THE PARADISE PARADIGM: CULTURAL COMMODIFICATION AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE PACIFIC WORLD, 1780-1914

A dissertation presented

By

Tara M. Dixon

to
The Department of History

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

In the field of
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Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts
August 2017
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Utilizing the framework of trade networks and negotiations in the Pacific during the era of globalization, my dissertation, *The Paradise Paradigm: Cultural Commodification and the Evolution of the Pacific World, 1780-1914*, explores the fantasy and reality of desires. Over the course of the long nineteenth century, a period commencing with the last phase of British exploration of the Pacific and terminating at the beginning of World War I, the world became known, and within that “knowing” European and American actors constructed a particular framework of beliefs, prejudices, and practices that they carried with them into the region, and cultivated at home. This framework, known as a “transit,” operated in conjunction with other racialized stereotypes—and sometimes in opposition to them—to determine the appearance and conduct of Islanders at world expositions, theatre shows, and other displays that collectively formed a culture of spectacle designed to indoctrinate white Euro-Americans into the developing ideology of white supremacy. The commodification of Islanders’ culture and Island spaces lies at the heart of my work.

Fundamentally, commodities is a study of objects, artifacts and the attendant belief-systems embedded within them, collectively known as material culture. Material culture illuminates unspoken processes at work in the Pacific; it helps articulate the actions and motivations of people who seldom left written records behind, or whose official account is belied by attitudes evident in their choices, expressed through the objectification, acquisition, and disposal of items they valued and ones they did not. There were times when both groups, operating in the same region, sought similar goals, though for different reasons. Tangible goods like cloth, china, masted ships, tropical fruits and plants and cultural expressions like dance (in this case Maori haka, Hawaiian hula, and Euro-American blackface minstrelsy), oral chant, and songs helped commodify the land and its inhabitants to enrich the pockets of white colonists. Goods in circulation helped reify Islanders’ traditional hierarchies in a constantly evolving world punctuated by shifting allegiances, new cosmologies, and influxes of Other people, and their “stuff.”

Though the politics in play ultimately deprived most Islander polities of their sovereign rights by the beginning of the twentieth century, that consequence was neither inevitable nor determinative. I demonstrate that Pacific Islanders appropriated Western goods and technology to their own ends, for their
own reasons; rulers negotiated the tricky waters of Euro-American racism and *noblesse oblige* to solidify and maintain power for generations after Europeans made contact with them. The Romantic and Victorian sensibilities regarding commerce, morality, mobility, and nature shaped the Pacific just as surely as the region’s artistic expression, cosmology, and demographic decline shaped Western political and religious thought, leisure and bodily practice.
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Introduction

Traveling by land to Waitangi is no easy task. The small town lies on the northeast coast of New Zealand’s North Island; on an ever-narrowing spit of land that peters out at 90-mile Beach and feathers out eastward to form a series of bays, coves, and inlets. Waitangi shelters in the Bay of Islands, accessible by way of winding motorways and hilly coastal byways (there are no flat surfaces in New Zealand, and no straight roads), and finally across a narrow bridge to the small peninsula where some Maori nations formally ceded governance of the archipelago to the British in 1840. The town’s distance from Auckland and the popular tourist sites south of that city have relegated it to “see it if you can” status in many guide books, but Waitangi is unquestionably the most significant historic site in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and represents a defining moment in the cultural history of Oceania. Immediately upon entering the site, visitors are confronted with a massive enlargement of the only English-language version of the treaty hanging from the ceiling—history literally writ large—and invited to pay a relatively modest fee to tour the grounds, and witness a Maori cultural performance. And it is here that ancient Maori tradition meets settler colonial history and collides with the contemporary commodification of culture that defines the tourism industry in the Pacific.

The oldest building on-site is a house built to house missionary James Busby and his family in the 1830s. Situated a few hundred feet from the beach, surrounded by several acres of pastureland rolling gently towards the shore, the house was built with lumber and stones imported from Australia. Styled to lend prestige to the first local British official in New Zealand, it was not made to accommodate the needs of his large family; the government gave him a house half the size he requested and stipulated that part of the space be used as his professional offices. This is perhaps why the treaty negotiations took place on the wide lawn in front of the house, rather than within the tiny room intended for official government business. With coaching from the tour guides, visitors are encouraged to reenact the negotiations that took place here, between the British house and the Maori beach, a kind of impromptu immersion into the past arranged by historical interpreters who are often descendants of the Maori delegates who met on the same spot 176 years ago to argue the merits of allying with the British. The tour concludes with a different kind of immersive experience: a Maori “cultural performance,” or kapa haka. For an additional fee,
tourists are invited into the whare built to commemorate the centenary of the treaty in 1940, and witness a series of routines incorporating dance, song, martial artistry, and storytelling that have been practiced by Maori since pre-European days. They learn the steps as children, usually as games, but the movements are in reality basic fighting stances and, with the substitution of weaponry for the toys they practice with, rudimentary defensive and offensive techniques.

In essence, Waitangi has come to fill several roles for a variety of interested parties. Once a piece of land as forgotten as the alliance that was forged there, it was revived in the nation’s political and cultural imagination through the efforts of the missionary family’s descendants decades after it ceased to be of value to anyone. The effort to make Waitangi relevant again meant that it had to incorporate elements from every type of commemorative space. Artifacts of historical relevance are on display in the central building, which also houses bi-lingual signage complete with a timeline of events surrounding both Maori and Pakeha (the Maori term for white people) occupation of the territory and events leading up to the ensuing treaty. The landscape has been partially returned to its presumed original state, and incorporates indigenous plants and local fauna with the pristine manicured lawns befitting a British government official’s residence. The residence itself has been transformed into a house museum displaying nineteenth-century life on one side, and a history of the building from its construction to restoration on the other. In addition to the live demonstrations (read: reenactments) performed in the traditional whare, the site houses a traditional Maori voyaging canoe built in 1940 that, while also not from the same period as the house, or the treaty, is an indigenous artifact manufactured in the traditional way by hand without using any metal fasteners or bindings. What it lacks in historicity it makes up for in prestige: Maori artisans felled three ancient kauri trees to produce this seaworthy canoe which, though it is a museum-quality artifact, is still used to ferry royal dignitaries and compete in boat races. Though the process is extremely detailed and heavily manufactured, the goal of the combined styles of representation is to create a natural, “authentic” experience rooted in the historical significance of the location, and the incorporation of “real” Maori culture.

The crucial issue of authenticity, of historicity, with regards to cultural representation defines the major problem public historians encounter in such situations and forms the crux of my study. The best displays allow colonial and indigenous interests to frankly engage each other along the sometimes painful
lines of inquiry related to justice, reciprocity, and community. Such a conversation must include questions like: How does one display “the truth” in an accurate and balanced way without demonizing any of the principal parties? How does one even get at “the real” experiences of the disenfranchised without infantilizing or belittling them? The Waitangi example demonstrates, somewhat successfully, the effort of colonial descendants to accurately depict their own troubled histories. Yet the displays there also illustrate the inherent imbalance, to the benefit of the settler nation over the displaced and often disenfranchised indigenous population, in representing both sides of the historical moment. Waitangi’s commemoration, which features a collection of relevant Maori and British artifacts, interpretive signs and contemporary illustrations, a house museum, and reenactments by descendants of the treaty’s signatories, is indicative of a larger pattern of engagement between the imagined civility of the West and the perceived exotica of the Pacific. Such patterns are made clearer in the contemporary Pacific region because these nations are encapsulated by their respective island landscapes. There is not enough space to put distance between the obvious disparities in sovereignty, wealth, and socio-political representation. In addition, these islands rely heavily on the income tourism provides, so the cultural dynamic—the push and pull of authenticity/indigeneity vs. civilization/modernity—is at the forefront of national identity.

By incorporating traditional performances and including traditional indigenous artifacts, places like Waitangi “solve” the problem of representing the Polynesian presence without ever addressing the lack of Polynesian perspective in their compositions. Even at Waitangi, where the guides are often descendants of the treaty’s original signatories, the dominant narrative focuses on the need for the treaty, and culminates in the success of the negotiations. Only brief mention is given to the contestation of the treaty itself, which several Maori tribes refused to sign; or the violation of the treaty by the British, which was remedied only in the twentieth century. Instead, the Maori voice is situated firmly outside of time, or in the distant past. The cultural demonstrations and reenactments rely on simulations of ancient techniques of navigation, sailing and war. The Maori are thus reduced to the two principal traits that caught the British imagination in the nineteenth century —their maritime skill, and their fierce prowess in battle. Elsewhere in the Pacific, Islanders are similarly essentialized. In Hawaii, the concept of *aloha* overrides all discussion of conflict between Hawaiians and British and American invaders. Visitors are invited to witness the “real,” unsullied Islanders perform their recovered traditions without focusing on
how indigenous people integrate or interact with the post-colonial nation in the present tense. Thus, the reenactments ultimately fail to achieve their goal of connecting the present to the past. Instead, reenactments and traditional performances keep Islanders padlocked in stasis. Like nineteenth-century ethnological displays, these sites effectively revert to the old system of relegating the “native” to a developmental position outside of time, side-lining indigenous culture by putting it into an endless loop called the ahistorical present.

Still worse, we, the audience, have fallen into the bad habits of old ethnologists and race scientists—we fail to disassociate the ancient traditions from the modern Maori. In other words, we actively participate in relegating the Maori to an undifferentiated past. At the end of the demonstration, the audience is rather abruptly returned to the present at the end of the half-hour by the troupe’s concluding comments (“‘like’ us on TripAdvisor”) and ushered out into reality to visit the on-site restaurant and gift shop. This final exhortation brought forth involuntary laughter from my audience, because it served, like nothing else, to remind us that we were watching re-enactment, not enactment. The Maori troupe are independent contractors, not employees, a fact made clear at the end of the show. Their goal is to educate, and viewed in this context, the kapa haka has more the feel of a demonstration than a performance. As tourists, we visit Waitangi to see something real, and leave with verisimilitude. The fact that we witness living history—which by definition is a paradox—does not alter our expectations to be transported back to the particular ahistorical present of the Maori, a realm which exists nowhere. The only voice left is that of the settler nation, the polity descended from the colonial inhabitants’ successful manipulation of indigenous sovereignty. As a result, the conversation that occurs in the public domain of the commemorative site is only between the nation and itself, and does not seek out any interpretation that it cannot immediately control.

This preoccupation with authentic representation is built into the site itself from the very beginning. Waitangi was established a century after the original treaty negotiations, and the celebration’s organizers insisted that Maori use the venue to showcase their cultural traditions. The practice of using “natives” to draw crowds dates back a further one hundred years, when New Zealand tourist attractions began marketing the Maori as part of their appeal. The fashion of studying the indigenous population in their natural, pre-historic habitat is part of a larger process linking tourism, ethnological curiosity, the rise
of “middling” classes, and the Euro-American exploration of Oceania in the late eighteenth through nineteenth centuries. The “discovery” of inhabited Pacific islands occurred at a time when the Spanish, French and American revolutions had deprived the naval nations of Europe of large, lucrative, developed tracts of land and the ensuing abolitionist movements depleted them of free labor. The newly-christened United States was looking to place itself at the level of established superpowers, and improved naval technology made it possible to stay at sea for much longer periods of time. Safe sea exploration became possible at a time when it also became more lucrative, and the Pacific drew merchants and mariners alike seeking their fortunes by selling either goods or stories of their exploits.

True tales of daring exploits in far off lands fascinated Europeans and books written by ships’ officers and crewman usually enjoyed wide readership. These published works included descriptions of flora and fauna and extensive discussion of the “native” population in their “natural” habitat. Sailors, traders, and the missionaries who followed in their wake all performed the work of ethnologists, initially to further the interests of the governments who often funded their voyages, and eventually for the personal edification and education of amateur and professional naturalists. Greater ease and safety, lower costs, combined with broader knowledge of the Oceanian islands, led inevitably to increased recreational travel, conducted for health or leisure. The exploration of the Pacific also coincided with several Christian religious movements, and Pacific Islanders became central components in Apocalyptic predictions deciphered by means of a scientific reading of the Bible. Science began to figure heavily into interpretations of the social customs of Europeans and the rest of the world; scientists relied upon ethnographies collected by biologists, philosophers, historians, naturalists, and amateur enthusiasts to construct racial hierarchies that advanced certain white ethnic groups at the expense of “lesser,” non-white peoples.

The teleology of white supremacy stipulated a regime of progress and racial uplift, the “civilizing mission” that was the burden and duty of white races towards “primitive” ones. That same ideology, however, suggested that lesser races were likely doomed to extinction. Whites were therefore required to advance other races and to preserve their memory for posterity. These actions directly contradicted each other.

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other, and moreover, they presupposed that whites possessed the capacity to master other cultures, and the right to absorb or alienate them as necessary. It is in this milieu that we must interrogate the Waitangi “moment,” where British political forces gathered in 1840 to engage the Maori according to the precepts established by developing theories of race and existing European laws regarding sovereignty. A century later, Pakeha descendants of the participants gathered again to act out scenes of their own largesse and diplomacy. To do so, they needed Maori participation, in the form of artifacts and cultural performance. Maori themselves initially resisted the project, but eventually saw Waitangi as an opportunity to publicly underscore and seek redress for the wrongs committed against them in the treaty’s name.

After nearly a century of active suppression of Maori culture, the slow turn towards its valuation in the present (1940) was fueled in part by the historical significance of the site, but mostly by the marketability of the “moment”—a term that encapsulates the original signing of the treaty, the centenary celebration, and the site itself—in terms of its value to both Maori and Pakeha citizens. The treaty itself functions as a bridging cultural artifact, at once Maori and British, and touring the site of its debut is an act of ethnology, though not a study of the unified culture inaugurated by the 1840 proceedings. British culture, itself barely interrogated and then only within the contemporaneous confines of the treaty, is represented separately from Maori culture. “Maori-ness” is experienced as an event out of time: the cultural performance, the relation of the ancient origin story, and the modern reproductions of cultural artifacts all occupy the same ethnological space, so to speak. Like many preservation sites throughout the Pacific that have come to define Islander interactions and engagement with the West, Waitangi represents all the elements of cultural commodification central to my study: it is imbued with a significant geographical relevance, possesses a marketable appeal, and recognizable material culture (art and artifacts) that lends an air of authenticity to the commercial experience.

Each of these elements forms a pillar of the conceptual framework of my cultural history of Oceania. Perhaps “pillar” is too rigid, since these elements, or sub-genres, overlap. Material culture embodies art and cultural histories, but also commodities and objects in motion, or at least in transition. The term commodities refers to networks and economies, but also touches on migration and mobilities, race and gender. Cultural geography casts the widest net, encompassing the racial and gendered aspects of globality and the imperial schematics of region, as they center on place, in this case Oceania, which
requires incorporation of material culture and trade networks to explicate why and how we commodify culture. Commodification is more than just an economic exercise, it is the process by which groups of people engage each other across the cultural divide. Separately, each sub-field addresses the process of commodification in some way; combined, this interdisciplinary approach enables a multivalent examination of empire—how it is made by a variety of interests. My approach also allows me to assert the malleability of constructs society tends to think of as rigid, like race, gender and location. All told, it is a way to analyze the past as lived experiences, which I define as desire plus motivation, measured by capability. I use desire as the defining impulse in my cultural study because desire can be evidenced, to some degree, by commodities, the traceable exchanges between colonies and metropole, locals and interlopers. The wants of Islanders are sometimes the only means we have to engage them across the gulf of history and culture, since so few of them left recorded “proof” of their interpretation of the colonial moment.

The particular capacity of commodities, of things in motion, to evince their own “social lives” has been well articulated in Arjun Appadurai’s edited volume. His central thesis, that a study of goods and how they attain value can illuminate larger processes at work in human interactions, has been elaborated upon many times, most notably, in terms of Oceania, by Nicholas Thomas. Thomas also examines the commodification of art and material culture, kitsch made purely for the “tourist” trade in the late 1700s, falsely “authentic” representations of Oceanian culture. C.A. Bayly, who contributed to Appadurai’s *The Social Life of Things*, specifically explores the homogenizing effect of commodities from 1780-1914, how they can create cultural “simultaneities” and “uniformities” within the core/periphery dichotomy. Bailey’s work centers on the long nineteenth century because it is only during that period that technological advances made possible the quick distribution of goods, collection of raw materials, and wide dissemination of ideas and images that led to the rise of imperialism without which

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the creation and expression of uniformities could not occur. All of these theorists use examples from the Pacific to make their arguments, and it is on their strength that I situate my study there.

Once Europeans penetrated the Pacific in the nineteenth century, for the first time the “world” was made “real,” and the record and level of detail of their interactions with Islanders is fairly complete, thanks to the same imperialist processes that fostered improved navigation and faster ships. When the entire planet became navigable, the relationship humans had to things changed, and desire for commodities—goods that are not necessarily necessary—developed out of an evolving sense of the “exotic.” A book on all the goods in transit in the Pacific would take too long and contain too much to render an analysis of desire worthy. The weightier goods, like whale oil, will be touched on because it isn’t possible to speak of merchant ventures into the region without including them. Mainly I want to explore things people do not need but want. For most of the world, the Pacific region functioned as both object and location. The tourist industry formed as a result of the work of naturalists who sought to classify life and create a hierarchy of human development; it, along with several concurrent intellectual and spiritual movements, converged to make the Pacific itself an object of interest and its people objects of desire and ridicule. For those who could not travel, world’s fairs and exhibitions served to commodify race in the same way that tourism commodified place. The English diaspora, including Americans, spread across the entire region and connected the Pacific Northwest coast of North America to the central and southern belts of Pacific Islands, Australia, and China. The Anglophone Pacific still maintains the largest economies and enjoys the most tourist activity of any other colonized archipelagos or outposts, and as such provides the most cohesive, though not necessarily complete, picture of Islanders’ engagement with “the West” in the first era of globality.

Relevant Literature

The concept of an extant or historic “Pacific world” seems to ebb and flow with the trends in humanities discourse. Studies of the region have utilized various methodologies over the years, such as Marxist analysis, diaspora studies, and transnational approaches. They have also covered the major fields of history, including economics, culture, art, and interdisciplinary works that draw upon literature, anthropology and the sciences. John C. Beaglehole penned an early regional survey history, *Exploration*
of the Pacific (1935), where he examined the maritime contributions of twelve early navigators from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries.\(^4\) He became one of the first modern historians to look at the entire Pacific as a discrete location, and not part of the colonial British, French, or Spanish fringe. Beaglehole made extensive corrections to later editions of his text in 1945 and again in 1966 as new sources and archaeological evidence surfaced; yet, *Exploration* remained organized around the important Westerners who put the Pacific Islands on the map, so to speak. While Beaglehole treated the region as a valid point of inquiry, his text focused only on European accomplishments, giving the impression that “the Pacific” exists only through the agency of white explorers. Ironically, in his professional teaching career, Beaglehole influenced the development of later historians by arguing against the contemporary grain of presumptive white superiority. He encouraged students to critically examine the detrimental effects of Europeans’ interactions with Islanders and to develop a more nuanced, balanced critique of significant figures in New Zealand history.\(^5\) In short, he worked to deflate and demythologize the region’s colonial heroes, and spent the remainder of his professional life humanizing Captain James Cook in his thoroughly-researched, annotated publications of Cook’s journals. His edited volumes of Cook’s voyages of “discovery” remain the go-to version of the most extensive primary sources available for proto-Contact Islander culture, and, perhaps unintentionally, served to elevate Cook to the status of pre-eminent figure in Pacific history. It is the struggle against Cook’s notoriety, and all that it entails, that has determined much of the thrust of current Pacific historiography.

The later works of Deryck Scarr, Donald Denoon (ed.), and I.C. Campbell borrow from Beaglehole’s expansive approach, and while their “primer” histories offer more nuanced interpretations of Europe’s role in the Pacific, their works largely adhere to Eurocentric analyses. Some of that is intentional, like with Scarr’s *Fragments of Empire*, a history of the British High Commission in Fiji based on Parliamentary papers and British settler accounts.\(^6\) Others, like Campbell’s *A History of the Pacific*


Islands, purport to include both Islander and European perspectives, but, like Beaglehole, Campbell relies almost exclusively on accounts written by Europeans. Campbell’s work, written in 1990, suffers from a lack of Indigenous-language sources, and a reticence to rely on unwritten “texts” in the form of oral tradition, art, and contemporary artifacts. Although Beaglehole, writing half a century earlier, had little or no access to Maori (or Tongan, or Hawaiian) language materials, Campbell could have used the native-language newspapers and correspondence that had been unearthed during those intervening fifty years. Still, Campbell’s work provides a concise, mainly political overview of the history of years leading up to and throughout colonization. By contrast, Cambridge History of Pacific Islanders (1997), written and edited by Donald Denoon, with Malama Melesia, Jocelyn Linnekin, Karen Nero and Stewart Firth, is a more weighty—double the length of any of these other texts—effort that focuses more on people (Islanders) in place (Islands) in both historical and current contexts. Denoon collaborates with several other noted historians and anthropologists, whose collective expertise gives them the range to cover topics not easily broached in a strictly geographic or political analysis.

The new century has also given rise to “world” defining works, namely Matt K. Matsuda’s Pacific Worlds and Nicholas Thomas’ Islanders. These take a definitively ethnohistorical approach, relying on anecdotal evidence, art, material culture as well as the staples of archaeology, correspondence, and ships’ logs to trace the social, economic, and political effects of cross-cultural engagement between Pacific Islanders and Europeans. Matsuda in particular manages to fold the Rim and Basin together into a single unit of analysis, pulling Japan, Korea, and Indonesia into a Pacific-world lexicon that also includes old standbys like Hawaii, Tahiti and China. Current twenty-first century histories trend toward a “global and local” transnational approach, best represented in Pacific discourse by Gary Okihiro’s Island World, which reexamines U.S.-Hawaiian history from an “island-centric” point of view, and Pineapple Culture, which explores the thematic representation of the tropics in Western thought using the example of

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Both books highlight a relationship between European and Oceanian diasporas that is not quite deterministic, nor quite symbiotic, but somewhere in between. Tropical regions like Oceania and tropical islands like Hawaii did not just inform the temperate zone’s policies regarding commerce and expansion, they helped create the ideology behind its colonization in the first place. Okihiro refers often to the “hermeneutics” of the tropics, and his methodology, like that of Matsuda and Thomas, relies on a conceptualization of the Pacific as a site both sacred and imagined, a space that existed in the intellectual landscape of Western Europe long before it was plotted on any map.

It is common to find discussions of the Islands’ pre- and post-Contact economies woven into broad survey histories, like those listed above. Stand-alone economic histories centered in Oceania are relatively rare considering how necessary the region was to international trade. The scarcity of written sources renders a developed analysis of pre-Contact economies nearly impossible for historians unwilling to rely on an oral tradition which is largely anecdotal and cannot usually be verified by art or material culture. Noel Rutherford’s work on Tongan “pre-history” relied almost solely on traditions recounted by Queen Salote in the 1950s and 1960s, who was herself repeating from memory accounts from her grandparents’ generation. Theodore Morgan examines the pre-Mahele economies of Hawaii, but he uses the historical record established by visitors during the time of Kamehameha I and not before. As a result, he oversimplifies the old system of land allocation and tribute, equating it to Europe’s feudal system of land tenure—a misinterpretation that persisted for decades in histories of the Hawaiian kingdom. John M. Ward’s _British Policies in the South Pacific, 1786-1893_ (1976) is effectively an economic history, though perhaps it was written as a political study. He uses ships’ logs and merchant accounts to flesh out his examination of Britain’s handling of its regional colonial interests, with the result that his discussion of political economies overtakes any socio-political analysis Ward may have striven to

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11 Gary Okihiro, _Pineapple Culture_, chapter 1.


The same can be said of David Igler’s much more recent work. *The Great Ocean* discusses the trans-Pacific trade between the fledgling United States and China, emphasizing the importance of Pacific Northwest connection; because Igler also uses diaries, account books, ships’ logs, and shipping news to map out U.S. and Chinese trade routes, he provides an in-depth economic analysis of the northern part of the Pacific trade network. His additional discussion of disease and the ecological impact of globalization elevate his work to something more closely resembling a survey history, but *The Great Ocean’s* value lies chiefly in its incorporation of the seldom-discussed Pacific Northwest into Hawaiian and Pacific histories.

The most numerous accounts of Pacific history can be found in anthropology and its intellectual antecedent ethnology. Twentieth-century fieldwork evolved quite a bit from its nineteenth-century ancestor, gained rigor and benefitted from professionalization, which allowed for a better defined method of scientific inquiry. Anthropologists were expected to live with their subjects, not just near them, adopt their manners and learn their language in an immersive effort to understand their subjects. The level of focus and specificity required of the new methodology was intended to differentiate Indigenous groups from each other, to elaborate with precision on the unique traits of a particular archipelago and its inhabitants, and to provide context for their interactions, rather than judgment. While the early work of modern anthropologists like Bronislaw Malinowski (Trobriand Islands) and Margaret Mead (Samoa) ultimately romanticized existing images of Oceania and its “natives,” rather than redefined them, the shift away from an imagined objectivity paved the way for more representative ethnographies. This ethos spilled over into the field of history, and has produced several micro-histories that use inference and extrapolation alongside data and statistics. Greg Dening’s history of the Marquesas best exemplifies this technique. The islands suffered the greatest demographic collapse in the Pacific, a tragedy which cannot be contextualized using traditional methodology, because the people affected left few written accounts of

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their own demise. Dening begins his analysis from the position that Islanders are people who respond to situations like any others would, based on the best options available to them, and supplements written second-hand accounts by Europeans with informed conjecture in order to center Marquesans in their own story. Recent anthropologists continue that trend, and one, Ben Finney, uses what might best be described as experiential anthropology to reenact—and thus verify the commission of—the great nautical achievements of Polynesian distance voyages using period materials and navigational techniques.¹⁷

Finney’s endeavors during the 1990s served to objectively certify the long-standing oral tradition related by Islanders themselves: namely, that they traveled by choice and deliberately settled the various islands of Oceania. Indigenous voices have always been part of the larger conversation about the Islanders’ “progress” and “place” in the modern world, if only for Euro-American missionaries to show off the success of their civilizing mission. Samuel Kamakau and David Malo from Hawaii were educated by missionaries and encouraged to preserve ancient Hawaiian history and culture. In addition to writing about the early years of the kingdom, they transliterated Polynesian origin stories that were circulated in local newspapers, and repackaged for travel narratives, and widely disseminated over the course of the nineteenth century. One contemporary strand of intellectual thought tried to connect Polynesians to an imagined Indian Aryan origin, and these origin stories were often described by white and Native scholars as derivatives of a master Indo-European narrative, comparable to Greek mythology. The academic world ceased to credit the Indigenous explanation for Islanders’ presence in the Pacific, and gradually phased Islanders out of the historic narrative altogether, or spoke of them primarily in terms of their decline. The revisionist effort precipitated by the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s restructured the mainstream narrative. Modern Indigenous scholars such as Sione Latukefu and Epeli Hau‘ofa (Tonga), Malama Meleisea (Samoa), and Noenoe Silva, Haunani Kay-Trask, and Lilikala Kame‘eleihiwa (Hawaii), focused their efforts on reinserting Islanders into regional and worldwide events from which they had been erased in order to cater to the twentieth century’s Eurocentric narrative of progress. Their inclusion of Native-language sources from the 1800s and use of oral tradition as a primary source recaptures

forgotten or misconstrued gender dynamics, cultural practices, and the alternative narrative of European contact.

The importance of using Indigenous voices to tell their own story goes beyond the expansion of sources and the aesthetics that indigeneity provides. There is often an expressed hope from the establishment that ethnic historians will address “their” histories from the unique perspective that their alterity provides, but that wish often carries with it an assumption that their work will serve to validate existing discourses, however liberal, rather than broach new territory. That expectation resides inside the parameters of a methodology rooted in a telos of white supremacy, one that maintains its bias and Eurocentrism despite revisionist efforts. Latukefu and Meleisea continuously move between past and present in their studies of the church and missionary activity in Tonga and Samoa, respectively. They take the stance that history is always unfolding in the present, especially for native populations, since they literally have to live with the consequences of actions that German, American and British people consider “the past.” Hau’ofa, a polymath in the social sciences, worked outside the narrow framework of history, employing literature and poetry to simulate ancient Islanders’ forms of documenting a past that, for them, exists outside linear timekeeping. Activist Haunani Kay-Trask minces no words with her scathing rebukes of the “prostitution” of Hawaii by European and American interests. Both she and Kame’eleihiwa argue that no legitimate histories of the Pacific can be written without inclusion of “native” interpretations, and cast doubt on the ability of foreigners to write Indigenous histories at all. While I obviously disagree with the latter belief, there is no question that Islander knowledge is essential to representative Islander histories. Noenoe Silva’s recovery of the Hawaiian-language petition against

18 Denoon et al., *Cambridge History of Pacific Islanders*, 26-35.


20 Epeli Hau’ofa, *We are the Ocean: Selected Works* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008).

21 Haunani Kay-Trask, “Lovely Hula Hands: Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaii” is a now-famous lecture Kay-Trask delivered in 1991 that was subsequently published in a now-out-of-print scholarly journal. It has been widely circulated online and in classrooms since then. I accessed a copy November 2011 at https://manjioca.wordpress.com/2008/09/12/lovely-hula-hands-by-haunani-kay-trask/

the annexation of the kingdom—a document which had been languishing in the National Archives, forgotten and untranslated, for a hundred years—reframed the entire history of the American takeover of those Islands. She proved that Hawaiians did contest the takeover of their nation, and that the U.S. Congress did view the actions related to the “conquest” as unlawful. Her work also shows the necessity of using native-language speakers to broaden imperial histories, particularly in regions like the Pacific, which enjoyed a higher rate of literacy than Western nations and documented more public commentary as a result.

Indigenous historians are neither more nor less “political” than their white counterparts, though they often feel hobbled by a fundamentally Western methodology and focus on provable evidence. In “On Analogies,” Teresia Teaiwa speaks about the general ignorance of Pacific cultural history outside the region, which has caused Pacific historians to resort to analogies (comparing struggles caused by diversification in the Pacific to European diversity issues, for instance) and fall victim to trends (like diaspora studies) in historiography. She warns against using “fad” methodologies, which can erase changes in indigenous “ways of knowing” over time and can erroneously conflate issues specific to Pacific Islanders with those of aboriginal populations in general or other communities with surface similarities. This is not to say that cross-cultural comparisons are not advisable; indeed they may sometimes be necessary, but they should be used judiciously, with a particular goal in mind that does not negate the specificity or magnitude of either experience. In that vein, Christine Skwiot’s comparative analysis of Cuba’s and Hawaii’s relationship with the United States avoids this problem by examining the divergent histories of both islands, which were “acquired” in the same year, through the lens of the American tourist industry. Though both island groups occupied the American imagination as “tropical paradises,” Hawaii was rendered relatively harmless because of its perceived population of light-skinned “natives,” whereas Cuba became an outlet for American male vice due to its association with


“degenerate” Spanish colonials and their “mulatto” Black population. It is entirely possible that American attitudes towards race and all that is packed into them—color, danger, humanity, value, sovereignty—can only be addressed in comparative context. As important as it is to pay attention to the experiences of the subaltern in instances of imperial aggression, there is no escaping the visceral, overt presence of the U.S., the U.K., France, or Spain in these islands, among these peoples. What Euro-Americans did in the tropics matters, and sometimes their actions overrode all other factors that contributed to identity construction in individual communities in either ocean.

Fundamentally, tourism existed to “sell” colonies like Hawaii and Tahiti to their “core” European populations, a process Kay-Trask refers to repeatedly as a form of cultural—and sometimes physical—prostitution. Elizabeth Buck, a structuralist, uses the powerful example of hula and chant to explore the changes wrought upon and within Hawaiian culture by contact with Westerners. She applies a modified Marxist framework that displaces the pre-eminence of economic determinism and class struggle and sees history as a combined “articulation of economic, political, and ideological forces eventuating in a very particular way, in particular places.”26 In Aloha America, Imada uses the oral histories of hula dancers who performed around the world in the 1890s, during Hawaii’s volatile transition from kingdom to colony, and combines them with more recent interviews of dancers who perform their culture to usually misapprehending audiences in Hawaii and abroad.27 These women inhabited multiple worlds, acting as tourists in the West while purveying an untrammeled “authentic” Hawaiian past to Americans who were effectively armchair tourists at world’s fairs and expositions. Imada captures the difficulty of being a contemporary performer of traditional cultural norms, a paradox in which many Indigenous groups find themselves trapped.

The Pacific entered the European imagination during an era that put culture on display in the Islands themselves, but primarily used museums to tell the “story” of pre-historic/ahistoric Oceania. The U.S. Exploratory Expedition collected artifacts during their three-year scientific voyage that became the


seed of the Smithsonian Institution in the 1840s. Adrienne Kaeppler’s compendium of *Oceanic Art* (1997) catalogues this collection and ones like it in museums around the world—this necessary tome addresses the difficulty of explaining not only what Oceanian art is, but where it is, and how to differentiate different styles from each other. It is not a work that could have been completed without the efforts of early explorers and merchants who gathered and stored these items in (primarily) Western museums, but *Oceanic Art* is also a sobering examination of just how literally object-ified the Pacific has become. Nicholas Thomas has also written about Pacific art and objects, though he focuses on items in transit and exchange between Asia, Europe and Oceania in the nineteenth century. His texts are part of the body of work utilizing an anthropological methodology that strives for informed subjectivity, and in *Entangled Objects* (1991) and *Oceanic Art* (1995) he posits that an object can have multiple meanings in transit, as it changes hands between Islanders and Europeans, and between Islanders themselves as the object in question circles the Islands, and Europe. Thomas draws on the much-researched and oft-cited examples in Melanesia, like *kula* rings, but also speculates on underrepresented exchange groups with little or no documentation. Cultural histories, particularly those of underrepresented or misrepresented groups—and Islanders fit both definitions—sometimes require intellectual leaps of faith, as Teaiwa articulates in her essay. She states, as have Dening and Hau’ofa before her, that speculation is preferable to silence. In the face of the monolith of an unprovable Pacific past, it is better to conjecture than to not speak at all.

**Pertinent Methodologies**

I have built a conceptual framework rooted in the idea of other people’s “stuff,” so it is only appropriate to build from Daniel Miller’s monograph of the same name. *Stuff* argues that people are actually created by their material belongings, and not the other way around. The lack of a thing does not negate desire for

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it, yet all too often scholars investigating non-industrial cultures begin with the premise that they have all they need, with no real consideration that many people feel a need for objects others find extraneous. In other words, “stuff” is how we know who we are, but it is also what we use to define the Other. I would also argue that Other people’s stuff is also what we use to define ourselves—how “we” are different from “them.” Miller believes that the collection of materials to which we stake our identity is a means of self-alienation, what he calls objectification. If this is true, then our relationship to “stuff” is both dialectical and reductive. The more we, or society, gain in materiality, the more we are “reduced…by the sheer quantity of things.”

I take this as explanation for the West’s growing fascination with “primitive” societies over the course of the nineteenth century, when Euro-Americans’ access to stuff increased exponentially. Scholars, tourists, and especially anthropologists diminished the complexity of these societies, constructed so very differently from their own in terms of their relationships to each other, the land, and their belongings. While the invention of the noble savage primarily became “a stick with which we beat ourselves,” it also created a longing, both for “their” stuff, and for a more Arcadian lifestyle in which “our” stuff was no longer necessary. This longing contradicts its own meaning, for we take and display their material culture in our homes and museums as evidence of progress—ours, not theirs—and to verify the marked dislocation between where we “are” and where they “remain.” And yet, we clearly venerate these fascinating objects and use them to remark upon a mythopoetic unity, or universality, set in the distant past.

Miller means his theory to apply not just to the West’s attitude towards possessions, but to all “stuff,” meaning that his is a transcendent, though not unitary, theory to explain the contradictory manner in which human beings desire, possess, and shed their belongings. I am not sure I concur, but if he is right, then the Maori are the most aware of the dialectic. They have a concept of a force called hau that imbeds itself in objects at the moment of exchange and necessitates obligation or reciprocation. This means that they take a far healthier stance toward materiality than Westerners do. Instead of losing themselves in the acquisition of stuff, and feeling guilt over their materialism, the Maori recognize that

“stuff” is actually “inalienable…demand[ing] some sort of return.”32 In On Longing, Susan Stewart takes this premise one step further. She sees in objects a narrative, and particular objects provide narrative insight into aspects of the human self, suggesting that we collect and surround ourselves with material culture to create and signify our symbolic connection to, and distance from, bourgeois existence, public life, and state authority.33 This suggests that the exchange, the hau, imbedded in the acquisition of “stuff” need not be literal, and may almost never consist of merely physical transactions, but is always a means to communicate with oneself, however muddled and abstract. Humans use scale (the miniature and gigantic) to evaluate and connect to objects, and they use objects to order and regulate the world. Stewart defines both the souvenir, collected while traveling, and the collection, a gathering of enshrined souvenirs, as “devices for the objectification of desire,” and particularly singles out the collection as “the nexus for all narratives…where history is transformed into space, into property.”34 And here is where the object, the self, and the state authority meet: in the mitigation of the past and the advent of history as expressed through the collection and state-sanctioned display of other people’s “stuff.” Take Polynesian canoes for example.

European explorers set out on government-funded expeditions and collected canoes and other items from the Pacific Islands in order to study and devise feasible methods for trade, settlement and religious conversion of the people who made them. Their particular fascination with Polynesian methods of sailing was natural, given their own occupation; and the drawings by naturalists attached to those voyages, which accurately document the shape, rigging, masts, sails and sailors of these vessels attest to their interest. Time passed, and Europeans began to conflate the styles and origins of particular vessels, especially as those objects began to disappear from daily Polynesian life. By the 1790s, most Hawaiians had replaced their labor-intensive, hand-woven, pandanus-leaf sails with European canvas sails.35

32 Ibid., 67.
34 Ibid.
after, they stopped making canoes altogether, in favor of European ships and smaller craft, some of which were made in Europe or New Zealand specifically for the burgeoning Polynesian trade. Hawaiians and Fijians and Marquesans sold their timber in the China trade, and by 1830, there were no longer many trees in any island community, except New Zealand, in sufficient supply to produce even small boats. Around this time, some colonial actors, like those in Tahiti and later, in Aotearoa, forcibly confiscated Islanders’ canoes, in order to control their movements between islands and render them dependent on Europeans for transportation.

Increasingly, canoes could only be found in museum collections, yet, the iconic image of the Polynesian navigators—clad only in bark-cloth, smiling, hard at work on masted canoes with lateen sails—persisted, replicated in official guide books and instruction manuals, often without an attempt to match the correct community with its vessel or their trappings. The conflation of material culture across Islander groups as well as across time was part of a larger trend in European thought and, sometimes, in colonial policy. If objects are metonyms—symbolic representations that substitute one thing or concept for another, closely associated thing or concept—then Europeans ceased to differentiate between communities of Islanders, especially within Polynesia, just as they stopped acknowledging their capacity for adaptation. At the same time, European intellectuals and colonial governments were developing a racialized theory of progress that labeled Islanders as incapable of further cultural development, and used as proof their primitive technological skills, no doubt evidenced by their canoes. They created a narrative based on a comparative analysis of a shared cultural structure: maritime tradition. Europeans once used such antiquated methods of travel, but had progressed to larger and faster vessels; it did not seem to occur to anyone that the reverse may have happened in the Pacific. They determined, correctly, that Islanders could not have used the same kinds of canoes Europeans later collected to sail the vast distances between island chains, but drew the wrong conclusions based on that assessment. The relatively unbiased observation of early explorers speculated that Islanders descended from a single cultural and linguistic point of origin, but mid-nineteenth-century academics pursued a theory of accidental settlement that grew increasingly complicated as time passed. Trapped, perhaps, by the romance of a lost people, European and American scholars dragged out the “mystery” of Polynesian origins for well over one hundred years before the 1976 Hokule’a expedition proved once and for all that the settlement of the Pacific by its
Islanders was no mistake. Once settled, Islanders ceased building their large voyaging canoes and transitioned to smaller, more maneuverable craft for fishing and local excursions.

To people who instinctively associate progress with size, the idea that Tahitians and Maori, with their relatively small boats, were modern iterations of an ancient culture was impossible. To apply Stewart’s argument, Westerners used scale to disassociate themselves from Islanders and to negate their history by invalidating their dynamic capacity for adaptation according to their own needs. They used Polynesians’ “stuff” to minimize their achievements, which from a political standpoint made it easier to justify imperial conquest as laying claim to spaces that were only “accidentally” inhabited. In other words, Euro-Americans used canoes to create an us/them divide along the lines of modernity, and determined that Islanders simply couldn’t keep up. People who were once valued on Western ships as excellent sailors were depicted almost exclusively as canoe-paddlers by the end of the era; in the minds of Westerners, it was who they were. It is no coincidence that museum collectors and ethnologists increased their efforts to enshrine Polynesian canoes once steamships came into standard use. Combustion engines represented advanced technology, and putting antiquated canoes in museums shut the door on the “primitive” remnants of both Westerners’ and Islanders’ pasts. Once Polynesian canoes became relics in museums, it was easier to make the same narrative analogy about the people who made them—that they, too, belonged in museums.

Collections, in museums but especially in more tactile, sensory venues like world’s fairs and expositions, create a sanitized, “utopian sphere” where the authentic/primitive can be witnessed in a presumably unfiltered environment and assimilated into the manufactured/modern landscape of the cosmopolitan viewer. They show, in essence, how things were. According to Robert Rydell, who studied all U.S. expositions and world’s fairs during the era of imperial expansion (1876-1916), these exhibitions also promote a vision of a utopian future, centered around progress and white supremacy. Both he and Anne Maxwell examine culture-on-display in the U.S and Europe, respectively, by analyzing how cultures were positioned spatially during these events, and how people, especially non-whites, were

36 Stewart, On Longing, preface.

distributed and posed within those spaces. Both approach world’s fairs as tools of the nation-states that produced them, since they “propagated the ideas and values of the country’s political, financial, corporate, and intellectual leaders,” thus creating and enforcing a belief system that they then instilled in fairgoers on a large scale, over a period of decades.\textsuperscript{38} Maxwell adds to her study colonial portraiture and photos from ethnological expeditions into Fiji, New Zealand, and Samoa—images widely circulated by the emerging tourist industry, which also contributed material and money to expositions themselves.\textsuperscript{39} We see then, an interconnected propaganda machine, one that promoted the science of racism and white supremacy within the comfortable confines of the metropole, and then encouraged whites to enact their dominance over places and peoples without ever resorting to brute force. This is what Mary Louise Pratt calls the anti-conquest, the “strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony.”\textsuperscript{40} While Pratt is speaking specifically of written travel narratives, Maxwell and Rydell stretch the definition of “narrative” to encompass the rhetoric created around and for the visual/performative displays of the exhibitions.

An important part of Pratt’s argument centers around the classificatory systems created by Carl Linnaeus in the eighteenth century and used widely by scientists, naturalists, merchants, explorers and anyone entering a “contact zone” to categorize any new find according to a pre-existing, pre-determined set of criteria.\textsuperscript{41} The entire world immediately became “known,” to borrow from Kerry Howe, long before its limits were navigated.\textsuperscript{42} This made it easier for the maritime powers to be more readily comprehensible to each other, for they could engage in the new world using the same “language,” science. The new “vocabulary” made it possible for Euro-Americans to incorporate all non-white people as subordinates in an existing schema, initially dubbed a “great chain of being” and eventually an “evolutionary scale,” regardless of how similar they might be to Europeans, and in spite of how dissimilar

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ibid.}


\textsuperscript{40} Pratt, \textit{Imperial Eyes}, 7.

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Ibid.}

Europeans felt from each other. Though presented as a new concept at expositions and in travel guides, the idea of the “natural” superiority of whites and their “inevitable” mastery of the world went at least as far back as Plato and his organization of the world into climatic zones, a philosophy Linnaeus drew upon when he created his classificatory system. So, during a time marked by increased competition between imperial powers, there grew also a realization of a shared whiteness, with similar goals and objectives, like beneficent world domination. The design of these expositions, whether manufactured in Paris or in the United States, spoke of a burgeoning pan-white identity that informed Euro-American reactions to indigenous peoples across the portion of the world then being colonized—Oceania and the African continent.

Based on Howe’s critical analysis of Western literature immediately preceding and during the centuries of exploration that led to the “discoveries” of the Americas and Oceania, “place” is created in the mind and in text long before it is manufactured on the ground in the actual locations ruminated upon by philosophers, merchants, colonists, and missionaries. This is why the issue of authenticity dominates the discourse of artifacts, objects and objectified people on display. Items representing Oceania have to be authentically Polynesian in order to have value, in order to be truly representative of what “the Pacific” meant to Westerners. Souvenirs thus became the place they came from (metonymy), and collecting them was an act of associative possession, one that could be comfortably engaged in by the upper and middling classes. For those who lacked the means to travel, expositions became forums for public racialization—the display of Brown and Black bodies—and thus a means for the state to communicate with all its citizens about indigenous populations, about whiteness, and about the civilizing mission. Attendees could collect souvenirs from the fairs as well, and the commemorative guide books, silver spoons, and postcards helped remind people of their patriotic duties and moral imperatives in a world increasingly characterized by terms such as “ours” and “theirs.” Most importantly, The quality of sameness Euro-Americans discovered in each other at the expositions made it easier for them to contract and flatten other people’s “worlds” as well. Just as Igbo from what is now Nigeria and Saan from the Kalighari desert became “African,” Pacific peoples became “aboriginals.” Even today, ideas of indigenous peoples become

43 See Gary Okihiro’s discussion of the philosophy surrounding climate zones in the first chapter of *Pineapple World.*
enjambed together, through word choice, by those of us trying to separate them. “Indian,” “aboriginal,” “Native”—these terms are all used to denote particular communities of Indigenous peoples in specific regions, yet they are also interchangeably used to speak collectively about a race of people defined by proximity to their “place” of origin. Our limited vocabulary demonstrates the extent to which our thinking has been done for us.

In her book *Transits of Empire*, Jodi Byrd argues that the erasures of specific indigeneity by colonial/imperial actors abroad and in the U.S. grew from the nation’s prior experiences with indigenous peoples in North America. This means that Britain shares many of the same notions about “native” populations because they spring from the protracted colonial period immediately preceding the imperial era of the U.S. and the U.K. Indigeneity, or “Indianness” functions as a “transit,” a compressed frame of reference, pervading colonial discourse and informing imperial policies down to the present day in theaters of Anglo/American influence. “Felt and intuited as a presence” more so than as a category of inhabitants, Indianness “served as a field through which structures have always already been produced.”

Indianness, then, was the lens through which America imagined it saw a world for the taking, the “world” of ocean polities beyond the terminal boundary of the Pacific Ocean. It is the “ontological grounds” upon which the U.S. justifies its colonial and imperial actions, whether in Hawaii in the nineteenth century, or Guyana in the twentieth, and the concept carries with it certain expectations that both justified and indemnified the worst policies created by U.S. settler colonials in service of the state. To be Indian is to be both the subject of an entire discourse on settler colonial/imperialism and the framework around which such discourse has been built. Speaking on a similar subject, Paige Raibmon goes on to describe Indianness as a one pole of a “binary framework” that casts “inauthenticity” in relational opposition to indigeneity. There are, of course, “parallel binaries” associated with Indianness—not least of which is whiteness—that collectively create a web of shared understanding of the “transit” of Indianness within

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45 Ibid., xix.

Euro-American polities, and between those polities and the indigenous populations that came under their control in the nineteenth century.

I propose an additional binary for the web Raibmon has constructed: that of Blackness in relation to indigeneity, specifically “Islandness.” In the first chapter of *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning*, Cedric Robinson recounts the public performances of “Africans” in Europe and Britain from *Othello* to *Juba*, one of the first African-American minstrel performers in the 1830s. He essentially describes the development of Blackness as a transit, to use Byrd’s term, in Europeans’ and Americans’ thinking about race. By the beginning of the Victorian era, definitions of “Black” diverged from those of “African,” and both terms carried different meanings than that of “Indian” or “aboriginal,” even in those places where Africans were the indigenous population. Both transits were created publicly, often on display, within and outside the sanitized sphere of the exhibition, but the messages packed into each transit were enacted very differently. While depictions of “Indianness” always required actual Indians to seem “real,” all whites needed to do was dress down and blacken up their faces in order to more “correctly” depict “authentic” Blackness. This changed after the Civil War, however, when, as Robinson says, the “dignity of the African phenotype” that had been constructed before the war as part of the abolitionist movement fell victim to the developing “racial consensus” on white supremacy.\(^{47}\) From that point on, the public required its minstrel entertainment be performed by “real” African-Americans, lending their performances, in the minds of the white audiences at least, a veneer of authenticity. It is in that desire for authenticity, however manufactured, that the transit of Indianness and the transit of Blackness intersect, creating a “parallel binary,” to use Raibmon’s term.

After the Plains Wars, the government renewed its efforts to remove Native Americans from the internal landscape and thus the national conversation. Britain followed suit in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. By the time the U.S. engaged the developing world narrative on indigenous peoples through expositions, colonial focus had shifted to Africa for Britain and the Pacific and Caribbean for the United States. Across the Anglophone world, in the Caribbean, Africa, and Europe, Blackness became the medium through which whites talked about race and the pivotal cornerstone through which they displayed

racial difference. I do not mean to suggest that the condition of Black in America was anything like the condition of “native” anywhere. But, Euro-Americans often compared them, and felt Pacific Islanders displayed a phenotype that was more “brown” than “red,” which put Islanders somewhere between immutable Blackness and vanishing Indianness. Being an Islander during the Age of Empire meant you endured the worst parts of both Indigeneity and “Africanness.” Both ethnologists and politicians drew heavily on both transits to predict—benevolently or maliciously, depending on your point of view—the future of Pacific Islanders and develop appropriate policies regarding the dispensation of their territories, and their material culture.

While the race science of the late Victorian period officially rendered Africans in diaspora permanently irredeemable by validating the “one drop” rule, these same thinkers postulated that as Indians and Islanders gained modernity, they lost authenticity; in effect, they ceased to be Indigenous. This form of reductive indigeneity did not go unchallenged, particularly in the spheres where “Indianness” was put on display. Indians performed their traditions for whites, but also used the existing impressions they helped create to improve their own situations and assert their fundamental identities on their own terms. They used “Indianness” to create a market for their authentic artifacts, and sold them to tourists desperate to own objects created by “real” Indians. They engaged Western courts in formal legal proceedings to keep their land or attend segregated schools. They used Western technology like tools and cameras to re-create or preserve records of traditional dances, dresses, and ceremonies. They appropriated Christian trappings of prophecy and revelation to create new religions and explore different destinies than the ones Euro-Americans set for them. Bayly calls the adoption or combination of competing cultural practices an expression of uniformity, designed not to erode pre-existing cultural norms, but to “set limits to the nature and extent of their domination by European power-holders.”

Uniformities created a mutually comprehensible field for debate in arenas like the court- or schoolroom, but they also transferred power almost wholesale to the colonial regime—what Raibmon calls the “Catch-22 of colonialism.” But, the very act of engagement also belied the colonial narrative that

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indigenous peoples were incapable of progress. Indigenous people everywhere, and Islanders in particular, refused to be restricted to the confining narrative of the vanishing “Indian,” and they affirmed their continuity through actions, manners, and objects.

Islanders used their purchasing power to make statements to Westerners about their perceptions of modernity. These purchases included clothing, housewares, curios, and large-ticket items like ships and houses. Islanders expressed their self-identity most often through consumerism. Daniel Miller would call consumption a natural reaction to identity erasure, since accumulating “stuff,” especially when it originally belonged to someone else, is an act in which all humans engage to more fully understand themselves. Take European ships, for example. Their arrival represented not so much a cultural shift to Islanders, as a cultural expansion. With them arrived new evidence of old memories: those of a shared island world comprised of distant relatives and points of origin. Islanders used tall ships to travel to other Islands, and reestablished their old trade networks with those Islands through the aegis of Europeans’ desire for goods. They traveled the world like their ancestors had done, even though the scale of the world may have seemed larger to them now. The method of travel might have been a novelty, but the travel itself was not. And though they no longer built and seldom used canoes, they still identified themselves as mariners, a cultural marker they shared with the British, French and Spanish whalers and merchants who washed up on their shores. Islanders, like Europeans, travelled the world as tourists, working as deckhands to pay passage, or wandering abroad as royal emissaries. Back “home,” wealthy Hawaiians and Tongans purchased Euro-American ships made to suit their tastes and status and sailed for pleasure, in the same way that wealthy Americans and British people did. They emulated foreign mannerisms to familiarize themselves with the political and social mores of a larger world. They made use of Other people’s “stuff” in order to set themselves apart as royals, which was still a fairly new concept in those islands. They used European ships to say something about themselves, to each other.

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I have divided the methodologies summarized above into three fields: the works of Miller and Stewart on material culture/associative possession; that of Rydell and Maxwell related to culture on display/public racializations; and finally Bayly, Raibmon and Byrd on commodities/culture in motion. These works, along with several others helped me develop the framework I outlined earlier, which uses these discursive
fields embedded within public history to explore the connected issues of race, identity, and commodification in the Pacific. Each chapter title reflects a different theme related to the settlement, exploitation, and survival of the region and its inhabitants. The first chapter, “Routes,” discusses the exploration and settlement of the Pacific Islands by Islanders, and concludes with the arrival of Europeans in transit through the region in search of easier paths to China. “Destinations” examines the role of cosmology in constructing “place,” creating a sense of attachment and permanence within the Islands—first for the Islanders themselves, and then for European interlopers beginning in the late eighteenth century. Chapter 3, “Consumed,” covers the developing ideology of white supremacy that infused the tourism industry and created themed expositions that justified the U.S. and Great Britain’s imperial projects. Chapter 4, “Commodified” explores cross-cultural appropriation through a comparative analysis of blackface minstrelsy—the world’s most popular form of entertainment—in the Pacific, and the hybridized Polynesian dance sensation that swept the world as “hula.” Finally, I note the “Evolution” that took place within the “island world” as a result of the cultural clash between Islanders, Americans, and British actors. I conclude with a modern examination of three sites of representation for Pacific Islanders and their material culture: The War Memorial Museum in Auckland, the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, and the Peabody-Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts.

Terminology

I have made an attempt to use the most logical terminology for my study and strike a balance between respect for the cultures I have researched and the Eurocentric perspective through which I have been raised and trained to filter all data and sensory information. None of us can escape our schema, but I do try to mitigate it whenever possible by using capitalization to elevate descriptors of non-white ethnic groups, and ethnic words (though not usually the accompanying grammar) to describe concepts unique or original to the Islanders that created them. As such, I use the term Indigenous to refer to the original inhabitants of a land mass, such as North America or Viti Lava (Fiji), and Islanders to speak specifically about the indigenous population of the Pacific Islands. I also refer to these people collectively, and interchangeably, as Pacific Islanders, Polynesians, and (rarely) Oceanian; if I am intentionally differentiating between geographical regions within the Pacific Ocean, I will use the terms Melanesian or
Micronesian as applicable. Since I concentrate my study on the region D’urville labelled “Polynesia,” my use of that word is consistent with traditional scholarship, though I agree with the earliest European explorers and modern scientific data that “Polynesian” more aptly describes the culture and ethnicity of Oceania in its entirety, rather than just a section of Islanders the French considered prettier than the rest. When I discuss a particular community or group, I refer to them explicitly as Maori (Aotearoa/New Zealand), Hawaiian, Samoan, Fijian, Tongan, etc., and I work to keep whatever Polynesian words I use consistent with the language of that community. For instance, I use kapu when speaking about the ideology as it existed in Hawaii, and tabu in discussions of the same phenomenon in Tonga. I do not use the term kanaka to speak about Hawaiians, though it is commonly used by other scholars, simply because there are other Islanders who refer to themselves as kanaka, and it would be confusing. By that logic, I use “Oceanian” instead of “Oceanic” to refer to Islanders because the latter term is also a generic adjective in the English language.

I do not capitalize terms such as “indigenous” if I am speaking in generalities. The word “white,” in reference to people, is almost never capitalized because one of the basic premises of my work states that the policies and actions of white people, or Euro-Americans as I often call them, during this time worked to enjamb their separate ethnicities and create a very general, polyglot ethnic group dedicated to the principle of white supremacy, though they expressed and enacted that singular ideology in different ways. I focus on two connected polities, Great Britain and its cultural descendant the United States. A more accurate term to describe their collective would be “Anglo-American,” but since this term is used in the U.S. to expressly identify white Americans, I feel it would only confuse many of the discussions on race within this study. When I write about “Americans,” I speak generally of the citizens of the U.S., which, for the majority of the time period I canvass, did not include Islanders, African-Americans or Native Americans. Thusly, I use the term, “Black,” “Indian” or “Indigenous,” and “Islander” when speaking of people from those communities. I do not enclose these terms in quotations unless I am referencing a particular discourse or collection of stereotypes that can be summed up by words like “white,” “black,” “brown” or “red,” and in such cases, I do not capitalize the word unless it falls at the beginning of a sentence. I occasionally use the term “Anglo-African,” when referring specifically to Africans of British descent or who fall under the political power of Great Britain; similarly, “African-
Americans” are those who are of white American descent or under their power. To be clear, I write about Blacks generally as part of the African diaspora, descendants of the European and American plantation slave systems, though “black” is an idea based almost exclusively on the representation of Blackness created and displayed by white Americans throughout the long nineteenth century. It was appropriated and re-disseminated by British actors in their colonies during that same period, so while Blackness is a multivalent, interconnected identity marker, “black” derives from the United States, though it quickly became part of the global discourse, usually to negative effect, in places like Africa, Australia, and Oceania.

For major Oceanian concepts, objects and social hierarchies, I use the term appropriate term for the Island group or community under discussion in that section. For instance, when writing about the system of taboos and societal restrictions as practiced by Hawaiians, I use the Hawaiian word “kapu” to accurately reflect that system of beliefs. When referencing Tongan taboos, I use the word “tabu” as is appropriate. Such use does not extend to the surrounding grammatical structure of the sentences in which these words occur, however. Oceanian languages require the use of modifiers to determine number (singular or plural) and declension (possessive, adverb, etc), so I use the word itself, usually in singular form, to convey--imperfectly--the uniquely Oceanian cultural interpretation of objects and power.

Tongan and Hawaiian languages make use of the okina, a glottal stop represented by an inverse apostrophe (or comma, as the British say). It is considered to be a letter of the alphabet, and not an optional type of punctuation. The word Hawai‘i properly should always include an okina, but I have adopted the convention of using the correct spelling to indicate the largest island in the archipelago, also called Hawai‘i, and using the word Hawaii without its okina to reference the entire archipelago. Other Oceanian words commonly used in my work are:

- ali‘i / ali‘i nui (Hawaiian) - chief / high chief
- ‘eiki (Tongan) - chief, royal family member
- rangatira (Maori/British*) - chief/elder *Maori had no word for chief, so the British created the word from the name of the god Rangi
- kapu/tabu/tapu (HI, Tongan, Maori) - sacred prohibition
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>noa (universal)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>sacred profanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hau (universal)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>literally “breath” or “spirit”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tama ‘a (Tongan)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>literally, “child(ren) of”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu′asina (Tongan)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>mother’s brother (uncle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mehekitanga (Tongan)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>father’s sister (aunt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>papalagi (Samoa)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>lit., “sky-bursters,” strangers, white people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haole (Hawaiian)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>foreigner, esp. white people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muli (Tongan)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>foreigner, esp. white people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakeha (Maori)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>white people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiwi (British)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>term for citizens of New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haka (Maori)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>a war challenge, traditionally performed before battle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hula (Hawaiian)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>a series of dances used for a variety of purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘ote‘a (Tahitian)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>drum-dance known for its fast rotating hip movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter One - Routes

The Lines on the Map

Imagine you could drain the world’s oceans. The Pacific Basin would be a valley so wide and deep it consumed one-third of the earth’s surface. Tahiti and Fiji would be just a few peaks in a long chain of volcanoes forming an extensive mountain range that spanned thousands of miles east and south from the Philippine plateau. As impressive as the cone of Rapa Nui would be, the massive peak would be dwarfed by the mountains of the northern ridge running east from Japan. That ridge would terminate rather abruptly in the world’s tallest mountain, as measured from the base of the Pacific valley floor: Hawai’i. Aotearoa/New Zealand is part of the southernmost spur of the inaccurately named “ring” of fire, though in a world without water the island nation would more closely resemble a wide escarpment extending south from Tonga, capped, like every other land mass in the Pacific basin, by a series of volcanoes.\(^{50}\)

Immured in our Western, continental sensibilities, we tend to associate islands with isolation. But in fact each island is rooted to the earth, connected to each other at a foundation that extends across the ocean floor and up through its depths. This is not to say the Pacific islands are static. They are part of a system of constantly shifting land masses, fed by magma that leaches through cracks in the earth’s crust. Every year the islands grow at a rate commensurate with their volcanic activity. The mass of the largest island in the Hawaiian archipelago, for instance, is increasing at a rate of about an inch per year as a result

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\(^{50}\) Aotearoa/New Zealand is the result of a confluence of different of tectonic activity. The Southern Alps (South Island), which include several volcanoes, were formed by the collision of the Pacific plate with the Australian plate, causing both vertical and transverse (sliding) movement along the fault. The Kermadec Trench forms another fault line along the underwater ridge from Tonga. This subduction zone continues beneath the North Island, and eventually connects to the transverse-vertical fault of the South Island in the ocean between the two islands. Recently, scientists have postulated that what we see above sea level are not islands but actually the elevated plateaus of a sunken continent, Zealandia, which might account for Aotearoa/New Zealand's unique (for Oceania) fault system. See Michael East, “Scientists Discover ‘Zealandia’ - a Hidden Continent Off the Coast of Australia,” The Telegraph, 16 February 2017. Retrieved online: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/16/scientists-discover-eighth-continent-zealandia/
of its two active volcanoes, Kilauea and Mauna Loa.\textsuperscript{51} Scientists predict that within the next 10,000 years or so, several new islands will be added to the chain, as the entire oceanic plate continues to drift north and west of the hot-spot fueling Kilauea, creating new seamounts (submarine volcanoes) in the suboceanic ridge. Volcanic regions are equally prone to loss; the sea floor beneath many Pacific islands is littered with debris from ancient avalanches and collapsing cones.

It is no wonder that ancient mariners traversing the ocean held themselves in their crafts as fixed points, and navigated based on the idea that their destinations moved towards them, and not the other way around.\textsuperscript{52} The science of plate tectonics has proved this conceptualization to be essentially true: the earth’s mantle loosely covers its core and rotates at slightly slower speed which causes the plates, composed of the crust and upper mantle, to drift independently of the core. Geysers of magma bursting from the core cool and harden in the ocean, creating mounds and eventually mountains with telltale, conical summits that continue to conduct molten lava towards the earth’s surface. The “ring of fire” refers to the volcanoes formed along the edges of the Pacific plate where it collides with the North American, Philippine, and Australian plates to the north and west of it, and the Antarctic, Nazca and Cocos plates to the south and east. The latter two also act against the South American plate, which created the Andes mountain range and its volcanoes. Volcanism is not limited to the seismic activity on the fringes, however; Hawaii and all of the islands between Tonga and Rapa Nui lie in the center of the Pacific, and are the result of fractures in the middle of the oceanic plate. The “ring” then, looks more like a banded circle, or perhaps a rough figure-eight.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{51} Vincent Neall and Steven A Trewick, “The Age and Origin of the Pacific Islands: A Geological Overview,” \textit{Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society}, vol. 263, no. 1508 (28 October 2008): 3293-3308. Scientists differ as to the rate of growth of the Hawaiian archipelago—some say they are growing as much as several inches a year, though probably the rate simply varies based on the seismic activity. The Bishop Museum in Honolulu presents an interactive exhibit that uses the estimates listed above. The Pacific plate has fourteen hotspots, of which only three, including the one responsible for the formation of Hawaii, are “deep source primary plumes,” meaning they were formed by magma from deep in the earth’s core as opposed to it’s mantle (the outer layer of the core where most magma forms). This may account for the actual movement of the hotspot itself over time, as has been hypothesized.

\textsuperscript{52} This is a widely distributed piece of information by Matt Matsuda, Kenneth Pomeranz, Gary Okihiro, I.C. Campbell, Donald Denoon, among others.

\textsuperscript{53} Millions of years ago, part of the Antarctic plate containing the Sandwich Islands (not Hawaii) broke away and drifted into the Atlantic Ocean, warping the shape of the “ring” even further. Of the many volcanoes on the Pacific-Antarctic subduction zone, only Mount Erebus still erupts with any kind of regularity.
Along the figure’s edges lie the Aleutian Islands to the north; the Japanese, Philippine and Indonesian island systems to the east; and New Zealand to the southwest. The North and South American coasts complete the north- and southeast edges of what geologists and economists alike refer to as the Pacific Rim.\footnote{Australia is often excluded from both styles of determination because it is a continent situated in the center of its relatively stable tectonic plate, and because it is not part of the transoceanic commerce system dominated by the Asian “tiger” economies.} Mapping the Pacific Basin, by contrast, presents a range of complications. Cultural and geologic constructions contradict each other. The Pacific Plate is unique in that it contains no continent, meaning the islands are the defining geography of an expanse covering nearly half the globe. According to the geological sciences, this “island world,” collectively known as Oceania, is a self-contained unit.\footnote{Gary Y. Okihiro, Island World: A History of Hawai’i and the United States, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).} But the area’s cartography reflects a European cultural hegemony which has divided it into three cultural regions. Two of them, Micronesia, meaning “tiny islands,” and Polynesia, or “many islands,” were named based on their physical features. Early explorers coined the term Melanesia, literally “the black islands,” based on physical descriptions of the islands’ inhabitants, and the name stuck. Evidently, complexion trumped any consideration of culture, though many of the regions’ languages descend from the same root source. Using skin color as the determining factor, geographers separated Fiji (Melanesia) and Tonga (Polynesia) into distinct cultural groups, even though they shared strong linguistic, cultural and political ties that went back beyond memory. They also situated New Guinea, the world’s second-largest island, on Melanesia’s western border even though it sits on the Australian plate and shares no cultural markers with the other islands. Papua New Guineans share more ethnic similarities with Australian Aborigines, who were eventually excluded from the Melanesian circle because they lived on a continent.

Polynesia consumes most of the region, and includes nearly three hundred islands. Originally, the term referred to all of Oceania, but in the early nineteenth century, French geographer Dumont d’Urville repurposed it to distinguish the lighter-skinned inhabitants of the central and eastern sprawl of islands. Hawaii to the north, Aotearoa/New Zealand to the south and Rapa Nui to the east are the outlying archipelagoes that shape the Polynesian “triangle.” In keeping with the “racist aesthetic” of the era, the perceived lighter skin of Polynesians both reflected and endowed them with greater intelligence,
enhanced beauty, and superior political structures. D’Urville decided Micronesians, who lived in the smaller islands dotting the ocean north of the equator and east of Japan, shared the same skin tones and thus the same level of “civilization” as Polynesians. Melanesians, on the other hand, he deemed savage, brutal, ugly—a wayward branch of the benighted African race. D’Urville’s designations shaped all future constructions of “the Pacific,” both the imposed characterizations made by Europeans, and the internal racializations that took place between Islander communities.

Physical maps, another geographic invention, place most of the habitable islands of Oceania between the Tropics of Capricorn and Cancer, which has created another methodological framework by which Europeans have engaged Pacific Islanders. Europeans developed the concept of “tropics” in ancient times, a region defined by its hot climate and its “jaundiced” Asian population. As the world expanded and became spherical, so did the zone of the tropics, consuming the Asian, African, and American lands between the 23rd parallels north and south of the equator. The indigenous inhabitants of the Oceania received their racial characterizations from Europeans in accordance with pre-existing notions of the correlation between skin tone and behavior: a combination of the degenerate but cunning “yellow” races and the passionate but lazy “black” ones. The prevailing attitude of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was that the “brown” races of the Pacific could elevate themselves if they could be properly managed by the industrious “whites.” Racial uplift would occur primarily through labor, arranged by and for the benefit of European polities. These nations accordingly staked their claims to various island systems, usually on paper, but occasionally in person.

The modern political designations of the Pacific Islands originate in the late 1700s and remain virtually unchanged since the nineteenth century. Some, namely Kiribati and the Micronesian Federation, are grouped based on their pre-colonial affiliations. Others, like French Polynesia and territories claimed by the United States and Great Britain, were developed following merchant trade routes to accommodate these nations’ strategic positions in their imperial conflicts. Only one polity, the Tongan archipelago, never suffered colonization, though even it was administered by Great Britain for a time. The British

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56 Nicholas Thomas, Islanders: The Pacific in the Age of Empire, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 143.

diaspora, including the United States, created a ribbon of colonies and outposts that stretched from British Columbia, the Pacific Northwest and California, Hawaii, the Tongan and Samoan archipelagoes, Australia, and New Zealand. These colonies supplied each other, their respective metropoles, and foreign markets with export goods, raw materials and food.

So how do we accurately map the Pacific? Geology provides a blueprint for the evolution of land over time, but it ignores the people who define the region. D’Urville’s human geography was racist and self-serving, but he was not wrong to link culture to language. Political maps show an alien, bird’s-eye view of islands and seas that were part of Islanders’ experiential lives, coded with names and spatial references that eased Europeans’ appropriation of local knowledge. The geologic, geographic and political cartographies all fail to adequately represent the Pacific because they are all based on systems of knowledge and representation that are foreign to the region. The Europeans drawing the maps privileged written records above all else, and since Islanders did not use writing to document their past, Western academics turned to speculation to solve the “mystery” of the peopling of the Pacific. But oral histories and archaeology provide an alternative, indigenous guide to this process that yields something closer to the unknowable truth.

Interstitials

The earliest evidence of human habitation in the Pacific dates back 50-60,000 years. During the last ice age, Asiatic and African migrants took advantage of lower sea levels to walk from the southeastern Asian continent to Indonesia, which was a peninsula at the time. They built the earliest boats known to man and rowed across the narrow sea separating them from a large landmass called Sahul, formed by Australia, New Guinea, and Tasmania. Boats also carried succeeding waves to the Bismarck

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58 The southeastern coast of Asia is not synonymous with Southeast Asia, which lies further west. Scientific journals call the southeast China coast Island Southeast Asia (ISEA), but during the time in question, c.60,000 BCE, most of the islands formed a large peninsula called Sunda. See Ben Finney, “The Other One-Third of the Globe,” Journal of World History, Vol. 5, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 273-297. Finney’s explanation conforms to the accepted data of Austronesian migration originating from Taiwan. More recent studies show that Asiatic people settled the areas off the southeastern coast of the continent in several waves, and that they originated from more diverse locations on the continent and the islands than previously thought. See also Pedro Soares, Jean Alain Trejaut et al, “Climate Change and Postglacial Human Dispersals in Southeast Asia,” Molecular Biology and Evolution, vol. 25, no. 6 (March 2008): 1209-1218 for a recent analysis based on DNA evidence that challenges the linguistics-based Taiwan-China origin theory.
and Solomon Islands, off the northeast coast of the Sahul continent. Some of the islands would have been visible from the mainland and from other islands nearby, but they became more remote as the oceans returned to their pre-glacial levels. The valleys of Sahel flooded, establishing a central continent with surrounding islands, including New Guinea to the north and Tasmania and Bass Straits islands to the south. The residents of the reduced continent, Australia, and the other islands developed their cultures and languages in extreme isolation from each other and the Asian mainland. However, they maintained enough linguistic similarities with their forebears to still be considered part of the Austronesian wave of migrations.

This early settlement of what archaeologists call Near Oceania spanned 20-30,000 years, followed by about 20,000 years during which migrations ceased. It is not clear what spurred Austronesians to migrate again, but they did so under much more dangerous conditions. Rising oceans separated Indonesia and the Philippines from the Asian continent, and dramatically increased the distance by boat between New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The other islands in the Pacific could not be seen from anywhere in Near Oceania; they were separated from each other by many hundreds of miles. Travelers had to sail out past the sight of their point of departure in order to locate an island or islands further east. This meant they needed ships strong enough to carry enough supplies to survive the voyage, and to manage blue-ocean sailing against the prevailing east-west trade winds. Austronesians created outriggers (detachable floats) for their long, slim canoes, effectively enlarging the beam area and stabilizing the vessel so to prevent capsizing in the deep ocean. They also lashed two canoes together, to the same effect. Thus, they embarked upon the largest migration in history across the greatest expanse of ocean in the world. Like their earliest migration, Austronesians completed their most recent one in waves. Except for one route, which took them from southeastern Asia across the Indian Ocean to settle Madagascar, the majority of Austronesians pushed east into the Pacific, then north. They did not venture into Remote Oceania (the Pacific Basin) until a few thousand years ago, eventually claiming every habitable island in the region. The initial waves departed from the island chains near Papua New Guinea, and arrived in Vanuatu and Fiji about 4000 years ago, and Tonga and Samoa about 3000 years ago. Genealogical evidence and oral history suggests that at least one wave of settlement came directly from
the Austronesian origin point on the Asian continent. The remote distance from Near Oceania facilitated another cultural shift, which created a Polynesian ethnicity distinct culturally, though not linguistically, from its Austronesian roots. From Samoa and Tonga, Polynesians moved east towards Tahiti and Rapa Nui, north to the Marquesas and Hawaii, and south to Aotearoa/New Zealand. Voyagers from the Philippines, themselves transplants from the same Austronesian point of origin, spread into Micronesia from the west, while other inhabitants were part of the Polynesian migration arm swinging north and west from Tahiti.

The furthest corners of the triangle, Hawaii, Rapa Nui, and Aotearoa/New Zealand, lie thousands of miles away from the central belt of Pacific Islands, and were the last ones inhabited in the Polynesian chain migration pattern. The earliest settlers arrived in the Hawaiian and Rapa Nui archipelagos about 1700 years ago, most likely from the Marquesas. Nearly a thousand years later, another wave of colonists arrived in Hawaii, this time from Tahiti. Tahitians apparently went south as well, for the earliest reliable dates for the population of Aotearoa/New Zealand are estimated to be around the same time, 1300 CE. In order to survive the journeys, Polynesian sailors and their families took (literally) boatloads of supplies with them to every new island they settled. In this way, mulberry and breadfruit trees, taro plants, pigs, dogs and rats (as pests and protein) spread throughout the region. Most of the seedlings did not survive transplantation to Aotearoa, the only Polynesian settlement located in a temperate zone. The Maori, as they called themselves, had to make do with vegetation like the kumara, a kind of potato. Like all potatoes, kumaras are from South America originally. It is unclear whether Maori found kumara growing in Aotearoa, the result of the tuber’s equally long migration saga on the Pacific seas, or if they brought it with them from the islands near Tahiti, where it grew as result of a less dramatic voyage...of the potato.

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60 Unfortunately, subsequent events on Rapa Nui have made it difficult to approximate the date of its original settlement. The date could be closer to that of New Zealand’s colonization in 1200-1300 CE.
The elaborate Lapita pottery that decorated early Samoan homes also did not travel beyond the tropics. Austronesians made the pottery, characterized by its dentate impressions, from 1500 BCE to about 400 BCE, well before the final phase of Polynesian migration. It has been found in digs in Fiji, carried by settlers as they dispersed across the central belt of islands, and perhaps traded to the outlying islands during the heyday of inter-island commerce, from 1200 CE to 1500 CE. Though pottery styles grew more simplified, and in many places disappeared altogether, it is evident the dentate artform continued in the production and design of tapa, a paper-cloth made from the bark of mulberry trees. Women spent days making it, stripping and soaking the bark, then beating the pulp into thin paper between two beaters, which were often etched with designs that left impressions in the cloth similar to Lapita patterns. Bark-cloth disseminated widely throughout the tropical island, though its use varied. Fijian nobles wore it as turbans to denote their rank, while in Hawaii it was used as clothing for both sexes, and as blankets and wall coverings. As versatile as the pottery whose form it followed, tapa served both practical and decorative functions throughout the region.

The Maori, lacking mulberry trees which thrive only in warmer climates, used skins and fur for clothing. If Lapita culture left any lasting mark with them, it was directly into the skin. Moko is as much a test of strength and endurance as it is an art form. Tohunga (artists) used fine chisels (umi) and small hammers to carve intricate geometric or curvilinear patterns into the skin of Maori warriors. They filled in the resulting narrow depressions or furrows with pigment made from soot, oil and charcoal, creating patterns of color from the scars. Men collected these tattoos over the course of their lifetimes, each one representative of an individual's prowess. Specific artists gained notoriety for their style, though the designs they created were unique to the man; strangers could identify warriors they had never met based on descriptions of their moko.61 Other Pacific cultures used needles to draw tattoos and distribute the ink subcutaneously, but only the Maori method created the textured, ridged effect so desirable in Polynesian art, and which was endlessly repeated in their woodwork, stone carving, and other manufacture. From tattoos to tapa cloth—each presents an extenuation of Lapita artistry to a different medium, which in turn spread throughout the Pacific.

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Polynesians carried as much as they could when they left one island and settled another, and their baggage was not limited to the physical. Perhaps the most widespread "artifact" dispersed across Pacific is the concept of *tabu*, *kapu*, or *tapu*. Closely tied to the cosmology of the Islands, it provides a system of regulating behavior by enforcing sacred prohibitions of certain acts, items, and locations. Every population seemed to have some form of *tabu* system (from which English-speakers derive the word “taboo”), and the similarities between prohibitions within the different groups indicate a common source, though they are by no means identical. For example, Hawaiians, Tongans, and Maori all conceived of a gendered division of labor that proscribed certain activities for women, and certain locations for men. The sacred power of men and women formed a binary relationship of complimentary opposition to each other. In Maori society, this was expressed as *tapu* (male) and *noa* (female) association, wherein men possessed a sacred power and dispensed it in varying concentrations to whatever they touched or ingested. Women’s *noa* has alternately been translated as “profane,” “impure” or “ordinary,” but in fact Europeans have no direct translation of the concept.62 Certain women, *ruahine*, possessed the power to remove *tapu* from objects and people, a sacred act in itself. Most women performed explicitly ordinary tasks, like cooking, from which men were prohibited by their *tapu*. In Hawaii, the *kapu* placed on certain foods (coconuts, taro, pork and some fish) was such that women could not touch them or be present when they were consumed; men cooked all meals, and built separate houses for men and women to eat apart. Men also built the houses that only women could inhabit, where they made *tapu* or sequestered themselves during menstruation.63

Not surprisingly, menstrual blood, a uniquely feminine fluid, possessed the strongest spiritual power possible. In Aotearoa, menstrual blood carried “the most virulent of all *atua* [spirits] called *kahukahu,*” described as “lesser, though feared, liminal creatures on the boundary who eat transgressors

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63 Julie Kaomea, “Na Wahine Mana: A Postcolonial Reading of Classroom Discourse on the Imperial Rescue of Oppressed Hawaiian Women,” *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, vol. 14, no. 3 (October 2006): 338. See also the work of Lilikala Kameʻeleihiwa which assess missionaries’ descriptions of early interactions with Hawaiian women to contest the then-dominant narrative of their oppression under the *kapu* system. Kameʻeleihiwa concludes that the Hawaiian women were crucial, if oppositional, components of the sacred system, and beneficiaries of *kapu* which excluded them from much of the domestic labor that missionaries later inflicted on them.
Menstrual blood thus had the power to desecrate anything that came into contact with it; conversely, any tapu could be lifted by passing beneath or between the legs of a consecrated ruahine, literally “old woman,” presumably one past child-bearing years. Tapu/kapu adhered to people of all rank and both genders, though interactions with the nobility suffered the greatest kapu because the nobles possessed the greatest mana, or spiritual power. Mana was derived from the gods themselves, and several Polynesian societies kept careful track of their genealogies in order to trace each family’s lineage, and thus, the strength of a family’s mana. In Tonga, for instance, lines of descent were traced matrilineally, though political power usually resided with men. This meant that the most powerful chief, or Tu'i Tonga, was outranked by his oldest female sibling, the Tu'i Tonga fefine, who inherited the most mana and strictest tabu of any Tongan because her family engendered the line of spiritual leaders. Her sexuality was strictly and perhaps selfishly regulated because of her spiritual potency, and to insure that ritual power remained invested in her younger brother. If she married and bore children, her oldest daughter was considered a sacred individual, the Tamaha, with power akin to the gods themselves. Tongan noblemen had to be careful how and when they interacted with their female relations in public, to whom they were always subordinate, lest they find themselves in violation of tabu and rendered powerless at an inopportune moment. Hawaiian society solved the issue of gendered rank kapu among family members by marrying powerful rulers to their biological siblings, with whom they shared the same degree of mana.

The concept of tabu—the sacred, possessed object or person—is something of a universal, as evidenced by the appropriation of the word itself into the vernacular of several European languages. Early

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65 Ibid., 73.
66 Stephanie Seto Levin, “The Overthrow of the Kapu System in Hawaii,” The Journal of the Polynesian Society vol. 77, no. 4 (December 1968): 402-430. There is a useful chart on p. 408 that depicts the degree of kapu existing between rank and family associations of the ali'i, or nobility.
67 Ve'ehala and Tupou Posesi Fanua (Noel Rutherford, trans.), “Oral Tradition and Prehistory” in Noel Rutherford, ed. Friendly Islands: A History of Tonga (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980). Her whole person was tabu, and she could neither procreate with nor wed any Tongan. One woman managed to circumvent the tabu by marrying a Fijian man. Their union created three new tu'i houses whose Fujian origin exempted them from the tabu. From that point on, a Tu'i Tonga Fefine could marry a distant relative from her own line of descent.
68 Levin, “Overthrow of the Kapu System,” 408.
visitors to the islands immediately grasped the concept and usually adhered to it in order to maintain their
welcome in the Islands. European beachcombers, often escapees or captives from European ships,
facilitated this understanding by translating between the two groups and demonstrating appropriate
behavior themselves. It makes sense that some form of tabu system would persist in the remote Island
groups, if only to preserve the limited resources and govern relationships in fairly closed environments.
However, the systems were maintained in the more accessible archipelagos as well, which enjoyed greater
cultural variation and larger populations. At the height of Tonga’s power, it ruled islands in both the
Samoan and Fijian chains, exerting considerable cultural influence over both archipelagos, and traded
regularly with the islands Rotuma, Furtuna, and Niue.69 Such proximity affected Tonga as well. After
Samoans successfully removed Tongan colonists by force from their islands, the two polities maintained a
civil relationship, and a Samoan noble house was integrated into the Tongan tu’i hierarchy.70 At least one
member of the Fijian nobility married into the tu’i Tonga lineage, eventually spawning two new branches
of their tu’i family tree and breaking the tabu against the tu’i Tonga fefine. Upper-class Tongans
disavowed cannibalism as a dirty practice, but acknowledged its persistence in their culture as the result
of close contact with Fijians—who ritually cannibalized their enemies far more often than Tongans and
for the same reasons the distant Maori did: to destroy their spiritual power and prevent their enemies’
laying a tapu/tabu on victors.71 These and other similarities in ideology, habit and rationale suggest a
communication and/or trade network that remained active long after settlers dispersed to other islands,
one that reinforced a communal identity to some degree, and certainly hinted at a common origin.


70 Ve’ehala et al, “Oral Tradition and Prehistory.” The chapter primarily consists of a recitation of the
lineage of the Tupou dynasty. Tongan nobility maintained property on Upolu and occasionally sought
refuge there in times of internal strife. Both Samoan and Fijian nobles were incorporated into the tu’i
system, probably as rewards for services rendered to existing tu’i. These relationships had the added
advantage of expanding the gene pool, and, as seen with the Tu’i Tonga Fefine, of dispersing power
laterally among the ruling class.

72 Early ethnographers like Elston Best draw explicit connections between cannibal activities in Fiji and
Aotearoa, but the comparison, and especially the association to cannibalism, seems to have faded away
in more recent works on the Maori. Perhaps this is due to the re-branding New Zealand as a tourist
mecca.
This early trade network has been substantiated by archaeological evidence such as the stones and potsherds from Tonga found on Fiji, Samoa, and possibly as far west as the New Hebrides. At the height of what might be called its empire, Tonga received fine woven decorative mats from Samoa, and traded or claimed canoes from Fiji and sandalwood to use as scent. Fijian and Samoan artifacts have been identified as far north as Hawaii and as far east as the Marquesas; indeed, Fiji was famous for its manufacture, according to the Tongans met by James Cook on his initial voyage through the region. The reverse routing of goods—eastern Polynesian artifacts traveling west and south back to Tonga—is not in evidence. There appears to have been sustained trade between Hawaii and the islands directly south of it, namely Tahiti and the Marquesas, for a brief period (1000-1300 CE) a few hundred years before Europeans arrived. Oral tradition and archaeology confirm the north-most trade network, and also the existence of sustained contact between the Society Islands and the Cook Islands to the southwest, trade that was ultimately terminated due to the murder of a Rarotongan priest by a Ra'iatean one, an event so scandalous that it was remembered in Maori oral tradition centuries later. These networks shaped the Polynesian world. It gave them proof of the existence of other Islands and other people like them across the blue-ocean expanse. Through oral history, Islanders in the more remote points of the trade network maintained the knowledge of these arrivals after the voyages themselves had ceased. The confirmation of

72 Matsuda, Pacific Worlds, 28.
73 Poulsen, "Archaeology and Prehistory," 24. This fits the theory that Hawaii was settled in waves, with the initial group arriving from Tonga/Samoa, as opposed to the Marquesas, and later influxes of colonists coming from Tahiti or the Marquesas. The presence of the kuawa caste, effectively slaves, on the islands before Kamehameha I consolidated his kingdom in the 1800s also bear out the theory. Colloquial wisdom has it that the lower caste were remnants of a conquered “tribe” of original settlers, displaced by the new arrival of different Polynesians. See Stephanie Levin’s article, “The Overthrow of the Kapu System in Hawaii,” for the kapu status of the kauwa.
74 Gary Okihiro, Island World, 49. Based on the raw materials used to make tools found in the Marquesas, the Enata clearly also had sustained contact with neighboring islands and Tahiti, up until the fifteenth century. See also Matsuda, Pacific Worlds, 68.
75 Ben Finney, Sailing in the Wake of Ancestors: Reviving Polynesian Voyaging (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 2003), 63-4. The murder is mentioned in an old Maori song that connects “the sin at Awarua [Avarua]” with the initial voyage of someone named Rongorongo (Rongo is the Maori god of agriculture), from “Hawaiki [Havai’i],” the original name for the island Ra’iatea. During the 1990 Hawai’iloa voyage, the tapu against voyaging laid against the Raiateans by the murder was officially lifted by Maori sailors, who according to contemporary interpretation of the legend, were the victims in the assault. Song excerpts requoted by Finney from S. Percy Smith’s 1898 publication Hawaiki: From Whence the Maori.
other islands beyond the horizon may have kept alive the belief in Hawaiki, the legendary Polynesian paradise and originary island from whence Islanders advanced into the Pacific.

Most Islanders conceived of Hawaiki as a physical place, an island or archipelago located in some distant part of the ocean. The word derives from the proto-Polynesian terms for ruler/conquerer (sau) and ancestral/chiefly (‘ariki). As languages developed and diverged, sau‘ariki eventually became hau‘aiki in early Tongan and hou‘eiki in the modern form. In other Polynesian languages, the term morphed into sau’aiki, and came to designate place names: Savai‘i in Samoan; Havai‘i in Tahitian; ‘Avaiki in Rarotongan; Hawai‘i in Hawaiian and Hawaiki in Maori. In Tahiti, the word hauari‘i meant “government by nobles,” but it fell into disuse under French rule. “Memory-men,” or ariki, kept track of history and lineage in parts of Micronesia, and in Pohnpei, one of the larger, and thus more isolated, islands in the region, the term for high chief, Namnwarki, is clearly derived from the same word. In Tonga, the word ‘eiki could only be employed to describe the children and female relatives of the Tu‘i Tonga, the sacred ruler. Recall that the kingdom of Tonga is the only Pacific polity to enjoy uninterrupted indigenous rule, and hou‘eiki is still used denote royal rank or personage. In fact, Tonga is the only place where hau‘aiki was used to describe a supernatural people, and was never the name of a legendary place.

It might be easier to think of hau‘aiki as a concept, since it functioned as both a place and a class of people. In societies where class hierarchies developed, usually the larger islands and archipelagos, Islanders did not differentiate between authority and the divine. To call a person “chieflty” was to name

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77 Elizabeth Keating, Power Sharing: Language, Rank, Gender and Social Space in Pohnpei (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 19. Though classified as Micronesia, Pohnpei has more in common, culturally and linguistically, with Polynesia. See also, Matsuda, Pacific Worlds, 19. Matsuda argues that larger islands in Micronesia were more self-sufficient, and so traded less than smaller communities for necessities. They became closed systems, and their languages and customs diverged more from the mainstream Oceanian cultures than those islands in near-constant contact with each other. This also means that their language evolved somewhat independently as well, as evidenced by the use of the central dipthong in nannwarki.

78 Taumoefolau, 393. Taken from Elizabeth Bott's interviews with Queen Salote before her death. Salote was in many respects the last link between the old ruling style of a tripartate system of government, and the consolidated rule that began with her grandfather. She inherited and preserved an oral tradition of customs and genealogy independently verified by scholars like Bott and Noel Rutherford, and was in her lifetime a primary source on ancient Tongan history.
him or her a god—a tacit acknowledgement that gods walked in the world. Certainly they made the world, and their bodies often formed islands or ocean terrain like reefs and seamounts. If people could embody the gods, and gods often literally embodied a place, then *hau‘aiki* was representative of the dual or concurrent status of being both place and person. Duality permeates Oceanian cosmology, as evidenced by the sacred/profane nature of *kapu*, the contentious balance between masculine and feminine, and the fluid stasis of the Islands themselves. It is no wonder that Islanders conceived of Hawaiki as an earth-bound paradise, a once-accessible point of origin that had since retreated from the world. Only three islands in the navigable reach of Oceanian voyaging were ever named after the legendary homeland: Hawai‘i in the Hawaiian archipelago, Savai‘i in Samoa, and Havai‘i in the Society Islands (now Ra‘iatea). These islands resemble each other; both are ovoid, featuring sloping, forested terrain that narrows to tall conical mountains with at least one large crater at the summit. Interestingly, Pohnpei, which hosts a uniquely Polynesian society in the center of Micronesia, also fits this description. There, legend tells of a large exodus in the distant past, completed in an elaborately carved canoe that fell from the sky. This is “the originary reference of many Pacific Island cultures.”

It is endemic to settler societies that they find familiar aesthetics in the new places they inhabit. Since Hawaii was settled by Tahitians, it makes sense that they renamed their new island home after the location it most closely resembled. It is generally accepted that Tahitians also voyaged out to Rapa Nui and Aotearoa, carrying with them legends of Havai‘i and the volcano cult. However, in 1996, linguist Melenaite Taomufalao made a strong case for Hawaiki being Tonga, because Tongans have no *place* name for Hawaiki; since the Tongan language features some of the oldest components of Polynesian language, *hau‘ariki* is among the concept's earliest formulations. We know now that archaeology supports an origin story that includes some transformative stay in Tonga/Fiji before Islanders ventured out into Tahiti and points beyond. Havai‘i could be the place name given to Ra‘iatea to signify the rule of demi-gods, the *hau‘aiki*. What is significant in Islanders’ cosmology is that Paradise exists as a place on earth, a destination as well as a point of departure. Only the Maori conceive of Hawaiki as a place removed

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from the world, accessed by passing through the thighs of the goddess Hine, the earth’s first mother, from
the sacred earth to a profane afterlife.

Islanders were connected to each other by language, custom, and sea routes. They also shared
similar aesthetics, which, as everywhere, were inextricably linked to their sense of the sacred, of the
socio-political climate of their islands, and power. The color red is very likely humanity’s one unifying
aesthetic, associated universally with the intimate, with life and death. Pigment made from red ochre
formed half of the world’s oldest color palette, tinting bodies, animal skins, rocks and cave walls. Lapita
pottery utilized the red-black color scheme inherited by its many cultural descendants. Artists constantly
sought a more brilliant red, one more accurately representative of the color as it exists in nature, and in
the human body. In Oceania, they graduated from the use of clay to vegetable dyes suspended in oil or
undiluted, and eventually plumage from the local avifauna. Featherwork featured prominently across
Oceania, but nowhere more so than Polynesia, where such garments might be said to recall the image of
the god Ta’aroa (Tangaroa in Maori or Kaneloa in Hawaiian), who is sometimes described feathered in his
original state before the universe began. Even in Aotearoa, relatively cut off from the share of
innovation that typified the equatorial islands’ manufacture, artisans independently developed the same
method of weaving mesh frames to which they sewed or knotted carefully selected feathers. Hawai’i’s
geographic situation, at the tropical end of the migration route of red-breasted i’iwi (Vestiara coccinea)
and apapane (Himatione sanguinea) birds ensured a regular supply of the color. Here and elsewhere, the
demand for plumage created a vocation; bird feather hunters trapped and plucked birds on uninhabited
islands and sold feathers to consumers as far east as the Marquesas and west as the Solomon Islands. In
Melanesia, red feathers were so valuable they became a form of currency in their own right.

A great amount of effort, and equal patience, went into making colored feather capes. Hawaiians
did not kill the birds they captured, giving the i’iwi time to regrow the precious feathers in question,

80 From The Pacific Journal of Louis-Antoine de Bouganville, quoted in Anne Salmond, Aphrodite’s
Island: The European Discovery of Tahiti (New York: Penguin Group USA, 2009), 21.
81 There is a fine example of Maori featherwork at the Bishop Museum in Hawaii. Birds frequenting
Aotearoa during their migration tended to be less colorful, as was the local avifauna. Maori feather cloaks
are therefore, not as vivid as those woven in the tropical Pacific islands. Instead, Maori women made
thread from flax that they dyed red, yellow, or black and wove into cloth, which they used to brighten the
feathercloaks they made.
which meant it could take years to gather enough material to produce a garment. The feathers were sorted by size and grouped together, so that the finished product, usually a cloak, appeared uniform and balanced. Different classes, and possibly different genders, participated in the several steps necessary to produce a red garment, from capturing the birds, sorting the feathers, and weaving the olona fiber mesh.

Dyed kapa cloth was sometimes added to stabilize the mesh and fill in blank spaces. Men wove the feathers into the mesh, the only clothing they ever made. Considering the mana embodied in such a garment, it is likely that each cloak was completed by the ali‘i who actually wore it; if so, this manufacture was truly a factory enterprise that enlisted the entire community. Such feats reinforced the kinship ties between ali‘i and maka‘ainana, and act which itself further contributed to the power of cloak and thus its wearer. As chiefs began to restructure and consolidate their bases of power, a process eventually culminating in the advancement of Kamehameha I (c.1740-1819) as ruler over the entire archipelago, red garments advertised their rank and prestige.

The manufacture of such garments was only possible in the relatively stable period following the cessation of trade with Tahiti, when Hawaiians began to find local sustainable sources for the rich materials that contributed to the ali‘i aesthetic. Red was most often paired with yellow plumage liberated from the ‘o‘o (Moho nobilis) bird, and the combination came to represent the unification of sacred (red) and secular (yellow) power. Initially, however, the decision to weave other colors into the mesh may have been practical rather than symbolic. Only two species of bird in the archipelago had any red plumage.

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82 On some capes, the feathers and skin of the bird were woven into the mesh, indicating that some birds were killed, perhaps accidentally, to obtain feathers. The method employed in capturing the birds, at least initially, would definitely have killed them. See Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter H. Buck), “The Local Evolution of Hawaiian Feather Capes and Cloaks,” The Journal of the Polynesian Society, vol 53, no 1 (March 1944): 9-10.

83 Olona was a fibrous plant unique to Hawaii that was spun into cordage and rope for nets, canoes and houses. It is now believed to be extinct. It had stronger tensile strength than sennit, rope made from coconut husks used all over Oceania, and was the preferred rope-making material for Europeans and Hawaiians.

84 Jocelyn Linnekin, “Who Made the Hawaiian Feather Cloaks? A Problem in Hawaiian Gender Relations” in Journal of Polynesian Society, vol 97, no 3 (1988): 265-280. Hiroa/Buck states that only men made feather cloaks, which makes sense considering the kapu against women touching masculine items, but Linnekin and others rationalized that such a complex endeavor spanning years would involve a variety of men and women from both classes. Women most likely wove the olona mesh frame, and probably sorted and kept the feathers safe. They may even have helped tie on the feathers, to speed up production. See also, Ross Cordy, “Who Made the Feather Cloaks in the Hawaiian Islands? Some Additional Information,” The Journal of the Polynesian Society, vol. 112, no 2 (June 2003): 157-161.
and two different species, the *mamo* (*Drepanis pacifica*) and ‘o’o, sported the even more rare yellow feathers. By incorporating other colors into the design—white, brown and black feathers from wild and domesticated avifauna were sometimes used—a cloak could be finished in less than half the time. Even though red was no longer the only or most prominent color, they kept the name *‘ahu‘ula* or “red garments.”\(^{85}\) By the time James Cook’s ships arrived in 1777, yellow had already begun displacing red as the “richest” color, likely due to the fact that it was even more difficult to procure. Nevertheless, the British mariners’ access to a universal currency in the form of a brilliant red greatly facilitated their crews’ welcome to the islands.

Of course, there were many goods and concepts flowing along the Islanders’ trade network, but I emphasize these three cultural commodities—the kapu system, the Hawaiki cosmology, and the red aesthetic—because they link the pre-and proto-Contact periods in Pacific history. Without a shared comprehension and valuation of these “commodities,” Europeans would have found very little traction among Islanders, and certainly not enough to develop a cohesive, encompassing trade policy regarding the Pacific. When Europeans arrived on their shores, Islanders interpreted their power, their *mana*, in part because of the red cloth belts, sashes and undergarments in their possession. The color signaled to Islanders that they should approach these strangers with respect but also caution. Though the value of iron waxed and waned as Islanders became aware of how little importance Europeans placed on it, red retained its cultural and symbolic meaning, and thus value, throughout the era of sustained contact between Europeans and Islanders. The concept of *tapu* also meant something to Europeans, and they understood the importance of the system to Islanders, even if they failed in some instances to adequately respect it. Europeans and Islanders shared similar views on the nature or Paradise as well, and though each culture expressed them differently, they were employed in a similar manner toward similar ends. To put it another way, the beliefs in *tapu/noa* and Hawaiki gave Islanders and Europeans a shared world framework from which to begin. The desire for red on one hand and the possession of it on the other was a fortuitous situation that opened the door to trade, instantly expanding Islanders’ network and exposing them to more prestige goods by way of assimilation—though not necessarily appropriation—of

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Europeans’ ideas of value. Where Europeans could master the Islanders’ cultural commodities, they were able to trade for actual goods and services.

Connecting the Dots

To understand why Europeans left the Atlantic Ocean and their known world to venture into the Pacific, we need to explore the lure of the exotic “Orient” that led them to China. Gary Okihiro has written a fine critique of ancient literature and the hermeneutics of the tropics. It categorizes and delineates the discourse in the climatological zones and their inhabitants that informs Europeans decisions and actions in East Asia and India in the early modern and modern periods. Fifteenth-century Europeans ordered their world according to the spatial precepts invented by the Greeks in the sixth through fourth centuries BCE. Pygathoras deduced that the earth is spherical, and divided it into uninhabitable tropical and polar zones, with a habitable temperate zone between them. A century later, Hippocrates connects climate to “race” when he surmises that Asians, though intelligent, suffer from laziness and jaundice due to their “mild and uniform climate.” Europeans, by contrast, owed their hard and hairy natures to drastic seasonal weather changes and a barren environment. Aristotle took these suppositions further, stating that tropical climates like Asia produced natural slaves, whereas Greece, situated between the cold European climate and the sultry Asian one, nurtured intelligent and active people ideally suited to ruling the world. So, when Eratosthenes drew his maps of the world in the third century BCE, he placed Ethiopia and India on the same latitude because of their purported similarities in weather and the population’s dark skin color. Romans inherited Greek culture and much of its empire, and they made no changes to Greek theories of geographic or climatic determinism despite greater familiarity with the Near and Far East.

To this I would add that western Europe spent nearly a thousand years forgetting Greek philosophers and their language. The gryphons, phoenixes, and pygmies inhabiting the edges of Plato’s maps faded from common knowledge, reduced to dimly inscribed lines on fragments of parchment that few scholars could read. Greek writings re-entered the European scholarly tradition through the work of

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87 Ibid., 9.
Arabian scholars like Averroes, who had access to the ancient texts in translation. Marco Polo’s travel narrative was published not long after the world west of Byzantium became reacquainted with Greek literature, science, and geography. Polo descended from a family of merchants who operated along the Silk Road. Stories of his travels from Italy across Asia were widely disseminated and wildly popular; they also seemed to verify the ancient knowledge of how the world was ordered. Polo’s narrative inspired interest in Asia during a time of increasing secularization in intellectual thought, prompted by the “return” of Greek philosophy to regions north of the Mediterranean. In other words, Greek philosophy was the old made new again, and the revival of Graeco-Roman culture in western Europe proved itself the latest iteration of style courtesy of the China trade.

While it is arguable that the Renaissance period offered greater security than the tumultuous Middle Ages that preceded it, events in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries did create space, ideologically and economically, for the creation of a small, upwardly mobile merchant class. The global pandemic of the Bubonic Plague proved that the nobility were just as vulnerable as their serfs in the eyes of God, and the demographic collapse it caused positioned those at the bottom to control, at least somewhat, the terms of their exploitation by those still on top. Most importantly, for my discussion here, the plague’s end drew skilled laborers to cities to take advantage of new opportunities and higher salaries created by the deaths of urban artisans. Surviving Europeans developed a more secular, and cynical view of the world, and for the first time, science began competing with the spiritual. Such a dichotomy reveals itself publicly as a cultural identity crisis, and China, the decadent, oppositional East, became a means by which Europeans recovered their sense of self after the turmoil of the epidemic. The act of forging a new future through analysis and emulation of the past served as the perfect cultural reboot for survivors of a catastrophe. There was safety and relevance to be had in reviving past aesthetics, a known entity in a changing society.

Asia and Europe had been connected for millennia through the land and sea routes comprising the Silk Road, but Middle Eastern and Italian intermediaries charged exorbitant prices to convey Chinese goods to Western Europe. Additionally, the only guaranteed currency the Chinese would accept for their valuable goods was gold or silver. The Silk Road trade in spices, cloth, and eventually tea and porcelain made up a considerable part of the western world’s economy. In fact, by the time the Age of Exploration
began in the middle of the fifteenth century, the orientation of the entire continent had been essentialized into East (China) and West (Europe), where the Middle or Near East stood as a contested region of elevated need and frustrated desire. Encouraged by the innovations in technology and navigation that made it possible to stay at sea for longer periods of time and arrive generally in the place one expected, western European polities sent ships around the world searching for new supplies of spices or shorter routes to China. They found both: the Spanish sponsored the initial voyages of exploration that added North and South America into the China trade supply line, while the Portuguese found an alternate trade route around the cape of Africa, bypassing the Middle Eastern middle-men. The Portuguese negotiated rights of entry at several African ports, and managed to secure the right to trade for Chinese goods in the port city of Macau, on the Pearl River delta, in the 1530s.

The China trade during the Renaissance centered around two types of goods: luxury or prestige goods, usually decor or fine fabrics—unnecessary necessities that reified the owner’s self-worth and prosperity; and spices, which were consumed medicinally and considered absolute necessities to prevent illnesses like the Bubonic Plague that had ravaged wealthy and poor alike during the Middle Ages. Spices were the only means by which Europeans could ensure health and vitality, at least for those who could afford them. As time passed and the Plague, which recurred every generation in Europe, though in increasingly smaller outbreaks, was reduced to manageable in the sphere of public health, spices transitioned from necessity to luxury. Tea was initially considered a spice. It was one of the few Chinese trade goods unknown in Europe before the seventeenth century. Most educated people, including merchants, would have read about Marco Polo’s travels in the thirteenth century, but they would have been more concerned with geography and trade opportunities than local customs. The Portuguese settled early in the region, but they did not put tea into circulation in Europe. That honor fell to the Dutch, who charted reliable sea-routes to China and Indonesia the early seventeenth century, founded a colony at the Cape of Good Hope near the southernmost part of the African mainland, and took control of the

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89 The Portuguese could not land their boats and step on Chinese soil until the 1550s, when the government granted them rights to build storage sheds on land. The official date given for the Portuguese entry into Macau is 1557, the year they began paying rent for the space they occupied. See Kenneth Pomerantz and Steven Topik, eds. *The World that Trade Created: Society, Culture and the World Economy, 1400-Present* (New York: Routledge, 2005), Kindle edition, chapter 1.
Indonesian city of Jakarta by force. They renamed the city Batavia, and from that strategic position, they began to dominate the Indonesian spice trade.

Tea was available in British coffee houses by the mid-1600s, and quickly dispersed into England’s colonial holdings in India and America. Hot drinks were still something of a novelty in Europe, but both coffee and chocolate had preceded tea in the beverage market, though the materials Chinese tea drinkers used, porcelain cups and porcelain or iron pots, soon morphed with or replaced the traditional Arabic and Mexican vessels used to serve the other beverages. Europeans used Chinese labor to create silver service ware for tea, coffee, and chocolate. Merchants provided the raw materials, silver, which also served as payment, then re-sold the finished products in the European and colonial markets. The incorporation of tea into European culture may have stimulated the demand for fine china porcelain, but it was already a known, and coveted, commodity by that time. The Chinese had developed a streamlined method of mass production of a generic blue and white porcelain made almost exclusively for export. It was so highly valued and singular in Europe, whose potters had long ago lost the ability to make glass, that the word “china” was commonly used to signify these ceramics. Porcelain manufacture was a closely guarded secret. Europeans tried for centuries to recreate porcelain in domestic pottery studios, to no avail. China vases and plates were primarily used to decorate homes; not until the eighteenth century was it ubiquitous enough to eat from, and then only because the secret of its production had successfully been smuggled out of the country. As navigation and sailing methods improved over the course of the era, it became cheaper to send raw materials to China to be manufactured into tables, chairs, paintings and service-ware than to commission European artisans to make them at home. Those wishing to display more wealth than they actually possessed could do so on the cheap by using Chinese labor or mass-produced Chinese goods.

The strategic placement of Cape-town and other port cities made it possible for Europeans to greatly extend sailors’ stay at sea, which in turn led to further exploration. Sixteenth-century Europeans relied on the ancient Greeks for their understanding of geography, who in turn had relied on scholarly philosophy rather than empirical experience for their “factual” representations of the world. The Greeks believed in the existence of a large tropical continent somewhere south of Africa, reasoning that if the North Pole was cold, then the South Pole must be warm. Europeans would spend the next two hundred
years searching for the Great Southern Continent; it became a standard item on explorers’ orders from the governments who funded their expeditions. Spain, in particular, sent its explorers in search of ways around the great continental landmass that separated Europe from China to the west. It was bound by the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, which allotted the eastern half of the world’s oceans, including the safest route to China, to Portugal. Desperate for an alternative, Spain even funded a Portuguese explorer’s attempt to circumnavigate the globe by sailing around the tip of South America and west into the ocean another Spaniard had named Pacific for the peaceful contrast it made to the Atlantic. Fernao de Magalhaes, or Ferdinand Magellan, survived the wide, dead expanse of the ocean known as the doldrums, only to be killed on Cebu Island in the archipelago eventually named Philippines in honor of the Spanish king. His battered crew eventually made it home, but the important part of their nightmare journey had already transpired in Cebu. Though Magellan was killed, the Spanish were made aware of a large, resourceful island chain loosely incorporated into the Chinese supply network that was not claimed or held by any European polity. A generation later, the Spanish took over the port city of Manila on Luzon and used it to resupply and sometimes to build galleons traveling from Mexico to deliver silver and cochineal, the red dye made from a type of beetle found only in Mexico, to China.90

Like Islanders, Europeans and Asians had a long history of seeking the perfect shade of red. It served as a symbol of power and prestige, and draped the shoulders not only of the holy, but the wealthy and influential as well. Renaissance Europeans used fabric to display their wealth and power, which anyone could glean from the amount of material used to clothe the nobility, and the brilliance of the red they wore. The Spanish conquistadores absorbed the Aztec tribute system in the 1520s, including dried cochineal beetles, whose blood produced the richest, deepest red the world had ever seen. Cochineal, or carmine, quickly replaced rose madder as the preeminent pigment, and by the end of the sixteenth century

90 There is a wild variety of cochineal that is smaller and produces about one-third of the dye that the domesticated cochineal makes. It can still be found elsewhere in Central America and the Caribbean islands. Only the Aztecs kept nopal cactus farms and cultivated the bug, collecting the dye as tribute or taxes from its farmers and exporting it to Native American polities in North and South America. The Spanish continued the practice, though terminated the North American continental trade; from 1520-c. 1780 Native Americans on both continents had no real access to cochineal. See Victoria Findlay, Color: A Natural History of the Palette (New York: Random House, 2002), 158-162; and Peter B.G. Shoemaker, “Red All Over: How a Tiny Bug Changed the Way We See the World,” Humanities, vol 36, no 4 (July/August 2015). retrieved online.
it was Spain’s second largest export, next to silver.\textsuperscript{91} It was highly prized around the world, in Africa as much as Europe, where red cloth was used by merchants of many nations in exchange for slaves and supplies. In Europe, carmine was used to dye expensive clothes and paint their wearers’ portraits.\textsuperscript{92} The shade it produced could be altered based on the binding method; two Dutch tailors in England discovered a method incorporating tin into the dye that produced a vivid scarlet. During the brief English Civil War, Oliver Cromwell standardized the color of the British infantry uniform and decided to use bright red, the shade of martial prowess, as the primary color. For the next two hundred years, long after Britain’s brief bout of republicanism ended, they remained one of Spain’s best customers, buying nearly a quarter-million pounds of cochineal a year at a cost of over £200,000 per annum.\textsuperscript{93} In China, red dye and cloth were among the few items, besides precious metals, that merchants would accept in exchange for their goods and services. Since Spain also controlled the world’s richest silver mine in Potosi, Bolivia, this meant that from 1550 onward, the goods China wanted could only be sourced from the Americas, and Spain held the monopoly. Any other European polity attempting trade in China operated at a distinct disadvantage. The Portuguese, Dutch, French and English New World colonies were primarily attempts by these polities to emulate Spain’s success…or steal its treasures.

Bound by the Treaty of Tordesillas, the Spanish developed ports along the west coast of South and Central America, including the great shipyards at Acapulco, Mexico, and the major port of Callao, in Peru. While trying to chart a reliable route from New Spain to China, explorers often used Callao as a point of departure or a port of supply. The routes these ships plotted managed, somewhat miraculously, to miss every single Pacific island between Acapulco or Callao and Manila. The one exception, possibly,

\textsuperscript{91} Amy Butler Greenfield, \textit{A Perfect Red: Empire, Espionage, and the Quest for the Color of Desire} (New York: Harper Perennial, 2005). “Preeminent” is a subjective term. I use it here to refer to the pigment with the widest appeal. Kermes, also the blood of an insect, was used to make the exclusive Venetian Red, but very few people could afford it. The kermes insect is a distant relative of the cochineal beetle, though the latter produces more dye of a richer red-purple hue.

\textsuperscript{92} Cochineal does not bind well to cotton, the material used to make canvas. Greenfield states that the expense of carmine, plus the difficulty of using it as a pigment prevented most painters, except Rembrandt, from using it (Greenfield 82-3). However, advances in chromatography over the last few years prove that many artists were able to use cochineal by reconstituting the pigment from animal fibers (like silk and wool) which stabilized the red and made painting with it easier. See Peter B.G. Shoemaker “Red All Over.”

\textsuperscript{93} Greenfield, \textit{A Perfect Red}, 140-141; 186.
were the voyages of Alvaro de Mendana de Neira, who attempted to retrace Ferdinand Magellan’s disastrous route from earlier in the century, with hope of better success. Perhaps intrigued by Incan stories of the black men who inhabited islands to the west of Peru and their gold, Mendana sailed from Callao in 1567 and arrived at an island chain east of Papua New Guinea in 1568, which he called Solomon after the fabled wealth of the Biblical king. The Islanders there welcomed him and his crews, but were offended by the Spanish men’s refusal to consume the human flesh the Islanders offered them, probably as part of a special meal to honor their guests. Thirty years later, Mendana led a fleet of four ships to settle the Solomon Islands, a venture that ultimately proved unsuccessful. In 1595, Mendana and his navigator, Pedro Fernandes de Quiros, spotted the Marquesas, named by Mendana after the wife of the Peruvian viceroy. They noted that the Enata were remarkably lighter-skinned than the other Islanders they had seen. None of the surviving Spanish were forthcoming on what exactly precipitated the violence, but by the end of their two-week stay, 200 Enata lay dead. These Spanish explorers’ interactions with the Solomon Islanders and the Enata, though unpleasant and violent, marked Europeans' first documented proof of Islanders' existence, and their potential ethnic diversity. Twenty years later, the Dutch followed them.

In 1616, two independent Dutch traders, Willem Schouten and Jacob LeMaire, sailed around, instead of through the straits of Magellan, and entered the Pacific below the latitudes anyone else had ever reached. They explored north and west of Tierra del Fuego, trying and failing to find the (non-existent) Great Southern Continent that would provide riches to trade to the Chinese. Instead, they sighted or landed in the Tuamotus, Tonga, and Futuna. Despite an initial show of force in Tonga, they managed to open friendly trade relations. Their purpose, besides opening up new trade relations, was to circumvent the monopoly the Dutch East India Company (VOC) had on all sea-lanes leading to Indonesia. Whereas the Spanish and Portuguese governments, which united in 1580, directly sanctioned and funded their

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94 Matsuda, Pacific Worlds, 67. It is possible that Islanders visited the western coast of South America. It would explain the presence of the kumara in the Marquesas and Rapa Nui (the Peruvian term for sweet potato is “kumar”). Then again, Native Americans often encouraged Spanish explorers to leave their territory by directing them to fabled gold-rich nations “far away.” If they were aware of Rapa Nui, they must have noted a distinct lack of gold, which means at least part of their legend was invented purely to entice away the Spanish.

95 Ibid., 77.
civilian merchants’ endeavors, the Dutch and English governments each authorized joint-stock companies to operate independently, and with great authority, in Asia around 1600. The VOC quickly gained control of the centuries-old trade in spices operating out of Batavia in Java, while the British East India Company (EIC) focused its efforts on Chinese tea. These companies amassed great power in the region, but more importantly, each demanded control of the sea-lanes between Asia and Europe, declaring any trade not sanctioned by the company illegal.

When LeMaire and Schouten arrived in Indonesian waters by way of New Guinea, VOC officials confiscated their cargo and jailed them on the grounds that they had violated the company’s charter. Company executives could not care less about the presence of Islanders they considered too poor and “insignifi[ant]” to buy Dutch products or supply Moluccan spices.96 Thirty years after LeMaire and Schouten, in 1642, the VOC changed its policy and sent Abel Tasman to chart the coast of Australia, or New Holland to the Dutch. His foray into the Pacific Ocean took him from Batavia to the southern coast of Australia and Tasmania, and on to Aotearoa. Off course and perhaps confused, Tasman sailed as far east as the Tongan archipelago, before returning to Batavia. He traveled twice into the Pacific, in 1642 and in 1644, attempting somewhat unsuccessfully to map the Australian coast (he thought Tasmania was connected the continent) and find a safe route through the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean. Had he succeeded, his efforts would have helped the Dutch avoid pirates that plagued the seas between Indonesia and Holland. The Dutch kept a choke-hold on the spice supply, ruthlessly exploiting the Javanese and destroying their own crops rather than see them in competitors’ hands. As a result, other nations hired pirates, or more accurately privateers, to secure spices which otherwise cost a fortune. These predations, and the open wars with England, their main perpetrator, contributed to the VOC’s decline in the region.

The inability or unwillingness of the Dutch and Spanish to explore opportunities in the Pacific basin left the door open for the French and English. Unfortunately, the English government faced impediments similar to those the Dutch encountered, due to the monopoly on Asiatic trade they granted to the EIC at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Operating primarily out of India, the EIC, like all foreign powers, had access to the Chinese port of Guangzhou, or Canton. Since Britain’s North American

96 Ibid., 78.
colonies lacked the riches of its neighbors to the south, the country’s merchants had difficulty procuring items of value to the Chinese. In the 1730s, Britain turned to drug smuggling, trading opium produced in Turkey and India illegally for tea and Chinese porcelain. The EIC charter also prevented any British citizen from doing business in the region without their permission, and made it illegal for British colonists to procure Chinese goods from other sources, effectively ensuring a broad consumer base for their illicit trade. During the last third of the eighteenth century, Britain’s North American colonies began protesting against the increasingly high cost of EIC goods, and the taxes demanded by the metropole to pay for its colonies’ protection. Within ten years, those colonies in revolt successfully formed the United States of America. Indirectly, the American Revolution put the Pacific region fully into the global trade system by forcing Britain to develop its interests there.

In the grand scope of Britain’s New World scheme, the loss of its North American colonies did not have a crippling financial impact. The early hope, soon dashed by the climate, soil, and irascible colonists themselves, was that Virginia colony could cultivate tobacco, wine, and mulberry trees (for silkworms) and thus mitigate England’s dependency on Spain, France and China. Instead, the southern colonies served as a dumping ground for Britain’s convict population; deprived of access, the British cast about to find a replacement penal colony and called to mind the bleak descriptions of Australia recounted by Captain James Cook. Cook had been commissioned by his government to verify, once and for all, the existence of the Great Southern Continent. Legends extending back to Plato suggested this unnamed land mass, *terra australis* or “land to the south,” brimmed with wonders and riches. The British, like all earlier Pacific explorers, wanted to settle *terra australis* and use its wealth to alleviate their country’s crippling debt and trade, finally, with the Chinese on equal terms. It was during the course of the first voyage in 1768-71 that Cook, then a lieutenant, and his crew first sailed the strait separating Tasmania from the southeast coast of New Holland, and into Botany Bay. His second voyage 1772–75 ended almost all speculation in *terra australis*, and proved finally that no warm southern climate existed below the tropic of Capricorn. The world was stuck with New Holland, eventually renamed Australia after the fabled land, though the real continent, according to Cook and his crew, was anything but rich and welcoming.

Joseph Banks, a naturalist and the man for whom Botany Bay is named, exerted his considerable influence to secure a penal colony in New South Wales (NSW), centered around his namesake bay. He
and advocates in Parliament believed that such an “inhospitable” place would punish the guilty according to an imagined strict moral code. It helped that NSW lay on the same latitude as the Spice Islands; to Banks that meant the colony may one day turn a profit for Britain. If convicts could grow spices, or cacti for cochineal, then they could finally alleviate England’s dependency on Holland, Spain, or increasingly, the EIC. Australia was large, and convicts could easily become colonists, in the minds of the scheme’s supporters. This potentially ran counter to the EIC interests, but only if colonial officials peddled NSW products in China or Britain, or used EIC shipping lanes. So long as NSW colony supplied itself from the Pacific Islands to the east, then there would be no conflict with the company. Lord Sydney went so far as to suggest importing Tongan women to satisfy the sexual needs of the prisoners and their guards, a decision the colony’s governor rescinded after spending time in Botany Bay, where he became convinced they would “pine away in misery.” Instead, the government made efforts to send convicts’ wives and girlfriends, and female prisoners to attend the men’s needs. Nevertheless, the male population outnumbered the white female population in the initial penal colony and the one founded a few years later on the island of Tasmania. Prisoners turned to Aboriginal women to fill the gap, usually by force. Their predations upon Tasmanian women, in particular, led to an uprising against colony in the 1820s, a revolt the government ruthlessly quashed during the prolonged massacre that the British dubbed “the Black War of Van Dieman’s Land,” as Tasmania was then called.

Australia engaged in subsistence trading with Tongan and Tahitian islands, venturing further north to Hawaii and to the Pacific Northwest coast as the century wore on to a close. The London Missionary Society took charge of the salvation effort in the Islands, beginning with Tahiti in 1760s, following favorable accounts from Samuel Wallis, an early explorer of the region, and James Cook. Their presence in the Society and later Friendly islands often facilitated favorable trade relations with Islanders, who wanted more of the stuff the missionaries brought with them, and eagerly awaited the missions’ resupply from naval ships on the way to and from Botany Bay. The British quickly found their way back to Aotearoa, which the Dutch had named New Zealand, and landed in the Bay of Islands, following the


98 Ibid., 6. Also, Sione Latukefu, Church and State in Tonga (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1974), 33.
very accurate charts Cook’s crew created during their initial voyage. The colony charter gave its governor, Arthur Phillips, permission to use or annex “local islands” as he saw fit, but he decided to initiate trade with the Maori rather than claim the islands outright, as he had done with Norfolk and Howe Islands.

The colony’s developing trade network benefitted from the relative disinterest of the EIC in the South Pacific Islands. Since 1757, the government had been trying to limit the company’s power in the Pacific, an effort that took one hundred years to bring to fruition. The EIC charter strictly forbade NSW from using or benefitting from any of its east Asian or Indian trade, but could not prevent other nations from trading with the colony, or stop British private citizens from conducting business to the east of Australia. British ships had permission to use Spanish ports like Callao, and with the establishment of Port Jackson in Australia, British whalers could operate in southern Pacific waters and resupply “locally” as needed without crossing into EIC shipping lanes. The expansion of British whaling was absolutely necessary since Britain had received its supply of whale oil, the century’s chief source of fuel for illumination, from American whaling firms based in Massachusetts and Connecticut—firms they subsequently boycotted in response to the Revolution.

The government therefore hoped to create a whaling route from Australia to the Pacific Northwest, where the U.S. And Russia had developed ports and trading posts. Colonial officials were somewhat surprised to find an abundance of sperm whales off the coast of NSW and New Zealand, whose existence presented both problems and solutions to the fledgling colony. The colony could not pursue development of a profitable whale oil industry in its own right, because whale oil was not a commodity Islanders needed. It only had value in the British market, and was thus proscribed by the EIC charter. Phillips speculated, correctly, that the presence of so many whales would quickly draw American commercial ships, their main competitors in the industry, who could easily undercut the prices the EIC charged for whale oil.99 This perhaps explains why Britain was so slow to develop the systems needed to support such a complex industry, until the Anglo-Spanish war, a prelude to the bloody Napoleonic Wars,

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erupted in 1796 and closed South American ports to the British. The government was then forced to rely more on its fringe colony in Australia to provision, refit, and resupply its naval ships in the Pacific.

Sam Enderby & Sons, a very successful London-Boston whaling company, became the first to conduct whaling in the Southern Ocean in 1788. It was staffed with American Loyalists who stayed with Britain after the war and tried to build its whaling fleet. They moved their operations into the south Atlantic, on the strength of the Spanish cooperation agreements, then into Australian fisheries waters (which ran as far north as NZ North Island), eventually settling in the Bay of Islands in New Zealand by 1786. Governor King, who succeeded Philip in NSW, encouraged the endeavor and by 1806, Port Jackson was in regular use. Other trades in the Pacific Northwest made the jump to Australia and New Zealand as local resources were depleted. In particular seal fur traders settled in the Bass Straits Islands and employed or compelled Tasmanian women, who were excellent swimmers, to hunt the sea mammals, skin them, and prepare their hides for sale in the Chinese marketplace. Sam Enderby lobbied for a coveted business license from the EIC which allowed him to sell seal fur directly to the Chinese in 1792. British traders faced a distinct disadvantage in Australia, despite the abundance of sea-life. They could not conduct trade in anything but company-owned or foreign ships, which cut into their profits, and paroled convicts had almost no business options outside of the EIC and few local prospects since cultivation in NSW was not possible at the time. However, the diminishing supply of whales motivated the British government to force concessions from the EIC, and by 1813 all of the Pacific, including company territory, was accessible to whaling ventures. Not long afterward, the EIC lost its monopoly on all trade in the region except for tea.

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100 See Dolin, Leviathan, 171-9. The British began trying to entice Nantucket whalers away from the United States as early as 1785.

101 Ward, British Policy in the South Pacific, 15. British whaling industry never achieved wide success. They simply could not compete with the American industry, which centered primarily in Nantucket, MA. By the late 1700s, Nantucket firms were multi-generational, and they hired local men who had been working at sea since childhood. Enderby managed to succeed primarily because he was a scion of the Nantucket industry.

102 Ibid, 16.

103 Ibid., 23.
American traders in the Pacific were not bound by EIC rules; they were subject to China’s whims. Their ships entered the China trade to replace the goods lately supplied to them by the colonial government via the EIC, since they could neither buy nor sell locally-sourced merchandise like cod to the other British American colonies, their chief customers. The first American ship to engage in the China trade, *The Empress of China*, left New York in 1785, loaded with ginseng from Appalachia which they hoped to exchange for cloth, tea, and spices. To the dismay of the crew, the Chinese could not distinguish between them and the English; to be fair, Chinese system did not prioritize differentiation because they considered all Europeans equally foreign. No foreigner could enter the city of Canton. Instead, the Chinese built storage sheds near the port area for Europeans use, and eventually merchants built houses and offices on the wharves where they could wait for their shipments to be ready. All business transactions between foreigners and Chinese manufacturers took place through a Chinese intermediary, called a hong. The hong answered to his merchant guild, called a co-hong. Every hong was answerable to the co-hong and the imperial government for the behavior of his foreign clients while they were in port. Hongs guaranteed their payment of duties and fees, helped them procure a trade license, hired translators for them, and arranged access to housing and servants near their ships or designated storage areas. These living quarters were also called hongs, and by the time Americans entered the China trade, Canton’s wharf area was virtually indistinguishable from a street in any fashionable city in Europe or America. This was the original factory system, so named because all business was conducted through a “factor,” or representative (the hongs). The Chinese established it during their initial dealings with the Portuguese in Macao in the 1550s, and maintained it in Canton because it served their dual desire for isolation and revenue.

Most American ships had several owners or firms who employed a supercargo, a broker, to act on their behalf in China. A successful supercargo not only read the style trends in American culture, he helped shape them. The first book on China’s relationship with America was not published until 1844; before then, anyone who wanted to engage in trade in the region consulted travel narratives and accounts published in newspapers or pamphlets. Samuel Shaw, who traveled to Canton on the maiden voyage of the *Empress*, kept a journal eventually published by Josiah Quincy in 1847, but excerpts were widely
disseminated up to that point. Benjamin Shreve, a supercargo (a professional shopper) and scion of the wealthy Boston family of jewelers and silversmiths, not only made notes in Canton on items he thought would fetch high prices, he kept track of goods his crew-mates showed interest in as well. Low-ranking sailors usually never left the ship, so if any wanted to speculate in the market for Chinese products, he had to rely on the supercargo to make transactions on his behalf. Supercargoes and captains also took requests for commissioned artwork or decor from family members, and hongs found artists or workshops to complete the order. The artisans furthered the homogeneity of American taste by mass-producing items that had been made to order. For example, Mary Morris designed a pattern for chinaware and commissioned her brother Henry Hollingsworth, a supercargo working for a Philadelphia firm, to have it made for her in China, probably in 1811. The Chinese firm responsible for filling the commission continued to produce the pattern, known as the “cow” china, which became very popular in the New England and mid-Atlantic states. In this way, American tastes spread beyond their region and became more uniform through mass-production of styles the Chinese thought Americans might prefer.

Philadelphia ships began sailing around the horn of Africa to trade in China on behalf of colonial interests from about 1750. By the end of the century, however, ships from Salem, Massachusetts operated the most profitable branch of the trade. Elias Hasket Derby, owner of The Grand Turk, the first New England vessel to engage in the China trade, earned distinction as the nation’s first millionaire. He used some of his money to found Salem’s East India Marine Society (EIMS) in 1799, to educate merchants on what to expect in their dealings with the Chinese. Membership was open only to those who had sailed around either Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope; by 1820, only fifty of Salem’s mariners qualified. In addition to the journals, these men were required to collect samples of the flora, fauna, and material culture of the people they encountered along the way. One geographer called the “maps, logs, and


106 The Phillips Library has an unsigned letterbook from the years 1811-12 widely attributed to Henry Hollingsworth in their manuscript collection. His sister Mary designed the china pattern around this time, so I have speculated that he commissioned them to be made during this trip.

107 Aldridge, The Dragon and the Eagle, 120.
narratives “the key to empire.”" The more familiar ships’ crews became with the world beyond the Atlantic shipping lanes, the better they became at assessing potential sources of trade goods. China’s tastes were mercurial, and since they often also involved items in finite supply, American merchants constantly sought new items which might gain traction in the Chinese market. These searches eventually led New England ships around Cape Horn and up the Pacific Coast to California and what would become Oregon and Washington territories. Americans sought purchase in a region already rife with competition from other nations. The Russian-America Company operated a port in Sitka, Alaska, and traded Russian goods for ocean mammal pelts as far south as Alta California, around San Francisco Bay. The Spanish held the Bay and several ports in California, where they barred all foreign ships. The British-owned Northwest Company sent agents from Montreal to secure a base of operations on the Pacific coast; eventually it was forcibly absorbed by the Hudson Bay Company, which built Fort Vancouver in 1824.

Americans were active off the Oregon and Washington coasts by the 1790s. John Jacob Astor left New York and established the American Fur Company and Fort Astoria on the Oregon coast at the Columbia River delta in 1808, hoping to gain a monopoly on the American fur industry. Astorians, like everyone else in the Pacific Northwest, incorporated local Native Americans directly into their supply network, trading cloth and guns for otter, seal, and sea lion pelts. The work was considered too dangerous for whites, and when the Native American population dwindled due to diseases introduced by the traders, American and British agents imported Hawaiians to replace them. The availability of furs from so many sources—the Pacific coast of North America, New Zealand, and Australia—eventually created a glut that diminished value and demand, and sadly decimated the animal population. Elephant seals, whose oil was also sold as illuminant, and sea otters were hunted practically to extinction. The fur trade was in decline by 1810, and the last American ship leaving the Pacific Northwest to trade them in

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108 Ibid, 190. Aldridge is quoting geographer Lloyd Brown.


110 Ward, British Policy in the South Pacific, 16; Igler, The Great Ocean, 105-106.
China for profit departed the Oregon coast in 1829. The American Fur Company suffered from a lack of supplies due to the War of 1812 and yet another British blockade of American ships; Astor sold his fort to the Northwest Company, who took over operations until their merger with Hudson’s Bay forced them to relocate to British Columbia.

New England ships gained access to Hawaiian ports, a necessary stop on the shipping route between Oregon and Canton, in the early 1800s. American missionaries arrived in 1820, but Hawaiians had been trading with Europeans and Americans since at least the 1790s. The Columbia Rediviva, the first American ship to circumnavigate the globe (1787-1790), and her sister ship, Lady Washington, were the first to initiate trade in Hawaii under the American flag in 1789. Their captains, John Kendrick and Robert Gray, made the nation aware of Hawaii’s supply of sandalwood, whose fragrant wood had been traded amongst Islanders for centuries. The sandalwood trade began in earnest not long afterward, linked like furs to the Chinese aesthetic, and ended with the depletion of supply in Hawaii in the 1820s, and across the Pacific Islands by the 1830s. The demand for sandalwood had been waning for the preceding decade, however. Charles Bullard, a supercargo connected to the Boston firm Bryant and Sturgis, took a shipment of sandalwood from Hawaii to China aboard the Tartar in 1821, which, due to unforeseen delays on his part, took over a year to offload. He complains in his letters about the poor quality and quantity of goods he procured in exchange, indicative of the declining value of sandalwood to the Chinese.

David Igler refers to the international development of sea mammal hunting for profit as “the Great Hunt” because it launched American, European, and indigenous Islanders and Americans around the world to profit from dwindling live resources. The Hunt was part of a larger endeavor that enveloped the indigenous populations of the Pacific Islands and the populations on Pacific continental coasts into a developing European trade network by utilizing their own internal labor and pre-existing trade sources. Hawaiian ali’i relied on maka‘ainana labor to secure the necessary quantity (usually shiploads’ worth) of

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111 Barman and Watson, Leaving Paradise, 32.
112 Columbia Rediviva collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, OR. See also, Igler, The Great Ocean, 3-4.
sandalwood to pay for Chinese nankeen cloth, spices and porcelain, just as Russian, British, Spanish and American traders used Aleut, Chumash, and Tlingit men and women, often cruelly, to extract a valuable resource from the environment and from other trade partners they could not access upstream, often for the same items. American ships soon dominated the Pacific Northwest trade, and are primarily responsible for pulling that region and Hawaii into the orbit of the Chinese trade system. By the time the regions’ natural resources began to disappear, American ships were employed by various nations, like the Spanish and French, who paid American ships to ferry goods between those nations and China, so Americans began earning actual currency to buy Asian goods and services, instead of relying so heavily upon the barter system.

By 1820, an Anglophone corridor of Pacific had already taken shape. The British colonization of NSW necessitated a supply chain extending east from Aotearoa through Fiji and Tonga to Tahiti. The American entrance into and eventual domination of the northern Pacific trade routes incorporated the Pacific coasts from Vancouver Island to Alta California, with the Hawaiian ports of Lahaina (Maui) and Honolulu (O‘ahu) as necessary resupply stations between East coast ports, Oregon and China. Anglophone navigators commissioned or coerced Islanders to accompany them on their voyages to act as interpreters, which facilitated sustained contact through successful trade negotiations. The relative ease with which these interpreters communicated with other Islanders throughout eastern Polynesia established the idea, expressed early on by James Cook, that the inhabitants of the sprawl of Pacific Islands were of one “Nation,” spread across “the vast ocean.”

For the British, such similarities may have influenced Parliament’s policy of minimal (for them) intervention in the Pacific Islands. The government could not hinder the actions of missionaries, even if it wanted to, but it viewed the political and social structures of the Islanders, as described by their explorers, as conducive to developing markets for their materials. With the notable exception of New Zealand, the British government’s preferred method of negotiating trade relationships in Polynesia involved distinguishing a powerful aliʻi/ariki and securing the equivalent of favored-nation status. In some places, the developing missionary presence assisted British efforts, and in other places hindered it. It helped that, to the extent that the government approved trade with regional

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114 An oft-quoted statement of James Cook. This version is taken from The Journals of Captain Cook on his Voyages of Discovery by J.C. Beaglehole, eds, and quoted in a paper by Damon Salesa from which he explicitly forbids citation.
islands, that it was only in service to New South Wales, a colony of prisoners the government saw no particular need to support until “free” British citizens began immigrating there in significant numbers in the nineteenth century. It also helped that the British entered a period of general anti-colonial sentiment following the American Revolution.

Other nations felt no such reluctance establishing colonial outposts, rather than trade depots, on Pacific Islands and Pacific coasts. The fledgling United States quickly moved to claim what was available on North America’s western coast, and used its well-developed merchant fleet to fill its treasury by acquiring products and selling them to China. When American ships entered the Pacific in search of new fishing grounds to rejuvenate its declining codfish and whale oil industries, they used established ports in Hawaii, Tonga, Samoa, Tahiti, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Australia to supply their ships, refine their products, and entertain their crews. These island chains served as stops on their preferred route through the Pacific because they could conduct business in English, thanks to the efforts of established Protestant missions. By the time the China trade could no longer provide the major source of revenue for the American government, the Pacific whaling industry was there to replace it. Over time, the Pacific Ocean and its islands ceased to be pit-stops on a Chinese-American thoroughfare, and began to be destinations in their own right.

Conclusion: Unnecessary Necessities

This broad overview of the effect of the China trade on Euro-American political economies should not overshadow the abstraction of the trade, of what the Chinese aesthetic meant to Europeans, and, in particular, Americans. The fact that Chinese artistry had to evolve to accommodate foreigners’ changing tastes is representative of Euro-Americans’ changing ideas about China (and china), the “newly discovered” Pacific Islands, and themselves. Eighteenth-century British and colonial Americans were happy to possess goods in what they imagined was the Chinese style, elaborately decorated with motifs like lotus flowers and dragons. By the early nineteenth century, this elaboration was succeeded by a wave of neoclassicism that may not have been entirely divorced from the idea of China, also populated by a
race as “ancient” as the Greeks and Romans. Increasingly, Americans wanted objects from China that appeared more austere or decidedly Western. Elaborately carved ivory baskets gave way to silver service tea sets embellished with Westernized lions, a symbol of British power. The demand for paintings of Asian flora and fauna evolved into a desire for depictions of American or British subjects that were created much more cheaply in Chinese factories. Chinese artists used an archaic Byzantine method of painting portraits and scenes on the reverse side of glass panes, using the solid grey layer as the final coat to create a mirror. A popular scene, painted in workshops in the first years of the nineteenth century, was the “apotheosis,” or ascension as a saint, of George Washington. Oil paintings of ships replaced porcelain figurines as centerpieces for front rooms, the latter relegated to the private, feminine spaces of the house. Blue and white export china became so ubiquitous in the United States that ships’ captains used crates of it as ballast during their voyages around the world.

The change in styles and usage of goods from China reflected Americans’ evolving self-identity. The U.S. used China, in the economic and abstract sense, to disassociate itself from Britain, even though it purchased the same goods and sought the same services. The American government was eager for recognition, to establish itself as a power in its own right. Moreover, American people wanted to shake the reputation of backwardness they had acquired over the colonial period. By sporting Chinese fabrics and displaying chinaware, commissioning decorative effects created with materials only available from the East, or painting oneself into imagined Chinese interiors, Americans reaffirmed their own collective sense of sophistication. The difficulty of doing business in China and the attitude of Chinese officials, who considered Westerners beneath them and conducted business with polite condescension at best,

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115 David Beevers, Chinese Whispers: Chinoiserie in Britain, 1650-1930 (London: Royal Pavilion and Museums, 2009), 36.

116 Lions feature heavily in traditional Chinese art, where they are often mistaken for dragons. These figures were not overly represented in export art, due to their association with imperial power. Heraldic lions in the British style are distinct from Chinese depictions of lions, and appear on pieces that were very likely commissioned.

117 Beevers, Chinese Whispers, 36.


merely added to the allure of goods procured there. Americans showed off these goods precisely because of their exotic air, as “proof” that they possessed the skill to succeed at the level of the established European nations whose cultures they emulated. In the early years of its independence, the United States’ admiration of all things Chinese said as much about the former colony’s relationship with Britain as it did about the quality of Chinese goods.

By 1840, no other nation except for Great Britain conducted more business in China than the United States. The nature of that business had not changed remarkably between U.S. independence and the trade’s peak years: transactions still required hongs, supercargoes, and factors. But after 1800, American tastes, always closely following those of Europe’s, became more overtly Graeco-Roman, or neoclassical. America sought representations of Self, not of the Other, as evidenced by the works commissioned from Chinese artisans during the late Federal period. Secularization progressed, but the new science served only to underscore Classical representations of race. China’s ethnic “degeneracy” was emphasized over its ancient cultural pedigree, and the negative connotations of “yellow” races were reflected by the increasingly negative attitudes towards the Chinese hong system, and the Chinese aesthetic. American and British society deemed the style suitable for feminine spaces because, as a “degenerate” race, the Chinese were effectively emasculated. Appropriate public art took a decidedly Romantic appearance: muted colors, Western figures, dramatic, emotional subjects. Americans continued to purchase Chinese goods, but they wanted things that celebrated what they thought of as the unique history of the United States as part in the legacy of Greco-Roman democracy. Around this time (c. 1800) American intellectual and popular thought increasingly began to distinguish white, “real” citizens from non-whites as part of American identity formation. Ironically, Americans’ search for identity had led them back to Great Britain as they drew upon their heritage as Anglo-Saxons to mitigate their biased and unequal dealings with Blacks, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders.

Europeans used Asia to regain a sense of self in the century of recovery following the Plague pandemic. They relied on a common value-system, based on precious metals to access goods and services that only recently had been made available to them. Faced with increasing national debts and a diminishing supply of raw materials, Europeans attempted to forge direct paths to China, acts which drew
them into the physical and liminal space of Pacific Islanders. The more stratified societies they encountered were in already in flux for a variety of reasons, engaged in the process of consolidating or re-structuring their systems of power. Americans and the English, the first mariners entering Oceania in numbers, assisted in those efforts, sometimes unaware of exactly what they were doing, by reinforcing the existing Hawaiian, Tongan, and Tahitian power structures in the short-run and preparing for the ascension of lesser chiefs in the long-run. Everywhere Europeans went in the Pacific, they enhanced the mana of those leaders who forged bonds with them, however fleeting, primarily because their trade corridor connected Islanders to the goods and services quickly becoming essential to their evolving ways of life. Chinese goods formed part of a general influx of exotica from Britain, France, the United States, and various other European nations.

As quickly as they became enmeshed in the China trade network, Islanders appropriated goods of Chinese and American manufacture to suit their desires. Hawaiian aliʻi tapped into their existing tribute system and began harvesting sandalwood to exchange for firearms, knives, dishes, and pillows. When the brig Neo arrived in Honolulu in 1819, for instance, William French, an American supplier who operated mercantile store on Oʻahu in the early nineteenth century, issued credit to Kamehameha (listed as Tamaahmah in his account book) for 16 kegs of rum ($400), 66 large bottles ($66), 20 bound books, ($40) and gunpowder shot ($8,000), which the king discharged with an equal value of sandalwood: 850 piculs, at $10 per picul.¹² Lesser aliʻi bought shirts, tinder and flint, and sundry items for what were likely greatly inflated prices from French, who procured the items from ships passing through on the way to China. However, from the point of view of Hawaiians, these goods were invaluable in that they provided proof of status, and allowed the aliʻi to reaffirm their authority amongst their makaʻainana and each other. This affirmation was absolutely necessary in the emergent nation of Hawaii, where authority had so recently become disengaged from the kinship ties that previously stabilized the hierarchy.

No local ruler had more need or reason to announce his new-found prestige than Kamehameha’s son Liholiho (c.1797-1824), who took his father’s name when he ascended the throne in May of 1819. Upon his ascension, his mother Keopuolani and stepmother Kaʻahumanu, who had been his father’s

¹² William French account book, 1818-19, Hawaiian Historical Society Library, Honolulu. A picul is an Asian unit of measurement not easily translated. It is the measurement of what a grown man can swing over his shoulder, usually listed as 120-160 pounds.
favorite wife, united to break forever the kapu system that reinforced the power structures across the archipelago. This rupture changed the nature of the relationship between ali‘i and maka‘ainana, which in turn altered the means by which ali‘i expressed their inherent right to govern. Liholiho was the first Hawaiian king forced to reassert his authority in purely secular terms, and he chose to emulate Euro-American projections of wealth and prestige to solidify his base. He spent the fall refurbishing his “houses in Woahoo” as French put it, purchasing nails, oil, frames, shingles, glass, and wallpaper delivered on the brig America.¹²¹ Like many wealthy Hawaiians, he took a great liking to the masted ships in which Europeans arrived, and eventually purchased two of them, the brig Becket and the first American-made yacht, Cleopatra’s Barge, at the price of a shipload of sandalwood each.¹²² The Barge was built for the wealthy Crowninshield family of Salem to be the definitive model of pleasure cruising. The mahogany and gilt interior, plush red cushions, and modern amenities—complete with delicate china serviceware—seemed designed with royalty in mind.¹²³ When its owner George died, Benjamin Crowninshield, strapped for cash, sold it to the merchant firm Sturgis and Bryant, who sent the yacht to Hawaii hoping that it would catch the young king’s eye.

The ships arrived in November, and Kamehameha II toured the Barge on November 7. It was subsequently sailed to Oahu. Charles Bullard took half of the payment to China on the ship Tartar, as previously mentioned, but when he returned for the rest of the payment, the king detained him on charges of fraud. It seems the ships’ captain, John Suter, misrepresented the seaworthiness of the vessels; when the Hawaiians hauled the ships out of the water, they found the Barge consumed with dry rot.¹²⁴ Though Bullard professed his ignorance, he was imprisoned for four months until he was effectively paroled

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¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Charles Bullard papers, Phillips Library. See also logbook of Cleopatra’s Barge, voyage to Sandwich Islands, June-November 1820, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. The entry dated Nov. 16 indicates the sale of the yacht, after several inspections by the king and his retinue, for an unspecified quantity of sandalwood payable in two installments in 1820 and 1821.

¹²³ The Peabody Essex museum in Salem, MA has constructed a replica of the interior of Cleopatra’s Barge in the marine wing of the museum, based on descriptions and the original plans found in the Crowninshield family papers.

¹²⁴ According to the Barge’s logs, the carpenter was employed almost immediately after the voyage’s outset in June of 1820. Several other entries noted the ship’s tendency to list to one side, and as late as November 14, two days before the sale of the ship, the crew was employed “bringing off water” from the ship. Logbook of Cleopatra’s Barge, 1820.
thanks to his own skill at negotiation and the largesse of other Canton-bound merchants, who paid money on his behalf towards the king’s refund.\textsuperscript{125} Liholiho was not the only Polynesian ali‘i to purchase a masted ship from Euro-Americans, though he may have had the most troublesome transaction. It may seem strange that such excellent mariners would choose to buy ships rather than continue to make them, but it appears to be a consistent pattern among Islanders. Some time after the cessation of the Hawaii-Tahiti trade network, Hawaiians stopped using distance canoes altogether and made vessels worthy only of inter-island boating, which could be rowed to different islands. Distance voyaging did not resume when ali‘i acquired ships, either. They were employed in the same way as local vessels, and served no other apparent purpose than to assert the mana of the ali‘i who purchased them. In the absence of the kapu system, Hawaiian nobility increasingly relied on “stuff” to differentiate themselves from the commoners.

Hawaiian nobles appropriated Western style, in the form of ships and houses to divorce themselves from the old power structures, but they also used trade goods to make their lives easier. The jugs, glasses, guns and iron tools replaced calabashes, war clubs and stone implements because they served Islanders’ needs better. Cotton and silk entered Islanders’ commodity chain because they were both novel and practical, eliminating the time-consuming production of kapa. While stuck in Hawaii, Bullard wrote to his employers, Bryant and Sturgis, about the popularity of nankeen cloth, which was manufactured in China and enjoyed wide distribution in Europe and America in the decades before most countries could produce cloth in large quantities.\textsuperscript{126} Islanders in the tropical belt had no plants similar to the flax cultivated in Aotearoa, so that had no means of making a fabric as comfortable and supple as linen or cotton. Early explorers traded shirts, belts and red flannel and wool garments for food, water, and sex. Established traders continued the trade and Islanders quickly began replacing kapa with cloth, incidentally catering to missionary desires that Islanders cover more of their bodies. The yellow color of nankeen cotton was sometimes deepened with turmeric-based dye, which may have assisted its rise in popularity since yellow, along with red, were important colors to Hawaiian aristocracy. The Chinese sent

\textsuperscript{125} Charles Bullard papers, Phillips Library.

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
over three million bolts of nankeen overseas in 1819, the peak year of its production for export.\textsuperscript{127} It is one of the few Chinese goods that Europeans and Americans lost interest in as the century progressed, when lighter cottons and muslins from India and Britain became more affordable.

This is not to say that the adoption of these goods, especially cloth, came without complications. Guns and powder made hunting and warfare easier, but also made it possible to kill more animals and people, in time contributing to demographic and ecological declines in some areas, and precipitated shifts in the balance of power in all of the more politically structured Islands.\textsuperscript{128} Once *kapa* production ceased, women struggled to fill their time, and to adjust to their new relationship to society, and each other. *Kapa* had meaning because it was difficult to make, and required group effort by women whose bonds were constantly reinforced and represented by its manufacture. The adaptation to masted ships and re-discovery of distance voyaging took Islanders away from the Pacific for the first time in their history, and many never returned. Their loss exacerbated the ongoing demographic decline precipitated in all Island communities by the introduction of foreign diseases. The next chapter will explore the changes the Sino-Anglo-American trade had on Islanders \textit{in situ}, but it is worth noting that as the trade incorporated the Pacific into a global network, it drew Pacific Islanders out to other parts of the globe. On the other hand, the existence of Islanders, just like the “discovery” of Native Americans centuries earlier, forced Euro-Americans to initiate conversations about who they were and what they were capable of. These conversations took place in a world where the relationship to and comprehension of the “exotic” had changed, and whites questioned what the larger world and its new people owed them as inheritors of a great civilization. Establishing the proper place of non-whites was not a new exercise for white society, but as the spiritual began to compete with the secular and the scientific began to define the spiritual, the correct status of Islanders became a site of contention for the next two hundred years.

\textsuperscript{127} Billy Kee Long So, \textit{The Economy of Lower Yangzi Delta in Late Imperial China: Connecting Money, Markets, and Institutions} (New York: Routledge, 2013), 84.

\textsuperscript{128} Kamehameha II purchased large amounts of gunpowder from French to battle conservative elements among the Hawaiian nobility, urged to war when he dissolved the *kapu* system in 1819.
Chapter Two - Destinations

Hina's Body, Maui's Hook: Origins and Order in the South Pacific

Europeans evinced little apprehension about repurposing the Pacific Islands for themselves through name and word association. Cook labeled Tonga "the Friendly Islands," a reference to the manners of the people he met, whereas Hawaii was dubbed "the Sandwich Islands," an homage to the British earl who was Cook's patron. The name “New Zealand” acknowledged the Dutch explorers' role in its "discovery." There was some attempt to reproduce the phonetics of Kahiki/Otaheite and Viti Lavau—Tahiti and Fiji, respectively. This form of appropriation through naming did not extend to the populations of these islands; in that regard most explorers seemed to invoke some sense of political correctness. When asked what they called themselves, the inhabitants of various islands answered kanaka maori, or tangata maori, or moriori, all terms that, loosely translated, means "us," or “people,” and the terminology stuck. Only in "the Marquesas" (originally Hiva) did the inhabitants define themselves using the spatially associative term te fenua Enata, "the people of this land," expressive of their awareness of other islands and Islanders, and their existence as unique members of a larger community.129

Recent linguistic and genetic analysis verify the observations of early explorers that the many island populations seemed part of one cultural diaspora, proof of what Islanders have always claimed in their legends and expressed by their belief-systems. These stories are all the more remarkable in that they demonstrate a plurality of consciousness that may be unique to island civilizations. Islanders' legends clearly indicate a historic moment of arrival, of journey to and settlement of a particular island or group. Yet they also speak of creation—a moment in the distant past when "the people" sprang into being "in that place," so to speak. In this sense, Islanders are both inhabitants and settlers; they arrived from elsewhere to a place where they have always been.130 In Aotearoa and Hawaii, this duality may indicate successive

129 According to Maori historian Peter Buck, Marquesans originally called their island chain “Hiva”—loosely translated as “large land” or “big country”—a word used in whole or part to name several individual islands throughout the Pacific, including three in the Marquesan archipelago: Nuku Hiva, Hiva Oa and Fatu Hiva. Due to distance and inter-island isolation, the Marquesan language has evolved into two dialects. Note that te fenua Enata (or te henua Enana in the northern dialect) can also be translated as "the land of these people," and thus, can be representative of the place, not the people. In either case, the larger point is still made that Marquesans identify themselves by association.

130 Matsuda, Pacific Worlds, introduction.
waves of migration and displacement. Both archipelagos seem to have supported two different cultural
groups simultaneously, and in both cases the later arrivals displaced and perhaps enslaved the older
population. The newcomers pushed the original population further north (Hawaii) or south (Aotearoa)
into the outlying islands; it is possible that Kaua‘i became the last refuge of these originals, who
eventually formed the *kauwa* caste of slaves to the *kanaka* of Tahitian descent. Whatever the specific
settlement patterns indicate, all Islanders rooted themselves in place using the shared cosmogony (cosmic
origins) and cosmology (cosmic function) of their mid-Oceanian origins. In this way, they developed
systems of behavior and belief that justified and reinforced social and personal relationships.

In the void before the world began, the darkness, or Po, gave birth to two beings: the Sky, Rangi
and the Earth, Papa. Rangi and Papa were locked in perpetual coitus, and between them they conceived
and birthed the world, its plants and animals, and six sons, who were gods of the elements, the forests,
and war. With all of creation smothered by its parents’ embrace, it was Tane, the god of nature, who
leveraged them apart and propped up the forests to forever separate the lovers. In time, Tane himself
grew lonely, and procreated with animals, birds and trees, seeking a true female version of himself to
mate. Rangi instructed him to look to his mother for guidance, and in her image—and from the clay of
her genitals—he constructed Hine, a wife and daughter. Considering that she was delivered to him
literally from his mother, it can be surmised that she was his sister as well. Tane kept his wife's origins a
secret from her, and they lived happily together and had many children. Hine discovered the truth by
chance and, deeply shamed by the close-kin relationship she shared with her husband, she ran so fast and
so far away that she punched a hole in the world and created the afterlife. Tane pursued her, but she bade
him remain in the world to care for their children, whom she would greet again in death. And so,

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131 It is suggested by terminology that their relationship to the land, the *moku*, may precede that of
Hawaiians. As slaves, *kauwa* became the ritual human sacrifices to the war-god Ku, the only Hawaiian
deity whose worship required such practices. Stephanie Levin, in “Overthow of the Kapu System in
Hawaii,” says they “symbolically…represent a race of ‘demi-gods’ of the earth who many have originally
been earlier migrants to Hawaii and who were conquered by later immigrants” (Levin, 411). Kaua‘i
contains a style of architecture and stone masonry that does not exist elsewhere within the archipelago,
further evidence of a different cultural influence that precedes the Tahitian culture imported by the
Hawaiians.
humanity was born of two complicated love affairs and two painful separations, which defined Maori
domestic relationships and kin affiliations until the British colonial era disrupted them.

The same origin stories reverberate throughout eastern Oceania, with subtle differences. Rangi is
called Wakea in Hawaiian cosmogony, and his son is Kane, sometimes referred to as Kaneloa. Kane
performs the same feats as his Maori counterpart, but Hina, his daughter-wife, does not exhibit the same
aversion to their kinship, reflective of an acceptance of incest in Hawaii that was actively discouraged in
Aotearoa and Tonga. Father-daughter marriages were truly rare compared to the commonplace sibling
unions, but they did occur. The last recorded one, and probably the last such union to take place, occurred
between Keawe, an ali‘i nui of Hawai‘i who fathered the famous Kalani‘opo‘u‘u, and his fifth wife, his
daughter Ali‘iwahine. Keawe was Kamehameha's uncle; his daughter's great-grandchildren, of his issue,
were Kalakaua and Lili‘uokalani, the last king and last queen of the Hawaiian nation. Hawaii's Hina also
bore several of her father's children, but cast aside the oldest, a deformed child she thought was stillborn.
This child grew in the earth, and evolved into the first taro plant, progenitor of the staple food of the
kanaka, or people. Hina's body also sustained her children; she was the coral reef surrounding the
islands, where Hawaiians fished up all manner of food that eliminated the need for deep sea fishing.

Polynesian religion is full of dualities and triunes—multiple aspects of the same God. They are
not just linguistic variations of their names, but different facets of their personalities and function. Hina/
Hine was often association with the moon, but in her aspect as Hine‘ahu‘one she was the woman of earth,
and once she left the world she was Hine‘nui‘te‘po, mistress of the underworld. What fragments remain
of the Tongan cosmic cycle credit the supreme deity Tangaloa with the formation of the earth. In
Aotearoa, Tangaroa is the god of the sea, but not usually a descendant of Papa and Rangi, who
engendered all other life. Likewise, Tanaoa of the Marquesas and Ta‘aroa of Tahiti seem to sit apart from

132 Kaneloa appears as a separate personality of Kane, and can best be understood today as his dual
opposite. Depending on the (usually Christian) source, Kaneloa is marked as a Satanic figure, Kane’s
evil twin, so to speak.

133 According to David Malo, as cited Martha Beckwith, Ku was Hina’s original husband and both first
manifested on the island of Kaua‘i. This makes sense, given that island’s early settlement and the cult of
Ku worship that existed there. Malo says Kane arrived later, and took Ku’s place in the mythic cycle,
much as the kanaka arrived and displaced the kauwa. Martha Beckwith, Hawaiian Mythology (Honolulu:

heaven and earth, and, in the case of the latter, is responsible for shaping or reshaping the world. Tonga’s Tangaloa’utufuga dwelt in the sky with his five brothers, most of whom were also named Tangaloa. One day he cast down wooden shavings from his carvings which piled up in the ocean to make the island ‘Ata. His brother Tangaloa’atulongolongo, descended as a bird and planted seeds on the mound of shavings, the only place in the world ocean where he could land. From his seeds grew a tree with vines reaching up into the gods’ plane of existence, which became the means by which the flightless among them traveled to earth. Tangaloa’atulongolongo returned to earth once more in bird form to deal with an infestation of worms in his sacred tree. He bit one worm into three pieces, and from them formed the first human men. In the Samoan version of the story, it is Tangaloa’s daughter, unnamed but probably some version of Hina, who flies down and creates humans from worms.

Polynesians trace the descent of all things—rocks, plants, people—directly from the gods. According to Tongan genealogy, the tu‘i hierarchy came about as restitution for an ancient conflict between Tangaloa’s sons. He had four children, all gods, by an unnamed wife, a goddess, who must have also been a sibling. One day, he climbed down the tree between worlds and came across a beautiful human woman, ‘Ilaheva, with whom he stayed briefly before returning to his home in the sky. He left her fertile soil to make a garden in order to care for the son they conceived together, ‘Aho‘eitu. Years later, the curious demi-god climbed the tree and presented himself to Tangaloa. His jealous older brothers killed him and secretly fed him to their father. When Tangaloa discovered who he had consumed, he regurgitated ‘Aho‘eitu and restored him to life. He furthermore sent all five of his sons to earth to remain forever, and put the elder four lower than their younger brother, now the most sacred man on earth, the first tu‘i Tonga. ‘Aho‘eitu was sanctified by his death and rebirth, and literal passage through his father, a god. Most Oceanian cultures require some ceremony between fathers and sons to bless and

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135 Tongan deities are often represented as sets of twins with names very similar to each other. An early version of Tongan creation stories acknowledge the incest between two sets of identical twins, one male and one female, whose coupling produces a new generation of identical twins, two of whom conceive Maui, the most famous Polynesian deity, usually characterized as a demi-god.


protect the latter. Failure to do so is the equivalent of cursing the infant. The most famous example is Maui, usually classed as a demi-god, not because of a human strain in his parentage, but because he was improperly consecrated by his father, Kane in Hawaii, Tane in Aotearoa. In both traditions, Maui usually treats Hina as his mother, though in some stories she is acknowledged as his elder sister. She is, in fact, both, and as such she holds a particular sway over Maui’s actions. Certainly the incentive for all his heroic deeds originate with her.

Every origin story in eastern Oceania credits Maui with the creation of the perceived world, usually the archipelago a specific Islander community inhabits. Tonga was jointly created by “fishing up islands or having them thrown down from above,” a rendering of the world that perhaps explains the different kinds of islands that form the Tongan archipelago. Maui used his famous hook, described by the Maori as his grandmother’s (Papa, or earth) jawbone, to pull Tongatapu, and possibly Vava’u and Ha’apai, from the ocean depths. These three are the only coralline islands in the chain, though there are several uninhabited or sparsely populated atolls made of the same material. The other islands, including ‘Eua, the largest island where the only rainforest in Tonga grows, are volcanic, created by the slow piling up of cooled lava rock over time—not unlike the gradual layering of detritus from Tangaloa’tufuga’s wood carving. In Aotearoa, Maui pulled up either all of the islands or just the North Island, depending on who is telling the story; he is responsible for raising the Hawaiian archipelago as well. Most retellings of the story state that he acted on a bet he made with his brothers, who are sometimes also named Maui. They set an impossible task, designed to shame him by his failure: the capture a deadly sea creature. Maui nearly dies but ultimately succeeds in killing the beast and bringing its carcass to the surface by following the advice of his mother, Hina, who gives him his special hook and recruits Tangaloa to his aid. In this way, Maui makes human habitation in the ocean world possible by bringing solid, fertile land up from the depths. He also brings women from Polutu, the underworld and Hina’s domain, as companions and reproductive partners for the first human men. Maui lassoed the sun and pulled it into a slower orbit

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138 Rosemary Madden, Dynamic and Different: Mana Wahine (Palmerston North: Campus Press, 1997), 19.

139 Elizabeth Bott, Tongan Society at the Time of Captain Cook’s Visits: Discussions with Her Majesty Queen Salote Tupou (Wellington: The Polynesian Society, 1982), 89. See also, Noel Rutherford, “Archaeology and Prehistory.”

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to the benefit of humanity but at the request of his sister/mother, who gave him her braided hair to use as a rope, so that she could dry her tapa.

Maui looms large in modern (post-1850) interpretations of Polynesian cosmogony. He does appear to be an omnipresent figure, who may once have been a living person, like Hawaii’s Pele, who eventually earned semi-sacred status in “local” legend as time passed. The fact that his name remains unchanged across virtually all of the Pacific signals a singular, and relatively recent origin. He embodies the strength and voyaging spirit of Polynesia; representations of Maui’s hook carved in ivory or rare koa, kauri, or sandalwood are still presented to adolescent male Islanders as a token of their transition from childhood to manhood. Tales of his exploits were quite popular with Euro-American ethnologists who collected them in the nineteenth century, and often equated him with Prometheus. They made Tangaloa “the Polynesian Jupiter” and found symmetry between several other “mythic” Oceanian deities and Greco-Roman or Indian (Hindu) gods and goddesses. More will be said of the effects of imposed correlations later in the chapter, but the most immediate one was to diminish the power and potency of Polynesian goddesses, who worked in necessary opposition to their male counterparts. Their roles in the cosmology differ distinctly from that of the gods’ “twin” or other aspects. Women balance the power of men in Maori society just as they do in Maori cosmology. A man displaying inappropriate power, who abuses his status, loses his mana when a woman, particularly a family member, turns her back on him in a display of contempt or displeasure. It violates tapu for women to speak during public meetings, and so this act is rendered all the more powerful by the silence that surrounds it. Without uttering a word, any woman has the power to deliver “the ultimate insult” to a man of rank; her noa immediately negates his mana.

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140 Hero-Maui is also called Maui Tikitiki (tiki means “right” or “good”) to distinguish him from his siblings, also named Maui. In Samoa and Society Islands, Maui is sometimes referred to just as Ti’i, Tiki or Tika.

141 Traditionally, girls are not allowed to wear pendants shaped like Maui’s hook; they were tapu to women. However, it is becoming more common to see girls or women wearing them in the Islands, probably as a Westernized conceptualization of feminine power—which is expressed through adoption or appropriation of traditionally masculine habits.

142 Roland Dixon, Oceanic, 29.

143 Madden, Dynamic and Different, 20.
When Hine turned from her beloved Tane, she did so to protect their children from loss of mana; since Tane was also her father, their children would have been robbed of all public power had she remained with him in full knowledge of their close relationship. Oddly, the situation did not bother Tane—he either had not considered his children’s status or could not bring himself to rectify the necessary but still untenable act of incestuous cohabitation—and so it fell to his sister-wife and closest female relative to correct him. Maui’s last great act was his attempt to achieve immortality by reversing his own birth. He entered Polutu with plans to enter his mother’s birth canal and exit her mouth, creating a paradox that would effectively end all death. Maui was Hine’s most beloved child, the only one who she allowed to move freely between her domain and Tane’s world, yet she crushed him between her thighs rather than let him profane the natural order by cheating death. To Polynesians, the islands may have been created by the aegis of powerful men like Maui, but it was women who ensured the continuation of life as a meaningful pursuit. In the post-Contact era, women would continue to preserve Polynesian cultural markers; during a time when Islanders had been marked for extinction, it was women who made sure they survived.

In all versions of the Hawaiian cosmic cycle, Hina is a direct descendant of the first being in universe, Night, who is also a woman. In the older Hawaiian cycle, it is Night, Kore, who spontaneously birthed Kumulipo, the first man, and Po’ele, a lesser version of herself. Kumulipo’s and Po’ele’s union produced 40,000 gods and goddesses. Hina was their oldest child and, as such, their most powerful. She may have spontaneously conceived the hero Maui in her earliest iteration. Women were reverent and necessary participants in island life, without whom there would be no islands, nor any life. Missionaries and ethnologists denigrated the kapu against them, which strictly regulated their exposure to objects and foods associated with male power. But, from a certain point of view, the kapu protected the sacred feminine from being contaminated by maleness, rather than subjugated it to that power. If the reverse was not evident to missionaries, a regulation of male exposure to the feminine, it was because there was less danger to the world if men became woman-like than if femininity was lost, because women were capable


145 Kaomea, “Na Wahine Mana,” 337.
of independent procreation, but men were not. Once femininity was lost or irreparably changed, the world would die.

All belief systems exist to explain the world and humanity’s relationship to it and to each other; the particular behavioral guidelines exemplified in Oceanian cosmology developed to optimize the peculiarities of island living. At its core, the origin stories developed in the Pacific elaborates on the situational relationships between its human inhabitants with an astounding level of flexibility to accommodate local complexities. It is no surprise that the most prominent relationship explored by these legends is that between siblings, especially brothers and sisters. The creation cycle mimicked but also defined the method of population increase for Islanders in the early years of their migrations. Hina, Papa, and Po all represent the originary female, each begetting her descendant asexually, leading to the eventual arrival of a male who progenitors other males who mate with existing females and help their sisters conceive more people. Whether their interactions remained amorous or became aversive, the dynamic between brothers and sisters epitomized the intimate nature of island society. In some communities siblings, especially those who shared the same mother and father, spent their entire lives with each other. More so than patriarchal or matriarchal relationships, brother- and sisterhood defined kinship networks, the division of labor within the family, and the most repetitive, common, and frequent human interaction individual Islanders enjoyed. Most importantly, brother-sister relationships gendered each sex; a girl learned what to expect of men and how to treat them, either in imitation of or opposition to these formative, personal cross-sex interactions.

In Samoa, a man’s sister was “the corner of her brother’s eye” and held the highest position in the household until she married, whereupon she became subordinate to her husband. Women carried the honor of a *nuʻu*, a small community comprised of several connected families (*aiga*), so a maiden’s safety and virginity were defended to the last; any violation of a kin group’s adolescent girls (*aualama*) was a legitimate cause for war. Tongans considered women closer to the divine than men, so sisters outranked their brothers in all situations, even after marriage subordinated them within their own households. Hawaiian nobles, and probably the slave *kauwa* caste, enjoyed the closest possible intimacy

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with their siblings. The kauwa class were forbidden interaction with makaʻainana and aliʻi, leaving only each other. Aliʻi of both sexes were free to enjoy multiple sexual partners, but marriages were arranged specifically to accommodate the kapu system, in order to produce aliʻi with the highest possible mana. Tongans also considered mana and degrees of kapu in their marriage arrangements. Their proximity to Fiji and Samoa gave them access to a far more numerous and diversified population than Hawaiians; there was no need, and evidently no desire, to resort to incest. Samoa’s political structure was more decentralized, less hierarchical, which obviated the need for strict proscriptions on intimacy for their aliʻi.

Sibling relationships in Aotearoa were likely more alloparental due to the flexible, and often fleeting, nature of their maternal bonds. Childcare was men’s responsibility, and women were not obligated to care for their own children. The custom, a reflection of Hine’s sacrifice, developed because women were often taken as prizes during war. A woman may end her life far from home, she may be forced to bear children to the man who enslaved her, but she would not be required to raise them. I suspect that children were raised with help from older siblings or paternal aunts within the family unit to offset the absence or neglect of their biological mothers.

Ancient Tonga developed the most articulated kinship network between siblings, cousins, and their children. Traditionally, every relationship between family members was determined by status, which was based on gender, birth order, and degrees of separation between relatives. All sisters, but especially the eldest sister (mehekitanga), outranked her brother and his children, who were her fakafotu.147 Children inherited rank from their mothers, so the sister’s children, or tama ʻa mehekitanga, also outranked their uncle (tuʻasina) and his children (tama ʻa tuʻasina).148 The more authority a man held within the community, the higher rank his sister possessed, which in turn affected public displays between the two. These situations were further complicated by degrees of rank between cousins, because the children of one’s paternal aunt still outranked that person, regardless of the personal authority s/he possessed. For instance, James Cook noted the deference the ʻeiki ʻʻPau” paid to a woman who interrupted a meal served in his honor. When “the Woman” arrived no one, including “Pau,” could continue to eat in her presence, and “Pau” touched her feet deferentially when she left the room. The “Pau” in question was

147 Bott, Tongan Society at the Time of Captain Cook’s Visits, 31.
148 Ibid.
most likely Paulaho, the *tu’i Tonga* during the period of Cook’s explorations. The *tu’i Tonga* inherited his position upon the death of his father and kept it for life. His sister was *tu’i Tonga fefine* until her death as well. The title then passed to her niece, oldest sister of the *tu’i Tonga*; the fefine’s eldest daughter, if she existed, was *tamaha*, the most sacred individual in Tonga. What Cook observed was the unique ability of Tongan familial associations to override public displays of power and authority at the highest level. “The Woman” at the feast was not Paulaho’s sister, but his cousin, Mo’unga’o Lakepa.\(^{149}\) Her mother, Paulaho’s aunt, still lived and was the current *tu’i Tonga fefine*; the title and its attendant *tabu* would not pass to Paulaho’s sister until his aunt died. Mo’unga’o, however would always to outrank her cousin to the degree displayed at the feast because she was *tama’a mehekitanga* to his *tama’a tu’asina*.

In addition to the primacy of sibling bonds, there stood the prestige obtained by lineal descent. The *tu’i Tonga* traced his ancestry all the way back to ‘Aho’eitu, the son of the god Tangaloa. According to oral tradition in Tonga, this man lived about 900 CE. During the early years of the monarchy, the *tu’i Tonga* was the paramount leader, but over time the other noble houses, each originating from ‘Aho’eitu’s lesser brothers, gained more secular power. The *tu’i Ha’atakalaua* was usually the younger brother of the *tu’i Tonga*; the *tu’i Kanokupulu*, however, traced its lineage back to Samoa, where the *tu’i Tonga* had lived in exile for a period of time in the fifteenth century. Though “foreign” in origin, the Kanokupulu eclipsed the Ha’atakalaua in strength by the seventeenth century, and formed a marriage alliance with the *tu’i Tonga*. From that point on, the Kanokupulu house provided the *tu’i Tonga*’s first wife, the *moheofo*, who bore the future spiritual leader(s). This constant jockeying for position and prestige was not limited to the Kanokupulu, although they would prove to be the most successful at it, and benefited from gradual alienation of the *tu’i Tonga* from secular matters. By the time the Kanokupulu house was created, the *tu’i Tonga* only presided over spiritual matters, though no leadership could be validated without his sanction. All Tongan nobility disseminated power by imbuing successors with secular and sacred authority, which they inherited and/or gained through marriage to a woman of high rank, and sending them out to govern the outlying islands. If the new leaders married women of lower rank, their family’s *mana* gradually

\(^{149}\) *Ibid.*, 33. Paulaho’s aunt had three children: a boy and two girls, all of whom outranked him. It is not clear whether Mo’unga’o Lakepa was *Tamaha*, but I doubt it; the fact that she could move about freely and not require absolute prostration from everyone around her suggests that she was the younger daughter.
diminished over succeeding generations, and ruling tu‘i had to send out new aristocrats to govern the fringes. By the time Europeans arrived, “most islands had representatives of all three major kingly titles,” which suggests a large governing class of Tongans that were related to each other, however distantly, and thus all descended from the gods themselves.\textsuperscript{150}

Hawaiians, by contrast, kept their ruling class small, even though their class structure resembled the Tongan system in most respects. Like Tongans, Hawaiian ali‘i ranked each other within their social class by both matrilineal and patrilineal connections. However, since parents were usually siblings, and both lineages descended directly from the gods, children could inherit greater mana from either parent, not just the mother. Incestuous marriages served to keep the pool of ali‘i rather small. If a chief had no “real” sister, he married as close as he could get to his rank, but his child would be of a lower rank than he because the child’s mother could not match her husband’s rank.\textsuperscript{151} Because of this, some paramount chiefs (ali‘i nui)—those who governed, say, a large district on one of the bigger islands—ranked higher than others. Chiefs also formed secondary marriage connections with someone who was always of a lesser rank than his primary wife, and those children would be lower order nobility, fit for warrior or bureaucrat positions. The offspring of two of the highest level ali‘i was considered sacred, and possessed a very strict kapu, more so than any other that surrounded Hawaiian nobility. This level of kapu served to protect the great mana embodied in such people, to ensure it would not be “contaminated” by more human associations.\textsuperscript{152} In Tonga, where women were automatically more sacred than men, the most sacred woman was unmarriageable because society encouraged an aversion relationship between cross-sex siblings. In Hawaii, by contrast, sanctity was inheritable so long as the sacred individual had a full-blood brother or sister to marry. The amorous dynamic of Hawaiian sibling relationships rendered such strict proscriptions against one’s whole person bearable.

It should be noted that the possibility of the Tamaha was a recent development in Tongan society. In the early 1600s, Siniataka ‘i Langileka, future tu‘i Tonga fefine to her brother Fatafehi, broke tabu and conceived a child by a Fijian commoner named Tapu’osi. Her father, ‘Uluaki’mata, was tu‘i Tonga at the

\textsuperscript{150} \textit{Ibid.}, 63.
\textsuperscript{151} Levin, “The Overthrow of the Kapu System in Hawaii”, 410.
\textsuperscript{152} \textit{Ibid}, 414.
time, and concern for his daughter’s happiness overrode propriety, and he allowed her to marry her Fijian. Their child, Fonomanu, became the progenitor of the Fale Fisi (“house Fiji”) titles of tu‘i Ha‘ateiho and tu‘i Lakepa, which elevated and accommodated nobles of Fijian birth within the Tongan ruling class.153 From that point on, the tu‘i Tonga fefine could marry leaders of Fijian descent, who were also distant cousins. The Fale Fisi houses never achieved equal status with the other noble houses in Tonga, though the line survived into the nineteenth century and produced three sacred Tamaha. Eventually, they were absorbed and dissolved by the ascent of the Kanokupulu line and the Tupou dynasty that still rules Tonga today. By creating new branches of the aristocratic family, Tongan elites incorporated fresh blood into the nobility in a way Hawaiians could not, though such diversification created a kind of tabu in the Tamaha that could not be surmounted, and resulted in difficult public family interactions under that same tabu.

Kapu permeated all relationships throughout the Pacific Islands. They were most complex where they regulated human interactions in highly stratified societies like Tonga and Hawaii, where power dynamics reflected most fully Oceanian theology—the relationship between gods and humans. Kapu between people were associative: some were gender-centric, class conscious, inter-socially (between members of the same rank) regulated, and generational based on who was in the room and how they were connected to each other. These ritual proscriptions evolved to protect the authority of the ruling classes, and in so doing determined the manners and etiquette of both ali‘i and commoner alike. The chiefs’ kapu required obeisance from all commoners, and more complex interactions also based on stature—the literal stance or height differentials achieved by sitting or prostration—with and between each other. Other kapu were situational: etiquette determined by an event, or a person's presence in a particular location. There is a Hawaiian parable about an ali‘i nui who once visited a deserted and desolate part of his island inhabited only by an impoverished elderly couple and their daughter. Custom demanded that guests be fed according to their rank, which in this case required meat. The couple owned no livestock, and so killed and cooked their daughter for the ali‘i. When he discovered what transpired on his behalf, he left the home in shame and sorrow, and a kapu was laid over the place. The lesson here is that the poor couple

acted in accordance with the tradition of Hawaiian hospitality, though it cost them everything; the *ali‘i nui*, on the other hand, behaved thoughtlessly by creating an untenable situation for his hosts. The parable served to remind *ali‘i* that the demands made by their presence and interaction with commoners necessitated careful regulation and planning.

Public relationships, the kind that existed between those in power and their subjects, formed the corpus of Hawaiian society. Hawaiians conceived of their islands’ societies as a body with the paramount *ali‘i* as head, the *kahuna nui* (high priest) and *kalaimoku* (head councilor and war chief) as right and left hands, and the warriors, farmers and fishermen as the feet. This tripartite rulership loosely resembled Tonga in that ultimate power was divided but overlapped between three men, usually relatives, who handle separately the religious, military and head-of-state offices. The difference was that, in Hawaii, the councillor position was for life, regardless of when his *ali‘i* died; the services of the *kalaimoku* were retained by the chief’s successor. The rule of three was again reflective of the way the gods ruled: Kane, Ku, and Lono divided the heavens between them, and each took responsibility for some aspect of nature, or human activity. Each god had a season, and with each season Hawaiians adopted the proscriptions associated with each god’s particular set of *kapu*. Lono was a weather god most associated with rainfall, agriculture and fertility, and as such the *ali‘i nui* most often aligned themselves, representationally, with him. Kane was the father of creation to whom all life was sacred; his twin Kaneloa, therefore, presided over the inverse of creation, which Europeans interpreted as death and/or the Underworld, but which more correctly might be called “unmaking.” He brought magic to the human world, and was closely associated with sorcery and the *kahuna* who practiced it. War was Ku’s domain, and during his season killing and ritual sacrifice took place. The *kalaimoku*, then, embodied Ku on earth, and directed war efforts but also provided council for peace talks. It can be surmised, based on the longevity of the position, that Hawaiians placed great importance on military prowess and the connections that *kalaimoku* were able to establish and maintain with each other through and beyond the lifetime of any

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155 While premier rulers in Hawaii were often men, there were exceptions, the most famous being a dynasty of women who ruled Kaua‘i in the fifteenth century.

156 Ibid. 418.
given ruler. War may have been common, and Hawaiians, like most Islanders, clearly considered it necessary, but they did not conceive of it as total, permanent, or excessive.

In Tonga, any position except the religious head of state could be surrendered by the possessor at any time. In such cases, a successor was chosen from likely candidates who may or may not be part of their predecessor’s immediate family. Only the tu‘i Tonga held his position for life, and passed the title on to his son upon his death. This also reflects Tongan cosmogony, where ‘Aho‘eitu ruled permanently over his brothers, who endured a more shifting and unstable authority under him. Gods were siblings who fought constantly, and nobles replicated those relationships with each other. Yet, commoners accepted the leadership of government without question or complaint, confident of their leaders’ divine association, and their acquiescence created a compact between ruler and ruled that was everywhere evident in the kapu system, which served to acknowledge the divine strength of the rulers, their mana, and their obligation to their subordinates. Even in the less overtly political societies of Samoa and Aotearoa, lesser hierarchies developed when need arose. In Samoa, the “Malietoa” system, in Aotearoa, the election of a “King Maori.” The rulers chosen for war councils, usually, were those who had unimpeachable lineages that connected them to great heroes, or communal ancestors, or deities.

The central tenet of all Polynesian political structures was belief that the state could not function without strong mana, which was guaranteed by religious devotion and demonstrated by adherence to kapu. It was the abrogation of religious practices surrounding the kapu system, the succession of religious leaders, and the unchecked power those leaders enjoyed that caused the nineteenth-century civil wars in Hawaii, Tonga, and Tahiti. Until the nineteenth century, Hawaiians confined citizenship to descendants of the god Wakea. Ali‘i were related to maka‘ainani through lesser lines of descent, and employed special record keepers to track of everyone’s lineage. Only the kauwa had no rank, and were outcasts, a physical resource used especially as human sacrifices to Ku, the god of war. Once the ancient religion was abolished in 1819, however, they were presumably absorbed into Hawaiian society. Later histories tied the dissolution of the old religious order to the arrival of Boston missionaries, but this event was more coincidental than derivative. The termination of the traditional religious practices was the last step in a cultural and political revolution that began on the island of Hawai‘i during the last half of the
eighteenth century, and eventually united the entire archipelago under the leadership of Kamehameha (c1740-1819).

He was the great-grandson of Keaweʻikekahialiʻiokamoku, who had inherited control of most of the big island from his parents at the beginning of the century. Keawe's son Kalaninuiamamao was older, but had inherited less *mana* through his mother than had his younger half-brother, Keeaumoku. Keawe's considerable holdings were divided between his two children instead of being granted to Keeaumoku outright, which precipitated a sort of civil war that left both men dead and put control of virtually the entire island in the hands of Keawe's nephew and Keeaumoku's half-brother (on his mother's side) Alapaʻi. Alapaʻi raised Kalaninuiamamao's son Kalaniʻopuʻu and Keeaumoku's son Keōua Kalanikupuapaʻikalaninui (who were half brothers through their mother) with his own children, and Kalaniʻopuʻu eventually took control after the death of his cousin in the 1760s or 1770s. His son Kiwalaʻo briefly succeeded him in 1782, but was challenged and overthrown by Keoua's son and Kalaniʻopuʻu’s nephew, Kamehameha I (the Great).

Since Hawaiians inherited their parents’ *mana*, by traditional reckoning Kalaniʻopuʻu was a lesser son of a lessor son. Both he and his father held tenuous claims to Hawaiʻi because, although they were elder sons, the lower rank of Kalaninuiamamao’s mother opened that claim up to challenge from Keeaumoku’s branch of the family. Their authority, their *mana*, was inherited through their patrilineal descent from Keawe, whose unimpeachable family tree made the consolidation of power in Hawaiʻi possible. Kamehameha's ascent in Hawaii may be regarded as restoration of proper authority since both his grandparents and father outranked the descendants of Kalaninuiamamao, from whom he seized power. As *aliʻi nui*, he called upon his extensive family connections throughout the islands to sustain and extend that power, which led to an unprecedented event in Hawaiian history: the creation of a monarchy extending over the entire archipelago.

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Note that Kalaniʻopuʻu and Keoua have the same mother. Her name was Kamakaʻimoku, and she left her husband Kalaninuiamamao for his half-brother Keeaumoku, who outranked him, and gave birth to Keoua. Though younger, Keoua possessed greater *mana* than his half brother Kalaniʻopuʻu, inherited through his grandmother, and had better claim to their grandfather’s (Keawe’s) lands. According to Abraham Fornander, Kamakiʻimoku also married Alapaʻi, who was her cousin as well as Keeaumoku’s brother. It was the descendants of Alapaʻi, through Kamakiʻimoku, who opposed the abolition of the *kapu* system and went to war with Kamehameha’s son Liholiho.
In order to maintain his authority, the new Hawaiian king restructured land management, which under the old system operated as a tenure for maka‘ainana, who might control contiguous tracts of land subject to the administration of an ali‘i. By granting commoners smaller land parcels spaced around the island and thus controlled by different chiefs, Kamehameha divided the loyalties of the people from their ancestral lands and their hereditary leaders. The king also replaced the hereditary ali‘i nui in many districts with governors who had no tenure rights to the island on which they lived, but merely saw to administrative duties like tax collection. Powerful and potentially disruptive ali‘i nui instead resided with Kamehameha, who moved his residence to Maui then to O‘ahu. Under the new system, ali‘i no longer maintained familial connection to their scattered maka‘ainana, and could no longer leverage those bonds to call upon their tenants to fight for them. This insured against insurrection, but it also reduced kinship ties to nothing more meaningful than landlord/lessee relationships, which made it easier for ali‘i to exploit the maka‘ainana, because they no longer felt any particular sense of obligation to them.\footnote{Levin, “The Overthrow of the Kapu System in Hawaii,” 420-22.} Dissatisfied tenants could now leave one farm for another parcel elsewhere, and no longer felt bound to the land, or their ali‘i. The maka‘ainana had more reason to be unhappy in their land tenure, because ali‘i began taxing them heavily after 1800, when sandalwood became a commodity in the world market. Nobles used the timber to pay their foreign debts, and tenants spent many days harvesting it for them.\footnote{Ibid.}

Kamehameha spent the entirety of his reign consolidating his power and imbuing his position with the greatest mana ever contained by any one family or person. When he died in 1819, his principal wife Ka‘ahumanu became regent over his young sons, Liholiho and Kauikeouli. She understood that in order to maintain their new power, the ruling elites would have to destroy the very kapu system which “sanctioned the challenge to authority” that made Kamehameha’s ascent possible.\footnote{Ibid., 427.} Together with Keopuolani, the boys' mother and Kamehameha's highest ranking wife, Ka‘ahumanu intentionally broke kapu with their son by sharing a meal with him, and initiated the final phase of Hawaii’s political transformation by destroying the old gods. To cement the new political order, Ka‘ahumanu created a hereditary advisory position she occupied throughout the reign of both Kamehameha’s heirs; all kahuna,
meanwhile, became just like other ali‘i, bereft of any sacred power. When Boston missionaries arrived in 1820 to attempt a large-scale conversion effort, they found a kingdom officially without religion, and embroiled in a conflict over whether or not the king should restore the kapu system. Ka‘ahumanu welcomed the missionaries, but it was American merchants such as William French who provided guns and ammunition the crown needed to win the ensuing religious war between Kamehameha II and traditionalist elements of his extended family.

Tonga’s political transformation was initially a much more drawn out process, rooted in the dissolution of its empire. At its height, the empire claimed land in both Fiji and Samoa and controlled an intricate trade network. In the thirteenth century, however, Samoans rose up in revolt and drove out most of the Tongan aristocracy in a series of vicious battles. The Samoan chiefs adopted the title "Malietoa" from that point on, a Tongan word meaning "brave warrior;" it is said to be the last words shouted up the beach as the last Tongan warriors left Samoa in defeat. However acrimonious the relationship between the two polities became, they never lost sight of their cultural connections, and Samoa's independence did not remove it from the imperial trade network. Centuries later, the Kanokupulu title was granted to a Samoan noble family in gratitude for services rendered to the family of the tu‘i Tonga, who took refuge on ‘Upolu after they were briefly ousted by one of the other noble houses. According to oral tradition, individual and family status began to play a greater role in politics once Samoans were granted noble status in Tonga.

The Samoan house provided the wife of the tu‘i Tonga, and in the eighteenth century, it was this scion of the Kanokupulu, Tupoumoheofo, who disrupted the line of succession in the Tongan noble house by elevating her young son to the role of tu‘i Tonga while his father still lived. She then replaced the tu‘i Ha‘atakalaua, the head of state, with someone loyal to her family. Tupoumoheofo was the wife of Paulaho, the tu‘i so plagued by his sister's children, especially his nephew Lanitupu—Mo‘enga Lakepa's brother—who, as James Cook had witnessed, Paulaho avoided at all costs. The disrespect heaped on Paulaho by his tama ‘a mehekitanga, his wife, and evidently his own son were probably the result of his insufficient mana. He was the younger son of a lesser wife of the previous tu‘i Tonga, and as such should never have been allowed to ascend to the position. The Kanokupulu, through Tupoumoheofo, used her husband’s unsuitability to consolidate all power, spiritual and political, within itself and the family it
represented. Though Tupoumoheofo was eventually forcibly removed from power, the events she orchestrated led to a civil war in Tonga that lasted two generations, and culminated in the seizure of power in 1845 by her descendant, who styled himself as George Tupou I, in honor of the British king he admired, and in recognition of his Kanokupulu lineage.\textsuperscript{161}

Much has been made of Tupou's relationship with Wesleyan missionaries in general and Reverend Shirley Baker, the British missionary who served as Tupou's premier, in particular. As in Hawaii, former missionaries often formed part of the Western-style government, but in Tonga this inclusion was somewhat surprising considering the contempt with which most missionaries were initially treated. Throughout the Pacific, Islanders first became aware of European culture through the “instruction,” such as it was, of beachcombers—men who deserted their ships or were accidentally marooned on the islands. These men usually attached themselves to a powerful island resident, and in exchange for knowledge and whatever skills they possessed, they received protection, housing, and female companionship. Missionaries, like the European beachcombers who preceded them, were expected to participate in Islander communities, to provide a means for the nobility to secure or advertise power. The early British arrivals to Tonga were not the dedicated proselytizers Americans first sent to Hawaii; they were uneducated and racist, contemptuous of traditional Tongan culture and of Tongan people.\textsuperscript{162} They made no effort to learn the language, which would have facilitated conversion efforts. Worse, most could not provide any useful community skills, like medicine or smithing, that would have impressed the Tongan nobles and may have won them over. Yet, because they arrived in the early stages of what would be lifelong conflict for most Tongans, they were incorporated, whether they liked it or not, into that ongoing power struggle. The London Missionary Society did not send a competent missionary until nearly forty years after Europeans began arriving on Tongan shores. Nathaniel Turner transferred to Tonga from the New Zealand mission, and arrived in 1827 to rescue the Tongan mission’s second attempt from failure under ministers John Hutchinson and John Thomas. Turner, fluent in Maori and deeply committed to the

\textsuperscript{161} All members of the royal family, and many other Tongans, incorporate “Tupou” into their names in honor of Tupoumoheofo and the line of kings. Interestingly, Tongans in general, and Tupou in particular, were not much impressed by the British who lived in Tonga. Tupou’s choice of name may have been a political one, a means to satisfy the British residents or conciliate them.

\textsuperscript{162} Sione Latukefu, \textit{Church and State in Tonga} (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1974), 41.
success of the mission, supported the few Tahitian missionaries onsite, expanded the school they had built, and began educating the youth of Nuku’alofa. ¹⁶³

Yet, for all their efforts, when religious change did come, it was incorporated into the political system first, as was tradition in Tonga. By 1829, Taufa‘ahau, of house Kanokupulu, needed an edge in the ongoing war between royal houses and requested a representative from the mission to teach his people. Turner dispatched an early Tongan convert to Lifuka, where Taufa‘ahau lived. White missionaries soon followed and one was on hand, by happenstance, to save the young Kanokupulu from an assassination attempt, thus magnifying the *mana* of the Christian god at the expense of the Tongan ones. Taufa‘ahau used the event to justify his destruction of traditional iconography and spiritual centers, and as he secured his power base, he introduced the new religion wherever he succeeded. In this way missionaries and their doctrine were used to secure secular power. Fifteen years after his own conversion, Taufa‘ahau, baptized George Tupou, ascended as *tu‘i Kanokupulu* and immediately declared himself king of all Tonga, and began inserting influential missionaries into his government, who in turn influenced the development of his constitutional monarchy. It would be easy to see George’s Wesleyan Methodism in solely strategic terms; however, Tongans did experience some kind of reconceptualization of the world during the years of his ascension. The proof is in his relationship to Baker, a Wesleyan lay preacher who arrived in Tonga in 1860, a full generation after most Tongans began thinking of themselves as Methodists. Baker, with the king’s permission, broke with the mission officials and founded the Free Church in 1879 while serving as prime minister; to the dismay of many Tongans, the government began to “punish” those who continued to frequent the Wesleyan churches. The tension came to a head in 1887 after several Tongans tried and failed to assassinate Baker, and eventually the Western Pacific High Commission intervened and forcibly deported Baker in 1890.

¹⁶³ The London Missionary Society’s original goal was to train Polynesian converts and send them out to convert other Islanders, beginning with the Tahitian mission in 1797, and the Tongan mission initiated that same year. Clearly, the Tahitian mission met with more success, but Tahitian missionaries abroad received mixed receptions. Some Islanders were offended by their presence; perhaps they felt if Europeans wanted them to worship their god, they should come and teach them about him personally. See Neil Gunson, “The Coming of Foreigners” in Noel Rutherford, ed., *The Friendly Islands: A History of Tonga* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1976), 92 and Sione Latukefu, “The Wesleyan Mission,” in Rutherford, *The Friendly Isles*, 120-22.
Theatricalities aside, the episode illustrates a shift in religious thinking in the Tongan people, if not in their king, both in terms of their personal relationships to the divine, and their public social relationships to the king. Half a century earlier, George Tupou, as tu‘i, could have forced a wholesale shift in cosmological thought, but the leveling effects of Christianity, combined with a codified system of civil rights and laws influenced by the new religion, made it possible for Tongans to see themselves as separate and individual practitioners of a faith they coveted. Ironically, it was this very effect, exacerbated by the dictatorial and paternalistic attitude of the Wesleyans, that caused the king’s break with their brand of Methodism in the first place. The wholesale adoption of Christianity was made possible by the extremely hierarchical nature of traditional Tongan society—the king decreed education and conversion in the 1830s—but Tongan (and Tahitian, and Hawaiian) hierarchies typically did not provide for differentiation within Christianity. Catholics, who came late to the proselytizing effort in Oceania, were often discriminated against or outright abused for encouraging an alternative form of Christian worship, as were Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, and other groups who entered the region after the Baptists, Methodists, and Congregationalists, who dominated the early efforts. When someone new tried, late in the game, to introduce yet another new set of rules, the ruling classes met them with staunch resistance, in contrast to their attitudes toward early proselytizers. This resistance was sometimes generational, as was the case in Tonga. Younger Islanders, born within the era of European contact, turned to Catholicism as an alternative to the stifling Methodism of the Wesleyans because Catholic priests tolerated a return to certain ancient (pre-Contact) traditions.\textsuperscript{164}

\textbf{The Material Culture of Theology}

Cosmology and cosmogony function on macro-process levels in society, and inscribe our lives with a sense of place and purpose (where we came from and why we “are”). They are top-down and relational; as such, an examination of social culture—manners, bodily practices, social interaction—provides a way access the deeper purpose behind belief-systems. Material culture, by contrast, uncovers personal connections to that system, or what we might think of as theology: an individual or collective

relationship to the divine/sacred (who we are). Every culture expresses their relationship to god through art, whether it is vocal, performative, painting or sculpture. In Oceania, religious figures were not just representational, they personified the gods themselves.\textsuperscript{165} This was apparently a universal concept in the region. When Hawaiians draped Lono in \textit{kapa} or addressed Ku in prayer, the gods were there, present within their statues, which formed the central component to family compounds and public spaces. This is why the destruction of iconography in Hawaii, Tonga, and Tahiti mattered so much: it was a sure break with the old ways, that in the case of the former, at least, actually preceded American conversion efforts. What we know of these pre-existing religious habits, how they ordered Islanders’ lives in relationship to their gods, we know from early observations made by European explorers and naturalists, which have since been confirmed by archaeological evidence.

Islanders in Samoa and Aotearoa, inhabiting less stratified communities, managed to maintain their pre-European belief-systems longer, well into the colonial period, and Aotearoa in particular may provide the most fully realized extant references to religious practices as they probably existed elsewhere in the region, and also how those beliefs evolved to reflect events unique to the Maori. Of all the Pacific Islands communities, Aotearoa and Rapa Nui probably experienced the most extreme isolation soon after their initial settlement. Cultures developed in isolation can splinter completely from their root and develop into something new, as happened to a degree in Rapa Nui, the furthest point of the Polynesian triangle. Once the Rapa Nui denuded their islands, they could no longer replicate the kind of iconography present in other archipelagoes, and possibly developed ideographic writing to replace their \textit{moai} construction and worship. Rongorongo, which means literally “to chant out loud,” was clearly tied to religious worship. Only priests and royalty learned to read and write it, and it was inscribed on wooden tablets, which were extremely rare in Rapa Nui after the destruction of its native forests. Maori art, by contrast, developed from the abundance of timber in Aotearoa, which allowed for experimentation and greater elaboration than any place else in Oceania. The continued presence of wood also helped preserve religious worship by making it possible for Maori to call forth their ancestors and their gods through iconography long after Hawaii and the central belt of islands lost their resources. Aotearoa’s location and

\textsuperscript{165} Thomas, \textit{Oceanic Art} (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 34.
size made it possible for its inhabitants to continue to evolve and adapt apart from Europeans’ presence, even though it was increasingly to the European presence that they were forced to adapt.

As mentioned earlier, Polynesians kept their gods with them, usually in view within the family compound. Maori craftsmen carved images of ancestors into the walls and roofs of their homes, or *whare*, and images of gods and animals associated with fecundity on their storehouses, or *pataka*. The most three-dimensional—and the most threatening—figures appear on the palisades of fortified villages, or *pa*. The most elaborately carved building in the village or compound was the *wharenui*, the meeting-house, initially modeled on the home of the highest ranking elder in the community.\(^\text{166}\) The building is designed to mimic a human form that is itself densely inscribed with the images of important ancestors, cultural heroes, and sometimes gods—individual characters together producing a more substantial corpus, a single unit ready to challenge, welcome, or protect as the need arises. Both the inner and outer carvings contain stylized human forms with abalone-shell eyes that catch the light from every angle. Upon entering, the guest’s eye does not know where to rest, which creates a feeling of dissonance, perhaps confusion. This is an intentional effect designed to leave strangers off balance, but which would not affect residents, who grew accustomed to the images and could not feel threatened by them.\(^\text{167}\) *Wharenui* developed during the early nineteenth century, and their addition to the village, plus their similarity to the chiefs’ residences, suggests they sprang from a desire to extend the protection of the elders’ ancestors around the entire community during a time of increasing uncertainty precipitated by the arrival of Europeans and their guns.

*Pataka*, a type of elevated storehouse, on the other hand, are much older edifices, designed to protect the community’s food supply from floods and vermin. They too are intricately carved, but usually contain scenes and images associated with fertility, such as whales or copulating couples. Unlike *whare* and *wharenui*, which contained images of people important to the place where they were built, *pataka* carvings contained similar subject matter throughout Aotearoa, with differences in style attributed more to the individual artists rather than the genealogies of the local population. The larger villages were gated, fortified communities that relied on “carving clearly intended to threaten” to ward off strangers, enemies,

\(^{166}\) *Ibid.*, 60.

\(^{167}\) *Ibid.*, 64.
and perhaps threatening phenomena.\textsuperscript{168} These carvings usually depicted men sporting erect penises and weapons, or referenced specific martial events by recreating them on the massive \textit{waharoa} framing the gates.\textsuperscript{169} Many \textit{pa} were destroyed during the wars between Maori \textit{iwi} (nations) and between Maori and Europeans; most of the remaining \textit{waharoa} pieces are recreations based on descriptions in stories or other drawings. Taken together, the Maori village exhibited a form of group ornamentation, of art that connected the people to each other and to their pasts, which was where Maori believed the future lay.\textsuperscript{170} Inhabitants of these villages reinforced their cultural and ancestral connections merely by living within those spaces, under constant gaze of their forefathers who birthed them, and were waiting for them.

Maori, like other Islanders, also carried their gods on their person, in sacred objects like ivory hooks representing Maui and ancestral objects like \textit{hei tiki}. Maori \textit{tiki} necklaces were carved from rare greenstone (nephrite) found only on the South Island; though it was used everywhere, it could be obtained only through trade with southern \textit{iwi}. Any greenstone (called \textit{pounamu} in Maori) object, then, whether stone adzes, fishhooks, or figurines, possessed tremendous value, and were often handed down as heirlooms from one family member to the next. The stone is very hard, which makes for relatively austere images carved onto the surface. \textit{Tiki} are almost always squatting or kneeling figures, with disproportionately large eyes and heads, and arms carved either at rest on the bent knees or superimposed over the abdomen. What exactly these figures embody has been debated over the years. One theory is that they are representative of fetal infants used by women as talismans to keep an unborn child’s spirit at bay.\textsuperscript{171} While \textit{hei tiki} are most often given to and worn by women, there is no substantial evidence that this is the reason why. Ethnologists reported \textit{tiki} were sometimes buried with their owners, only to be exhumed later and passed on to a close relative--though whether this was a traditional practice or one of expedience to keep valuables out of the hands of grave-robbing ethnologists is impossible to say.

\textsuperscript{168} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{169} \textit{Ibid.} The closest definition of \textit{waharoa} is “gateway,” though \textit{waharoa} seem to be both the posts on either side of the gateway and the arching figure above the gateway, as well as the entrance itself. The posts form the legs of the figure, if it is one, meaning a person must pass beneath the legs of the ancestor depicted in order to enter the village, which is a means to sanctify or negate \textit{mana}, depending on the ancestor depicted.

\textsuperscript{170} \textit{Ibid}, 59.

Generally speaking, any Maori object with a face is representative of a person or class of beings (like *atua*, or spirits), and any item made from greenstone is *taonga*, or treasure. Maori custom stipulates that objects possess *hau*, a piece of one’s spirit invoked by the transfer of that object, and are “inalienable,” meaning that they cannot be given away unfettered--the act of giving demands reciprocity or return.¹⁷² This suggests that *hei tiki* may always have been exhumed and re-circulated, either by heirs of the original owner, other members of the community, or even by enemies in order to ensure *hau* returns, survives, or transfers from one bearer to another.

The word “hau” occurs in all Polynesian languages, literally defined as “wind,” “spirit,” or “breath.” The concept of *hau* appears unique to Aotearoa, where it intersects with the common Oceanian ideas of *mana*, *noa* and *tapu*. Certain objects, clothing, or actions may increase a person’s *mana*, and certain people embody so much *mana* that their presence, possessions or actions can invoke a *tapu*. The idea that part of a person’s spirit remains in their possessions fits the universal concept of *mana*, but the belief that exchange confers obligation is uniquely Maori. The fact that *hau* can be satisfied with reciprocation may seem somewhat antithetical to *mana*, since such exchanges effectively negate the latter concept’s power. Perhaps that is intentional. Maori customs and bodily practices convey the most articulated sense of the *tapu/noa* dichotomy in the region; it makes sense that *hau* balances *mana* in the same way. It is important to note that *hau* does not erase *mana*, since nothing can do that, but it may provide a means for individuals to transfer or trade it. In this way, Maori stay connected with each other, across time, place, and probably across alliances, through the remnant spiritual power invested in their objects. Failure to provide reciprocity for any transferred object endangers the people involved in the exchange because it creates an imbalance in *mana*. However, embedded in *hau* is the concept of restitution, that no object can ever be lost in exchange, which suggests that power imbalances are self-corrective.

The most famous *hei tiki* belonged to Maori war chief Hongi Hika (1772-1828) of the Nga Puhi *iwi* which controlled the Bay of Islands. He wore it while traveling the world in 1820, and eventually gave it to the Church Mission Society (CMS) in London. Nearly a century later, a Pakeha New

Zealander, Thomas Donne, presided over the New Zealand exhibit at the 1905 Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in the United States, and traveled on the London, where he happened to visit the CMS offices on business. They presented him with the hei tiki Hongi had given to them, which Donne promptly donated to the new Dominion Museum of Wellington upon his return. It has been drawn and photographed extensively since its return to Aotearoa/New Zealand, and has become one of the iconic representations of Maori sculpture and art. Hongi was a man of considerable stature, famous during his lifetime. Even by 1820 he possessed great mana, as had his forefathers, certainly enough to make such an item tapu—even one that may not have been his personal hei tiki. But here is where the familiar concepts of tapu and mana meet the unique belief in hau that might make a Maori rangatira (chief) give away something so powerful, knowing it would return somehow to his people. It appears to be a true gift; there is no record that Hongi received something from the missionaries in return. He was no convert either; though he harbored and protected the missionaries in the area he controlled, he was insistent that neither he nor any of his people would adopt the new god. He may have simply donated someone else’s tiki to the society, one to which that he had no personal connection, but everything about hau suggests that it is not possible to feel no connection to an object, even one that belonged to an enemy. What we are left with, then, is the supposition that Hongi Hika gave away a sacred object assuming there would be some reciprocity on the part of the society. And there was: descendants of missionary settlers carried Hongi Hika’s hei tiki back to the land of its birth, satisfying its hau.

Hau is not restricted to Maori objects, but rather lies in the strength of the transfer. For example, in 1881, while gathering items for the seed collection for the Auckland Museum, the native agent came across a war canoe (waka taua) named Tapiri after an ancestor of its creator, a member of the Ngati Matawahai near Hawke’s Bay. The canoe was commissioned and built around 1840 and traded to a carver, Te Waaka Perohuka, of the Rongowhakaata in Poverty Bay for a special garment. Several artists carved and reshaped the waka, but evidently kept its name, and Te Waaka Perohuka sent it to his brother, who sent a horse to Poverty Bay in exchange and acknowledgment. The canoe eventually turned up in

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173 The events as described by Thomas Donne in a scrapbook he made consisting of photos of various hei tiki, most of them modeled by scantily-clad Maori women. Thomas Edward Donne, 1860-1945: Papers, ms 0619, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.

174 From the provenance archives of the War Memorial Museum, Auckland.
Auckland, where it was sold for £400 to a Mr. Ngaliteata or someone from his family. The original Hawke’s Bay carver also did some carpentry work for “a certain European,” who traded him a horse, Taika, for compensation, which reportedly was the same horse exchanged between the two brothers for the canoe. Sadly, the canoe itself was damaged in the Maori Wars in 1860, during which the British collected all canoes that might be used against them. Fearing his government would destroy it, one of the British agents in the area disabled it by removing part of the stern instead. It remained beached for years at Onehunga beach in Auckland harbor, until a bored and disrespectful midshipman tried to blow it up as target practice. By that time, the wars had passed, and the original owner refused to reclaim the damaged canoe, and was awarded £600 in compensation. The British colonial government repaired the canoe themselves in time for a visit from the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Alfred, in 1870, but he kept the figurehead of the refurbished canoe as a souvenir and placed it in the Science Museum in London. The rest of the canoe found its way to the Dominion Museum in Auckland, and eventually George V, Alfred’s nephew, returned the missing piece some time after his ascension in 1910.

In this instance, hau worked in multiple instances unlike simple cash payment or barter. The exchange of Taika the horse for Tapiri the waka taua was not an even exchange--any waka can carry more than any horse, and the value of the timber and labor put into making the canoe was easily worth more than the horse. The value of the items in trade matter less than the act of trading them. Cash and manual labor eventually enter into the exchange network, but only to the degree that they contributed to the ability of the people involved to reciprocate the transfer of the canoe. The British sense of property, and propriety, intersected with the canoe’s hau, and the government assigned a value to the waka taua in order to compensate its owner. In the New Zealand that emerged from the wreckage of the Maori Wars, the canoe saw more formal use as a British vessel than it might otherwise have, had it remained with the Maori who built it. Tapiri fell victim to that European habit of tourists to collect souvenirs, but arguably the cash payout was enough to satisfy hau once again, because the waka taua was eventually fully restored, in Aotearoa, and is still on display in the Auckland museum, renamed the War Memorial Museum after World War I.
*Tapiri* is impressive, over seventy feet long and six feet wide at the center, and nearly three feet deep, and can carry a hundred men. It is one of the last period war canoes ever carved, and like all Maori woodwork, the intricate detailing leave the eye with no one focal point. Before the introduction of European guns, war in Aotearoa, and indeed, across Polynesia, was small-scale but efficient, quick and vicious, using melee weapons like lances and clubs (*patu*, in Maori). Tongans, Marquesans and Fijians all carved images and designs onto their war clubs, in order to cause maximum damage to the skin on impact, and possibly to distinguish different weapons from each other if they were ever separated from their owners. The level of detail and the time put into carving them means they were likely heirloom items as well. Tongan and Fijian clubs were square or rounded at the top, but Marquesan war clubs had flatter, leaf-shaped heads and longer handles, which made them excellent paddles as well. Maori clubs were leaf-shaped, but short-handled, more easily concealed and carried close to the body; Maori artists heavily inscribed them as well. In wartime, the combined effect of the *waka*, the carved canoe paddles (that could double as weapons), hand-held *patu*, the unfamiliar *moko* on the warriors’ faces and the sheer strength of numbers must have been overwhelming to unprepared victims. Everywhere in Polynesia, the act of war was highly ritualized, and crucial to the increase of one’s personal *mana*, but only in Aotearoa did warfare develop this form of visual assault. That all began to change after Hongi Hika’s world tour. He stopped in Australia on the return leg of his journey to acquire crates of muskets to give the Nga Puhi advantage over their enemies, both Pakeha and Maori.\(^\text{175}\) He died in 1828 as result of a gunshot wound received in the Musket Wars he initiated, but his actions changed the style of Maori warfare forever, and led directly to the Waitangi treaty, first signed by his nephew Hone Heke, written in the Maori language he helped transliterate for the missionaries while he was in London.\(^\text{176}\)

Guns, paper money, and horses were not the only European goods to enter the Polynesian supply network; ivory did as well. Ivory was a rare material throughout the Pacific, at least before 1830, because


\(^\text{176}\) Supposedly, this is why the written Maori language uses the diphthong “wh” to represent the “f” sound. Maori from the Bay of Islands area tend to aspirate certain sounds.
it could only be had from the bones of the odd beached whale or other sea mammal. Artists used ivory to make jewelry that had ornamental and sacred value. It was the only other material beside nephrite that Maori carvers ever used to make hei tiki. Ornamentation provided Hawaiians with a means to “distance” themselves from their social inferiors, and ivory may have been second only to feathers for this purpose. Fijian artisans worked ivory into shell breast-plates, and shaped whale teeth (tabua) into tokens used in ceremonies for birth, death, and marriage. Hawaiians often carved whale teeth (niho palaoa) into hook-shaped pendants commonly worn by nobles as necklaces (lei). The lei niho palaoa was held to the neck using braided human hair, though it is not clear why: kapa would not have been strong enough to hold the heavy ivory, but sennit or olona rope could have withstood the weight. Whalers and merchants were quick to notice Islanders’ veneration of whalebone, and saved the teeth and parts of the skeletons to use as trade items. As more American whalers entered the Pacific, the volume of available whale ivory increased exponentially, which in turn devalued it. Ivory joined the list of new items like iron nails that quickly lost their allure, and sailors took to carving patterns and images on whale teeth themselves. They created scrimshaw, a new Western artform modeled in part on the similar practice in which Islanders engaged. In the case of ivory, it was not a new product that Islanders needed to absorb or appropriate into their existing social custom or bodily practice. Europeans created a surplus of a valuable material, rendering it common as a result. Interestingly, ivory was still a valuable social marker in the West, despite its increasing availability. In Oceania, though, wealthy Islanders began to use European or Chinese goods and jewelry to differentiate themselves from their social inferiors. They still held kahili (feather scepters) and draped themselves in ahu ula (feather cloaks), but they also wore cameo pendants and silk dresses, and designed royal regalia for Hawaiian monarchs modeled on the

177 Some islands had populations of wild boar and dogs, and their tusks, teeth and bones were also used to make ivory decoration on tools, jewelry, instruments and weapons.


181 Ibid., 241.
British example. Existing ivory prestige ornaments became heirlooms, but Islanders began to use ivory in the same ways Europeans did— as corset stays, piano keys, and billiard balls.

The excess of ivory changed habits of adornment for Islanders, as did the introduction of cotton nankeen and other cloth material. In Hawaii, the outsourcing of clothing material effectively ended kapa production in most places, which in turn created another surplus for the women who traditionally spent days making it: time. Missionary women tried to “solve” this new issue for Hawaiian women with the introduction of sewing and quilting circles. Like kapa production, quilting is a group activity performed in a social setting. Women could congregate and express themselves through a medium which seemed familiar enough. Cloth as a medium arguably provided more flexibility to women artists than kapa had, because fabric came in a greater range of textures and colors that could be shaped, cut, and sewn into any pattern women wished. Through their work, they could express their frustration with the demands of the growing Euro-American population, and with the restrictions placed on them by missionaries. Ironically, the change in their production pleased missionaries who encouraged women to sew dresses, mu‘u, to fully cover their bodies. Hawaiian women absorbed a new skill, sewing, into their existing social practice, communal work, not to please missionaries, but to maintain their collective sense of self in the face of overwhelming change. The most significant piece of clothing in Hawaiian material culture, though, was made in 1823 using traditional methods. It is a masterpiece of textile art, thought to be the largest piece of featherwork ever made: the feather pa‘u of Nahi‘ena‘ena (1815-1836), beloved sister of Liholiho, Kamehameha II and his brother Kauikeaouli, Kamehameha III (1813-1854). A beautiful piece of work, it symbolizes Hawaii’s struggle to assimilate European cultural norms, maintain their own traditions, resist Christian hegemony and reaffirm the royal connection to the sacred/divine.

Nahi‘ena‘ena was a young child when her father died in 1819. Her mother was Keopuolani, the mother of both Liholiho and Kauikeaouli, whose lineage imbued her with even greater mana than

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183 Thomas, *Islanders*, 16.
Kamehameha possessed. As the full sister of both of his heirs, traditionalists promoted her marriage to Kauikaouli, to whom she was closest in age. The siblings shared a real bond that developed into true love as time passed. Any child of their union would have the highest possible rank—would, in fact, be sacred. It was a good match, and a very necessary one to reinforce the mana of the Kamehameha line and ensure the health of the fledgling monarchy, especially after the sudden death of Liholiho five years into his reign at the age of 24. It was around this time, in 1824, that Nahiʻenaʻena, age nine, received the paʻu as a gift from her people in Lahaina, on the island of Maui. Made with over a million yellow feathers of the oʻo bird, the original paʻu measured twenty feet long, and 2.5 feet wide—long and wide enough to wrap several times around her young body. The paʻu actually consists of two layers, yellow on top of red iʻiwi feathers, held together by olona fiber netting, through which the tips of red feathers occasionally protrude from the sea of yellow oʻo feathers. It is not reversible; the sacred color red is meant to be worn next to the body, while the golden yellow of royalty is displayed to the public. The edges are lined with alternating red and black feathers shaped into triangles, to signify mountains or sharks’ teeth—both commonly occurring motifs in Hawaiian textile art.

The whole of it, the red underneath the yellow, the border meant to empower, represents both old and new forms of power, the secular rooted in the sacred, around which society could construct wholly new traditions. For example, in the past, female aliʻi did not wear sacred feather capes or helmets; that practice began with the advent of the monarchy, and the rise to power of Kaʻahumanu, who used featherwork to invest herself, as kuhina nui, with kingly power. Furthermore, paʻu were not previously considered royal garments, which means Lahaina artists created an entirely new type of royal vestment specifically for the young princess. It may have been on Kaʻahumanu’s orders; Nahiʻenaʻena would have

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184 Keopuolani’s father was Kiwalaʻo, the son of Kalaniʻōpuʻu, but her mother was the highest ranking princess on the island of Maui. He married Kamehameha’s half-sister Kekuʻiapoiwa, who was also his half-sister, with whom he fathered Keopuolani, his only daughter. Kiwalaʻo was killed during the wars for the island of Hawaiʻi that Kamehameha initiated, and Keopuolani married Kamehameha around 1795, a union which linked him to the ruling houses of Maui and virtually cemented his rule of Hawaiʻi. She was his highest ranking wife, and one of the highest ranking aliʻi nui in the archipelago.

185 Hiram Bingham, a missionary leader in Hawaii at the time of Kamehameha II’s funeral, said the paʻu was lined with red satin, but this may have been the iʻiwi feather layer he saw on the reverse side of the paʻu. No other mention of fabric has been made in connection with the paʻu. It seems unlikely the fabric would have been removed, even after the paʻu was cut it half, so most likely it was never there.

186 Rose, Hawaiʻi: The Royal Isles, 122-3, 193.
been an excellent choice for kuhina nui after her, and she may have considered grooming the child for that purpose. In that case, creating a new, definitively feminine feather garment sent the message Ka‘ahumanu spent her long reign trying to convey: that the secular power of the monarchy both contained and superseded the divine power of the gods themselves, and was completely vested in the kuhina nui. In other words, Ka‘ahumanu sought to combine the defunct kahuna class with the kalaimoku role she assumed when she declared herself co-ruler, and create a legacy position. And who better to ensure the continuance of the kuhina nui role, than the sacred daughter of Keopuolani and Kamehameha himself?

Then again, the pa‘u could have been intended as a gift from Nahi‘ena‘ena’s birth mother, Keopuolani, who died in 1823, before its completion. Nahi‘ena‘ena was her youngest child, her only daughter and her favorite. She made sure her younger children received Christian instruction, but she must also have been aware that the rapid political changes in Hawaii could negatively impact her daughter’s mana. The pa‘u, in that case, would have been a way to publicly sanctify her in a Hawaiian way, using Hawaiian-style royal clothing. Then again, it may have taken years to complete, and could have been commissioned long before Liholiho and Ka‘ahumanu obliterated the kapu system, and long before the missionaries arrived in 1820, maybe even by Kamehameha I before he died. Regardless of who ordered it made, its existence indicates that much was expected of her life. Artists finished the pa‘u and presented it in time for Kamehameha II’s funeral; she did not, however, wear it in the traditional style, which would have left her chest exposed. Nahi‘ena‘ena instead wore it wrapped over a black, Western-style dress.

Liholiho was the last Hawaiian king to practice polygamy, and incest. He married two of his half-sisters, and died with one one them, Kamamalu, from a disease they both contracted while visiting London. This put both his younger siblings in the line of succession, and made their union even more desirable, in some quarters, because the nation needed the additional assurance that only a child born of the remaining Kamehameha children could provide. Unfortunately, by the time the pa‘u was completed, Nahi‘ena‘ena’s marriage prospects had already changed dramatically in the wake of her mothers’ acceptance of Christianity. Keopuolani’s wishes for her children’s union were never recorded, but Ka‘ahumanu’s desire to move the nation away from its spiritual traditions may have led her to support the
missionaries’ ban on incestuous marriage, even though it would have quelled the unrest of traditionalists within the new government. Nahi’ena’ena and Kauikeaouli were separated when the capital city moved to O‘ahu, and she stayed in Lahaina with her stepfather, the governor of Maui. When she came of age she was engaged to Leleiohoku, also called William Pitt after his father Kalanimoku, the first prime minister of Hawaii, who took that name as well. Kauikeaouli never stopped wanting her though, and when his regency under Ka‘ahumanu and her successor, his half-sister Kina‘u, ended in 1833, he sent for Nahi’ena’ena with the intention of marrying her. They had been sexual partners for years, but this time they engaged in a very public sex act in front of several ali‘i on the banks of the Pearl River.187 This kind of open fertility ritual had been common in the days before the missionaries’ arrival, particularly during the makahiki, a seasonal festival dedicated to the god Lono. After their arrival, those Hawaiian nobles who converted to Christianity, like Nahi’ena’ena’s stepfather, put a stop to such activities, at the insistence of the missionaries. Kauikeaouli’s actions then, were a form of protest against the missionary faction and his Christian kuhina nui, Kina‘u.

Both missionaries and monarch demanded more power only after the death of Ka‘ahumanu, which in itself is a testament to her power. From the young king’s standpoint, the role she had created was not stable and need not be permanent. He accordingly made a public declaration of his intention to bring back the old traditions and rule independently of his older sister. To do that, he needed his younger sister by his side as much as he wanted her there. Very little is known of Nahi’ena’ena beyond the missionary accounts in which she plays a significant role, like the events unfolding over the winter of 1833-4. By those accounts, she was a pious daughter forced into wicked ways by her petulant and overbearing brother. However, she, like Kauikeaouli, grew up torn between two worlds. As children, and as ali‘i nui, they both expected to live the same kind of life as had their much older siblings, and their parents. Rather suddenly, for them, everything changed, with no real explanation as to why, and they were saddled with an entirely new set of rules that required each of them to diminish him/herself in ways that would have been unacceptable to their elders a few years earlier. It may well be that Nahi’ena’ena felt as frustrated as her brother about their future prospects. Her reported ambivalence may have been

wariness over incurring her elder Christian relatives’ wrath, or it may have been a genuine fear of sin. In any case, concern for her despondent brother overrode all else, and she did voluntarily join him on the banks of the Pearl River for the ceremony. There, Kauikeaouli and Nahi‘ena‘ena were finally able to consummate their “marriage” publicly, as described. Much to the further dismay of the (mostly Christian) government, the siblings lived together for several months while maka‘ainana and many ali‘i alike engaged in a celebratory orgy of excessive eating, drinking, and sex.¹⁸⁸

The party did not last. The missionaries managed to spirit Nahi‘ena‘ena away from O‘ahu and marry her off. Within a year, she gave birth to a child probably fathered by Kauikeaouli, but who lived only a few hours. Nahi‘ena‘ena herself died not long after, in 1836. This, more than anything, seemed to break Kauikeaouli’s spirit. He mostly withdrew from public life, and left governance to Kina‘u (Ka‘ahumanu II) and missionaries like Hiram Bingham and his ecclesiastical successors. When she died, Kauikeaouli had the pa‘u cut in half so it could never be worn again; the two halves were sewn together lengthwise and used years later as a pall for Kauikeaouli’s coffin, and re-appeared at the funerals of all succeeding monarchs through Kalakaua. The irony is that both of the women who opposed Kamehameha III’s ambitions were themselves products of sibling incest—it is how they derived the power to challenge the king. Kina‘u was also Kauikeaouli’s sister, and while he lived had been one of Liholiho’s five wives. The rapid changes that took place during Lihiliho’s reign left a vacuum of spiritual power, though secular power remained intact and vested in his heir. The incest ban clearly devastated Kauikeaouli, but it affected Nahi‘ena‘ena the most, because she no longer had a means to increase the prestige of her descendants or herself. All the women surrounding her, from her elder half-sisters, to her mother and step-mother, would have been aware of this. The pa‘u could have been the means they chose to protect and elevate her in the only way left to them. The saddest legacy of this unique garment is the gulf between the spirit in which it was given, and the use to which it was put. It was created to celebrate the joyous life and exciting future of a young woman who could ensure the future of Kamehameha’s lineage. Instead, its chief association has been funerary, beginning with its debut at Liholiho’s services.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 201.
Ancient Oceanian theology articulated Pacific Islanders’ socio-political hierarchy—relationships between the people and the rulers/gods, and between each other. European missionaries attacked those personal associations by destroying iconography (which they called idols) and criticizing dress, artwork, cultural norms and social interactions. They launched wholesale programs to change these practices, by modeling Christian (read: “better”) alternatives. Missionary wives introduced activities like housework and quilting to Hawaii, as a form of domestic industry to replace *kapa* production, though with quilting Hawaiian women sometimes subverted the intent by producing original forms and patterns that critiqued the new societal order. It was not all cultural appropriation, however. The arrival of Christian missionaries gave Hawaiians the opportunity and the means to evolve their own political system away from its sacred origins. Spiritual worship and secular governance began to function separately in the nation after the death of Kamehameha I, and his heirs, including his wives, altered bodily practice and social customs to create new rituals in order to bring these changes about. Female *ali‘i* adopted the traditionally male adornment to imbue themselves with political power, and Hawaiian weavers stretched custom further: using traditional materials (feathers) and gendered dress (*pa‘u*), they created a unique form for women rulers. Unfortunately, the constraints of the new religion came into conflict with the need to stabilize the state, and the Hawaiian nation struggled to accommodate traditionalist *ali‘i* and *maka‘ainana*. Given a choice between re-aligning the sacred with the secular, the Hawaiian government instead chose to shift toward an overtly Western form of monarchy. Nahi‘ena‘ena’s feather *pa‘u* ended up being the first and last of its kind, as her failed union with her brother and premature death redefined the object in the eyes of commoners and royalty alike.

Human belief systems can provide insight into the habits, artforms, and social relationships between members of a community. Our cosmogonies and cosmologies help us explain our presence on earth, and guide our purpose while we are here. Across the Pacific, Islanders espoused religious beliefs similar enough to each other that they are often compressed into a singular narrative arc. While the similarities are compelling we must remember that the core belief exemplified by Oceanian cosmology is one of multiplicity—many simultaneous ways of being. Hina and her many faces, the many forms of Maui, the paradox of arriving to a place and also having always been there—these originary stories evince a capacity for divergence, a tolerance for evolution and change that flummoxed early European explorers,
missionaries, and merchants. On the whole, Europeans, the objects and the beliefs they introduced were incorporated into existing cultural patterns as often as they helped create new ones. In places such as Tahiti, Tonga, and Hawaii, they arrived at a time of religious upheaval, and often became enmeshed in that turmoil—not because they offered alternative spiritual beliefs, but because they were also something “new,” part of a developing reconfiguration of the world.\(^{189}\) In other island groups, like New Zealand and Samoa, their decentralized systems of governance made religious conversion—or appropriation, or assimilation—a more challenging issue for Europeans there. But European aims in the Pacific evolved quickly, and within a generation salvation took a backseat to commercial interests. It took the combined interference of Euro-American merchants, missionaries and intellectuals to appropriate the Pacific Islands for themselves.

The period of early contact between Europeans, Americans and Pacific Islanders is best articulated by Samoans, who were largely left out of both Britain’s and the United States’ missionary endeavors. Samoans conceived of the world as spherical, the lower half of which, Pulotu, was below sea-level and inhabited by spirits. Humans lived above the sea, which surrounded them. The sky and air around and above them was divided into nine levels, or strata. Everything in the universe was contained within the sphere, which made the first Europeans to arrive there *Papalagi*, “sky-bursters,” because they must have come from “outside the universe.”\(^{190}\) The wording makes it sound as if Europeans exploded Islanders’ world, but really the arrival of the foreigners was more of a leak, a rupture—like a hull breach that does not immediately sink the ship. The alien element seeps in, but presents no immediate, observable threat. In the nineteenth century, Euro-Americans inserted themselves into the breach they created, first by disrupting Islanders’ theology, then by appropriating their cosmogony and finally by reducing Islanders’ culture, not always intentionally, to products that could be packaged, digested and reproduced by white interlopers. In this way, Europeans managed to displace indigenous Islanders in their own lands.

\(^{189}\) Thomas, *Islanders*, 114.

\(^{190}\) Meleisea, *Change and Adaptation in Western Samoa*, 20.
“Artificial Curiosities” and the Tensions of Trade

Europeans saw a diaspora in the Pacific and expected Islanders to see themselves the same way—or rather, they expected Islanders to see themselves the way Europeans saw themselves, as ethnically distinct from each other, and as possessing separate territories they called their own. This is why Islanders’ self-designations (kanaka/tangata/enata and maoli/maori/moriori) stuck, because Europeans assumed Islanders differentiated themselves in the same way that Europeans did. Though they recognized a common origin, they viewed individual communities as “progressing” at different rates: some Polynesians, like Hawaiians, were semi-civilized, and some, like Samoans, existed in primitive states of barbarity. The designation was further complicated by the different approaches to the “civilizing mission” taken by each European polity. It seems more likely that Islanders engaged in the opposite world view. They had no need to create an us/them dichotomy because they understood their situational proximity to each other despite physical distance or relative isolation. It was Europeans that created a true separation between different Islander communities, even as they compressed them into one “race” for their own ideological and “scholarly” pursuits.

As mentioned earlier, D’Urville separated Islanders into Polynesians, Melanesians, and Micronesians. His aesthetics also determined what was collected, preserved, and catalogued and what was not. He preferred Fijian war clubs to Tongan ones, for instance, which is why so many more of the former have been preserved in museums. Because Fiji was part of a pre-existing trade network, many items early navigators collected as gifts or in trade while visiting the region came from somewhere else. Samoan pandanus mats, Fijian tappa, Tongan ivory jewelry—all expressed distinctive local styles, but often wound up mislabeled in European collections, where their origins were eventually elided into a general Melanesian or Pacific “type.” Another reason Fiji tends to be well represented in most museums featuring Oceanian art is its location and resources; the archipelago caught the attention and interest of merchants looking to harvest sandalwood, which was in plentiful supply during the first quarter

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191 Cook’s term for the items he brought back from the Pacific on his first two trips, because they were items of common use there; only in England did they become “curiosities.”

192 Thomas, Islanders, 138.

193 Thomas, Oceanic Art, 21.
of the century, and dive for pearls and beche-de-mer offshore, all popular China trade items. Not all merchants were honorable in their trade negotiations, and several resorted to extortion by force in order to secure their cargo, burned villages and shot residents rather than pay a fair price. Their behavior created additional problems for the next white traders, who Fijians blamed for the bad actions of earlier visitors. While some were still willing to trade with whites, all came to view them in a universally bad light. Fijians gained a particularly nasty reputation abroad for fighting, killing, and consuming unsuspecting and unprepared white sailors and traders, which in turn made white traders more hostile.

Tensions escalated after the wreck of American whale ship *Oeno* in 1825 on the reef of one of the outlying islands in the Fijian archipelago. The ship was looted by the local Fijians, many sailors were killed, and some of them were eaten. The sole survivor was saved and hidden by friendly residents until another passing ship rescued him. After the sensationalism died down, cannibalism became part of whites’ representation of Islander identity, whether they were Fijian or not, or cannibals or not. The *Oeno* disaster both terrified and excited Euro-Americans. It reminded them of the savagery of the people who killed and partially consumed James Cook, and demonstrated the need for a civilizing influence in the region. Westerners renewed calls for religious conversion of the region as a way for them to continue their trade without facing mortal peril with every transaction. They also made money promoting the salacious details of such practices in the Islands. The idea of cannibal Islanders became a trope, and evidence of such activity—severed heads in Aotearoa, jewelry and drinking vessels made from human bones in Fiji—became collectors’ items. The theme of cannibalism found its way into slogans and novels—Hawaii carried the nickname “the cannibal Isles” for the entirety of the nineteenth century, and Herman Melville’s *Typee* featured a protagonist stranded in the Marquesas after a shipwreck who was barely saved from being cannibalized by hostile “natives”—and even informed the choices of stranded sailors aboard the wrecked whaler *Essex* in 1820, who braved 2,000 miles of ocean in open boats to get to South America rather than row west a mere 200 miles to the Marquesas, for fear of being eaten alive by

194 William Carey was stranded in Fiji for seven years, by his account, but he somehow wound up on the Salem whaler the *Glide*, which also foundered in a hurricane off the coast of Fiji. The sailors, all but two, survived the wreck, were NOT eaten (possibly because Carey knew the language) and were eventually rescued. In later accounts of Carey’s adventures, his first ship is omitted and the *Glide* is credited with wreck and cannibal encounter. See James Oliver, *The Wreck of the Glide: with Recollections of the Fijis, and of Wallis Island* (Wiley and Putnam, 1848).
Islanders. That unlucky decision cost the lives of most of the crew, and reduced the survivors to cannibalism themselves, which in turn drove several of them mad.\textsuperscript{195} Despite the pressing danger of lethal animosity from Islanders, the idea of ceasing operations in the region never seems to have occurred to anyone. The Pacific Islands was already a destination in its own right; it was an integral part of the international network linking Europe and the United States to Asia and Indonesia, and Euro-Americans were loathe to give up its riches.

The central problem for merchants lay in the developing worldview that outright colonization of indigenous spaces was no longer acceptable: it cost too many lives, most of them indigenous, and it was unfair, in the sense that it was illegal. The British led the international effort to manage indigenous populations in ways that were both moral and just. Though they usually failed to uphold the principles they promoted, they deserve some credit for introducing the idea of humanitarian progressivism into the region at the turn of the nineteenth century in response to their citizens’ abuse of Australian aborigines. To them, and to Americans, who adopted a similar strategy based on the democratizing principle they began promoting around the same time, the solution to creating safety in the Pacific while respecting the sovereignty of Islanders came in the form of a two-pronged policy of scientific illumination and religious epiphany. Though few people connected the two strategies during their implementation, they have become part of what Mary Louise Pratt calls the “anti-conquest.” Pratt cites early Spanish colonial discourse from the Americas, where Linnaean classification techniques armed early naturalists with the power and moral imperative to categorize the natural world and order it into a hierarchy of progress that asserts European hegemony.\textsuperscript{196} Anti-conquest does not negate actual, physical colonization—in fact, it almost always precedes it—but it does allow western Europeans, at the top of the pyramid, to rationalize their actions towards those situated “below” them. The science of natural classification came into its own in the nineteenth century, and provided its adherents with “factual,” logical justifications for interfering with the natural progression of other cultures, and for consuming their resources. Scientific analyses of nature diverged from explications rooted in religious doctrine during this time, but faith- and science-based ideologies remained concurrent, if not intertwined, for most of the century. This meant that while

\textsuperscript{195} Dolin, \textit{Leviathan}, 276-7.
\textsuperscript{196} Pratt, \textit{Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation} (New York: Routledge, 1992), 7.
Euro-American nations felt the need to proselytize to “heathen” Islanders and draw them into the light of salvation, scientists representing those countries also wanted to analyze the Islands’ flora and fauna (which included inhabitants) in order to properly situate them along the “great chain of being”—which was being reconfigured into a web.

The U.S. had been using the Pacific to define its own independent nationhood for some time, first with the China trade, and then with the transition from faith-based articulation of the world to a scientific one. Though Great Britain, France and Russia had been mining the Pacific for artifacts to contribute to its scientific development for decades, the U.S. only managed to cobble together the resources and the intellect to conduct such research in the late 1830s. They launched the U.S. Exploratory Expedition (U.S. Ex. Ex.), the last major expedition to circumnavigate the globe, in 1838. The stated intent, since everything else had been “discovered,” was to map the coast of Antarctica, to survey the treacherous mouth of the Columbia River, and to accurately map the sections of the Pacific habitually overlooked by previous expeditions because they lay outside the merchant and whaling thoroughfares, or were part of the dangerous Fijian archipelago.197 The scientific and maritime personalities thrown together over the four years of the voyage clashed often while engaged in very dangerous work in the Pacific Northwest, the frigid Antarctic, and the volatile region surrounding Fiji. It was a near disaster, but it did log some “firsts” into its books, and young America achieved the expedition’s actual goal: to join the world conversation on science, evolution, and public education. The curiosities collected by the U.S. Ex. Ex. formed the seed of the Smithsonian museum, and helped shift the pedagogy of scientific education from philosophical discussion to public display of specimens.198 The expedition helped professionalize the American scientific community, which wasted no time joining its compatriots in Britain, France and Germany in the process of enshrining Islanders’ artifacts in museums and discussing them at length in scholarly articles and book-length narratives. This process, Pratt’s anti-conquest, created a sense of familiarity, which in turn engendered a sense of safety, and a feeling of knowing comprehension that


198 Ibid. The specimens collected were originally exhibited in the U.S. Patent Office in Washington, D.C., and drew over 100,000 visitors a year for ten years.
rendered the Pacific not only palatable, but desirable. Euro-Americans compressed Islander histories, traditions and objects into what Jodi Byrd calls a “transit,” a body of discourse, rooted in the concept of “Indianness” or indigeneity, that informs the decisions of white colonial/imperialists wherever they travel. The work of whites’ in their anti-conquest of the Pacific created a new “transit,” formed from the existing one of “Indianness,” that could be called “Islandness.” It contained all the hallmarks associated with whites’ perception of indigeneity, and added themes related to cannibalism, exotica, scientific progress, and Judaeo-Christian mythos.

Explorers collected what ethnological information they could during their brief sojourns among “friendly” Islanders, but the more difficult burden of translating Oceanian culture to Euro-Americans fell largely to missionaries. The “discovery” of Pacific Islanders occurred during a period of renewed evangelical fervor in the United States and Great Britain. Both nations contemplated the collective souls of their nations in light of the unsavory practice of chattel slavery, still practiced in the British Caribbean colonies until 1833, and in the U.S. until 1865. Both nations also had to contend with the moral implications of their burgeoning empires in Asia, India and Africa and the western half of the North American continent. Rather than work towards equality within their borders, missionaries of both nations turned their gazes to the Pacific, perhaps eager to start fresh with a relatively unsullied population of “heathens.” In the beginning, it was a race against the clock, for no sooner was contact made with a new island group than speculators showed up, eager to make the most cost-effective exchange possible and join the growing community of international buyers and sellers working in or near the Pacific. Nearly every European ship traveling the region lost crew members (or convicted prisoners) who jumped ship or were left with the locals to convalesce. Such men made missionaries’ work harder by poisoning opinion against them when they arrived to proselytize to the locals, or by poisoning the opinions of Islanders against all whites. Some beachcombers managed to insinuate themselves into Islanders’ societies, but more often than not they offended the local population when they stole needed food supplies from the general population, raped or brutalized the women, and tried to force the people to recognize their “innate” superiority by demanding servitude or prostration. To be fair, it was not always errant

beachcombers who gave Westerners a bad name. Sometimes naval or merchant ships lured women aboard and kidnapped them, then reduced them to sex slaves, sometimes for years, until they escaped or could be rescued. George Vancouver picked up two such Polynesian women in Nootka Sound during one of his circumnavigations, and arranged for their return to Hawaii after a harrowing time spent at the mercy of British sailors. David Porter, captain of the USS Essex during the War of 1812, claimed the Marquesas for the United States as a strategic location in 1813. During his few months there, he used guns and cannon to intimidate the locals into submission, killing dozens of them, and precipitated a war between the Marquesans themselves. Several communities banded together to eventually drive them out, and Porter was later court-martialed for unrelated activities during the war.

After several prominent missionaries in Tahiti and New Zealand “went native,” abandoned their posts and took up with Islander women, missionary organizations soon recognized the need to send family units into the region, rather than just unmarried men. In 1836, the American Board of Commissioners for Missions (ABCFM) laid out the responsibilities wives engaged in missionary work took upon themselves: they must keep their husbands steady, support his work, demonstrate healthy, Christian family living to “the natives,” and run a school if possible. The rhetoric also cast non-Western women as oppressed and abused by their men, and that Christian women, standing on “the highest peak” of social equality, could help liberate their “sisters.” Missionaries took their ideas from explorers’ accounts of gendered interactions they had witnessed, and did not alter their opinions despite ample evidence to the contrary.

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201 Eric Jay Dolin, Leviathan, 198-201.
202 Thomas, Islanders, 40. He mentions George Vason, an early British missionary sent to Tahiti. Vason integrated himself into Tahitian society. Though not originally a man of means, he had a gift for languages, possessed skills the Tahitians valued, and most importantly, respected their culture and traditions. He married a Tahitian woman and rose in that society to the level of minor chief. See also Philippa Mein Smith, A Concise History of New Zealand (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) regarding Toby Kebbell, a CMS member sent to New Zealand and joined Hongi Hika’s Nga Puhi, married a local woman (abandoning his British wife at home), and left the mission’s service.
204 Ibid., 266.
205 Kaomea, “Na Wahine Mana” 338.
unwilling partners who were forced into service by fathers, brothers, or slave-owners to pay for European items, but few Islander societies coerced their women. The widespread impression of female suffering was one among several negative stereotypes that enveloped all Islanders equally, along with the paradoxical assumption of lasciviousness. Even missionary women’s accounts, viewed from a certain angle, attest to the power women enjoyed in society. Certainly they show how white women believed and spread contradictory accounts of the brown women they came to save. The mission wives in Hawaii, for instance, called native women lazy and indolent, but also crushed by the burden of labor and unfair treatment at the hands of Hawaiian men. Yet, their major labor contribution was the, admittedly, time-consuming production of *kapa*, which was a group activity. Because of the ‘*aikapu*, food restrictions, men prepared all meals, ate separately from women and, presumably, cleaned up after themselves.\textsuperscript{206} Women had plenty of leisure time, as the frustrated missionary women noted, because they were well cared for by their men.\textsuperscript{207}

It was the Americans’ gender-bias that blinded missionaries and other observers to, say, the dynamism of Tongan sibling relationships, the elevation of the Samoan maiden, and the importance of Hawaiian women as purveyors of *mana*.\textsuperscript{208} And it was the British, early colonizers of the region, who turned the denigration of women in the Pacific into actual policy when they stipulated that Australia’s penal colony use Tongan women as a sexual resource for its male prisoners.\textsuperscript{209} The convict colony, formed in 1803, was situated on an inhabited island, Tasmania (Van Diemen's Land), so it was only a matter of time before escaped prisoners (bushrangers) and guards alike began to terrorize the local women as well. Their predations instigated the Black War of Van Dieman’s Land, so called because Tasmanian Aborigines presented to the British as “black,” meaning of African ethnicity, to white colonists. It was

\textsuperscript{206} Ibid, 342.


\textsuperscript{208} Hyaeweoi Choi and Margaret Jolly, *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2014), 206.

\textsuperscript{209} Ward, *British Policy in the South Pacific*, 2. Also mentioned in Sione Latukefu’s book *Church and State in Tonga*, also printed in the 1970s. This fact seems to fall out of Australian historiography after this point. To be fair, the British later rescinded this ordinance, fearing that Tongan women would not fare well in Australia’s barren landscape.
this war of attrition against the Tasmanians that spurred the London Missionary Society (LMS) and the Church Mission Society (CMS) to action. Fresh from the success of their humanitarian efforts to abolish slavery in Britain’s African and Caribbean colonies, they launched new campaigns to defend Aborigines’ human and legal rights against other Britons, who committed “appalling atrocities” against Aborigines throughout the 1810s, -20s and -30s in the name of land and labor acquisition. In an odd bit of British policy beginning in 1834, the few surviving Tasmanians were exiled to Flinders Island, the largest island in the Bass Straits separating Tasmania from the Australian continent, where they could practice their cultural traditions in peace and, one assumes, perish quietly. It has been argued that mainland Aborigines fared better in their many conflicts with the expanding prison population, but only because they had more room in which to run for their lives. Accordingly, they felt the full force of missionary/humanitarian zeal, and those who survived were forcibly separated from their children, who were taken to mission schools to be educated as servants and as Christians.

Women’s work as educators and models of English/American propriety freed men up to find ways to support the mission, and to research the language and customs of the people they came to “save.” Few showed much interest in Tasmanian cosmology because there was no real mission on their behalf; they were encouraged to convert later in the century, mostly by the government officials who ran the reserve to which they were consigned. The interest in the Tasmanian “phenotype” was definitively scientific, both in terms of their projected expiration, and their hypothesized place along the “great chain of being,” where they were thought to be “missing links” between humans and apes. Mainland Aborigines, who had lighter skin and straighter hair, were deemed worth saving, or at least the white men’s children to whom they gave birth were, and they entered the colonial labor pool through the

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210 Grimshaw, “Faith, Missionary Life, and Family,” 261. See also, James Bonwick, The Last of the Tasmanians, or The Black War of Van Diemen’s Land (London: Sampson, Low, Marston and Son, 1870).

211 Henry Reynolds, This Whispering in our Hearts (Sydney: Allen and Unwin Publishers, 1998), Introduction. Reynolds argues the opposite; that as horrific as the extermination of the Tasmanians was, it was relatively humane in comparison to the brutality with which mainland Aborigines were treated. It was the Tasmanian plight which drew humanitarian aid to Australia, but they were not able to control the predations of white colonists on the mainland as well as they could in Tasmania. Aborigines, by contrast, were able to escape into the interior of the continent, thus ensuring some of their survival.

212 Richard Weikart, From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics and Racism in Germany (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 106.
acceptable means of Christian conversion rather than outright enslavement. Evangelist scholars who traversed the continent also mined the rich oral traditions of the remaining Aborigine nations, synthesized them, and committed them to paper for posterity. Mainland cosmologies came to represent those of all Aborigines, including the “vanishing” Tasmanians. In this way, scholars could claim to understand and lament the passing of Tasmanian culture while eagerly laying physical claim to Tasmanian bodies. Museums around the world jockeyed for the prestige of owning some part of the remains of whom they presumed to be the last “full-blooded” Tasmanian man, William “Billy” Lanne, and the last woman, Truganini. They died in 1869 and 1876 respectively, and afterward scientists dismembered their corpses for study. Their skulls, hands, feet and brains became curiosities displayed in European and Australian museums, colleges, and drug stores. Their deaths contributed widely to the myth of the inevitable demise of “the native” that whites used at various times over the course of the century to justify colonization of Tasmania, Australia, and the more desirable South Pacific islands.

The projected death of the “noble savage” in the nineteenth century owes its existence to assumptions Euro-Americans made based on their New World experiences over the preceding two centuries. Islanders experienced nearly as high a death rate as those estimated for Native Americans, and missionary families, like their Catholic predecessors in the Americas, were helpless to do anything for them. As late as 1838, missionaries lamented on the still sluggish Hawaiian conversion effort due to their high mortality. Hawaiians noticed how often converts died of disease, probably due to their habitual proximity to asymptomatic Europeans. Conversely, the “depopulation and malaise,” a result of so many deaths and departures, escalated the rate of Tahitian conversion as the people lost faith in their customary beliefs. Both widespread conversion and widespread mortality spurred academics on in their anti-conquest efforts to record “traditional” Oceanian legends before they vanished from living memory forever. Indigenous converts also scrambled to transliterate their elders’ belief-systems, sometimes in order to link them to their new faith. Missionaries often gained inroads into communities by comparing their belief systems with Christianity, and encouraged them to substitute the old gods and “myths” with.

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214 Thomas, Islanders, 115.
the new trinity, saints, and cosmogony. The work of Hawaiian ethnographers Samuel Kamakau and David Malo rose out of that methodology, and while they provided valuable insight into pre-contact Hawaiian culture, they consistently interpreted that culture through the lens of “Christian spectacles” and Western thought.\textsuperscript{215}

Across the Pacific, Islanders grappled with the concept of Christianity and some found peace in it, or at least an explanation behind what was happening to them. White missionaries, academics, and contemporary observers such as merchants and tourists all expressed their contradictory opinions on how “true” the conversions of Islanders really was. It is impossible to know for certain the inner spiritual world of most converts, since the vast majority left no written records, or their writings were subsequently filtered through the missionary propaganda machine in order to get more funding or quiet their critics. What is made clear through Islanders’ religious art is their struggle to come to terms with the ritual and tenets of the faith. The Melanesian Mission created thousands of pieces of art to export for sale to members of the faith, but quite a few remained in the region.\textsuperscript{216} Indigenous artists carved objects specifically created for Christian worship, like wooden chalices and bowls inlaid with stylized abalone or paua shell crosses, matching candlesticks, and one notable triptych altar that was likely displayed in services. Yet, they also worked Christian iconography into traditional forms for personal use, like elaborate combs and the choker-style necklaces worn in the Solomon Islands. In New Zealand, artist Patoromu Tamatea created a Madonna and Child (“Whakapakoko”) statue elaborately carved like all Maori art, to present to the Catholic church in the 1840s. Unfortunately, the priests refused to display his work because it was too ethnic; the Madonna and her tiny baby are both covered in moko from head to foot, and the Christ child’s open mouth and exposed tongue is more a display of Maori aggression than Christian piety. Tamatea created a truly Maori Madonna: inscribed with a power that Maori can immediately read on her face, her hands, her body. The warrior baby Jesus also evokes a particularly, specifically Maori response to lineage, inheritance, and power because He is claimed—carved— bearing

\textsuperscript{215} Thomas, \textit{Oceanic Art}, 34-5. See also, Martha Beckwith’s comparative approach to \textit{Hawaiian Mythology}, where she lists the alternate versions of Hawaii’s origin stories as articulated by Kamakau, William Westervelt, Abraham Fornander, and others.

\textsuperscript{216} The objects from the Melanesian Mission may be the most widespread of Oceanian artifacts in the world. See Nick Stanley, “Recording Island Melanesia: The Significance of the Melanesian Mission in Museum Records,” \textit{Pacific Arts} No. 9 and 10 (July 1994), 25-41.
His mother’s *moko*, and assuming the posture of a *tiki*, fingers across his stomach, tongue exposed in challenge. The priests could not see that Tamatea’s very Maori representation of the Madonna’s power was reflective of his very Christian beliefs, not in opposition to them. Christian missionaries came the Pacific to proselytize to Islanders, but were often unprepared for how seriously their neophytes would interrogate Christian doctrine and assimilate it using their own unique forms of expression.

The Maori conversion effort stalled in New Zealand in the 1860s, not only because of the lack of a centralized authority to impose Christianity on the population, but also due to the Christian-derivative anti-foreign movements that arose during that tumultuous period of Britain’s colonial effort. The British government failed to uphold the terms of the Waitangi treaty, and began consuming more Maori territory. Instead of holding the British to account, as promised, missionaries seemingly sided with the white colonists and sought to profit from land sales as well. It is in this context both the Pai Marire and Ringatu rebellions appropriated the Christian religious apocalyptic traditions, effectively interpreting Western culture through the lens of Oceanian cosmology. Pai Marire, also called the “hau-hau” movement after the concluding invocation used by its followers, called for a removal of all Pakeha except Jewish people from Aotearoa. The movement’s prophet “Te Ka,” (Te Ua) said God showed him a vision that Christianity, while perfectly fine for whites, harmed Maori, and that its followers should be removed from the islands. The ensuing purge destroyed several missions, uprooting missionary families and Maori converts; Pai Marire adherents executed a German preacher and killed several more Pakeha soldiers. The greatest toll was on the North Island Maori population itself, divided between religious movements each side saw as radical. Te Ua and his followers ultimately lost their struggle to liberate Aotearoa, and faith in the movement waned after several of his prophesies, like the one where he claimed he could render Maori

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217 The ethnographic term for this process is called “transculturation,” but it leaves little room to explain the manipulation of ideologies that Islanders, and indigenous people in general, engage in to define the extent of their acceptance of Christian theologies. I prefer the term appropriation, which connotes a greater amount of agency in the transformation of ideas from one culture to another. See Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6.

218 The prophet’s name was Te Ua Haumene. William L. Williams, an eye-witness to the rise and spread of the religion while still a child living with his father (also Rev. William Williams) near the east coast along Hawke’s Bay, consistently refers to Te Ua as “Te Ka” in his notes, which were written at the end of the century, twenty years after the movement died out. See William Leonard Williams, *Notes on the Ringa-tu*, unpublished manuscript c. 1890, ms 2492, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.
invulnerable to bullets, were invalidated. Out of this short-lived rebellion, however, rose the more resilient Ringatu religion, founded by Te Kooti, a follower of Te Ua exiled to Chatham Islands for several years with the survivors of the Pai Marire “rebellion.” Ringatu (literally, “raised hand”) called upon some of the same religious elements and appropriated symbols as the Pai Marire, but ostensibly advocated a more peaceful form of resistance. It too, elevated the original Judaic teachings over what Maori saw as the hypocrisy of Christian practice, and preached that cultural revival would lead to actual resurrection of the Maori.

Though missionaries condemned both movements, they were steeped in Judaeo-Christian theology: they accepted the existence of God, the concept of an afterlife and the belief in deliverance from evil, which, to the Maori, manifested in the behavior of the Pakeha government and its missionary cronies. Members of the faith quite literally envisioned the British Bishop (Selwyn) and military commander (Grey) as devils forcibly carrying the Maori to Hell. By getting rid of these agents of Satan, the Maori could enjoy Paradise on earth, in their homeland. Pai Marire and Ringatu both believed that the path to eternal peace required the erasure of whites’ influence over the Maori, because they violated the tenets of their own faith, and came to value profits from land sales over the lives of their Maori brethren. This shows a shrewdness in Maori comprehension of Christianity, which some Maori were increasingly beginning to see as the “true” faith, that escaped the missionary observers, probably because they were implicated in causing the devaluation of the very beliefs they wanted to instill in the Maori. The net effect of the wars, the land sales, and depopulation, according to witnesses like William L. Williams, future bishop of New Zealand, was to curtail the growth of Christianity among the Maori for a full generation.

219 See the Visions of Aporo, held at the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand. Aporo was a Maori warrior killed in the Maori Wars by G. Mair, who confiscated a notebook containing his drawings in 1867. Not much is known about him, but Aporo appears to have been part of the Pai Marire movement, and proof that followers still existed in New Zealand even after most of them were exiled to Chatham Islands in 1866. Aporo had what Maori believe to be visions from God during his sleep, which showed him a path to the true faith and depicted the Pakeha as horned devils with forked tails and pitchforks. Once the Pakeha were removed, the visions indicated that Maori would enjoy some kind of Paradise on earth.

220 W.L. Williams, Notes on the Ringa-tu.
Apocalyptic visions in the Pacific went both ways. Some evangelicals preferred to think of Polynesians as Hebrews, one of the lost tribes of Israel. This placed Polynesians within the pale of Biblical prophecy, and several millennial discourses developed around the Pacific, which claimed Islanders were central to the end-of-days phenomena. Jehovah’s Witnesses, Millerites, and Mormons all sought to place Polynesians within a larger narrative of Biblical proportions on the premise that they were lost Israelites. These religious movements arose in the 1840s, twenty years after Joseph Smith had his Mormon epiphany and went into the American frontier to convert Native Americans, who he also classified as one of the lost tribes. Mormonism spawned a fad, a renewed interest in “aboriginal peoples” just at a time when more of them appeared in the world. Polynesians provided “proof” of the Bible’s accuracy and refuted those doubts cast by men, educated in the new scientific method, on its validity. True believers engaged in their own scientific readings of the Bible—for Millerites and Jehovah’s Witnesses it became the defining characteristic of their religions—and determined where and when the world would end, and who would be eligible to enter Paradise on Earth. Centuries earlier, Catholic theologists speculated that Arcadia might be geographically located in the New World; in the nineteenth century, new members of the faithful speculated that it might be in the new New World, somewhere in the Pacific. Yet, when faced with the reality of Islanders and their ability to comprehend Western eschatology and cherry-pick from its rules to provide their own monotheistic ideological framework, missionaries concluded Islanders had simply failed to understand the concept of the hereafter, not that they had understood it all too well. The demonstrated affinity Pai Marire adherents felt for Jewish people likely stemmed from their recognition that Jews were treated as outsiders by other whites and acknowledgement of the possibility that they were both descendants of the same ethnic group. Maori appropriated the "lost tribes" theory to restructure their own origin story based on information received from Christians, while simultaneously rejecting the Christian theology espoused by the missionaries.

Richard Taylor, a former missionary, wrote Te Ika a Maui (1855) to “rescue from oblivion” pre-European Maori customs and traditions, which he felt would disintegrate in the light of the “second

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Britain” colonists created in New Zealand. Written during a lull in the protracted land wars between certain iwi and between Maori and white settlers, Taylor vacillates between complimentary statements about the strength and prowess of Maori, and dismissive commentary on their primitive traditions and heathen beliefs. He concludes that Maori were conquered due to the clear superiority of European weapons and medicine, but also that they “voluntar[ily] consent[ed]” to join the British empire. Aside from his deliberate misconstruction of the Waitangi treaty, Taylor misinterprets many of the customs he records, and fails to find any ideology present in Maori habits: he translates hau as “wind,” describes tapu as arbitrary and malicious, and denied that Maori prayed to gods and ancestors despite recording and (mis)translating several of those prayers within his text. In the main, Taylor is determined to commit Maori culture to posterity, and speaks with condescending nostalgia about a vanishing way of life. In light of his unabashed pro-British white supremacy, he makes some surprising assertions about Maori origins. Citing linguistic similarities between Polynesian languages and Sanskrit, Taylor claimed they shared a singular written origin in the distant past, before the Maori were cast out and forced to sail to New Zealand, where they lost certain cultural refinements, such as writing. Later in the century, more forward-thinking religious scholars also thought they recognized patterns in Islander cosmologies and languages that denoted an Indo-European origin, but Taylor may have been the first to articulate a belief that Polynesians—or at least some of them, like the Maori, were part of the Aryan “race.”

Writing nearly half a century later, Edward Tregear also tied the Maori to Indo-Europeans using the relatively new academic field of linguistics. In Aryan Maori, he aims to provide irrefutable evidence of the Maoris’ lofty origins using the “two youngest and fairest daughters of Knowledge,” comparative philology and mythology. By his calculations, Tregear argued that Maori left India and arrived in New Zealand 4000 years earlier. Published in 1895, his book appears to be the culmination of an ongoing debate about whether the Maori could achieve the highest level of human development, “civilization;” in the conclusion, Tregear called attention to his maverick efforts against the academic establishment. His

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223 Ibid., 69, 3.
224 Ibid., 83-91, 75.
willful divergence from mainstream speculation regarding Polynesian origins was in defense of Polynesian “civilization;” he sought to combat the common perception that Islanders were inferior to Europeans, and drew upon the common assumption that the older races were better suited for modernity. This and similar arguments had real implications for the racial classification of Maori beyond the borders of New Zealand, and well into the twentieth century. In South Africa, Tregear’s book triggered debates on how or whether Maori rugby players, as Aryans, should be separated from other people of color.226 Aryan Maori can be seen then, as a way to explain the continued existence, the hardiness of Maori phenotype—they were not “noble savages” doomed to extinction, but a wayward branch of the white race.

Though it is considered a fringe theory today, it nevertheless attracted interest from notable figures among the growing body of Pacific intelligentsia. It was primarily promoted in Hawaii by Abraham Fornander, a Swedish immigrant who arrived in Hawaii in 1844 and went on to become one of the most well-known men in Hawaii. The son of a vicar, Fornander studied theology himself before dropping out of university in Uppsala, Sweden. Shortly thereafter, he left the country suddenly in 1831, perhaps to escape a hopeless love affair with a close relative, possibly his mother’s much younger sister.227 He traveled constantly during the period between 1831 and 1844, and visited Hawaii at least once before signing on to the whaler Ann Alexander out of New Bedford in 1841. He jumped ship in Honolulu a few years later, and cast about for suitable business prospects, eventually taking a job at the local newspaper, The Argus, which he eventually took over as editor in 1852. Fornander’s education included a thorough grounding in the Classics, which perhaps explains his interest in “ancient” (pre-1778) Hawaiian history and cosmology. He was one of only four hundred or so foreigners living in the city, and he was not a member of the popular set, either due to his unusual European background—Sweden was not very well represented in the Pacific, and New Englanders were notoriously fond of cliques—or his perceived fascination with “authentic” Hawaiian culture. He married an Indigenous Hawaiian woman,


Pinao Alanakapu, and together they had several children, though only one survived to adulthood. He feuded often with the only other white publisher in Honolulu, Edwin Hall, editor of the popular, and government-sponsored, Polynesian newspaper. He expressed opinions that favored strengthening the constitutional monarchy and criticized the thinly veiled legislative measures the mostly white privy council took to amass more power and control over the king.

Despite, or perhaps because of, his earlier criticism of white encroachment on native Hawaiian power, Fornander served as a circuit judge, then joined the cabinet of Lot, Kamehameha V (1830-1872) as education inspector. He seems to have had a knack for the law, despite no formal education, because he spent his last years in public service on the bench again, as one of four supreme court justices, though he died only a year into his appointment, in 1887. Between 1878 and 1885, he published three volumes on Hawaiian history and what he believed to be Polynesian origins. He called them “ante-Malays” and traced them back to the Indian subcontinent using linguistic similarities between Hindu and several Polynesian languages, but mostly relied upon perceived uniformity of social customs and mythology. He deduced, correctly as it turns out, that Polynesians established themselves in the Fijian island group before spreading east, north and south throughout the habitable Pacific. The dates he lists for their arrival in various places are wrong, but considering there was no possible scientific authentication at the time, his analyses of Polynesian migration patterns, at least once they arrive in the Pacific, are not completely erroneous. He is on stronger ground with his Hawaiian history because he conducted interviews and researched the genealogies Hawaiians produced for their own records, though he promoted his own beliefs in their origins over their own account and conventional wisdom. This was no small concern, because Fornander’s standing in Hawaii added weight to his speculations, and they


229 Davis., Abraham Fornander, 67. Fornander published several newspapers himself, all failures, until he took over running the Polynesian in the late 1850s. Whether this was coup or cooperation with Hall is unclear.


231 Ibid., 23.
became commonly circulated theories, expressed as truth by many local intellectuals, and gained an international audience through publication, and Fornander’s Swedish connections.232

Fornander embraced his adopted nation in the same way that many white men did; he did not use the term, but he doubtless considered himself kama‘aina, an invented category for white Americans born in Hawaii that very quickly evolved into the term used by white residents to differentiate themselves from tourists. Kama‘aina connoted, at least to those who referred to themselves as such, a certain comprehension, a “knowing” of Hawaii that was as complete as the understanding native Hawaiians, maka‘ainana, possessed of their homeland. Kama‘aina felt entitled to comment on government ineptitude, the lamentable state of the Hawaiian native, the restrictive property laws—basically any aspect of life in the archipelago that curtailed their rights to pursue their own commercial and civic interests. Fornander often provided a fresh, though not always welcome, perspective because he advocated greater freedoms for Hawaiian commoners and stronger government than American proponents of republican democracy. In his scholarly pursuits, being kama‘aina made Fornander feel he had the necessary understanding and the objectivity to restructure—to correct—Hawaiian cosmogony, to place them within the Western hierarchy of human development by minimizing the unique aspects of Hawaiian history and legend. To Fornander, tracing Hawaiians back to their imagined Aryan origins cast them in the most positive light, because it gave their culture value in his present. By claiming Hawaiians as fellow Indo-Europeans, Fornander and other whites found a way to insert themselves literally into Hawaiian origins, which allowed them to situate themselves within Hawaiian spaces.

The definition of residency, and the expertise that came with it, varied from person to person. For instance, Isabella Bird, a habitual British tourist and travel writer who suffered from chronic back pain, embarked on a world cruise in 1876 in hopes the sea air would cure an unspecified ailment, possibly depression. She spent six months in the Hawaiian islands, climbing volcanoes, swimming lagoons and riding horses bareback, commenting theatrically on Hawaiian landscapes and people in the 1870s, at the beginning of Kalakaua’s reign.233 Her travel narrative includes a section on ancient Hawaiian mythology.

232 Ibid., 22-3.

233 Isabella Lucy Bird, The Hawaiian Archipelago: Six Months Among the Palm Groves, Coral Reefs, and Volcanoes of the Sandwich Islands (Putnam Press, 1886).
and political commentary about the king's cultural revival movement. In order to validate her opinions, she specifically referred to herself as *kamaʻaina*, claiming that status after a residence of six months and an extensive tour of the islands.  

Mark Twain toured the islands on behalf of the *Sacramento Union* newspaper in 1866. He alternates between a satirical present-day account of his adventures with stories of “old time” customs in the Islands, presumably related to him by the people he met there. His colorful narrative essentially relates third-hand information about “ancient” Hawaii, interspersed with his attempts to recreate imagined settings and events, especially those revolving around naked Hawaiian women—he spies on women bathing in a lagoon, pays to see an “authentic” hula danced in the nude, tries to witness surfing. Twain got a lot of literary traction out of his tour; in addition to the articles, he penned a travel narrative, *Roughing It*, and gave lectures to packed audiences about his time in Hawaii. Both Twain and Bird capitalize on the American and British fascination with Pacific Islanders at a time when Westerners saw their “advancement” as proof of the success of the “civilizing mission.” And both felt that minimal exposure was all they needed to make comprehensive, objective assessments of Islander culture.

People like Bird and Twain belonged to the first generation of Westerners who grew up in a truly *known* world; who read about South Pacific exploration and Pacific Islanders in the context of a larger discourse that placed Islanders somewhere in the middle of the evolutionary development of all of humanity. The idea that Islanders may also descend from an ancient civilization like Europeans fed into the anti-conquest, and contributed to the pervasive sense of “knowing” Oceania, and the aura of innocent objectivity whites projected when they expressed a desire to move Oceanian civilization “forward.” The Islands came to serve as a proving ground for the spiritual and socio-political ideologies rising in the West. Stephen H. Phillips exemplified this attitude in his 1870 speech, “The Destiny and Triumph of Civilization,” delivered to a Hawaiian Christian association, possibly the YMCA. Phillips described a formerly “barbarous” nation, Hawaii, now lying at the pivotal juncture “between the civilization of the Old World and the New.” He credits “civilization”—which he defines as poetry, art, history, Christianity and the technology of Europe—for the “elevation of the human race,” and “commerce” for its

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advancement. Phillips was speaking about globalization, a phenomenon made possible, to his mind, by the trade networks linking China and Japan to the rest of the world, and the elimination of “bondsmen” (slaves and serfs) in the U.S. and Russia. And, of course, by the “elevation” of formerly “barbarous” people like Hawaiians—though he acknowledges the loftiness of their ancient origins—to a state of “civilization” that gave them power to create nations, accept Christianity, and, above all, enter the trade network linking the world. His tone, unapologetically capitalist, fits the governing ethos of the day, one that linked human progress to the modernization of supposedly ancient ideologies like capitalism and democracy.

Phillips was one man among many who sought to take advantage of the opportunities enumerated by other New Englanders in Hawaii—the climate, the social life, and the possibility of political and social advancement. Phillips was the scion of a wealthy Salem family who had made their fortune in the China trade and later owned whaling ships operating in the Pacific; Phillips’s father, Stephen C. Phillips, had traveled to the Hawaiian kingdom around 1820. The man himself was unknown in the Pacific, but Phillips referenced his father’s connection in 1866 when he accepted the job offer to serve in Kamehameha V’s cabinet, and his family’s stature and reputation probably led to that offer in the first place. Like Fornander, he appears to have been running from some unnamed difficulty, though his might have had legal implications—Phillips was a practicing attorney at the time and had formerly served as the attorney general to the state of Massachusetts. And Hawaii did work for Phillips. He took his wife, and together they had a son, Stephen W. Phillips, born in Hawaii. He rented a house and had it furnished and outfitted to the standards of a man of his stature in the community. He developed a personal relationship with the King, Kamehameha V, and appears to have befriended other members of the royal family as well. Phillips formed part of the close circle surrounding the king on his deathbed, in 1872, and

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236 Ibid. Phillips cites the end of the American Civil War and the termination of the serf labor system in Russia, both of which took place in 1865.


238 General Records, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu.

so was present when Lot offered the throne to Bernice Pauahi Bishop, his hanai sister, who promptly and steadfastly refused it.  

Phillips eventually left the service of the Hawaiian government after the death of the king and his successor, William Lunalilo (1835-1874), just one year later. His stated reason was financial—that his position in government simply did not offer enough money to support his small family, and the legal practice he maintained on the side did not provide adequate supplement. However, he exhibited a pathological dislike for Kalakaua (1836-1891), who ascended to the throne after some contestation, in 1874. Phillips’ respect and regard for the Hawaiian monarchy did not extend beyond the Kamehameha family, and in absence of what he considered a legitimate monarch, he began advocating for Hawaii’s annexation to the United States. In a kind of farewell address delivered in 1873 from the Hawaii Hotel, he claimed that his faithful service to the government, his six years residency, and relative objectivity as neither citizen or resident gave him the necessary perspective to push for annexation in Hawaiians’ best interest. He portrayed himself as kama‘aina, though he never uses the term outright, and worse, he drew upon his reputation as the nation’s lawyer to create an air of disinterested concern as he called for the dissolution of a sovereign nation in order to progress American trade in the archipelago. Phillips cited the damaging trade agreement, the concerns of American merchants and British lords, even the state of decline of the maka‘ainana as reasons why Hawaii would be better off as a U.S. state.

His rhetoric put him in line with the rest of the faction of New England whites living in Hawaii, most of them the children of the missionaries who helped establish Hawaii’s constitutional monarchy. They insisted that Kalakaua and his sister and heir Liliu‘okalani were unsuitable, if not outright ineligible, for the throne. People went so far as to call them black (African), inserting coded racist language that

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240 Letter from Stephen H. Phillips to Charles R. Bishop, December 11, 1872, Stephen H. Phillips Papers, Historic New England Archives, Haverhill, MA. Hawaiian nobles commonly fostered other ali‘i children, and sent their own biological children to others to raise in order to further strengthen the bonds between families. Hanai children are not distinguished from blood relatives, except in very specific circumstances. Pauahi was Lot Kamehameha’s biological cousin, but her status as his hanai sister and former fiancé gave her additional standing, though Lunalilo, the eventual choice, was more directly related to the Kamehameha family.


242 Ibid.
white Americans, in particular, would be familiar with, in order to delegitimize them. In this context that
the Kumulipo, the genealogy mele (chant) that traced the Kalakaua family lineage all the way back to the
original gods, was “collected and transcribed” by the Board of Genealogy of Hawaiian Chiefs in order to
defend his claim to the throne to the “encroaching foreigners,” not to other ali‘i. The Hawaiians were
being “blackened” by avaricious Americans eager to assert their presumed superiority and ensure their
land claims; they said they wanted only to build upon and improve the potential of the Islands, while
increasingly ignoring the rights and wants of Islanders themselves. Phillips left the Islands before the
debate over Kalakaua’s fitness reached its inevitable conclusion: in 1887, white merchants, missionaries’
sons, stormed ‘Iolani Palace and put a gun to the king’s head, forcing him to sign what has become known
as the “Bayonet Constitution,” effectively stripping the monarchy of all power and investing it in the
hands of white American residents, the kama‘aina. When he died and Liliu‘okalani (1838-1917),
Hawaii’s new queen, moved to change that constitution and restore monarchical power in 1891, these
same Americans staged a coup and seized control of the nation from her, using the same excuse—her
inexperience, her ineligibility, her blackness—that they used to defame her brother twenty years earlier.

Oddly, the speculative “blackness” of Islanders was not a new theory in the Pacific, though the
late-century Hawaiian example was by far the most egregiously racist use of the concept. The Africa-
theory of Islanders’ origins was contemporaneous with the lost tribe theory, originating early in the
century. In an effort to explain the darker skin of most Islanders, some said they were the remnant of the
Kush civilization, descendants of Noah’s “cursed” son Ham, which, at the time, still elevated them to the
level of a “degenerate” race, like the Chinese, as opposed to a “primitive” one like the sub-Saharan
Africans, or the missing-link Tasmanians. Charles Pickering, another scion of a wealthy Salem family,
sailed with the U.S. Ex. Ex. from 1838-1842. He examined the facial features and bone structure of the
many ethnic groups he encountered in the Pacific, African and Indian oceans, and concluded—correctly,
as it turned out—that all of humanity originated from Africa at some point. His work was dismissed and
remained buried, unpublished, in the volumes of papers and scientific analyses produced by the
expedition for over a century. In the 1840s, polygenesis, the idea that humanity derived from multiple

origins, was still used to explain the different levels of advancement Euro-American scholars believed were exhibited by different “races.” By the last quarter of the century, Darwin’s theories on evolution were widely circulated, and while they disproved polygenesis, most whites failed to really separate the former theory from Darwin’s “survival of the best adapted”—or “fittest,” as it came to be known. White intellectuals, be they doctors, lawyers, or naturalists, steadfastly viewed darker-skinned humans as having evolved from different, lower origins than lighter-skinned ones. Islanders became caught between the findings of men like Fornander and Tregear, whose work energized whites in Oceania, determined to save from extinction this lost version of who they once were, and the circulating ideology that whites, and only whites, were suited for human progress. They used the ordinary stuff of Islanders’ lives—their objects, their socio-political constructs, customs, and belief systems—to more fully differentiate themselves from their own pasts, and from Islanders’ present state of perceived decline.

The seemingly chaotic and contradictory efforts to classify Islanders, to both assimilate and preserve them, is part of the process of anti-conquest. It was designed to conquer Islanders on the page and in the museum. In the nineteenth century, anti-conquest reduced Islanders to an academic problem that could be solved by, say, assimilating them into progressive white culture. Anti-conquest removes the threat of “savagery” from “uncivilized” races because it gives interlopers like colonists and missionaries the confidence to enter “primitive” spaces armed with irrefutable “scientific” knowledge. Drawing on the transit of “Indianness,” that frames unwritten Indigenous pasts as “ancient” in order to separate it from the modernizing influence of the “historic” colonial period, the Pacific anti-conquest allowed people, Islanders and Euro-Americans alike, to feel good about how quickly they were able to effect change. Since speed is often equated with progress, these changes were generally presented as beneficial, even though Islanders themselves became just as quickly disillusioned with their place in the global economic, social, and intellectual networks. This same progress served to de-mystify the Pacific, and opened it up to civilian exploration by tourists, and exploitation by whites seeking to take over for Islanders by putting them in their place…should they survive. Unlike the transit of indigeneity, “Islandness” did not solidify around a particular time (pre-history) and place (North America), but, like everything else in the Pacific, was always on the move. It was created during the rise of Social Darwinism and the eugenics movement,
the most significant and dangerous effect of which led to the normalization of whiteness and the Othering of everything and everyone else. The rest of the world became “artificial curiosities,” while whites came to view themselves as the natural inheritors of the earth’s tropical territories.

**Conclusion: Mana and Moku**

It is important to remember that white Europeans and Americans did not set out to take control of the Pacific. Ultimately, that outcome resulted from issues surrounding land and power, specifically land use and governance. Euro-Americans have long associated land ownership with sovereignty. In earlier centuries, they used the excuse that Native Americans did not appear to cultivate their land in order to justify their colonization of the Americas. When they entered the Pacific, they found islands in various states of what they would consider “use,” meaning cultivation. Therefore, some Islands conformed to their idyllic agrarian sensibilities, which affected their attitudes towards certain populations and their strategies for land acquisition. The way the British inserted themselves into Australia and Tasmania mirrored their earlier takeover of North America because they came to roughly the same conclusion: that Aborigines had failed to “master” their landscapes, and so did not possess them, which made British actions to conquer the continent legal in their minds because Australia was, effectively, uninhabited.

They behaved differently in Tonga, for instance, because they recognized a high degree of land cultivation, and felt compelled to honor Tongans’ prior claim. Constrained by their own sense of fair play, Euro-Americans eventually created a “place” for themselves, and engendered their own sense of belonging by the same means Islanders used over the millennia. They created a narrative in which they, Euro-Americans, were the central actors and agents of change in the region. They did this by equating residency with citizenship, effectively creating a new type of native (birth) nationality, which in Hawaii they called *kama‘aina*. Once they claimed residency, *kama‘aina* went on to insist upon their “rights,” and

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244 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 64.


argued that local polities should adopt more advanced, Western, ways of governance for the benefit of all its “citizens,” including themselves.

The other tactic Euro-Americans used to ensure their place in the Islands was to recast Islanders as fellow whites. They claimed the saga of travel and settlement in the Pacific was really the conclusion to a much older story that began in the same place that Europeans did, in the Caucasus Mountains. Both the Aryan Polynesian and the “lost tribe” theories traced Islanders’ origins to Europe; by taking credit for Polynesians’ existence, it was much easier to justify laying claim their inheritance, the Islands themselves. Conversely, by claiming Polynesian spaces as their own by right, Euro-Americans could dismiss the Polynesian presence entirely. The power shift in the region did not always slide in one direction; Islanders also used Europeans’ stuff, their goods, belief systems and technology, to evolve their own sense of place. Euro-American cultural products helped *ali‘i* and *ariki* create more structured political systems without sacrificing power or control of said systems. Just as there were concurrent religious and scientific ideologies circulated by Euro-Americas, there were also concurrent and competing interests— Islanders used Euro-Americans to gain power, and Euro-Americans used Islanders and Islands to develop and enact scenes from their own cosmogony.

The first part of the century saw missionary and merchant interests entering the Pacific, each group eager to find ways to negotiate its ocean and peoples. Early missionary and maritime accounts conveyed a sense of uncertainty, largely due to concerns over safety—fear of hostile “natives,” the duration of the trips, the fear of being stranded or without supplies. Hawaii became a major port in these early decades of Contact because Hawaiians were well-disposed to let Euro-Americans resupply and conduct business there. It benefited the *ali‘i* to have whites nearby; Kamehameha I amassed great wealth in the China trade, which he spent on “ships, guns, clothing and other luxuries” to increase his *mana*. The first generation of nobles to engage with Euro-Americans capitalized on the trade in ways no succeeding generation could match, and so they were inclined to be friendly to the merchants who lived among them. They accepted the missionary presence for the same reason; the new religion benefitted *ali‘i* because it replaced something *maka‘ainana* lost as a direct result of the creation of the monarchy.

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The next two decades brought even more change. Better, faster ships shortened the travel time between Europe or the U.S. and the Pacific. Fears of cannibalism and “native” hostility faded due to the mitigating presence of missionaries. American and British mariniers navigated a safe path through the Pacific from the western coasts of North America to Hawaii and on to Indonesia or China, or they followed the whales south to Samoa, Tonga, and New Zealand. The number of American whalers in the Pacific from 1825-50 were double that of the preceding quarter century, which means the number of foreigners circulating in the region increased exponentially.248 These island chains drew more Euro-Americans, who worked harder to change the local dynamics to their benefit, ensuring the best trade deals and enjoying greater physical safety. As they were able to stabilize shipping routes, more whites arrived to settle in favorable Island polities and facilitate Euro-American trade networks and businesses. Their arrival exacerbated existing tensions with missionaries and white residents over power—how it should be used and who should have it—and dispensation and ownership of land.

White colonists in the Pacific always wanted more land. They needed it to feel secure, and to exercise pressure on Indigenous governments to prioritize Euro-American interests. Some nations, like Hawaii, changed the system of land distribution and ownership for their own citizens, which gave whites the opportunity to purchase land. Tonga took the opposite approach and vested land ownership in the monarchy, which rented it but refused to sell any to white settlers. In other places, like New Zealand, they had to fight for it. In 1843, the British government took over land sales in New Zealand in order to curb fraudulent sales on the part of white land agents in New Zealand and in Britain.249 They could not really address the issue of land rights, however, because Maori disposed of land in ways that did not really allow for outside purchase. The confusing situation was brought to a head in the 1850s in what became known as the King Wars. Maori īwi each designated one “king,” who had no governing powers except to deal directly with the British over land lease and purchase issues. The entire īwi had to agree to a transaction before one could take place, and only the “king” could negotiate the legalities.250 Several

249 Banner, Possessing the Pacific, chapter 3.
Maori *iwi* came to blows with white settlers who felt they had no right to keep land in commune if someone (and there was always at least one person) wanted to sell directly to a colonist, usually to erase a debt. The British government backed its colonists; the missionaries, led by Bishop Selwyn, who felt that fee-simple land ownership would advance the civilizing mission, advocated land tenure reform. Maori gave up fighting in 1865, except for occasional skirmishes, and the protracted revolts of the Pai Marire and Ringatu religious movements. To prevent further unrest, the British government took control over the Maori half of land dispensation, effectively Anglicizing land ownership. Maori had to prove their right to the land on which they lived in court, an involved and sometimes contentious process for which they had to pay all costs for surveys, titles, and legal fees, often proving their rights only to lose their land to the state in payment for their efforts. By 1899, most Maori had been “legally” disinherited by the colonial land (taking) courts in New Zealand.\(^\text{251}\) The Maori Wars, the Hawaiian Mahele, and the ascension of Taufa’ahau to the Tongan throne all occurred during the pivotal decades of the 1840s and 1850s, when the sheer volume of white newcomers to the region increased exponentially due to the lure of possible land ownership and the attendant independence that came with it.

Certainly by 1850, missionaries were no longer the major population of white settlers; their presence was gradually eclipsed by the arrival of businessmen, farmers, paroled felons from Australia, and other hopefuls looking to cash in on the Pacific’s dwindling resources and limited space. It is no coincidence that the mid-century political developments referenced above took place when they did, or where they did: Hawaii and New Zealand dwarfed the other archipelagos in terms of square acreage, and Tonga’s central location lent itself to the plantation model of land development that British, American and European businessmen imported from their respective North American island colonies.\(^\text{252}\) Local changes, especially ones that conformed to familiar European systems of governance and land ownership, gave white colonists a greater sense of stability, even in Tonga, where whites were shut out of land ownership by the monarchy. Merchants there made plenty of money leasing land for their coconut and

\(^{251}\) Banner, *Possessing the Pacific*, chapter 3.

\(^{252}\) Thomas, *Islanders*, 101. Banner, *Possessing the Pacific*, chapters 4 and 5. See also Tongan High Commission papers. Germans, late to national unification, had no Atlantic colonial expertise on which to draw, but they made do in Samoa with their strong belief in white supremacy.
sugar plantations, though they grumbled constantly about the additional fantasy profits they could have enjoyed, if only they could purchase their plantations outright.253

Throughout the nineteenth century, scientific articulations of racial hierarchies and natural rights gave white residents the confidence to feel they could understand Pacific Islanders and their culture. After 1860, Darwin’s theories on evolution, formed, in part, based on observations in Oceanian islands, enjoyed wide circulation throughout Europe, the Americas, and among those populations living in Africa and Oceania. This changed the intellectual climate of the Pacific. At first, Euro-Americans literally wrote themselves into the narrative of Pacific Islanders by re-imagining their ancestry, then claimed Islanders’ spaces as their own by “natural” right. They gradually began to erase Islanders from their “place” in white colonists’ stories. Pacific Islanders became displaced in the same process that centered the Pacific Islands themselves in the ambitions of British and American actors in the region. Suddenly Pacific Islanders were not people, they were stepping stones in the evolutionary process. Suddenly, Islanders were not and never could be the equals of whites. In Darwinism and its intellectual spawn, Social Darwinism, Euro-Americans discovered explicit, scientific justification for the de-humanization of Islanders. They dropped lower on the great chain of being, which became the evolutionary ladder. By the close of the century, Euro-Americans found a “scientific” justification for taking over the Pacific Islands. The Pacific Islands became the background scenery to a story of white racial uplift, and Pacific Islanders stood as props in that story. Pacific Islanders were forced out into the world, where they and their culture became commodities for Euro-American consumption, just as the region became a focal point of Euro-American desire.

253 Miscellaneous papers of the Tongan High Commission, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.
Chapter Three - Consumed

The first chapter traced the routes to the Pacific used by Islanders to populate the region, and by Europeans and Americans to pass through it to their fabled Orient. The arrival of European interlopers disrupted Polynesian lives, culture, and eventually sovereignty. The second chapter discussed how both groups used the same cosmology and cosmogony to situate themselves in place. Phenomenology, theology, cosmogony— all words to express the metaphorical association between events as they happen in the observable world and the spiritual connections humans always try to make to explain who they are and how they got there. In the Pacific, Euro-Americans appropriated Islander cosmology for themselves in order to transform Islanders’ paradise into their own, to insert themselves into Islanders’ spaces as true inheritors, rather than conquerors. White settlers tried to absorb Polynesian culture for their own enaction while limiting its expression among actual Polynesians. Yet, what ultimately situated interlopers in Polynesian spaces was the consumption of land, which Euro-Americans have always associated with power, acquired through their belief that agriculture was a sign of divinely-inspired civilization.

The next two chapters explain the process by which British and American interlopers used Brown and Black bodies to create, then reify their own cultural sense of self, to differentiate themselves from other European whites, and to benefit financially by folding Polynesia into their own benevolent empires. The process required transformation as well as transfer of land ownership—a reconceptualization of ideas like “property” and “rights.” To succeed, Euro-Americans required Islanders to assimilate Euro-American ideologies such as capitalism and Christianity. Since a large part of nineteenth-century British and American self-identity lay rooted in a perceived dedication to Greco-Roman doctrinal antecedents, they required of themselves strict adherence to the democratic principle of governance by consent, not violence. The British and the Americans failed on both counts, resorting to force several times to assert legal ownership of Island territories. Euro-Americans relied instead on the rhetoric of peaceful transition,
which they used to enact a “benevolent” takeover that merely gave the appearance of being consensual.\footnote{Christine Skwiot, \textit{The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawai'i} (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 16. Skwiot speaks of Americans implementation of “white republicanism” based on a consensual empire. The British were engaged in the same effort, though they eschewed words like “republic” in favor of “empire,” they hoped for rule through benevolent white supremacy.} They used spectacle to approximate some sort of intellectual exchange through what one historian has called an “empire of culture” to expedite the long process of assimilation.\footnote{Matthew Wittmann, \textit{Empire of Culture: U.S. Entertainers and the Making of the Pacific Circuit, 1850-1890} (University of Michigan PhD dissertation, 2010). See also Skwiot, \textit{The Purposes of Paradise}, 16.} Euro-Americans also used entertainment to educate and indoctrinate poor whites, Blacks, Islanders, and other people of color into a shared but fictional world of white supremacy and nature-centered Indigenous identity. Thus, European and American cultures began to cohere along the lines of their shared whiteness, rather than diverge according to their several approaches to governance of their white and “colored” populations. In this way the British and Americans developed a formula whereby they could create what they hoped would be a benevolent and consensual introduction of Islanders into the modern world.

Benevolent Empire

A tried and true method in colonial conquest involved creating discord between indigenous communities in order to convince individual members of the community to work with Europeans against their own collective interests. The most damaging iteration of this policy eventuated in Samoa and Aotearoa/New Zealand, resulting in all-out war between various Indigenous factions. The reverse also held true: in places where Islanders could pit European interlopers against each other they could avoid a coordinated attack on their sovereignty, and so maintain independence for a longer period of time. By and large, Islanders lacked the reach and power to create chaos among European polities or their representatives abroad, though Tonga stands out as a nation exceptionally adept at forestalling European ambitions. The greatest limit placed on European avarice in the Pacific, however, came from the British. Because they had such a large sea presence, passing British naval ships were frequently called upon to
settle disputes. The haphazard nature of the settlement of these disputes, which all too often ended with the deaths of multiple Islanders at the hands of British officers, led finally, in 1875, to the creation of the Western Pacific High Commission, a branch of the British Foreign Office tasked to monitor the actions of the European planter community in the central belt of Islands and settle disputes that fell outside the authority of Pacific nation-states. The High Commissioner was stationed in Fiji, the site of much colonial contention, and a Deputy High Commissioner was installed in Tonga. Contrary to the expectations of the white colonists in the area, the Commission officials proved a bigger obstacle to land acquisition and financial gain than the Islanders themselves. While British and American colonists worked to reinvent themselves through cultural appropriation in the Islands, the British government put most of their effort into codifying a standard system of engagement between white and Brown polities, especially over the issues of land and labor.

The tension between colonists and colonial governments can be traced back to evolving British attitudes towards civil rights beginning in the eighteenth century. By the early 1800s, the British government seemingly embraced a new morality, highlighted by rescinding laws that legalized the slave trade in Great Britain (1807) and the practice of slavery in its colonies (1833). The moral question of slavery was first broached in the eighteenth century during the 1772 Somerset court case, a decision which posited the correlated ideas that Britain’s air was “too pure for a slave, and every man is free who breathes it,” and that if the British simply exposed lesser “races” to their superior form of “freedom,” the Brown and Black peoples they encountered would want to emulate it. During the American Revolution, “British air,” meaning British territory, extended to anywhere where the British flag flew, like

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256 Protest letter to High Commissioner Gordon, January 1878, papers of the Western Pacific High Commission, University of Auckland, Auckland.

257 Reportedly uttered by William Murray, Earl of Mansfield and Chief Justice of Britain, in 1772 during his decision in favor of James Somerset, an escaped Virginia slave. Somerset’s master brought him to England on business, and Somerset’s escape, capture, and trial brought national attention to the issue. Lord Mansfield’s ruling in this and an earlier case became the basis for the abolition of slavery in Great Britain, based on the argument that slavery had no legal backing or precedent in English common law. The phrase was in fact used by Somerset’s lawyer, who in turn was quoting a case dating back to 1569.
its ships and other colonies. African slaves willing to fight American patriots on behalf of the British surrendered themselves to British ships’ captains and were freed according to the Dunmore Proclamation of 1775, upon which Abraham Lincoln modeled his Emancipation Proclamation much later.

They may not have been fully aware of it at the time, but with those decisions, Britain set itself the task of evolving its colonial holdings into a consensual empire. Motivated by their difficulties in North America, and prompted also by the Romantic sentiments of the day that valued “nature” and “feeling,” they formulated an emotive, moral response to the strict rationalism of the Enlightenment. In this they sought to emulate the ancient Roman empire, and used imagery, architectural styles and dress to present themselves as the great inheritors of Roman culture and intellect. The British chose not to focus on how much blood the Romans actually shed while growing their power base, or the disfavor in which they had held the island on the northern fringe of their empire. They seemed to forget that Britannia, the Romanesque personification of Great Britain, was modeled after Boudicca, the fierce queen of the Iceni who led several Britonic tribes in revolt against Roman rule after a local official illegally annexed her kingdom, flogged her, and forced her to watch as Roman soldiers publicly raped her daughters. Instead, the British government resurrected the rule-by-consent philosophy that helped grow the multinational ancient empire and keep its diverse population in check. In practice, Romans had taken a carrot-and-stick approach to empire whereby they seduced local leaders with a taste of patrician opulence, then sent them home starry-eyed and compliant. Transgressors like the Iceni faced the full wrath of the Roman legion. Georgian Romantics emulated this approach to empire, not unlike their political forbearers of the Georgian Enlightenment, with slight adjustments. They used missionaries on the ground

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259 The oldest image of a personification of Britain appeared as a ravished or subservient woman during Hadrian’s rule, long before the Iceni revolt. After Boudicca’s rebellion, however, Romans created a more reserved, respectful character who closely resembled their anthropomorphic personification Roma. It is the conflated image of Boudicca/Britannia that has graced British coinage, figureheads, and banners since the 1600s. See Annie Ravenhill-Johnson, *The Art and Ideology of the Trade Union Emblem, 1850-1925* (Anthem Press, 2014), 129-30.
to model appropriate behavior and established a network of government outposts managed through a central office in London to monitor that behavior and enforce the law for all concerned.

The British Foreign Office faced the same obstacles to governance that impeded missionaries’ conversion efforts—the persistent presence of unscrupulous whites who refused to conform to the missionary/imperial endeavor. Europeans, many of them British nationals, entered the Pacific with their own inventive schemes to illegally acquire land, or to swindle other whites (many of them British) who tried to legally purchase land. The colonial governments prior to 1875 spent most of their time cleaning up other people’s legal messes, most of which centered around land. The issue of unscrupulous transactions in Aotearoa, where more land was bought and sold between European vendors than existed in the Islands, led directly to the Waitangi treaty in 1841. From the British perspective, it was their first benevolent conquest—a colony acquired by the consensus of the indigenous population, suggestive (to the British) of an eagerness on the part of Islanders to be brought forward into “civilization” by the British. The Maori had a completely different interpretation of the purpose of the treaty, and the power it had to control their actions, especially with regard to land use. Conflict over land devolved into the Maori King Wars in the 1860s, as discussed in the previous chapter. Elsewhere in the Pacific, British imperial ambitions also led to war: a few years after Waitangi, the British engaged in a series of Opium Wars (1844-60) with China over trade and access; the Sepoy Mutiny (1857) led to direct rule in India; and British annexation of part of South Africa in 1843 to establish sugar plantations led to long-running conflicts between the British and Dutch Boers on one side and southern Africans tribes on another. These actions belied the government's own stated purpose, and gave the lie to the presumption that the presence of white civilization would automatically affect positive change in “primitive” or “degenerate” parts of the world.

As the British government persisted in its goal to establish a global network of supplies and raw material—a self-sustaining empire—it encountered the same problems with land and labor as during the
colonial era, with no ready legal solution in sight. For land sales to be valid, the land itself had to be alienable, which means Euro-Americans needed to alter indigenous inhabitants’ understanding of land purchase and ownership. When the British first beheld tilled soil and ordered gardens in Tonga and Aotearoa, it was easy for them to assume that the Islanders there already shared their ideas about land use and tenure. But most Islanders had developed an attitude towards land that made it difficult to sell or purchase it outright; instead, they employed a right-of-usage concept similar to what British tenant farmers once held in England.\textsuperscript{260} Several decades of exposure to Western culture had not disabused Fijians or Samoans of their traditional land usage, so when Euro-Americans arrived to take advantage of their open fields, they ran into exactly the same problem as they had centuries earlier in North America, and decades earlier in Aotearoa—they could not possess purchased lands even though some few Islanders may have sold their interest or titles in collectively-held property.

Not surprisingly, widespread grift and fraudulent land sales resurfaced in the 1870s, this time in the central belt of Pacific Islands, what the British thought of as the “western” Pacific.\textsuperscript{261} Eager to avoid another South Pacific war and its attendant public relations disaster, the newly formed High Commission installed land courts to assess the validity of Europeans’ claims. The Samoan court sifted through transactions for a total of 1.7 million acres of land, though territory in all of the Samoan islands did not exceed 950,000 acres.\textsuperscript{262} The Commission invalidated all but six percent of those early claims, and most of the land was returned to Samoans. This action caused a new wave of problems in Samoa between native inhabitants, the German firms operating there, American observers, and British speculators and plantation owners. The Samoans consolidated their leadership around two families who would each put forth an alternating Malietoa, or local leader, but the Germans undermined their efforts to present a united

\textsuperscript{260} Stuart Banner, Possessing the Pacific, chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{261} The British evidently did not take a rim vs. basin approach to Pacific geography. Though Fiji, Tonga and Samoa are all well east of Australia and New Zealand, they excluded these two map markers from their “western” Pacific.

front to the Europeans. They pitted the two factions against each other, traded guns and munitions for land, and eventually put forward a rival Malietoa, Tamesese, over Laupepa, the man most Samoans supported. The British feared their interference would further destabilize native rule, and feared tarnishing their world image, which had taken a hit in 1879 over the conflict in South Africa. Henry Herbert, the Earl of Carnarvon and Secretary of State for the Colonies, warned against creating “a bad copy of [South Africa] in Samoa,” and advised non-interference there.263

The High Commissioner, Sir Arthur Gordon, set up offices in Fiji because it was the site of the most egregious practices, perpetrated by Australian expatriates hoping to build or expand their own plantation bases or escape the economic depression in their colony by starting over elsewhere. Large-scale agriculture still provided the same avenue for upward mobility it had a century earlier, especially in the wake of a global industrial revolution beginning in the 1850s, but it also presented the same ethical problems. Sugar from Hawaii, cotton from Fiji and Australia, copra (dried coconut flesh) from Tonga and Samoa—these were commodities in global demand, and the most cost effective way to produce profitable quantities was still though plantation-style agriculture. The planters and speculators arrived in the western Pacific expecting to find a ready pool of labor to choose from, but though local Tongans, Fijian and Samoans might “sell” land to whites, they refused to work it for them. Euro-Americans naturally fell back on the time-tested colonial model for mass production—forced labor.

The British government supported the import of paid indentured labor from other parts of Oceania, as well as from Asia and India, but could not enforce their anti-slavery ban over such a distance so far away from the metropole. Slavery was also officially outlawed by most South American nations fronting the Pacific Ocean, but unscrupulous traders still engaged in blackbirding, the act of luring Islanders onto a ship by some means and then kidnapping them to sell to one of the colonies. The worst

263 Ibid., 14. The fact that Carnarvon was directly responsible for the South African debacle he references here seems to have escaped him, by evidence of this quote. In 1877, he tried to turn South Africa into a confederation along the lines of the one in Canada he had helped design in 1867. The idea was terribly unpopular, especially among the southern African nations who feared (correctly) that they would be disenfranchised by the move. When Carnarvon tried to force the states together, the Zulu and Xhosa revolted and the Zulu served the British several widely publicized, humiliating defeats.
instance of blackbirding is known as the Great Peruvian Slave Raid, where sailors from Peru kidnapped over 200 Islanders from Rapa Nui sold them to the guano mines in Chile in 1863, where most of them died of diseases caught from Native American or Euro-American miners. British citizens participated in blackbirding as well, purchasing Pacific Islanders off of passing ships, or refusing to pay workers they imported once their indentures expired.²⁶⁴ Try as they might, the British were unable or unwilling to dispose of the colonial slave labor model; the Pacific iteration of the institution left many Islanders stranded far from home, and over time Samoa, Fiji and Tonga gathered a small population of disgruntled Islanders from the Gilbert Islands, the Solomons, and other archipelagos closer to the British colonial hubs of Australia and New Zealand.

Given the multiple abuses recorded by Foreign Office officials, the British effort to install land commissions on the islands and their insistence that they be run by disinterested government officials was in keeping with their benevolent ethos. Because so many transactions involved British citizens, the government felt compelled to intervene directly, either to protect British consumers or punish British transgressors. In an attempt to restore order and curb the excesses of the planter classes, the British formally annexed Fiji in 1875, though they held off on Samoa due to the numerous other parties engaged in their own colonial expansion. White colonists enjoyed the protection a large Western political presence provided, though they chafed at the restrictions these same government officials imposed. By the end of the 1870s, many colonists abroad subscribed to a general belief that, as whites, they should not be subject to the primitive laws of South Pacific nations, even those enforced by fellow whites, because they enjoyed a superior rule of law at home. They refused to consider that the reason the “rule of law” was so bad in the Pacific was because white residents refused to respect any laws made by Islanders. A planter in Fiji called the King Cakobau “an old nigger” who would be “more in his place digging or weeding a white man’s garden;” Germans in Samoa pitted rival factions against each other and actually deported the

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 16. The practice was so widespread that the British government implemented the Pacific Islanders Protection Act in 1872, which made prosecution of blackbirders possible. Since Fiji was at the center of the Pacific plantation structure, the British set up their regulatory offices there.
Malietoa Laupepea in order to elevate their puppet Tamasese.\textsuperscript{265} Euro-American planters had come to the Pacific to put its Islanders to work, to recreate an Oceanian version of the Old South complete with happy plantation workers and their redolent masters.\textsuperscript{266} To be stymied in their efforts by both the Foreign Office and the Islanders themselves was intolerable to them.

Throughout the remainder of the century, white colonists in Fiji, Samoa, and especially Tonga accused agents of the High Commission of turning “the natives” against them for their own profit. They conflated missionary-turned-statesmen like Shirley Baker with career bureaucrats like John B. Thurston, who was also a premier, in Fiji. He had previously spent many years in Australia before getting shipwrecked in Samoa for a year, and before entering into the service of the British government in Fiji. He was acting Consul to Fiji and Tonga and facilitated the annexation of the Fiji Islands, before serving as secretary to the second High Commissioner, and eventually gaining that position himself in 1888.\textsuperscript{267} Baker, a surprisingly savvy politician in his own right, left the Wesleyan mission to become George Tupou’s premier, and did his best to promote the interests of Tongans, often at the expense of his fellow white residents. Yet he made dubious decisions that seemingly pitted the will of the king against the well-being of the people. In 1880, the Deputy High Commissioner (and Consul) at the time, Alfred Maudslay, found or fabricated evidence to remove him from the mission’s service, only to see him return a year later as premier under the direct jurisdiction of King Tupou.\textsuperscript{268} Baker’s second deportation came in response to another of his schemes to raise tithes for the Tongan Free Church, Tupou’s answer to the Wesleyan mission. Baker encouraged an American subject (possibly a merchant), identified only as “Bloomfield,”

\textsuperscript{265} Ibid., 19; \textit{San Francisco Chronicle}, November 27, 1887.

\textsuperscript{266} Ibid., 14. See also Banner’s chapters on Australia and Fiji and Tonga.

\textsuperscript{267} Ibid.; See also Western Pacific High Commission papers, British Commission for Tonga, BCT-1 series (microfilm), University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.

\textsuperscript{268} Shirley Baker papers, British Commission for Tonga, BCT-1 series (microfilm), University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand and British Commission for Tonga, 1870s on. In 1880, several European residents signed a letter of thanks to Baker for his service, and Rev. Walthin sent a letter of complaint to the Commission refuting the evidence against Baker, claiming that the disreputable Maudslay coerced or paid “bad men” to give false testimony against Baker over a tithing scheme to fund the Free Church. Letter, Nov. 17, 1880 in Shirley Baker papers.
to lend Tongans money without telling them it was a loan, and Bloomfield later forced or convinced them
to work off their debt by working on his plantation—arrangements Thurston’s government in Fiji saw as
illegal indenture, based on testimony of at least some of the Tongan workers. Though both men clearly
fell on opposite sides of the debate on how best to ensure Tongan sovereignty, the colonists evidently felt
that the Commission and the Premier were equally out to swindle them somehow.

“Steinberger,” another infamous so-called con artist with no documented first name, sailed to
Samoa under the U.S. flag in 1875 to inquire into possible expansion of U.S. agriculture. President Grant,
concerned about the competing interests in the archipelago, decided not to pursue official colonization, at
which point Steinberger became a free agent who still masqueraded in some quarters as an American
official. Once the Foreign Office became aware of the deception, and Steinberger’s dubious association
with an aggressive German firm, he was forcibly deported from Samoa, to the dismay of both Samoan
and Tongan political leaders. According to the Commission’s account, the testimonies of white planters
and merchants, and a few Islanders, these men were the scourge of their separate archipelagos. But
perhaps Baker and Steinberger were simply held accountable for something that many whites attempted:
trying to convert British systems of commerce into something Islanders could understand and in which
they could participate. And while Tonga needed cash to settle its debts with European firms, it also
needed money to build the Tongan Free Church. That project began in 1880 as a means to lessen the
influence of the Wesleyans and to punish them for their handling of Baker’s first removal from
(missionary) office. In other words, Baker was crucial to the Tongan government’s reorganization

Miscellaneous papers of the General Consul, 1890-1, Western Pacific High Commission, University of
Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand. Please note that many members of the High Commission also
worked for the British consulate. The High Commissioner also the governor of Fiji, and usually served as
Consul; the Deputy Commissioner was usually the Vice Consul. Their dual positions may have
contributed to the colonists’ fear that the government was out to “get” them.

Tongan Chamber of Commerce correspondence, Western Pacific High Commission, British
Commission for Tonga, BCT-1 series (microfilm), University of Auckland Archives, Auckland, New
Zealand.

Miscellaneous correspondence, British Commission for Tonga. “Steinberger’s” name has no consistent
spelling within these documents, and his first name is never given.
attempt. For all of Steinberger’s shady dealings abroad, Samoans apparently loved him, and the Tongan secretary called him “the only man in America who can do us service.”272 To Islanders, the actions of Baker and Steinberger were no more questionable ethically than those of other whites, and at least both men instituted measures, like a police force, migrant worker documentation, and political advocacy that actually improved the daily lives of their constituents. Perhaps that was the reason the Commission stooped to the Germans’ forced deportation method in both cases—the acceptance of both men in their respective societies proved how little Islanders trusted any white residents, and how little differentiation they made between them.

In 1887, over a decade after Tonga’s land consolidation acts made white residents permanent lessee-only occupants, a group of merchants in Lifuka formed a branch of the Tongan Chamber of Commerce which, despite its official-sounding title, was a sort of club for white business interests in Nuku’alofa. Lifuka was a small port town located on a different island than the capital city, and the merchants there feared their location shut them out of business opportunities as a result. Their letters to the government became more sullen and demanding as time passed. These acrimonious exchanges between the Committee for the Chamber of Commerce, a body composed wholly of white residents from Britain and Germany, and the assistant Premier Basil Thomson, a career Foreign Office employee, underscored the lofty expectations the British population in Tonga held. The initial letter seems to be in response to a general request for information and suggestions from Thomson as he settled into a position abruptly vacated by Baker. In response, the Chamber demanded certain changes to the constitution and a new customs tariff implemented in 1891. The body expressed understandable apprehension about the period of unrest brought about by the removal of the premier and what they assumed would be the impending death of the king. They couched their complaints in reasonable fears like the king’s health, a

272 Letter, Mr. Le Mamea, Secretary to Taimua Faipule, Government of Samoa, February 1878 in Miscellaneous Tongan Papers, 1870 on.
possible hurricane—events that may have led to sudden, but inevitable changes to their fortunes and the health of the nation. However, beneath these fairly normal concerns, the tone of the letter and the nature of their proposed changes indicated a deep resentment towards the government for stunting their commercial growth in order to benefit the real citizens of the country.

Of the more ludicrous demands, the Chamber wanted the Tongans to convert to a cash payment system for their taxes, which they paid in produce and livestock up to that point. The government redistributed foodstuffs collected as taxes, presumably to local markets, so residents of the nation did not have to pay for food. This made the use of money in their daily lives largely unnecessary. White merchants wanted Tongans to switch to cash so that they would have to work for whites to collect money that they could then pay to the government. Already Tongans were getting steadily poorer, because they had to give a portion of their food as taxes to a growing white population that did not reciprocate in kind, in addition to feeding the diminishing Tongan non-farming population. By 1890, when the letter was sent, many were also in debt because they purchased goods on credit and did not or could not pay off those debts because some plantation owners no longer wanted payment in copra or labor, something whites had been willing to accept earlier. The Chamber complained that Tonga was approaching the sad state of Fiji where “a very large staff of Europeans” supported “the small and rapidly decreasing population of Colonists.” Convinced that the “government [of Tonga] is introducing laws from Fiji” designed to enrich it at the colonists’ expense, the Chamber indirectly accused the High Commission of destabilizing the monarchy for their own ends.

In a response dated July 15, 1891, Thomson calls out the Chamber on its hypocrisy in advocating for a “balanced” government that nevertheless serves their financial interests. He calls their complaints ignorant, partisan and self-serving, and racist. They complained endlessly about a tariff that was already lower than those in New Zealand and Fiji. He admonished them that “Tonga is not the only country in the

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274 Tongan Customs and Commerce, 1886-91.
world where foreigners chafe at the laws and restrictions of the country in which they themselves have
elected to live,” and concluded that since in Tonga “all chief food articles are free,” the Europeans were
better off there than they would be “if under the play of a civilized government.”275 What these
businessmen displayed in their correspondence was an attempt to undermine the sovereignty of Tonga in
order to assert their “natural” rights as whites, especially as British citizens of the world. They were not
in fact concerned with obeying the laws in the place where they lived; they were concerned with
benefitting from their whiteness in a place far from home. They fully adhered to the principle of white
superiority, in that they expected to enjoy rights superior to that of the indigenous population. Their
demands to address non-existent or overblown issues, coupled with their anger towards the government,
makes sense in no other context.276 They put forth suggestions for change entirely designed to benefit
themselves; they would not accept that ultimately, it did not matter what they wanted—they were guests
and foreign residents in someone else’s country. They were making money, and if they wanted to, they
could go somewhere else and try to make more.

The Members of the Chamber lacked even common knowledge of the politics and people of the
region. Telling is their aversion to the use of the word “muli,” which means “foreign” in Tongan. They
complained that its use to describe them was racist, even though these same whites took pains to separate
themselves from native Tongans and—as these communications show—held themselves above the laws
created by the Tongan government. They resented being called muli because it showed that local Tongans

275 Letter, Thomson to Lee, 15 July 1891 in Tongan Customs and Correspondence, 1886-91.

276 As Thomson points out, the fees they complain of are actually higher in Fiji than in Tonga, and the poll
tax and tariffs were lowered through legislation, not raised. He takes special insult at the use of
quotations when the Chamber referred to the “king” and his “government,” though when he challenged
this usage, the secretary for the Chamber demurred. Thomson feels the judgment of the merchants
cannot be trusted, due to the animosity between the European residents and Tongans. Letter, Basil
Thomson to Charles Lee, December 17, 1890. Baker also had problems with this particular body of
residents, and had to remind them that under the Tongan constitution, foreigners and Tongans had the
same rights, except Europeans had the option of having certain court cases tried by the High
did not accept them. These quibbles were mixed in with genuine causes for concern, like merchants’ clashes with the local police force over (non)enforcement of anti-theft laws. Traditionally, items on beaches belonged to whomever took them, and Tongans were slow to recognize European property rights. The issue came to a head with the drawn-out case involving the wrecked ship *Smiling Man* and its pilfered goods. The legal owner of the wreck had no luck retrieving his property despite repeated appeals to the Tongan court and the police, and the case became a hot-button issue between white merchants and native Tongans. It served also to underscore the frustration Tongans felt over changing expectations and what they believed was a loss of traditional values, frustrations which contributed to the assassination attempt against Baker and the Commission’s heightened involvement in Tongan affairs.

Thomson’s acerbic response to the members of the Chamber in this and subsequent communications presents a clearer picture of the “burdens” these men endured as residents, but not citizens, of the tropical nation. A son of the Archbishop of York, he had spent time at Oxford, but left early, and tried farming in Iowa before attaching himself to Sir William Des Voeux, governor of Fiji and High Commissioner in 1884, at the tender age of 23. Thomson was a trained magistrate (a justice of the peace) with a knack for Pacific languages, but the tropics did not agree with him; he was invalided back to England after contracting malaria in Papua New Guinea. But he returned in 1889 to assist High Commissioner Thurston. In his capacity as magistrate, Thomson worked for the Commission’s lands office for several years, until health issues cut short his tenure with the Foreign Office and forced him once again to return to Britain. Thomson wrote several books—some fiction, some historical—about his time in Fiji, but his real talent lay in law enforcement, and he spent most of his career overseeing prisons in the UK. Later in life, he made a name for himself when he joined Scotland Yard during World War I. He was important enough to be sent to interrogate suspected spy Margaretha Zelle, better known to

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277 Resolutions passed by the Tongan Chamber of Commerce, January 1891, Tongan Customs and Commerce papers, 1886-91.

278 Letter, R. Easthope to Beckwith-Leefe, Dec, 1889 in Miscellaneous papers of the General Consul, 1890-91.
history as Mata Hari. The breadth of Thomson’s talents was not yet on display in 1890 when he was tasked to bring order to the Tongan Premier’s office, but the young man clearly familiarized himself with the nuanced situation there. Assistant Premier Thomson gave the planters one of the few concessions to their demands by soliciting a suitable replacement for the objectionable word “muli” to denote white residents. The Chamber responded by suggesting whites in Tonga adopt the term “papalagi,” as in Samoa, which must have made Thomson smile a bit. With his gift for languages, he would have known that the common translation for “papalagi,” used by native Samoans and white colonists alike, was “foreigner.”

The Foreign Office officials in the Western Pacific High Commission were career Crown servants, which also made them career colonials who traveled the length and breadth of the empire, working in far-flung colonial outposts and discovering the same essential conflicts between whites and locals wherever they went. Because they traveled in literally the same circles, they got to know each other very well. Their infighting sometimes reached soapy, operatic heights as with Maudsley and Baker, or Gordon and everyone, and class conflicts undoubtedly complicated matters between self-made men like Baker and gentlemen’s sons like Thomson, who made a tidy profit ridiculing Baker’s perceived inefficiency after he returned to England. These men also witnessed British civility at its absolute worst in colonists’ dealings with Islanders, Indians and Africans outside the metropole. Their correspondence provides a nuts-and-bolts look at nineteenth-century British bureaucracy, the mechanics that made empire briefly possible. These are the men whose decisions built up the Euro-American presence in the Pacific, even as they provided the only written proof of some of the atrocities perpetrated by their constituents there. They held the same opinion at the end of the century as they had at the

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279 Thomson released Zelle though she admitted working for the Germans; he concluded that despite her claim, under duress, there was no real evidence of her crime. Thomson was correct; Zelle did not pass on any French state secrets, and her very public trial and execution were likely a means for the French government and army to distract people from their own failures in 1917. See Basil Thomson, Queer People (1922).

280 Noel Rutherford, Shirley Baker and the King of Tonga (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). See also Basil Thomson, The Diversions of a Prime Minister (1894)
beginning, that British intercultural engagement must be codified and rooted in existing laws, but that the protection of British citizens and their property legally superseded other concerns. The American approach to imperialism, by contrast, focused more on the spirit of democracy. They believed that the general feeling of democracy was flexible and adaptable to events on the ground, so long as Americans expended maximum effort towards instilling democratic principles according to their own vague and ever-changing blueprint.

“The White Republicanism”281

The real problem, for the foreign merchant class, was that the monarchy in Tonga prevented them from exercising the same level of influence over politics as their counterparts in Hawaii could. The planter class expressed disappointment at the survival of the Tongan race; they both feared and hoped the demographic decline in Tonga would match that of Hawaii.282 The demise of the Tongan “race” might deprive them of an unreliable labor pool, but it would give them access to widely available, cultivated land and cleared fields in fee simple ownership. The rather mercenary comparison falls apart upon closer inspection, however; something contemporary planters might have realized had they not subscribed to the belief that indigenous peoples were doomed to extinction. Though “discovered” around the same time, more people from more places in Asia, Europe and the Americas passed through or settled in Hawaii, exposing the Indigenous population there to waves of disease over time. Tonga enjoyed the patronage, primarily, of the British, and eventually other Euro-Americans, in no great numbers until much later in the century. The demographic collapse in the Pacific was thus comparatively much more pronounced in Hawaii, which had a larger population established on islands in much closer proximity to each other than is the case in Tonga. The resulting situation of the Hawaiian islands was therefore very different from that in Tonga, which meant that the integration of whites into Hawaiian society was a completely different

282 partial letter, Gordon to Baker April 13, 1878, as noted by Scarr, Fragments of Empire, 91-2.
process, though both were tied to the administration of land ownership, and the presumption of white supremacy.

Like the British, Americans drew inspiration from idealized notions of Roman culture, though they focused more on the era of its Republic to model their society. They had little interest in a multinational empire, instead, they aimed to create a homogenous white republic by spreading white republicans around the world. Colonial Americans’ experience with indigenous populations led them to believe that they would die eventually, and leave empty, cultivated lands behind to be worked by lower-class whites or people of color. Where the British contented themselves with a practical, racialized hierarchy of workers and owners, American expansionists dreamed of prosperous societies peopled only by free whites. The shame of their nation, slavery, hobbled democracy, but their solution was not to free slaves but to remove Black people altogether.

Americans abroad were guided by the ethos of Manifest Destiny, a concept first codified by then-secretary of state John Quincy Adams in 1823 in the Monroe Doctrine, named for the president Adams served at the time. Every subsequent president reaffirmed the Monroe Doctrine throughout the rest of the century, including Quincy Adams himself, who enjoyed a long and industrious career serving Massachusetts in Congress after the end of his presidency.\textsuperscript{283} New Englanders and their principled, Puritan colonialism and their early nineteenth-century enthusiasm for evangelical Protestantism seeded into the minds of early Americans the idea that their benevolent Christianity would accomplish in the nineteenth century what the British had failed to do by force of arms in eighteenth-century America. The idea of a “manifest destiny” grew from the Lewis-Clark expedition on the heels of the Louisiana Purchase (1803). Ostensibly a survey mission, its successful completion allowed to government to claim that the “natural” extent of the United States went from one sea to the other, which gave them the moral excuse to conquer the Western territory to the coast. This also meant potential conflict with Spain, Russia and Britain—nations that all claimed some part of the western coast of North America.

\textsuperscript{283} Skwiot, \textit{The Purposes of Paradise}, 19. The term itself was not coined until 1845 however.
Americans traveled over land and by sea to establish forts in the Pacific Northwest, where the Spanish claim was minimal, and where the Russians eventually gave up their claims altogether. They established Fort Astoria on the bones of the Russian-American Fur Trading Company. This toe-hold on the Pacific coast helped cement the idea that continental conquest was possible, potentially profitable, but the primary focus at the time was the Pacific and Asian markets. The idea of walking across the western frontier, settlement by land, was more daunting than the prospect of colonization overseas by developing outposts of Christianity and commerce. Sea routes may take years to establish, but they were the more reliable method of travel and settlement, so the idea of settling islands hundreds, or even thousands of miles away from the continent must be taken in proper context. The landscape of the American West was so vast that it was conceptually inaccessible, whereas conquering the Pacific expanse was a much more realistic endeavor, because it was already underway. Taking several months to sail into and around the Pacific was preferable to the years it took to travel maybe 700 miles from where you started.

The Monroe Doctrine specifically addressed Latin America, and stated that no other nation except the U.S. would interfere with Latin American politics, but that they would not steal from Spain what Spanish colonists were not willing not give. This was the no-transfer policy, and it was predicated upon the fantasy of consent. In the 1820s, Spain’s New World empire seemed to be falling apart in North America, which meant there was a fair chance that it was equally tenuous in the Pacific. The possibility of acquiring Spain’s colonial island possessions in both oceans was immensely attractive, particularly at a time when America was turning its gaze westward. Hawaii was a desirable and strategic location from

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284 Igler, The Great Ocean; and Russia-America Company papers, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon.


286 Ibid., 12. Clark uses Daniel Boone as an example of someone who, as a professional trailblazer who lived a long time, walked approximately 700 miles.

287 See Bruce Cummings, Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Cummings asserts that U.S. history’s preoccupation with the Atlantic world is revisionist based on twentieth century events. He believes that U.S. policy prior to the world wars focused on westward expansion over land primarily as a means to secure pathways to the Pacific Ocean and the lucrative China trade.
which to extend the U.S.’s China trade, which had been in decline due to the ever-changing tastes of the Chinese, the diminishing supply of precious metals, and the government’s growing ire over the illicit opium trade Western merchants initiated in order to guarantee their supply lines of tea, silks and cheap labor/manufacture. Through a series of wars, and especially the Opium Wars that began in the 1840s, Britain forced China to continue to trade with them on terms favorable to the British and other participating nations. While the U.S. stood by as thoughtful observers to the several unbalanced treaties resulting from each engagement, the nation no doubt thought it could only benefit from increased Asiatic trade. Americans believed that capitalism and democratic principles went hand in hand, though their support of Britain’s actions in China displayed a rather flexible attitude toward sovereignty that played out on a much more intimate scale in the Caribbean and Pacific islands they coveted.

Americans’ avowed dedication to freedom and free market enterprise was complicated somewhat by their support of slave labor. The solution was to subscribe to the general principle of white supremacy making the rounds through the European intelligentsia that specifically contrasted the “inferiority” of Blacks and the possibility of racial uplift of Indigenous communities. This allowed for a tolerable contrast between Blacks, characterized as incapable of progress, and Brown Islanders who simply needed guidance. It also created a conundrum for proponents of territorial expansion into the North American islands, where slavery had created a large Afro-Caribbean population, and where the institution itself still existed in some form. It is in this context that the no-transfer policy took shape in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as a government guarantee that the U.S. would not expand their own slave system or increase their slave population through conquest. Unfortunately, there was no way to control individual operators, or what non-government organizations like missions or private businesses might do to maintain power and turn a profit in the Islands.

New England missionaries arrived in Hawaii in the middle of the expansion debate, armed with a general faith in democracy, Christianity, and capitalism as elevating forces in society. They inherited the British tendency to equate land ownership with personal freedom. They immediately set about trying to
implement these principles in Hawaii, and managed to connect themselves to the monarchy through Ka'ahumanu and her heirs. It took time to make lasting changes, to shape Hawaiian society into an idealized Romantic model, but they finally got their opportunity in the 1830s. Kamehameha III's long reign and young age gave missionaries in government greater influence than they would have had if Kauikeaouli had been older, and created more permanent change than might have occurred if his reign had been short. Once Hawaii had been largely deforested of its sandalwood trees for the China trade, Americans turned their thoughts to the prospect of large-scale agriculture on the colonial plantation model in order to continue to profit personally, but also to sustain the nation’s economy and the missionaries’ civilizing experiment. Beginning in 1845, the government, composed of many prominent white residents, devised a system of land tenure reform called the Mahele, a coordinated effort to transform Hawaiians’ relationship to land by encouraging them to document ownership of their parcels.288

The decade preceding the Mahele was a pivotal one for U.S. involvement in the Pacific. In 1845, the Mexican War resulted in territorial gains of Texas and the California coast. Both Great Britain and the U.S. developed West Coast port cities in Oregon, California and British Columbia territories, from where they could launch and land ships dedicated to Asiatic trade. Hawaii therefore became a nexus for travel to and from North America, and by mid-century was crucial to the strategies of trade in the hemisphere. Though the British increasingly used the sea route around Cape Horn in Africa after the decline of the Iberian empire, they did need eastern Pacific routes and access to fur pelts for the China trade. By the 1820s, they had formed colonies on the west coast of Canada, and Hawaii in particular was an important resupply station. In 1843, buoyed perhaps by their country’s “acquisition” of New Zealand, local British nationals convinced a British captain to annex the Hawaiian islands in order to ensure the commercial security of British citizens operating in the archipelago.289 The young Queen Victoria

288 Banner, Possessing the Pacific, chapter 4. The legislation leading up to the Mahele began in 1845, though the event itself, the “start-clock” for maka‘ainana to register their land, began in 1848.

eventually forced the captain to return sovereignty to Kamehameha III. This foreign intervention forced
the Hawaiian government and its American participants to think about land in terms of potential conquest
by an invading power in a way that they perhaps had not done so before. The Mahele was first and
foremost a way to secure the territory belonging to the king and the nobilit

White officials did not initially intend to disenfranchise all Hawaiians; rather, they hoped—or
claimed to want—to improve Hawaiians’ work ethic by giving them the independence they felt came only
from land ownership. This was the opposite stated aim of reformers in New Zealand, who wanted to give
Maori the ability to sell land to whites irrespective of community interests. The fact that the proposed
Hawaiian reforms made it easier for white Americans to finally own Hawaiian property was a perk that
also happened to encourage more immigration. The Hawaiians in government supported the effort and
implemented it in order to demonstrate Hawaiians’ capacity to have and use private property in the same
manner as whites did—a necessary assertion during a time when Islanders across the Pacific were being
stripped of sovereignty for failing to prove possession of their land.290 Their model of land tenure reform
shifted Hawaiians away from the feudal system modified by Kamehameha I, and terminated all
obligations between makaʻainana and aliʻi. Under the new system, whites could now buy land outright
instead of only leasing it. Aliʻi supported selling land to white foreigners—a reversal of policy that drew
strong opposition from the makaʻainana, who feared, correctly, that if white residents purchased land,
they would begin to “step on” all Hawaiians, and dispossess them as they had Native Americans.291

The Mahele stipulated that all Hawaiian land-owners survey and document their properties.
Unlike in New Zealand, private individuals, many affiliated with the church, offered their surveyor skills
free of charge, and the cost for registration with the Land Commission was minimal.292 Yet, very few

290 Hawaiian, Tongan, and U.S. nationals were all aware of the danger of annexation posed by European
powers towards those they considered “uncivilized.” The Hawaiian ambassador in Australia suggested to
King Tupou in Tonga in 1854 that he take steps to present a politically Westernized nation to the world,
regardless of the social cultural traditions he maintained. See Scarr, Fragments of Empire, 86.

291 Ibid. See also, Albertine Lewis, To All People: A History of the Hawaii Conference of the United
Hawaiians complied with the edict, which gave maka'ainana two years to complete the process. By the time Mahele took effect in 1848, most Hawaiians could read and write in their native language, so the issue was not literacy or fear of the legal process. The Mahele failed because most Hawaiians already felt enfranchised, and did not need official documentation to proclaim what they had known for generations under the existing land tenure: the boundaries of their lands. As a result, most of their holdings were reduced or eliminated because they refused to register their claims, and the government refused to allow any extensions to commoners (though ali‘i could apply for formal possession of their traditional land until the 1890s). Unfortunately, the Mahele also codified and separated inalienable Crown lands from government land, which could be bought and sold at will. Eventually, lands that were not claimed by commoners, millions of acres in total, became government property by default, and were redistributed among the nobility or sold to white residents. The average maka‘aina wound up with title to just 2.7 acres, whereas the average ali‘i had over 1,500 acres apiece, and even foreigners managed to secure about 140 acres each. The government claimed title to 1.5 million acres to keep or sell to Euro-Americans as it saw fit.

White individuals and religious missions used their newly transferred land to create sugar, coffee, and, later, rice and pineapple plantations. The Congregationalists and Mormons used native Hawaiian students as labor under the auspices of educating and converting them, but most other large-scale agricultural endeavors required imported labor. Secular whites hoped to use Hawaiians to work their plantations, but many were already leaving the Islands in search of other opportunities on the continent or at sea, and those that remained were not always willing to work for minimal pay on land that once belonged to them. Plantation owners began importing Asians and Filipinos (after 1898) to fill the labor void in the second half of the century, which introduced more virulent diseases that further decimated the indigenous Hawaiian population. The few Native Hawaiians who supported the overthrow were sorely

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293 Banner, Possessing the Pacific, chapter 4.

disappointed afterward when their American “allies” who championed democratic principles like self-determination ceded sovereignty to the U.S. to provide a strategic naval base for their Spanish-American War. The U.S. finally gave up its no-transfer policy at the close of the century, when it “liberated” the Philippines from Spain only to annex it as another territory, alongside the newly acquired Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Guam. The U.S. finally achieved an empire that, while not global in scope like the British, at least extended across both of the oceans that formed the nation’s eastern and western borders.

In the intervening years between the Mahele and the end of the century, the Hawaiian population was halved while the white population more than doubled.295 There were about 70,000 Hawaiians according to the 1853 census, and by 1896, only 31,000 “full-blooded” Hawaiians remained, though the number of hapa-, or part-Hawaiians ballooned from just under 1000 to almost 8,500 in the same years. Conversely, in 1853, there were only about 1,600 people who identified as Caucasian or Portuguese (who were not considered white in the nineteenth century), and by 1896, the islands reported well over 22,400 who fit that description.296 As more white people entered the Hawaiian population, more whites appeared in government positions to address their needs in society. Kamehameha III reportedly said that he employed white men in government because they were the only ones who could deal with the white residents.297 Decades later in Tonga, Tupou I expressed the same sentiment; part of the reason whites there believed Shirley Baker to be the power behind the throne was because the king refused to deal directly with them, sometimes making them wait months to address their concerns when Baker was out of the country.298 In Hawaii, however, the missionaries-turned-statesmen had more of a say about who joined them in government. Nearly every one of the white officials was a New Englander by birth, and as

295 Ibid.
297 Banner, Possessing the Pacific.
298 Miscellaneous papers of the Tongan Chamber of Commerce. Baker spent several months of each year in New Zealand throughout his tenure as Premier, which was probably another source of frustration for the planters and merchants in Tonga.
the government expanded, they sought more like-minded people from Massachusetts and other Northern states to demonstrate the democratic principles of the “average” American. The men who answered these summons, like Stephen Phillips, possessed average management and other skills, and very likely would never have reached such powerful positions had they remained in the U.S. Phillips said as much in his letter of acceptance for the post of attorney general to Kamehameha V. Such men brought high hopes and expectations of what Hawaii could do for them, but they also carried over ideas about Hawaiians determined in large part by their own personal ideas about non-whites.

By the time Phillips took up his post as attorney general, it was difficult to distinguish Americans’ racial attitudes towards Blacks from their attitudes about race in general. People tended to transfer their feelings about Blacks onto Hawaiians, Native Americans, and most “foreign” (non Anglo-Saxon) whites. The habit continued as the century came to a close, and opinions about Hawaiian sovereignty in the 1870s evolved as attitudes towards Blacks in America changed. The Phillips family’s maritime connection to the China trade in the early 1800s was a source of ongoing pride, as was the family’s refusal to engage in the illicit Atlantic slave trade that often formed a lucrative side business for many New England sea captains. Phillips had no recorded opinion about Native Americans, and his non-opinion might indicate general neutrality on the subject. In Hawaii, he conducted himself accordingly—he expressed no public negative opinion about the Hawaiian kingdom, just as he never openly maligned those of African descent. He took his role as King’s advisor and interpreter of laws seriously, and understood that as attorney general, his job was to be the King’s voice when the King himself was not present. This explains why he advocated so strongly for the elevation of Bernice Bishop to the throne after the death of Kamehameha V, whose dying wish was that she ruled after him. It explains also why he continued to work for Lunalilo, who he felt to be the rightful heir, and why he resigned rather than work for Kalakaua, who won the throne in Hawaii’s second (and last) democratic election for the throne.

Despite an upbringing which encouraged a belief in meritocracy, Phillips’ attitude was affected by the resurgence of Romanticism in the 1870s, as evidenced by his last few public speeches in Hawaii. He felt that the decline of the Kamehameha dynasty terminated the Hawaiians’ sovereign rights, and seemingly sided with New England planters that annexation to the United States was the next logical step.\(^{300}\) There is no documentation about how Phillips felt about the proposal to hire freed American slaves to work Hawaiian sugar plantations in the 1870s, but Kamehameha V implemented Hawaii’s first immigration ban against freedmen on the rationale that they would introduce an unclean element into Hawaii. In 1882, Kalakaua’s government vetoed another measure to recruit African-American labor for much the same unfounded and racist reasons.\(^{301}\) Ironically, around this time, rumors began circulating among the white population that Kalakaua was himself a descendent of an escaped slave woman named Flower, and thus ineligible for the throne. Comparing Hawaiians to Blacks and using inherited Blackness to de-legitimize Kalakaua passed along a coded message, usually through political cartoons, that said the Hawaiian monarchy, like their alleged African “forefathers,” were too “uncivilized” for self-governance. They posited this unfitness by referencing an imagined Blackness, an unsuitable bloodline for any ruler of a place where so many white people lived. White residents in Hawaii revived the societal concerns circulating in the U.S. as far back as 1820s, when the missionaries first left Boston—questions about whether a Black person can be a person, or a human, or citizen, which were then used to defend the institution of slavery for several more decades.

The difference between men like Phillips and men like Lorrin Thurston, the architect of the American coup in Hawaii, turned out to be less about outlook and more about birth. Phillips was not born in Hawaii, and when he became disenchanted with his personal progress there, he left. The Phillipses continued to advertise their worldliness, and especially their Hawaiian connection, when they returned to

\(^{300}\) Stephen H. Phillips, Address at the Hawaiian Hotel, March 1873. Note, planters in Hawaii had tried in the 1870s to recruit freed slaves as “expert” plantation labor, and given Phillips’ opinions in this speech, he probably supported the attempt as a means to boost sugar production.

\(^{301}\) Okihiro, *Island World*, 134.
Salem and their New England roots: in front of their house they raised the flag of the Hawaiian kingdom, and Stephen W. Phillips, who was born in Honolulu, spent much of his life referring to himself as a Hawaiian national. Inside their home, located in the fashionable McIntyre district, Phillips’ study is decorated with enough Polynesian artifacts to furnish a museum exhibit. The parlor displays a healthy collection of Chinese lacquerware and Western-style export goods from Canton. Lorrin Thurston, on the other hand, born in Hawaii like the other missionary sons, raised barefoot on the beach and educated abroad, grew up to believe that Hawaii belonged to men like him by natural, if not legal right. He saw Hawaii as his legitimate birthright, a nation rightly populated and governed by the whites who had rescued it and its “savage” occupants from ruin. His grandfather, Asa Thurston, arrived with the first wave of missionaries in 1820. His father, also Asa Thurston, served the kingdom in its house of representatives, as did Lorrin himself. It was not long before these like-minded Christian sons decided to “rescue” Hawaii from the Hawaiians, in the same way that their New England forefathers “saved” North America from the despotic British and “savage” Indian. Hawaiians, men like Lorrin reasoned, were both savage “natives” and despotic monarchs, the worst of everything principled Americans fought against. Lorrin penned the Bayonet Constitution, a document which reduced the Hawaiian monarch to a figurehead and transferred most of his power to the white-dominated parliament. He was present when it was delivered, at gunpoint, for King Kalakaua to sign.

When missionaries first arrived in Hawaii, the population had already suffered the effects of European diseases for which they had no antibodies. Pray as they might, the Congregationalists could do nothing to mitigate that damage. As the native population shrank, the growing white population became multi-generational, as missionaries gave birth to children in the Islands. Some profited greatly from marriages to Hawaiian royalty, both in terms of material wealth and lands, though the female scions of these unions were immediately dispossessed in the American takeover in 1892. Most missionaries married other white colonists, and sent their Hawaii-born children back to New England for education. It was these missionaries’ sons who stormed ‘Iolani Palace in 1887 and forced King Kalakaua to abrogate
most of his duties of state and gave American ships exclusive rights to Pearl Harbor; these same men also staged a coup upon the ascension of Kalakaua’s sister, Lili‘uokalani, in 1891 that ultimately ended the monarchy. All royal holdings, approximately two million acres of land, transferred to the Hawaiian Republic—a brief government formed by kama‘ainana until the U.S. formally annexed the kingdom during the Spanish-American War in 1898. The American government’s last chance to adhere to the democratic principles it espoused came in 1892 when Princess Ka‘iulani (1875-1899), Lili‘oukalani’s niece and heir to the throne, traveled with the queen to Washington, DC to deliver a written petition condemning the illegal acts of aggression perpetrated in Hawaii in the name of republican virtue.\footnote{Noenoe Silva, \textit{Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism} (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). Chapters 4 and 5 give a much more thorough account of the coup and the ensuing Hawaiian protests than I could possibly do justice to them here.} Surprisingly, the U.S. government sided with the Hawaiian queen, and refused to annex the archipelago without consent of its sovereign. While the rebelling white residents countered this refusal by establishing an independent nation, the point should not be lost in the dramatic episode that Hawaiians used the American legal system and American methods to extract justice from a culture that still debated their basic humanity. In the end, strategy trumped democracy, and the U.S. acquired, through annexation, its long-sought naval base in the Pacific.

The decade of the 1870s proved as symbolically pivotal to the United States as it did for Great Britain. In May of 1876, Truganini, the woman widely believed to be the last full-blooded Tasmanian, died, an event that seemingly validated the long-standing supposition that “native” populations would eventually expire, leaving whites the sole inheritors of their spaces. In September of that same year, the reciprocity treaty between Hawaii and the U.S. went into effect, a measure which allowed duty-free importation of Hawaiian sugar and rice into the U.S. as part of a plan to replace southern plantation crops with Oceanian ones. This treaty linked the fate of Hawaii to the consumer interests of the United States, and provided the first legislative steps towards annexation. Elsewhere in the Pacific, the American
president Ulysses S. Grant tried to open trade with the fractious Samoan government, to no avail. A divisive presidential election rounded out the year, and Republican congressmen closed a back-room deal that ended Reconstruction and imperiled the lives of freedmen in order to keep themselves in power. But perhaps the defining moment of the decade took place when United States held its first exposition in July 1876 in Philadelphia, in honor of the American centennial. At the time, it was the largest exposition ever produced, and presented American democracy as the best form of government in the world, and Americans themselves as the freest people. Americans in Hawaii expressed an antipathy towards monarchies in general, and circulated within the archipelago the same kinds of ideas on display at that year’s fair: that non-whites were incapable of self-rule, and that decent whites were compelled to lead their Brown-skinned brethren into the light of civilization. The sentiment would come to be known as, in the title of an 1899 poem by Rudyard Kipling, as the “white man’s burden,” and it became a common theme at subsequent world’s fairs.

The World at Your Doorstep

Part of the function of any imperial machine is to create a uniform system of laws, customs, and practices that influenced moral and cultural perceptions throughout the empire’s reach. To Victorian Europeans, the Romans were the pinnacle of Western civilization, a belief reinforced throughout the age by periodic discoveries of the ancient Roman archeological sites. The Romantic movement originated at a time when the cultural descendants of the Romans embarked on their own quests for empire, and Roman ideals unified diverse European polities, though how they enacted their imperial schemes varied. This systemization, a uniform approach to the land, labor and wealth required to grow empires, was achieved primarily through bureaucracy and relied upon a firm belief in white supremacy, that was in turn undergirded by what passed for science during this era. Romanticism espoused a belief in feeling and Nature, a shift from the Enlightenment era and its strict adherence to reason and logic. Where the

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303 Thanks to Carol Hendricks from the 2015 CWHA meeting, February 27-March 1, 2015 for her invaluable insight during and after her presentation, “The Resurgence of an Empire: The Excavations at Pompeii and Neoclassicism”
Enlightenment gave Europe Linnaean classification and a firm belief in reason and rationality. Romanticism elevated nature and emotion above logic. These Romantic principles contributed to the second Great Awakening that took place in early nineteenth-century America. It was a movement whose emphasis on morality and the noble savage helped fuel an interest in indigenous populations, and the concomitant condescension towards them, condescension coupled with a grudging admiration.

Culturally, the Romantic movement focused on Roman aesthetics in dress, architecture and art that in many ways fed off of the latest archaeological finds in Italy and elsewhere in what had been the Roman Empire. In the literary world, Romanticism and its Gothic descendant gave way to naturalism in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The naturalism movement was marked by its devotion to realism, a seeming shift back to toward the Enlightenment, but punctuated by a more cynical attitude towards the lower, more “degenerate” classes. Yet, I would argue that naturalism always carried a strong component of Romanticism, especially since the modern world was periodically reintroduced to the Roman one every twenty years or so as excavations uncovered more of the forgotten relics of the era. Amateur naturalists collected both local and rare specimens from the natural world, and such activities were one of the main leisure pursuits of the nineteenth century for the bourgeois classes; the century saw more members of the middle class emulate the upper classes even if they could not join them, so collecting became part of the general habits of pretty much everyone in Europe’s and the U.S.’s middling classes. As emotional and impetuous Georgians became principled and restrained Victorians, the interest in the natural world never waned. Packaged within the discipline was the principle of self-improvement through self-education, that through careful observation one could find out all they need to know about life and the universe, and everything one needed to understand about the wilder, more primitive versions of “the self” found roaming the Pacific Islands.

Travel narratives acted as information, amusement and propaganda for those who could not venture into the Pacific or even to the pastoral areas near to one’s home, and “armchair” travel narratives became one of the most successful literary genres. Official narratives such as those of James Cook,
Joseph Banks, James Dana and Charles Wilkes joined published diaries and accounts from professional tourists such as Isabella Bird, and men who had gone “native,” such as Robert Louis Stevenson in Samoa and Paul Gauguin in Tahiti and the Marquesas. For years after the exhibitions of materials from Cook’s expeditions and the U.S. Exploratory Expedition of 1838-42 drew crowds of people wherever they were displayed for years, and Islander material culture influenced Euro-American decorative arts. Hawaiian feather capes sparked a fashion trend in England, where imitation *ahu‘ula* were constructed from turkey and pheasant feathers.\(^{304}\) In New England, pineapple shapes carved on door-knockers and finials and woven into flags evoked a sense of the Hawaiian tropics, hospitality, and the path to Chinese riches. Salem especially flaunted its maritime connection to Hawaii in this way, as seen in decorative details in the architecture from the early nineteenth century, though pineapples did not become a cash crop on the islands until the end of the century.\(^{305}\)

These displays of “savage” nature, along with ostrich feathers and turbaned headwear, and architectural nods to Roman history served to connect the timeless exotic with the ancient European culture. The universal classificatory system with which armchair travel enthusiasts had familiarized themselves materialized in the metropolitan world in cultural expositions such as the Crystal Palace, erected in Britain from 1850-51. From then on, European polities began competing with each other to see who could promote their own “advanced” society to greatest advantage. The expositions also served as a political tool to keep working class whites pacified. The exhibition of cultures in a narrative that elevated Western and American civilization allowed poor whites to share in the glory of empire and “whiteness” even though their whiteness provided no personal benefit to the quality of their lives. These European competed with each other over consumables—land and resources—but also collectively engaged in supporting and promulgating the culture and politics of whiteness, expressing fundamentally similar

\(^{304}\) Rose, *Hawaii, Royal Isles*, 123.

\(^{305}\) Gary Okihiro, *Pineapple Culture*, 92.
beliefs and attitudes about non-whites, primitivism, capitalism, Christianity and the tropics. These attitudes and values morphed into a nascent white supremacy.

By the time the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition had been organized and built in 1876, show creators had developed a consistent pattern of presentation, based on two decades of expositions in Europe and the United States. At the time, the United States government was in the process of democratizing education by establishing free libraries, public access to basic schooling, and exposure to the arts and sciences for the poorer classes. The aim was both philanthropic and nationalist—in order to make good Americans, everyone, but especially young people, was encouraged to subscribe to the same general principles of meritocratic progress and democratic self-rule, but also to know their place. The alleged science of race formed an outsized portion of public education at the time, both in classrooms and in the developing “American public sphere.”

The main buildings of the Centennial Exhibition were designed as great Gothic structures—a combination of Victorian practicality and Romantic sensitivity, and a sort of Classical *nouveaux* meant to evoke notions of sublime nature. The buildings were also meant to awe and inspire. The Main building was nearly 2,000 feet long and was, at the time, the largest building in the world. It was soon dwarfed by buildings in other expositions, but the layout for all future installations—the placement of the buildings, the grounds, the location of stalls and exhibits—all hearkened back aesthetically to the Philadelphia Centennial. The exhibits of “white” races appeared at the center of the main structure or campus, with “lesser” races radiating out from that core. The French, British and American displays gave way to those of developing or recovering nations such as Spain and Germany, to “yellow” nations like the Chinese, and “brown” nations like Japan.

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Representatives from Asia and the Middle East were hounded through the streets by rough and curious onlookers desperate to get a look at them, as if they were exhibits at a zoo.\(^{308}\) Since traveling zoos and menageries were the closest prior experiences most Americans had had with such spectacles, it is no wonder they proceeded to associate the novelty of a “real” African with the novelty of, for example, a “real” elephant. A popular exhibit at the Philadelphia exposition, the Old Plantation, used Black actors to reenact scenes from the antebellum South. It may have been designed as a commentary on the new American freedom, though the placement and content gave the lie to that sentiment. The plantation scene drew upon skits from blackface minstrelsy, the most popular form of entertainment at the time, to stage its venue and performers. The installation appeared at every exposition in the United States until well into the twentieth century; promoters sold new products there when the stage was not in use. Nancy Green, a free woman of color, was hired to play a “mammy” character, Aunt Jemima, at the Columbian Exposition to sell pancake mix to busy housewives, the first of several simulated Black “kitchen helpers” (read: slaves), used to advertise to upwardly mobile but frugal whites.\(^{309}\) Because they had their own public life outside of the world of the Exposition (see the next chapter), the southern plantation scenes were quite popular at this and other fairs. They formed a part of the “authentic” native vogue that included the performance of “professional savages” drawn from living “collections” of Native Americans, Africans, Australian Aborigines, and eventually Pacific Islanders.\(^{310}\)

According to Anne Maxwell, fair planners saw a steady increase in participation as the century wore on. Once a new exposition was announced, often at the preceding exhibition, the public eagerly anticipated the event and then flocked to see it. Similar to the display of artifacts from the US Ex. Ex., which were also exhibited for long periods to maximize attendance, these expositions were open for

\(^{308}\) Ibid.  


\(^{310}\) The term is used by Roslyn Poignant in her book *Professional Savages: Captive Lives and Western Spectacle* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2004). She traces the lives and experiences of a troupe of Australian Aborigines kidnapped in the 1880s and displayed on stage and in photographs around the world until most of them succumbed to respiratory infections and died.
months. This made repeat visits possible, and considering the size, scope, and expense of the venues, necessary. Improvements to rail and steamer travel within the continental U.S., between Great Britain and Europe, and even between continents made travel to the fairs faster and more comfortable. Visitors could enjoy new foods, try out new inventions, and see new fashions. Telephones, root beer, and suitcases debuted in Philadelphia. Rudolph Diesel showed off his new engine at the World’s Fair in Paris in 1900. A clever food vendor at the Louisiana Purchase exposition (1904) invented waffle cones on the spot. Technological advancements such as the various steam engines first displayed at the Crystal Palace in 1851, and the Corliss engine, shown in Philadelphia in 1876—were celebrated as evidence of the West’s superiority. Exposition designers linked all of it to capitalist consumption, nationalism, and the inevitable progress of the white phenotype. The stereotypes of non-whites were a large and significant part of these promotions. “Aunt Jemima” did not just sell pancakes, she sold the nostalgia of the down-home, folksy, slow country life as a balm for the speed and rapid industrialization of the “new” post-Civil War America. Key elements to all exhibits were local industry and familiar aesthetics, if only to give the alien Other more mystique.

In the United States at the time, agriculture played a prominent part in public discourse, especially as more settler colonials moved into western plains territories. The point of the fairs was to promote America to itself, especially as it expanded beyond the confines of its original ideological and physical limits. The fairs had free days and special days set aside for students, women, and people of color. Though the government and the fair presenters insisted on drawing lines between “clean” whites and “dirty” Blacks, they still wanted everyone to come to the fairs and internalize that very message. African-Americans and other non-white races had very little input in how they were presented, which explains why, decades after abolition, Black people at the world’s fairs were still being depicted as slaves—and only as slaves. Freed slaves formed part of the anthropological studies of the “native” that characterized the latter half of the nineteenth century. The subject was as much of interest to fair
planners, many of them former Civil War soldiers, ethnologists from the Smithsonian, and businessmen hoping to encourage reinvestment in the agricultural South.

Getting Black people to perform at such venues must have been crucial. Organizers discouraged use of the blackface “mask,” though they often included some of the “numbers” used in minstrel shows to satisfy white audiences accustomed to seeing such performances. But at the exposition, promoters wanted the Blacks to seem as if “‘[they] were brought direct from the fields and plantations of the South and put before the northern people.’” 311 Note, these plantation displays were not featured at southern expositions until the end of the century. The official governments of the Jim Crow South balked at the idea of paying to see caricatures of themselves or their habitual victims. Plantation exhibits and shows existed solely to gratify Northerners’ interest in the “progress” of blacks from slavery to liberation, with no real connection made between comedic staged performances and the reality of their continued suffering.312 To white Americans, Blacks were the opposite of the vanishing Indian; they would never disappear, so there need be no concern for their survival. To many people, the only danger associated with Blacks was the threat they posed to the security and comfort of whites.

Hawaii was not represented on the fairgrounds until the Columbian Exposition in 1893, the year it was declared an independent republic. The Hawaiians were placed furthest away from the central buildings, along with all other representations of “savage” or “semi-civilized” nations, and like curiosities. Items from British colonies in Australia and New Zealand may have made an appearance in Philadelphia, but they were grouped with the British exhibit. Instead of presenting the range and racial diversity of the U.S. at the central exhibit, show planners put Brown and Black bodies on display as far from the main buildings as possible. Those exhibits on the Midway, as the area furthest from the educational edifices at the center of the fairs came to be called, placed more emphasis on entertainment and spectacle than knowledge. They were sites where whites could act out fantasies of metaphorical and


312 Ibid.
sometimes literal conquest and possession. Many Black and Brown women were prostituted out after their stage performances, sold for a few cents to white men lusting for a “taste” the exotic. The fair promoters of the Philadelphia Centennial did not incorporate live performances from Native Americans, too afraid to reference the recent defeat of an American cavalry unit by the Lakota Nation, a battle commonly known as Little Big Horn. But after 1890, when the Federal government had put down the last major organized Indian resistance, Native American “Wild West”-style shows drew large audiences, eager to remotely experience the excitement of battle from the safety of the bleachers.313

Millions of people attended the international expositions, prompting state and local official in the United States to create small-scale lucrative regional fairs. The far-flung British colonies also arranged their own local expositions in New Zealand, Australia and India, though colonists there still sent materials to the British and European expositions. This is not to say that all communities participated willingly, or in ways the fair-makers expected. Frederick Douglass, by that time the Ambassador to Haiti, was refused admittance to the stage of dignitaries because he was Black, and denied the opportunity to address the crowd. Black women helped raise money for the beleaguered Women’s Building on the promise of equal participation in the planning and execution of the exhibit.314 They were ultimately denied space, voice or mention at the exposition despite their assistance. In response to these injustices—and their perpetuation in the planning of the Columbian Exposition of 1893—education and justice reformer Ida B. Wells called for a boycott of the Columbian Exposition that was for the most part successful. Douglass went himself and delivered a fiery speech at the Columbian about the legacy of slavery and its damage to African-Americans and the continued problems they faced in a hostile nation. On the steps of the Haitian building, he famously thundered,

313 1890 is the date often given for the conclusion of the long-ranging wars with the Plains and Southwest Indians, although Geronimo, an Apache resistance fighter, was active until the turn of the twentieth century. Skirmishes with his band of Apache were localized, however, and he was eventually captured and removed from New Mexico, ending the last Indigenous resistance to continental expansion.

314 Rydell, All the World’s a Fair, chapter 1. The planning committee agreed to requisition space for a building on site, but insisted women pay for it themselves. Since African-Americans were denied space altogether, with the excuse that it looked segregationist, Black women had to present in the Women’s Pavilion, or not at all.
Douglass’s speech impugned all of white society. There had been no restitution, he argued, no real liberation for the vast majority of African-Americans, yet they were chastised explicitly and implicitly for their inability to thrive. Sadly, entertainment, one of the few paths out of poverty for Black Americans at the time, served mainly to reinforce the negative stereotypes circulated by the growing white supremacist establishment. The primary message sent by the Smithsonian ethnologists and the private businessmen and the newspaper moguls was that “the international body politic” need “racial purification” to create the utopian ideal imbricated into every structure in the White City.316

Other non-white ethnic groups faired a little better in the public imagination. Japan presented an exhibit in Vienna in 1873, and at the American Centennial and Columbian expositions. The Japanese were widely seen as the primary engine for racial uplift in Asia, and they accordingly presented themselves as part of the civilized races in the world.317 Japan’s industrialization period was quick, sharp, and efficient, though white nations were shocked and discomfited by the very “progress” they previously championed when Japan successfully challenged Russia for imperial control over the Pacific Rim nation of Korea in 1905. A group of Samoans, appropriately romanticized for white audiences by the works of Robert Louis Stevenson, arrived in Chicago at the same time as the Hawaiians, and like them, struggled

315 Ida B. Wells-Barnett, “The Reason why the Colored American is Not in the World’s Columbian Exposition: The Afro-American’s Contribution to Columbian Literature,” (1893). The Indianapolis Freeman, recorded Douglass’s speech on September 2, 1893. The most widely circulated Black newspaper of the day, the Freeman urged Blacks to boycott the Exposition, and were the chief source of the boycott’s success. Nevertheless, they sent reporters to cover the (failure) of “Jubilee Day,” as fair promoters called the segregated admission day. The ideological distance between the two fairs could not be summed up better than this comparison, that at the Centennial fair organizers feared segregation and its denotation of anti-Black racism, and at the White City, many of the same planners insisted upon it. Wells and Douglass circulated this pamphlet among the exposition’s pavilions in an attempt to draw international attention to the continued injustice among African-Americans, with little success.

316 Rydell, All the World’s a Fair, chapter 2.

317 Ibid.
with the show planners’ insistence they appear “authentic” (read: primitive) and their desire to spend their hard-earned cash on the latest fashions.\textsuperscript{318} The Hawaiians found themselves suddenly without country in the nation that had robbed them of their sovereignty. Their official exhibit, a cyclorama of the volcano Kilauea, was appropriated from afar by Lorrin Thurston and the other whites in Hawaii. The round stage featured “pagan” statues of Pele at the entrance, to entice and “warn [fairgoers] of the dangers of a ‘heathen’ revival that the annexationists argued King Kalakaua had begun and Queen Lili‘oukalani continued.”\textsuperscript{319} The Hawaiian hula troupe who formed part of the Midway entertainment extended their trip, performing as part of smaller stage productions in the U.S. and Europe before returning several years later to the Hawaiian Republic.

The Kilauea Cyclorama debuted on the Midway Plaisance, a venue which itself debuted at the Columbian Exposition. The origins of the Midway lay in the carnival shows and traveling menageries that lower class fair-goers had experienced for decades. Because each fair was a multi-million dollar production, often privately financed, it depended upon successful promotion and souvenir sales to help offset the expenses of mounting the extravaganza. This necessity served to unify the fairs’ presentation, not only because the same men planned multiple exhibitions, and hence the aesthetics consistently adhered to their tastes, but future ad campaigns stuck to the successful formulae of previous expositions.\textsuperscript{320} The layout, architecture, objects on display, people on display as artifacts from places such as the Philippines, Hawaii, and New Zealand, which were “loaned” out to fairs from ethnologists in colonial hubs (India for example) and other metropoles like the United States, Great Britain, France and other imperial powers. In Britain, Foreign Office employees promoted colonial interests to highlight their own successes, as in the Indian and Colonial Exposition (1886). In the U.S., regional expositions redefined regional progress, like when the Cotton States and International exposition (1895) in Atlanta

\textsuperscript{318} Rydell, All the World’s a Fair, chapter 2 and Adria Imada, Aloha America: Hula Circuits through U.S. Empire (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012)

\textsuperscript{319} Skwiot, The Purposes of Purposes, 40.

\textsuperscript{320} Maxwell, Colonial Photography and Exhibitions, 5 and Rydell, All the World’s a Fair, introduction.
offered a “solution” to the Black problem by reimagining American colonialism on the continent with the “colonists,” Negroes, working to enrich the “mother country,” the United States. This particularly ahistorical suggestion was met with equally problematic positive responses that refused to contextualize the speaker’s, Judge Emory Speer, modernized slavery proposal. The expositions fed off of each other and worked in concert to coordinate an international, universal brand of “whiteness,” but the rhetoric circulating through these venues erased the history and consequences of their own problematic ideology. That American patriots in 1895 recommended the old colonial model they had rebelled against a century prior, and then advocated a labor system that had torn the nation apart within living memory 30 years earlier proved that slavery was a box from which Euro-Americans simply could not think their way out. The continued failure of Euro-Americans to enfranchise their non-white labor pools damned all laboring workers to low pay, short lives, and long-lasting interracial animosity.

Expositions were not just about what nations wanted to believe about themselves, but what they wanted others to believe about them, a discourse that changed over time. Expositions built around the wealth and opportunity of colonial holdings in the 1860s gave way to moralizing and self-justification of inhumane practices uncovered in these colonies in the 1880s and 1890s. That criticism gave way eventually to a kind of patriotic noblesse oblige at the fin-de-siecle expositions around 1900. Wistful nostalgia and sentimentality closes out the era before the Great War, when Euro-Americans had had more than fifty years to reflect upon their progress towards “racial uplift,” both of themselves and people of color. By the end of the long nineteenth century, expositions were seemingly planned around the entertainment, most of which was designed to reinforce one of two messages: the benevolence of the British empire, or the spirit of progressive democracy of the Americans. In 1911, Te Arawa iwi from the

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321 Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, chapter 3. Speer was a respected judge in one of the most racist cities in the United States at the time. The only noted African-American speaker at the Cotton States exposition was Booker T. Washington, who opened the festivities with a speech that became famous for its reassuring, conciliatory tone. Now known as the “Atlanta Compromise” speech, Washington told the anxious white planters that Blacks were content to continue working as laborers and domestic staff. Speer delivered the above comments immediately afterwards.

Rotorua region of New Zealand visited Britain’s White City. They were hailed as the first ethnological display of Maori; one of the men, supposedly the Arawa chief responsible for the death of Te Kooti, was displayed at the exposition, and the British and Maori re-enacted the signing of the Waitangi treaty on its 70-year anniversary. This was the first re-enactment of the treaty, and the first acknowledgement of it abroad as a pivotal piece of British imperial legislation, and it took place within the same scope as King George V’s coronation. As Victoria’s grandson, he inherited the fully realized empire she began assembling decades ago through the Waitangi treaty. The heavy doctrinal and legislative concerns that informed the Waitangi moment in 1841 and its derivative issues—not least of which was the rebellion headed by Te Kooti in the 1860s—were reduced to passive spectacle at the end of the imperial era…a consensual empire in memory if not in fact.

In the U.S., the bloody war of conquest fought in the Philippines soured the government on further military attempts at empire for several decades, and the United States did not have the maritime presence to create the global bureaucracy Britain maintained through its Foreign Office. Once the war in the Philippines ended, Americans naturally expressed great curiosity in their new subjects, and Filipino villages worked their way into several turn-of-century venues, beginning with the Louisiana Purchase exposition in 1904. The most lavish representations of the former Spanish colony took place in the Pacific Northwest, in the Portland (1905) and Seattle (1909) expositions. Smithsonian designers made their exhibit the capstone of their ethnologic displays of Indigenous peoples of the Pacific. By the time of the Lewis and Clark Centennial exposition in Portland, the management teams of the fairs kept in contact with other, transferred exhibits and artifacts wholesale from one venue to the other—including the Filipino performers. Americans referred to the Filipinos as “dog eaters” and ridiculed them at local

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323 Scrapbook relating to Maggie Papakura, Thomas Donne Papers, ms 0621, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand

324 Rydell, chapter 6. See also, Papers of the Lewis and Clark Exposition, August-October 1905, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, OR. The same planners failed to secure a planned “South Seas Islands” exhibit to accompany the Filipino performers, evidently due to lack of funds—at least at the Portland exposition. By the early 1900s, Polynesian dancers were in high demand, and may have demanded more money for their presence than the organizers could raise.
performances between expositions. Because the Lewis and Clark exposition received federal funding, the military took an interest in the welfare of their main exhibit, and convinced the managers to take better care of them. Situated in the inner Northwest District, the Portland exposition shed the earlier fairs’ colorful buildings and returned to a stark white theme lit at night by the still-novel electric lights. Fittingly, Italy had one of the largest exhibit spaces, and the white marble edifices there matched the colonnades and sunken gardens near the center of the fairgrounds, designed by the Olmstead family firm, who were responsible for many of the public gardens across the United States as well as the Columbian and the Buffalo Pan-American expositions. The only stain on their design came in the form of a statue of four rough-rider cowboys, guns drawn, mid-stride on horseback. Meant to evoke the spirit of the western frontier, it sits incongruous amid the Romantic splendor of the orderly European garden, though perhaps that is the point. The fair’s planners sent a message about the nation’s progress from the end of the Oregon Trail that defined much of its westward expansion: the old coinciding with the new and looking west towards the ancient Orient and the nation’s future.

The World Abroad

Euro-Americans presented a compelling self-narrative marketed to Blacks, whites, rich, and poor people. Through the expositions’ displays, they developed a deceptive narrative about progress, presenting Great Britain and the U.S. as strong nations best equipped to marshal the labor and technology required to direct humanity to a teleology of enlightened civility. The people responsible for this message understood they were deceiving large sections of the population. After all, the free/cheap labor and abundant fertile land abroad materially damaged the financial prospects of the working classes at home. Imperial expansion actually hurt the people for whom the educational displays and promotional materials were designed. To encourage them to engage with the civilizing mission of benevolent empire,

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325 Bydell mentions them in several chapters, as does Cedric Robinson in his book. They were the children of Frederic Law Olmstead, a famous conservationist and advocate for urban sanitation fostered by open, public green spaces.

governments and business interests presented it in the most entertaining way possible. The vast majority of fair-goers never left the nations of their birth, so their only experience of “the world” lay within the confines of the expositions and the Midway. There they consumed the transits (pre-determined units of discourse) of Islandness, of Blackness, and indigeneity in ways that made them feel complicit in the scheme of racial uplift. Though what was really being sold to white fair-goers lacked the mobility and pliancy of a transit. What attendees purchased—as admission tickets, souvenirs, even novelty foods—was the commodity of white supremacy. Color does not exist in transits; it is too immutable, too rigidly defined. Ever-changing and evolving racial categories define transits, and while certain European ethnic groups moved in and out of phenotypical color designations, the fact of whiteness, or blackness, or brownness, remained fixed. Whites were encouraged to immerse themselves in the exoticism on display, to enjoy but not emulate it or risk losing their whiteness. The transition from the sanitized world of the fair to the gritty sub-altern of the Midway and back again was meant to instill white pride despite lack of mobility for themselves. Such movement also fostered a sense of relief in stationary whites’ ability to participate in the modernization of the world without being sullied by it.

This ploy generally worked, except for people such as Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), who were enticed away into the exotic entirely. Likely many men who came to Oceania to re-invent themselves, Gauguin had all the makings of a failure. Born of no special parentage, schooled in no prestigious way, he joined the merchant marines for a few years until a death in the family brought him back to France at the age of nineteen. He met with some success for over a decade at a bank job, until a stock market collapse cost him most of his earnings. It was then, in middle age, and with a wife and several children to support, that Gauguin decided to pursue his painting career. He sold some pieces and exhibited more, played with several styles and used his connections to scrape together a life in the cheaper cities of France. His wife eventually left him and returned to Denmark to care for their many children in the mid-1880s. It was the decisive act, though not of his making, that he needed to allow him to follow his ambition to seek out a more “savage” life. Gauguin did most things in fits and starts, usually at someone else’s prompting, and his final push into the Pacific came also at someone else’s instigation. After dabbling in exotic subjects in paintings of a few Atlantic French colonies, his paintings caught the eye of art dealer Theo Van Gogh, who suggested that Gauguin stay with his brother Vincent in Arles.
Unfortunately, Vincent’s mental health was in disarray by that point, and as Gauguin recounted years later, hours after a particular dispute, he returned back to their little flat to find that his friend had mutilated himself by cutting off his ear.\(^{327}\) It was this incident that compelled him to leave France again, this time for the Pacific.

The ear incident took place in late 1888, but Gauguin did not arrive in Papeete until the spring of 1891. This first trip to Tahiti came to an end in 1893, and produced some of Gauguin’s most memorable work. But if, as he had hoped, that his sojourn to the Pacific would lead to fame and fortune, he was mistaken.\(^{328}\) It did precipitate the final break with his wife, Mette, and he returned to Tahiti to live there permanently. Gauguin initially experimented with total freedom, but could not afford it; he eventually took a job with the French colonial government in Papeete. Before coming to Tahiti, Gauguin formed his opinions of the South Pacific based on the travel narratives and fictionalized adventure tales of sailors such as those of the *Bounty* mutineers, Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Herman Melville’s works, *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847), and those of French author Julien Viand.\(^{329}\) Once he took up residence, his letters indicate his disappointment at the reality of a Europeanized and Christianized colony. Gauguin settled into his work, and took up residence with several Tahitian women in common-law marriages, but he continued to fantasize about the exotic life he felt he was meant to have in Tahiti.\(^{330}\) His journals read like fiction; his mind simply could not shed the image of himself as a French Robinson Crusoe, with an easel. Not surprisingly, Gauguin grew disenchanted with his job, and eventually left the tame Friendly Isles for the wilder Marquesas, where the stain of European culture had not yet reached, or so he thought. Perhaps he continued to be inspired by Melville’s dramatic account of rebellious


\(^{329}\) *Ibid.*, 78.

\(^{330}\) Paul Gauguin, *Noa Noa: The Tahitian Journal* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1985). He discards his first *vahine*, Titi, because she is biracial. He states that her “white” blood has deprived her of her “distinctive racial ‘differences’” (8). By page 15, he is dressing and eating “like the natives.” He goes on to relate interactions with “the natives” who come to love him as their own, cry when he departs, and rail like children when frustrated.
cannibals, *Typee*, though it had been written decades earlier. In fact, the Marquesans suffered more from European visitation than most other Islander populations, though the chain was not part of the plantation system, and there were fewer whites who lived there. European diseases decimated the Enata, and by the time Gauguin arrived most of them had died or migrated. If Gauguin wanted a savage landscape peopled with nubile Islander women, he would not find it in the *fin-de-siecle* Pacific.

It is not immediately clear what Gauguin hoped to find in the Pacific, other than “himself.” He complained constantly about government corruption and bureaucracy, but never strayed beyond the confines of the colonial authority. He hoped to witness Polynesian savagery and primitivity, yet he was surely aware he would not have survived in such circumstances. He professed to have great respect for Pacific Islanders and their way of life, yet his perception of their culture was rooted solely in fantasy. As an artist, he produced certain images of the Pacific Islanders, particularly women, that manipulated and reinforced Western beliefs about them. He even wrote himself into the narrative history of Tahiti as an Islander, sculpting a self-portrait with his features indigenized in order to represent himself as one of them. He was a man who suffered from identity issues his whole life, the product of a French father and creole Peruvian mother. Perhaps the allure the Pacific held for him was in some way a coming to terms with his own multi-ethnicity in a world that insisted on a hierarchy that placed “whites” on top and “mixed races” somewhere near the bottom, and thus forced him to choose one or the other. Gauguin’s perceptions and many of his actions were derivative of the privilege his perceived whiteness allowed him, privilege that enabled him to choose a manufactured Brownness for himself.

Between Gauguin’s quest for his savage life and the average working-class white man who would never leave his home province or state, the technology and bureaucracy of the nineteenth century created a class of tourists. They can be divided into: the bourgeois class bent on their grand tours across several continents; the health-conscious convalescent or adventurist; and for the first time, the middle-class

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331 *Ibid*, 139. See also Herman Melville, *Typee, or a Peep at Polynesian Life* (Philadelphia: David McKay Company [Reprint], 1846). Not many people believed Melville’s story at the time the book was published, accusing him of exaggerating the perils he faced after his ship wrecked there in the 1840s. One of his crewmates wrote a news editorial verifying his Marquesan adventure, and *Typee*, unfortunately, became the lens through which many Westerners saw the Enata.

traveler. Even Britain, with its more rigid class system, loosened enough to allow a greater variety of travelers abroad. First-generation *nouveau riche* from America embarked on luxury expeditions to improve their minds and emulate their betters, appropriating the concept of the grand tour in order to define for themselves the difference between civility and the savagery. The first wave of neophyte globe-trotters went primarily to England, seeking cultural and racial solidarity, but as the century progressed, they turned west to the developing Pacific excursion routes. Experienced travelers, unwilling to risk their health and safety abroad, also ventured into the tropics for the first time in the latter part of the century. Between 1850 and 1900, the British “solved” both concerns by staffing a network of colonial offices, and widely distributing quinine, produced from the bark of the South American cinchona tree to combat malaria, as a staple export to its outposts in India and Africa, and elsewhere in the tropics. The constant presence of a Western power, whether it was employees of the British or French foreign offices, made travelers feel safer and provided (or gave the impression of providing) a moderating police presence, and emergency medical help.

Travel costs plummeted as steam technology improved and bigger ships could accommodate more leisure excursions for the less wealthy but upwardly mobile by offering steerage rates and package deals on travel. Passenger accommodations on government-funded mail packets made it possible for working classes, especially emigrants, to go abroad. The political goal of many elites and governmental agencies was relocation: to transfer poor whites to Hawaii and New Zealand to help repopulate the Islands. There was a practical business component to this push as well. Lower-class whites would work the shops and serve as servants to the wealthier white residents and tourists. In a world where Black servitude was no longer acceptable and Brown people were “doomed to extinction” according to the ethnologists, getting working class whites to emigrate from Europe and America was crucial to preserve the dignity of the leisure class and the image of white superiority, as well as white class distinctions and rigidity. By the last two decades of the century, it was well established in the collective imagination of the metropole that more British and American people would go abroad and settle in the Pacific in large numbers. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company ran a special “emigrant” fare of $130 USD from New

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York to Auckland or Sydney. The ships, “carrying the United States and British mails,” left San Francisco several times a week, and stopped at Honolulu, Auckland, Wellington, Port Chalmers, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Brockhampton, Adelaide and Hobart town. The fare from San Francisco to Hawaii was only $20 USD, so a person could take a train from New York or somewhere in middle America to California (or British Columbia) and hop a steamer to the Pacific Islands. The company offered proportional rates for teens, children and servants. Also for a reduced rate, passengers could purchase an extended-stay round trip ticket, which allowed them to remain in the Islands for up to a year.

The flexibility of the stay reinforced the notion that a white person from the mainland could easily become kama‘aina in Hawaii, Pakeha in New Zealand, or papalagi in Samoa or Tonga.

Immediately after the coup, Lorrin Thurston formed the Hawaiian Bureau of Information (HBI) to encourage tourism and to secretly plot against the deposed monarchy, so as to make restoration as undesirable as possible to the wavering United States government. If Americans emigrated to Hawaii in volume, then it was possible to eventually be eligible for annexation. The earliest primers distributed by the Bureau, written to attract tourists and potential residents, date back to 1891. They include a brief history of the Kamehameha dynasty only, with no mention of Kalakaua or his sister, who ascended to the throne the year the pamphlet was published, and had not yet been deposed. The pamphlet describes Hawaiians as a “guileless, happy, laughter-loving, flower-loving, song-loving, willing-to-be-taught race” and the Islands as “simply ‘Fairyland’—a land of perfect rest and repose.” The writer, a former missionary named Anne Prescott, makes repeated references to “King Sugar” and the music-loving “natives…[who] lack the power of reasoning and concentration” in terms meant to allude to the old plantation scenes of the American South—a bucolic ideal reimagined for American delectation at every public exposition and private theatre in the United States.

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334 Pacific Mail Steamship Co, c. 1878 brochure, Eph-A SHIP, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand. The Library lists the date for this item as c. 1890, but the brochure itself advertises rates for the 1878-9 season.

335 Ibid. This particular company also had lines running from San Francisco to Japan and China, with first-class only rates to Singapore, Calcutta, and Penang. They had “local” service along the Pacific Coast from British Columbia to San Francisco, and had lines to Mexico and central America as well.

336 Anne M Prescott, Hawaii (1891), 6-7

337 Ibid., 17, 30.
After the takeover in 1898, the U.S. Department of Foreign Affairs released its own handbook, printed before the writers could be sure what form of government Congress would prescribe for the archipelago. The Foreign Affairs department specified “desirable settlers” as its core audience, and went on to list the steamship routes between Hawaii, the U.S. and “the Colonies,” meaning Australia and New Zealand. The handbook also drew attention to the ease of travel within the archipelago. Twenty-five “coasting steamers” traveled weekly between the larger islands. The government publication shies away from mentioning any “native” activities, though the image on the back cover is that of a female hula dancer; instead, it promoted Western sports of baseball, rugby, and cricket. In *Hawaii: Its People, Climate and Resources* (1903), potential visitors got advice on hotels, and entertainment, but also banking and other serious concerns. The images accompanying the text depict a *luau* attended by fully clothed, proper Hawaiian women, and scenic locations located primarily on O‘ahu. A later edition of the book added section titles like “Hawaii—an Investment” and “Products & Markets” with statistical information for each. As late as 1920, these promotional materials had separate sections about the “Hawaiian Race.” They were clearly advertising to white people in order to increase the white presence within the islands; as such, later editions include a helpful glossary of terms like “*luau*” and “surf-riding.”

The people coming to Hawaii with some capital and a desire to get rich quick might buy a plantation and import contract labor from the Philippines or China to work the land for them. Demand was so high that the government issued visas to migrant workers that remained valid for up to four years. The importation of foreign labor hurt indigenous Hawaiians because they found it difficult to get work; it also exposed them to diseases from Asia to which they had no immunity. There were several outbreaks, including the Bubonic Plague, that further decimated the Hawaiian population. The provisional government, which needed healthy Hawaiians to promote its tourist industry, was nevertheless staffed by

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338 *The Hawaiian Islands: A Handbook of Information Issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs* (Honolulu, 1899)


341 Ibid.

plantedation owners, and did little to curb the health or the sanitation problems caused by the increased populations of the working poor. Given the restraints imposed by anti-slavery laws and anti-Black sentiment, the only other option for paid daily labor was poor white Americans, Canadians, and Englishmen, but of course, they were too poor to emigrate. As inexpensive as the steamship tickets were, only the middle or lower-middle classes could afford them. Those groups were all upwardly mobile, and did not want to emigrate simply to become servants; they were the people for whom population statistics were printed in every brochure—people who viewed the declining “native” population with a hopeful pragmatism reinforced by the exposition propaganda. The provisional government finally renounced the dream of transforming Hawaii, now a U.S. territory, into a white republic, and instead contented itself with creating a highly stratified society with indigenous Hawaiians “in their place” as entertainers and markers of “authentic” tropicality. Nevertheless, Hawaii’s tourism and immigration promoters refused to let visitors stray too far into the savage imaginary that defined Hawaii at the beginning of the century; the material opted to reinvent Hawaiians by insisting (falsely) “it is certain that the Hawaiians never were cannibals.”

The intent behind cheap, extended-stay tickets was primarily to allow curious potential immigrants time to explore and accustom themselves to living and working in the Pacific, while allowing them the possibility to return if their ventures failed. However, these extended stay tickets also accommodated people who needed to convalesce in the tropics. New Zealand’s government-run tourism board, the first of its kind in the world, promoted the bath houses at Rotorua, built on the site’s ancient thermal springs. Rotorua rests on the south shore of Lake Rotorua, near the center of the North Island, surrounded by a series of geysers. Tourists and sick people could bathe in the sulfurous waters and witness one of the world’s wonders without having to risk life and limb like at Yellowstone, which at that

343 Hawaii: Its People, Climate and Resources, 7.

344 The Department of Tourist and Health Resorts was not officially established until 1900, when it was still unique in that it connected the finances of the government as a whole with the fate of the tourist industry. Before then, tourism had proceeded as private, Maori, or collaborative endeavor between the local government, landowners, and the Maori iwi who lived nearby.
time was high up in what was still “Indian country.” The area also boasted a natural geologic formation called the Pink and White Terraces, the most famous landmark in New Zealand. One could argue that the entire tourism industry developed around finding easy access to these particular natural wonders. The only way there was by steamship up the Whanganui River to Lake Taupo, then by coach (before rail service) to the town of Rotorua. From there, guides were required to navigate the small tributaries by canoe to the various geothermal sites. The area belonged to Te Arawa iwi, and since tourists required their assistance to navigate, sleep and eat while there, the nascent tourism industry had to work with the Maori in order to survive. In the early 1880s, the government invested in the latest equipment to build indoor baths so that modest men and women could enjoy the springs in privacy, but also used images of traditional Maori “at home,” cooking and washing with the thermal springs to promote their use. Mt. Tarawera erupted in 1886, burying the Terraces, which actually increased traffic to the region. The government reinvested in the infrastructure at Whakarewarewa, Ohinemutu, and the remaining accessible geysers and hired experts in balneology (spa development) from Switzerland.

The sanitation movement that had gained force in the United States and many European nations in the later half of the nineteenth century was part of the overall program for health reform, racial purity and uplift, and eugenics, that had lethal repercussions for Indigenous peoples in the twentieth century. The Victorian quest for wellness was also tied up in the vogue of “taking the waters” that had its roots in ancient Roman society and culture. Sufferers of arthritis, gout, rheumatism and other vaguely defined muscle and joint ailments as well as the mental condition the Victorians called “neurasthenia” or “nervous debility” were always on the lookout for new therapeutic springs on advice from their doctors, many of whom “prescribed” the Pacific Islands for their pure water and natural geothermal activity. Part of the Victorian medical treatment for asthma and tuberculosis required inhaling large quantities of salty sea air.

345 President Grant designated Yellowstone as a national landmark in 1871, the first such designation in the U.S. The hopes were to turn the area into a therapeutic spa/resort like the ones in Europe which Rotorua was also modeled upon. The legislation to actually protect the park’s resources were bogged down in Congress for many years, and the spa idea was scrapped early on. Yellowstone’s management became a cautionary tale for Rotorua, but its discovery and the interest it generated helped inspire the New Zealand tourist board, according to McClure in the first chapter of her book.


347 Ibid., 20-22.
so the availability of lengthy cruises, such as those offered by the joint-owned American and Australian Line provided its own path to business success despite the existence of speedy trips via steamship. The company offices in London sent maps, brochures and information about their “pictorial route” by request to North America and Australasia for “the Tourist, the Sportsman, the Colonist, the Invalid, and the Investor.”\textsuperscript{348} In New Zealand in the 1890s, Te Arawa guides Maggie Papakura and her sisters gained internationally notoriety through word of mouth for their beauty and skill, and the \textit{iwi} grew wealthy through interactions with tourists and with the government, which paid to lease or buy property around Rotorua to build hotels, spas and other entertainment venues.\textsuperscript{349}

For the more adventurous white emigrants leaving Great Britain, Canada or the U.S. to improve their fortunes in the colonies, the year-long tickets to Australia or New Zealand gave them time to pan or dig for gold in Kimberley or Otago. The people who did not strike gold often stayed and opened up shops selling mining equipment and goods to newcomers. Miners depleted the mines in Otago by 1870 and Kimberley’s veins ran out 1885; eventually, panning for gold became part of the tourist adventure in Otago, and travel agencies adjusted their packages accordingly. Advertising materials in New Zealand included brochures designed to attract anglers and sports-fishermen as well as winter sportsmen, mountaineers and naturalists.\textsuperscript{350} The Hawaiian Bureau of Tourism, formed out of Lorrin Thurston’s HBI, commoditized the informal excursions that mid-century tourists such as Bird and Twain reported on in their books; hotels offered guides and equipment for horseback riding, surfing, and nature hikes to natural wonders like Kilauea and Moana Loa. The quest for geysers, hot springs, and scenic nature were indicative of a revival of the Romantic era’s naturalism, with its focus on feeling and proximity to nature. These excursions also symbolized a small rebellion against the civilizing mission, with its strict insistence on shoes and corsets, manifestations of civility and superiority in wild places. It was not possible to

\textsuperscript{348} Flyer, American and Australian Line, c. 1878, Eph-A SHIP, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.

\textsuperscript{349} McClure, \textit{The Wonder Country}, 31.

adhere so strictly to proper appearances while engaged in such hot and physically arduous activities, so excursion vacations gave tight-laced Victorians and their Edwardian successors room to breathe.

As colonists’ wealth increased, many young people, or their parents, opted to keep them in the Pacific when the time came for their grand tours. In 1883, New Zealand launched its own fleet of pleasure travel steamships, the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand, Ltd. They offered local sight-seeing jaunts around the North, South, and Stewart Islands, and ran steamships up the Whanganui river to the North Island’s picturesque interior as well.\textsuperscript{351} By 1896, the Union Steam Ship Company offered “intercolonial service to Australia, Tasmania, and the South Seas Islands.” By that time, the company floated fifty ships, some based in Australia, and marketed travel among the South Seas to “Tourists, and those in search of health and novelty.”\textsuperscript{352} They traveled to Fiji and back from Melbourne every seven days, and from Sydney to Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga and Auckland every four weeks. Ships sailed directly from Auckland to Suva (Fiji) every four weeks as well. New Zealand’s Royal Mail Service fleet offered passenger services, including meals and entertainment on board.\textsuperscript{353} An 1898 cruise aboard the \textit{RMS Ruahine} featured the “Royal Ruahine Minstrels,” presumably in blackface make-up, performing standard skits and songs whose origins, lampooning African-American slaves, they carefully forgot.\textsuperscript{354}

The concept of the grand tour resonated as much with wealthy Islanders as it did with Euro-Americans; throughout the century, leisure travel was a marker of class and good breeding. In the first half of the century it put Islanders out into the world in traditionally European spaces. Wealthy Islanders used tourism to distinguish themselves in ways white society could understand, though it was more

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{351} Flyer, Union Steam Ship Company, c. 1893, Eph-A SHIP, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.


\textsuperscript{353} Union Steam Ship Company, Eph-A SHIP, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.

\textsuperscript{354} Flyer, Union Steam Ship Company, Eph-A SHIP, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.

\textsuperscript{355} Program, \textit{RMS Ruahine}, 1898, Eph-A SHIP, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand. Audiences might have convinced themselves that blackface minstrelsy was so ubiquitous that it was its own form, divorced from its racist roots. Certainly, early twentieth-century entertainment critics advocated this view. However, in any nation still troubled by its “black” population, minstrelsy served a double purpose, to elevate whites and diminish blacks.
\end{footnotesize}
dangerous for them to travel abroad, due to the disease and possible violence done against them. King Kamehameha II and his wife died on their grand tour in 1820s. Lot, Kamehameha V and his brother Alexander, Kamehameha IV (1834-1863) traveled widely in the 1840s and 1850s, only to be subjected to racist treatment at the hands of white Americans when they were mistaken for Blacks. This left the monarchy somewhat disenchanted with the U.S. and likely negatively affected their opinion of Blacks as well. The princes reportedly preferred British whites to their colonial cousins, and demonstrated their affection for their oldest allies by incorporating the British flag into their own. Hongi Hika traveled from Aotearoa to Britain as well, to gain recognition for his īwi but also to establish his status abroad, to ensure his people’s survival in a rapidly changing world. Princess Ka‘iulani resided with her Scottish father outside of Hawaii at the time of its takeover, which put her in position to move about the world as political advocate for her people. It worked, too; the American Congress did not quickly annex the Hawaiian Islands as the revolutionaries had hoped, which forced them to declare themselves a republic as Texas had done in 1845. Tourism was not a one-sided convention, but wealthy Islanders faced much greater danger than their white counterparts did wherever they went. Not only did increased travel expose them to more diseases, they were more likely to be exploited by unscrupulous whites and literally objectified by white society.

As more working migrants from Asia and the Pacific Rim poured into the Basin at the close of the century, Pacific Islanders sometimes left the region in significant numbers, looking for work. This was not a new phenomenon; The Russian-American Company used Hawaiian workers in Astoria and Alaska to replace their dwindling and abused Aleut population in the 1810s. These early “tourists” were people set in motion as a result of interactions with Euro-Americans, who continually took advantage of their desire to see the world to display them as curiosities or exploit them as cheap labor. Later on, displaced Islanders were used in and out of the region much the way Indian and Chinese laborers were, though in much smaller numbers, as contract labor to fill in the gaps created by the global emancipation of African slaves. Though not legally bound in the same way, they were subjected to the same basic treatment by white landowners, using the same excuse: that hard labor, like cleanliness, would have a

Letter, 12 August 1819; Letter, 6 January 1821, Calendar, Russian-American Company papers, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon.
civilizing effect, providing racial uplift. Traveling Islanders of all classes were never seen only as consumers and tourists, but as cultural oddities abroad. In short, they were always “on” for white spectators in Europe and America, regardless of their reasons for travel, and often expected to perform, regardless of their actual occupation. In its worst iteration, working tourists were abducted by unscrupulous exposition or theater promoters, who forced them to perform abroad with the promise to pay in the form of return fares. This happened to a troupe of Aborigines in the 1880s, and fear of such misusage prompted Thomas Donne, the first Superintendent of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, to advise Maggie Papakura to exercise caution twenty years later when she agreed to take members of the world-famous Te Arawa Maori to Sydney and Britain to perform at expositions there.\textsuperscript{357}

The companies that assembled tourism packages were often connected to or run by the same men and firms who provided the materials and people for the ethnological displays at fairs and expositions.\textsuperscript{358} This increased the profits of the show-runners, and also allowed them to script a very particular narrative about the tropics, especially the Pacific, since they were the sole source of materials never widely seen before. They became directors of tourism boards they formed in New Zealand with the intention of promoting the Maori presence as part of the distinctive New Zealand landscape and therefore as a tourist draw. Planters-turned-promoters asserted their “radical innocence” in the conquest of Hawaii while promoting white resettlement and eventual annexation.\textsuperscript{359} They promulgated the idea in consumer tourism and public exhibitions that the exotic was inherently education, and then profited from it. In the last quarter of nineteenth century, Pacific tourism accelerated, and like the expositions, was a collaborative effort between Anglophone interests. Canadians used British and American ships to travel to the Anglophone Pacific, and British tour packages included rail travel in North America as well as

\textsuperscript{357} Correspondence, Donne to Papakura, 1908, Maggie Papakura scrapbook.

\textsuperscript{358} Maxwell, \textit{Colonial Photography and Exhibitions}, 6. These men often held multiple positions in colonial office and had their own business connections from which to draw as well. Lorrin Thurston helped plan Hawaii’s presentation at the exposition in 1892, but also ran its tourism board. Thomas Donne took a government position in the tourism office, but also helped plan the new museum in New Zealand. Imre Kiralfy planned several exhibitions and spectacle-type productions in the U.S. and Britain, including the Columbian Expo at which the first hulas were performed, and the coronation of George V at which the Maori re-enacted the Waitangi treaty signing.

\textsuperscript{359} Maxwell, 5.
steamship service through both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, depending on which was more convenient.\footnote{Map, Australian and American Line, c. 1890, Eph-A SHIP, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.} After 1870, the British ships tended to travel through the Suez Canal to South Africa and into the Pacific, whereas the American companies embarked from San Francisco, and took a much more direct path into Pacific waters. Most British ships at sea during this time were naval frigates traveling to the Australia or Pacific stations, visible proof that they were willing to reinforce their benevolent empire with force, if necessary.\footnote{Catherine Dengate, \textit{British Naval Vessels in the Pacific Islands, 1800-1900: A Provisional Index the Source Material} (Canberra: Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, unpublished manuscript)} Therefore, the American or joint-owned companies provided the easiest way into the region, carrying more whites to, and circulation them among, the Islands in service of both nations’ civilizing mission.

The process of anti-conquest worked through imagery and exposure, as opposed to brute force, and travel narratives were a key component of that process. Descriptions of “natives” in their “natural habitats” abound in these works, which were usually published well after the era of initial European contact, during a sustained period of colonization. In the Pacific, the earliest iterations were penned by explorers and their teams of naturalists and artists, many of whom embarked in order to expand the body of knowledge that existed in the eighteenth century. Such men sailed with the expectation that they would compose a narrative for general publication upon their return. These works combined ethnology, botany, and zoology, with sensationalized stories of adventures among “native” populations. The fact is, travel narratives are only possible within the machinery of empire, a condition far removed from the wildness of the actual spaces illustrated and described in such texts. The point of the expedition was to find what could be used; the goal of a world tour was to find oneself. Leisure travelers, those not employed by the state, used the same narrative structure to write their books, thus creating a standardized format for the tourist guidebook. During a time when every amateur naturalist believed she could apply the scientific
classificatory model to every environment, travel narratives—proper ones—could only be written by tourists. I define “tourists” in two ways. The traditional tourist—very much a product of the improved transportation technologies of the nineteenth century and the increased safety that “whiteness” held in the age of empire—may spend a significant amount of time in the countries visited, but not enough to become colonists. Their “scientific” observations were not always firsthand, but frequently borrowed from professional sources. Their experiences among Islanders tended towards the personal, and anecdotal, which rendered these publications more accessible by the “armchair” traveler or “stationary” tourists who got their “experience” by reading what others had written and “witnessed” the exotic and the foreign in cheap photographs and engravings in the books they read.

A stationary or cultural tourist did not travel, but absorbed a sense of place and knowledge of the exotic within the confines of his or her immediate location. They sometimes attended world’s fairs or regional exhibitions, events designed with the stationary cultural tourist in mind. These shows and displays put the tropics in reach of the temperate zones, literally fused the global to the local. Thus, Euro-Americans were able to feel and think themselves a part of say, Hawaii, from the comfort of their homes, thus fulfilling their imperialist objectives, such as they were. Expositions were an important part of the machinery of empire, and often impressed more people with the tropics’ place in the world hierarchy than did books written by people who had actually been there. Travel firms used these narratives to promote the Islands and also to build up certain landmarks and activities discussed in the earlier works of people such as Isabella Bird, a professional travel writer and convalescent who travelled in the American Rockies as well as Hawaii. Mark Twain, perhaps the voice of his generation, wrote travel observations that carried considerable weight despite the heavy dose of satire with which they were served. These and other travel writers told the same kinds of stories about the same locations, creating the paradox of navigable, manageable locales that remained somehow still “savage.” Tourists, set on the same paths by earlier travel writers (and illustrators), reinforced the paradox by recounting the similar adventures about the thrills and dangers of travel to the rougher parts of the world. They were, of course, all traveling well-
beaten paths within the Islands, as the brochures for hotels, recreational packages, port cities and public transportation led them to specific, popular hot-spots owned by wealthy Pakeha and haole—the same ones who shaped tourists’ perceptions of “the savage” through ethnological displays created in Euro-American expositions.362

The demands of the white-owned and -run tourist industry sold Islander cultures as part of the allure, and used Islanders to enact their cultural productions for profit. They conformed to uniform ideal of Islandness in the Pacific in order to more fully align themselves with each other’s idyllic representations of Islandness. Brochures and advertisements used similar fonts and graphics, recycled similar photos, and depicted Islanders in similar poses, engaged in similar pursuits (fishing, swimming, eating) with just enough variety (surfing, moko) for the customer to distinguish between tour packages. To remain competitive, they offered the same kinds of rates for the similar services, and encouraged the same kinds of fashionable pursuits and popular entertainment. The speed of travel made Pacific excursions more common but also made them shorter, more compressed, based on the schedule each ship had to keep, and tourists found they had limited time to enjoy the variety of the Islands. More visitors also necessitated a more sophisticated infrastructure, and government and private interests worked together to build better roads and finer accommodations for high-paying customers, which in turn removed the presumed educational benefit tourists supposedly derived from their tours by staying amongst “the locals.” As the tourism bureaus worked to remove the inconvenience and pain from travel, they also removed the ethnological exchanges between cultures meant to provide personal edification on one side and racial uplift on the other.

Mid-century fairs trained late-century travelers to make certain assumptions about Polynesians, so that when they went to the islands where they lived, they expected to see Islanders perform the same kinds of activities “at home” as they had in exhibition, in order to “recognize” them. Like Gauguin, they wanted a Polynesia uncorrupted by “civilization,” filled with dancing, happy natives sitting at luau.

362 For my analysis, I have made extensive use of the ephemera collection, series Eph-A through Eph-D Tourism boxes, arranged by location (e.g. Nelson) and mode of transportation (e.g. RMS packet) at the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington; see also, the Hawaiian Commercial Art collection at the Bishop Museum Library Archives in Honolulu, Hawaii.
dancing haka. The metaphorical distance created within the confines of the exposition was replicated in “real” life, however. From the comfort of the hotel verandah, the tourist could see Islanders on display as clearly as if they had been on stage, but remained simply a witness to an ethnological display. They left the Islands with all the knowledge and preconceptions they arrived with, and only souvenirs to prove they had been anywhere at all. These items—photographs, postcards, sea shells, lava rocks—represent the places visited, but eventually eclipse the event, the tour itself. Instead they connected travelers back to the exposition, presenting sanitized images of Islanders as subjects of the photos and subjects of the observers. The photos emulated earlier naturalists’ drawings to the same effect: they provided an authentic depiction of the specimen in question in his or her natural state. The Islanders presented are “at work” or else viewed from the side, rarely head-on, as if to indicate an ignorance of the camera’s presence, perhaps of the camera’s function. The “Maoriland” postcards, hula souvenir photos and guidebook images of dancers, surfers, fishermen and basket-weavers give the impression that the subjects have been caught in some natural state, gazing at an unseen object or scene in the distance, indifferent to their own objectification and observation.

Conclusion: Commodification of Place

Beginning in the 1830s, paintings emerged from the eastern United States that visually encapsulated the sentiments expressed by the Romantic, Gothic and Naturalist movements that spanned the middle half (1825-1875) of the nineteenth century. The works Thomas Cole, his students and stylistic adherents have since been grouped into an artistic movement called The Hudson River School, distinguished by the luminous quality of many of its works, the magnitude of its landscapes and the insignificance of humanity captured within the grand frame of sublime Nature. The sublime ideal first entered public discourse through the works of eighteenth-century philosophers Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant. Their books influenced movements like Transcendentalism and informed the actions and policies of spiritual leaders among the Puritans in America and their evangelical spawn. Nature itself was
seen as pathway to the Divine, and the Hudson River School artists at their best captured the divine sublime in their landscapes. The School’s students traveled into virgin territories of the American West, incidentally providing free advertisement for westward expansion by linking the imagined Arcadia of their Puritan ancestors to the New New Jerusalem beyond the frontier. Painters took grand tours of Italy and Great Britain, translating those old ruins and orderly fields into grand ruins or majestic vistas; these works were then displayed at world’s fairs and expositions around the world. The movement incorporated artists in both sides of the Atlantic, artists such as Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900) to J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851), and Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902), whose paintings of the Sierra Nevadas and Colorado Rockies have become the best example of the techniques requiring mastery of value, scale and perspective on a massive scale. In many ways the works of the Hudson River School provided the best articulation of their generations’ longing for the primeval forest, Eden, and a return to grace that a trip to the Pacific Islands or the American frontier afforded them.

Titian Ramsey Peale (1799-1895), an illustrator traveling with the U.S. Ex. Ex., painted several landscapes of the volcano Kilauea after his return to Washington DC. Though not a member of the School, his work clearly shows their influence. He was the son of famous artist and scientist Charles Wilson Peale, who did portraits of several American Founding Fathers and founded the Peale American Museum in Philadelphia, and brother to Rembrandt Peale, who painted the famous portrait of George Washington as an old man. Titian and his brothers, all named after Renaissance artists, spent a great deal of time with masters, students and enthusiasts traveling the East Coast and abroad. His paintings, “Kilauea by Day” (1842) and “Kilauea by Night” (1842), captured the steaming fissures that by nighttime have cracked open to show a searing pit lit by its own light. Tiny figures dressed in ancient Hawaiian garb sit in the edge of the volcano during the day, and at night more minuscule figures gesture at the pit as if in preparation for a ritual, perhaps a sacrifice. For those who have never seen such sights, the paintings captured the menace, wonder and awe-inspiring power of primeval Nature, an effect enhanced by Peale’s decision to place “authentic”-looking Hawaiians around Kilauea’s rim. They serve as a tacit reminder
that when missionaries arrived to create a new Eden on the slopes of these massive volcanoes, they found scores of Adams and Eves to transform from benighted savages to industrious Christians.

On the other side of the Polynesian triangle, and at the opposite end of the century, Charles Blomfield (1848-1926) captured one of the most striking and memorable landscapes of New Zealand when he painted a series of the Pink and White Terraces in the 1890s, years after they disappeared beneath a sea of ash and lava. But Blomfield’s landscapes, like those of several amateur New Zealand artists present a different commentary on space, and on place. The terraces were spectacular enough that no inner luminosity is needed but its lack indicates a renunciation of the sublime in favor of the practical. The absence of human figures from many of Blomfield’s renderings ensures that the observer (tourist, naturalist) completely possesses the landscape, and the memory of the place. Blomfield never achieved the widespread notoriety of his New York counterparts. His paintings of the Pink and White Terraces are his most notable pieces, due in large part to that landscape’s destruction around the time he completed his sketches. He worked as a drawing instructor for fashionable young Pakeha, and though technically proficient, his work was deemed uninspiring and old-fashioned during the years he was active, the 1890s until the 1910s.

Most of the landscape paintings of New Zealand that circulated through Europe were completed by amateur artists, many of whom had arrived as missionaries in the 1840s. Landscape artists transformed the New Zealand landscape into a newer Britain, replete with bordered fields, stiles, and hedgerows. These amateur works served as advertising, a way to demonstrate “back home” that the terrain of the Antipodes could be similarly tamed. They appeared late in the century, after the height of the Hudson River School, and within the era of the “disposable” Kodak camera, circa 1888. These small cameras came complete with one hundred exposures and a return envelope, so that the exposed film could

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Cameras made it possible to collect such landscapes and abscond with them in a way not possible with the grand paintings of the American and British masters. Cameras capture what is there, not what we want to be there, so perhaps that explains the lack of luminosity, of grandeur in so many later paintings, after the decline of the Hudson River School: art began to imitate the “fact” of the photo. Mid-century landscapes trained the human eye to focus on a point, the source of the light within the massive landscape. Photos, by necessity, require a focal point to produce a clear image, and so the camerawork replicated how the landscapes were framed and centered. What was missing in photos was the luminous internal light present in so many paintings. Just as photos sought to imitate the paintings by framing features in a certain way, late century landscapes on canvas simply depicted the scenery. By that time, the Pacific had also been reshaped by capitalism and merchant enterprise, the forces that altered the landscape through deforestation and agriculture, over-fISHED rivers and mining, and depopulation. By the time artists such as Gauguin and Titian Ramsay Peale painted the bucolic or sensual Pacific scenes that caught the public imagination, there were no more Arcadian Polynesian forests, no more naked bathers in the river or sacrifices to the volcano.

The missionaries’ New Jerusalem, intended to harbor and transform the Pacific Islanders through hard work, merely caught them up in a cruel cycle of plantation labor to relieve the heavy debts of the mission. Religion and commerce collided in the production of sugar, cotton, and pineapples in mission school plots managed by Congregationalists designed to indoctrinate and educate young Islanders by forcing them to work. Mormons purchased a refuge in central O‘ahu and turned it into a communal farm designed to provide self-sufficiency for Hawaiian and Samoan neophytes…after they sold enough cotton to pay off the debts missionaries incurred relocating to Hawaii. In the end, the Mormons and

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365 Maxwell, Colonial Photography and Exhibitions, 9-10.
366 Okihiro, Pineapple Culture, 102-3.
Congregationalists were no different than the secular interests taking over the Islands, which were effectively up for sale from the last quarter of the nineteenth century onward. White immigrants also coveted virgin landscapes in which to roam, but found they also needed Islanders to labor for them in order to elevate them to the level of landed gentry. They needed Islanders to sell the idea of “virgin landscapes” abroad to those not as artistically informed, to bring more immigrants and visitors to the primeval forest. Mobile Islanders became the promotional material for the static Islands themselves. They were used to advertise the necessity of the missionaries’ civilizing mission and tourism at different ends of the same century. The commodification and consumption of the Pacific is imbricated within the exploitation and commodification of Islanders themselves.

Like Gauguin, Americans found the idea of unsullied wilderness appealing, though few wanted to engage in the deadly work of taming the frontier or living in the woods. Through “the frontier” as an idea, they felt connected to their Puritan forefathers, whom they thought of as men and women responsible for forging a nation out of the raw wilderness—which of course, was not true. Pilgrims and Puritans, Cavaliers and Carterets, yeomen and traders built their original settlements on the bones of Native American communities, many of which had been destroyed by diseased or unscrupulous whites. The decimation of Native Americans left empty towns and tilled fields for British colonists to occupy, just as the tilled and orderly fields of Islanders drew whites who bought existing farms rather than transform their own. Since Islanders probably expanded their agriculture into the spaces deforested by the sandalwood trade in the 1820s and 1830s, there were even more ready plots to take or entice away from them and turn into the large-scale plantations that had already wrecked much of the American South and Caribbean Indigenous and colonial agricultures. During the nineteenth century, Pacific Islands were being literally consumed as they were figuratively possessed by the West.

That process of consumption was laid bare by the commercial tourist industry formed in the second half of the century. Once Euro-American powers secured their political and, in some cases, their military bases in strategic parts of the Pacific, the entire region was laid bare for Euro-American
delectation. Its inhabitants were redistributed throughout the region for the economic gain of the few wealthy and white landed interests, and many were circulated abroad as living curiosities to create uniformity of purpose amongst the squabbling, competing nations united in their desire to dismantle Oceanian sovereignty. Oddly, the presence of Islanders proved essential to the marketing campaign for white re-settlement in the Pacific. This was due to the success of the exposition narrative that pushed the civilizing mission as the duty of all able-bodied whites abroad. Travelers could not act out “whiteness” in the absence of color. The presence of Islanders and the narrative of racial uplift gave purpose to sentimental white tourists who might otherwise have felt guilty taking so much from people who had so little left. Despite the best wishes of men such as Thomas Donne, who wanted to keep New Zealand “authentic,” or the feverish desire of men such as Gauguin, always chasing an imaginary ideal, it was the likes of Lorrin Thurston whose vision finally shaped the region. He failed to create his all-white republic, but his tourism/settlement model did tip the balance of demographics and sovereignty against many Islander communities, and cities such as Honolulu, Auckland and Suva became indistinguishable from San Francisco or Brighton, palm trees excepted.
Chapter Four - Commodified

Commodification of Race

World’s fairs served as the backdrop for an orderly, Classical world, neatly catalogued and arranged by description, designation, and purpose in order to train visitors in how to see the world. The patrician splendor of the White City, or the Rainbow City, or the City of Light always gave way to the more vernacular instruction of the Midway. The setup and layout of the Midway areas drew upon the long European tradition of the carnival and the freak show. Carnivals have an impromptu feel, they appear at the site of any prolonged novelty, wherever vendors and entrepreneurs think they can make some cash. Freak shows require more planning because trickery is often involved, not to mention the collection of human and animal “oddities” to justify the exhibition’s name. In the overtly racialized and carefully catalogued atmosphere of the nineteenth century, freak shows held a special appeal, one that master showmen like P.T. Barnum and Imre Kiralfy helped shape according to the Darwinian theories in circulation at the time. Kiralfy designed the Midway Plaisance and secured exhibitions for the Columbian Exposition in Chicago and Empire of India Exhibition (1895) outside London, the latter of which was so successful it became an annual event. He and his brother had already made a name for their firm through their lavish burlesque and opera productions, and Kiralfy’s style and penchant for reenactment made him the preferred designer of the increasingly nostalgic British expositions. Barnum collaborated with Kiralfy in Chicago, and though his shows were aimed at a decidedly more low-brow set, the combination of carnival, burlesque, and freak show proved to be a lucrative one, and Barnum’s productions became more spectacular and his ad campaigns more polished as time passed.

The other template late-century exhibition designers drew from was the popular blackface minstrel shows then circulating through Europe and the U.S. Minstrel shows pre-date Barnum’s adaptation of the freak show, but they both drew from the same societal unease about race in America, and both focused on the exhibition of bodies and racial “types” to capitalize on those social insecurities. Minstrelsly added a cheapened version of formal, staged theatrical production to the plebeian street show,

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368 Maxwell, Colonial Photography and Exhibitions, 27-32.

369 Ibid., 81-2.
elevating it to the level of a natural performance by simulating an imagined verisimilitude. As in the colonies, white supremacy in the metropole developed two faces, both on display at the expositions: the benevolent, cridite expression of noblesse oblige expressed by the sanitized displays in cathedral-like settings of the fair mirrored the formal, bureaucracy of the Foreign offices; the dominating instinct called up by the Midway venues that managed to be both predatory and voyeuristic and at the same time emulated the attitudes of the colonial landed “gentry.” The validation whites received at the fairs justified the explicit racism they often displayed on the Midway.

White supremacy on display at the expositions was not founded on the principle of hard work, but of deserved ease and luxury. In a society where Blacks labored specifically to produce wealth for whites, it is no surprise that whites came to believe that they existed to reap the benefits of that wealth, primarily by accepting the servitude of people of color. Long after the idea of forced labor became morally reprehensible in some circles, the appeal of Black servitude remained intact. Many whites in the U.S. could not afford to keep a paid house servant, so food manufacturers began sell food products and domestic tools shaped like Black bodies in order appeal to that sense of deserved luxury at the expense of Black labor. The tourism industry grew out of the civilizing mission, and similarly relied upon the promise of personal edification and comfort. This, in turn, necessitated the creation of the luxury hotel or resort, where visitors were guaranteed the attention and service of Brown bodies to ensure they remained as comfortable abroad as they were at home. Just as the opening of the Pacific Islands to white ownership reproduced systems of exploitation nearly identical to those used on North American Blacks, the culture of leisure and the creation of leisurely pursuits abroad also required the commodification of Islanders’ bodies. Because Black and Brown bodies could be exposed, measured, and objectified without uproar or negative commentary in a patriarchal, eugenetic world, Black and Brown female bodies were particularly delectable in the rigidly asexual world of Victorian England and America.

Black women’s bodies were an early topic of discussion in travel narratives and ethnologies from the 1600s. The accepted explicit nature of these ruminations transferred intact to the Victorian era,
though the evaluations of African beauty changed over time. Black women’s bodies formed the “ur-text...of public female mythologies in the nineteenth century.” This means that black bodies were in public discourse constantly in the nineteenth century, whether in terms of their enslavement—and that act’s concomitant exploitation, torture, and dispossession—or in terms of their grotesquery, and, by diametric opposition, the beauty of the white form. The exposure of Black bodies and the public portrayals of Blackness early in the century determined the method and level of discourse to which all non-white people were subjected to during the time period. Staged performances of Blackness throughout the nineteenth century were the primary contributor to the racialization of whites during the era. Whites used performative spaces “to exploit and manipulate Afro-Americans” in a “non-threatening way” in order to define both Blackness and its opposition, which they assumed to be themselves. As a result, the concept of “blackness” worked its way into national and international discourse as a discursive field, a “transit,” in its own right. Blackness was not necessarily limited to Africa, either. Fairs and exhibitions took great pains to separate the “acceptable” African phenotypes of Egyptian dancers and Moroccan bazaars from the dark sub-Saharan Africans with their banana leaves and bones. The sensual allure of the belly-dancer was not the inscrutable danger of the Dahomey.

Dark Africans—or those who could be racially classed as “black”—existed, in many ways, outside the scope of their “place.” They were the Africans in America, but not part of it. Americans took great care to depict Blacks as fundamentally Other, and the popularity of blackface minstrelsy ensured that other whites across the world adopted this view. The Brown bodies of Islanders, on the other hand, were a fundamental part of the landscape shaped by tourism and immigration propaganda. They were, in

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372 Robert Toll, Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 57. Minstrelsy provided a non-threatening venue for whites only. The stereotypical and often violent depictions of Black Americans on stage put them in real and sometimes immediate (post-curtain) danger from ignorant and angry whites, especially once these shows opened in the South.
fact, inseparable from it, since they were literally draped in the flora and fauna of their Islands. Every Brown body in motion, therefore, served to advertise the availability and allure of the Pacific. If Black women’s bodies were the foundation upon which all public renderings of the feminine were situated, then Brown bodies elaborated the framework within which all female sexuality could be performed. Just as anti-Black and anti-Yellow imagery was co-opted by popular culture to demean poor whites, comparatively pro-Brown imagery was appropriated to eroticize middle-class white women.373 As white society transitioned from its Victorian “separate spheres” articulation of gender to a more fleshed out—and fleshier—version of the empowered modern woman, Polynesian and North African women provided the only publicly available models for the naively open sexuality white men desired from “their” women. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, white women began to “displace” their Brown counterparts in the public projection of tropical erotica.374

These depictions and performances were not subtle commentaries on race. They were enacted publicly, internationally, ubiquitously, and interdependently. Though many Pacific Islanders and Australian Aborigines found themselves caught up in the established circuits for touring performers in the U.S. Britain, and Europe, it was hula and other Polynesian dance routines that found their way most often to the world stage at fairs and expositions, and to concert halls and palaces. Minstrelsy, on the other hand, the most popular American entertainment form, was appropriated by the British and their colonists as it spread across the world, creating a comprehensive, uniform understanding of race and racial hierarchies that was very American in its articulation. These different racializations served the same purpose, and instilled the same ideas about the same types of people—people of color—to Pacific Islanders, Americans and the British. Race and white supremacy were the most important cultural commodities of the nineteenth century, and entertainment became the most efficient means to mass produce, market and sell these ideologies around the world.

Authentic Blackness: Anglo-American Appropriations of “African” Culture

373 Harkins, Hillbilly, 32.
Oh, Jim Crow’s come to town
As you all must know,
An’ he wheel about, he turn about,
He do jis so,
An’ ebery time he wheel about
He jump Jim Crow
- from “Jump Jim Crow,” lyrics (c. 1832) attributed to Thomas D. Rice

Blackface minstrelsy is a nineteenth-century phenomenon whose origins may derive from representations of Africans on the Elizabethan stage. Several productions, of which Othello is now the most widely known, featured dark-skinned Africans as main or supporting characters. Queen Anne herself, wife of James I, Shakespeare’s last patron, performed in blackface before the court, to somewhat ambivalent praise. An enthusiastic patron of the arts, Anne was well known to be fascinated with the African body type, if not with Africans themselves. She had several African servants in Edinburgh, who may have accompanied her from Denmark when she married James. Certainly they followed her to London once James ascended to the English throne, left vacant by the death of Queen Elizabeth I without issue. It is entirely possible that the presence of these servants inspired Anne to commission the masque in which she was so prominently featured. Written by Ben Jonson in 1605, the Masque of Blackness was novel in its use of body paint rather than masks to disguise the performers, the majority of which, as another novelty, were women. The plot revolved around the presentation of the daughters of Niger, an African god, by the sea-god Oceanus to the sun, in the form of the king himself, so that they may be beautified (whitened). However, the use of paint rather than masks to darken the ladies rendered the final action impossible to stage and necessitated a sequel. The Masque of Beauty was eventually performed several years later featuring most of the original female cast, now “cleansed” of their darkness.

As the titles of the two plays suggest, beauty and blackness were mutually exclusive qualities. In order to become beautiful, the goddesses must become white; while they are Black they are, and know

375 For my discussion of the forms, promotion, and evolution of minstrelsy, I made extensive use of the primary source materials in the American Minstrel Show Collection, 1823-1947, MS Thr 556. Houghton Music Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

themselves to be, ugly. The conceit of the masque was mirrored in reality as well. More than one audience member found the queen and her entourage repugnant and virtually unrecognizable in their blackface makeup. Considering too that the makeup complicated the production by making the final act logistically impossible, one wonders why the designer, architect Inigo Jones, did not simply use masks, which could easily be discarded for the beautification scene at the end (a scene which had to be concluded in a completely different production). The likely possibility is that the queen insisted on using paint, perhaps in order to create a more realistic representation of blackness. Blackness would have been on the mind of many European sovereigns at this time, as African slavery was becoming more of an institution, and colonial enterprises began to profit immensely as a result. James’ reign spanned the first permanent British settlement of North America as well as the Plantation of Ulster province. The English were beginning to decide exactly what inclusion into the race meant, and they began to develop racist policies that barred certain ethnicities from equal participation in English “whiteness,” and humanity. The problematic racializations of the Irish and the African would plague British imperial and domestic politics for centuries, and inform their decisions about the management of indigenous populations in Ireland, India, parts of Africa, and the Pacific.

Most British people had no access to “real” Blacks, unless they lived in one of the slave-holding colonies in North America, and the unsavory elements of slavery itself did not lend itself well to reproduction in polite society. The moral implications of the institution eventually overshadowed its obvious financial benefits, at least in the British metropole. A century after Jacobean jurists codified and legalized African slavery, their Georgian counterparts, spurred on by widespread public protest, began deconstructing those justifications. Slavery was an acknowledged evil, but blackness continued to fascinate the British at home and in diaspora, though colonial polities clung to the former for a generation or more after it was abolished in the metropole in 1833. Portraits of noble or wealthy men and women sometimes featured Africans and Anglo-Africans in background settings as diverse as drawing rooms and landscapes. To reduce these figures to scenic fauna would be a mistake, however. The slaves depicted are often gorgeously attired, a testimony to either their individual importance or their masters’ wealth. Anne’s portrait includes an African man serving as a finely dressed groom replete with red velvet doublet and silk shoelaces. He gazes adoringly at his queen, clearly in an attitude of subservience, but not quite
British royals from James to George III repeated this or similar scenes in at least one portrait each throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The image of the resplendent Black servant/slave became a staple in British popular culture, echoing or perhaps creating a contemporary fad among the British elite.

The opera “The Padlock” (1768), by composer Isaac Bickerstaff, featured a proto-Dandy (the epithet applied to any man excessively devoted to fashion in the early 1800s) Black character called Mungo Macaroni. The character and his finery became a popular costume for wealthy whites at masques, who blackened their faces in order to denote the Mungo character specifically. The Duchess of Queensberry had a “real, live” Macaroni in the form of her servant Julius Soubise, whom she dressed, no doubt based on the opera’s character, in silk, with diamond-buckled shoes and a powdered wig. Though the “dandy” existed separately in white tradition from the characters in the minstrel production, it eventually became a variant of the coon character. It is debatable whether or not the dandy figure was the earliest Black caricature performed on stage, since the advent of minstrelsy, as a defined form of entertainment, occurred across the Atlantic and half a century after Mungo Macaroni strutted and simpered across the British stage. In the United States, as in Britain, the entertainment industry shied away from the divisive issue of slavery, even as they strove to come to terms with the existence and place of Blacks in their society. It was not, then some plantation-derived or southern vehicle to reinforce white superiority. Minstrelsy grew and originated in the pro-abolitionist northern United States, in the heart of abolitionist territory (Massachusetts), long before the Civil War. It existed as a key way for whites—all of them—to comment on and explore their whiteness, as well as the “natural” inferiority of Blacks. This perhaps explains the wide variety of material that often had nothing to do with slavery per se, though every actor appeared on stage in blackface regardless of the nature of the skit or song.

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379 The “Sambo” figure occasionally seen in early nineteenth century plays and sketches also predates minstrelsy, and is most closely associated with the “Uncle Tom” caricature.
Legend credits Thomas “Daddy” Rice with the creation of “Ethiopian” minstrelsy; he based his stage routine on the song and dance of an old Black man he observed outside a theatre in either Kentucky, New York, or Massachusetts. He took the stage and delivered an impromptu imitation, first blacking up his face with the ash residue of some burnt cork he had on hand. Thus, “Jump Jim Crow,” Rice’s song and dance number, burst into the national imagination in the 1830s already steeped in authenticity. Several other white minstrel performers also claimed to base their acts on a careful study of black culture—meaning song, dance and speech—in the American South. They effectively presented themselves as early ethnologists, or amateur naturalists, which leant their caricatures an imagined credulity. Some actors quickly consolidated their acts, and the minstrel troupe was born. Productions became increasingly more lavish as the entertainment form gained fans and notoriety, and troupe sizes swelled to as many as thirty men. Since the minstrel show was basically a variety act, the entire company seldom appeared onstage all together, except during the opening act, called the minstrel first part, and sometimes the finale. There were no women performers; all female characters were played by cross-dressing male actors. Every character these men portrayed stemmed from one of six archetypal figures: the coon, the dandy, Uncle Tom, mammy, Tipsy and the quadroon. Note that, while the male caricatures were based on obverse portrayals of both free and enslaved men, the women’s roles were firmly rooted in the slave tradition, much of it invented, of the mammy and the quadroon.

The dandy was the most ubiquitous figure on stage, as he drew upon the oldest stereotypes. He was a pretentious, badly educated, northern Black man, and staged representations grew to include the “zip coon” (a destructive trickster) and “buck” or “Stagole” (dangerous, predatory) variations. The coon, a shiftless, dim-witted, buffoon, and the pitiable Uncle Tom characters were supposed to be representative

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380 It should be noted that minstrelsy’s portrayals of Black men's physicality and costume had much in common with the preexisting circus clown or buffoon character. More likely than not, Rice simply corked up his face and drew on experience that actors such as he would have already had: as clowns. By claiming to imitate an actual person, Rice legitimizes his notion that Blacks were society's clowns, both creating and reinforcing the stereotype.

381 The three parts of the show usually consisted of the minstrel first part, the olio, a series of sketches and variety acts, and the “end man,” a soloist finale.

382 There were several all female minstrel troupes operating from the late 1840s onwards, both in the U.S. and abroad. These troupes were all managed by men, and their show content tended more toward the proto-burlesque. Women did not appear with men onstage in minstrel performances until the 1890s, and by then the shows' popularity had already begun to wane.
of enslaved blacks, as was the mammy, Uncle Tom’s female counterpart, Tipsy, a simple-minded “pickaninny,” and the tragic quadroon maiden. The last figure embodied the most explicitly negative commentary on the slave system. The quadroon characters were comely, relatable to white audiences, and doomed to suffer the predations of both white slave owners and rapacious bucks; only death released them from the horrors of their situation. These caricatures remained the stock personae upon which most skits revolved throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Musicologist Robert Toll notes a sharp divide in pre- and post-1850 shows’ depictions of blacks. Before 1850, minstrel shows portrayed both negative and "positive" elements of slavery, and included a wide variety of frontier types—men who were trappers, loggers, hunters, etc. Once slavery began to threaten the fabric of the Union, after 1850, and northern whites had to face the idea that Black men would soon compete with them for jobs, status and power, depictions of blacks in minstrel shows crystallized. The diversity of Black “character types” disappeared, as did any negative commentary on slavery. What was left was “contrasting caricatures of contented slaves and unhappy free Negroes.”

Free Blacks had always presented a challenge to the American doctrine of white superiority. Their success gave the lie to white stereotypes of Blacks as lazy, shiftless, and ultimately satisfied with their lot as slaves. Minstrelsy addressed the problematic (for whites) existence of free persons of color by ridiculing that success, instead portraying them as ignorant, dangerous, and obscene. In other words, a major function of blackface minstrelsy was to tear down the positive image of the free Black man, leaving only the alternative of the happy slave.

Fundamentally, minstrelsy performed a critique on society. Any subversive ideology, group or social movement that threatened the status quo, such as secession, emancipation, women’s suffrage, immigrants (especially Roman Catholic immigrants from Ireland), and Native Americans, was maligned on stage. But the fact that these performers delivered their scathing rebukes in blackface demonstrates the depth of society’s bifurcation along racial lines. Nothing was more subversive, more threatening than Blackness, and though these performers straddled the divide, they could never be subsumed by it. In fact, performers could use minstrelsy specifically to make positive distinctions between ethnic whites—Irish, Germans, Eastern Europeans—and the Black population. Though staged scenes always tended to cast

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Germans in a positive light, scenes featuring Irish characters began as uniformly negative during the early years of minstrelsy. Over time, such harsh portrayals softened, and “Irishness” onstage evinced a more romanticized, or at least nostalgic, reaction from audiences. This change can be explained by the ethnic composition of the urban audiences, who became increasingly Irish over the course of the century, as well as the performers, who were often Irish as well.\textsuperscript{384} “Acting black” offered them a chance to trade on their whiteness, a quality they shared with their Anglo-Saxon counterparts. As the prestige of whiteness gained traction and scientific credibility in the second half of the century, the fascination with blackness, its binary (relational opposite), deepened.\textsuperscript{385} Ethnic groups, including the Irish, were assessed by how close to “black” they were, and the degree to which they could be “whitened” or civilized. And blackface minstrelsy, the literal interpretation of Blackness performed by those who could supposedly vouch for its authenticity, became an international phenomenon.

As a form of entertainment, minstrelsy spanned both class and ethnic divides. It translated vernacular culture to its wealthy audiences—and it had many adherents among the wealthy and noble—and gave the working classes a means to envy, admonish, admire, and disassociate themselves from their non-white counterparts.\textsuperscript{386} The shows’ venues also gave poor whites a place to congregate and share their developing class and national consciousnesses independently of the expectations imposed on them from the “top.” “Daddy” Rice’s character/invention, Jim Crow, “brought raggedness into the theatrical house” in the main protagonist who was both the hero and the comic relief.\textsuperscript{387} Within a few years of Rice’s first turn about the stage as Jim Crow, he took his act overseas to Britain in 1836. He expanded his repertoire to include high-brow material from \textit{Othello}, but performed the Shakespearean classic as he did all his

\textsuperscript{384} Toll, \textit{Blacking Up}, 176-80. The minstrel caricatures of the Irish are not to be conflated with the depiction of Irish Americans in print media, which remained quite negative towards the end of the nineteenth century, or public policy, which was often discriminatory. Also note that around the turn of the century, law enforcement also came to be dominated by Irish men, making it possible for them to police their own neighborhoods, rather than rely on ethnic gangs. This change ultimately led greater chances for economic advancement within a safer community.

\textsuperscript{385} Paige Raibmon, \textit{Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast} (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 7. Raibmon’s diagram casts whiteness across from “Indian,” but I think strong case has been made here and in society for blackness to exist equally, and perhaps more directly, opposite whiteness.


\textsuperscript{387} \textit{Ibid.}, 9.
other material: using the incorrect, mispronounced, halting speech that supposedly belonged to the African-American. Rice and other actors crisscrossed the ocean many times during their careers, and over the course of the 1840s and 1850s, minstrelsy moved out of the vernacular, and into the elite cultures. Actors in blackface entertained queens and presidents; middle-class and upwardly mobile citizens expressed themselves using the “black” grammar, movements, and gestures they learned from the shows. Minstrelsy had its detractors, more often among the upper classes, but in the forty years between its creation and the end of the Civil War, it moved from the fringes into the mainstream. Yet, performing as Blacks left its own stain. Actors constantly fought the common assumption that they were really African-American; they began inserting their photos into advertisements and playbills in order to prove that they were only pretending to be black.

Dressing up as Blacks gave poor white performers and, by proxy, their audiences, a way to interrogate whiteness, especially the white aristocratic tradition. Pre-Civil War productions did comment sometimes on the cruelty of slavery. However, when performers enacted or sang about the atrocities of the slave trade—parting lovers, the sexual predation upon Black slave women, selling children and older slaves away from their families—it was more to remark upon the rich and their immoral habits than to critique slavery itself. These scenes also provided a melodramatic climax for the audience: they could cheer the oppressed slaves’ eventual release or weep over the pursued woman’s suicide (rather than submit to rape) much in the same way penny dreadfuls allowed later audiences to cheer and gasp through an overwrought plot. Such catharsis gave audiences an emotional release without requiring them to do something about the horrors of the system. The severity of the crimes against Blacks was undercut by the general buffoonery of the other parts of the program, particularly that staple of minstrel entertainment, the happy plantation ideal. After the Civil War, every positive portrayal of Blacks hinged on an unabashed longing for plantation life, kinetically illustrated in a neutered version of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The stock caricature of Uncle Tom as a pious, self-effacing

388 Taylor and Austen, *Darkest America*, 44.

slave willing to die for his white masters fed the belief that Blacks could not handle liberation. They lacked the capacity for freedom, which in turn absolved whites, after the fact, from the crime of enslaving them. For this representation to carry any “logic,” one must forget the long tradition of successful free persons of color who co-existed with whites according to their rules throughout the period of American slavery. Or else, as minstrelsy does, reduce the reality of their existence to a ridiculous, improbable, and especially dangerous farce.

Irish characters enjoyed a greater range of behavioral types than any other race represented in minstrelsy, reflective of their appropriation of whiteness and eventual American citizenship, as well as their overrepresentation as blackface performers. Blacks, on the other hand, were inherently foreign or extra-American, despite the generations of slaves born on U.S. soil, and so were incapable of practicing independence. They were “naturally” subservient, and any attempt to liberate them ended in catastrophe. Minstrelsy served as public acknowledgment of the alien nature of Blackness. It announced that “white” culture situated itself firmly within America. Prewar shows sometimes included skits featuring the “noble Savage” caricature of American Indians, lamenting the loss of an Arcadian, idealized past in the face of “modern” industry and change. These depictions changed during the 1860s to reflect the growing threat Native Americans posed to American expansion, and subsequently traded on the negative stereotypes of the drunken, warmongering “savage.”

Popular culture depicted real Native American Indians, who came from “here,” as violent and proud, while Blacks, who could never be from “here,” regardless of where they were actually born, were products of their African environment—happy only in servitude, and stupid. The staged enactments of Blackness and indigeneity hinted that only white cultures were capable of expressing the positively brave independence of the indigenous population while suppressing Indians’ more murderous inclinations, and disavowed entirely the shiftless ignorance of its captive labor force. In the skits, whites became true “native” Americans, the natural inheritors of Indians’ pride and independence, even though in truth they, like Blacks, were transplants.

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Minstrelsy is purely a Northern invention—troupes, who advertised themselves as “Nigger” or “Negro Minstrels,” were not allowed to perform in the antebellum South—designed to allow whites the opportunity to explore and affirm their innate superiority over Black Americans with whom they shared physical and situational proximity. Though they seldom ever interacted, both populations inhabited the precarious space of tentative upward mobility as marginalized ethnicities, and experienced similar class and racial discrimination as a result. Minstrel troupes “provided their audiences with one of the only bases that many of them actually had for understanding America’s increasing ethnic diversity” and the audience members’ place within the emerging “hierarchy.” They laid the foundation for urban Americans’ comprehension of indigeneity and the relegation of such people to a permanently primitive state of exotic foreignness.

The mask of blackness allowed white performers to disappear into the black persona and act out subversive and aberrant behavior forbidden to the upstanding Victorian white male. Not least, as a precursor to vaudeville, penny dreadfuls, and Tin Pan Alley productions, minstrel shows created a recognizable and acceptable venue for the display and ridicule of non-white cultures, class conflict, public policy, and social issues. Ironically, the same issue of verisimilitude that these actors traded on became a moot point after the War, when African Americans took to the stage as “authentic” blacks. To combat this competition, white minstrels increased their range of material to incorporate—and lampoon—opera, Shakespeare, circus acts, and other aspects of both high- and low-brow theatre. The last quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed an increasing demand for “real” Black performers, which stemmed from the new science of ethnology and, through it, a way to codify racial inferiority. In worldwide popular culture and certain intellectual circles, African-Americans bridged the gap between the most savage iteration of humanity, Africans, and other, more “savable” races, like Polynesians. Mired in eternal blackness, they represented the extent to which any given ethnic group could eventually achieve whiteness.

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20 Ibid., 169.
The earliest troupe of Black minstrels dates back to 1866, shortly after the conclusion of the Civil War. Before then, Anglo-Africans and African-Americans only rarely appeared on stage. The most famous antebellum Black actor was commonly known as Juba, who was probably American but rose to fame on the European stage. His real name was William Henry Lane, and he was probably the first Black actor to perform before white audiences. He was active in the 1830s, around the time that Thomas Rice claimed to have been inspired by the antics of a local black man, and his performance contained many of the elements that later became a staple of the genre. Lane toured with the Aethiopian Serenaders, and as the only Black member, he was the only one to forego blackface makeup. Though his turn as the coquettish quadroon was well in keeping with the standard caricature, critics lauded his “authentic” performance as something unique, differentiating him from the “sham” white actors of the group. They interpreted his performance as an accurate representation of African-American life and customs. He often took the part of the quadroon, a particularly nasty caricature that debased Black women by suggesting that

392 Ernest Hogan, “All Coons Look Alike to Me”: A Darky Misunderstanding (London: M Witmark and Sons, 1896). This song marked an evolution in the minstrel genre. Ernest Hogan, an African-American songwriter and performer, penned this and several other “coon songs” as they came to be known. The title of the song became a popular saying among white Americans, as well.

they were to blame for the predatory sexual attention visited on them by white men. In his time, Lane was widely considered the best minstrel performer on stage, beating out noted white minstrels in competitions judged by whites. His fame established the “two-edged sword of blackface” for black performers: their shows demeaned them by painting them as figures of ridicule, and liberated them because the performative space gave them the opportunity to escape the oppressive strictures of racist America.  

Black minstrels gained immediate notoriety as entertainers because they could present themselves as “experts” on Blackness, and on the condition of the slave. But because they could only “make minor modifications” to the format and existing stereotypes created by white performers, “black minstrels, in effect, added credibility to these images by making it seem that Negroes actually behaved like minstrelsy’s black caricatures.” The issue of authenticity is an important one. The public’s interest in natural history and anthropology made the idea of seeing how “real” slaves (formerly) lived appealing, and no doubt allowed American and British whites the opportunity to pat themselves on the back for their roles in eradicating slavery. They also used the “proof” of the actors’ impersonations to demonstrate the civilizing effect of slavery, and elevated African-Americans and Anglo-Africans above Africans from the continent on the racial hierarchy scale. Yet, when wealthy Black actors behaved like the modern Victorians they were offstage—when they, in essence, acted upon the presumed “civilizing effect” gained from proximity to white culture—they were ridiculed by “polite” society. In effect, Africans were judged by how closely they resembled “civilized” Black Americans (former slaves) while free blacks were ridiculed for presumably aping their “betters,” i.e. pretending to be white, and failing to understand their “place” in society: at the bottom, where the carefree, happy-go-lucky plantation “darky” resides.  

The Georgia Minstrels (later called the Original Georgia Minstrels) were the first Black minstrel troupe. Popular culture used their name, "Georgia," along with "colored" or "slave," to describe all succeeding Black troupes. Founded by Black entertainer Charles Hicks, they performed "an imitation of an imitation of the plantation life of Southern blacks," not least because the majority, if not all, of the

394 Taylor and Austen, Darkest America, 49.

395 Toll, Blacking Up, 196.
original troupe had never been slaves and so had no real experience as slaves. The caricatures, portrayed by actual African-Americans, validated existing stereotypes and became embedded in white Americans' understanding of Blackness, which they had long equated with slavery. For the next few decades, "regardless of the troupe...black minstrels were consistently described as ‘natural’ and ‘spontaneous’ representatives of plantation ‘Negroes.’" The public began to question the fitness of whites to perform plantation skits. They interpreted the behavior of Blacks on stage as authentic, as if they were simply being themselves despite the manufactured set and the atmosphere of the theatre. Both white and Black audiences subscribed to this misapprehension. Black people perhaps interpreted minstrelsy as harkening back to “traditional” African cultural expressions, and embraced it despite its obvious racist content and White origin. At least one review, in the newspaper The New York Clipper in 1880, called white minstrels “poor white trash” who could not hope to produce plantation life with the accuracy that Black minstrels, specifically Haverly’s Colored Minstrel Troupe, could.

Black actors found little work in the second half of the nineteenth century beyond the confines of minstrel variety shows, and their choices within the genre were severely limited by the pre-existing archetypal characters. Despite this, being involved in minstrelsy had definite benefits. It provided training opportunities for actors, producers and writers, and a means to make a living beyond sharecropping and menial labor. Since most Black troupes were also Black-owned, their profits stayed within their community, so to speak. Black performers could make small modifications and additions in their characters, and add new dances and songs derived from actual Black experiences. These skills would later help establish Black theatre on the vaudeville and Broadway circuits during the Harlem Renaissance. Most importantly, African-American and Anglo-African performers produced shows


397 Toll, Blacking Up, 202.

398 Ibid.

Blacks audiences could attend. Within the confines of the theater, they could root for an underdog representative of themselves, and find meaning within the skits and songs that wholly escaped their white counterparts.

As mentioned earlier, the inability of white audiences to differentiate between the imagined physiognomy of Black people and white actors in blackface established the mid-century convention of actors including real photos of themselves as part of their marketing practices. Though performing the same routines and dressing as the same characters, white actors felt compelled to separate themselves from the very people they claimed to emulate. Black troupes continued this practice, emphasizing the difference between their actual appearance and their stage personae, but they did so in order to show their refinement, and their wealth. Coons and dandies were only characters they played; the real actors strove to present themselves as gentlemen. These actors also used their ads to direct a different message to their Black fans. For their real images portrayed smart, successful, well-dressed men who had clearly found success in the industry. They had “made it.”

Sadly, this desire to legitimate blackness did not extend to representations of women. Since men performed the female roles as well, there was no "authentic" black woman to embody a respectable version of her racist caricatures. Representations of Black femininity rested in the age-old archetype of the quadroon and in the newer invention of the mammy; both figures served to “buttress the utopian construction of the imagined Old South.”

Historical evidence shows that the average female house slave was about 19 years old, light-skinned or bi-racial, and likely related to the male members of the house or nursing a child who was fathered by one of them. Her condition as a nursing mother was important because she had to be able to nurse the lady of the house’s (the slave owner’s wife) children. The “mammy” figure, dark-skinned, middle-aged and overweight, that began to show up in Old-South narratives forty years after Emancipation had been inserted into public imagination in order to erase the stigma of white male sexual predation upon the Black house staff. The mammy caricature may also have

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400 Robinson, *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning*, 60.
served to shift the reason that “mixed-blood” slaves existed from the white males in the house onto the Black ones based on the contrivance that no white man would be willing or able to impregnate the older Black slave. Thus, any bi-racial children born in the slave system must have resulted from white women who were raped by Black men. Because “mammy” was a complete fabrication, she could not be refuted in any practical sense. She was created at a time when minstrelsy began to take root in the South; her nurturing, matronly characteristics invoked a certain nostalgia for a comforting “old-timey” Southern past in both white and Black post-War communities.

The evolution of the mulatta/quadroon from a sympathetic figure before the War to the female equivalent of “zip coon”—a dangerous, sexually voracious Jezebel who seduced White and Black men alike—also relieved white men of accountability. White commentary on such relationships was that Black women would naturally consider the attentions of white men a compliment. The subtext of such statements implied that the men had been seduced and were behaving in an uncharacteristic manner by finding Black women attractive. This attitude simultaneously dismissed the allure of light-skinned Black women and held them accountable for their own violation. Southern society used the idea of the lascivious quadroon to absolve themselves of the crime of raping Black women while engaging in the lynch mentality that excused the murder of black men to avenge (or prevent) the imagined violation of white women. Twentieth-century Black cinema tried to redeem the quadroon, then cast as a pretty Black woman, but succeeded only to the extent that she became a pitiable victim again. This was intentional on the part of the black male establishment, which depicted Black women as victims in order to lionize Black men. Like their white counterparts, Black Victorians were polarized over issues of

401 Ibid. See also the slave narrative of Harriet Jacobs, et al. She cites the common practice of infanticide or abortion engaged in by white women who found themselves impregnated by their Black lovers. Such children, she states, were never allowed to live, which means that multi-ethnic slaves were always the children of Black female slaves, who were forbidden, according to Jacobs, from ever naming the father of their children.

402 Ibid., 53. See also Erin D. Chapman, Prove it on Me: New Negroes, Sex, and Popular Culture in the 1920s (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), and her discussion of Ida B. Wells and the National Association of Colored Women’s protest against lynch law in the 1880s and 1890s.

403 Chapman, Prove it on Me, 57-8.
women’s equality such as suffrage, and used the medium of popular entertainment to explore what they perceived was a public problem. Black men were often complicit in the degradation of black women in order to validate their own masculine power. In addition, the continued misrepresentation of Black women as over-sexed vixens gave Black men the same “unfettered sexual access” to them that white men enjoyed.  

Popular opinion validated the government’s refusal to address the victimization of Black women, and gave license to Black men to participate in it.

The association of Black women with sex predates the rise of minstrelsy, but the genre certainly helped advance the idea that non-white women were composed almost entirely of primitive urges, whether towards sex, deception, or theft. It would be several decades before actual Black women performed on stage in minstrel shows, and when they did, they were relegated to the roles that had already been carved out for them by their male cross-dressing predecessors. By the end of the century, sexualized representations of Black femininity were joined onstage by similar depictions of women from newly acquired colonial outposts in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. World’s fairs and expositions celebrated imperial enterprises by juxtaposing the dominance of the “white” races against the effeminate degeneracy of “yellow,” “brown,” and “black” ones, and they began doing so by showcasing American “exotics.” Once Reconstruction ended, minstrelsy easily transitioned from stand-alone theatrical performances to the Midway cultural displays that typified the fair experience. In 1879, Haverly’s Colored Minstrels built an entire plantation replica in a field, turning staged entertainment into an historical reenactment simply by changing the venue. However, this and similar productions were billed like zoo or animal attractions, not staged productions. By placing the show in an environment that purportedly hinged on scientific, ethnological display, minstrelsy lost all pretense of performance. The ads and reviews emphasized the

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404 Ibid., 57.
405 Toll, Blacking Up, 205.
Blackness (“realness”) of the performers, suggesting their success in portraying ‘darky’ life was not a matter of skill, the way it was with white minstrels, but a matter of instinct.406

Black performers were rarely seen as gifted actors, their genuine talent delegitimized by their “authentic” Blackness. Black performers were quick to distance themselves through their behavior and dress from the crude stage personas that made them wealthy and famous. Producers poured that wealth into their shows. They developed an increasingly sophisticated repertoire that required opulent costumes and sets. Black and white minstrels began traveling to southern cities along what would become known as “the chitlin’ circuit” in the 1870s, though Black-owned troupes tended to use personal rail cars to avoid dealing with segregation and mistreatment they experienced on public trains and in hotels.407 The South held the biggest potential for Black performers’ success because there they could draw the largest audiences. Yet, that very success also endangered their lives. Southern audiences had no problem laughing along with white actors in blackface about African-Americans’ imagined deficiencies, but they resented the truth evidenced by actual African-American lives: that they could advance in spite of the severe restrictions imposed by the doctrine of white supremacy. For the duration of minstrelsy’s popularity, Black showrunners and performers had difficulty maximizing their profits in the U.S., despite the obvious draw provided by their ethnicity. Many began looking elsewhere for a way to capitalize on their authenticity as living embodiments of “blackness.”

Blackness Abroad: The Australasian Circuit

In the field I’ve worked when I thought ’twas hard
But night brought its pleasure and rod
In the old house down by the river-side,
The place of all the world the best.
Oh! where are the children that once used to play
In the lane by the old cabin door?
They are scattered now, and o’er the world they roam
The old man will ne’er see them more

406 Ibid.

407 Though many cities banned minstrel performances before the Civil War, the music was already very popular. “Dixie,” a minstrel song, was the Confederate anthem. Audiences would have been very familiar with the style of minstrel shows, even if they had never seen one.
Now the old man would rather have lived and died
In the Home where his children were born,
But when freedom came to the coloured man
He left his cotton field and corn.
The old man has lived out his threescore and ten,
And he’ll soon have to lay down and die
Yet he hopes to go into a better land
So now, old cabin home, good-bye.

- from “The Old Home Ain’t What it Used to Be,” lyrics printed in The Australian Melodist (c. 1885)\(^408\)

Anglo-Africans had been coming to “the Colonies” since the early years of the nineteenth century. When Britain used the Dunmore Proclamation to free Loyalist slaves after the American Revolution, the government relocated them to Nova Scotia, where they were re-enslaved by local white Loyalists.\(^409\) These freedmen appealed to the British government again, which shipped them to Sierra Leone where they could enjoy British freedom…working as suppliers in the British slave trade. Predictably, the former slaves balked at the idea of participating in the trade, and instigated a revolt that subsided only with the abolition of the slave trade in 1807.\(^410\) At some point, roughly 600 of these Anglo-Africans—former U.S. slaves, and perhaps some Jamaican enslaved soldiers (who were brought in by the British to quell the resistance movement), and maybe even a few local Africans—relocated again to Tasmania, where they arrived around 1820. The indigenous population of Tasmania, then called Van Dieman’s Land, were racially classified as Blacks. Tasmanians were darker, with thicker, curlier hair than mainland Australian Aborigines, whom the colonial government, when it acknowledged them at all, also referred to as “black.” It is entirely possible that the freedmen went or were sent by the government to

\(^{408}\) “The Old Home Ain’t What it Used to Be,” The Australian Melodist: Containing the Most Popular Songs as Sung in the Theatres and Concert Halls, by the Several Minstrel Troupes and others who have visited the Colonies (Melbourne: A. H. Massina and Co, c. 1885). This song dates back at least as far as 1872, and was performed by the Original Georgia Minstrels. Other song books include the lyrics, attributed to Charles A. White. There was a fairly successful Black musician by that name, dubbed “The Black Apollo,” earlier in the century, so he may have penned this as a sequel to “Old Folks at Home” (c. 1850) By Stephen C. Foster, who wrote memorable minstrel pieces like “Oh, Susanna” and “Dixie.”


\(^{410}\) Ibid. The final chapter alludes to dissatisfied Sierra Leonans planning to leave some time after 1815.
Tasmania because it was populated by other Blacks with whom they could intermarry, and perhaps “civilize” according to the developing theories of race science.411

Aboriginal Tasmanians fell victim to an attempted (some would say successful) genocide during and after the “Black War of Van Dieman’s Land” in the 1830s, and while these Australian Anglo-Africans fell out of the historic record during that time, it is possible they survived the genocide by being incorporated into white Australian society. The modern Australian government asserts that this is so, attributing the seeming “blackness” of non-white Tasmanians to these former American slaves rather than to any surviving ethnic Tasmanian heritage.412 Though it seems this particular band of African-Americans could not catch a break, shifting from slavery to freedom and enslavement again across two oceans, three continents, and four colonies, these transitions demonstrate the malleability of race, despite the rigid strictures of color.

Color is determinative; “blackness” is a permanent genetic stain that relegates those who exhibit it to the bottom rung of pseudo-science’s evolutionary hierarchy. Race, however, can be overcome if a person can inhabit multiple national identities, or be cross-racialized as it were. The freedmen were simultaneously African, American and British. It was in the empire’s interest to acknowledge their status as free persons of color, even if that meant removing them from their colony of origin and redeploying them to other British peripheries, or in the case of Sierra Leone, creating a new one. Whether in Africa,  

411 Australian Aborigines, specifically Tasmanians, were often classified as “missing links,” between humanity and apes, so the presence of African-Americans could have been seen as a civilizing influence upon them. Though these classifications were not officially codified until the second half of the century, these ideas were in circulation as early as the 1820s. See C. Loring Brace, “Race” is a Four-Letter Word: The Genesis of the Concept (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 39-43.

412 They may have become conflated in Tasmania with the Caribbean freedmen who also came there, perhaps separately (reports are unclear) or—most likely—the Caribbean soldiers were part of the group of African-Americans who arrived from Sierra Leone, and later anecdotes about their presence grouped them with the former American slaves, who were all classed as “Caribbean.” See Nicolas Peterson and Will Sanders, eds., Citizenship and Indigenous Australians: Changing Conceptions and Possibilities (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 171; see also Richard Broome, Aboriginal Tasmanians: A History Since 1788 (London: Allen and Unwin Publishers, 1982) about the state’s refusal to acknowledge surviving Tasmanians. See also, Tim Johnston, “Australia Says ‘Sorry’ to Aborigines for Mistreatment, New York Times, Feb. 13, 2008. Retrieved online http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/13/world/asia/13aborigine.html While the official government apology was significant, it was a long time in coming. Legislators debated for over a decade over whether or not to officially apologize.
North America, or Australia, they remained British, and so they remained free, at least on paper. When local officials could not or would not enforce their freedom, the central government stepped in and did it for them. To do otherwise would mean to concede authority, to relinquish control of the colonial outposts to the colonists themselves, thereby negating not only the process of empire, but also its purpose. If, as I propose, the British government re-settled these Black freedmen to demonstrate their authoritarian strength, they succeeded perhaps a little too well; very few records exist detailing the survival of this group of settlers, which suggests that they integrated with, or at least became “invisible” to the majority British population. Though the Anglo-African settlers were absorbed into the colonial Tasmanian mainstream, enough of them traveled to the mainland of Australia and on to New Zealand that, over a hundred years later, white colonial descendants still recall their presence. So white colonists would have been familiar with their Anglo-African British counterparts, free people of color, who traveled throughout Australia and New Zealand in search of material comfort and relative safety. When African-American entertainers appeared in the 1870s, the novelty they presented was instead tied to the evolving discourse on Aboriginal “blackness,” in which colonists engaged to assess their own racial fitness and alleviate their guilt over the abhorrent treatment of indigenous Aborigines.413

By the time British interests colonized the southern hemisphere, the process itself had become a more uniform experience. White settlers in diaspora carried with them similar ideas about the roles of women, non-whites, and lower classes, just as they often had the same predilections with regards to the concepts of beauty, prestige, and entertainment. These norms stemmed from their shared metropole, Great Britain, across the expanse of peripheral colonies in the Pacific, Africa and Asia, and diverged

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413 For an interesting collection of ideas about the transnational construction of whiteness, especially in settler colonies like Australia and the U.S., see Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Maryrose Casey and Fiona Nicoll, eds. Transnational Whiteness Matters. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008, especially Martin Crotty’s “Constructing Whiteness in the Australian Adventure Story, 1875-1920.” For histories on Australia’s treatment of Aborigines, and colonial and state efforts to come to terms with it, see Henry Reynolds, This Whispering in our Hearts (St. Leonards, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1998); Lyndall Ryan, Aboriginal Tasmanians (London; Allen and Unwin Academic, 1997); Clive Turnbull, The Black War: The Extermination of the Tasmanian Aborigines (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1948).
surprisingly little despite the heterogeneity of the settlers themselves. I would argue that their very existence as colonial subjects in the periphery elided their diverse ethnic experiences at the metropole. Ironically, the settler colonial experience, which often included difficult interactions with indigenous populations, became its own unifying force. Residents of newer British colonies, like Australia and New Zealand, felt a greater symmetry with older colonies, like the now-independent United States, than they did with their metropolitan center. This perhaps explains why it was relatively easy for American popular culture to “colonize” the public imagination of these newer colonies, which lacked an internal engine capable of producing their own popular entertainment. Advances in transportation and the mid-century gold rushes in Victoria, Australia and California created a stable and lucrative environment in which traveling shows flourished. When Australia and New Zealand did eventually “grow” their own entertainment industries, in the second half of the century, blackface minstrelsy was a cornerstone even though neither colony had large African diasporic populations to serve as a target for minstrelsy’s social commentary.

The platform was diverse enough to incorporate the white ethnic types that were present in the colonies. A late-century souvenir book of popular minstrel songs contains the spectrum of such music. The selection includes traditional Irish and German folk songs, as well as what might be considered popular dance hall numbers that, while performed in blackface, were not written in the pidgin English that represented Black speech. A significant amount, though, are of the standard Jim Crow variety, popularized because they drew attention to their subjects’ blackness. There are songs, like “Carry me Back to Old Virginny” that fondly recalled a plantation existence that no Australian colonist could have

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414 There are plenty of works that focus on specific British ethnic groups in colonies—the Scottish, Welsh, and Irish colonists who incorporated their “native” cultural habits into their adopted physical spaces. But these habits rarely, if ever, changed the main narrative that relied on British, meaning Anglo-Saxon, allegiance and affectation. This period marks the beginning of pan-white ideology and rhetoric, as discussed in the preceding chapter.

415 *The Australian Melodist*. Mixed in with the popular minstrel songs are several Negro spirituals, a new type of music which debuted in “the Colonies” in 1884. Originally performed by the Fisk Jubilee Singers, who eschewed all of the trappings of minstrelsy, they were nonetheless presented as part of the same genre.
experienced. Others, like “I’se so Wicked,” sung by Topsy’s character in the Uncle Tom skits, reveled in Topsy’s antagonism towards her mistress while connecting Topsy’s inherently bad nature to her dark skin. Minstrelsy provided a vehicle by which white ethnic groups could problematize their specific “black” populations, and by doing so cohere to a shared “whiteness.” Even though the caricatures portrayed in minstrelsy are in no way connected to Aboriginal culture, minstrelsy became the means by which white Australians described, demeaned, and dismissed them, in accordance with the shared objectives of white America.

Into this tense racial milieu entered frontman Charles Hicks, the first African-American manager to take his minstrelsy troupe to Australia. Before Hicks, the most successful Black actors in blackface operated exclusively under the aegis of white owners. Individual minstrel productions could never hope to compete with federally-funded exhibitions like those at the Columbian Exposition (1893), but experienced owners could take advantage of their media connections and garner favorable reviews and well-placed advertisements for their shows. Typically, editors of mainstream papers would only work with white managers, which meant that all-Black productions found success only on the fringes—away from lucrative metropolitan venues.

Hicks got his start just after the Civil War, touring Great Britain with Sam Hague, the first white man to manage an all Black minstrel troupe, called the Georgia Slave Minstrels. Minstrelsy gained mass appeal in Britain in the 1840s, and it remained wildly popular in the U.K. until the 1970s, longer than anywhere else, including the United States. According to Robert Toll, “the principal importance of the Hague troupe was that its success in England helped black minstrels establish themselves as entertainers

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416 Ibid., 15-16.

417 The play “Van Dieman’s Land!” features an early stage depiction of an Australian Aborigine “chief” that bears a combination of African, Native American and Aborigine cultural markers. The play was performed in Britain, and is an example of the elision of racial types deemed inferior that was encouraged in British popular culture.

418 Toll, Blacking Up, 210-3.
in America” in the late 1860s.\textsuperscript{419} It is not clear how Hicks gained proprietorship of the troupe, or even if his group of Georgia minstrels was the same one as Hague's, but both men spent years fighting over the title of "original" Georgia slave minstrels. Hague eventually brought a different Black minstrel troupe to the United States, but he failed to find an audience as enthusiastic as the British. Perhaps the actors’ time abroad re-racialized them as Anglo-Africans, and not African-Americans, and rendered them “inauthentic.”\textsuperscript{420} Undaunted, Hague redesigned the form of his minstrel show, introducing more “refined” material from operas and plays and slowly began replacing his African-American actors with white Americans, and possibly white British actors. Hague is responsible for the transformation that took place in white minstrel troupes when Black performers began to usurp their claims to authenticity in the 1870s.\textsuperscript{421} But it was Hicks who garnered widespread international success for the Original Georgia Minstrels.

Hicks was one of the few Black producers with the contacts to advertise, rent theaters, and gather performers at the same rate as his white counterparts. In 1877, Hicks lured away talent from Jack Haverly and Tom Maguire, white troupe owners, and promptly went abroad to Australia and thence on a world tour to capitalize on the troupe’s authentic Blackness and avoid retaliation from Haverly, the most powerful entertainment mogul at the time.\textsuperscript{422} Hicks wrote four articles about his troupe’s three years abroad and sent them to \textit{The New York Clipper}, The U.S.’s first entertainment newspaper and precursor to \textit{Variety} magazine, to build up his home-based notoriety while he was away. Hicks promoted his troupe as “the famous and only Original Georgia Minstrels” in a \textit{Clipper} ad in 1878 that documented their world

\textsuperscript{419} \textit{Ibid.}, 199-200.

\textsuperscript{420} \textit{Ibid.}, 154. It is my assumption, not Toll's, that Hague's initial lack of success stemmed from the questionable ethnicity of his Black performers. For more on Hicks and Hague, and their eventual animosity over the coveted title of "Original Georgia Minstrels," see Eileen Southern, "The Georgia Minstrels: The Early Years," in Annemarie Bean, James V. Hatch, and Brooks McNamara, eds., \textit{Inside the Minstrel Mask: Readings in Nineteenth Century Blackface Minstrelsy} (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 163-178.

\textsuperscript{421} \textit{Ibid.}, 154-6. See also the \textit{New York Clipper}, August 18, 1883. Industry heavyweights Billy West and George Primrose bought Hague’s lavish sets when he retired, continuing his tradition of “white minstrelsy” (Toll’s term, also used by Taylor and Austen).

\textsuperscript{422} \textit{Ibid.}, 213.
tour. They left San Francisco in March 1877 for Auckland, New Zealand, and after touring several cities to “one continued ovation,” they went to Hobart, Tasmania and on to the Australian mainland before returning to the United States via Indonesia and East Asia, the Suez Canal, and the British Isles.\footnote{423} Several other accounts, probably written by Hicks or someone connected with the troupe, traced their successful tour through the antipodean colonies, India, and England. After Hicks returned to the United States in 1881, he was railroaded out of the business by way of a bad merger with duplicitous white troupe owners. Their company absorbed his and threatened to blacklist any entertainers who stayed with Hicks. After several more failed ventures, he found success only “in marginal areas [like New Zealand and Australia] that [American] whites could not covet or control.”\footnote{424}

During the Original Georgia Minstrels’ first colonial tour, \textit{The New Zealand Herald} gave a lukewarm assessment of the performers, based not on skill, but rather appearance. An account of the troupe’s arrival in Auckland expressed disappointment that so many performers were light-skinned (“mulattoes or half-castes”), rendering their “much-abused burnt cork” usage “absolutely necessary.”\footnote{425} To the white colonial spectators, the majority of the African-American actors were not authentic because they were not very dark. They took very literally the representation of blackness displayed in minstrelsy, and were eager to see “full-blooded negroes” perform, mistakenly assuming that such specimens would look “jet-black” without resorting to artificial enhancement like burnt cork.\footnote{426} Since we know that British colonists were already quite familiar with Anglo-Africans and the variety of skin tones they exhibited, this longing to see “real” Black people likely had more to do with the era in which these performers traveled than any inherent novelty of their presence.

\footnote{423} \textit{The New York Clipper ad}, January 26, 1878. From University of Illinois digital archives.
\footnote{424} Toll, \textit{Blacking Up}, 215.
\footnote{426} Ibid.
Black performers had to adopt the uniform minstrel appearance, created by whites, in order to be accepted on stage as Blacks. Few, if any, Black performers since Juba could present themselves in (coon) character without makeup. Juba did so only to prove he was not white, which in turn served to affirm the “accuracy” of the white minstrels’ portrayals of Blackness. Once African-Americans became accessible to the global public, their varied, and importantly, the lighter skin tones reminded whites of their symmetry to, not of their divergence from, themselves. Seeing Blacks without makeup unsettled audiences at home and abroad because their physical similarity to whites cast doubt on their alleged inferiority. The dark face, white or red lips, exaggerated features and misshapen clothes gave minstrel performers a veneer of inhumanity, which made their antics more palatable, just as that inhumanity and the appearance of Blackness made for a humorous exhibition of a “lesser race.” In the end, the allure of the minstrel show is rooted in its ability to be the negative image, the exact opposite, of “civilized society” (defined as white culture), and light(er) skinned Blacks undermined that pretense.

Based on show content advertised in late-century playbills, traveling Black troupes eventually broadened the scope their shows to include more sophisticated material, in much the same vein as Sam Hague in the U.S. However, their most popular material by far remained the sketches rooted in the so-called slave tradition and plantation life. To be fair, minstrel performers were not the only African-Americans able to capitalize on that tradition. The Fisk Jubilee Singers toured the world from 1884-1890, performing Gospel music, a true product of the African-American slave experience, for primarily white audiences. The choir was loosely affiliated with the historically Black college in Tennessee, itself a product of Reconstruction, so it represented the greatest level of refinement possible for African-Americans to its audience. The Singers also indirectly promoted the ideal of American progress, by symbolizing the nation’s greatest post-War achievement: “conquering” the evils of slavery.

427 According to the October 6, 1886 issue of the Sydney Morning Herald, “All the poetry, passion, exuberant fancy, and deep religious feeling of the coloured races is embodied in their songs.” There are several more mentions in British and Colonial papers about the Singers’ manner and “refinement.” See Lynn Abbott, Doug Seroff, Out of Sight: The Rise of African American Popular Music, 1889-1895, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003). The book is an annotated collection of newspaper clippings, performance reviews, interviews, letters and diaries regarding the rise and proliferation of African-American music. The first chapter covers the Fisk Jubilee Singers as described by various local newspapers on their world tour.
The fact of their origin, an American university where many of them were educated, and their unquestionable financial success, on which several newspapers reported throughout the length of their world tour, easily gave the impression that African Americans had achieved self-sufficiency.\footnote{Waipawa Mail article that calls the “American negroes” “clever, not lazy or indolent.” Australian papers echoed these sentiments. Quoted in Abbott and Seroff, Chapter 1.} In a sense, the choir from Fisk helped validate the narrative of American progress by obscuring the nature of ongoing Black oppression. The fact remains that, in the late nineteenth century, the members of the choir were atypical representations of the African-American experience. Their individual and collective successes took place in spite of their origins, not because of them. The Fisk Jubilee Singers are another example of African-Americans who were racialized, but not colored. Though they performed within the same window as minstrelsy, which presented the worst of black “culture,” they were seldom negatively stereotyped, though their classification, as refined people of color, had negative impacts both on their mission and on other black people.

Fisk manager Frank Loudin and members of the local press both noted that Australian “blacks” were deeply moved by gospel performances; some Aborigine audience members openly wept. The \textit{Port Augusta Dispatch} reported that the Singers’ performance was universally appealing to the “musical amateur,” the “educated ear” and “the central Australian nigger.”\footnote{Port Augusta Dispatch, September 21, 1888.} The New Zealand press also made much of the “rapport” between the Singers and Maori, noting their easy companionship after cross-cultural performances of jubilees and \textit{haka}.\footnote{Abbot and Seroff, \textit{Out of Sight}, 12.} Both sides expressed feelings of kinship and mutual affection, a sort of nascent pan-Blackness. The Singers were certainly subjected to the same anti-Black discrimination, at least in Australia. Sydney hotels and restaurants refused to admit them, much to the chagrin of the reporting newspaper, because of their color.\footnote{Sydney Christian Monitor, October 8, 1886} In Newcastle, they were also refused admittance to hotels, and had to stay with patrons, “the leading citizens of the place” instead.\footnote{Wellington Evening Press, Feb. 14, 1889} At least one reviewer wanted them to “blacken up,” metaphorically if not literally, and perform cruder material
more in keeping with blackface minstrelsy. Yet, whites also used the Singers’ success to disparage the progress of their own Blacks in the hierarchy of civilization. The *Waipawa Mail* gently ridiculed Loudin’s sentiments of commonality and ranked American Negroes far above the Maori, who were stuck in “the last stage of savagery.”

White audiences may have understood, after some explanation, the purpose of a Negro spiritual, but they could not connect the experiences described within the songs to the present condition of Black people. To them, the music became an ethnological artifact, a piece of the timeless past, displayed in an authentic representation by “real” Blacks in much the same vein as slavery reenactments staged at expositions for the same educational purpose. Fisk’s Negro spirituals, however popular at the time, were stuck, rather like indigenous populations, in that limbo, the ethnological “present,” or else were ascribed a specific time-and-place relevancy. It is minstrelsy that provided a continuous narrative of Black inferiority. Years after the Fisk Singers made their final tour through Australasia, Georgia minstrels were still making the rounds and reaping the benefits of their notoriety. Most memorable to antipodean audiences was the indomitable Charles Hicks, who continued to field all-Black troupes in the 1880s and 1890s. Some of his best actors, Irving Sayles and Charley Pope, chose to stay in New Zealand rather than return to the United States, and continued to present themselves as “real” Blacks abroad until their deaths in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Most historians agree that minstrelsy as a form of entertainment was waning by the 1880s, supplanted by vaudeville and burlesque, artforms which themselves sprang from the minstrel tradition. I would argue partly against this assessment, and assert that whatever level of decline took place, it was the

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433 *Sydney Bulletin*, October 12, 1886. This treatment seems to be atypical however; they reported no other bad press throughout the remainder of their tour through the British colonies and Europe.


435 Ibid., 5-7. Note that the choir’s director, Frederick Loudin, ran the tour like any entertainment business venture. He printed and sold souvenir books which included a catalogue of the Singers’ repertoire, lending to the impression that the program was educational, not political. When he first introduced the Jubilee Singers, he explained the nature of Negro spirituals and their origin in slave culture. There is no indication that he sought to connect the slave experience with that of African-Americans in the Jim Crow South.

436 Irving Sayles died in Christchurch in 1911, and Charley Pope was still performing in Australia and Asia in the early 1920s. See Abbot and Seroff, *Out of Sight*, 62-5.
result of the appearance of Black actors. Once the white entertainment industry could no longer control the expression of minstrelsy’s narrative, though they maintained control of the narrative itself, it began to promote other genres where white actors could dominate. So the mainstream industry moved away from minstrel performances, but the general public, particularly in the American South, still frequented minstrel shows well into the 1890s. In the British imperial sphere, both Black and white performers in blackface managed to pull in audiences well into the twentieth century. “Coon songs,” focused on the malevolent zip coon caricature, became popular in the 1890s, during the Long Depression. By that time, it was Black songwriters who kept the tradition going, eventually adapting their works for the Broadway stage during the Harlem Renaissance. The advent of radio and television helped draw new generations of fans even as these technologies promoted the older forms which featured “Sambo” and “Mammy” archetypes.

Minstrelsy evolved with the real-life narrative of African-Americans, though it always worked to keep them in their place below whites, and outside of the national narrative. It depicted Blacks as ignorant and downtrodden slaves before the Civil War, and as ignorant and dangerous freedmen afterward. Minstrelsy presented a blackness that was antithetical to the American and Colonial experiences, because its Blacks were incapable of progress. Beginning in the 1870s, Hawaiians, previously racialized as Polynesians, were re-cast as “blacks” in the American popular imagination. Kalakaua and his heir, Lili‘oukolani were portrayed as coon and mammy figures by the press, broadcasting white Hawaiians’ determination that they, like all Blacks, were unsuited to the task of rulership. The effort to de-legitimize the ruling aristocracy of Hawaii was ultimately successful, based in part on the universal presumption of Black inferiority. The effects of these negative depictions impact African-American and Australasian Blacks to this day, and minstrelsy archetypal characters continue to imprison Black performers in roles that fundamentally demean them while encouraging a real fear of Black people that too often costs them their lives.

The proliferation of minstrelsy occurred during the rise of Social Darwinism, a set of ideas that, among other things, sought to associate African ethnicity with an immutable Blackness, that no amount of breeding, education, or freedom could surmount. Minstrelsy both fostered and reinforced a pan-white identity among the settler nations in the Pacific, Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii that negatively
influenced how these colonies thought about and legislated for their “black” populations. As the Pacific colonials banded together in their “whiteness” they objectified and belittled their indigenous populations, now racialized as “Indian” or “black,” in keeping with the contemporary language of the Euro-American (settler) nations. This racialization is literally incidental, based on the precedence of finding “new world” inhabitants in places where no human life or landmasses had been thought to exist, and the fact that most Islanders are dark-skinned.

Unwritten Hawaii: Hula in Tradition and Transliteration

Pupu we'u-we'u e, Laka e,
O kona we'u-we'u e ku-wa;
O Ku-ka-ohia-Laka, e;
Laau me Ku-pulu-pulu;
Ka Lehua me ke Koa lau-lii;
Oka Lama me Moku-halii,
Ku-i-ku-i me ka Hala-pepe;
Lakou me Lau-ka-ie-ie.
Ka Palai me Maile-lau-lii
Noa, noa ia oe, Laka;
Pa-pa-lua noa!
- Prayer to Laka to lift kapu

Legend credits the creation of hula to one of three Hawaiian goddesses: Laka, Pele, or Kupo. Most modern interpretations of these ancient stories revolve around Laka, wife of Lono, one of the most important deities in the Hawaiian pantheon, and she remains the "patron" of present-day hula performances. The common thread in the origin myths is one of celebration, gratitude, and worship. Today, the term encompasses a genre of performance; there are different styles performed for various occasions. Yet, hula may originally have referred to only one type of celebratory performance. The Hawaiian word for dance is ha’a, similar to the Samoan word fa’a and the Maori haka. There is no Polynesian-language variant of the word "hula," which suggests that it is specific to Hawaii, but it was not widely used by any European merchants, missionaries or explorers in connection with Hawaii until the

As discussed in Chapter 2, Hawaii passed anti-Black immigration legislation after the Civil War, the result of white planter efforts to recruit cheap labor in the face of indigenous demographic decline. By that time, African-Americans had such a bad reputation in the world, fostered by minstrelsy’s presentation of them, that the Hawaiian government felt a large Black presence would be too dangerous.

second quarter of the nineteenth century. It is possible that the word “hula” came to signify all forms of Hawaiian dance as the result of a European misapprehension, and thus became the universally accepted term.

It is impossible to say how hula would have survived the transition from sacred to secular initiated by the Kamehameha dynasty. The missionaries present at the time predictably condemned the tradition, both because of its lascivious nature, and its “pagan” function. Their disapprobation meant little at the time, but Ka‘ahumanu, either on her own initiative or to keep faith with her new religion, officially banned the practice around 1830, shortly before her death. The ban had no immediate effect, but government officials did enforce it where possible, and since hula requires long study and visual instruction, they managed to push it underground. What remains of the ancient tradition has been reconstructed from early ethnologists such as Nathaniel Bright Emerson, the Hawaii-born son of missionaries whose project to render the oral and kinetic tradition of hula into a written literary form resulted in Unwritten Literature of Hawaii: Sacred Songs of the Hula (1909). He gathered songs and stories from native Hawaiians willing to break “with the old superstitious tradition of concealment,” but by the time he conducted these interviews, hula had long since ceased to be part of the cultural fabric of Hawaii, and at best his work must be taken as a representation of an altered form.\textsuperscript{439} One could argue, and Elizabeth Buck certainly does, that transliteration itself prevents the recovery of “real” or authentic hula, because language is itself a colonizing force.\textsuperscript{440}

From the approximate representations provided through indeterminate oral interviews recorded by Emerson, we know that hula served several related purposes within early Hawaiian society. It provided a medium for ritualized worship of the sacred, and recorded and transmitted history and tradition for a non-literate world. Dancers and chanters enjoyed royal patronage and formed part of a group of specialized artisans whose work involved not just the creation and transmission of interpretative dance and chants, but also the building, furnishing and maintaining of sacred spaces, halau, in which to

\textsuperscript{439} \textit{Ibid.}, 4.

\textsuperscript{440} Elizabeth Buck, \textit{Paradise Remade: The Politics of Culture and History in Hawai‘i} (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 9. See also Pratt, \textit{Imperial Eyes}, 64. Pratt asserts that ethnographies are inherently Eurocentric and “Eurocolonial,” designed to reform prior social and cultural knowledge to fit within the framework of outside (non-native) comprehension. It is knowledge re-presented, not re-produced.
Performers invoked the holy and provided a space for it to dwell on earth. Emerson applies a hierarchy of importance that Westerners can easily recognize, rooted in what he feels is the analogous Greek and Roman tradition, but his exhaustive examples of songs/chants (mele and ‘oli) and prayers (pule) fall into several distinct categories. Religious performances served to appease akua, the sometimes vengeful spirits inhabiting the islands, or to invoke the gods to remove kapu or bless a structure, endeavor or person. Some chants also served more secular purposes and were composed and performed to recall historical events such as battles, or the genealogies of a family or a specific person. ‘Oli performances consisted of recitation with no accompanying dance. Some mele had no higher function other than to express love, joy or sorrow. The songs were composed with short repetitive verses which served a mnemonic purpose, to ease memorization.

Ho’o pa’a, or “steadfast ones,” led the music, and played heavier instruments while seated, and sang the mele alone or with the accompaniment the dancers. The olapa were young men and women who danced, along with mahu, “transgendered or effeminate men who embodied both genders, [who] became advanced practitioners.” Proficiency in hula was gender-stratified. Women could dance as olapa, but never advance to become ho‘opa‘a (chanters, musicians) and so could not become kumu hula, instructors and composers. Men and mahu could inhabit whatever role they wanted, and elevation to kumu may also have raised the status of many of these people, some of whom started out as maka‘ainana. The instruments used were mostly percussive: drums made from calabash gourds, coconut shells, or wood with sharkskin; finger cymbals made from pebbles; stamping tubes or drumming sticks made from

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441 Emerson might mean heiau, the term for Hawaiian temple or sacred site. But halau were built and maintained by dancers and performers, since they were the schools where such men and women trained, and they were warded by kapu, rendering them sacred spaces in their own right.

442 Mervyn McLean, Weavers of Song: Polynesian Music and Dance (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1999), 308. Not everyone is in agreement on the categories of hula, or even the number of types. W.D. Alexander, a contemporary of Emerson, felt there were four different types of mele, whereas a modern ethnomusicologist (c. 1925), Helen Roberts, felt there were only two. Emerson divides Hawaiian music into the three categories (mele, ‘oli and pule) mentioned above, and further categorizes the hula according to the instrumentation reportedly used to accompany the dancing.

443 Emerson, Unwritten Hawaii, 25; and Adria Imada, Aloha Americal, 39.

444 Imada, Aloha Americal 39. Emerson says that hula performers were often commoners, but that may have been his perception after hula was driven underground. According to Imada, many hula dancers were ali‘i. Then again, this could be a result of their elevation in society. Considering the complexity of hula and the precision required of chant, ancient Hawaiians most likely chose the best students from every section of society, except perhaps the kauwa class.
bamboo; rattles made from gourds or coconut shells filled with dried seeds; and rattles comprised of rows of dog teeth strapped around the dancer’s ankle or calf. Hawaiian musicians also played nose-flutes, a popular instrument in Oceania, designed, presumably, to allow a musician to keep their mouths free to sing or chant. Other wind instruments included the iconic conch-shell, which use had a strong kapu attached to it, and what ethnomusicologist Mervyn McLean describes as a bull-roarer (oeoe), a child’s toy made from dried leaves shaped and pressed together to create a hollow. A strip of rope was threaded through two holes drilled on either side of the oeoe, and sound was produced by spinning the instrument in the air above one’s head using the rope.

Hula was a form of artistic expression, contained not just in its choreography but also its accoutrements. Early drawings that featured Hawaiian dancers showed handsome, well-proportioned men and women wearing whale tooth necklaces and sometimes lei made from flowers, nuts or berries. Female dancers wore pa’u, bark-cloth skirts slung around the hips and gathered in the front or back, usually leaving their breasts bare. Male dancers wore malo, loincloths, or sometimes nothing at all, in which case they tied a strip of cloth or rope around their waist to hold their genitalia in place. The rattles served as further adornment, and feathers decorated the hand-held ‘uli‘uli to supply color and movement to the dancer.

Like much else in Hawaiian culture, hula is inherently hierarchical. Hula dancers trained for years under direct tutelage from qualified professionals. Every movement of the hand, arm, foot, or hip sent a specific message to the audience, and it took years to master the combinations of choreography used to present, say, a legendary story or invoke a certain ritual. Hula served as a historical document, a record of events especially genealogy, and its fluidity makes it something of “[an] historical process,” as well. Which, after all, is just what genealogy is meant to capture—the movement of history through time, and often space; a way for people in the present to connect to their past and anticipate their futures. Western intervention and appropriation devalued hula’s spiritual and historiographic importance, but, Westerns also used it to invent a future in Hawaii. By “transforming ancient rituals into an exotic show,”

446 Ibid., 308.
447 Imada, Aloha America! 43.
missionaries initiated a chain of “mythopolitical representations of reality” in which hula and chant were condemned by the colonizing elements to justify the restrictions they placed on Hawaiian cultural expressions.\textsuperscript{448} Later, the tourist industry applied the same interpretation of the form—exotic, inappropriate—to capitalize on the eroticized allure of Hawaiian paradise for public consumption.

Grass Skirts: Polynesian Appropriations and Cultural Revival

O ke au i kahuli wela ka honua
O ke au i kahuli lole ka lani

Oke au i kuka’iaka ka la
E ho’omalama i ka malama
O ke au Makali’i ka po
O ka walewale ho’okumu honua ia
O ke kumu o ka lipo
O ke kumu o ka Po i po ai
O ka Lipolipo, a ka lipolipo
O ka lipo o ka La, o ka lipo o ka Po

Po wale ho-i

[trans.]
At the time that turned the heat of the earth
At the time when the heavens turned and changed
At the time when the light of the sun was subdued
To cause light to break forth
At the time of the night of winter
Then began the slime which established the earth,
The source of deepest darkness,
Of the depth of darkness, of the depth of darkness,
Of the darkness of the sun, in the depth of night,

It is night,

So was night born.

- from the prologue to the *Kumulipo*, translated by Lili’oukalani\textsuperscript{449}

Perhaps it was partly because Kalakaua ascended the throne amid controversy that he dedicated himself to the Hawaiian cultural revival. With no eligible heirs to the throne after the death of Kamehameha V in 1872, the legislative assembly voted on eligible successors. He lost his first bid for the

\textsuperscript{448} Buck, *Paradise Remade* 2, 9.

\textsuperscript{449} Martha Beckwith, trans. *The Kumulipo, A Hawaiian Creation Chant* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951). Reprinted 1972 by University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, e-text by Hawaiian Electronic Library, \url{http://www.ulukau.org/elib/cgi-bin/library?e=d-0beckwit2-000Sec--11haw-50-20-frameset-book-1-010esccapewin&a=d&d=D0&toc=0}. For my discussion on representations of hula through advertisements, photos, postcards, and memorabilia, I made extensive use of the General Postcard Collection, the Commercial Art Collection, the Carter Collection, and scrapbook albums at the Bishop Museum Archives held generally in ms grp 367 (several boxes) and various albums, ranged 1989.001 to 2012.009.
throne to William Lunalilo, who had the best claim to the seat as a grand-nephew of Kamehameha I and Ka‘ahumanu through separate lines of descent. Lunalilo possessed greater mana, but he died only a year into his reign, and the second meeting of the electors chose Kalakaua over Emma, queen to Alexander Liholiho, Kamehameha IV. The campaign between the two grew contentious, and broadsides were plastered around Honolulu with each candidate’s claims to reform government, and ensure Hawaiians’ prosperity. The Nupepa Kuokua, a Hawaiian-language paper, endorsed Kalakaua, but Queen Emma drew quite a bit of support from maka‘ainana and the white population. News of Kalakaua’s victory led to a riot by supporters of Emma, dubbed “Queenites” by the press, which was eventually put down by armed American and British soldiers summoned from nearby ships in the harbor. The action was small, isolated, and ended quickly, but it gave white residents in Hawaii ammunition to question the legitimacy of the new king.

It is during this time that Kalakaua, a skilled musician and composer, ordered the Kumulipo to be translated and printed for the first time. It is the genealogical cornerstone to all humanity in Hawaii, and in it he traced his line of descent from the gods themselves. He used the ancient literature to validate his claim to the throne, but ascended to that position not through conquest, like the first Kamehameha had, but through democratic election as stipulated in his nation’s constitution. He may have felt, with good reason, that his reign initiated a new era in Hawaiian legislative history much like the Kumulipo documented the birth of something wholly new: light out of darkness. Though Lunalilo was the first elected monarch, his ties to the Kamehameha family and strong mana—not to mention his cousin’s acknowledgement, on his deathbed, that Lunalilo deserved the throne—guaranteed that vote. The Kalakaua dynasty, short-lived though it proved to be, showed that peaceful transition of power was possible, especially when that did not seem to be the case elsewhere in the Pacific. The king ruled for

450 According to Stephen Phillips, Lot (Kamehameha V) refused to name Lunalilo as his successor, even on his deathbed. Lot and and Alexander (Kamehameha IV) both refused to let him marry his childhood sweetheart, their sister Victoria Kamamalu. A child of their union would have outranked the Kamehamehas themselves. Instead, Victoria died young and childless, in 1866, which turned out to be the last chance either brother had to produce a legitimate heir in their line.

451 Broadside scrapbook, Hawaiian Historical Society, Honolulu, Hawaii.

452 “Riot of the Queenites,” Pacific Commercial Advertiser, February 14, 1874.

twelve uneventful years, during which he rehabilitated Hawaiian tradition and ensured the economic and political survival of the nation. As discussed, white planters forced the king to sign a partisan constitution that stripped him of much of his power in 1887, and Kalakaua ended his reign as something of a figurehead. In the end, it was white Americans who could not live up to their republican principles to ensure the peaceful inheritance of power; the same men repeated their violent show of force again when Liliʻuokalani came into power. She possessed her brother’s same musical gifts and also used the Kumulipo to present the case for her legitimacy, and Hawaiians embraced her as their queen, even as the white residents of the country violated the Hawaiian constitution and the American no-transfer policy.

Early on, Kalakaua had to balance the interests of a growing white population against those of native Hawaiian subjects who seemingly preferred a monarch more closely tied to the old dynasty. As one of his first acts, he signed the treaty of reciprocity with the United States that allowed duty-free imports in exchange for a dedicated market for Hawaiian sugar, but he also rescinded the ban on hula and supported efforts to increase the Hawaiian population amid speculation that they were doomed to extinction.454 Because it is a kinetic art form, hula has always been adaptable to the present needs of its practitioners, and Kalakaua’s cultural revival of the artform was also a revision of it. During the ban, hula had fallen out of common knowledge, but tourists, naturalists, and ethnologists often pestered Hawaiian women, usually through a male intermediary, to dance for compensation. The solicitation usually involved the expectation, clearly derived from earlier descriptions and illustrations produced by other Europeans, that some or all of the women’s clothing would be removed. Kalakaua wanted modern (circa 1876) dancers to be seen in the most respectful light, and the women who participated were strictly regulated following the old tradition of kapu, but also by the European expectations of modesty and decorum. The dancers all wore long dresses and shoes. Revived hula also maintained the gendered separation of roles, despite the fact that hula forms had survived in living memory solely through the agency of female dancers who passed on the moves and their meaning to their daughters in private.455

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454 Act to increase the Hawaiian Race, broadside, Broadside folder, Hawaiian Historical Society, Honolulu, Hawaii.

455 Imada, *Aloha America* 40. Note, that the nationalist movements of Europe are beginning at the same time that hula made its resurgence, which led in part to the conception of folklore, ethnology, ethnography, and ethnomusicology as disciplines worthy of research.
Isabella Bird was fortunate enough to arrive in Hawai‘i during the nation’s mandated cultural renaissance under King Kalakaua. She was present during one of “Merrie Monarch’s” early festivals, and approved of his efforts to revitalize his country, though she seemed aware that she held the minority opinion. It may have helped that the hybridized hula forms taught in the new hula halau, or schools, were Westernized to appeal to changing Hawaiian tastes as well as draw in Euro-American audiences. The instrumentation of the music evolved; ‘ukuleles and guitars joined traditional sharkskin drums to create a more Western sound that still relied on Hawaiian-language verses. Even the gestures incorporated more Western dance moves, from the waltz and polka. The hula, in other words, evolved during its revival in ways it never had before, even as it became the marker of “old timey” tradition in the eyes of most Hawaiians in the Victorian period. And, importantly, men disappeared from the performance itself, instead appearing as part of the instrumentation, or as managers for the troupes. They altered the composition of the performances to conform more to the expectations whites engendered for themselves in older depictions, and earlier protests, of hula.

Bird and other women travel writers were quick to affirm the decency of hula, and by association, its performers. They averred that the women wore blouses and skirts, though this was not so much to change world opinion on Hawaiian women as to safeguard their own reputations. Women travel writers were often alone and had to present themselves in a certain light, namely as respectable, well-educated, well-traveled. Such women could not engage in any behavior so improper as to attend what amounted to, in the public imagination, a “nudie” show. And yet, it is shortly after hula’s rebirth that hula dancers, or at least Hawaiian women dressed as dancers, began to pose for photos in the “traditional” garb—that is: skirts, lei, bare breasts, and bare feet. The associations about the dance and its performers disseminated outside of Hawai‘i had been internalized within the country, despite the rarity of public hula performances between 1820 and 1875. These new dancers displayed themselves along traditional lines in a world whose


457 Imada, Aloha America! 44.

458 Bird, The Hawaiian Archipelago, chapter 2. See also Helen Mather, One Summer in Hawaii (New York: Cassell Publishing Company, 1891). Mather admits that she, regretfully, did not witness a hula, but surmises that it cannot be “worse” than the can-can. Note that she visited the islands well after hula was re-established; the fact that it still has a salacious reputation despite the government’s efforts to modernize it is telling.
strictures on decency had drastically changed. By posing half-naked for such photos, they affirmed their Hawaiian-ness by rebelling against the strict moral code of the Victorian period. Yet they also adopted the European attitude that hula is Hawaiian culture, and that to display themselves attired as hula dancers was in some way an accurate representation of what it meant to be Hawaiian. Furthermore, the choreographers and stagers participated in the gendering of Hawaii by catering to expectations and using only female dancers, though it is likely the decision also stemmed from a broader desire by Hawaiian men to acquire a more masculine reputation. Sexualized dance was decidedly unmanly to the Western eye; similar gendered shifts took place in other dance forms deemed foreign or exotic by the West, like belly-dancing, which was debuted on Western stages the same as hula, at the Columbian Exposition in 1893.

Hula was performed by Hawaiians in places outside of Hawaii for the first time when a Hawaiian dance troupe left the islands in late 1891 to tour America. Along the circuit of sideshows, expositions and regional and world’s fairs, female performers endured catcalls and demands that they dance the “real” hula—the one with the grass skirts and bare breasts. Ironically, the skirts were a new feature to the “naughty naughty hula dance,” that had already been popularized by the dancers’ tour through the western and middle United States in the winter of 1891-2. The wet weather made use of the traditional pa’u paper skirt impossible, so the ladies on tour borrowed from the cultural dress of Gilbert Islanders, who used more durable grass skirts. Once winter set in, they switched to artificial flowers as well. The later addition of grass huts into the background scenery of the Hawaiian stage had more to do with the recent acquisition of the Philippines than any cultural callback to “old” Hawaii on the part of the troupe’s managers. What these audiences really wanted was an exhibition that situated Islanders within their place according the social Darwinian rhetoric of the time. As Indigenous peoples, the dominant ideology had already relegated them to the undifferentiated past as practitioners of lost traditions destined, like Islanders themselves, to die out.

The turmoil of the American takeover contributed to the opinion that native Hawaiians had nothing “civilized” to offer the world, and the engineers of the coup forwarded materials to the

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459 Imada, *Aloha America* 30, 83. Grass skirts are worn by people of the Gilbert Islands, who were imported to Hawaii as field laborers. American audiences conflated the cultural markers of the Islanders.

460 Ibid., 83.
Columbian exposition that made it seem as if Hawaiians welcomed American annexation. Since Kalakaua’s reign, planter interests in Hawaii had been circulating images of the monarch and Hawaiians in general that put them on the same level as African “savages” in the colonial discourse. In 1891, Lili‘uokalani ascended the throne and was treated to the same indignities in print. An educated monarch in the Victorian tradition, she was nevertheless depicted in political cartoons of the era as diminutive, half-naked, wearing a grass skirt and lei, carrying a spear, and speaking in a pidgin dialect to indicate her lack of intelligence and sophistication. Her features were Africanized to further underscore her unsuitability for self-governance. These representations were a critical strategy to the success of Hawaii’s annexation. African or simian features, nudity, and childishness delivered a coded message to white American observers. No one would expect the subject of such illustrations capable of self-rule. She was too savage, too Black—a representative of a backward race doomed to extinction. The women on the tour found themselves similarly maligned; hula and Hawaiian culture were equated to a “negro song and dance,” unworthy of preservation.\footnote{Ibid., 83.}

The troupe’s members traveled abroad to deliver the opposite message. They risked their dignity and reputations, many of them said later, to present a modern Hawaii to the world. Like Kalakaua, they wanted to show that their unique cultural traditions could exist within a modern, independent society. Like many cultural displays involving non-whites, the Hawaiians, and Samoans, expected the audience to separate who they were in the present from the historical reenactments they performed on stage. The sight of Hawaiians, particularly women, who insisted on their modernity and agency, who performed the reputedly salacious dance with decorum, modesty, and pride was anathema to the imperial project. Both within and outside of Hawaii, the “lascivious hula hula” was what people wanted to see, and it is no surprise that it became the one cultural marker that survived, albeit in warped form, in the reductive atmosphere of the late nineteenth century.\footnote{Twain refers to the hula this way in his letters from Hawaii which were printed in the Sacramento Union and in the book he wrote from his collection of letters, called Roughing It. His terminology, including doubling the word hula, was widely circulated and much repeated.} The Hawaiians extended their 1892 tour for some time because the political turmoil that ensued the following year made return impossible. The women, who
left as cultural ambassadors of an independent nation returned home four years later to more jeers and catcalls from their fellow subjugated Hawaiians, who viewed them as sellouts and race-traitors who had helped shape the world’s negative view of their culture, and their progress.463

Hawaiians found themselves on stage with other Pacific Islanders around the same time, and they were all made to perform their indigeneity in very stereotypical ways for onlookers. P.T. Barnum put Fijians on stage at the 1876 Centennial in Philadelphia and billed them as “man-eaters,” even though they had been raised as Christians, spoke English fluently, and had never consumed human flesh. That one of the performers, the “interpreter,” was an African-American woman from Virginia further indicated Barnum’s and the audience’s inability to see the Fijians as in any way other than a racialized manner.464 Barnum profited immensely from his “ethnological” displays—he later created a whole show around the comparative displays of misshapen, grotesque Brown and Black bodies and perfect specimens of white racial purity—and established the convention of presenting exotica adjacent to the formal exhibition, and charging for admission.465 Most, if not all, Midway performers were organized by private businessmen speculating in entertainment and, by using Islanders and Africans, hoping to make money quickly by trading on the purported salaciousness and licentiousness of the entertainers. It was imperative to these speculators that their subjects appear as “authentic” as possible—which usually meant dressing them in leaves, bones, loincloth and feathers, regardless of how they went around at home. The Hawaiian hula dancers fell victim to this convention almost incidentally, since authentic pa’u were made of paper and could not hold up against the cold and wet weather. Because they were also classed as exotic, the promotional materials and show reviews equated their performances with those of Islanders and Aborigines who drew on more reductive stereotypes to sell tickets. From the point of view of the Hawaiians at home, these women were “acting” out “Islandness” in the worst possible ways, and for payment.

The Hawaiian hula troupe’s tour was funded by Harry Foster, a white American jeweler from San Francisco. This affected everything from the venues from which they were forbidden to the press they

463 Imada, Aloha America! 94.
464 Maxwell, Colonial Photography and Exhibitions, 82.
465 Barnum’s famous freak show was called The Ethnological Congress.
could not control.\textsuperscript{466} This meant touring the Jim Crow South with bearded ladies and blackface minstrels, as well as performing in more high-brow venues in the major metropolitan areas. By contrast, when the Maori troupe toured in Australia and Great Britain, the exhibition details were handled by the Te Arawa themselves. Maggie Papakura, the tour guide from Rotorua, was well known outside of New Zealand, due to the international renown of the hot springs. When exposition planners decided to request Maori performers, they asked for her specifically, and she managed to control the narrative of the Maori performance every step of the way. While in Australia, Maggie wrote letters to the newspaper to promote her troupe’s tour through Australasia, just as Charles Hicks had done years earlier. These playfully upbeat editorials described a warm reception at the Melbourne Exhibition in Australia in 1910, and a similarly cordial welcome at the White City for the Prince of Wales’ coronation in 1911.\textsuperscript{467} Maggie was even photographed with the new king, George V in 1911, and at the exposition, the Te Arawa participated in a reenactment of the signing of the Waitangi treaty. Her notoriety lent her a credibility the unknown Hawaiian “hula girls” could not match, and her fame afforded the Te Arawa a certain level of respect abroad.

For promotional photos, the Maori troupe appeared in their capes, feather cloaks, the men bare chested and the women’s Edwardian up-do hairstyles modestly covered with shawls.\textsuperscript{468} Maggie was made the center of it all, said to have “taken them [the troupe] under her wing” and formed an attraction “so fascinating as to be irresistible” according to the British paper.\textsuperscript{469} Their routine was lauded with the same tones, and even same wording, as minstrel troupes were spoken of half a century earlier; comments highlighted their “natural accomplishment” and “careful training.”\textsuperscript{470} The troupe also sang popular English songs of the day, and some hymns, proof that they could represent both their timeless authentic and timely colonized selves. The Maori visit was sensational in a variety of ways, though singular in

\textsuperscript{466}Imada, \textit{Aloha America}! 60. Foster and the troupe spent six months in Chicago, before he took them along the proto-vaudeville circuit (known amongst Black performers as the “chitlin’ circuit”) of the American South.

\textsuperscript{467}Photos, Maggie Papakura Scrapbook.

\textsuperscript{468}“Maori Village at the White City”, unknown paper, March 1911. Maggie Papakura Scrapbook.

\textsuperscript{469}Clipping, Maggie Papakura scrapbook,

\textsuperscript{470}Review, Maggie Papakura Scrapbook.
none. Even when one of the performers gave birth to a baby, named “Coronation” for the organizing event, journalists discovered he was not the first Maori baby born in London. They dredged up a story from fifty years earlier, in the 1860s, when a group of Maori visited from the Bay of Islands and a woman gave birth to a child they named Alfred after the British king-consort, and Queen Victoria herself stood as his godmother. Because the Te Arawa in 1911 took control of the terms of their display, they were able to strike the best narrative path for their inclusion into Britain’s imperial story. They cast themselves as co-partners in empire, and while their audience may not have seen them that way, they were able to connect a shared Anglo-Maori past to a hopeful and integrated future in ways that did not overtly sexualize or demean the Maori themselves.

Attire shaped the international reputations of tropical and temperate Islanders as much or more so than climate and landscape. Whites arrived in Aotearoa at the beginning of the century and discovered evidence of agriculture and people clothed in robes and full-length dresses suited to the colder weather. Colonists complained about the savagery of the Maori in appearance and combat, but raised relatively few questions about the sexuality and sexual morality of the women or the men. When the Maori went abroad in their traditional garb, they did not elicit the leering responses to their bodies that the Hawaiian, Samoans, and Filipinos received during those same exhibitions. It helped also that Maggie Papakura, easily the belle of the Maori troupe, was light-skinned, spoke English fluently, practiced Christianity, and above all, was engaged to marry a white Englishman. Newspapers reported on their long acquaintance and romance, but the fact of it proved to the collective imperial mind that integration (and perhaps erasure) was possible...at least with the Maori. Even the sexually risque photos of Maori women depicted them in more or less the same poses and settings as white women, often with only their hei tiki to distinguish them as Maori.

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471 Port cities in Aotearoa/New Zealand, as elsewhere, developed communities of prostitutes to service the ships frequenting their harbors. There were also reports of Maori men selling the sexual favors of women for guns and other goods during the Musket Wars. During the 1820s, the port city of Kororareka (now Russell) was one of the largest ports in the Pacific, and became notorious for its lawlessness, drunkenness, and vice. As whaling industry declined in the 1840s, so did the port, and prostitution declined accordingly. The white female population grew rapidly in the islands, and white prostitutes replaced Maori ones by the time the gold rushes of the 1850s and 1860s brought an influx of lusty men back to New Zealand. See Philippa Mein Smith, A Concise History of New Zealand.

In the equatorial islands, Euro-American explorers found the same tilled and cultivated fields, and the same people, but in this instance dressed for the muggy heat of the tropics. The comfortable nudity of all tropical populations, especially the women, titillated and appalled white men, who associated all public nudity with prostitution. The sensibleness of scant attire in hot places could not compete with a lifetime of Christian indoctrination, and Tahitian and Hawaiian women especially were subjected to the rude presumption of Westerners because of their color, and their (lack of) dress. The state of undress in the central belt of islands and Hawaii at the beginning of the century was recodified at its terminus on European and American public stages. Colonizers drew upon their cultures’ negative correlations between nudity and decency to portray the Pacific Islands themselves as nubile and ready women eager to be ravished by white men. Representations of Hawaiians in grass skirts and coconut bras swaying to popular show-tunes became the de-facto depiction of Islanders in the tourism industry and immigration promotional materials, images that, in turn, encouraged lewd behavior from the troupe’s audiences. Where their fellow African and African-like performers (many of whom also wore grass skirts) were only tangentially tied to any one place, Pacific Islanders soon faded into the Islands they came to represent, part of the flora and fauna which they helpfully wore around their necks and waists for easy categorization.

“That Hula Hula!”: Appropriations to Suit White Fantasies

Underneath the sad Hawaiian moon
Where the sad Hawaiians love to spoon
While the Ukalalies strum a tune
Ev’ry evening you can see them doing

CHORUS
That Hula Hula,
Have you seen them do the Hula
In Honolulu,
The way they do?
I know, if you knew,
How to do the Hula Hula,
You’d be in Honolulu doing the Hula too
That Hula too

- from “That Hula Hula!” Lyrics (1915) by Irving Berlin473

Irving Berlin, famous songwriter from the early decades of the twentieth century, wrote “That Hula Hula” as part of “a new musical comedy,” called *Stop! Look! Listen!*, starring the infamous actress Gaby Deslys. Performed in 1915, and based on a novel penned by playwright Harry Smith, the operetta “exploit[ed] the Hawaiian craze then sweeping New York City.” In fact, the “craze” was a national phenomenon, and Hawaiian music (both instrumental and vocal, in English and Hawaiian) found its way into theater shows, films, concerts halls, and drawing rooms. By the time *Stop! Look! Listen!* found its way to Broadway audiences, the musical style it used was one of the most popular in the country. As was common at the time, the producers released a folio of piano music from the show for sale through local music stores. The folio’s cover depicts a pale Hawaiian woman with Anglo-Saxon features and roses in her hair, which is swept back from her face. On her head she carries a basket of pineapples partially concealed by a conical lid that itself resembles a Chinese hat. She is wearing a *lei*, and her dress is draped in the Classical Roman style, but with one breast bare and the other sleeve off the shoulder. She descends a set of stairs, one bare foot before the other, hip thrust to the side to give the impression that she is in motion, walking towards the viewer, at whom she appears to gaze with a fond expression. Palm trees curl up in the distance, with a suggestion of grass houses at their base.

The play revolves loosely around a talented chorus girl who fills in for a big-name star in an expensive production. In order to avoid conflict among the other members of the cast, the producer of the musical fakes the starlet’s “discovery” in an out-of-the-way place: Hawaii. The artwork then, is designed to complement the setting of the operetta. The starlet, a young, respectable, modern girl, co-opts the sensual allure of the figure on the cover without being directly implicated in so salacious a pose. The back cover depicts a rosy-cheeked blonde woman in a skirt, hat, and boots—a more literal representation of Deslys’ character. The front image represents the timelessness of the indigenous Hawaiian, the character’s foil, and her disguise, reconfigured into the sadly noble savage. Her Grecian dress and stance are meant to evoke associations with a lofty, proud past while her surroundings allude to a somewhat

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dilapidated present. She saunters through a grand ruin; the palm trees and huts, despite the distance, are small by comparison. The entire scene, from hat to hut to ruin, is unequivocally feminine. The Hawaiian woman depicted looks wistful, perhaps a bit sad, but also fertile (just look at those pineapples), and welcoming. The artist, Al Barbelle, has re-imagined Hawaii as peopled by light-skinned natives descended from an archaic Romantic past, not unlike his fellow Massachusetts native, Stephen Phillips, had done fifty years earlier.

Another music collection, called “Native Hawaiian Songs and Hulas” (1916) contains music in both Hawaiian and English, written between 1912 and 1916, presumably for those interested in “real” Hawaiian music, which was “everywhere the rage” in the 1910s, according to the tourism primers. The black-and-white cover depicts a Hawaiian couple, unshaded, against a coral-colored background. The man, seated and clothed, plays a ‘ukelele next to a pool of water and a stand of (presumably) coconut trees. Standing over him, but facing forward is a woman, clad only in a grass skirt, her arms raised in an undulating motion while she gazes over her shoulder at the ‘ukelele player. Her many, beaded lei sway with her movement, down her shoulder and along the curve of an exposed breast. Palm trees and a distant volcano complete the image, and the title card is framed by roughly drawn clouds and waves, the byline enclosed in the outspread wings of two coral-colored exotic birds. The folio includes sixteen songs, including “Aloha Oe” (called the “Farewell Song”), all labeled as either “hula” or “song.” One number “Maui Girl,” has no Hawaiian translation, and another, “Sweet Constancy (Ua Like No a Like)” pokes fun at the Hawaiian language by using homonyms to convey a message between languages.

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, Hawaiian-themed music and goods made their way onto store shelves just as Hawaiian-centric content made it onto the stage and eventually the silver screen. “Hawaii” was sold to American consumers as flowered cloth patterns, artificial leis, and novelty cards featuring dancing hula girls or surfer boys, all of which became popular merchandise. When tourist industries outside of the United States promoted Hawaiian tourism to their own citizens, they did so with

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477 Hawaii: A Primer (Hawaiian Promotion Committee, 1920).
479 Ibid.
the figure of the swaying hula girl. The insistence on hula as a “lascivious” cultural export served two purposes. First, it replaced cannibalism in the Euro-American imagination, but retained a degree of infamy required to justify colonial exploitation. Cannibalism—the hunting and butchering of other humans—is a masculine endeavor; in order to render Hawaii ready for peaceful conquest, it had to personify the feminine. Secondly, hula evoked the image of a loose woman, someone who needed to be taken in hand and rehabilitated, which catered to the Euro-American self-image of virtuous republicanism.

The Hawaiian Promotion Committee, with the collusion of tourism agencies, shepherded the transformation of Hawaii’s image, in its anthropomorphized, feminine form, into something very like the folio illustration. Almost immediately after the coup, American newspapers began to present Hawaiian women, especially those performing the hula circuit, as comely, light-skinned, and vivacious, not unlike their white mainland counterparts. As Hawaii’s export industry saw fewer returns as time passed, though it remained profitable throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tourism supplemented the export sugar, cotton, and coffee as the territory’s primary source of income until the second half of the twentieth century, when it replaced those commodities wholesale. To maximize that income, and in keeping with the industry’s secondary goal to encourage immigration, Hawaii’s Promotion Committee directed its advertising at white women as well as men. Images of light-skinned dancers with distinctly European features graced the covers of menus at luxurious hotels, ads for steamer ships, postcards, and maps. By the 1920s, infantilized versions of the grass-skirted woman, the “hula baby,” with large eyes, chubby hands and oversized head, also began to appear, a sort of Betty Boop without the sex appeal.

As Hawaiian bodies grew lighter on the page, white women appeared more exotic on stage, screen and in print. Just as blackface provided a vehicle for social transgression for white men, the “hoochie coochie,” adapted from Middle Eastern and Polynesian cultural performances, gave young women the opportunity to escape the restrictions placed on their lives. White women performed the hybridized dance on the Midway in their petticoats, free of the heavy dresses and bustles that literally

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480 Imada, *Aloha America!* chapter 2.
shaped them to suit the male gaze. By imitating the exotic, Edwardian white women could use it to free themselves, briefly and in the appropriate venue, from the pressures of bearing up civilization. In Europe, several white women secured fame by imitating eroticized performances in revealing clothing like they saw at the Columbian exposition. In America, “hoochie coochie” performers at the 1905 Louis and Clark exposition in Portland were reportedly very popular.\footnote{Photo collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon.} That fair turned a profit for both the city and its investors, so the organizers turned it into a yearly event, the Rose Festival, which relied heavily on female performers to promote idealized feminine beauty. Within twenty years, women performers transitioned from baring their ankles on the Midway to performing bare-legged in shifts and scarves on the main stage of a major production. The main program at the 1925 Festival, “Rosaria, an Allegorical Pageant Depicting the Influence of the Rose Upon the Progress of Civilization,” featured near its conclusion the “Dance of the Pacific Waves,” a celebration of American progress and westward expansion made possible, the program explains, by the civilizing effect of the female presence.\footnote{“Official Souvenir Program, Portland’s Rose Festival,” 1925, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon.}

Appropriating the exotic allure of the indigenous woman strengthened white women by providing an avenue for them to express their sexuality. White Euro-American women appropriated Turkish, Moroccan or Egyptian dress as exotic dancers, stage, and screen actors to seduce men in the show and in the audience. The accused World War I spy, “Mata Hari,” made a living emulating “Little Egypt,” the belly-dancer at the Columbian exposition, baring her midriff for photos and performances, and (according to the French) for dirty politicians selling state secrets. Eventually, the doleful, inviting tropical goddess who graced the music cover of \textit{Stop! Look! Listen!} gave way in the middle half of the twentieth century to the \textit{hapa haole}, or half-white, Island princess. A popular character in silent films set in Hawaii, she finds happiness only with white men, and ultimately sacrifices herself for her lover—but not before decking herself out in a grass skirt and flowers and dancing for him.\footnote{Wood, \textit{Displacing Natives}, chapter 6.} On the surface, the \textit{hapa haole} maiden functions as the Pacific Islander version of the tragic quadroon, a character invented to justify white male predation upon Hawaiian women. But since the character was created on screen for a visual audience,
and designed to be performed by women in “brownface,” it is clear this archetype does not serve only the “scopophilic male gaze,” as Adria Imada calls it. By playing *hapa*, white actresses got to assert their independent modernity, in grass skirts and leafy bracelets, while white audiences were transported to a virgin landscape and alternate reality wherein they could act out their primal desires by proxy. Which, as it happens, is one of the goals of the tourist on vacation.

In Hawaii, hula evolved again to suit the industry that made it world-famous. Other Polynesian dances, such as Samoan fire-sword dancing and the Tahitian *ote’a*, or drum dance, fused with the more familiar Hawaiian form to create the ultimate contemporary tourist experience in the Pacific: the *luau*. Guide books first defined the *luau* in the early twentieth century, though it has been the traditional form of celebratory dining in Hawaii for centuries. Once tourism picked up in the 1900s, it morphed into something part picnic, part regional exposition. It incorporated the most sensational forms of Polynesian dance, including acts never performed at expositions, meaning that those who wanted to experience the “real” tropics needed to travel to Hawaii to see it on display. Now, the *luau* has become the centerpiece of the hotel dining experience, designed to give Westerners a taste (literally) of the tropics in its wild, “native,” but ultimately controlled, setting, making possible the metaphorical consumption of the tropics, especially the Pacific, by the West. The *luau* condenses this grand process down to the individual level. Each participant, cannibal-by-proxy, is a guest at table, visually devouring the eroticized islands as they physically consume the exotic foods that comprise the feast.

This chapter presents the foundations of racialized performance as seen with the blackface minstrelsy genre formed in the first half of the nineteenth century—though its antecedents can be traced as far back as the 1500s. Depictions of Blacks on stage formed the cornerstone of all racial displays, which in turn informed most public and political discussions about race, so it is important to understand how Blackness was enacted, particularly in connection to the forms of Islandness put on display in the late nineteenth century. In her book, *Authentic Indians*, Paige Raibmon draws a web of connected references she calls a “binary framework,” and each line connects to its situational opposite on the other

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484 Imada, *Aloha America*! 63.
“White” opposes “Indian” and next to it, “inauthentic” opposes “authentic”—representative of the tendency of whites to equate Indigenous displays of culture with something “real,” a pure expression of the self. “Blackness” does not appear within her framework, but if it did, it might appear at a right angle to both “Indian” and “white,” a reference or concept used to reinforce the definitions of either identity as the colonizer sees fit. We see Blackness used as a tool—specifically, a wrench—used to dismantle Islander sovereignty in the last decades of the nineteenth century. As I noted above, whites have been using Blackness to denote general unfitness for centuries, and in Hawaii, they borrowed from the transit of Blackness in order to justify abrogating Islander sovereignty because a major component of the discourse on Blackness was their presumed incapacity for self-rule. This was “demonstrated” time and again in the minstrel show using the “coon” caricatures modeled on free people of color. The assumption was reinforced when “authentic” Blacks took the stage and presented the exact same incongruous image of incompetence, sly stealth, laziness, bumbling stupidity, and sorrowful nostalgia for the “good old days” of paternalistic dependency on whites.

This is not to say that “Indianness” lacked its own uses in the Pacific. As soon as whites assumed power over most of the Pacific Islands, Islanders resumed their role as Indigenous peoples in co-opted spaces, and the presentation of Islanders on stage helped cement their status as “authentic” and thus “timeless” (another binary, coupled with “historical”). They became racialized, once again, as a familiar version of the “noble savage” that had been used to categorize them in the eighteenth century. The retrenchment of Islanders’ prospects is significant, in that it was a total reversal of earlier policy, and marked a shift in the classification of Islanders as a “race.” Whereas Blacks were perennially incapable of independence, Islanders, who were Indigenous but not “red,” were encouraged to “choose” between maintaining sovereignty on the condition of modernity, or keeping their cultural traditions at the expense of control over their Islands, or their people. As time passed, even that choice evaporated and Islanders, like many Indigenous people during this era, were left with one option: to be “their true selves” in their “old” lands, now owned by Euro-Americans. For Native Americans and Australian Aborigines, that meant confinement to reservations for most, and that meant the only way to earn money outside of the

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485 Raibmon, Authentic Indians, 7.
impoverished conditions managed by the government was to enact cultural performances for mostly white audiences. While Islanders were not reduced to reservation life, they faced many of the same problems related to self-sustenance that propelled them out into the performance circuit. They traveled the world as advertisement for Island territories, promoting their own loss, but also surviving it through one of the few means left to them.

The performative spaces assigned to both minstrelsy and hula served different, but related purposes—not surprising, seeing how they were built using the same framework. Both displays served as living exhibits—moving dioramas—designed to situate both Blacks and Islanders firmly within their proper “place” in the Euro-American mindset, and to give whites literal and figurative purchase in whiteness, and white supremacy. By boxing up Blacks, whites could remind themselves of their history, turning Black performers into historical re-enactors of an imagined idyll. But Islanders were an indigenous population (a category from which even Africans in Africa seemed permanently excluded), and Indigeneity carried with it a different, but equally picturesque, set design in the Euro-American imaginary. Islanders were their Islands; when they performed cultural displays, all presumption of historicity was removed, replaced with a timeless, ahistorical construction that turned Islanders into history. So, paradoxically, hula and other cultural performances ceased to be historical, because they were no longer part of the distant, or even recent, past. Polynesians got to exist in a liminal space, the undifferentiated past, that could have been anywhere, any time, but resurfaced every time they went on stage and performed their current, but still traditional, culture. Western audiences could experience the satisfaction of witnessing traditions that they helped to “preserve,” without feeling responsible for their deterioration in the first place.

Conclusion: Looking Back to Move Forward

In 1963, the Church of Latter Day Saints opened the Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC) on the grounds of their compound in central O'ahu. The site, La’ie, had once been a refuge for persecuted Hawaiians, and the Mormons purchased the grounds from the Hawaiian government in 1865 in the hopes
that they could create a similar safe space for the dwindling Indigenous population. Mormons believed, like many fringe religious movements operating in Hawaii, that Polynesians were the lost tribes of Israel, and as such, the chosen people of God. The presence of fresh water, disused farm land and abandoned cotton crops made for an ideal, self-sustaining commune within which missionaries could advance their message and pay off their debts with extra earnings from their cash crops. La‘ie soon transformed into a plantation indistinguishable from any other on the island, complete with imported labor, to perform the backbreaking work that the Chosen people could not or would not do. Native Hawaiians and Samoan converts who immigrated to La‘ie were not allowed to sell their produce independently, nor transfer or sell land without the Church’s permission. They were, in essence, denied the self-sustainability they had been promised. The Church’s policies changed only with the decline of the agricultural industry in Hawaii, when the plantation had to change its business model in order to survive.

The construction of the PCC coincided with a return to a darker-skinned Hawaiian aesthetic that was likely fueled by the momentum of the civil rights and anti-colonial movements eventuating around the globe. Staffed by students from Brigham Young University, the PCC offers a half-tuition credit for performers or those who work backstage on its world-renowned cultural exhibitions. The grounds are divided into several Polynesian “villages,” separated by nation or ethnic group. Each village demonstrates the unique cultural traits of the Polynesian diaspora, and includes demonstrations, hands-on activities for children and signage that relate information about Polynesian culture, language, religion, and dress. This information comes together in the night show, a staged cultural performance that, taken with the day activities, is designed to provide an immersive Polynesian experience. Polynesian dancers have performed in long-form programs since 1981, exhibiting culturally accurate dress, dance, and music to fascinated tourists.

In 2009, the PCC changed the nature of its long-form performances, which had been, up until that point, an integrated and lengthier display of forms visitors would have witnessed in the separate villages.


487 Ibid.
“Ha: Breath of Life” (2009) was the first narrative performance the PCC produced; it told a story with a character that audiences could follow throughout his life, across the entirety of Polynesia. Through dialogue, song, dance, and animation, “Ha” shows the life experience of “Mana,” a boy born in Tonga, whose parents flee with him to Hawaii after some catastrophe, perhaps a volcanic eruption, devastates their island. After he is blessed in Hawaii, his parents take the child next to Aotearoa, where he is trained to fight and initiated into manhood in a haka. He travels to Samoa where he meets a woman and, after completing a challenge set by her father, carries her to Tahiti where they are married. Fijians arrive and murder his father, but Mana and the Samoans travel there and exact their revenge before the big finale, where all of the dancers, representing all of Polynesia (even murderous Fiji) come together to celebrate the birth of Mana’s daughter, “Hina.” At the announcement of the child’s name, which closes the performance, those who have paid attention during at the village tour gasp in comprehension, finally, at the narrative unfolding below them on stage. They have just witnessed the story of creation, when mana, divine power, created Hine, the mother of all Oceanians.

The program was carefully researched and very inclusive. The PCC contacted experts, many of them former students, from around Polynesia to contribute to the narrative, technical design, costumes, and general stage aesthetic. Site-specific languages, instruments and objects—tapa from Tonga, Samoan pandanus mats, Tahitian drums—give the appearance of verisimilitude. The audience is treated to a display of Tahitian ‘ote’a, with its fast hip rotation, separate (for once) from hula’s slow undulating movements and flowing hand gestures, and Samoan fire-sword dancing and the boisterous, competitive fire-walking that is unique to that community. But for all its accuracy and innovation, the narrative also relies on some of the same stereotypes that punctuate all the other Polynesian cultural performances on most European stages in the nineteenth century. Tahiti is still the island of love, Fiji is still full of murderous intent, Aotearoa is where the fiercest warriors live, and from Hawaii blessings flow. So what gain, if any, do Polynesian students have for participating in the commodification of their culture?

They gain the technical skills to pursue careers in the entertainment industry, and they receive some benefit from reduced tuition costs. They have the opportunity to learn cultural forms beyond their

own: the lead adult man, “Mana,” had to master Maori haka, Hawaiian mele, Samoan fire-walking and fa’a; all subsequent and prior long-form programs required similar dexterity. More importantly, the acquisition of such knowledge and skills gives the students who master them options they may not have had otherwise. Carpentry, set design, sound and lighting engineering, all have real-world applications within and outside of Oceania, where, increasingly, many young Islanders find themselves headed. For many Polynesians, moreover, mastery of these dance and musical forms serve as cultural revival, a way to re-connect with who they are as a people and what has been taken from them. Though it is not usually the aim of the white managers and audience members arranging and witnessing these performances, the Indigenous actors—be they Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, or Australian Aborigines—use the power they have in the only place they have it, the stage, to signal their pride, skill and basic humanity to the whites in the crowd, and to signify their cultural solidarity and dedication to survival to each other.489 Just as one group, performers, can encode different messages in their performances for two different audiences, two different groups (whites and Islanders) can perform the same act (cultural commodification) in the same space to different ends.

This is not to say that the gains of both parties are ever equal. The inherent power imbalance in the funding, management, arrangement, and display of such performances renders that impossible. In the world of the exposition, show producers made more than performers, and often performers were additionally responsible for their own costume purchase/manufacture and upkeep, and building and breaking down the sets on which they performed. At the PCC, the arrangement is not as dissimilar as it may appear. In addition to the requisite “authentic” performances, most Polynesian Mormons who traveled to Hawaii for school in the 1950s and 1960s had to help build the Center and its outbuildings, contracted work that involved no pay.490 As was typical of mission enterprises throughout the Pacific,

489 See Yuval and Austen on signification among Black performers and audiences during minstrel performances; also Raibmon on the same concept and process among Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest; and finally Roslyn Poignant for the different goals of Aborigines and their managers. The Aborigines she discusses were not willing participants in their travels; they were lured away under false pretenses and pressed into performance. This affected how they saw their roles in their exhibition, of course, but their story is one extreme of a continuum of appropriation and misuse revolving around racial stereotyping and commercialization in the nineteenth century.

490 Aikau, A Chosen People, chapter 3. The author gives a full account of the building of the Center and the College, both of which were completed with the “volunteer” labor of many Polynesian students.
proselytizers expected neophytes to labor for them, in exchange for their indoctrination or salvation. This system stung particularly hard in the Church of Latter Day Saints, however, since by their own doctrine, Polynesians were already saved, and by the 1960s, when construction began on the Center, many Polynesians were born Mormons. Try as they might, say what they would, "church" whites, like all whites, saw Brown bodies as labor-saving sources of revenue as well as purveyors of “authentic” Islandness. The trend continues: the PCC is the most-visited tourist destination in the Hawaiian Islands, and its profits go to fund the operations of the Church of Latter Day Saints throughout Polynesia, the Mormon New Jerusalem, and in Utah, the central location of the Church.
Chapter Five - Evolution

Uniformities and Appropriations

In *The Birth of the Modern World*, C.A. Bayly examines the networks and global processes created during the long nineteenth century. He uses the terms “simultaneity” and “uniformity” to describe the phenomena where concurrent beliefs and values are instilled across cultural lines by these processes. Bayly gives the example of late nineteenth-century Maori portraiture to demonstrate how certain people “adjusted practice to create similarities on a larger scale.”

Gottfried Lindauer (1839-1926), a Bohemian painter who arrived in New Zealand in 1876, achieved national fame through his series of portraits “The Maori at Home,” executed with such precision that the paintings, at a glance, are still easily mistaken for photographs. In the example Bayly uses, the Maori man’s self-effacing posture and averted eyes are in keeping with the presentation of indigenous subjects at the time—a means to objectify him. Bayly points out that the subject of the particular painting he references is also wearing a suit and cravat, British symbols of gentility and power; these clothes seem incongruous with his *moko*, but in fact both the cravat and the *moko* say the exact same thing about the wearer of them, though the two customs developed separately. The comprehension of appropriate displays of power has changed, hence the cravat and trappings of British gentility, but *moko* also demonstrated strong evidence of power simply through display. The underlying similarity is the desire to express power succinctly, though dress and appearance, and the overall uniformity lies in the Maori adoption of Western symbols of power and prestige.

Using Anne Maxwell’s methodology, one could easily claim the Maori portraits Lindauer executed were intended to display his subjects as authentic specimens, in keeping with the ethnological techniques of the era. His paintings were displayed at several regional exhibitions, and several even traveled to the Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London in 1886, where they were well-received.

While it is true that the Maori subjects of Lindauer’s paintings often chose to wear modern clothes or other accoutrements to show their capacity to master British mores and the civility so eagerly pressed on

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them by missionaries and settlers, there is nevertheless the feeling in these paintings that Lindauer wanted to document something before it disappeared. He was clearly fascinated by elderly Maoris’ *moko*, which missionary disapproval helped to drive out of fashion in the 1860s and was, literally, a vanishing cultural practice. These paintings and those of Charles F. Goldie (1870-1947), whose similar style and subject matter has been closely associated with Lindauer’s, fall more into Maxwell’s framework of objectification than Bayly’s concept of uniformity, unless one counts the uniform fascination with Polynesian tattoos that arose as a result of its decline in the Islands.

Bayly’s larger point, that people are modern whenever they express modernity, speaks to the unwillingness of colonial actors to recognize that modernity, which in turn affects their willingness to let Indigenous people integrate with white societies or create their own modern version of their own societies as they themselves see fit.\footnote{Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, 10.} Integration became a subject of discussion in New Zealand in the late nineteenth century, but only because the Maori did not vanish as anticipated. Once their presence was co-opted by the national narrative of benevolent empire, the tourism industry had no vested interest in seeing the Maori modernize; the Board routinely commissioned photos of tattooed Maori to use as promotional materials—some of which Goldie used for his portraiture in the absence of (by that time) living subjects with facial *moko*. These portraits represent what was left of the “old ways” of Maori bodily practice. They were too entangled with the tourism, ethnography, expositions, and the culture of spectacle at the time they were commissioned to speak forcefully of Maori modernity or agency. The chiefs and women depicted in these portraits sat for them for reasons entirely different from each other, which Bayly himself conceded, and the fact of their divergent goals presents its own concerns.

Islanders and whites may engage in the same activity to different ends, and Bayly’s similar point, mentioned within his argument for uniformity, may be better articulated by the photo series commissioned by Thomas Donne (or collected by him) of young Maori women wearing *hei tiki*… and not much else.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 9-14. Thomas Donne *hei-tiki* scrapbook.} Donne, the Superintendent of the Department of Tourist and Heath Resorts, and an avid collector of Maori artifacts, created an album of *tiki* figurines which included several photos of women
wearing their *hei tiki* (family heirlooms for Maori women) bare-breasted, completely naked, or covered with traditional Maori cloaks made of dog fur or perhaps even feathers. One woman, draped in a cloak, posed reclining on a pile of blankets in a *whare*, and with her *tiki* resting on the hem of her robe. She stares down the camera with a look of defiant petulance contradicted by her inviting posture, perhaps a silent objection to the session or the photographer, or the suggestive nature of her pose.\(^{495}\) In most of the images, though, the women faced the camera or glanced to one side, and adopted intentionally erotic poses. There is little historical authenticity to the photos; Maori women living in temperate zones typically covered their breasts, so the photographer could not rely on the usual excuses many ethnographers used to justify photographing the feminine nude.

Unlike Hawaiian women, who were often photographed naked or nearly naked from the waist up, Maori women in promotional materials were fully clothed in flax bodices, skirts, and cloaks, an often standing in front of a tourist attraction or object of interest. Since bodices were sometimes strapless, a woman’s shoulders were sometimes bared, but often she would position her cloak so it draped across one shoulder, limiting the amount of flesh exposed. Women in studio portraits sometimes posed bare-shouldered with *hei-tiki* and war clubs or paddles, their cloaks fastened around their shoulders, but they were sitting upright and fully dressed since the photos were often used as commemorative memorabilia or promotional post-cards. But the series of photos in Donne’s *hei-tiki* scrapbook are something else. For the Maori, the *mana* of the individual extends to his or her clothing, which invests them with *tapu*, but several of the models are wearing cloaks above their societal position, cloaks meant for high-ranking women and even male chiefs. The women posed in decidedly Euro-American fashion, displaying Maori *taonga* (treasures) and adopting the tropical Polynesian (lack of) dress were behaving in deliberately transgressive manner. They have appropriated *for themselves* the aesthetics of the era as well as the aesthetics of the spectacle or show which used nudity to denote indigeneity. The staged performances and official exhibitions created a uniform understanding of messages about racialization, gender, and display that the *hei tiki* models used to empower themselves. Nevertheless, the items and women on display are

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\(^{495}\) Tourism photos, PA-Coll 3405, 9453-6; and Thomas Donne unnamed scrapbook, ms 0619, Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand.
posed to appeal to the other uniformity engendered by expositions and ethnic performances—the scopophilic male gaze.

The regulation of the scopophilic gaze requires a uniform understanding of the delectable body that crosses both race and region. This systemization is really a form of codification that occurred simultaneously within the Euro-American sprawl of empire. The women and their hei tiki, the Maori portraits, and photos of nude Hawaiian hula dancers demonstrate Bayly’s concept of simultaneity, the idea that changes happen across vast spaces at the same time as part of the process of globalization, as well as uniformity. The processes that created simultaneities and uniformities also produced cultural exchange and appropriation between Islanders to Euro-Americans, and other communities caught up in the metropoles’ imperial webs. Bayly argues that the hegemony of the imperial powers was never comprehensive or total, so Indigenous and African peoples always had room in which to maneuver, sometimes to out-maneuver, their colonial “oppressors.” Bayly uses expressions of modernity like those enacted by the Maori models as proof of the ruptures in colonial power where Indigenous power inserted itself. I worry, however, that use of conceptual frameworks like cosmopolitanism and modernity to explore resistance and agency ultimately undermine the the point of resistance, and negates any agency colonized peoples may acquire to navigate their own oppression. A display of power does not have to be total in order to be destructive. By averring that Islanders resisted their cultural erasure, we run the risk of absolving the West from the heinous acts it perpetrated to demolish Indigenous ways of living and thinking simply because those acts were not successful. Nevertheless, the evolution of the Pacific was founded upon both the successes and the failures of Euro-Americans’ “civilizing mission.” It is through the globalization process that the cultural exchanges that are the subject of this work took place.

Simultaneities and Derivation

The Hawaiian kingdom developed coincidentally with the British “discovery” of the Hawaiian Islands. When Kamehameha I consolidated his power into a kingdom, he modeled it somewhat on the British monarchy to which he had been exposed through the stories of the merchants, explorers and military men who arrived in Hawaii at that time. This does not mean, as the British supposed at the time, that they effected positive change in the region, but the instance of the creation of the Hawaiian monarchy
was used to forward the concept of the civilizing mission. Hawaiians evolved their own society along lines that make the most sense to those in power at the time. The Hawaiians were the first hierarchical kingdom in the region, so the British and Americans may think they initiated sweeping changes, but in fact those changes were already well underway. Hawaiians simply appropriated the elements they thought they could use from the British, including the pomp and regalia of the monarchy, in order to re-encode their systems of hierarchical power to please or coerce the maka‘ainana and newly diminished ali‘i.

Concerns over the encroachment of European polities on Islander sovereignty led Hawaii to formally transcribe the rights and responsibilities of the people and the state into the first Hawaiian constitution in 1840, modeled on the British system of constitutional monarchy, an homage reflected also in the Hawaiian flag. Not long afterward, in Tonga, the tu‘i Kanikopulu, Taufa‘ahau consolidated his power and created another Oceanian monarchy modeled on the Hawaiian system. George Tupou I, as he styled himself, and many Tongans eschewed most things British due to a strong dislike caused by early Wesleyan missionaries’ missteps that they never fully overcame. When Europeans’ predatory actions towards land and people again became cause for concern, George Tupou and his advisors put together a constitution in 1875 that was expressly modeled after the latest Hawaiian one. Tupou felt that the Hawaiian system best catered to the interests of Tonga. The Tongan monarchy was, in many ways, a derivation of the Hawaiian monarchy, which in turn rose out of a syncretic amalgam of European monarchies, chief among them being the British system. The consolidation and expression of Indigenous power created fairly similar governments which sprang from a universal concern about loss of power and sovereignty—in other words, a uniformity. But these systems were also derivative.

The successful consolidation of power in Hawaii inspired the same approach in Tonga, and the presence of land-hungry Europeans necessitated such extreme moves. This was proven in Samoa in the 1880s, where the late attempt at consolidation along a Tongan/Hawaiian model and the ultimate failure of that attempt made annexation inevitable. The Tongan, Samoan, Fijian, and Hawaiian rulers were particularly interested in presenting to Euro-Americans the image of the modern monarchy, because they

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496 Scarr, Fragments of Empire; also the Shirley Baker Papers, University of Auckland.
had the early example (in the 1840s) of a European takeover in Tahiti and Aotearoa before them as evidence of how white actors in the Pacific could behave if they did not discern a recognizable authority with whom they could deal. However, nothing in Polynesian leaders’ actions in the central belt of islands and Hawaii indicated fear or submission to foreign authority. Until the Bayonet Constitution, the Hawaiian government did not appear overly worried about the stability of their power. When threatened with annexation to Britain in the 1840s, Kamehameha III used diplomatic channels to secure assurance that Great Britain recognized the Islands’ sovereignty. Both Kamehameha III and George Tupou I spoke openly about their practice of employing white government officials in order to deal with problems within the white resident community. They maintained a policy of jurisdictional separation between their native populations and the immigrant whites that, while irksome to the resident Euro-Americans, served the Island polities well. It was erosion of that separation, and the enfranchisement of whites in Hawaii that ultimately sealed that kingdom’s fate.

The presence of Euro-Americans, and their attitudes towards private land ownership created another uniformity, that of laws and customs across the Pacific and with the British Empire. The synchronization of property and civil laws resulted from the extension of the British Foreign Office into the Pacific in 1875, a move designed to address the lack of uniform approaches to law enforcement and criminal justice in years prior, where justice was meted out at the whim of passing ships’ commanders. These Foreign Office and British administrators traveled in the same circles and knew each other. They were educated in the same schools, with the same instructors, and often thought along the same lines because of their similar education, upbringing, class, and sometimes, their family connections. Though their personal opinions and approaches differed, they were united in their desire to serve Great Britain and implement national/imperial policies. They were also fairly uniform on their conceptualization of what “white superiority,” as one official called it, meant in the colonies. Most upper-class whites thought of noblesse oblige as a necessary expression of gentility, proof of higher breeding. They were comfortable with their elitism and expressed dismay over what they saw as lower-class whites, the nouveaux riche of

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497 Known as the “Paulet Affair,” when a rogue HMS naval captain implemented a blockade and embargo in response to the complaints of some British nationals in Hawaii. A Hawaiian envoy was despatched to London, and after a few months of negotiation, and the naval intervention of American ships to lift the blockade, Paulet withdrew.
the tropics, trying and failing to enact their whiteness in an acceptable way abroad. The bureaucrats, bleeding-heart white supremacists, developed their own uniform approach to white transgressors in the Pacific—deportation. But they could do little to interfere with those with valid land claims. By their own social mores, property rights superseded moral concerns about the bad behavior of many of the white residents towards Polynesians.

When Hawaiians institutionalized their royal power, they designed the trappings of Hawaiian monarchy along the lines of what already existed as evidenced by the British, the Swedish, and the Russians. Representatives from these monarchies all came to the Pacific either formally as ambassadors or informally as merchants, whalers, shopkeepers, and vagabonds. Like many nations, Hawaii benefitted from the technological advances available everywhere at the time. The Hawaiian palace and the original post office of Honolulu were some of the earliest modern buildings in that region of the world. The British and Americans took credit for these developments as well, and whites in Hawaii advertised these buildings with their modern conveniences as proof of the success brought about by their white republicanism. But while the Hawaiians took several procedural cues from the men and women traversing the Pacific, they modernized with the speed and success witnessed elsewhere in the world at the same time, especially in Germany and Italy. Hawaiians took advantage of the modern technologies at the same time as European royals, and sometimes in advance of them, because they were building new state and official buildings instead of retrofitting old ones, as Europeans and Americans were sometimes forced to do. White Americans and Europeans in Hawaii and (to a lesser extent) Tonga presented the simultaneity of modern technology as proof of racial uplift.

In some parts of the Pacific, Islanders accepted that cash worked as well or better than barter for goods and services. Maori and Hawaiians traded land for cash when they could, and many left the Islands in order to earn money as deck hands and sailors on whalers and merchant ships. Tongans and Samoans resisted the implementation of a currency system in their archipelagos, and preferred to trade labor directly for goods. As in many colonial settings, whites in Samoa adapted Indigenous forms of payment to suit their own needs as part of the process of “converting” them to a cash-payment system. The Germans appropriated the system of the payment using pandanus mats for services, which eliminated the prestige aspect of those transactions, wherein services were announced and celebrated within the aiga.
By regulating the cost of services based on the “price” of mats, Germans managed to accomplish through currency manipulation what they had failed to achieve through schemes and intrigue: the destabilization of the Samoan power structure. Attempts to create a uniform system of currency failed initially in Tonga, where whites were unable to shift the monarchy to a monetary system. Instead of paying the debts of government officials, Tupou forgave them; when Tongans wanted items for sale, they paid by “dressing copra,” a process so widely understood it is never fully explained. The debacle with the Free Church and the substitution of cash tithes with indentured labor can be interpreted as an unsuccessful attempt to keep both traditional and European economies at work simultaneously. Money did not take root in Tonga until well into the twentieth century, and only when cash began “operating in the sphere of prestige,” as a means to secure a higher status through purchases.

During Islanders’ cultural revival in the 1880s, they incorporated new forms of musicality—such as hymnody, and harmony—and new instruments—such as guitars and ‘ukulele—borrowed from white residents into their recovered folkways. I have spoken of the display and spread of Islanders’ performative cultural markers throughout the world, but it should be noted that folklorists and ethnologists were also studying European ethnic groups at the same time. Ethnography provided a means of cultural preservation, but it also excited an interest in the forgotten past of modern Europeans. What was often lost in narratives of empire disseminating from the metropole was consideration of the variation among the very people struggling to assert white hegemony on a global scale. Many of those charged to bring civilization to the Indigenous horde were only nominally white at home. Once in the colony, they romanticized past experiences among their now-beloved Irish or Welsh neighbors and longed to surround themselves with community. Whites in New Zealand and Hawaii joined fraternal orders in order to reconnect with an ethnicity they shed when they came abroad to participate in the whitening of the

498 Meleisea, Change and Adaptation in Samoa, 11.
499 Commerce Papers of the Western Pacific High Commission, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand.
501 See McLean, Weavers of Song.
Pacific. Part of the allure of non-white ethnic displays was that they reminded white Europeans of just how far they had advanced, but they also awakened nostalgia for the old ways and a desire to preserve their individual whiteness.

The Paradox of Exchange

I have argued here that color is not a malleable construct; that those designated “black” or “brown” have great difficulty moving out of that racist caricature, and certainly not in the direction of equality with whites. Africans, Asians, Native Americans, and Islanders were caught in multivalent transits that drew on references to color as well as to race, both determined by the supposedly objective categorization of white pseudo-scientists. Whites set the terms of the differentiation from people of color, defined them, and elaborated a fictional construct from which they omitted themselves. Whiteness, and white supremacy, were articulated as absolutes, but also as transparent truths. In other words, whites did not interject themselves into the “colored” discourse they circulated in the nineteenth century because they did not see themselves as people of color. As Lyndall Ryan put it, whites behaved they way they did because they “failed to see themselves clearly;” in fact, they refused to “see” themselves at all.502

Whiteness was held outside of racialization; there were ethnic groups consisting of people who were white, but white supremacy did not rely on differentiation among whites—as a matter of fact, the ideology erased the existence of ethnicity in order to impose a blanket whiteness. Individual communities clung to their identities as Irish or Welsh or German abroad, but they also embraced a pan-whiteness designed to elevate all of them, even those who were long-thought of as “trash,” by other whites who were in positions to oppress others by right of their whiteness. This was, in many circles, a revolutionary shift, one that poor whites understood best; for many, it was the first time their skin color played to their advantage. They were sold the idea of whiteness at expositions and in advertisements, political cartoons, packaged goods, travel narratives, and the other commodities, technologies, and services that inundated their world. The ethnic whites in the Pacific understood quite clearly that whites could do whatever they

502 Lyndall Ryan, *Aboriginal Tasmanians* (Allen and Unwin, 1981), Introduction. Ryan conducted oral interviews with the remaining population of indigenous Tasmanians, whose existence, at the time, was roundly denied by the Australian government. She quoted one of her subjects, in response to a question about why the Australian government persisted in denying their survival two centuries later.
wanted, because the rules, such as they were, did not apply to them. They carried their preconceptions of Blacks, Indians, or Islanders with them into the region, but once there, refused to align themselves to any overarching construct despite the clear benefit they derived as “whites” abroad. While they may have depended on whiteness to get them to the colonies, once there, they were steadfastly Irish or Italian again.

Whites as a race could never define themselves in meaningful ways beyond the moniker “superior,” a quality that they routinely failed to display in every new environment. Whether it was the Foreign Office or the local government or the intelligentsia, no official body could systematize whiteness because they could not control the actions of whites abroad. The bureaucrats responsible for managing whites were usually well-to-do statesmen or members of the nobility, and very comfortable with the privileges whiteness granted them. By and large, they hated the actions of colonial whites even as they were forced to defend or support them. Colonists in turn despised what they saw as government overreach when administrative agents insisted on holding them to a higher-class standard of behavior. Within the British community, their own intra-racist animosity and class conflicts interfered with the creation of a uniform code of conduct that would define the expectations of the “superior” race. In short, whites abroad failed to create a generic set of qualities that could function as a transit. The amorphous, shifting quality of whiteness could, however, be used as a weapon, a powerful one.

This is not to say that Victorian and Edwardian whites were twirling their mustachios waiting to pounce upon Brownness or Blackness and eliminate it entirely. They needed these other racializations to rationalize their own (often bad) behavior in a world that was still fundamentally a moral one, even if those moralities were shifting and relative. This is why so many stage productions and, later, major films used race to forward a morality tale. *Othello* was habitually performed throughout the century, usually by white actors in blackface until Paul Robeson became the first Black man cast in an American production in 1843 (a milestone Ira Aldridge reached in Britain in 1833). Through minstrelsy, “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” had taken on a life of its own, completely divorced from the sympathies Harriet Beecher Stowe meant the abolitionist morality-tale to inspire. The minstrel version was the most performed play of the second half of the century in the U.S., and minstrels usually included at least a scene or two, completely decontextualized, for decades after the Civil War ended. President Wilson called the romantic pro-Klan saga *Birth of a Nation* (1915) “lightening out of a clear sky,” a momentous ode to white suffering and
sacrifice as a result of liberating slaves.\textsuperscript{503} Theater was a public forum for discussion, indoctrination, and resistance for the masses. Whites longed to see their “real” selves in these productions. They also sought to absolve themselves of any wrongdoing. By “mastering” Blackness or indigeneity through play-acting, they could claim to understand those experiences, and judge white interference, their interference, into the lives of “colored” peoples ultimately as beneficial to the victim—thus affirming the success of the “civilizing mission.” Neither Blacks nor Islanders were what white people said they were, but that hardly mattered. Whites developed consistent stereotypes of them that collapsed the differences (as all stereotypes do) between non-whites while magnifying the separations between whites and everyone else. This tendency to compress non-white ethnicities, more than anything else, contributed to the interrelated racializations found within the transits of “Blackness” and “Islandness.”

Whites abroad sought to vest themselves with indigeneity to absolve themselves of the atrocities they committed in order to control other spaces and other races. They could not maintain a standard of behavior according to their own moral parameters. What they “mastered” through their interracial interactions was not racial uplift, but racial oppression. As a result, they cycled through expressions of failure, self-recrimination, and self-absolution—which only they can mete out because (according to the strictures of the day) only whites can judge each other safely, though never fairly. White colonial governments and colonists remonstrated with each other over the fate of Islanders (or Indians, or Africans), and implemented policies to restore, repay, or assimilate native populations without consulting them. Whiteness never functioned as a transit in globalization, but it did not need to; transits, by definition, are wielded by those with power in order to deprive others of their power. As long as whites saw themselves as non-racialized, objective observers and advocates of indigeneity, they could absolve themselves of their participation in, and enjoyment of, white supremacy. The most powerful display of whites’ power was, and remains, the insistence on their own “radical” individuality, their personal non-

\textsuperscript{503} See Erin Chapman, Prove it on Me: New Negroes, Sex and Popular Culture in the 1920s (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) for a brief overview of silent era “race films” made to combat the negative stigma against Blacks. See also Allen Woll, \textit{Black Musical Theater from Coontown to Dreamgirls} (Louisiana State University Press, 1989) for a description of stage productions featuring Blacks in blackface who often portrayed “scheming” Blacks trying to get ahead.
involvement in the processes of colonization, even as they collectively benefit from the disenfranchisement and oppression of the Indigenous populations around them.⁵⁰⁴

Nineteenth-century cultural exchanges reinforced a hierarchy rooted in white supremacy and the inferiority of Black and Brown peoples. The latter ideology mattered in societies like the United States where collective identity rooted itself in a belief in democracy. World’s fairs used merchandise and entertainment to sell whites on the concept of Black inferiority, so that they could blame Blacks for their continued struggle within a supposedly meritocratic society. Islanders were demeaned in much the same way, though for different reasons, and their inferiority was couched in their Indigeneity, which carried with it a presumption of savagery, stasis, and inability to self-govern. Euro-Americans constructed imaginary cultural, physical, and psychological traits to demean both Blacks and Islanders, and assert their own “radical innocence,” as Kiwi historian Jock Phillips calls it, as they used these ethnicities’ non-white status against them.⁵⁰⁵ By trading on the inferiority of Islanders and Africans, whites in America and Europe masked their aggression towards them and presented their actions as necessary, and fundamentally benevolent. The process of commodification was designed to make everyone think the same way about the same things in order to provide whites a profitable sphere of influence in which to travel, work, and feel good about themselves.

Using race, white society created a uniform conceptualization of “the world” to which both whites and non-whites subscribed. They did this in order to exploit them, and to justify that exploitation. They succeeded in creating a uniformity in conceptions about property and ownership, which in turn impacted land purchases, exchanges of goods and services, and relationships between those people involved in the exchanges. This in turn affected Polynesian power structures and attitudes towards hierarchy and sovereignty. Whites also forced a uniform understanding of the concept of a racialized

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⁵⁰⁴ Jock Phillips, a New Zealand historian and editor of the nation’s official encyclopedia, uses the term “radical” to describe the quality of the United States aggressive form of democracy that they, paradoxically claim is an inevitable form of human development while forcefully implementing it throughout the world. I use it here to ascribe the same paradox to the American and British insistence on individuality, which colonists and their descendants use to absolve themselves of injustices committed in the name of the civilizing mission, even though their presence in the colonies is directly a result of a concerted effort to take territory from indigenous communities.

⁵⁰⁵ quoted in Anne Maxwell, 5.
hierarchy or “chain of being,” a pattern of behavior and set of qualities that could be used everywhere to
differentiate between those who were “civilized,” and those who were not. Each group labelled “savage”
fought against that designation using the means at their disposal—rhetoric, behavior, language, dress,
bodily practice—to demonstrate their civility, but no one gave sufficient challenge to the concept of a
racial hierarchy to really refute it. Islanders, especially those who formed their own hierarchies, wanted
to elevate themselves to the level of whites in the pyramid/chain, but few people challenged the primacy
of whiteness itself.

W.E.B. DuBois, an African-American civil rights leader, historian, and prolific author, was
someone who did. He stated that the Japanese represented the best hope of non-white races to prove that
they could all achieve modernity and be designated “civilized.” Japan succeeded in engaging whites and
beating them according to the parameters they set; the island nation modernized quickly after being
forcibly pulled into the global economy, and they adopted the circulating policies of racialized supremacy
to suit their imperial aims. Their success in their war with Russia in 1905 did not materially change the
discourse about “brown” races’ capacity to achieve modernity. In fact, white scholars struggled to either
move Japan into its own racial category or isolate them from the rest of the white world to preserve the
narrative of white supremacy. If beating whites had once been the ultimate proof of equality with them,
Euro-Americans simply changed the rules to maintain hegemony, and re-cast Russians as inferior whites.

Meanwhile, DuBois worked tirelessly, not just for African-Americans’ racial uplift, but to prove
that Blacks were already at the level of white Americans. He organized the Afro-American exhibit at the
Paris Universelle in 1900 to make his argument using the framework that whites insisted on when making
racial commentaries or creating racist discourse. He collected hundreds of photos and conducted scores
of interviews to weave a narrative of Black empowerment intended to demonstrate to whites, using their
own methodology and favored discursive venue, that Africans were people. As such, they had rights and
deserved the same consideration as whites in the nations that they helped create. Moreover, he
criticized the white conceptions of racial purity, especially the inclusion of Anglo-Saxons into the
pantheon of “pure” races. DuBois argued at the Paris Universelle and elsewhere that, judged by the

506 See photo series, Library of Congress, and book citation?
standards of their own morality, white Americans had failed Blacks and each other, and the democratic principles supposedly instilled through their “white republicanism.”

It was a difficult point to get across to people who refused to be held accountable for the continued decline (as they saw it) of Black Americans, and DuBois ultimately failed to convince white Americans to take responsibility for the socio-political situation in which they found themselves. He eventually gave up on the United States and the nation’s tendency to recodify the designations for “civilized” and “savage” at will for the specific purpose of keeping Blacks from attaining the status of the former. He moved to Ghana and lived out his life there.

The transit of Blackness, rooted in the concept of Black inferiority, insinuated itself into the national and social discourses of most Islander polities over the course of the long nineteenth century (1780-1914). It served as a cornerstone, along with Indigeneity, of procedural, behavioral, and doctrinal policies constructed by whites towards Islanders. Where it was not internalized, it was used to justify Islanders’ discrimination against Blacks, and sometimes other Islanders like Filipinos and Solomon Islanders brought to Polynesia as labor. They used the narrative of Black inferiority to create racial hierarchies among each other that had never existed before Europeans arrived.

The West’s anti-Brown sentiment tied Islanders to their Islands in a way they had never been before. People who chiefly defined themselves in terms of their fluid connectivity across time and space evolved as a result of their commodification into separate and often hostile groups enjambed together in colonial spaces that no longer belonged to them. The long road back to togetherness came as part of decolonization, when white colonials once again became uncomfortable with their roles as subjugators and made attempts to “liberate” their Indigenous populations—in the most unbalanced, partial, and subjective ways possible. This mostly involved re-invention with little self-reflection on the part of white colonials; but Islanders aligned themselves intellectually with Euro-American Black Power movements or

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the American Indian Movement (AIM). This perceived radicalism provoked different responses from different settler-colonial governments, but the larger point can be made through the fact of twentieth-century Islanders’ intellectual associations with Indianness, and with Blackness. It is the final iteration of the uniformity of racialization in the region—Islanders beginning to define themselves in the same way that Euro-Americans have defined them for centuries. It suggests that the compression of identities into manufactured transits eventually collapses them together whether the objects within the transit—Islanders, Blacks, Indians, etc.—want to be or not. This erosion of separateness has led to yet another appropriation: the adoption of Other people’s methods of resistance.

Coda: Museum Representations of “Islandness” in the Polynesian Diaspora

The process of de-colonization brought attempts at restitution, though each settler nation interpreted their level of culpability, and thus their level of responsibility, differently. Settler nations built their foundations on some kind of erasure of “the Indian,” and recovery movements operate within the same conceptual framework—that “Indianness” is something that had been erased, and must be recovered—as part of a post-colonial mitigation of colonial actions. Multicultural advocacy only functions within the imperial pale because it had been necessitated within that same sphere. It is that very multicultural quality of former colonies and settler nations that creates difficulties for museums and other sites of commemoration to present truly representative depictions of their histories without causing offense. This is especially difficult in former colonies, where whites today insist that their non-involvement in past atrocities absolves them from current ones; Indigenous and non-white migrants view such sentiments as evasions, proof that what whites really want is to continue constructing a narrative in which they exist as both heroes and victims in a tragedy of their own making. Their refusal to accept the role of “antagonist” in the histories they craft about the spaces they “settled” mean that neither Indigenous nor interloper can truly move past the colonial “moment” in which both find themselves.

The tendency of white colonials to center themselves in every story can be visually traced in museums—the tail end of the narrative of benevolent conquest. The move towards balanced

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representation has been bumpy in the Pacific, as elsewhere, largely due to issues revolving around culpability. Australia struggles the most with this, or at least struggles the most publicly. The recent debates over terminology on museum signs and public policy underscore the conundrum white Australians face regarding how, and whether, to mitigate the damage done to Aboriginal culture and peoples. The debate between Australian historians on how to categorize Australian history first spilled out into public discourse during the 1990s. The argument began over revisions to the pacifist, settler narrative that had been promulgated up to that point, and which cast British interlopers as intrepid frontiersmen in *terra nullius*. Prominent historians Lyndall Ryan and Keith Windschuttle quickly divided into camps scathingly referred to by the other side as either “black armbands” (those who interpreted history as a crime against humanity perpetrated against Aborigines) or “white blindfolds” (those who held Australian settlers and their descendants blameless, and wanted historical representations to instill pride, not shame). Sadly, it clearly continues today, resurfacing every time the Australian government apologizes for past atrocities, or pays reparations for past harm. Many white Australians feel that they should not have to think anymore about the difficult chapters of the past, unconsciously evincing a teleology of successful racial uplift despite all the evidence (crime rates, lack of education, widespread poverty, drug use, depression) to the contrary.

Aotearoa/New Zealand’s approach has been to do the exact opposite, embracing Maori culture, at least publicly, incorporating Maori images and artistic design into the official business of the country. Some of this may be reactionary against the continent in whose shadow Aotearoa/New Zealand has always sat. The colony was formed to feed the penal camps and suffered through proximity because of Australia’s bad reputation in Britain. New Zealand has worked hard to differentiate itself from its closest colonial neighbor, however the public respect with which Maori are greeted by the state can be deceiving. Islanders elsewhere admire the inclusive aspects of the nation’s formal procedures, but Maori still receive


the worst education, suffer higher rates of drug and alcohol abuse, and endure greater poverty than their Pakeha counterparts. In short, they experience the trauma of the disenfranchised that plagues every Indigenous and misplaced community in the world. These are not truths a museum can easily represent in sixty-word signs, so instead the Aotearoa/New Zealand museums have opted for breadth and range. Eschewing “black armbands” and “white blindfolds,” the Kiwis have opted for the trickier path of public acknowledgement and restitution. There are no straight roads in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Auckland harbor is the public transportation hub of the city. The ferries, buses, trains, and commuter rail all converge there in the city, which is, paradoxically, on the edge of the water. Though it is New Zealand’s largest city, it is yet relatively small, and a healthy tourist can walk to the majority of the major attractions, so long as they are prepared to walk uphill. The War Memorial Museum, New Zealand’s first, sits atop a long slope, several miles up from the harbor. I believe that the placement of museums within the cityscape says as much about the society that erected it as the materials inside, and the museum planners clearly did too, because the museum, a neoclassical edifice designed to accommodate its own growth, sits alone above the city, surrounded by botanical gardens and with traditional plants and neatly manicured lawns of imported grass. Much like the nation itself, the WMMA (originally the Dominion Museum) insists on being its own thing, out in the middle of what can conceivably be called “nowhere.”

I visited the WMMA in October of 2014, and the special exhibit at the time centered around the exploration of the Antarctic, on the centenary of the Terra Nova expedition and British explorer Robert Scott’s attempt to find the southern pole. The exhibit was installed on the ground floor and consisted of materials from the doomed expedition, and artifacts from the base camp, samples collected (including the preserved body of an emperor penguin, still bearing its toe tag), and a reconstruction of the base camp. Because it was also the centenary of the start of World War I, the War Memorial museum had an exhibit at the top of the building, near the research archives, depicting the nation’s seizure and occupation of German Samoa. It may not have been intentional, but the positioning of the exhibitions struck me as the perfect way to encapsulate Aotearoa/New Zealand history: caught between scientific exploration at one end and empire at the other.
The Pacific Islanders in general and Maori in particular are presented in the majority of the museum’s galleries. Though the map describes the ground floor (what we call the first floor in the United States) as dedicated to “the story of Pacific People” that includes “Pakeha…and other newcomers” in that description, Polynesians receive the bulk of the space on the floor. Divided between “Lifeways” and “Masterpieces” the Oceanian galleries’ artifacts are subdivided by region, and backlit signs projected onto the floor from above announce the transition from one archipelago to the next. The use of modern technology to highlight objects displayed in traditional museum fashion is refreshingly unique. The galleries are darker than usual, probably to protect the fragile paper and fibre artifacts like tapa and pandanus baskets that comprise much of the collection.

The Maori Court takes up the bulk of the space on the floor. This is appropriate due to the museum’s location (it is Aotearoa, after all) and the sheer scale of the material collected there. The other Pacific galleries displayed a couple of outrigger canoes representative of those found in the smaller Micronesian atolls, but the Maori gallery features several large waka, including “Tapiri,” capable of transporting dozens of people. They have intact an entire whare (house) and pataka (elevated storehouse) and a tall waharoa (gateway) dubbed “Tiki” for the figure carved on the archway. Other stand-alone tiki statues dot the room, as do cases of smaller statues and artifacts, including war clubs, adzes, and elaborately carved tools, musical instruments, and weapons. The Pakeha gallery, by contrast, is slightly smaller than either of the Oceanian galleries and off to the side of the special exhibitions hall. I originally mistook it for a coatroom. There is not much attention paid to the narrative of Encounter here, and while the room boasts some beautiful Regency and Victorian furniture made from kauri wood, there is not much to overwhelm. All the space and energy of the floor is reserved for the Oceanian cultures with whom Pakeha now “share” space.

The crowds thin as one ascends the museum into the first floor galleries clearly designed for habitual, meaning resident, museum attendees. Kid-friendly displays of natural history and family room for relaxation and play take up most of the floor space. Artifacts from the ancient world, which formerly received pride of place in settler museum culture have been relegated to a small upper gallery,

511 Map, War Memorial Museum of Auckland

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entertainment for children. The third floor features the artifacts which give the museum its name. For
Kiwis, the Great War was devastating in impact, a national trauma. The permanent exhibits contain
medals, buttons, bullets, bits of uniform, and artillery. This was the first war that made use of aircraft, and
information about biplanes and aerial strategy receives significant attention in the signs dotted throughout
the room. When I visited, the exhibit on New Zealand’s quasi-independent colonial takeover of German
Samoa was installed in a separate gallery, round, like the atrium above which it sits. Its story was also
told mostly through signs, focused on the issues caused by the influx of Samoans into New Zealand’s
literal and jurisdictional spaces. For the first time, New Zealand, whose climate eliminated the possibility
of colonial plantation schemes, found itself host to large numbers of other Polynesians besides the Maori,
and Samoans did not fare well in the comparison. The displays did not relate much past the nominal
efforts to fold Samoans into the indigenous population after the war. But then, they were created within
the context of World War I history, so my disappointment in not finding a continuation of the story stems
from an irrational desire to see what happened next: to find, represented, an answer I already know to a
question I dare not ask in a room full of World War buffs.

In a way, the German Samoan exhibit went further into the present than many of the Oceanian
exhibits, though there were several in the downstairs galleries that mentioned Pacific Islanders in
contemporary (post 1950) history. But those installations worked to convince observers of the continued
presence of Islanders, as evidenced by their continued traditional lifeways, and felt more part of a show
than any real engagement with the difficulty of the Polynesian present. Nothing at the museum
underscored the paradox more than the layout of the ground floor. Amid the expansive galleries of
countless greenstone hei tiki and abalone breastplates, lies a smaller room with a stage and seating for
perhaps a hundred people for the cultural performance the museum puts on at regular intervals throughout
the day. The position of the room, its location near the raised pataka, behind the installed whare, and its
purpose remove all pretense of bilateral representation for which the museum and the nation claim to
strive. The Maori are as objectified in the national museum as they are at the Waitangi reenactment site,
rendered part of the exhibition in a room specifically reserved for this purpose. The performers here are
also independent contractors. They do not work for the museum, and it is not possible to gauge how
much they are paid for their services without asking (I did not).
I suspect that the arrangements are much the same today as they were over one hundred years ago, when Maori booked their own transportation and paid their own expenses and were reimbursed according to the specifications of a contract both they and the venue who hired them negotiated.\textsuperscript{512} I am certain that both the museum and the \textit{haka} troupe profit from the arrangement. I am equally certain that the museum profits much, much more. After all, they benefit from control of the venue just as exposition planners did all those years ago. Presumably the Maori performers do not get a cut of the revenue earned from craft services—the cafe and the restaurant, or the admission prices, or the gift shop. Even if the entirety of the entrance fee for the cultural performance went to the cultural performers, the museum profits from the fact of their presence. No one will go out of their way to the museum to see Pakeha farm rows of fields or execute bad paintings of beautiful landscapes, or kill all the flightless birds. But many, myself included will spend a day walking through the enormous facility and return to catch something we may not see anywhere else, a “real” \textit{haka} performed by “authentic” Maori in a setting full of their “treasures” (\textit{taonga}). They—we—return to feel immersed in culture, something we do not experience within the present moment of the Pakeha in Aorearoa/New Zealand, because it feels too much like our moment—British, American, \textit{haole}, \textit{papalagi}, \textit{muli}—elsewhere.

The twenty-first century desire for “new” cultural experiences descends directly from nineteenth century impulses that led upper-class and upwardly mobile Euro-Americans out to tour the world and enjoy its novelties. The newer cultural trend, expressed through museum patronage, has grown out of the rise of intellectual museum collections in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. It centers around the latest iteration of “radical” individuality, the desire to cultivate one’s best self, to present a thoughtful, informed, benevolent face to societies and communities still struggling to recover from “past” injustices against their non-white populations. Museums provide a quick, easily accessible overview of “the world” and a progressive, conciliatory narrative that allows beneficiaries of benevolent conquest and “white republicanism” to enjoy what they interpret as a bright future for indigenous populations in the British

\textsuperscript{512} In the early 1900s, the Hawaiian Royal Band was in demand and was booked to play at the Portland exposition in 1905 at the rate of $2500 per week for the first two weeks, and $2250 per week for the two weeks after that. Presumably they were expected to pay for their housing, though it appears the fair planners paid for their passage. They wanted to book some south seas natives as well, but deemed it too expensive. Had the Islanders agreed to the pay, they would have been expected to forage for food while at the fair, according to their traditional habits. See the Papers for the Lewis and Clark exposition, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon.
post-colonial diaspora, and the American neocolonial sphere. While it seems like a paradox that current museum patrons interpret ahistorical demonstrations of indigeneity as “progressive,” remember that all representations, past and present, of Indigenous peoples have been filtered through the narrative of the “vanishing Indian/noble savage.” Every performance of “real Indians” enacting their “authentic” cultural habits reads as progressive (and thus, as progress) because they serve as evidence of Indigenous resilience and survival. Since Euro-Americans rarely differentiate between commemoration and preservation, memorials, museums, and historical reenactments have a tendency to become conflated in the post-colonial mindset. This is demonstrably true at the War Memorial Museum, a planned museum space for “endangered” Maori artifacts re-named after World War I in order to pay tribute to the nation’s fallen soldiers, wherein historical reenactment in the form of *kapa haka* are performed in the most historical environment possible.

The drive out to the Bishop Museum is long, but pleasant. It was formerly the mansion of Bernice Pauahi Bishop (1831-1884), who resided a little outside the city of Honolulu with her white husband. The land has since filled in with private homes and apartment buildings, strip malls, and fast food restaurants, giving the average tourist staying in Waikiki a view of “real” Oahu they would never otherwise see between the airport and the beach. Staying in Hawaii for any amount of time, even on vacation, presents a particular challenge to the pocketbook that leaves many people opting to use public transportation rather than rent cars. The sight of the museum elicits an audible gasp that, for many middle income tourists, occurs in unison. One can easily separate them from the residents and return visitors even sooner than that however. Bernice Pauahi Bishop’s former residence is not visible from the busy street; it sits in a maze of 1950s ranch style homes and perfectly manicured lawns, so newcomers cluster together on the walks from the bus stop, worried that perhaps we made a wrong turn. When we finally see the late Victorian mansion made of lava rock, stained glass, and ornately carved woodwork, it feels like coming home. Not to our home (we just took the bus), but maybe that of the respectable older relative who collects antiques and keeps tiny spectacles at the end of a long chain. The grounds tell a different story, which elicits a different set of first impressions. Once we are close enough to verify the sign over the door, a glance around reveals palm trees, ferns, ginger, and other tropical plants that do not
grow in the soil on the mainland. Under one tree sits a large chair carved out of a massive boulder some time in the distant or recent past. And, positioned to look as if it is centered under the sign, is a *moai*, one of the large stone heads from Rapa Nui (Easter Island) that has become the most recognized, representative image of the Pacific since they were “discovered” and removed from the island beginning in 1869. Everyone knows the name of the Islands where those heads are buried, though few comprehend what they actually mean.

The familiar heads that we see were actually attached to bodies, buried in the ground. They were carved over the course of generations, and most of Rapa Nui’s natural resources were used up in the process. The construction of *moai* deforested the archipelago and trapped the Rapa Nui on their island because they no longer had enough lumber to craft canoes, and the lack of trees eroded the soil, making sustained agriculture impossible. Environmental historian Jared Diamond has posited that the presumed veneration of the *moai* fell into decline as a result of this environmental collapse, which may also have sparked an internal power struggle, so that by the time the Europeans sighted the islands in the eighteenth century, Rapa Nui was in crisis culturally, politically, and ecologically. While it is the most plausible theory of what happened in Rapa Nui, this scenario can and probably has been used to excuse the later predations of Euro-Americans on the island and the people, under the excuse that the Rapa Nui caused their own decline and needed saving by whites. In 1862, blackbirders from Peru began abducting hundreds of Rapa Nui and enslaving them; those few who were returned, about 200, were already very sick, and their illnesses caused an epidemic of Euro-American disease that tore through the remaining population of 1200-1300 people. In 1871, missionaries evacuated the nearly three hundred survivors in concern for their health and safety, though 111 decided to remain or were left behind, including 36 women of child-bearing years.

The *moai* were such a unique representation of Pacific Islander belief-systems they were instant artificial curiosities, and were removed from the island with the Rapa Nui themselves, over the course of

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513 The *moai* are visible from the seas surrounding Rapa Nui. The first Dutch explorers made note of them in 1722, as did subsequent passersby. James Cook visited the islands around 1774 and noted that some statues had been toppled over, which must have been as a result of intentional vandalism given their size. See Barry Rollet and Jared Diamond, “Environmental Predictors of Pre-European deforestation on Pacific Islands” *Nature* (September 23, 2004), 443-6. See also, Jared Diamond, “Easter Island Revisited” *Science*, vol. 317, no. 5845 (Sept.21, 2007) pp.1692-1694.
the 1870s. No doubt the Western world, and the Oceanian one, believed the Rapa Nui population would soon go extinct, and wanted to preserve the artifacts they would undoubtedly leave behind. The story of their epic survival is evidence of just how much strain a population can face, and still recover. Those remaining Rapa Nui slowly repopulated the island, survived annexation (by Chile) and independence (of a sort), and those who had been evacuated to Tahiti and their descendants returned eventually, leaving the current demographics at over 3,000 and growing. Seeing the moai here at the Bishop Museum served as a reminder, at least to me, of the stakes involved in colonization, which always produces the same devastating results for the indigenous populations, whether they were First Nations peoples in the Americas in the sixteenth century, or Pacific Islanders three hundred years later. If historians and anthropologists feel compelled to make analogies between cultures across vast separations of time and space, it is because the West keeps making the same critical errors in judgment and, frankly, morality, that lead to the same unsettling, inevitable conclusion time and again. That the museum acquired one of the moai and chose to display it outside rather than situate it indoors to better preserve it like other curators have chosen to do struck me as remarkably optimistic, as well as culturally accurate. It also serves as a compelling lure for those of us interested in Polynesian culture, because we get to see some of that “history” up close.

Inside, the museum collections house some items of European provenance, like the Kilauea paintings by Titian Peale, that connect to Hawaiian or Polynesian culture, but its central premise from the time Bishop willed the space to the kingdom in 1884 has been to preserve Hawaiian culture and history. Bishop was once betrothed to Lot, Kamehameha V, but instead married a white American businessman, Charles Reed Bishop. Bishop was in the line of succession, but refused the throne, which went instead to Lunalilo, who died not long after being crowned. Bishop was alive when the monarchy officially passed out of the hands of the Kamehameha family, and she was there for Kalakaua’s efforts at cultural revival beginning in the 1870s. The decline of the Hawaiian population had been an issue of concern for decades, and for the later royals, educated as much by white missionaries as by their Hawaiian instructors, Bishop may have come to the conclusion that education was the best way to prevent the total loss of Hawaiian culture in the face of modernity. When she died in 1884, she left funds and instructions to establish the museum, converted, as mentioned earlier, from her mansion in 1889. She also established
two gender-segregated schools, the Kamehameha schools, with the intention of educating the remaining “Hawaiians of pure or part aboriginal blood.” Her will stipulated that the children be trained according to standard English educational practices; it is unclear if she meant the British or American model, but the American public school system was still being established at the time the will was written (1883). She also stipulated that only Protestant teachers be hired to staff the schools. It seems that Bishop, who in life was one of the wealthiest Hawaiian nobles, wanted to preserve Hawaiian history, but also move Hawaiians themselves forward, as she saw it, by equipping them for a future according to the Euro-American standards of the day.

The current museum has undergone a complete overhaul focused around its Polynesian collection. Housed in a three-story gallery, smaller objects from the pre- and post-Contact periods of Hawaii are distributed in cases that line the walls, and larger objects, including the remains of a whale and a large model of an ancient Hawaiian hale (house) and grounds are suspended from the ceiling or elevated off the floor in the center of the large room. Before entering the Polynesian Hall, visitors can watch an informational video about Bishop, her husband, the Hawaiian monarchy, and the museum’s mission. Other video recordings are spaced throughout the exhibit and discuss a range of topics related to the artifacts, like kapa production, hula, or the monarchy. The new additions to the museum, part of the restructuring of the main house, include an expanded Pacific Hall, with more pieces from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Rapa Nui, the islands within the Polynesian triangle, and the islands of (mostly) Melanesia and Micronesia. The old design featured a portrait gallery at the top of a grand staircase which has now been reconfigured into a room dedicated to the ali‘i of Hawaii, a hall of monarchs, so to speak. Portraits of the ruling monarchs are there, plus several photos or renderings of other famous nobles; each monarch is displayed with his or her feather kahili, a type of traditional Hawaiian scepter. The feathered staffs give the room its name: the Kahili Room.

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514 Text of Bernice Pauahi Bishop’s will (Hawai‘i State Archives) transcribed by Kamehameha Schools and retrieved online, http://www.ksbe.edu/about_us/about_pauahi/will/

515 The renovations were completed after my visit there in December 2012. At that time, the Hawaiian Hall had been completed, and materials for the Pacific collection were awaiting installment. Some items were positioned outside the Hawaiian Hall for display. The new hall opened in September 2013.
Elsewhere on the museum grounds, a child-friendly science center features exhibits on volcanoes and lava, the ocean, and Hawaiian flora and fauna. On nice days, which is every day in Hawaii, experts demonstrate different activities from Hawaii’s cultural past, like traditional *kapa* production, or a hula demonstration, minus the Tahitian and Micronesian elements made popular by hotel *luau* events. The expansions to the museum campus and incorporation of the science center, which includes a planetarium, have integrated Bernice Bishop’s two goals: to move Hawaiians forward into the new century while preserving traditional Hawaiian objects and culture. The museum’s role as preserver of authentic Hawaiian ways has not been without controversy, however. It made headlines in 2004 when it was designated as a repatriation center for Hawaiian remains that had been buried elsewhere or removed.516 The museum declared itself a “native” Hawaiian organization in order to take the lead in these repatriation efforts, a move many other (or actual, depending on who you ask) native Hawaiian organizations contested due to the multivalent nature of Bishop’s wishes and the multicultural nature which has defined their execution. By collecting sacred funerary objects, including human remains, rather than returning them to their burial caves the museum is continuing an age-old, and ruthless, ethnological tradition rather than protecting Indigenous Hawaiians’ rights… or respecting them. Like all museums in settler nations, and perhaps all museums everywhere, the Bishop must navigate the choppy waters between exploitation, interpretation, and veneration that drowns most efforts at preservation.

The Peabody-Essex Museum (PEM) sits squarely in the middle of East India Square, a walking mall at the center of the tiny city of Salem, Massachusetts. It was once a single building, property of the East India Marine Society (EIMS), with a nearby library, the Phillips Library, housing the collection of ships’ logs the EIMS made public for future ships’ captains engaged in the China trade. EIMS members who traveled around either the horn of Africa or South America were required to collect samples and write travel narratives detailing the habits, appearance, and consumer habits of the “natives” they encountered during their long voyages to China. Their collected artifacts provided the seed collection of

the Essex Museum, which still has a very nautical atmosphere. The rest of the museum was built around the original building, which still houses some of the original collection of Oceanian and Asian materials and many maritime-related instruments and tools, even a few ships’ figureheads. Inside the main structure, several dozen galleries are spread out over three stories and two wings, but the pride of the museum is a four-hundred year old multi-level Chinese house, dismantled piece by piece in China and reconstructed in the courtyard behind the museum.

The PEM is an urban museum, despite the size of the city in which it resides, capable of supporting much more traffic than it receives for most of the year. In October, the population of Salem, home to the infamous witch trials of 1692, swells exponentially, and the museum is situated in the middle of a pedestrian-only street. Many tourists arrive in Salem to experience vicariously the suffering of over a dozen innocent men, women, and children, and the museum offers up a different narrative of the city which, at one point, led the nation in the China trade and was America’s busiest port. An entire wing of the museum is dedicated to that history, and features casements containing export art from that trade. The rest of the museum’s Asian material culture is divided into three sections featuring a broad sampling of art and decorative art in the Chinese, Korean, and Japanese styles. The other wing of the museum contains a few galleries of maritime material culture, including a recreation of the interior of the yacht “Cleopatra’s Barge,” which a wealthy Salem merchant sold to Kamehameha II in 1821. The rest of the space is used as an art gallery, displaying portraits of prominent Salem and Massachusetts residents executed by artists of varying notoriety. Some of the portraits are of ships, not people, a trend imported by the British and leftover from New England’s colonial days.

The PEM’s collections of Native American and Oceanian art were once confined to a few rear galleries in the back of the museum, in rooms accessible from only one entrance and frequented mostly by accidental tourists who stumble into them on their way somewhere else. It is a shame, because the Peabody Essex Museum has more Polynesian objects than any other American museum outside of Hawaii. It is also home to one of the three remaining statues of the Hawaiian god Ku, magnificently displayed in the center of one of the back galleries. The other two statues reside at the Bishop museum and the British Museum in London, which makes tiny Salem, Massachusetts the midway point for the range of the most important Hawaiian artifacts in diaspora. The gods were brought together at an
international exhibit at the Bishop Museum in 2010; the PEM has since given much more thought to its extensive collection of Oceanian artifacts, many of which remained hidden away in the back house or offsite storage facilities. In 2013, the museum made the decision to resurrect the city’s Polynesian connection and approved the construction of another wing of the museum in the location of the seldom-used Asian garden and cafe. The original building of the EIMS will soon be flanked in either side by modern, architecturally symmetrical buildings, which will increase the floor space of the three-story museum by 40,000 square feet and the storage space by 100,000 square feet. The official floor space will be primarily dedicated to Hawaiian and other Oceanian objects, which have, sadly, been crated up and stored until the project’s completion. The construction project has faced numerous setbacks, however, and the grand opening date for the new wing has been pushed back from 2015 to 2017, and has been slated for a 2019 public reception. It seems that the mainland’s best collection of Polynesian historical artifacts and its ideas about the appropriate display of the “domestic exotic” represented by Hawaiian culture are still under renovation.

Collectively, these three museums house nearly half of the collected artifacts of Oceania, dating back to Captain James Cook’s earliest voyage in 1768. If one includes the Te Papa Museum in Wellington, then the number of artifacts represented in the four cities (each heavily dependent on tourism-generated revenues) nearly doubles. Facilities like the WMMA, the PEM, and the Bishop Museum have the greatest impact on what much of the Western world thinks about the region’s history, and the region’s inhabitants, and each museum approaches the task of informing its visitors differently. These different representations determine the expectations of millions of visitors who travel between and within the Euro-American colonial diaspora every year. Though any representation is better than none, these museums still rely on the ethnological method for display systematized by the Germanic school of thought in the 1870s—the school whose racial ideologies brought about several genocides in the twentieth century. That ideology, encompasses historical telos, racial hierarchies, and the inevitable, unquestionable mastery of the white Euro-American over the world and its peoples. It is reified in our habit of collecting—both at

517 See the PEM website, www.pem.org/about-pem/expansion
the personal level, the souvenir, and the national level, the museum—and display of the radical, racialized Other and their “stuff.”
Conclusion

Net Gains/Losses

I began this work with a question: can we accurately represent colonized people in the spaces that no longer belong to them? The short answer (no, we cannot) poses another set of questions, not least of which, “why not?” that I have tried to answer here. In order to do so, I took the methodological approach of becoming a tourist, because I know, as a public historian, that most people acquire their historical content and context from museums, which shapes their world views, and indirectly contributes to the persistent inequities along lines of representation and restitution that make accuracy unattainable. Not every tourist enters a museum while on vacation, but many do. Again, a central justification for tourism was and remains the educational benefit of entering an alternate landscape, of learning new things about new people—or at least, for tourists to pay their respects to known communities they have been encouraged to see in a new light. White people are conditioned, by museums and commemorative spaces, to experience the gamut of emotions evoked by nostalgia, sorrow, (white) guilt, perseverance, and benevolent tolerance engendered by both the objects on display and the act of traveling to the site. They are encouraged, by the end of the visit, to feel they have sought new knowledge, and arrived at the end of a journey called “progress” leading to an experience called “cultural diversity.” Perhaps because I am neither white nor Indigenous, I sense, in these spaces not intended for someone like me, the tension between what Islanders present and what Euro-Americans absorb from the cultural exchange, which is decidedly asymmetrical.

The exchange is asymmetrical in ways I do not always address in my study. For instance, I barely speak about tattoos and rarely mention surfing, the two cultural commodities from Oceania that have gained global notoriety—fame which has generally erased the origins of those cultural markers. The appropriation of Hawaiian surfing and Polynesian tribal tattoos is largely a twentieth century phenomenon, and I have tried, with uneven success, to keep myself confined to the long nineteenth century. I also did not want the entire work to recount an inexorable shift from Indigenous to interloper, because that is not what happened. I focus on the big “stuff”—land, especially—but I hope I have not done this in a fatalistic way. It was by no means assured that Euro-Americans would “win” and Islanders
would “lose.” But there was a loss, a shift of power that has definitely diminished the prospects and altered the course of Islanders lives, and to ignore that fact caters as much to the teleological rhetoric of progress as wholesale adoption of the doctrine of “vanishing Indian” does. It is frustrating to see how present and alive Islanders and other Indigenous populations are, and to see how persistently Westerners continue to relegate them to the undifferentiated past.

It is equally frustrating to recognize in my tourist self the conflation of say, Maori cultural performance, with the Maori themselves. As a historian who spends a great deal of time in museums designed to assuage our feelings about the past rather than reflect the events themselves, I am nevertheless stunned by Westerners’ bifurcation of white and non-white representations. When we see objects or reenactment associated with, for lack of a better term, “white” history, we understand them to be items or events associated with the past, connected to people and ideologies that are no longer present. They are symbols to which hat we have come to pay our respects. But, because Indigenous people have been effectively removed from history, watching them perform encourages the impression that it is to them, not their past, that we show respect. This isn’t wholly a bad association, but it can lead down dangerous paths. By conflating the Maori with their “stuff,” in this case, their cultural reenactment, we behave as if we are giving them their “due” by honoring their past, present, and future—which happens to be eventuating before our eyes. This removes any incentive to act to improve the gap between where contemporary Maori (or Hawaiians, or Samoans) are and where they should be. In other words, such conflation and veneration erases the need for amelioration.

Which brings us to what most settler-colonials like to think of as the post-colonial “moment,” by which I mean the state of existence beyond the race wars, territorial disputes, and capitalist aggression that marked Euro-Americans’ quest for world domination. Three of the Polynesian polities in my study currently exist in three different stages in that “moment”: Hawaii is a U.S. state, Aotearoa/New Zealand operates independently of British governance, though the British monarch is still the recognized head of state, and Tonga remains an independent nation in a sea of territories and “protectorates.” One of them is American Samoa, which remains a U.S. territory, like Guam and Puerto Rico, caught in a particular trap

that neither protects nor enfranchises, political relics of an acknowledged “ugly” period in U.S.
development. But the Islanders within Aotearoa/New Zealand and Hawaii also remain well within the
colonial “moment,” as do most non-white people in settler nations and former colonies around the globe.
This means they exist somewhat outside of the parameters of “white” society; they are colonists
themselves now within nations that do not always encourage solidarity or inclusion. This is not
necessarily a bad thing—poverty rates and poor education aside—because it allows for the opportunity
that people of color rarely have in white-driven/white-centric discourse: the chance to define themselves
in whatever way they choose according to whatever restrictions they decide to impose on themselves.
This may mean learning hula or haka at community centers to reconcile their histories with their present.
It may mean working as an interpreter at a museum, or working at a surf shop, or attending university. It
may mean anything and nothing at all, or it may be simply survival, or survivance as potent Indigenous
communities. In the end, the questions surrounding Islanders’ representation in mostly white spaces may
have less to do with the sub-altern/colonizer dichotomy, and more to do with why we expect them to
conform to our schema regarding diverse representation—or history, or time, or symbolism, or “stuff”—
in the first place.

One of the issues I struggle most with is the positive articulation of diversity in whites’ post-
colonial world. This is because the expression of diversity is part of the same colonizing process as
forced homogenization, and both are actions springing from imperial agency, not indigenous ones. For
example, whites circulated Islanders throughout the region to suit their own needs. They created a
Pasifika diaspora within the Islands, which still has its own tensions and animosities. Forced to work far
from home, Pasifika peoples created their own distinct polyglot communities, which strained the already
thin resources of the Indigenous populations already present. The reversal of white supremacist policies
has often failed to account for these tensions. Islanders from across Oceania are now enjambed together,
to use Jodi Byrd’s term, by the leveling quality of white supremacy that erased the differences between
Maori and Samoan, just as it did between Islanders and Blacks. Groups who identified with each other
across the ocean divide in the eighteenth century resented each other in close proximity in the twentieth
century, and their path back to solidarity courses around and beyond the administration of the settler colonial state.

One avenue of return lies within the legislation surrounding land use and abuse. Europeans worked hard to instill their sense of ownership and property rights into Islanders, but the cultural reclamation effort has brought about a reversal of the concept in some countries. The recognition that white, Christian attitudes towards land and ecology have destroyed the environment has encouraged former colonies like New Zealand to return stewardship of the land to Islanders. Endangered animals and plants can be placed under the protection of Maori communities, effectively making them off-limits to Pakeha, Pasifika, and tourist communities. The Maori collect data, manage population size or cultivate new growth as needed, turning ecological recovery into instructive demonstrations for younger generations as well.519

The state of Hawaii has also taken the lead on limiting further ecological damage to Hawaii and its surrounding oceans. Hawaii relies heavily on fossil fuels due to tourism, but has implemented clean-energy measures and hopes to become the first American state to achieve total clean energy usage by 2045.520 The Obama administration assisted Hawaii’s preservation efforts by quadrupling the size of the Papahanaumokuakia Marine National Monument, originally created in 2006 by George W. Bush, which lies to the northwest of Kaua’i. The preserve now encompasses the entire archipelago and includes

519 An example of the government’s policy in action has been made the subject of a documentary on the longfin eel, the largest in the world. Found only in New Zealand, they were fished nearly to extinction by Pakeha. Whites did not eat the eels, but culled them to protect their trout population, a non-native species preyed on by the eels. Maori, who consider the eels as sacred animals, complained and eventually gained control of the population, the regulation of which they are solely responsible. See the documentary, “The Mystery of Eels” (2013).

several seamounts and the Midway Islands of Micronesia, where American jurisdiction in that part of the Pacific ends.\textsuperscript{521} At 500,000 square miles, it is the largest protected area “anywhere on earth.”\textsuperscript{522}

Embedded within land stewardship is the idea of territorial reclamation. Because property laws coalesced, universally, into the Eurocentric version of ownership, issues of sovereignty arose as part of the backlash in Europe and, to a lesser degree, in the U.S. over felonious transactions and treatment of the indigenous populations under their “protection.” Where Islanders have been able to document theft of land or abrogation of treaty, as is the case in Aotearoa/New Zealand, governments have made some form of restitution. The government of Aotearoa/New Zealand finally acknowledged their co-partnership with the Maori, codified in the Waitangi treaty in 1841, returned control of certain landmarks, restored the nation’s original name and incorporated the Maori language into official proceedings and public life.

After much political debate, Australia formally apologized to its Aborigine population, and Tasmania paid financial restitution to families disrupted by the forced removal policy, known colloquially as the “Stolen Generations.” Bi-racial children were removed from their mothers and placed in orphanages or adopted out to white families in an attempt to recondition and eventually breed out the “stain” of Aboriginal indigeneity. The government has designated a national “Sorry Day,” where white Australians are encouraged to commemorate the decimation of the Aborigine population in terms that acknowledge the responsibility white colonists played in their demise, and that their descendants, continue to play in their sustained marginalization. Of the settler nations discussed here, Australia struggles the most with the idea of conciliation and restitution, but that seems true only because Australia struggles so publicly with the difficulty of proudly commemorating a reprehensible history. This is directly related to the propaganda used to advertise Australian settlement, which described the continent as a virgin wilderness, \textit{terra nullius}, formed wholly for white progress and advancement.

Today, Aborigines have won settlements in court cases meant to compensate them for the devastating effects of ethnic cleansing. They join the ranks of other Indigenous groups able to work


\textsuperscript{522} Ibid.
within post-colonialism and secure some form of restitution and acknowledgement, which, I believe, is
the key to the actual progress toward the state of inclusive diversity that Europeans and Americans claim
to want. Yet, these victories present their own challenges to all former colonial nation-states; if
Indigenous peoples everywhere seek monetary restitution, how will these states survive if they are forced
to pay what they owe, according to the value systems they standardized across the world? There are no
easy solutions, just as there are no easy pathways to true equality, but one clear way to start would be a
collective shift in orientation, away from the worldview that refuses to equate current injustices with past
ideologies, especially when much of the world still grapples with the effects of whites’ “distant” history in
their present. As a public historian, I believe that shift must occur within the commemorative spaces that
shape much of the dominant narrative expressed by the majority population. The past is only prologue if
everyone escapes it, and a “moment” that exists only for some does not exist at all.
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Appendices - Maps and Illustrations

see attached files