

Hawaiian Musicians Sing the Soft, Sweet Songs of Sovereignty

KEVIN FELLEZS
Columbia University

Abstract

Nahenabe is the Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) term for “soft, sweet, melodious” and is the term most often used to describe the aesthetic ideal for Hawaiian music. In this essay, I challenge the stereotyping of softness as acquiescence or worse, cowardice, sweetness as weakness or naivete, and melodiousness as the sound of the tritely familiar or perfunctorily conventional. Hawaiian music’s central nahenabe aesthetic is often overdetermined as “merely” soft and gentle, incapable of expressing force or registering gravitas. How might Hawaiian musicians be heard as offering alternatives to conventional notions of the ways in which music signifies action, agency, and authority or, more pointedly, protest, opposition, and resistance to settler-colonialism? My central argument is that Hawaiian music is “not” the soft, sweet inviting sounds meant for tourist consumption but, rather, the expression of a people whose cosmological, ontological, and epistemological dispositions bend toward a fluid and flexible orientation to the world. In this light, Kanaka Maoli opposition to U.S. encroachment as articulated in their music has been consistently misheard and misunderstood. I assert that Hawaiian musicians’ mana (supernatural or divine power) and their music’s affective resonance and social effectiveness comes from its fundamental nahenabe aesthetic.

Key words: *nahenabe*, Hawaiian music, militourism, *aloha ‘āina*, Hawaiian politics

I musicisti hawaiani cantano le dolci e soavi canzoni della sovranità

Nahenabe è il termine usato dai Kanaka Maoli (nativi hawaiani) per “morbido, dolce, melodioso” ed è il termine più spesso usato per descrivere l’ideale estetico della musica hawaiana. In questo saggio, metterò in discussione gli stereotipi che vedono la morbidezza come un atteggiamento di acquiescenza o, peggio, di codardia, la dolcezza come una debolezza o ingenuità, e la melodiosità come il suono di ciò che è banalmente familiare o superficialmente

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convenzionale. *L'estetica nahenabe, elemento centrale della musica hawaiana, è spesso considerata in modo riduttivo come "semplicemente" dolce e delicata, incapace di esprimere forza o la gravitas. Come potremmo considerare i musicisti hawaiani in quanto attori in grado di offrire alternative alle forme convenzionali attraverso cui la musica significa azione, agency e autorità o, più precisamente, protesta, opposizione e resistenza al colonialismo? Il mio discorso principale è che la musica hawaiana "non" è un suono dolce e invitante destinato al consumo turistico ma, piuttosto, l'espressione di un popolo le cui disposizioni cosmologiche, ontologiche ed epistemologiche si piegano verso un orientamento fluido e flessibile al mondo. In questo senso, l'opposizione dei Kanaka Maoli all'invasione degli Stati Uniti, così come si articola nella loro musica, è stata costantemente sottovalutata e fraintesa. Sostengo che il mana dei musicisti hawaiani (il potere soprannaturale o divino) e la risonanza affettiva e l'efficacia sociale della loro musica, derivano proprio dalla loro fondamentale estetica nahenabe.*

Parole chiave: *nahenabe*, musica hawaiana, *militourism*, *aloha 'āina*, politiche hawaiane

«What we needed was to get Hawaiians active and off their ass.
Music is the easiest way I know because people tune into music.
That's what I use music for»
George Helm

Kimo Turner, *George Helm and the "Language – Pain Revolution"*

Nahenabe is the *Kanaka Maoli* (Native Hawaiian) term for “soft, sweet, melodious” and is the term most often used to describe the aesthetic ideal for Hawaiian music.¹ In this essay, I challenge the stereotyping of softness as acquiescence or worse, cowardice, sweetness as weakness or naivete, and melodiousness as the sound of the tritely familiar or perfunctorily conventional. Hawaiian music’s central *nahenabe* aesthetic is often overdetermined as “merely” soft and gentle, incapable of expressing force or registering gravitas. How might Hawaiian musicians be heard as offering alternatives to conventional notions of the ways in which music signifies action, agency, and authority or, more pointedly, protest, opposition, and

¹ The literal translation for *kanaka maoli* is “true people,” but is used to indicate “Native Hawaiian.” I rely on the Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel Ebert-edited *Hawaiian Dictionary* (1986) for definitions and follow the standard usage for diacritical marks by using the ‘okina to indicate a glottal stop and the macron to indicate an elongated vowel. I spell “Hawai’i” with the glottal stop unless referencing older texts, commercial entities, or historical terms such as the “Republic of Hawaii” or “The Sons of Hawaii” which do not indicate the glottal stop. I offer a concise English language definition at the first use of an *ōlelo Hawai’i* (Hawaiian language) term.

resistance to settler-colonialism? How might Hawaiian musicians perform «native refusal», to borrow a term from *Kahnawà:ke* Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson (2014) meant here to designate the *Kanaka Maoli* refusal of settler-colonialist logics, including the critical dismissal of Hawaiian music as pleasant but lightweight escapism?

To answer these questions, I begin by describing the *nahenahe* aesthetic and its relation to a broader category of what I am calling “soft musics.” I analogize the effects of soft musics to the myriad ways in which water, one of the softest materials in its liquid and gas (steam) forms, is yet able to transform, even destroy, the most solid of materials such as rock and metal. Since these effects occur within specific socio-historical contexts, I turn to the history of Hawai‘i tourism – and, by extension, the Hawaiian music industry – which served as the handmaiden to U.S. militarism in Hawai‘i and, in doing so, reshaped Hawaiian music as an escapist music for the touristic imaginary.

But rather than simply recounting the negative effects of tourism on Hawaiian music, I shift our focus to discuss the life of activist and musician George Helm, whose efforts helped to align *Kanaka Maoli* concepts such as “*aloha ‘āina*” (love of the land) with political efforts, linking Hawaiian music and politics in his brief but exemplary life. Finally, I conclude by thinking about the *nahenahe* aesthetic as part of a broader *Kanaka Maoli* epistemology and its activation in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement through the concept of *pono*, or holistic balance.

Hawaiian music privileges a *nahenahe* aesthetic, highlighting consonant melodies and harmonies with a sweet, gentle sound. Rather than such music sounding out an acquiescent *Kanaka Maoli*, however, I want to offer a counterargument, especially since contemporary notions of protest music are conventionally thought of as either engaged with noise and high volume in some fashion (think, punk music) or employ lyrics that are explicitly or didactically oppositional (think, folk-based protest music). Hawaiian music rarely offers either. Instead, Hawaiian musicians employ *nahenahe* and *kaona*, or hidden meanings, to give expression to their political concerns. Living within an oral culture, Hawaiians accept that words convey more than they denote and that multiple meanings and interpretations accompany any spoken word. More importantly, words are spoken through the *ea* or breath, an important spiritual concept for *Kanaka Maoli*, granting spoken words an importance beyond surface meanings (Dudley 1993 [1900]; Kanahale 1986; Meyer 2008). Correspondingly, Hawaiians

are often circumspect in their verbal communication and direct confrontation is assiduously avoided. Punning and word play are common in both speech and lyrics. It is one reason *kaona* is so widely practiced. The U.S. American injunction to “speak one’s mind” is at odds with *Kanaka Maoli* understandings of communication in which the unspoken saturates every conversation with meaning beyond the merely verbal or that constrains lyrical verse to the literal.

My central argument is that Hawaiian music is “not” the soft, sweet inviting sounds meant for tourist consumption but, rather, the expression of a people whose cosmological, ontological, and epistemological dispositions bend toward a fluid and flexible orientation to the world. In this light, *Kanaka Maoli* opposition to U.S. encroachment as articulated in their music has been consistently misheard and misunderstood. I assert that Hawaiian musicians’ *mana* (supernatural or divine power) and their music’s affective resonance and social effectiveness comes from its fundamental *nahenabe* aesthetic.

The aesthetics of *nahenabe*

Hawaiian musicians use the term, *nahenabe*, to name their musical ideal, seeking a balance between delicacy and flexibility, an affective register deeply connected to the ideals of *aloha ʻāina* (love of the land), a term I will discuss later. The element that connects Hawaiian music of various kinds is the *nahenabe* aesthetic. In terms of this essay’s focus on the ways in which Hawaiian music challenges the illegal U.S. annexation of Hawai‘i, I understand settler-colonialism in Hawai‘i as mobilizing racist policies since the nineteenth century in order to lay claim to Hawaiian territory while using Hawaiian culture to promote the colonialist project as a benign effort.

I want to suggest that the *nahenabe* aesthetic, which is often characterized as narcotic, even by some of its practitioners, can be thought of as a sounding out against settler-colonialist logics by “acting softly,” that is, by thinking of agency not only through bold, “loud and hard” acts but through quieter, less volatile ways as well. Perhaps we might think of “soft agency” through the metaphor of water, as soft a material as any we might consider. Water has two fundamental ways of leveraging power. One way is patient. Water simply drips on the same spot. Eventually, whatever the drops are hitting bear an ever-expanding cavity, slowly worn away with the patient drooling of water. The other way is for enough water to gather

together to overwhelm: from individuals drowning to entire settlements disappearing in the wake of tsunami or floods to assisting earth and wind in mudslides and hurricanes. Water as steam or ice can be dangerous or beneficial. Indeed, water is often imagined as benign, but carries the potential for death even as it is necessary for life.

Softness often uses a sly stratagem of patient corrosion – think, again, of the relationship between water and mineral, the soft liquid eventually working the hard mineral into sandy softness. Soft music almost imperceptibly reshapes materiality. Soft music is not anodyne or “safe” but intensely introspective while simultaneously active, alert, sensitive to the larger ambient context, enfolding itself in its narrowest cracks and crevices, and enlarging the space it occupies with geologic tenacity.

Nahenahe as expressed in Hawaiian song suggests defeating colonization is possible through a relentless but patient demonstration of powerful softness and aggressive gentleness through generous outpourings of *aloha* (love), and happiest when others are sharing in the music’s *jouissance*. Hawaiians’ music is forceful and agentive, refusing to live amicably within the colonial matrix, and confronting it with a seductive blend of exuberance and quiet charm, aurally articulating a world of social relations in which *all* difference is made visible. We can see this in the explicit way the typically-invisible presence of whiteness is made visible through the common everyday usage of the term, *haole* (literally, foreigner but used to designate whites and whiteness), in the quotidian interactions throughout daily life in Hawai‘i. Ideally, Hawaiian music originates from a cultural orientation in which encounters of difference are not automatically confrontational but, rather, hold the possibility for collaboration and co-existence.

Softness in musicking is doubly marked as sweet, gentle, and serene, often associated with spirituality or solemnity, a sounding filled with silence and silences – in a word, passive, even compliant. Soft has been a term used to describe genres and styles as varied as ambient, downtempo, bossa nova, smooth jazz, new age, easy listening, MOR (middle of the road), AOR (album-oriented rock), and soft rock, as well as early psychedelia, folk/folk rock, and the work of singer-songwriters. The category, soft rock, was a marketing term used in the 1970s to mark the merging of pop, folk, and rock with the former two modulating the latter, in distinction to the more aggressive sounds of contemporaneous “hard” rock. Soft rock musicians’ apolitical stance was allegedly signaled by their introspection and

focus on personal expression rather than more social concerns.² Art music categories such as minimalism as well as liturgical or religious music from medieval Gregorian chant to Zen monks' *honkyoku* (*shakuhachi* or vertical bamboo flute music) have all been perceived, described, or marketed in terms synonymous with "soft."

Significantly, soft is one of the textures of "indigenous" musical signification used throughout new age and the retro lounge-exotica music genres, especially in the attempts to evoke misty-eyed prelapsarian fantasies of innocent savages "dwelling in nature" and, in the case of Hawaiians, evoking a gentle, indolent people blessed with a childlike innocence, even at their most lascivious. The links between the feminine and the native are many – both are emotional rather than intellectual, weak rather than virile, naïve rather than worldly, soft rather than hard. In fact, the gendering of Hawaiians and their culture as feminine is one of the stereotypes against which their music is understood (Trask 1999 [1993]).

I use softness as a keyword to tease out the ways in which softness and corollary terms such as smooth, sweet, and gentle articulate social relations in which norms are contested and potential alternatives are offered. I am writing my essay in the midst of the 2020 #BLM protests in the U.S. in which racism and white supremacy are being opposed by a multiracial coalition. In this context, I reconsider the ways in which the soft, gentle musicking of Native Hawaiians prefigure and sound out social relations antithetical to the racist logics invoked by white supremacy and, implicitly, settler-colonialism in Hawai'i. Importantly, by staking their sonic and political claims in *Kanaka Maoli* rather than Eurocentric terms, Hawaiian musicians articulate and perform an indigenous rejoinder to the U.S. hegemon.

Hawaiian music and its *nahenabe* aesthetic began filtering out beyond the reef beginning in the 1920s, shaping the sonic imaginary of haole listeners on the continental U.S. through recordings and live performances as

² For example, Stephen Holden, in his *Oxford Music Online* (2001) entry, defines soft rock as «A term invented in the early 1970s to describe acoustic folk-rock and other tuneful, soothing types of popular music that use electric instruments. James Taylor, Neil Young (the early recordings), and Cat Stevens (Yusuf Islam) typify the folk element in soft rock; in Los Angeles, the pop-rock groups Bread and the Carpenters made polished, soft-rock recordings that the music industry designated "middle of the road". The term is now applied broadly to quieter popular music of all sorts that uses mild rock rhythms and some electric instruments in songs of the ballad type» (<<https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.49243>>, added emphasis).

well as part of the belongings of a growing Hawaiian diaspora desperate to preserve a sense of “back home”³. While early commercial Hawaiian music was associated with musical kitsch, an “ethnic” novelty music for early twentieth century popular music audiences, there remained pockets of authentic Hawaiian music within musical ‘*ohana* (family) networks though much of this music was rarely recorded. The music industry in Hawai‘i developed as part of the militourism industrial complex focusing its efforts on producing music for tourists rather than the much smaller local market (Tatar 1987). Furthermore, Lisa Kahaleole Hall links commercial Hawaiian music and its representative misrepresentations to settler-colonialism, writing,

The kitschy transformation of Hawaiians and Hawaiian culture [means] that unlike other stigmatized groups in the United States, Hawaiians are not feared, even though, with our warrior history, our popular image could easily have been different. Instead, our friendliness has been a major selling point for the tourist industry for more than a century, possibly because the death toll from colonization was so one-sided (Hall 2005: 409).

The tourist industry promotes an image of *Kanaka Maoli* as always welcoming, their *aloha* spirit imbuing them with an innate hospitality and generosity that ignores a long history of *Kanaka Maoli* battling non-Hawaiian encroachment in the islands. But as Hall suggests, the legacy of Hawaiian warriors has been long forgotten, replaced by the laconic yet hypersexualized beach boy and *hula* maiden who embrace all *malihini* (strangers) into their welcoming arms (Buck 1993; Coffman 2016 [1998]; Diamond 2008; Silva 2004; Trask 1999 [1993])⁴.

Hawaiian music’s *nabenebe* sound is oppositional precisely because it offers an alternative to settler-colonialist logics by softly announcing its presence, quietly opposing the racialized hierarchies articulated in social relations in which non-Hawaiians dominate Hawai‘i economic and political life. Yet it is true that Hawaiian music of any style rarely registers as abrasive even to non-Hawaiian ears unfamiliar with the music. Innocuous,

³ Hawaiian music began circulating even earlier than the commercialization by the recording industry or sheet music publication as *Kanaka Maoli* sailors left the Hawaiian Islands on whaling and trade ships beginning in the eighteenth century. We can hear this evidenced by the widespread transmission of sea shanties such as *John Kanaka* (Carr 2014).

⁴ Correspondingly, the rough-riding *paniolo* (Hawaiian cowboy) of Hawaiian slack key guitar lore has largely disappeared from historical memory and popular representation.

pleasant, even simple perhaps, but it would take a highly contrary pair of ears to find Hawaiian music “noisy” or “disturbing.” But it is arguable that in the contemporary metropolitan soundscape, noise is non-threatening, quotidian, even banal (*pace* Attali 1985). Noise or noisy music as the sound of the “shock of the new” is anything but shocking in the contemporary moment with noise reiterating a now-barely registered buzz, oblivious to its own complacency and reactionary position (Adorno 1997; Shank 2014). Additionally, noise just as readily reproduces forms of dominance and power as of resistance and opposition, its sounding out just as often reactionary as progressive (Fast & Pegley 2012; Johnson, Cloonan & Scott 2013; Shank 2014).

By contrast, *nabenahe* is gently persuasive rather than aggressively argumentative. I do not wish to be misunderstood. There is a place for both noise artist Merzbow (né Akita Masami) and Hawaiian slack key guitarist Charles Philip “Gabby” Pahinui. Pointedly for this essay, Merzbow’s animal rights activism is the sort of visible political action comparable to Hawaiian musician George Helm, discussed below. Importantly, however, Hawaiian musicians are invested in a *nabenahe* aesthetic and are uninterested in dominating a listener with decibels and velocity, instead seducing listeners through a leaning in, to borrow Barry Shank’s notion of musical connection (Shank 2014). In this sense, the *nabenahe* aesthetic invites listeners to explore compassionate, dialogical possibilities in opposition to noise artists’ desires to dominate listeners (Novak 2013).

The *nabenahe* aesthetic is articulated perhaps most readily in the *leo-ki’eki’e* (falsetto) vocals, which all *Kanaka Maoli* vocalists employ as there is no set tessitura for vocalists. Notably, I discuss only male musicians – one musician, really, in any kind of depth – though there are many important women musicians, such as Helen Desha Beamer, Genoa Keawe, Haunani Kahalewai, Noelani Mahoe, and Alice Namakelua, among many others, including the Lēo Nahenahe Singers, a female trio consisting of Noelani Teves, Ethelynne Teves, and Lynette Paglinawan who were mentored by Mahoe. The *nabenahe* aesthetic crosses gender lines as both *Kanaka Maoli* male and female vocalists and instrumentalists all seek the same balance between sweetness and melodiousness in their vocals, which soar above the supportive yet gentle rhythms of *hula*. Moreover, the gendered perspectives of a song’s lyrics are never altered to fit the vocalist’s presentation as male or female – male and female vocalists often sing lyrics from the “other” gender without raising eyebrows or altering their performance style.

The central aesthetic imperative is to achieve a *nahenabe* sound no matter the gender of the musician.

Nahenabe is not a romantic return to Nature or “the folk,” that space of unsullied *communitas* often ascribed to rural folk music. While Hawaiian music has enjoyed periods of interest for non-Hawaiian audiences, its turn as a popular music genre has little to do with traditional Hawaiian musicking, particularly prior to the period later dubbed the Hawaiian Renaissance (ca. 1964-1980). Yet, despite a long history of commercialization and trivialization, *nahenabe* remains the core aesthetic for Hawaiian music whether it is intended for tourists or for Hawaiian audiences and one can still hear the sweet, gentle quality in contemporary recordings and performances. This quality of *nahenabe* was pervasive in Hawaiian music even as young *Kanaka Maoli* turned their attention to regaining Hawaiian sovereignty in the 1970s.

The dance of the militourism and commercial music industrial complexes

During the Hawaiian Kingdom (1795-1893), the Republic of Hawaii (1894-1898), and the U.S. Territorial (1898-1959) periods, much of the musical practices of *Kanaka Maoli* went underground as Hawaiian culture was suppressed by haole missionaries arriving in 1820. By the middle of the nineteenth century, political actors such as Lorrin Thurston and Sanford Dole emerged from the ranks of New England Protestant missionaries’ descendants, forming a *haole* sugarcane oligarchy who strategized to fold Hawai‘i into the U.S. in order to secure their sugarcane business interests (Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, 1994; Coffman 2016 [1998]). They ensconced themselves into the political life of the Hawaiian Kingdom as advisors and legislators, gradually usurping *Kanaka Maoli ali‘i* (elites) and, eventually, Hawaiian sovereignty. In 1898, they forcibly annexed Hawai‘i with the support of the U.S. military, initiating the U.S. Territorial period (Coffman 2016 [1998]; Osorio 2002). Dole served as the President of the Republic of Hawaii in 1894 until securing U.S. annexation four years later (there was a brief period in which a Provisional Government of Hawaii was established in the wake of the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893 and the founding of the Republic of Hawaii a year later).

The triangulation I want to draw at this point links colonialism, tourism, and readings of *aloha* in which Hawaiians are rendered as always

hospitable, accommodating and welcoming to non-Hawaiians. Desmond links settler colonialism and tourism within the history of the Hawaiian annexation: «[*Haole*] who had wanted to overthrow Kalākaua, proclaim a republic, and seek U.S. annexation regrouped in a clandestine Annexation Club. Its members turned to travel and tourism to raise support and funds» (1999: 37). Lorrin Thurston, a key member of the Annexation Club, implemented a number of strategic moves, including the establishment of the Hawaii Bureau of Information (HBI), the precursor to the HVB. Its stated purpose was to advance the interests of the business community, support the World's Fair exhibit, which also helped initiate the worldwide interest in Hawaiian music, and «encourage and induce tourist travel, the immigration of desirable population [meaning, white European Americans; there was an incipient anxiety about the growing Asian population], the settlement of the country, the establishment of hotels, sanitariums, and other resorts» (Desmond 1999: 38).

This connection remained consequential to maintaining U.S. hegemony in Hawai'i. Heather A. Diamond asserts in her examination of the 1989 Smithsonian Folklore Festival celebrating Hawai'i's multicultural heritage that «[tourism] and tradition are bound together in the marketing of Hawai'i» (2008: 13). While some argue that tourism has helped perpetuate traditional Hawaiian culture, even if in adulterated or compromised ways, Elizabeth Buck, Jane Desmond, and Haunani Kay-Trask insist that tourism is neocolonialist. Trask is emphatic about the tourism industry's false claims of Hawaiian generosity and the transferability of the “spirit of *aloha*” writing: «The point, of course is that everything in Hawai'i can be yours, that is, you the tourist, the non-native, the visitor. The place, the people, the culture, even our identity as a “Native” people is for sale» (1999 [1993]: 144).

This image of generous and open-armed *Kanaka Maoli* was reinforced through the early history of commercial Hawaiian music, which began with the successful publication of *Mō'i Wahine* (Queen) Lili'uokalani's *Aloha 'Oe* in 1884, and flourished during the early twentieth century Hawaiian music craze. The yen for commercial Hawaiian music (i.e., not traditional Hawaiian music) was one of the earliest and biggest global popular music trends, beginning in 1915 with the sensational success of Hawaiian musical groups at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, California, notably sponsored by the HBI (Imada 2012; Kanahale 2012; Garrett 2008). Most of this music became known as *hapa*

haole, literally “half foreign,” with stereotypical Hawai‘i-based themes such as paeans to alluring exotic *hula* maidens or sunset beachside reveries set to musical forms drawn from Tin Pan Alley rather than indigenous Hawaiian music and typified by songs such as the ersatz *Makin’ Wicky Wackey in Waikiki* as well as less offensive fare such as Bing Crosby’s hit song, *Sweet Leilani* (Buck 1993; Garrett 2008; Kanahale 2012)⁵.

This misrepresentation was used to both promote Hawai‘i as a welcoming paradise for *haole* settlers at a time when U.S. Americans were hesitant to visit “exotic foreign” lands as well as to convince U.S. voters and legislators that Hawaiians were not resistant to annexation and, in fact, welcomed *haole* to Hawai‘i. Toward this end, *Kanaka Maoli* were described as generous to a fault. Early chronicler and Hawai‘i booster, Ferdinand J.H. Schnack writing in his 1915 guidebook, *Aloha Guide: The Standard Handbook of Honolulu and the Hawaiian Islands for Travelers and Residents with a Historical Resume, Illustrations, and Map*, can serve as a paradigmatic example. After Schnack briefly recounts the history of *Kanaka Maoli* depopulation due to disease and territorial dispossession while avoiding any mention of colonial violence or *Kanaka Maoli* resistance, he paused to describe the Native Hawaiian:

He is gentle, peace loving and law abiding [...] Unusually musical, he is capable of learning to play any instrument by ear in a very brief time, and is seldom without his guitar or ‘ukulele with which he accompanies his singing of the sweetly melancholic Hawaiian songs. *In fact, his whole life almost seems one round of laughter and song and happiness* (Schnack 1915: 18, added emphasis).

Native Hawaiians, Schnack and others argued, were simply incapable of self-rule despite (or because of) their preternatural warmth and hospitality, and thus needed the paternalistic guiding hand of U.S. governance.

Importantly, *Kanaka Maoli* openly resisted these moves through peaceful protests, letter writing campaigns, and armed rebellion against both the Provisional Government of Hawaii and the Republic of Hawaii, both of which they viewed as illegitimate. However, *Kanaka Maoli* were represented as happily acquiescent to the U.S. American public – a vision promoted through the tourist industry, which established the image of the open-armed Native Hawaiian, ready to welcome all visitors to their island paradise (Beamer

⁵ For a study that recuperates *hapa haole* song from its critics, though with important qualifications, see Yamashiro 2009.

2014; Coffman 2016 [1998]; Silva 2004, 2017; Trask 1999 [1993]). This representation effaced earlier representations of *Kanaka Maoli* as savage and bestial, incapable of self-rule which provided one of the rationales used to argue for U.S. annexation (Saranillio 2018). The Hawaiian warrior and the once-ubiquitous stereotyping of *Kanaka Maoli* as cannibalistic savages were transformed by the tourist industry into the “happy go lucky Hawaiian native” that, along with the passive sexuality of the “brown hula maiden,” served to inculcate a notion of *Kanaka Maoli*’s cheerful acceptance of U.S. rule (Beamer 2014; Linnekin 1997; Skwiot 2010; Trask 1999 [1993]). Jane Desmond notes the use of *aloha* in Hawaiian tourism «figures Native Hawaiians as “ideal” natives who are graciously welcoming to outsiders and who present visitors with a nonthreatening, alluring encounter with paradisaical exoticism [and] indicates both the perception that aloha has been lost and that its promotion benefits the tourist industry» (1999 [1993]: 4). The image of open-armed Hawaiians greeting tourists was once enacted on ship piers and, later, on airplane runways in the early years of jet travel. Though visitors may no longer be greeted personally by smiling young *wāhine* (females) and *kāne* (males) bearing *leis* and kisses on the cheek, the idea of the always-welcoming Native Hawaiian lingers in the touristic imaginium.

Concurrent with a Hawaiian music craze, the 1910s and 1920s saw significant rise in the numbers of white American tourists to the islands. In 1932, after the notorious Massie trial, in which *Kanaka Maoli* and Asian men were falsely accused and acquitted of raping a *haole* U.S. military officer’s wife, and the subsequent Kahahawai trial, which resulted from the officer murdering Joseph Kahahawai, one of the accused men, in what was claimed to be an «honor killing», there was a reinvigorated effort to use tourism as a means to re-establish legitimacy for *haole* political dominance (Rosa 2000; Skwiot 2010; Stannard 2005). Whereas a multiracial Hawai‘i was celebrated in the years prior to these highly publicized trials, «promoters erased Asians from tourism literature and landscapes [...] The Massie and Kahahawai cases had made a mockery of claims that multiracial Hawai‘i had solved the problem of the races, so *haole* promoted it as a South Sea paradise peopled solely by caring whites and carefree natives or just by whites acting out fantasies of native culture» (Skwiot 2010: 142). Throughout the Great Depression and through the years of the Second World War, Asians, despite being the islands’ largest population group, were effectively erased in materials promoting tourism.

After 1945, however, tourism once again used Hawai‘i to celebrate U.S.-styled multiracial harmony, particularly for advocates of statehood.

Tourist agencies advertised Hawai'i as the premiere example of American democracy, «a world famous melting pot, imbued with the spirit of live well and let others live well; a land where there is little poverty, hardship, or disease; a land that is tropical in aspect but temperate in atmosphere and conduct» (Desmond 1999: 109-110).

In 1955, the Hawaii Visitors Bureau (HVB) linked Hawai'i's value to its multiracial culture: «The traditional appeal of Hawaii to visitors parallels our desire to create in Hawaii a rich culture based upon the contributions that each of the many racial groups here can make to that culture» (Hawaii Visitors Bureau 1955: 35). The HVB, along with the Governor's Advisory Committee on Tourism, argued that resources for social services were better allocated to efforts to promote tourism «unless proponents could demonstrate 'that the benefits from such service will be greater than from the private purpose for which funds would be used'» (Skwiot 2010: 163). Arguing a neoliberal privatization position *avant la lettre*, the committee acknowledged in intra-committee communications that «it is over-estimating to believe that tourism employs a great number of people» (Skwiot 2010: 163). Despite this private acknowledgement, however, tourism would serve as the handmaiden for continued haole supremacy in Hawai'i, rising to become the island chains' premier industry while masking the establishment of Hawai'i's second largest engine of economic activity, the U.S. military, forming the islands' militourism industrial complex (Ferguson and Turnbull 1999; Gonzalez 2013; Kajihiro 2008, Teaiwa 2008). As Kathy E. Ferguson and Phyllis Turnbull note, «Everywhere you look in Hawai'i, you see the military» (Ferguson and Turnbull 1999: ix), which installs a «form of bribery, in which Hawai'i's economic and physical security can only be guaranteed by the [U.S.] military presence» (Ferguson & Turnbull 1999: xv).

Indeed, despite tourism's overall economic dominance and constant allusions to *aloha*, it is arguably an adjunct to the defense industries. World War II changed O'ahu from a predominantly rural, agricultural society into an urban, service-based economy, pulling in workers not only from all the "outer" islands but from the continental U.S., as well, eventually making Honolulu the densest population area in the entire archipelago. The net effect was that military defense industries replaced agriculture as Hawai'i's economic base during the four years of World War II (Desmond 1999: 148).

The connection between tourism and militarism remains strikingly visible in the *Spring 2016 Hawaii Military Guide* (HMG), a glossy publica-

tion that is an information guide for new military arrivals⁶. Ostensibly a practical source for locating necessary services such as medical and dental care, schooling, lawyers, and rental agencies, the guide's cover more closely resembles the widely available tourist guides common to hotels and stores in Waikiki and elsewhere, featuring a young female model, arguably *hapa haole* (half-white), posed in a tropical outdoor scene, wearing a bright orange and red sarong imprinted with Pacific tattoo motif patterns, her smiling face framed by a wreath of leis around her neck and deeply tanned bare shoulders, a flower behind her left ear. The opening two-page spread is a full-color montage of sights – catamarans on beautiful beaches, a rainbow against a tropical forest, an aerial view of Waikīki, the front of 'Iolani Palace, an iconic Hawaiian sea turtle – easily mistaken for a publication targeting tourists rather than military personnel. The first piece of text begins, «Aloha and welcome to paradise! The Hawaii Military Guide appreciates your service in the U.S. Military and hopes your stay is filled with one pleasant experience after another» (*HMG* 4). Advertisements featuring young, happy females cavorting with male military personnel offer “military specials” for a variety of consumer services and merchandise, including discounts at various resorts around the islands. The connection between militarism, consumerism, and tourism could not be plainer than the admonition: «Always remember that your Military I.D. is your passport to Hawaii's boundless dining, shopping, activities and attractions [...] Now it's time to start turning the pages and tune into the best of Oahu!» (*HMG* 4).

The “best of Oahu,” as it turns out, is Hawaiian music, which plays an important role in disseminating notions of Hawai'i and *Kanaka Maoli* to visitors. Don McDiarmid, Jr. affirmed Archer's nearly forty-year old boast in 2003, stating, «Nothing brings to mind the swaying palm trees, the waves coming over the reef, the smell of flowers in the air faster than the plunking of ukuleles and the strumming of steel guitars» (McDiarmid, Jr. 2003: 6). As soon as passengers leave the airplane walkway and enter the terminals at Honolulu International Airport, Hawaiian music fills their ears, welcoming them to paradise. Many passengers will continue on to Waikīki, where they will either hear Hawaiian music in every shop, mall, and hotel, or in a live

⁶ An online version of the guide is available (as of March 4, 2016; the PDF is no longer available in 2021): <<http://www.hidili.com/harringtonPublishing/hawaiiMilitaryGuide/current/#?page=0>> Tellingly, perhaps, the only entertainment venues given their own separate listing are “Irish Pubs.”

performance in a hotel lounge or at a commercial *lū'au*. The opportunities to hear Hawaiian music are ever-present, particularly in the tourist enclave of Waikīkī and even the more adventurous tourist will have plenty of opportunities to hear Hawaiian music throughout a typical stay. Hawaiian music scholar Elizabeth Tatar insists, «of the Hawaiian music types considered traditional – chants, hymn-like songs and *hula* songs – [each] evolved in the 20th century to their present status as traditional musical styles because of tourism's cumulative influences. Each was shaped by the Hawaiian musical community in response to the changing tastes of the US mainland tourist. Indeed, *tourism has been a major influence on the development of Hawaiian music in the 20th century, and its effects on musical performance continue unabated*» (Tatar 1987: 2, added emphasis).

After U.S. statehood, sociologists such as Robert Park partnered with the tourist industry's interest in representing Hawai'i as a paradisaical escape from modernity, by championing Hawai'i's mixed race population as the perfect case example of U.S. American democracy (Park 1950). Park argued that the racial and ethnic mixture of Hawai'i resulted in a tolerance for difference that could serve as a model for American assimilationist ideals, an idea that was used to promote Hawai'i statehood. The interests of U.S. capitalists in Hawai'i, annexationists argued, rested on the sanctioned foundation of American democracy, capitalism, and Christianity (preferably Protestant), which had the good fortune of being coupled to *Kanaka Maoli's* purportedly innate affectionate and welcoming natures, allowing for a blossoming of mixed race social harmony to prevail. However, this view ignored *Kanaka Maoli* genocide and land dispossession as well as the dire circumstances faced by labor immigrants, largely from Asia, induced in part by the intertwined political and economic motives of *haole* land-owners (Osorio 2002). As Lisa Kahaleole Hall points out,

The most widespread American mythology about contemporary and historical Hawai'i revolves around the vision of the melting pot, a multicultural paradise where elements from every group combine into a rich whole that all can share [...] The pleasure of this vision erases a violent, coercive, and tragic history. The multiplicity of races and cultures in contemporary Hawai'i was born in the attempt by plantation owners to divide and conquer their workforce (Hall 2005: 406)⁷.

⁷ Chinese immigrants were recruited as plantation laborers in the 1850s but restrictions on Chinese immigration led to Japanese immigrants in the 1880s until the 1907

George Helm and Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana

The link between the music and the politics of *aloha ‘āina* during this period may have been most explicitly drawn in the life of George Helm. Helm, a *leoki‘eki‘e* singer and guitarist, helped form the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (PKO) and was a key figure in articulating *aloha ‘āina* before his untimely death in 1977. The PKO was established in order to stop the U.S. military from using Kaho‘olawe as a bombing test site (Morales 1984), inspired by a group called the Aboriginal Lands of Hawaiian Ancestry or ALOHA, another organization formed to reclaim territory and political self-determination for Hawaiians (Meller & Lee 1997). In 1976, the PKO began efforts to reclaim the island of Kaho‘olawe from the U.S. Navy, which had been using it for live ordinance exercises, including missile testing, beginning in 1941. Incredibly, Kaho‘olawe experienced the most bombing of any Pacific island during the Second World War despite not enduring a single enemy firing on the island.

Kaho‘olawe was banned for public use by the Navy after World War II, ostensibly because of the amount of live ordinances still on the ground from the numerous bombings. On January 3, 1976, George Helm along with eight others, organized a landing on the island. Anticipating their arrests, which occurred almost immediately after they landed, the PKO’s primary agenda was to raise public awareness. Arguing that the island was sacred to *Kanaka Maoli*, the Navy finally relented and allowed for a small party of Hawaiians, including Helm, to perform religious rites on the island on February 13, 1976. On March 7, 1977, Helm disappeared, along with fellow activist Kimo Mitchell, in a failed attempt to land on Kaho‘olawe for a third time but his catalytic work in shaping the PKO and his public advocacy for the reclamation of Hawaiian lands renewed *Kanaka Maoli* attempts to regain political and territorial sovereignty.

Gentlemen’s Agreement between the U.S. and Japan. Portuguese and Puerto Ricans arrived in the islands in the 1870s, followed by Koreans and Filipinos in the early 1900s. When the Chinese organized to better their conditions, Japanese labor immigration began and established a pattern of, as Hall describes, a divide and conquer management strategy to pitch workers of different ethnic and national groups at odds with one another. The strategy ultimately backfired as immigrant groups not only produced more children than *haoles* but the plantation owners had not imagined the formation of cross-racial coalitions that eventually rose to challenge their hegemony (Takaki 1983; Okihiro 2008).

The Navy would eventually cede the land back after they attempted to thwart the federal court judgment ordering them to do so by failing to comply with the order to clear the island of any remaining ordinance as part of the condition to return the land – an effect that continues to keep Native Hawaiians from living on the island. Land restoration efforts continue nonetheless as well as cultural practices such as the annual *Makahiki*, a celebration of the harvest and a time of spiritual renewal, which, before Europeans arrived, was a period, running roughly from October to April, in which war was outlawed and the *ali'i* would circuit their islands to receive tribute as well as participate in various festivities and activities such as hula and surfing competitions (Blackford 2004; Hartwell 2002; Kame'elehiwa 1992; Kirch 2012; Mackenzie, Serrano & Kaulukukui 2007).

At the time, Helms and Walter Ritte's occupation of Kaho'olawe was a bold attempt to force the U.S. Navy to stop shelling the island. They were not only confronting the U.S. military industrial complex head-on but also the Hawaiian Civic Clubs, which had taken out ads against the PKO actions (the members of the Clubs would eventually change their minds and support the PKO and the ideology of *aloha 'āina*) (Lewis 1985: 157). Pointedly, Helm observed the softness of Hawaiian protest, declaring,

Hawaiian music reflects the attitudes toward life and nature. *These are basically clean protests and not harsh*, for example, 'Kaulana Nā Pua,' but with a deep hidden meaning. Unfortunately, modern Anglo-Saxon reasoning cannot truly appreciate the deep meaning of a song such as 'Kualana Nā Pua.' Many of the Hawaiian songs that are now openly played were once hidden from those who were not of the culture. Many of the songs now openly express, if one understands the words, the language – pain revolution; it's expressing the emotional reaction the Hawaiians are feeling to the subversion of their life style. *It's an immediacy of feeling* (Turner 1976: 2–3, emphasis added)⁸.

Critical of both the Bishop Museum's "mummification" of Hawaiian culture and the Polynesian Cultural Center's "commercial preservation", Helm called for a vibrant, living Hawaiian cultural revolution, emphasizing the spiritual outlook of *aloha 'āina*, a concept rooted in Native Hawaiian cosmology in which the *'āina* is a living entity as well as a source of human life. Helm is also referencing *kaona* here – «if one understands

⁸ See also, Stillman Amy Ku'uleialoha (1999).

the words» – as a means of bridging musical and political meanings to an «immediacy of feeling».

Toward the end of the documentary film, *Kaho'olawe Aloha 'Āina – George Helm* (Yasso 1977), Helm defends the notion of aloha 'āina against those characterizations at a public rally in front of the 'Iolani Palace, declaring,

It's very important that we get together. We got to shed off a lot of the images that have been thrown on top of us by newspapers, by television. We just want one thing to talk to you folks about. This is a seed, today, of a new revolution. And we not talking about da kine like the Pilgrims came ova' heah and run away from England, go wipe out the Indians, y'know, and call this America and celebrate two hundred years with firecrackers. *The kind of revolution we're talking about is one of consciousness* – the consciousness, awareness, facts, figures. And like Walter [Ritte] said, “We're going to the 'Iolani Palace to make *ho'ō pupū* [make a stand with] to our *kupuna* [ancestors], yeah? Our *ali'i*. We hope to put somebody back in deah. We serious! We gotta think this way, we gotta talk that way because that's the only facts that allow for change. And change is synonymous to revolution. And revolution comes from the word, revolving, turning in and out so that you have something better, better to live with. And we say again, we want to get rid of that image – radicals – we don't know what that word means but I know a lot of people get turned off by us. Not giving us a chance. You know, we not getting our kicks doing this. This is the beginning. After this, *pau* [finish]! We're going down to something else. What we're looking for is the truth. The truth, the truth, the truth, the truth. *Aloha nō* (Yasso 1997).

Disavowing the image of the radical, Helm argued that the truth is on the side of the Native Hawaiians. After two centuries of settler-colonialism, Helm maintained that Hawaiians needed a change of consciousness – a change in thinking and feeling, a transformation of ideological and instinctual reflexes. As Helm's epigraph to this essay demonstrates, he believed that music was one of the most effective ways to accomplish this transformation.

Helm performed repertoire we might readily call traditional Hawaiian folk song but many of his most enthusiastic performances are of *hapa ha-ole* songs, indicating his non-dogmatic open-eared approach to Hawaiian song. The only extant recordings of Helm performing music, however, are culled from his live performances in 1976 at the Gold Coin, a restaurant where Helm held a regular gig, released posthumously the following year

on two separate recordings by the venue's owner James Wong⁹. Originally planned as nothing more than private recordings without any intention to release them publicly, the recordings contain a number of anomalies such as songs getting cut short before they end. Nevertheless, the raw recordings capture an exceptional *leoki'eki'e* singer and fluid guitarist with a deep facility in the Hawaiian language. More importantly, Wong also managed to capture some of Helm's song introductions in which he describes the history of a song's composition or the meaning of the lyrics – the songs' *mo'olelo* – revealing the depth of his knowledge and concern for Hawai'i even when entertaining diners at a restaurant.

Helm's *leoki'eki'e* vocals consistently express the *nahenabe* aesthetic. His version of the classic *hula ku'i* song, "Hi'ilawe", is a prime example. The *hula ku'i* form, which is the basis for much of the slack key repertoire, is based on a verse form in which a lyrical couplet is sung twice to accommodate the hula dancer, who performs the first couplet on one side of the dance space and then repeats the dance movements for the second iteration of the couplet on the other side of the dance area. In conventional *hula ku'i* practice, the guitarist provides a short, improvised *kaholo*, or vamp, as the dancer moves from one side to another. As slack key began being performed as an instrumental style (there is still plenty of singing on slack key recordings), the *kaholo* was retained. In between verses, there are a number of musical figures Hawaiian musicians call turnarounds, which smoothly lead back to the next verse. Importantly, these do not function as cadences but are vehicles to keep the dancer and the song in continual movement like the surf constantly breaking at the shoreline.

Helm emphasizes the *hula ku'i* form by singing an alternative melodic line for the initial iteration of the couplet and resuming the traditional melody on the second iteration, acknowledging the song's origins as an accompaniment to hula. His smooth vocal style is paradigmatic display of the *nahenabe* quality inherent to *Kanaka Maoli* singing, a sweetly rendered quality that underlines the often romantic or sexual nature of Hawaiian song. In his patient and quietly revolutionary musicking, Helm, along with many of his generational peers during the Second Hawaiian

⁹ According to ethnomusicologist Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman, Helm has a total of 62 unique tracks spread out over 88 total tracks on the four commercial recordings available – two on vinyl and two CD compilations: <amykstillman.wordpress.com/2011/07/19/crunching-data-the-music-of-george-helm-a-true-hawaiian/>.

Renaissance, reconnected the *nabene* aesthetic to the political issues of the day.

Like the slow drip of water, the efforts of the poorly funded PKO eventually paid off. In 1980, a consent decree was signed between the US Navy and PKO mandating the Navy to begin restoration of the island to its pristine state through soil conservation, revegetation, and goat eradication. In 1990, President George Bush banned the bombing of Kaho‘olawe. The Navy would eventually cede the land back after they attempted to thwart the federal court judgment by failing to comply with the order to clear the island of any remaining ordinance, dragging its feet in clearing the island and finally evacuating, but leaving approximately twenty-five percent of the land uncleared. It would take until 2004 before the island was deemed clear of enough unfired ordinances, or unexploded bombs, to accede the island completely over to the State of Hawai‘i. However, there has been little effort to restore Kaho‘olawe to its pristine state, ostensibly because of the amount of live ordinances still on the ground but also a consequence of the lack of funding from the State to complete the task.

The effects of all this musicking would take some time to ripple out but as the 1980s saw an increase in Japanese and other non-Hawaiian investment in resort developments and increasing numbers of tourists, Hawaiian activists and their sympathizers renewed efforts to highlight Hawaiian territorial rights into the set of issues covered by the term, the Hawaiian sovereignty movement (Kame‘eleihiwa 2004; also, Trask 1987). Indeed, after his impassioned speech at the ‘Iolani Palace, Helm and some of his compatriots begin singing *Hawai‘i Aloha*. If this were to occur today, the audience would begin to hold hands and sing along, perhaps swinging their arms in rhythm with the singing. However, even at the height of the Hawaiian Renaissance, only a handful of people seem to be singing along and no one is holding hands. Most of the audience stand motionless, merely listening. Thirty years later, in a 2007 YouTube video of Iz (Israel Kamakawiwo‘ole) performing the song, the audience – young, old, men, women, children, *tūtū* (elders) – quickly jumps to their feet, form a human chain of linked hands, and sing along with the star, gently swaying to the rhythm (I have been a part of countless Hawaiian music performances which end this way). Underscoring Helms’s assertion for the role of Hawaiian music in political life, the articulation of *nabene* found in *Hawai‘i Aloha* continues to speak softly yet forcefully to the politics of *aloha ‘āina* and its role in the Kanaka Maoli liberation struggle.

Nahenabe musicking as *ho ʻoponopono*

In 1970, the politics of *aloha ʻāina* were mobilized by the Kōkua Hawaiʻi organization in an effort to stop developers from removing 150 families from Kalama Valley, Oʻahu, who were served relocation orders by the Bishop Estate, which slotted the area for resort development (Kameʻeleihiwa 2004; Milner 2006; Trask 1987). While the protesters lost this battle in the end, the action was a turning point in Hawaiian politics and gave focus to a growing sense of Kanaka Maoli pride and an acknowledgement of alienation from their past, their land, and their collective mana. Liko Martin, a musician involved with various Hawaiian issues, composed *All Hawaiʻi Stand Together*, as a response to the forced removal. *Nanakuli Blues* was another song written by Liko Martin with Thor Wold in 1974 in response to the resort developments in Nanakuli but when the band, Country Comfort, recorded the song on their debut album, *We Are The Children*, that same year, they changed the title to reflect their hometown and the song has been known as *Waimanalo Blues* ever since. The resigned sentiment, however – «Spun right around and found that I lost/The things that I couldn't lose/The beaches they sell to build their hotels/My fathers and I once knew» – remained the same. Both *All Hawaiʻi Stand Together* and *Waimanalo Blues* continue to be sung as part of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement.

We can hear the difference in non-Hawaiian musical softness and the particularity of Kanaka Maoli *nahenabe* in the introduction to Country Comfort's arrangement of *Waimanalo Blues*. The opening fingerpicking guitar sounds like a typical British ballad-based country music style in free tempo, relying on the guitarist's musicality to shape the introduction. As soon as the band joins in, however, the "country" in the band's name is sounded out, resonating with the steady tonic-subdominant-dominant bass movement supporting a conventional continental U.S. country and western string band ensemble in a steady duple meter. However, after ten measures, the band takes a short "breath," pausing before the *ʻōlapa* rhythm and the guitar takes on a slack key figuration firmly planting the group within Hawaiian song. The rest of the track continues with the steady roll of the *ʻōlapa* rhythm, underscoring the *nahenabe* close harmony vocals expressing the melancholy of the *Waimanalo Blues*.

Yet these young musicians managed to recover some of "the things they couldn't lose" reviving older songs that spoke to and about Hawaiian history and self-rule. A song composed by Samuel K. Kamakaia in 1897, *Ka Naʻi*

Aupuna, was revived by activists and has continued to be sung as a reminder of *Kanaka Maoli* political autonomy. *Ka Na'i Aupuna* honors various Hawaiian kings and includes the words from *Mō'i* (King) Kamehameha III which now forms the Hawai'i State motto, «*Ua mau ke ea o ka 'āina i ka pono*» (“The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness”). A song composed in 1893 by Eleanor Kekoahewaikalani Wright Prendergast to protest Queen Lili'uokalani's forced abdication titled *Kaulana Nā Pua* was revived during the Hawaiian Renaissance and expressed the ongoing struggles for decolonization and independence (Stillman 1999). The links between musicians and protest can be traced in the history of this song through an event which inspired Prendergast. When the bandmaster for the Royal Hawaiian Band demanded that the members sign an oath of allegiance to the new Provisional Government – formed in the wake of the illegal US annexation of Hawai'i – or they would «eat rocks», a number of the musicians walked out in protest, declaring that the “rocks” (i.e., *'āina*), would sustain them (Nordyke and Noyes 1993). These two songs, employing both *kaona* and *nahenabe*, speak to the long history of taking non-Hawaiian musical forms and shaping them to conform to *Kanaka Maoli* sensibilities and concerns.

Kanaka Maoli epistemologies and ontologies – systems of knowledge, ways of being – provide alternate ways of knowing the heavens and achieving the purported goals of Western science (Blaisdell 2002). How, in fact, did those ancient Pacific sailors journey purposely across thousands of miles of open waters without a “scientific” knowledge of astronomy, oceanography, and climatology? I want to be clear that I am not against Western science or its traditions of rationality but mean to level the discursive field on which these two alternative epistemological positions, histories, and corpora of knowledge have been gathered together in the struggle for control of Mauna Kea and, indeed, of the entire Hawaiian archipelago. Sympathy with Donna Haraway's critique of scientism encourages an explicit reminder that scientific rationality is yet another narrativizing, troping schema with no inherent superiority over other idealizations of the world as it is weighted with a similarly positioned, partial, and invested perspective (Haraway 1989). As a hegemonic narrative, however, it is often used to dismiss non-western technologies and epistemes as “irrational” or “mythological.”

Jonathan Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio characterizes Hawaiian dispossession as dismemberment, writing, «this is a story of violence, in which [settler] colonialism literally and figuratively dismembered the *lāhui* (the people) from their traditions, their lands, and ultimately their government. The mutila-

tions were not physical only, but also psychological and spiritual. *Death came not only through infection and disease, but through racial and legal discourse that crippled the will, confidence, and trust of the Kānaka Maoli as surely as leprosy and smallpox claimed their limbs and lives*» (Osorio 2002: 3, added emphasis). Following Osorio's analogic dismemberment, I want to consider the possibilities of a restorative prosthetics as evidenced in the revival of indigenous Hawaiian agri- and aquaculture practices envisioned and enabled by scholar-activists such as Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, Ikaika Hussey, and Erin Kahunawaika'ala Wright whose collective editorship of *A Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land, and Sovereignty* has given visibility to the revival of *Kanaka Maoli* land and sea management (also, McGregor 2007). Revitalizations of musical practices and the reinforcement of *Kanaka Maoli* aesthetics in traditions such as *kī hō'alu* (Hawaiian slack key guitar) perform similar contestations to the twin ideas that, one, Hawaiian culture was completely eradicated and, two, that it has been relegated to an irretrievable past without relevance or utility for contemporary life.

Manu Meyer describes *ho'ōponopono* as «an ancient Hawaiian communication practice based on the physical and spiritual need for members of a family to work together and aid in one another's well-being» (Meyer 1995: 30). Primarily interested in describing a family conflict resolution ceremony, which Meyer states was the historical basis for *ho'ōponopono*, the essay's preface suggests broader implications for «setting to right», the meaning Meyer attributes to the Hawaiian term. Citing the fact the United States recognizes about 500 groups as “Native”, including Native Hawaiians, Meyer notes that «at the core of all Native American [including *Kanaka Maoli*] peacemaking is a sense of spirituality, a respect for ancestors, a focus on balance and harmony, and, above all, an honoring of land» (Meyer 1995: 30). Contrasting Native ways of peacemaking against lawyers' discourse regarding mediation, Meyer compares mediation terms (punishment, revenge, right) with peacemaking ones (restitution, forgiveness, truth). Although both sets of terms and actors seek to resolve conflict, «peacemaking is not concerned with distributing justice, finding who is right, or dispensing punishment», rather, it «strives instead for the maintenance of harmony between individuals and the exhibition of spiritual efficacy» (Meyer 1995: 30).

I close by invoking *pono* and the concept of restoring balance through the *nahenahē* aesthetics of Hawaiian music, which gives us a way to envision a world in which humans are once again integrated with the non-human, a sounding out of an acoustemology in which we are no longer the center,

no longer simply the heedless partakers but the self-reflexive partners with the *moana* (sea) and the *‘āina* (land) and all that is contained within them.

I want to align a sense of *pono*, realized through *ho‘ōponopono*, with the terms I have grappled with throughout this “thinking through” of the politics of the *nahenahe* aesthetic. Ultimately, similar to artists everywhere, Hawaiian musicians desire respect for their musicking, their culture, their beliefs, and their artistry. As Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua’s example demonstrates, *Kanaka Maoli* offer alternative ways of civil society that can no longer reasonably be described as «the modern nation-state» (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua et al. 2014; Kanahēle 1986). The possibilities are manifold, just like the variations on *Hi‘ilawe*. As Watson, Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, and others note, Native Hawaiians found a sustainable way to *malama ‘āina*, to care for the land, that, in turn, cared for them for centuries. It is a reciprocal relationship that nurtures both *‘āina* and *Kanaka Maoli* (Blackford 2004; Chirico and Farley 2015; Frankel 1994; Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua 2013; Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua et al. 2014; Kaneshiro et al. 2005; Kirch et al. 2004; Mackenzie et al. 2007; Watson 2015).

As Kekailoa Perry suggests, «the decade of 1980-1990 saw tremendous political action and might even be considered a logical result of the cultural renaissance of the late 1970s in Hawai‘i» (2014: 268). The *nahenahe* music of *Kanaka Maoli* musicians did not simply beat the drums or sing protest songs as an accompaniment to more visible political actors. As James Houston observes, «[In] this land where music has always been a key, it is true to the culture that the early voices in the renaissance were not writers or politicians or campus activists; *they were dancers and singers, musicians and performers*» (Houston & Kamae 2004: 125, added emphasis). Similar to the soft lapping of the waves along the shores of Waikīkī, the *nahenahe* musicking of *Kanaka Maoli* offers more than solace to the harried tourist but, more significantly, re-sounds and re-forms *Lāhui Hawai‘i* (the Nation of Hawai‘i).¹⁰

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¹⁰ I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their insight, advice, and prompts. Any errors that remain are my own.

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