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THE PARADOX OF HAWAIIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY AND RESISTANCE TO UNITED STATES ANNEXATION

Maia Lichtenstein

In 1897 tens of thousands of Hawaiians petitioned President William McKinley to oppose a treaty for the annexation of Hawaii that had been submitted to the United States Senate. The recently deposed Queen Liliuokalani also submitted formal protests to the President and to Congress in an attempt to preserve the sovereignty of Hawaii. These petitions seem to represent a departure in the Hawaiian position towards American influence in Hawaii. The diaries of David Lawrence Gregg, head of the American diplomatic mission to Hawaii from 1853 to 1858, depict King Kamehameha III as openly engaged in annexation negotiations.¹ More surprising, the Hawaiians who protested annexation in 1897 were attempting to preserve a Hawaii that was significantly more American in character than the Hawaii of only a century earlier. The government of Hawaii had changed from a loosely unified tribal society to a monarchy and subsequently to a constitutional monarchy that lasted until it was overthrown by the white foreign population in 1893. The Hawaiians had converted to Christianity in large numbers and had acquired widespread literacy, leaving their traditional oral culture behind. The monarchy had enacted land reforms that constituted a complete departure from the Hawaiian concept of land ownership. Finally, the nineteenth-century factors of widespread disease epidemics among the native Hawaiian people, the importation of foreign workers for Hawaii's sugar industry, and intermarriage with the non-native population combined to permanently change the population of Hawaii.

It would seem that the Hawaii of the 1890s was a product of American influence, created through reforms that were met with almost no violent protest. Why then, in 1897, did the Hawaiians oppose annexation so strongly, when it could have been seen as the logical expansion of American influence? Furthermore, how complete was the acceptance of earlier reforms among the Hawaiians? How genuinely "Hawaiian" was the Hawaiian independent nation that Liliuokalani and the Hawaiian citizens tried so hard to

preserve?

These questions are strengthened by much of the literature on nineteenth-century Hawaiian history and the annexation debates. Many primary source accounts of the negotiations, like that of Gregg, ignore the likely motives of the native population to accept Westernizing reforms. The sources focus on the interests of the white, foreign, *haole* population's desire for annexation, and dismiss Hawaiian reforms and Kamehameha's openness to an American protectorate as passive reactions resulting from Hawaiian military weakness and decimation by disease. In doing so, they ignore the possibility that the Westernizing reforms enacted by the Hawaiian monarchy were intended, paradoxically, as a source of resistance to American influence by attempting to gain legitimacy as a Western nation in the eyes of America. Furthermore, the extent to which these reforms reflect the acceptance by the Hawaiians of an increasingly American identity has been exaggerated in modern literature. One example of this exaggeration is Francine du Plessix Gray's claim that "[late] 18th century explorers, whose adulation of the noble savage inspired great admiration but little concern for the Hawaiians, had unwittingly triggered the collapse of Hawaiian culture by sheer force of historical encounter."²

Contrary to Gray's assertion that the Hawaiians implemented and accepted Westernizing reforms as a result of cultural interaction that they were powerless to prevent, the monarchy and Hawaiian leaders made conscious decisions to prevent American domination of Hawaii by gaining legitimacy as a state in a form recognized by America. In addition, the Hawaiians exploited some of the Americanizing institutions to maintain aspects of their culture and identity. An example of this exploitation was the recording of some of their traditional myths and stories in the newly established newspapers. Ironically, anti-annexation and anti-American sentiments in the 1890s led the native Hawaiian population to unite around a new Hawaii modeled in the image of Western society. The Hawaiians' protests against annexation, and in later decades against statehood, constituted a powerful force of coalescence for the new Hawaiian identity that was being created in this struggle.

The struggle for Hawaiian sovereignty and independence began not only as a struggle with the United States, but with England and France as well. Hawaii attracted the American, British, and French in many different areas. For example, missionaries were drawn to Hawaii for the purpose of converting the native population, and Hawaii's sugar-growing capabilities

and strategic geographical trading position made it an area of interest for businessmen from all three countries. The Hawaiian monarchs had discussed protectorate status with France, England, and the United States during the period between the first interaction with Captain Cook in 1778 and 1854.³ Through these negotiations the Hawaiian kings attempted to protect Hawaiian sovereignty. The foreign threat to Hawaiian independence first peaked in 1839, when the commander of a French warship threatened war if Kamehameha III did not agree to provide religious tolerance to the Catholics in Hawaii and to lower taxes on wine imports. The King chose to avoid violence and instead negotiated a treaty, the Laplace Convention, which acquiesced to the French demands.⁴ Tensions rose once more in February 1843 when the captain of a British warship, Lord George Paulet, demanded that Hawaii recognize British land claims and trial procedure or be fired upon by the British ship. Kamehameha ceded the islands temporarily to the British, until Hawaiian sovereignty was officially recognized by a British admiral in July. In November 1843 Hawaii obtained a joint declaration signed by France and England acknowledging Hawaii's independence. The Hawaiian government also obtained the Tyler Doctrine from the United States, mandating "that no power ought either to take possession of the islands as a conquest or...colonization..."⁵ and also that "the United States...seeks...no exclusive control over the Hawaiian Government, but is content with its independent existence..."⁶ Together, these policies exemplified the legal strategy that the Hawaiian monarchs followed in order to maintain their sovereignty. They did not take up arms and resort to guerilla warfare when threatened; instead, they sought internationally recognized means of maintaining independence.

Talk of American annexation of Hawaii began in 1854 at a moment of weakness for the Hawaiian Kingdom and its ruler, King Kamehameha III. Three factors contributed to the weakness of the monarchy: increasing French pressures to meet demands regarding religious tolerance and taxes on alcohol; internal pressure from the foreign residents for changes in governmental policy; and a smallpox epidemic that broke out in May and affected much of the native population.⁷ When the British refused to aid the Hawaiians in responding to French threats on grounds that their help would violate Hawaiian sovereignty, Kamehameha turned to the United States for help and opened annexation negotiations. From this point on, the debates over the future of Hawaii would be determined by and also center around U.S. influence in Hawaii. Although these early infringements upon Hawaiian sov-

ereignty resulted primarily from the aggressions of foreign powers, they show how the Hawaiians dealt with the British and French, and provided a model for relations and strategy with the Americans. The native Hawaiians did not fight the influence of foreign powers, but rather relied on means approved by the Western powers to negotiate settlements.

Despite the desperation which led the Hawaiians to open annexation negotiations in 1854, they successfully kept Americans at bay for the next forty years. Their efforts were not solely responsible for resisting annexation, and were supplemented by American anti-imperialist movements.⁸ Yet the native Hawaiians and their leaders continued to pursue their own policy of Westernizing reforms as a means of achieving legitimacy as a nation in the eyes of America and other European powers. Although the Hawaiian efforts ultimately failed, the language of their protest demonstrates their conscious efforts to maintain Hawaiian sovereignty and independence through the reforms that the rulers enacted.

One of the first such reforms focused on the land. The Hawaiian concept of land ownership was vastly different than the capitalist private ownership principles dominant in the West. The distribution of land before American influence was a system roughly similar to the feudal system in Europe. The land was ruled by chiefs, *ali'i*, who governed through a reciprocal relationship with the common people, or *maka'ainana*. The *maka'ainana* gave tributes to the *ali'i*, while the *ali'i* "provided the organization required to produce enough food to sustain an ever increasing population."⁹

The balance of this system was interrupted by the arrival of foreigners to Hawaii. The native Hawaiian population steadily declined, leaving the land increasingly empty, difficult to manage, and vulnerable to foreign encroachments. In 1846, the Board of Commissioners to Quiet Land Titles was established. This board began the switch from communal land use to private land ownership. They began by translating the ancient system into Western legal language. The board explained the reform of the system as, "If the King should allow to the landlords one third, and retain one third himself, 'he would injure no one unless himself.'"¹⁰ Basically, the land was intended to be divided equally between the King, the native Hawaiians, and their chiefs and leaders. The *maka'ainana* were required to present claims in order to receive their land grants, and the process was made very lenient in their favor. They were allowed to present land claims even after the deadline had passed, and instructions on how to do so were publicized in newspapers and

in churches. These reforms were thus designed to respond to the changes made necessary by the effects of a foreign presence in Hawaii, while still protecting the rights and interests of the native population.

In 1850 the Hawaiian legislature passed an additional land reform measure that proved detrimental to the native population.¹¹ The legislature enacted the Great Mahele, which allowed foreigners to purchase land. Americans residents of Hawaii took advantage of the Hawaiians as they, in the words of Queen Liliuokalani, “acquired titles to lands through the simplicity of our people and their ignorance of values of the new land laws.”¹² The native Hawaiian population, as well as their leaders, proceeded to give away and sell their claims to the land at extraordinarily low prices.¹³ It is difficult to determine whether the Hawaiian leadership anticipated these results. The Hawaiian leaders were counseled by English and American missionaries and business advisors that the reforms would “restore the population, would inspire the *maka’ainana* to work hard for material rewards in the capitalist economy being put into place, and would ease commercial treaty making with other members of the family of nations.”¹⁴ Thus we see that the Hawaiian leaders enacted reforms not only because they were powerless to stop them, or because they truly believed in the Western system. Rather, they were counseled that conforming to a Western concept of land ownership would help the Hawaiians withstand the foreign pressure for land acquisition created by their increasing ambitions and the decreasing Hawaiian population. The hope may have been that by conforming to a Western system of land ownership, the Hawaiians could have learned how to function within a system understood by the foreign presence surrounding them, thus maintaining the rights to their land and perhaps even improving their situation.

One of the most sweeping changes that resulted from American influence over the native Hawaiian people was the widespread conversion to Christianity. The mostly Protestant missionaries first arrived in Hawaii in late 1819.¹⁵ The arrival of the missionaries was preceded by the dissolution of the Hawaiian *kapu* system, a system of taboos that prevented things such as men and women eating together. This system was destroyed by two of Kamehameha I’s wives, who convinced the new King Kamehameha II to eat with the women at a feast. This triggered a series of temple and idol burning. These events, together with Hawaiian perceptions of the foreigners’ immunity to the diseases that plagued the Hawaiian population despite the foreigners’ disregard for the *kapu* system, combined to weaken the Hawai-

ian religion before the arrival of the missionaries. This weakening then primed the native population for the arrival of the missionaries, most of whom were strictly zealous Calvinists, who dominated the missions on the island in the early nineteenth century.¹⁶

In 1854, when American Commissioner Gregg arrived in Hawaii, he judged the Hawaiians to be “in a sort of transition state.”¹⁷ A practicing Catholic, Gregg often observed the practices of the Catholic congregations in Hawaii. In January 1854 he wrote,

The behavior of the natives is entirely decorous and proper. I never saw a Catholic congregation more intent upon the great object of religious worship. They were well dressed, well behaved, and seemed to realize most fully the purpose for which they were assembled.¹⁸

Gregg criticized the Protestant missionaries for their inflexibility, but at the same time demonstrated the degree to which the native Hawaiians had accepted the religious reforms. He described the many practices forbidden by the missionaries. “Dances were taboo, ball playing was taboo, wreaths for the head, of which the natives were fond, were taboo, ear-rings and finer rings were taboo, in short every innocent amusement was in like manner forbidden.”¹⁹ Gregg recounted a conversation repeated to him between a native Hawaiian and a foreigner. The native Hawaiian “remarked that it was bad to raise flowers... [because] the missionary at Hilo told him it would kill the soul because the flowers were used for vain and foolish ornament.” This conversation shows the degree to which the Hawaiians had become knowledgeable in the Calvinist teachings.

Yet Gregg also explained that the religious conversions had limits. He explained,

While Puritanism has done much good in these islands, it has also done much evil. It has taught the people to read and write, it has learned them to be shrewd at driving bargains; it has assimilated them in some degree, with foreigners with whom they hold intercourse; it has led them to observe outward religious forms. But it has taken away their amusements, for which they still have a longing...They are missionary disciples in the head, as they will readily tell you,

but *malalo* [underneath], the very opposite. This they will tell you too.

Gregg's sense of the nature of the Hawaiians' conversions hints at their possible motives. Although epidemics and interaction with foreigners may have initiated their desire to convert, the Hawaiians' conversion to Christianity became a useful tool in improving interactions with foreigners and legitimizing their position as an equal partner.

Gregg perceived that the Hawaiians did not wholeheartedly accept all of the missionaries' teachings. In addition to longing for the forbidden amusements, the Hawaiians preserved some of their own religious practices, such as the hula ceremony. Mark Twain's account of his visit to Hawaii in 1866 demonstrates the Hawaiians' awareness of the need to publicize outward religious conversion while hiding what they had preserved. Twain's account of the traditional Hawaiian mourning rituals performed at Princess Victoria's funeral show the judgmental nature of foreigners' views of Hawaiian religious practices. Access to the funeral was restricted to native Hawaiians until the last day of mourning, when a few *haoles* were invited to watch the rituals from a veranda overlooking the scene.²⁰ Twain describes his excitement to see the "famous hula-hula we had heard so much about and so longed to see – the lascivious dance that was wont to set the passions of men ablaze in the old heathen days, a century ago."²¹ He also refers to the funeral rites as a "funeral orgy" and a "wild scene,"²² passing critical judgment on some of the remaining Hawaiian religious traditions. Twain's criticism shows the necessity for the native Hawaiians to hide the remnants of their former religious traditions in order to gain the respect of Westerners, and be seen as anything other than uncivilized heathens. While the Hawaiians did not convert to Christianity with the primary motive of achieving legitimacy in the eyes of the Americans, they were aware of the value that their conversion had in appearing civilized and thus politically legitimate to Western countries like the United States.

In Queen Liliuokalani's memoirs, she used the Hawaiians' conversion to Christianity as a means of pursuing political goals. In a chapter in support of Hawaiian autonomy, Liliuokalani wrote,

I shall not claim that in the days of Captain Cook our people were not civilized...But Christianity in substance they have accepted; and I know of no people who have developed a

tenderer Christian conscience, or have shown themselves more ready to obey its behests...And where else in the world's history is it written that a savage people, pagan for ages, with fixed hereditary customs and beliefs, have made equal progress in civilization and Christianity in the same space of time?

Liliuokalani cleverly expressed the state of the native Hawaiian population before its interaction with American and European missionaries as savage and uncivilized, as her American readers would have viewed it. She seemed to agree with their view of a pre-*haole*-influenced Hawaiian society so as to maintain the trust of her readers as she asked, "Will it also be thought strange that education and knowledge of the world have enabled us to perceive...that a separate nationality and a particular form of government, as well as special laws, are, at least for the present, better for us?" Liliuokalani smartly attributed the advancement of the Hawaiian people to the influence of Americans, thus attempting to validate the conclusions that the Hawaiians drew from their education and advancement. Liliuokalani argued that the Hawaiians' desire for independence was a direct result of the knowledge they gained from American influence, proving, in humble language, that their conclusions must be right. Thus, paradoxically, by highlighting the American influence on Hawaiian religion and government, Liliuokalani advocated her own goals through American concepts.

One religious reform was directly enacted for the appeasement of the French, rather than the Americans. The early Catholic missionaries who arrived in Hawaii suffered harassment at first.²³ American Protestant missionaries had persuaded the Hawaiian leaders to prohibit the teaching of Catholicism on the islands, and many Catholic missionaries were expelled.²⁴ Protestantism was much more widely accepted by the native population. This disparity was reflected in the relative number of Catholic schools versus the number of Protestant free schools, which Gregg documented in an 1852 Minister of Public instruction report. The report listed 431 Protestant free schools taught by natives in 1851, as opposed to only 104 Catholic free schools.²⁵ Yet despite the wider popularity of Protestantism in Hawaii and the leaders' earlier persecution of Catholics, tensions with France convinced the King to sign an agreement with France, the Laplace Convention, and to pay a \$20,000 penalty in order to assure religious freedom to all.²⁶ This measure did not affect much of the native Hawaiian population, but the King agreed

to it in order to appease the French and to prevent French aggression against Hawaii.

Among the reforms that the Christian missionaries instituted was a widespread literacy campaign. Before the arrival of foreigners to the Hawaiian Islands, the Hawaiian language was only oral. The first missionaries who arrived in Hawaii perceived the native population's illiteracy as proof that they were not civilized. But the establishment of schools by the missionaries led to such a fast growth in the literacy rates in Hawaii that "by the mid-1830s letter writing had apparently become routine."²⁷ Although some of the Hawaiian chiefs knew how to read and write English prior to the arrival of the missionaries, the missionaries began to create a written version of the Hawaiian language and subsequently to teach it to the native population.²⁸ The native population was taught at first to read religious tracts and elementary-level school texts,²⁹ and by 1834 had progressed so quickly that they were able to publish a Hawaiian language newspaper, called *Ka Lama Hawaii*.³⁰

Although the first Hawaiian newspapers were controlled in large part by the missions, in 1861 a group of native Hawaiians from all levels of the Hawaiian hierarchy published *Ka Hoku o ka Pakikipa*. This paper "began a long tradition of nationalist anti-colonial resistance through the print media."³¹ Published from September 1861 to May 1863, the paper was designed to preserve in writing traditional Hawaiian poems and stories and to publish anti-missionary sentiments and news from abroad that the paper's editors felt was being withheld by the foreigners in control of Hawaii's other newspapers.³² A Hawaiian poem entitled "A song of affection for education/civilization" was published in one of the issues of *Ka Hoku o ka Pakikipa*. This poem used romantic metaphors common to the Hawaiian language, but was considered vulgar by a *haole* reader who wrote a letter of protest that was also published in a later issue of the paper. The native Hawaiian editors of the paper responded to the *haole*'s protest, arguing against the suppression of free speech by the "speech police."³³ The newspaper's editors claimed that similar texts had been published in newspapers controlled by missionaries, and that the real issue was the native control of a newspaper.³⁴

The American missionaries' introduction of literacy to the native population and the subsequent creation of newspapers embodied a form of protest that was not as subtle as in the arenas of land and religion. The rapid rise in Hawaiian language literacy (the native population was almost en-

tirely literate by 1861) and the subsequent publication of newspapers again constituted a way in which the native population conformed to Western concepts of civilization in order to obtain legitimacy. In addition, the native Hawaiians were able to use the advent of written language to preserve their traditions and voice protests.

The use of political reforms as a means of protesting increasing foreign influence in Hawaii and preserving Hawaiian independence is less clear. The initial Western influence on the Hawaiian government was welcomed by Kamehameha I, the first king of Hawaii. Kamehameha, originally a Hawaiian of the *ali'i* or chiefly class, took advantage of his friendships with foreigners to obtain military advice and guns, which he used to subdue his rivals and unify the islands of Hawaii. Kamehameha succeeded in his unification efforts and became the Kingdom's first monarch. Although the loss of Hawaiian independence was not a serious threat during Kamehameha's rise to power and reign, his "Hawaiian cunning"³⁵ allowed him to manipulate peaceful interactions with foreigners to his benefit in ways that foreshadowed the native Hawaiian acceptance of Westernizing reforms of their government to obtain their goal of legitimacy in the family of nations. Unfortunately, Kamehameha opened a Pandora's Box of increasing foreign encroachments and influence upon Hawaiian sovereignty.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Hawaiian government saw an increase in foreign advisors and a sequence of constitutions that steadily limited the power of the monarch. The first constitution of Hawaii, accepted in 1840, was written with the advice of missionaries, but implemented by the authority of the King. In 1852 a new constitution composed by three foreigners, Dr. Judd, John II, and Hawaiian Chief Justice Lee, was ratified by the Hawaiian legislature. In 1864 King Kamehameha V wrote a new constitution that stood until the 1887 overthrow of the constitution by foreigners, who proceeded to write their own version which they enforced without ratification by a legislative body.³⁶

In 1893 the power of the monarchy was usurped for good. Queen Liliuokalani was removed from the throne by a group of American residents of Hawaii who feared the implementation of a new constitution, which would have restricted the right to vote to native Hawaiians.³⁷ Liliuokalani had received petitions from all over the Hawaiian Islands requesting a new constitution to restore some power to the native population, and asserted that to ignore them would have been to ignore the voice of the people, "which tradition tells us is the voice of God."³⁸ Despite the Queen's argument that she

was justified in drafting a new constitution, a group of American residents of Hawaii organized an “Annexation Club,” which overthrew Liliuokalani’s government in January 1893 with the aid of the United States Minister John L. Stevens and four boatloads of American Marines. The Americans behind the coup organized a provisional government run by foreigners.³⁹ Stevens recognized the provisional government, and the British minister implied that he would follow. Queen Liliuokalani and her supporters feared American military backing of any effort made by the provisional government, and so the Queen surrendered her throne under protest.⁴⁰ This time, the Hawaiian monarch’s efforts to pursue the Western concept of a government based on the will and representation of the people failed. But the Hawaiians did not abandon their protest of American interference and annexation, nor did they abandon their method of protest through “Westernized” means.

Both Liliuokalani and the native Hawaiian population fiercely protested the overthrow of their government through petitions and requests made to the United States President and Congress. The language of Liliuokalani’s protests in 1893 and again in 1897 demonstrates once more the strategy of the Hawaiian monarchs to use Western concepts to preserve Hawaiian independence and identity.

One of the charges made by the members of the provisional government in 1893 against Queen Liliuokalani was that she “proposed to promulgate a new constitution,”⁴¹ in which “only subjects, in distinction from temporary residents, could exercise suffrage.”⁴² Liliuokalani responded to this accusation by asserting that

to limit the exercise of suffrage to those who owed allegiance to no other country; is that different from the usage in all other civilized nations on earth? Is there another country where a man would be allowed to vote...without becoming naturalized, and reserving to himself the privilege of protection under the guns of a foreign man-of-war at any moment when he should quarrel with the government under which he lived? Yet this is exactly what the quasi Americans, who call themselves Hawaiians now and Americans when it suits them, claimed the right to do at Honolulu.⁴³

Liliuokalani sharply pointed out that the principle for which she was removed from government was one that was upheld by all “civilized” na-

tions of the world. By asserting that Hawaii was just like all other Western nations, Liliuokalani attempted to retain the respect of the United States for Hawaii as a fellow legitimate nation.

In 1893 Liliuokalani and the native inhabitants of Hawaii won a “battle” in the “war” against American annexation. Newly elected American President Grover Cleveland sent Special Commissioner James Blount to Hawaii to investigate the actions of the provisional government of Hawaii.⁴⁴ The reports submitted to Blount by groups of native Hawaiians convinced him that the overthrow of the Hawaiian government had been illegal.⁴⁵ The report included a letter from J.W. Jones, secretary of the Annexation Club (which became the Provisional Government), that stated that 1,022 Hawaiians were included on the register of the club. Yet the report specified,

The testimony of leading annexationists is that if the question of annexation was submitted to a popular vote, excluding all persons who could not read and write except foreigners (under the Australian-ballot system, which is the law of the land), that annexation would be defeated. From a careful inquiry I am satisfied that it would be defeated by a vote of at least two to one. If the votes of persons claiming allegiance to foreign countries were excluded, it would be defeated by more than five to one.⁴⁶

Blount’s report clearly showed the extent of Hawaiian opposition to American annexation in 1893, and this may have influenced President Cleveland’s views on annexation and the legitimacy of the provisional government. The American minister to Hawaii therefore recognized the authority of Queen Liliuokalani and addressed the leaders of the provisional government: “It becomes my duty to advise you of the President’s determination of the question which your action and that of the queen devolved upon him, and that you are expected to relinquish to her constitutional authority.”⁴⁷ In her memoirs, Liliuokalani attempted to prove her legitimacy as queen by emphasizing the United States Commission’s recognition of her authority, rather than focusing on her rights as queen under Hawaiian law.

In July of 1897 a treaty for the annexation of Hawaii was submitted to the United States Senate. In 1897 Queen Liliuokalani formally protested to the U.S. State Department in a continued attempt to restore native Hawaiian sovereignty and to prevent American annexation. In this protest, she ex-

pressed certain ideas that illuminated the changing identity of the Hawaiian people.

Liliuokalani “declare[s] such a treaty to be an act of wrong toward the native and part-native people of Hawaii...”⁴⁸ The inclusion of part-native people in the group of Hawaiians for whom Liliuokalani expressed concern shows the impact of American influence on the native Hawaiian population. The native population of Hawaii decreased from 300,000 in 1778 to about 37,500 in 1890, mainly as a result of epidemics caused by low immunity to diseases brought by foreigners.⁴⁹ The population size of the native Hawaiians further decreased in proportion to the overall population of the Hawaiian Islands as a result of the importation of labor for American sugar plantations.⁵⁰ A total of 117,323 people immigrated to Hawaii between 1855 and 1899, primarily to work on sugar plantations.⁵¹ The two largest groups of immigrants came from China and Japan. The Chinese proved quite successful in assimilating, and often intermarried with Hawaiians. Gray notes that “the Chinese also merged with amazing speed into the racial melting pot created by the sugar planters... The great majority of them arrived single and swiftly married Hawaiian women.”⁵² Despite the less successful assimilation of the Japanese, the language of Liliuokalani’s protest shows the impact of American influence on who was considered a Hawaiian. American sugar planters imported most of the Asian population of Hawaii, yet intermarriage and the need to present a united front of an otherwise depleted population necessitated the addition of part-native residents of Hawaii into the Hawaiian national identity.

The Hawaiian annexation treaty in 1897 was protested by groups of native Hawaiians as well. The native population formed a Men’s and Women’s Hawaiian Patriotic League. Together with a third organization, the Hawaiian Political Party, these groups petitioned against annexation and submitted tens of thousands of signatures. The abundance of names in the petitions also documents the probable addition of Asian immigrants and “part-natives” into the new Hawaiian national identity by necessity. The language of the first petitions submitted to the U.S. State Department included four clauses. The first clause asserted the trust that President McKinley would deal justly with the Hawaiian people. The second recalled the assurance of the Independence of the Islands given to Hawaii by the United States in 1843. The fourth proposed the granting of amnesty to the members of the provisional government.

The third clause proved problematic. It stated that “no cause whatever

can arise that will alter or change the mind of the Hawaiian people and their desire to see the Monarchy restored, and the Throne occupied by the Queen, who would never have been deposed by a handful of foreigners but for the support rendered them by the U.S. Ship Boston.”⁵³ President McKinley, influenced by annexationists in Hawaii as well as expansionists at home, ignored the protests of the Hawaiian organizations and proceeded to submit the treaty to the Senate. The leaders of the organizations feared that the promonarchy wording of the petitions would not be well accepted in the Senate, and they submitted a new petition which stated, “. . . We, the undersigned, native Hawaiian citizens and residents of the District of _____, island of _____, who are members of the Hawaiian Patriotic League of the Hawaiian Islands, and others who are in sympathy with said League, earnestly protest against the annexation of the said Hawaiian Islands to the said United States of America in any form or shape.”⁵⁴ Thus, even as active native Hawaiian protests against American influence and annexation reached their pinnacle, the native population was willing to alter the language of their protest so as to conform to the style most likely to be accepted by an American audience. Despite their best efforts, the native Hawaiians’ protests against annexation were not heeded and the annexation treaty passed in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. President McKinley signed the joint resolution and Hawaii was officially annexed in July of 1898.

The presence of foreigners in Hawaii profoundly altered the Hawaiian Kingdom. The Hawaii of 1898 looked very little like the one Cook found in 1778. It was unified, capitalist, Christian, literate, and ruled by a weak monarchy. The reforms and changes in Hawaiian society that led to these changes paradoxically attempted to maintain Hawaiian sovereignty and identity even as they radically changed that identity. The Hawaiian strategy of conforming to a Western model to withstand the pressure for annexation was used until the bitter end.

The struggle for Hawaiian independence did not die with American annexation. A Hawaiian nationalist movement remains a force in Hawaii today, prompting the emergence of new historiography written from a nationalist perspective. For example, Noenoe Silva’s book, *Aloha Betrayed*, attempts to portray the Hawaiian resistance to annexation, which she claims is often overlooked. Kenneth R. Conklin, an outspoken opponent of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, issued a scathing criticism of Silva’s account, calling it “historical revisionism.” He points out that there were some native Hawaiians who were in favor of American annexation, as well as some *haole*

Hawaiian residents who opposed annexation.⁵⁵ Yet the Blount Report and the anti-annexation petitions show that at least a majority of the native Hawaiians opposed annexation. Their failure to prevent annexation may reflect the many obstacles of opposing the might of an American military-backed provisional government with only a fraction of the originally robust native population remaining to fight. In assimilating so much of Western culture into their own, it is possible that Hawaiians became even more appealing to the United States as a people who could be incorporated into America as a state. However, their failure does not invalidate their efforts to preserve Hawaiian independence, particularly through the method of turning Hawaiian acceptance of American culture against the Americans.

A unique Hawaiian national identity remains a presence in Hawaii to this day, despite the changes that occurred over the course of the nineteenth century. Gray describes a scene that depicts the sentiments of the new Hawaiian nationalists. A group of Hawaiians gathered in 1970 to protest the demolition of a housing complex. An older member of the group muttered angrily, "*Imua Kamehameha!*" ("Forward Kamehameha!") A younger member of the group replied, "No, not Kamehameha! *Imua Liliuokalani!*"⁵⁶ This exchange demonstrates the focus on Liliuokalani as a national symbol, instead of the Kingdom's forefather, Kamehameha I. Despite the distance of modern Hawaiian society and identity from the Hawaii before *haole* influence, it is Liliuokalani's efforts to reinstate a Hawaiian-led constitutional government that comprise the center of the new Hawaiian nationalism. The preference for Liliuokalani, whose efforts to protect her kingdom through the method of embracing Western culture, over Kamehameha, who presided over a "purer" Hawaii but is seen as inviting in the all the problems caused in the nineteenth century and beyond by foreigners, echoes the paradoxical nature of the Hawaiians' struggle against American annexation.

¹ King, Pauline, Ed. *The Diaries of David Lawrence Gregg: An American Diplomat in Hawaii 1853-1858*: (Honolulu: Hawaiian Historical Society, 1982)

² Francine Du Plessix Gray. *Hawaii: The Sugar Coated Fortress*: (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 39.

³ Rich Budnick, *Stolen Kingdom: An American Conspiracy*: (Honolulu: Aloha Press, 1992) p. 8.

⁴ Budnick, 13.

⁵ Budnick, 14.

⁶ Budnick, 14.

⁷ King, 13.

- ⁸ Thomas J. Osborne, *“Empire Can Wait”*: (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1981).
- ⁹ Noenoe K Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*: (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004) p. 41.
- ¹⁰ Silva, 41-42.
- ¹¹ Silva, 42.
- ¹² Liliuokalani, *Hawaii’s Story By Hawaii’s Queen*: (Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc., 1964) p.177.
- ¹³ Gray, 48-49.
- ¹⁴ Silva, 42.
- ¹⁵ Silva, 31.
- ¹⁶ Gray 36, 41.
- ¹⁷ King, 68.
- ¹⁸ King, 63.
- ¹⁹ King, 66.
- ²⁰ Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture*: (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002) p.70-71.
- ²¹ Kaplan 71.
- ²² Kaplan 70.
- ²³ Gray, 41.
- ²⁴ Budnick, 13.
- ²⁵ King, 67.
- ²⁶ Budnick, 13.
- ²⁷ Silva, 33.
- ²⁸ Silva, 32.
- ²⁹ Silva, 33
- ³⁰ Silva, 34.
- ³¹ Silva, 55.
- ³² Silva, 63-64.
- ³³ Silva, 66.
- ³⁴ Silva, 66.
- ³⁵ Gray, 30.
- ³⁶ Liliuokalani, 238.
- ³⁷ Gray, 54.
- ³⁸ Liliuokalani, 231.
- ³⁹ Gray, 53.
- ⁴⁰ “The Overthrow of a Queen: Mr. Blount’s Report of the Hawaiian Revolution.” The New York Times 18 November 1883.
- ⁴¹ Liliuokalani, 237.
- ⁴² Liliuokalani, 237.
- ⁴³ Liliuokalani, 237-238.
- ⁴⁴ Silva, 131.
- ⁴⁵ Silva, 134.
- ⁴⁶ “The Overthrow of a Queen: Mr. Blount’s Report of the Hawaiian Revolution.” The New York Times 18 November 1883.
- ⁴⁷ Liliuokalani, 250.
- ⁴⁸ Memorial of the Hawaiian Kingdom Government, *“Lance Paul Larsen vs. the Hawaiian Kingdom,”* Permanent Court of Arbitration, the Hague.

⁴⁹ Budnick, 34.

⁵⁰ Gray, 63.

⁵¹ Budnick, 34.

⁵² Gray, 66.

⁵³ Memorial of the Hawaiian Kingdom Government, "*Lance Paul Larsen vs. the Hawaiian Kingdom*," Permanent Court of Arbitration, the Hague.

⁵⁴ Memorial of the Hawaiian Kingdom Government, "*Lance Paul Larsen vs. the Hawaiian Kingdom*," Permanent Court of Arbitration, the Hague.

⁵⁵ Kenneth R. Conklin, *Book Review: Noenoe Silva, Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*. 2005. <http://www.angelfire.com/hi2/hawaiiansovereighty/noenoealohabetrayed.html>

⁵⁶ Gray, 126.