mistakes, and ‘not tryin’ fo’ talk pidgin if you no can.’

Both participating in local culture and supporting Kanaka Maoli self-determination (and recognizing the convergences and tensions therein) manifest a connection to peopleplace. Supporting (decidedly not leading or unquestioningly following) Kanaka Maoli self-determination comes from an understanding of Hawai‘i’s colonial history and recognition of Hawaiian indigeneity. Figuring out how to appropriately be supportive turns out to be more difficult than it might seem. Kelly Kraemer identifies five main stumbling blocks for haoles as lack of commitment, hidden agendas, dominant behavior, racism, and wanna-be syndrome (Kraemer, 2000).

I suggest honoring ‘situated knowledges’ as an alternative to positioning oneself as in ‘recovery’ or even as ‘an ally.’ There is often a certain amount of paternalism in positioning oneself as ally, thereby refixing identity categories. Wuthnow emphasizes that being a
‘recovering haole’ is all about process since one can never fully escape their haoleness/privilege/historical positioning. This idea of a never completed process is useful in that it suggests adopting the humility of a genealogical perspective. ‘Living with the tensions and incompatibilities that result from such a strategy requires an ironic stance, a wry shrug at the impossibility of complete resolution and a concomitant willingness to keep struggling for partial victories’ (Ferguson, 1993: 182).

I have already touched on the biggest limitations of the recovery model: it fosters a disciplinary resistance rather than a retooling of desire and it tends to essentialize identity. Haraway’s concept of ‘situated knowledges,’ on the other hand, allows the continued mobility of subjectivity asking simply, but profoundly, that we become ‘answerable for what we learn to see’ (Haraway, 1988: 583). In Hawai‘i, for haole, this necessarily means becoming answerable for the history of colonization. One of the strengths of this theory is that it allows for relational multiple subjectivities without assuming the innocence of any one. Thus, becoming answerable for haole can include the recognition and tapping of one’s other ‘situated knowledges.’ A Haraway analysis argues, ‘relationality is a dynamic and fluctuating comparison of not only marginal positions to the dominant one, but marginal positions to each other as construed through vectors of power’ (Bartsch, DiPalma, and Sells, 2001: 132). Both Haraway and Ferguson deny the possibility of closure or complete resolution but expect continued political engagement. For Ferguson, that engagement is the politics of ‘struggling for partial victories’; for Haraway, the responsibility of holding oneself accountable.

Living in contradiction and paradox, living sin fronteras, not attempting to build a solid fortress of home or identity feels scary and vulnerable. This must be where comrades and coalitions come into play. With its diverse population and ‘mixed plate’ local culture, Hawai‘i is an ideal location for practicing intersectional, rather than strict identitarian, politics. Among other things, this means mining one’s own multiple mobile subjectivities for resources to build understandings and points of convergence for political action. It also means attending to the dangers of nativism, as Clifford warned, and nationalisms in all varieties. If one is never simply haole, one is never simply native Hawaiian or local either. We are the set of stories we tell ourselves, the stories that tell us, the stories others tell about us, and the possibilities of new stories. I am these stories. I lived them or I inherited them and they live vibrantly and turbulently in and around me. All stories are political; they involve power that has structural underpinnings and material consequences.

It is not new, this idea of coalition building based in political struggle rather than simplified identity. It is infused with the spirits of Audre Lorde, Bernice Johnson Reagon, bell hooks, June Jordan and so many others. Jordan once wrote ‘I am looking for an umbrella big
enough to overcome the tactical and moral limitations of ‘identity politics’—politics based on gender, class or race. I am searching for the language of a new political consciousness of identity’ (Jordan, 1996: 300). Jordan called the new consciousness ‘justice.’ If we are to be able to call anything home or belonging, it must be solidarity and accommodation, the synergistic moments on the bridge between you and me, us and them, myself and myself—‘this bridge we call home.’ In the words of Bernice Johnson Reagon, ‘that’s why we have to have coalitions. Cause I ain’t gonna let you live unless you let me live. Now there’s danger in that, but there’s also the possibility that we can both live – if you can stand it’ (Reagon, 2000: 352).

What might these coalitions that include genealogically oriented haoles look like? I imagine they would look like Hawai‘i culturally and politically; they would be mixed plate. They would not tokenize local involvement because locals would be key players. They would not use scare tactics to divide people or to manipulate political outcomes. They would make decisions about future work by facing and considering the past, especially the legacies of colonialism. They would not pretend that everyone is positioned equally in these histories or has an equal claim to Hawai‘i, as the Rice v. Cayetano decision does. They would not follow Robert’s Rules or insist on legal-objective ‘Fact’ as congressional hearings on policy have done. These coalitions would include lots of talking story, listening, chanting, joking, and yes, lots of eating. They would make it their business to ‘make trouble,’ adopting a sassy, wry politics that is often as fun as it is effective. They would embrace paradox and ambiguity leaving self-righteous certainty for the ‘mainland haoles’ of the world. They would be inclusive of multiple issues and strategies, struggling to find temporary points of convergence in order to agitate for progressive change.

This is not meant as a recipe for success. It is not a ‘how to haole’ guide. I can only ever attempt to shed my own ‘partial light’ and analyze what I see. Living in fronteras seems to be about using our contradictions productively. It must be about ‘living carefully, rather than comfortably’ since living with ambiguity and contradiction while still stretching toward progressive political change is uncomfortable. Recognizing the legacies of colonialism is uncomfortable. Coalition is uncomfortable. Learning ‘how to live with the histories I am coming to know’ is uncomfortable (Haraway, 2003: 81). There is quite a bit of bobbing in the backwater here.

Histories, of course, are situated. Whiteness is not the same thing across spatial and temporal planes (oceans?). Developing ideas about rearticulating haole requires attention to specificity and a willingness to explore borderspaces. I would like to be historicized, but still hopeful, in how I haole. I want to strive toward a flexible genealogical stance that recognizes my kuleana (that I have both an opportunity and a responsibility to peopleplace), is built with my multiple subjectivities, and honors my ancestry. Perhaps we can
cultivate this sensibility elsewhere in order to interrogate other forms of situated whiteness. Deconstructing and cautiously rearticulating whiteness seems fundamental to moving beyond the current climate of racial tension and fear.

Judy Rohrer grew up in Hawai‘i and received her PhD from the University of Hawai‘i’s Political Science Department in 2005. She has written previously about haole and the colonization of Hawai‘i in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* and *The Contemporary Pacific*. Her book, *Haoles in Hawai‘i*, is forthcoming from the University of Hawai‘i Press.

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**Notes**

1. This literature is very interdisciplinary, pulling from history, feminist studies, sociology, geography, education, cultural studies and many other fields. Some texts include: (Hill, 2004; Frankenberg, 1997; Rasmussen et al., 2001; Hartigan, 1999; Levine-Rasky, 2002; Yancy, 2005; Roediger, 1994; Jacobson, 1998; Lipsitz, 2006).

2. Here I borrow from Donna Haraway’s ‘natureculture’ and coin ‘peopleplace’ as a way of gesturing toward the inseparably intertwined relationships between people and place in indigenous thinking (Haraway, 2003). I am acutely aware of the danger of cultural appropriation. I mean for my gesture toward indigenous notions of genealogy to be just that, a gesture that recognizes and respects indigenous knowledge.

3. Thanks to Kathy Ferguson for suggesting the verbing of ‘haole.’

4. Punahou is an elite missionary-founded, mostly haole, private prep school. Kōloa school, Kaua‘i High and Roosevelt High are mostly local public schools.

5. Bamboo Ridge is the leading publisher of local literature in Hawai‘i.
6. In Hawaiian culture, naming is extremely important. Names convey genealogy, tell stories of place and deeds, and transmit mana (supernatural or divine power).

7. Longs Drugs in Hawai‘i is an important social, cultural institution accommodating local tastes and providing the environment for all types of daily social interactions.

8. For example, cultural and literary theorist Christopher Connery called Trask’s critique an ‘antilocal diatribe’ (Connery, 2001: 200). While Connery may be right to a certain extent, he, like many non-native scholars, misses the distinction between genealogical indigenous claims and race-based identity claims. For more see (Kauanui, 2008; Rohrer, 2006).

9. The U.S. Supreme Court decided Rice v. Cayetano in 2000 siding with the haole plaintiff claiming that the Hawaiians-only voting requirement for the state office administering native Hawaiian programs was racial discrimination. This decision has opened the flood-gate to attacks on native Hawaiian programs and entitlements (Kauanui, 2002; Rohrer, 2006, 2010a).


11. My use of scare quotes here is meant to indicate that some of the Kanaka Maoli prison diaspora is twice displaced, first by incarceration, then by dislocation to prisons on the continent, effectively ending familial and cultural contact and context.

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