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Localness and Indigeneity in Hawaiian Reggae

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by

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Abstract

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The musical genre of Hawaiian reggae is typically considered a combination of reggae and Hawaiian music, and has been popular in Hawai‘i since the 1980s. Also known as Jawaiian or island music, this genre involves the ever-shifting identity and cultural categories of localness and Hawaiianness. Localness in Hawaiian reggae involves rootedness in and affective connection to place, multicultural inclusion and equalization, and opposition to an “outside” or the global. Musicians and listeners of Hawaiian reggae will reference these characteristics in the music directly or when speaking about it. Localness in Hawaiian reggae also involves the cooption of Hawaiianness. Localness as a general category becomes legitimately connected to Hawaiian land through coopting Hawaiian indigeneity. In Hawaiian reggae, cooption occurs when musicians incorporate elements that sound Hawaiian in order to make the music sound more local. Listeners of the music also recognize sounding Hawaiian as serving this function. Although cooption and other settler colonial processes that legitimize localness make it highly problematic, it is the reality of many people. For this reason, I suggest that localness expresses a different connection to the land than that of indigenous Hawaiians. It is at once legitimate and highly problematic.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Identity and culture in Hawai‘i are complicated and constantly shifting, and the music of Hawai‘i is a rich arena for many of these processes. The genre of Hawaiian reggae is particularly illustrative. It is at once totally at home in Hawai‘i, yet totally alien to it; it has inspired controversy and great loyalty. Though reggae began as localized Afro-Jamaican music in the 1960s, it has circulated globally and grown roots all over the world in the last forty years. It has since achieved tremendous and long-lasting popularity in Hawai‘i (ho‘omanawanui 2006:277). In the process, reggae has become incorporated into Hawai‘i’s ever-shifting and sometimes contradictory discourses of identity and culture.

Hawaiian reggae, also known as Jawaiian, island music, or island reggae, is typically considered a fusion of “*Jamaican and Hawaiian music*”¹ (Weintraub 1998:78) (Jamaican music being synonymous with reggae). It has been described somewhat diversely, but these descriptions typically involve many of the same characteristics. For instance, musicians, listeners, and scholars have described Hawaiian reggae as music for people who are the “*loalest of the local*” to Hawai‘i (80), music “*indigenous to the Hawaiian youth of today*” (84), local music “*allied*” with reggae (Stillman 1998:97), and contemporary Hawaiian music influenced by Afro-diasporic music (ho‘omanawanui 2006:273). The Hawaiian reggae scene first emerged in the 1980s, and Hawaiian reggae appeared to be both dance-party music (ibid) and protest music directed against the colonial U.S. presence in Hawai‘i (Yonover n.d.). It became widely popular in the 1990s, and was perhaps the most popular form of localized music. Musicians continuously drew upon conventions of American popular music and Hawaiian music. However, the fact that much of the music did not “*sound*” Hawaiian

enough to many listeners became controversial. In the last five to ten years, it has circulated globally as a Hawaiian “brand” of reggae music (ibid) and continues to be popular in Hawai‘i.

Since the 1980s, Hawaiian reggae has become tangled up in and continues to perpetuate certain discourses of identity and culture in Hawai‘i. The main categories that operate in Hawaiian reggae are “local” and “Hawaiian.” These categories are always relational and are constantly shifting in this genre, producing discourses that often layer and contradict each other. The discourses that I focus on in this thesis relate to the ways that Hawaiian reggae sounds local or sounds Hawaiian. The presence of a global sound is a thread that runs through local and Hawaiian, which they sometimes incorporate or oppose.

The concept of localness in Hawai‘i goes beyond simply the opposite of the global. Like island cultures generally, identity and culture in Hawai‘i involves a heightened sense of localness derived from the bounded and isolated nature of islands (Conkling 2007:192). Localness in Hawai‘i also denotes the identity and the culture of the people who were born, raised, and live in Hawai‘i, regardless of race or ethnicity. Hawai‘i has a very diverse population compared to most of the rest of the U.S.; there is no racial or ethnic majority, and the most populous groups are haoles (white people), Filipinos, Japanese, Hawaiians, Chinese, Koreans, and blacks (census.hawaii.gov 2017). There is also a high rate of racial or ethnic intermarriage (Okamura 2008:30). Localness can also signify being incorporated effectively into local culture, even when one was not raised in the culture (Spickard, forthcoming). It expresses a strong affective connection to Hawaiian land as home and in opposition to a global outside. It has a historical precedent in discourses of multiculturalism, interracial cooperation in plantation labor contexts, and opposing settler colonial impositions unique to

Hawai‘i, like tourism. Local culture is often considered a blend of these cultures, and much of the time it incorporates recognizably Hawaiian elements. Values such as being laid-back, generous, humble, having the “aloha spirit,” and love of the land exemplify such elements. Local music is often touted as being representative of a common culture in Hawai‘i (Stillman 1998:98) or applicable to all Hawai‘i residents (Weintraub 1998:85). Hawaiian reggae is often categorized as local music instead of Hawaiian music because it is understood to be of this common culture or applicable all the locals of Hawai‘i, rather than Hawaiians only (Weintraub 1998:85).

In this thesis, I use the terms “Hawaiian,” “indigenous Hawaiian,” or “Kānaka Maoli” to refer to the people who are descended from the Marquesas Islanders and Tahitians who arrived in the islands as early as 600 CE (Howe 1984:15). They are known as the indigenous people of Hawai‘i because they are cosmologically descended from its land, water, and sky—which is known as the ‘āina in the Hawaiian language—and were its original inhabitants (Trask 2008:50). Hawaiian, indigenous Hawaiian, and Kānaka Maoli also refer to the racial or ethnic category of Native or native Hawaiian. I do not use N/native Hawaiian in this thesis because I want to emphasize the indigenous aspect of Hawaiian identity rather than the racial or ethnic ones (though none of these can be separated completely)². There is some discrepancy over who qualifies as Hawaiian, in relation to blood quantum, descent, and the non-Hawaiians who reside in Hawai‘i. Though traditional Hawaiian notions of genealogy or descent do not require people to have a particular blood quantum to qualify as Hawaiian (Kauanui 2008:13; Spickard 2002:44), notions of blood quantum have become part of the discourses of Hawaiian identity. These discourses often construct Hawaiians with more Hawaiian blood as more authentically Hawaiian (Arvin forthcoming; Kauanui 2008:13). In

addition, people who were born and raised in Hawai‘i or simply live there often take on a Hawaiian identity or are labeled as such by outsiders (Kauanui 2007:139; Akindes 1999:12). In other words, there is overlap and tension between localness and Hawaiianness; locals who are not indigenous Hawaiian may call themselves or be mistaken for Hawaiian. The way that I use Hawaiian in this thesis follows the traditional notions of genealogy that do not rely on blood quantum and are not equivalent to local. This is the way that the word is most often used in practice among locals/Hawaiians in Hawai‘i. Additionally, my use of the word Hawaiian to mean only indigenous Hawaiian people eschews colonial processes that indigenize non-Hawaiians to the land.

Because “Hawaiian” is an indigenous category, it exists in relation with settler colonialism. According to Patrick Wolfe, settler colonialism is different from other forms of colonialism because it is fundamentally about the acquisition of land through the “elimination” of the peoples already on the desired land (2006:388). Other scholars such as Maile Arvin have noted that elimination may not always be the goal of settler colonialism (forthcoming). Nonetheless, settler colonialism is marked by the oppression of a group for the acquisition of their land. Hawai‘i has been illegally occupied by the U.S. since 1893, making it and Hawaiian people colonized subjects. Moves like equalizing local and Hawaiian, then, are settler formations that continue such colonization by indigenizing non-indigenous people to the land.

Like with Hawaiian identity and culture in general, definitions of Hawaiian music are variable and sometimes contentious. As George Kanahale states in the original preface to *Hawaiian Music and Musicians*, regarding the creation of this encyclopedia of Hawaiian music: “The most telling point of all...was the unresolved question of ‘What is Hawaiian

music?” (2012:ix). Kanahēle then describes the impossibility of identifying a definitively Hawaiian melodic or rhythmic character. However, other scholars have attempted a definition. Amy Ku‘uleialoha Stillman notes that some consider the Hawaiian language to be the defining characteristic of Hawaiian music (Stillman 2011a). ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui defines it as based on the pre-contact music of the Hawaiian people (before Captain Cook “discovered” Hawai‘i in 1778). She contends that this music is also flexible enough to incorporate global music forms (2006:273). Other scholars have noted the diversity of these global influences on Hawaiian music: tourism (Tatar 1987:2), Protestant missionaries (Stillman 1996:481), Mexican cowboys and Portuguese laborers (Troutman 2016:11), sailors and whalers (Carr 2014:3), and “jazz, blues, gospel, rock and roll, [Puerto Rican] cachi-cachi music, American country & western, Jamaican reggae, and rap” (Akindes 1999:15).

In this way, the basis of definitions of Hawaiian music often begin with pre-contact music that is then influenced by global musics (Stillman 2011a). However, no one knows how pre-contact Hawaiian music sounded because there are no recordings of this music. Musicians of Hawaiian music often have traditional understandings of what consists of pre-contact music, based on oral transmission, but these characteristics shift³. Furthermore, it is impossible to separate “truly” Hawaiian characteristics from other Pacific Islander or global musics that may have existed in pre-contact Hawai‘i. With these issues in mind, the question “what is Hawaiian music?” does not make much sense. Rather, a more productive question would be “what *about* any given song, or what about any given presentation of a song[,] is Hawaiian? (emphasis mine)” (Stillman 2011b). Or, as I posit here, how does a song *sound* Hawaiian?

There are several overlapping realms within pre-contact Hawaiian music that have been variously interpreted as Hawaiian since contact: genre, vocal or instrumental styles and sounds, themes and concepts, and language. Traditional Hawaiian chanting, known as mele, seems to be the only known pre-contact Hawaiian music, and is typically categorized as Hawaiian music. Mele can be divided into two categories: mele oli (chanting without dancing) or mele hula (chanting with hula dancing) (Tatar and Berger 2012a:95). Under these categories, there are numerous genres of mele that determine specific vocal styles, melodic and rhythmic conventions, and ornaments. Common genres of mele include mele he'e nalu (surfing chant) and mele inoa (name chant to honor someone) (96). Mele can also be accompanied by pre-contact instruments like the ipu (gourd percussion instrument), 'uli'uli (feathered gourd rattle), and 'ohe hano ihu (nose flute) (97). The concept that the words of mele are more important than the "music," which some scholars consider "logocentrism," is characteristic of pre-contact mele (Szego 2003:297). Additionally, the concept of kaona, which is layers of hidden meaning, is a common poetic device used in mele. Kaona can range from multiple meanings that are commonly understood to those known only to the composer (Tatar and Berger 2012a:94). Finally, mele is usually in the Hawaiian language, the only language that is generally known to have existed in Hawai'i before contact.

Since contact, the sounds, instruments, vocal styles, etc. that qualify as Hawaiian have broadened substantially. At the same time, the boundaries of Hawaiian music have been called into question with increased global influence. James Revell Carr argues that Hawaiians became cosmopolitan, global subjects long before globalization was even conceived of in the west. Hawai'i has been a nexus for trade routes throughout the Pacific since contact at the end of the 18th century, and so Hawaiians had great exposure to globally

circulating culture throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. In addition, Hawaiians were not solely subject to conditions of colonial power, but were agents who adopted cultural forms that fulfilled their own particular cultural needs throughout this time (2014:3). Carr gives examples of the ways in which the royal family in the late-19th century, especially King David Kalākaua, patronized music that ranged from traditional hula and mele to minstrelsy, and freely mixed elements of these musical forms (175). Besides having access to a wide variety of global cultures, Hawaiians freely accepted and incorporated these cultures into their own music. Carr asserts that these processes have since continued throughout Hawai‘i’s history (183).

The ‘ukulele and steel guitar, for example, were two such instruments that have come to sound Hawaiian to locals/Hawaiians. However, they were originally based on the Madeiran machete (Tranquada and King 2012:10) and the Portuguese steel-stringed guitar (Troutman 2016:11), respectively. Another example is the genre of “contemporary Hawaiian music,” which first appeared in the 1970s. Much of the music in this genre is not in the Hawaiian language, nor does it use pre-contact instruments or vocal styles and ornaments (Stillman 1998:90-91). It is often considered Hawaiian because it invokes pre-contact genre themes like place and kaona. They are also considered Hawaiian because the lyrics invoke Hawaiian sovereignty, the notion that Hawaiian people represent a sovereign nation and should break away from the U.S. in some capacity. The fact that musicians are Hawaiian is another characteristic often ascribed to Hawaiian music (Stillman 2011a). Other Hawaiian music genres or categories created since contact have all added new Hawaiian sounds to Hawaiian music. Such genres include hīmeni (Hawaiian hymnody), hula ku‘i (genre of hula and its music that incorporates pre-contact elements with the instruments, melodies, and

rhythms of 19th century American popular music), hapa haole (songs in English about Hawai‘i for performance for tourists in the style of American popular music from approximately 1900-1970), ki ho‘alu (slack-key guitar), Hawaiian or Hawaiian reggae, and Hawaiian hip-hop.

Differentiating traditional Hawaiian music from contemporary is another point of contention within the category of Hawaiian music. The word “traditional” is often used to mean pre-contact. Mele, for instance, is usually characterized as traditional Hawaiian music. However, other musics from the 19th and early 20th century, like hula ku‘i, include global elements of American popular music but are still considered traditional (Tatar 1987:5). In relation to contemporary Hawaiian music, traditional Hawaiian music becomes “more” Hawaiian and “less” global. Stephanie Nohelani Teves further argues that the very notion of a traditional Hawaiian music came about in the 1970s, perhaps to be opposed to the then-new category of contemporary Hawaiian music (2015:257).

With the boundaries of Hawaiian music thoroughly broken down, one can consider its relations with the category of local. As different groups of people settled in Hawai‘i from countries throughout Asia, Europe, and the Americas, they started to identify with such music as their own (Stillman 2011c). How does localness relate to Hawaiian music? Is Hawaiian music always local because it is not global? What does local music sound like if not Hawaiian music, the most uniquely local music of Hawai‘i in a global context?

How, then, is Hawaiian reggae local and how is it Hawaiian? Because of Hawaiian reggae’s broad appeal among Hawai‘i residents and strong alliance with the sounds and content of global reggae music, scholars often consider Hawaiian reggae local music as

opposed to Hawaiian music. However, they also immediately complicate this opposition by discussing the ways in which Hawaiianness is imbricated in localness.

For instance, Amy Ku‘uleialoha Stillman argues that localness in general “denotes a common culture that is shared among Hawai‘i residents” (1998:98). She describes it as “a particular space in which shared experiences of daily living are celebrated” and where concerns for its maintenance are voiced. Localness also involves an “appreciation of the land and environment,” “easy-going style[s] of interaction,” and “opposition to threats of social, economic and political changes, especially when perceived to originate outside Hawai‘i” (90). Local music, then, expresses these shared concerns, sentiments, and aspirations (ibid). She explicitly categorizes Hawaiian reggae as a local music, framing it as local music “allied with the performance of reggae” (97). Stillman appears to consider language the quality that separates local and Hawaiian music—the lyrics must be in the Hawaiian language in order to count as Hawaiian music⁴ (96-7). However, since language appears to be the only characteristic separating local and Hawaiian music, Hawaiian reggae could be Hawaiian music if it is in the Hawaiian language (97).

Stillman’s discussions of top ten song charts from the radio station KCCN in 1996 and the Nā Hōkū Hanohano Awards support this point. According to Stillman, KCCN created charts for two of its stations—one titled “Hawaiian Top Ten” and the other titled “Island Top Ten.” The Hawaiian station was supposed to focus on more specific Hawaiian material and the “island” station on a “broader range of local music” (99). However, Stillman points out that in 1996, the top four songs on both charts were exactly the same, and there were two other songs that overlapped charts but did not share the same ranking (ibid).

Further, she contends that the Nā Hōkū Hanohano awards, coordinated by the Hawai‘i Academy of Recording Arts and voted on by industry professionals, were ambivalently divided into Hawaiian and local music categories at the time of writing. The paired categories of “Contemporary” and “Hawaiian Contemporary” exemplify this. According to Stillman, this division reflects the reality that not all local musicians engaged in Hawaiian music, and that there are diverse approaches to performance within Hawaiian music (100). She points out that between the years 1978 and 1996, all but two of the awards for Album of the Year were Hawaiian, which she argues demonstrates an unusually high integration of indigenous music into a commercial entertainment industry (102). Despite the idea that the Nā Hōkū Hanohano awards purportedly represent the music of all of Hawai‘i rather than just Hawaiian music (nahokuhanohano.org 2017), and, based upon these evenly divided categories (this is currently not the case), the vast majority of the Album of the Year awards were Hawaiian music. The results of the Album of the Year award, then, complicate the categorization system of the Nā Hōkū Hanohano awards.

In this vein, Andrew Weintraub positions his inquiry about localness in Hawaiian reggae through this question: “How is Jawaiian perceived as a symbol of local cultural identity in contemporary Hawai‘i?” Rather than framing Hawaiian reggae as local music and not Hawaiian music, his intent is to explore *how* different actors frame Hawaiian reggae as local in varying ways. He identifies four values of local culture that are present in Hawaiian reggae, qualifying it as local music: “maintenance of the insider-outsider dichotomy, the ‘aloha spirit,’ love and defense of the land (aloha’aina) and a symbolic connection to the past” (1998:80). He argues that both these values and Hawaiian reggae are meant to appeal to everyone in Hawai‘i, rather than Hawaiians only. Further, he maintains that the music

belongs to the “local youth of Hawai‘i” (86). However, Weintraub argues that the four local values he cites were originally Hawaiian, and projects that Hawaiian reggae could become the newest style of contemporary Hawaiian music (ibid). He also points out that Hawaiian reggae musicians, like foundational musician Bruddah Waltah, actually consider Hawaiian reggae to be rooted in Hawai‘i. Weintraub quotes the cassette jacket of Bruddah Waltah and the Island Afternoon’s 1990 release *Hawaiian Reggae*, where a definition of “Jawaiian” music is printed: “pertaining to Jamaican-Hawaiian music *indigenous* to Hawaiian youth of today” (84). Weintraub argues that Bruddah Waltah uses the word “indigenous” to establish that Hawaiian reggae has roots in Hawaiian culture, and is therefore part of Hawaiian heritage.

Unlike Stillman and Weintraub, ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui unambiguously categorizes Hawaiian reggae as Hawaiian music (2006:273). She contends that positioning Hawaiian reggae as local music erases the fundamental Hawaiian influence on the genre (283), and provides numerous examples of it. She maintains that many Hawaiian reggae songs invoke Hawaiian food, surfing (originally a Hawaiian sport), love of the land (originally a Hawaiian concept), and mele inoa (291). Many Hawaiian reggae songs also include Hawaiian instruments like the ‘ukulele, and are sung in the Hawaiian language (278). ho‘omanawanui uses the lyrics in the song “Pi‘i Mai Ka Nalu” by Robi Kahakalau as an example. ho‘omanawanui points out that even though it is a Hawaiian reggae song, distinguishable by its prominent reggae beat, Kahakalau sings only in the Hawaiian language (279). ho‘omanawanui also contends that the theme of the song, surfing, is traditional in Hawaiian music⁵. Finally, she argues that the only thing that distinguishes this song from “more traditional” Hawaiian music is its reggae beat (ibid). This claim might be contentious,

especially since many of the instruments in this song sound like synthesizers evocative of pop music of the 1980s. However, the musicians also use Hawaiian-sounding instruments, like the steel guitar and acoustic guitar, to a great extent.

As the discussions of Stillman, Weintraub, and ho‘omanawanui demonstrate, the separation between local and Hawaiian music is blurry in the context of Hawaiian reggae. Their shifting disagreements and agreements exemplify the always-moving, relational discourses of localness and Hawaiianness in the music of Hawai‘i. How they shift can be described by Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs’s notion of cycling epistemologies of purity and hybridity (2003), as interpreted by Ana María Ochoa Gautier. According to Ochoa, Bauman and Briggs identify an Enlightenment-era process of defining modernity: domains of thought were discursively separated and yet linked at the same time. Domains like science, language, and tradition were constantly rendered autonomous from the domain of society, and therefore outside the realm of human construction. At the same time, however, language and tradition were constantly linked to society (2006:809). Ochoa calls this mechanism, used to separate and unite domains of knowledge, cycles of epistemologies of purity and transculturation. In order to render something separate or pure, an “epistemology of purification” obscures the constitutive parts of something. On the other hand, Ochoa argues that an “epistemology of transculturation” validates the hybrid (820). Transculturation makes visible and audible the multiple parts of something. She also argues that epistemologies of purification and transculturation “cycle” and “feed into each other and constitute each other in contradictory and complex ways” (ibid). For example, framing Hawaiian reggae as Hawaiian music cycles through this purity and multiplicity. Calling Hawaiian reggae Hawaiian music obscures its global influences by elevating its Hawaiian

elements over all others. At the same time, this framing points to the history of global influence upon this music, as most musicians and listeners of Hawaiian reggae are aware of this history. Hawaiian reggae and Hawaiian music, then, cycle through purity and multiplicity.

But is there any tendency to this cycling? In the genre of Hawaiian reggae, the categories of localness and Hawaiianness cycle in relation to a dual notion of connection and cooption. Localness involves rootedness in and affective connection to place, multicultural inclusion and equivalency, opposition to an “outside” or the global, and cooption of Hawaiianness. In Hawaiian reggae, localness plays out through the ways in which lyrics and sounds reference the diversity of Hawai‘i’s localness but create barriers to entry. The references range across the constitutive cultures of localness, but the listener must be knowledgeable of local culture in order to understand these references. These boundaries are clear from the responses of listeners of this music. While locals praise Hawaiian reggae for reminding them of home, non-locals express frustration or overt hostility over not being able to understand it. In addition, locals will assume a marginalized identity against this frustration or hostility that supports these boundaries.

Localness further becomes legitimately connected to the ‘āina because it coopts Hawaiianness. That is, local identity and culture incorporate Hawaiian identity and culture, and in doing so, make Hawaiianness represent localness. This process is clear in Hawaiian reggae because of the fundamental way this genre relies upon Hawaiianness. Out of all of the ethnically or racially-based cultures typically invoked in local culture, Hawaiian culture is most often referenced. Many of these references to Hawaiian culture in Hawaiian reggae are also used to promote Hawaiian sovereignty. Despite the presence of this fundamental

Hawaiianness, it is often obscured to be made applicable to all locals. Finally, musicians and listeners of Hawaiian reggae often consider it more “unique” or local when it is more Hawaiian. Although cooption and other settler colonial processes that legitimize localness make it highly problematic, it is the reality of many people. For this reason, I suggest that localness expresses a different connection to the land than that of indigeneity. Localness is not genealogical, and therefore preserves indigenous peoples’ statuses as the only group with this weighty and unique connection that supersedes all others. However, while real and legitimate, local connection is problematic because it relies on colonial processes to become established. The shifting meanings of the word “island” in Hawaiian reggae exemplify these processes.

Context

In indigenous studies and studies of indigenous music in ethnomusicology, there has been ongoing work that focuses on “modern” indigeneity. “Modern” is often a gloss for “popular” music or culture, and the authors associated with this thread point out the problems that occur when actors insist that indigenous people must remain traditional. This argument assumes that tradition itself is static and past, which perpetuates colonial discourses that relegate indigenous people to the past. Such studies typically explore the ways in which indigenous people have always been a part of popular music history in the mainland U.S. and Canada in particular, and continue to utilize popular music in resistant ways (see Carr 2014; Teves 2011, 2015; Osumare 2007; Stillman 2007; Diamond 2007; Diamond, Szego, and Sparling 2012; Berglund, Johnson, and Lee 2016; Hoefnagles and Diamond 2012; Scales 2012; Dueck 2013; Samuels 2004). Related to this is a recent turn from culture as

circumscribed, localized process to culture as transformative circulation. In this framework, culture is still a process and constantly changes, but is always moving geographically and transforms as it moves. Likewise, discussions of globalization in ethnomusicology focus strongly on the dichotomy of local and global; this turn to circulation totally blurs the boundaries of this binary as each comes to constitute the other (see Novak 2013; Steingo 2016). This thread complements discussions in studies of the Pacific, sometimes called Native Pacific Cultural Studies, which have advocated a centering of circulation for over twenty years. Native Pacific Cultural Studies has posited that Pacific peoples traditionally understand themselves and their culture to be multiple and perpetually in motion, yet always grounded in a particular ‘āina-like entity (see Teves et. al 2015; Hau‘ofa 1993; Teaiwa 2001; Diaz and Kauanui 2001; Lyons and Tengan 2015; Arvin 2015a).

In the realm of Hawaiian music, this thesis contributes to a recent florescence of work on Hawaiian music and hula in circulation. These include James Revell Carr (2014), John W. Troutman (2016), Jim Tranquada and John King (2012), Adria Imada (2004; 2012; 2013), and Amy Ku‘uleialoha Stillman (1998; 1999; 2004; 2011a-c). These scholars have discussed Hawaiian music and dance constituted in circulation, both through the ways in which global music cultures transformed Hawaiian music and through the ways in which Hawaiian music transformed global culture, especially American popular music. While this work is greatly productive, circulation and indigeneity in the Pacific have largely been explored this way in a historical context. My work is historical because it is about Hawaiian reggae in the past. However, it also explores Hawaiian reggae of the past several years, the tenuous “ethnographic” present. In general, studies of Hawaiian music tend to be historical, so future

investigations of Hawaiian music in a contemporary and even ethnographic context would be welcome.

In addition, this thesis contributes to work on localness in relation to the music of Hawai‘i. This topic has been explored by ethnomusicologists like Amy Ku‘uleialoha Stillman (1998; 2011c), Andrew Weintraub (1998), and Eugenia Siegel Conte (2016), as well as Kanaka Maoli literary studies scholar ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui (2006). This thesis contributes to this discussion by exploring the shifting meanings of localness in a larger historical context. This thesis also contributes to work on localness in Hawai‘i outside of music, which has been discussed in relation to settler colonialism, indigenous studies, and ethnic studies (see Fujikane 2008; Trask 2008; Rosa 2014; Okamura 1980, 1994, 2008; Yamamoto 1979; Halualani 2002; Tamura 2000; Takaki 1983).

The methods I use involve the close readings of scholarship, songs (which include both sounds and lyrics), music videos, interviews, and YouTube comments. This thesis is limited by my own subjectivity and positionality. I am Hawaiian but was born and raised in California. However, I become automatically local the moment I arrive in Hawai‘i, even though I have little personal knowledge of localness in practice. This thesis is also limited by the fraught political context of the subject matter. Indigenous studies is an activist discipline that is currently trying to decolonize. Because I am trying to legitimize localness even though it is problematic, I could be accused of trying to prevent decolonialization. My intent is not to do that, but to actually aid decolonization by pointing out how deep colonialism goes. However, my aim is also to complicate some of the totalizing tendencies of decolonization by considering localness as more than merely a gloss for settler colonialism.

Chapter 2

What is Hawaiian Reggae?

Reggae first traveled to Hawai‘i in the 1970s and was popular among Jamaican soldiers, local Hawaiian youth, and university students. However, it did not circulate much beyond these groups. Reggae became more widely popular in the 1980s, following Bob Marley’s 1979 concert at the Waikiki Shell. It was at this point that musicians in Hawai‘i started to produce their own localized version of reggae (Yonover n.d.; Weintraub 1998:78). During this time, Hawaiian reggae was known commonly as Jawaiian.

Marley’s messages of resistance to oppression may have appealed because they appeared on the heels of the Hawaiian Renaissance (ho‘omanawanui 2006:304; Yonover n.d.). This was a movement inspired by the black, red, brown, and yellow power movements on the mainland in the 1970s. It also called for the revitalization of colonially repressed traditional culture, which included music, dance (hula), and the Hawaiian language. In addition, it sparked the Hawaiian nationalist or sovereignty movement.

The Hawaiian Renaissance was a reaction to the cultural and political repression that haoles had committed against Hawaiians since the 19th century. During that century, haoles had driven pre-contact-derived mele and hula underground because of their religious connotations. They also believed that mele and hula distracted Hawaiians from working on sugarcane and pineapple plantations (Silva 2000:46). The Hawaiian language had almost died out—it was banned by a haole provisional government in 1896 (Imada 2004:118)—but was brought back and began to be taught in universities and K-12 schools (Szego 2003:294). Finally, the Hawaiian sovereignty or nationalist movement called for Hawai‘i to break away from the United States in some capacity. This call is based upon the fact that Hawaiians were

members of a sovereign nation that has been illegally occupied by the United States since 1893. This movement has continued since this time in various forms, including calling for formal recognition of the Hawaiian sovereign nation, achieving a status similar to American Indian tribes, and complete separation from the U.S.

Although the politically-charged environment of the 1970s created an affinity for the political messages of reggae in Hawai‘i, much of Hawaiian reggae music in the 1980s was not political. The lyrics of certain songs from the 1980s contained political messages critiquing colonialism, like Brother Noland’s (Noland Conjugacion) “Are You Native” and “Tourist Island,” but these were in the minority. Further, the political messages of these songs are not overt—they do not name colonialism but allude to its unequal conditions in the spirit of the Hawaiian concept of kaona.

The lyrics of “Are You Native” (1986) for instance, appear tongue in cheek because of the bizarre subject matter of the song—an alien invasion of earth. However, the lyrics are evocative of Hawaiian politics. Brother Noland begins by discursively separating and othering aliens from earthlings:

Who are these creatures?
Where do they come from?
Who are these strangers with different voodoo?
Do you feel danger when they are near you?

They come from outside—can they come inside?
Can they vacate here and drink your water?

Are we invaders that come to visit, or just some neighbors?
Perhaps we’re tourists—ask us.

Earth becomes Hawai‘i, as Brother Noland starts referencing invaders and tourism, known promulgators of colonialism in Hawai‘i. However, the outsiders that he describes are never named or identified outright—they only *might* be invaders, tourists, etc. Although they appear to represent the colonial or global outsider invading and stealing from Hawai‘i, the boundary between outsiders (aliens) and insiders (earthlings) is constantly undone. For instance, an alien appears near the end of the song, sonically marked through sounding electronic and high-pitched as if the recording were sped up. It introduces itself by saying “Greetings, fellow earthlings.” It subsequently delivers a message from a higher power that seems to apply to both aliens and earthlings: “Whatever space you occupy on this earth, Mama says you are all natives of the planet earth—one world, one race. Everybody!” Further, even though Brother Noland sounds like an earthling throughout this song (not electronically modified) and refers to the outsiders as “they” in the beginning of the song (“They come from outside...”), he defines himself as an outsider by referring to these outsiders in the first person: “Are we invaders..?...Ask us—are you Native?” Are the aliens, then, related to or also Natives?

Despite the ambiguity, this song is a clear invocation of Hawaiian sovereignty to locals or people who know about the political context of Hawai‘i. One fan-made YouTube video made to go along with this song is a clear indication of this interpretation (funimuni808 2011). The video maker includes an image of a man holding the upside-down Hawaiian flag, which is a known symbol of the Hawaiian nation in distress, next to a sign that reads “The Gods of The Ancients, DECLARE and CLAIM, This LAND is OURS.” They also include an image of the coat of arms of the Hawaiian monarchy that was in power before being deposed, and an image of the Kanaka Maoli flag. This flag is sometimes used in association with the

Hawaiian sovereignty movement to represent the Hawaiian nation. However, there is no direct explanation or reference to the political context of Hawai‘i in this video; one must already know what the flags, etc. mean in order to access the meanings, hidden in a kaona-like fashion. At the same time, Brother Noland’s highly ambiguous and contradictory definitions of invaders/tourists/neighbors vs. natives seem to undercut a purely Hawaiian sovereignty-based interpretation. The video makers seem to incorporate this idea into their video as well. Besides including highly political and Hawaiian-specific images, they include pictures of haoles surfing and enjoying themselves on the beach. The aliens seem to become Natives in these images. At the same time, a satirical edge to this song is evident from the subject matter, the overwrought and animated style of singing, and the more overtly satirical nature of the other songs on this album. These characteristics cause one to question even an interpretation of ambiguity. Is Brother Noland making fun of politics, ambiguity between Hawai‘i “Natives” and outsiders, or both at the same time?

The sounds and albums of Hawaiian reggae from this time, and continuing into the present day, range from more recognizably Hawaiian to more recognizably global. Musicians like Brother Noland and Butch Helemano released full albums of Hawaiian reggae (*Native News* and *Reggae Fevah*, respectively), while others like Kapena released albums with very few reggae-inspired tracks amongst others that sound “more” Hawaiian. The tracks on the album that “Are You Native” comes from, *Native News*, do not appear to sound Hawaiian. However, to those who know about Hawai‘i’s political context, the subject matter is clearly local and/or Hawaiian. Surprisingly, only one song on this album seems to sound like reggae (a cover of Freddie McGregor’s “Big Ship”), indicated by a reggae beat and Brother Noland’s Jamaican patois-inspired pronunciation. The rest of the songs sound largely like

1980s synth-pop and various other mainstream American popular music of the time, like R&B and funk. Though this stylistic choice seems to indicate that this album is not Hawaiian reggae beyond “Big Ship” (ho‘omanawanui 2006:281), other songs on this album are considered Hawaiian reggae (Weintraub 1998:80). Brother Noland also publicly defines himself as the “Father of Hawaiian Music” (brothernoland.com 2017). On the other hand, Kapena’s album *Satisfaction Guaranteed* has only one obvious reggae song, a cover of Peter Tosh’s “Stop That Train.” However, the rest of the album sounds “more” Hawaiian. Out of the twelve songs on this album, all except three are in the Hawaiian language. The others use Hawaiian sounds like falsetto, yodeling vocal styles, vocal ornaments associated with hapa haole music, and the strumming of the ‘ukulele.

Weintraub argues that a Hawaiian reggae scene began to consolidate in the 1980s through public parties and dances, but it remained a largely “grass-roots music” at the time (1998:78). However, around 1990, Hawaiian reggae became widely popular in Hawai‘i. The first all-Hawaiian reggae radio station was established on KCCN/FM 100 that year, which contributed greatly to its dissemination (Berger 2012:392). Hawaiian reggae continued to draw from reggae, whatever was most popular on the mainland, and Hawaiian music in varying ways. For example, the songs “Hawaiian Lands” and “Church in an Old Hawaiian Town” from Bruddah Waltah & Island Afternoon’s album *Hawaiian Reggae* (1995) sound Hawaiian in varying ways. “Hawaiian Lands” sounds Hawaiian because of its references to sovereignty and use of the Hawaiian language. The chorus, which includes the line: “keep Hawaiian lands in Hawaiian hands,” is an explicit call for sovereignty. The chorus also includes the line: “Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono.” This phrase translates to “the land is perpetuated (or restored) in righteousness,” and has been used in association with the

sovereignty movement⁶. Other than the lyrics, the song does not sound very Hawaiian; rather it sounds largely like 1980s synth pop with a reggae beat. Similarly, “Church in an Old Hawaiian Town” sounds primarily like 1980s synth pop. However, its “treacly” melody, nostalgic lyrics, and traditional Hawaiian invocations of place reference hapa haole music and missionary-sanctioned popular music from the early 20th century (James Revell Carr, personal communication).

During this decade, Hawaiian reggae musicians also began to incorporate rap into their music. ho‘omanawanui argues that the earliest band to do this was Kapena with the song “Island Stylin’” in 1992. Others like “We Are Only Human” by Sunland, “Punani Patrol” by Sean Na‘auao, and “Early Morning Surf Session” by Typical Hawaiians continued this trend (2006:281). Perhaps the most famous Hawaiian rap group, Sudden Rush, is often included under the umbrella of Hawaiian reggae because their music sometimes alludes to reggae. Illustrative tracks include their cover of Jimmy Cliff’s “Roots Radical” and their original song “Irie Eyes” from their 2002 album *Eā (Sovereignty)* (283).

By the 2000s, much of Hawaiian reggae did not use Hawaiian sounds, themes, styles, instruments, etc. and it began to circulate as a Hawaiian brand of reggae music. However, some Hawaiian reggae music videos and other visual media and material culture maintains ties to the landscape of Hawai‘i. For example, songs like The Green’s “Mama Roots” (thegreenhawaii 2016) largely do not sound Hawaiian. This song sounds much like contemporary roots reggae music or other American R&B inspired popular music in instrumentation and vocal styling. It is also in English and Jamaican patois-inspired English, and does not appear to invoke Hawaiian themes or concepts like kaona. However, much of the video consists of helicopter shots of iconic locations on the coasts of O‘ahu and Kaua‘i,

including Waikīkī, Diamond Head, Aloha Tower, Chinamen's Hat, and Waimea Beach Park on O‘ahu, and the pier at Hanalei Bay and the Nā Pali coast on Kaua‘i. Most locals or people who know about Hawai‘i would immediately recognize many, if not all, of the places shown. Although these places may not be legible to those without knowledge of Hawai‘i, they are at least representation of a tropical island with beaches—perhaps the most globally legible traits of Hawai‘i.

To some extent, much of this period of Hawaiian reggae does not sound like reggae at all. While this trait was present in the genre from the start, it is perhaps more pronounced at this point. In fact, many groups do not present themselves as “Hawaiian reggae,” “Jawaiian,” “island music,” or “island reggae” artists per se, but rather as “reggae” artists. They become “Hawaiian” because they were either originally from Hawai‘i or are now based there. For instance, all but one member of the Hawaiian reggae group Iration are from Hawai‘i, but they formed the band in Isla Vista, CA and tour primarily on the mainland (Iration 2017). On the other hand, artists J Boog, O-shen, and Fiji are not from Hawai‘i but base their careers there—they were originally from Los Angeles, Papua New Guinea, and Fiji, respectively (Yonover n.d.). Some of these artists do not even use the word “reggae” to describe their primary genre, but list it as one of their many musical influences (ABC News 2016).

Occasionally, however, recent Hawaiian reggae songs will overtly sound Hawaiian in some fashion. For instance, the first and last songs on The Green’s album *Hawai‘i ’13* are choral music in the Hawaiian language sung by children. These songs invoke the Hawaiian music genre of hīmeni, which was created in missionary contexts in the 19th century. It continues to be performed in church choirs (Conte 2016:13) and schools that emphasize Hawaiian culture, like the Kamehameha Schools (Szego 2003:300). This music sounds like

protestant hymnody and is sung completely in the Hawaiian language. In addition, the title of *Hawai'i '13* likely refers to Israel Kamakawiwo'ole's song "Hawai'i '78." This song overtly mourns the detrimental effects of settler colonialism on Hawaiian people and land. Finally, the last track of the album is "Hawai'i Aloha," which is strongly associated with the Hawaiian sovereignty movement.

Chapter 3

Localness in Hawaiian Reggae

Localness in Hawaiian reggae involves rootedness in and affective connection to Hawai‘i as place, multicultural inclusion, and opposition to a global outside. These facets of localness play out through the ways in which lyrics and sounds reference the diversity of Hawai‘i’s localness but create barriers to entry. These references range across identities and cultures, but the listener must be knowledgeable of local identity and culture in order to understand the references. These boundaries are clear from the responses of listeners of this music. While locals praise this music for reminding them of home, non-locals express frustration or overt hostility over not being able to understand it. In addition, locals assume an oppositional or marginalized identity in the face of such frustration and hostility. They frame those who do not understand local identity and culture as oppressive outsiders.

Localness as Rooted and Multicultural

Localness is often understood as rootedness in and affective connection to place. Rootedness requires an originary connection to place; a group of people become themselves because their identity or subjectivities derive from this geographic place (Feld and Basso 1996:4). Similarly, Michael Jackson effectively explains affective connection to place through the concept of home. He describes home as the phenomenological experience of having “complete consonance between one’s body and the body of the earth” (1995:111). While this feeling of home is transportable to any number of geographic places, the feeling is often brought on by specific ones. Both rootedness and affective connection position Hawai‘i as a “special place” (Rosa 2014:104), in other words, as the originary point for local identity

and culture. While not all locals may have the genealogical connection to land that Hawaiians do, localness grounds locals to Hawaiian land because it is their home.

General usage of the word kama‘āina follows this connection to place (Yamamoto 1979:101; Conte 2016:103). Meaning literally “child of the land,” kama‘āina is often used synonymously with local (Miyares 2008:520). Eugenia Siegel Conte argues that for choral singers in Hawaiian churches, kama‘āina means “of the island” rather than “of the land” (2016:99). Being “of the island” does not have the same indigenous, genealogical connotations as “of the land.” Therefore, “of the island” opens up the concept of kama‘āina to locals who are not Hawaiian. Conte contends that kama‘āina entails the ability to code switch between musics from disparate places in an idiosyncratic and consistent manner that may not be understandable to outsiders. This idiosyncratic code switching is what makes singing in Hawaiian churches “of the island” (41). At the same time, the openness of kama‘āina can extend beyond the boundaries of Hawai‘i. The diverse music programmed in Hawaiian churches, which ranges from hīmeni, to worship music based on mainstream American pop music, and to traditional Protestant hymns in English, can all be made at home in Hawai‘i (63). Localness, then, is about reconfiguring influences from a global outside to make them “of the island.”

The multicultural facets of localness are clear from the discourses of inclusivity involved in kama‘āina. Typically, discourses of localness do not require individuals to be Hawaiian, rather, they commonly hold that individuals must be born and raised in Hawai‘i (Okamura 1980:119), or have assimilated into this culture through performing localness effectively (Spickard, forthcoming). Hawai‘i has a diverse population compared to much of the U.S.; there is no racial or ethnic majority, and the most populous groups are haoles,

Filipinos, Japanese, Hawaiians, Chinese, Koreans, and blacks (census.hawaii.gov 2017). There is also a high rate of racial or ethnic intermarriage (Okamura 2008:30). Local culture contains elements of many of these groups' cultures, including Hawaiian, various Asian, and haole "mainstream" American cultures (Okamura 1980:120). Local culture has also been described as "common sentiments that unify Hawai'i's ethnically diverse population" (Stillman 1998:90). Local culture also includes various "values," such as being "easygoing, friendly, open, trusting, humble, generous, loyal to family and friends and indifferent to achieved status distinctions" (Okamura 1980:128), "aloha 'āina" or love of the land (Weintraub 1998:80), and being "laid-back" (Okamura 2008:115).

Outright references to multiculturalism unique to Hawai'i, which have been present in some fashion since contact, are also constitutive parts of localness. Multiculturalism in Hawai'i began with the notion of the "aloha spirit," which has existed in some form since western contact with Hawai'i in 1778 (Halualani 2002:36). Around the time of contact, haoles framed Hawaiians and other Polynesians as inherently pleasant and peaceful, which Captain Cook and his crew refigured to include pleasantness towards outsiders and haoles in particular. Discourses of overt multiculturalism arrived in the 1920s with Romanzo Adams, who tied the aloha spirit to race. He argued that Hawai'i was a "multicultural model" for degenerate urban centers of the mainland, and a place of harmony and peace because of the high rate of intermarriage. Such discourses were promulgated through mass media and social science research throughout the 20th century (Okamura 2008:8-9).

Local culture, which includes certain foods, language, and music, combines much of these notions of inclusivity and rootedness in place. Local culture includes influences from the cultures of the people who have lived there historically (Yamamoto 1979:102). Local

food like spam musubi (sushi), kalua pig, laulau, and malasadas are variously American, Japanese, Hawaiian, Portuguese, and more, and are representative of this wide range of influences on local food. Pidgin or Hawaiian creole, the local language, was originally created as a lingua franca for laborers on sugarcane and pineapple plantations in the 19th century, who had been recruited from all over the world (Takaki 1983:118). Though local culture is diasporic to some degree—it clearly includes culture tied to places outside Hawai‘i like Japan and Portugal, it is transformed in a way that acknowledges its roots in Hawaiian land.

The lyrics of numerous Hawaiian reggae songs describe and extol the values and characteristics of local culture. Songs like Darrell Labrado’s “Da Kine” (1999) include lyrics that reference such characteristics both in an explicit and veiled manner:

Verse:

Now I’ve come to the islands to escape what’s insane
Meanwhile everyone’s smiling even if it rains
And there’s many words for just one state
In Hawaiian, Portuguese, ‘n’ Japanese the local way
Then you meet these happy people and you hear them speak
It may sound like somethin’ simple, but it really is unique

Chorus:

Hey bra’ what’s da kine (what’s da kine)
It’s a word we use all of the time
As simple as saimin
It’s one word that means just about everything
When da kine (now’s da kine)
Who da kine (you da kine)
What da kine (I donno)
Where da kine
Da kine is da kine and that’s da kine
It’s the word that’s on your mind

(BluSakura808 2008)

In the first verse, Labrado describes Hawai‘i (“the islands”) as being a place that is different from the rest of the “insane” world, a place full of “happy people” where “everyone’s smiling.” The values of being laid-back, the aloha spirit, and being inherently pleasant are clear here. He points to Hawai‘i’s multicultural population (“There are many words for just one state...”), specifically citing Hawaiian, Portuguese, and Japanese identity and culture as constitutive of “the local way.” A local food, saimin (a ramen-like broth and noodles dish) also makes an appearance. Finally, Labrado introduces the phrase “da kine.” Da kine is a phrase in pidgin that derives from the English “the kind.” It means “anything and everything” and is “typically used in quick speech when one cannot remember a word” (kanakaman 2004), as Labrado describes to some extent in the song. While the meaning of this word is perhaps as vague as possible, in this case, it seems to mean the *right* kind or the *local* kind. It is the “unique” “state” of local people. This unique state is a summation of all of its “Hawaiian, Portuguese, and Japanese” constitutive parts, but becomes local or da kine because it is of Hawai‘i specifically. YouTube comments from a fan-made video exemplify fan identification with da kine:

“this song is my life”

“Dis song brings back da roots :)”

“Lmao saimin. Da kines da kine bra! just left hawaii and wish I was back! I was there so long I forgot I went to hawaii to escape whats insane [sic]”

(BluSakura808 2008)

Both the first and second commenters perceive a connection to home, and therefore to island and land, in this song. Even though the third commenter does not appear to be from Hawai‘i originally, they understand the references and identify with them. Da kine, then, signifies local rootedness, affective connection, and inclusivity to fans of this song.

Sean Na‘auao’s “Fish and Poi” (2001) exemplifies a Hawaiian reggae song that describes local food as a characteristic of local culture. There are numerous Hawaiian reggae songs about food that have similar messages of nostalgia, connection to home, and multicultural inclusivity. The chorus of “Fish and Poi” is a menu of local foods:

Verse:

I’ve been many places, tasted all the flavors
If there’s one thing I can’t understand, it’s why I’m not satisfied
There’s nothing like the feeling, when you start craving
Flashbacks reminiscing about that one very first lū‘au

Chorus:

I like my fish and poi, I’m a big boy
Lomi salmon, pipikaula, extra large lilikoi
Squid or chicken lū‘au, don’t forget the laulau
Beef or tripe stew, just to name a few, oh yeah!

(lyricsfreak.com 2017)

Besides listing foods that are widely known in Hawai‘i and generally considered local, this song expresses a nostalgia for home. Na‘auao appears to be craving comfort food that he cannot get anywhere else. He is not satisfied by other foods from other places, and is having flashbacks to his first lū‘au. In the next verse, he talks about food that his parents make, “Mama’s specialty” and “Papa’s poi mochi,” further cementing a connection of local food and home. Like the multicultural references in “Da Kine,” the food described in this song has many different influences. Poi mochi, for example, is mochi (Japanese rice flour dough or cakes) mixed with poi (mashed taro root, and the foundation of the pre-contact Hawaiian diet) that is deep-fried in bite-sized pieces.

Localness as Oppositional to the Global

Who counts as local can be contentious, however. Although localness is often framed as inclusive, many discourses of localness are oppositional (Okamura 1980:135). While some

insist that race or ethnicity have no bearing on localness, others prioritize certain groups of people as relatively more or less local (2008:116). Because of the several hundred-year history of haole settler colonialism that has oppressed non-haoles, Hawaiians especially, some discourses of localness construct a hierarchy of localness (122). Haoles are relatively the least local, and in fact can only become local if they can perform localness appropriately (Spickard, forthcoming). Asian people, Portuguese people, and Puerto Rican people are typically local, unless they are clearly immigrants, because of their history as workers under haoles on plantations in the 19th century (Okamura 1980:128). Often Hawaiians are considered the most local because they are indigenous to Hawai‘i (Halualani 2002:3). However, some Hawaiians try to distance themselves from localness because it threatens indigenous Hawaiian claims to the land (Okamura 2008:122).

Arjun Appadurai argues that localness is not necessarily a spatial distinction, rather, it is a process of boundary building (1996:182). He contends that locals produce localness in order to distinguish themselves from others. It is fundamentally relational and dialectical, created by defining local objects, subjects, and processes against other entities, which are usually other localities or the global. Its teleological objective is pure localness. Localness in Hawai‘i involves particular discourses that include such connections to place and boundary-making, but are specific to the history of settler colonialism in Hawai‘i. These discourses have changed over the course of the 20th century, but they all remain present and layered to some degree.

Localness, then, is an oppositional marginality constructed against outside entities in a manner similar to Appadurai’s conceptualization. According to John P. Rosa, localness as a concept was first codified in the wake of the Massie Affair of 1931-32. This incident

involved Thalia Massie, the haole wife of a navy lieutenant stationed in Hawai‘i, who accused several “Hawaiians” of raping her. However, most of the members of the group were Asian and not Hawaiian. This characterization was symptomatic of a trend that had been developing for the past several decades, in which haoles began to separate themselves from all non-haoles. Previously, haoles had racialized Hawaiians as “almost” white through eugenicist discourses that made whiteness indigenous to Hawaiian land. This move allowed haoles to justify taking this land (Arvin 2015b:28). In addition, political struggles of the time were largely between haole missionaries or plantation owners and the Hawaiian monarchy. These struggles erased the presence of other races or ethnicities in the islands, who were largely Asian, Portuguese, and Puerto Rican. The presence of non-haoles and non-Hawaiians in the mid-19th century onward is largely due to the sugarcane and pineapple plantations established by haole descendants of missionaries. The notion of localness derives from the migration and settlement of these workers in the islands (Halualani 2002:3). In their search for the most productive and docile group of laborers, haole businessmen “tried out” groups from different Asian countries, Portuguese people from the Azores and Madeira Islands, Puerto Ricans, and even Norwegians (Takaki 1983:38). The planters were also afraid that their laborers could outnumber them, and so continued to “dilute” the labor pool with people of other races or ethnicities (Imada 2004:137). This diversity was also a standard labor practice that had been used substantially in railroad and industrial contexts on the mainland. Managers stereotyped different races or ethnicities and pitted these groups of laborers against each other in order to make them more productive (Roediger and Esch 2012:5).

In 1893, these planters and their ilk deposed Queen Lili‘uokalani (the last monarch of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i). The U.S. annexed Hawai‘i in 1898 and made it a territory in 1900.

In the early 20th century, then, haoles were the undisputed rulers of Hawai‘i, and Hawaiians were no longer in power. Hawaiians were largely working class at this time, and this was a trait that they shared with other non-haoles who either worked on the plantations or whose ancestors had. At this point, perhaps haoles no longer considered Hawaiians a threat and thus no longer needed to be “related” to them, and so lumped Hawaiians and other non-haoles into a marginalized working class group together (Rosa 2014:104). Thus, when Thalia Massie, who was part of this haole elite, could not identify her assailants’ faces, she assumed that they were all Hawaiian because they were not haole.

In the mid-20th century, conditional alliances among working-class non-haoles continued in interracial or interethnic cooperation. Moon-Kie Jung contends that this cooperation came about in the mid-1930s, and allowed the establishment of a Hawai‘i local of the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union (2006:9). This move cemented the precedence of class over race in labor relations, but as Jung persistently argues, this change transformed the way that race worked rather than disappeared it (190). These interracial or interethnic alliances were contingent and short-lived; there is no historical evidence that non-haoles formed a united front against haoles (ibid).

According to Candice Fujikane, citing Eric Yamamoto, such interracial cooperation returned in 1965 in order to protest forced eviction. Working class tenants were evicted to make way for commercial and suburban development in Honolulu (2008:27). At this point, it appears that localness became a term that signified a legacy of interracial cooperation, which had begun to be touted by Asian locals in particular (26). At the same time, localness had started to become mobilized as a pure marginal identity against actual or perceived

oppression (that did not necessarily need labor or unions to hold). As a result of this history, haoles are often cast as the oppressors of locals in the present day.

This opposition to oppressive outsiders has moved beyond the haole to include the tourist, the immigrant, and the global writ large (Okamura 2008:122; Yamamoto 1979:107). Locals have rightly blamed the tourist industry for problems such as the high cost of living (1994:168) and being evicted from the land. In fact, tourism has historically been a force of colonialism in Hawai‘i. In the 19th and 20th centuries, haole capitalists framed Hawaiian land and people as passive and desirable in order to make the capitalists’ possession of Hawai‘i appear consensual (Gonzalez 2013:13; Imada 2012:11). Like with tourists, locals often consider immigrants outsiders who cannot assimilate into localness (Okamura 1980:130). Locals tend to view immigrants and immigrant business as entities that take advantage of locals’ resources. They are also blamed for similar problems associated with tourists, like eviction from the land, as immigrants tend to be wealthier haoles from the mainland or Japanese and Chinese nationals and their business interests (Yamamoto 1979:109). Largely, this is true; wealthier immigrants tend to be “snow birds” who spend very little time in Hawai‘i but take land and resources away from locals. However, unfortunately, these same broad-sweeping characterizations are often put upon deeply oppressed people such as Micronesians. A lot of Micronesians are homeless, and immigrate to the U.S. because their land is poisoned from U.S. military nuclear bomb testing during World War II. In this way, all immigrants are equalized as global outsiders who cannot assimilate into localness.

In Hawaiian reggae, localness as oppositional to the global is exemplified by the ways in which understanding or affinity is purposefully obscured. Local cultural competency is necessary to understand the music. Additionally, boundaries between locals and global

outsiders are decisively erected. YouTube comments from the songs that I analyzed previously, “Da Kine” and “Fish and Poi,” as well as the lyrics from Brother Noland’s “Tourist Island,” exemplify these characteristics. Most of the comments that I use here and in the rest of this thesis are either partially or entirely in pidgin.

As I discussed earlier, the pidgin phrase “da kine” is used to signify local inclusion, rootedness, and affective connection in “Da Kine.” However, these meanings are completely hidden to outsiders—da kine is never explained in the song. You have to already know and/or be da kine to understand—its meanings are only accessible if you know some pidgin and dynamics of identity and culture in Hawai‘i. Judging from the comments on a YouTube video that accompanies this song, there is a clear divide between people who understand and those who do not. Comments provided earlier (“this song is my life” and “Dis song brings back da roots :)” ...) exemplify that many listeners of this song understand it. Others express frustration over not understanding pidgin or da kine, sometimes in an explicitly racist manner:

“Hawaii sucks! Couldn’t wait to leave that place!! Pidgin is annoying as hell by the way!!”

“I Love it here I just hate it when the locals talk super strong pigeon [sic], it makes them sound retarded.”

“...wht’s [sic] a sause?...heh???? what this mean? what do you serve?? dakine? i don’t get it. who wrote dese [sic] lyrics?”

(BluSakura808 2008)

Local cultural competency is thus necessary to even begin to understand most of the references to food and local values. Similarly, this comment from a video accompanying “Fish and Poi” exemplifies the obscuring and oppositional nature of localness:

“Zippys, Diners in waipahu, get one bomb plate lunch place under da freeway by da

plaza hotel. libbys manapua in kalihi!! All da places fo grine. Az no mo nothing close to dat.”

(mainlandkid 2007)

This songs evokes specific local restaurants, restaurant chains, and foods to this commenter. In addition, the geographic places that they mention would only be recognizable to someone who was familiar with the geography of O‘ahu. Waipahu is a census-designated place in the center of the southern coast of the island, and Kalihi is a neighborhood of Honolulu.

Additionally, commenters will explicitly name outsider groups that threaten locals.

From “Da Kine”:

“no for real these DAWMMIEZ TINK DEY NO EVERYTING BOUT US! U DAWM HAOLEZ!”

(BluSakura808 2008)

From “Fish and Poi”:

“ehhhh, da people who when dislike dis song are probably haole people from da mainland.....they get one lolo [stupid] brain if they tink this music sucks.....they lolo cause they tink they music best....our music da best....no fakes...no nothing.....we stay true. Island pride foreva.”

“ubuntungbelele [referring to another username] what kinda name is that you must be one stupid micro [Micronesian] yeah. go do ya micro call somewhere else.”

(mainlandkid 2007)

The first comment equates all those who do not understand, or those who think they do but do not, with haoles. Haoles are therefore cast as a colonizing outsider that continually marginalizes locals, invoking the history of localness as associated with plantation labor and the working class. This commenter appears to both praise the obscurity of localness and to call out haoles for assuming that they can and are allowed to understand local culture by

saying something to the effect of “you think you know everything about us.” The second comment, from “Fish and Poi,” similarly vilifies haoles. This commenter also calls out haoles for assuming that they understand. In addition, the commenter references the historical tendency for haoles to label the culture of non-haoles as inferior to their own to aid in the colonial project (“they lolo cause they tink they music best...”). Finally, the third commenter others Micronesians in an overtly racist manner. This commenter assumes that any “strange” name belongs to some sort of outsider. Because Micronesians are a favorite outsider group that locals vilify (and because this name does not appear haole), the commenter assumes that the username is Micronesian. The exclusion of Micronesians from localness is in no way equivalent to the exclusion of haoles, but comments like this equalize Micronesians and haoles as outsiders that marginalize locals and have no roots in Hawai‘i.

Finally, Brother Noland’s “Tourist Island” (Tourist Island 1986) references locals’ opposition to tourists. Brother Noland’s delivery of the lyrics is exaggerated, indicating that he is mocking the tourists. Brother Noland sets the scene and places the listener in Hawai‘i by listing the typical things that tourists do on vacation there: “Mama check in the beach hotel, Daddy look for the big lū‘au.” He critiques the exploitative side of tourism, in which local/Hawaiian culture is exploited to make money: “Don’t you want to be another native? Culture yourself in paradise.” He then refers to the detrimental effects that tourism has on locals: it’s “costin’ too much to be Hawaiian” and “I’m runnin’ out on tourist island, but we got the space if you can buy it.” Although Brother Noland uses the words native and Hawaiian to refer to the people being exploited by tourism, the way he uses the words is broad enough to include anybody living in Hawai‘i. His overarching point, which is that tourism is exploitative, is a concept that unites locals beyond racial or ethnic lines.

Chapter 4

Localness as Coopting Hawaiianness

Through rootedness and affective connection, multicultural inclusion, and an opposition to the global, localness establishes a connection to Hawaiian land. However, this connection poses a political problem because of some of the ways it is legitimized. In Hawaiian reggae, and in localness in general, this problem plays out through the mechanism of appropriation or cooption. Localness coopts Hawaiianness in order to “indigenize” itself to the ‘āina. That is, localness coopts Hawaiianness by making Hawaiianness signify localness. This legitimizes local connection to the land. In Hawaiian reggae, this process is evident through the ways in which Hawaiian reggae’s fundamentally Hawaiianness is obscured. Further, sounding Hawaiian is often identified as the element that makes Hawaiian reggae “unique,” or uniquely local, in relation to reggae from other localities.

Localness as Settler Colonialism

Localness has been critiqued for perpetuating settler colonialism. Settler colonialism has been described, in varying ways, as oppression for the acquisition of land. Settlers, then, are people who benefit from settler colonialism and the expropriation of indigenous people. Settler colonialism is not a singular event; rather it is a “practice” (Fujikane 2008:10), a “structure,” an “organizational principle” (Wolfe 2006:388), or a “never-finished project” (Saranillio 2015:284) that continues as long as settlers oppress indigenous people to acquire land. This is different from other forms of colonialism because it is centered on land, as opposed to another exploitative purpose like the extraction of labor (Wolfe 1999:2). The nature of this oppression varies depending on context; in addition, scholars deeply disagree

over the nature of settler colonialism. Patrick Wolfe, for instance, characterizes it as “elimination.” Elimination can occur physically, as in genocide or displacement, or discursively, such as through discourses like those of blood quantum⁷ (2006:388). Other scholars, like Dean Itsuji Saranillio, have described settler colonial oppression as a “system” that discursively defines settlers as superior and thus more deserving of land (2015:284). Maile Arvin considers it a process that is regenerative, but only in order to reproduce indigenous Hawaiian people who are at once more authentically indigenous, whitened and Americanized, and yet fundamentally inferior to haoles (forthcoming; 2015b:37). In Hawai‘i, settler colonialism has occurred most overtly since a U.S. military-backed junta of haole businessmen illegally deposed Queen Lili‘uokalani in 1893. The next year they established the Republic of Hawaii. The U.S. formally annexed Hawai‘i in 1898, and then declared it a territory in 1900. Finally, Hawai‘i became a state in 1959. However, settler colonial processes began earlier with legislation such as the Great Mahele of 1848, which was spearheaded by haoles acting in the Kingdom of Hawai‘i’s government. The Great Mahele transformed the ‘āina into private property, which allowed haoles take or buy the ‘āina from the Hawaiian monarchy, chiefs, and other citizens of the kingdom (Osorio 2002:44). The dispossession that the businessmen and the U.S. government enacted over the Hawaiian people continues into the present.

Localness has been critiqued for reproducing settler processes. According to these critiques, localness reduces Hawaiians to yet another marginalized racial or ethnic minority, which undercuts Hawaiians’ status as indigenous people. This occurs through invoking historical memories of working-class protest against an oppressive outsider force, like haoles. Locals also invoke discourses of multiculturalism in Hawai‘i, in which many different groups

of people supposedly lived together in harmony. Both multiculturalism and shared oppression equalize Hawaiians and other locals by framing them as equally oppressed (Fujikane 2008:27). These discourses also “indigenize” non-Hawaiian locals because these discourses give all locals equal claim to the ‘āina⁸ (Trask 2008:48). Discourses of multiculturalism in Hawai‘i additionally allow locals to frame attempts to grant groups special status, like the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, as “divisive” (ibid). Locals, then, can use localness as a screen to obscure the fact that they are oppressing Hawaiians. This tactic has been deployed regularly since the 1970s. In one instance, during the 1970s, the Asian-dominated Democratic Party in Hawai‘i blamed Japanese and haole businesses from outside Hawai‘i for creating local problems associated with development. Lower-income locals (especially Hawaiians) were losing their land to these developers. However, blaming outsiders was a screen to obscure the fact that these politicians were actually the ones benefitting from this development. The development also targeted Hawaiians to some extent. In the 1980s, for example, the Democratic Party targeted holdings of Bishop Estate. The Bishop Estate is the largest private property owner in Hawai‘i, and the sole beneficiary of its assets is the Kamehameha Schools. These schools only accept Hawaiian students, so an attack on the Bishop Estate targets Hawaiians. The Democratic Party forced landholders to sell their land to their lessees to “redistribute” the land to poor tenants. Rather than wealth distribution, then, the Democratic Party targeted a Hawaiian organization for the party’s own benefit (Fujikane 2008:28).

Localness as Cooption

Another way that localness “indigenizes” itself is by coopting Hawaiian indigeneity. This move perpetuates settler colonialism because it uses Hawaiians’ unique position as the indigenous people of the ‘āina in order to make localness “indigenous.” Localness coopts Hawaiian identity by making Hawaiian identity signify localness. In other words, Hawaiian identity and culture—like sounding Hawaiian in Hawaiian reggae, for instance—are utilized and foregrounded in order to make local identity and culture *more local* to Hawai‘i.

Several scholars have noted that values and characteristics of localness originated in Hawaiian culture or were originally applied to Hawaiians. Jonathan Okamura identifies the beginning of local culture in pre-contact Hawaiian culture, which was later influenced by the immigrants who arrived in the 19th and 20th centuries (1980:121). ho‘omanawanui argues that labeling Hawaiian reggae local music instead of Hawaiian music erases the fundamental Hawaiian influence on this genre, perpetuating colonial processes of appropriation and displacement (2006:284). Finally, Rona Tamiko Halualani argues that the multicultural dimension of localness is based upon 18th century European stereotypes of Hawaiians as inherently “peaceful” and “tolerant.” In the 20th century, the haole-established tourist industry transformed these discourses into the “aloha spirit,” which has become absorbed into Hawaiian culture. The aloha spirit, peacefulness, and tolerance were then coopted into local culture. Okamura identifies the local values of the aloha spirit, multicultural inclusion, being laid-back, etc. as being consistent with the Hawaiian value of aloha kanaka (1980:128). In this way, Hawaiians became the model for locals, and Hawaiian identity is “hailed precisely because it has taken on the semblance of a Hawaiian origin or an interiority that seems native” (2002:xiv).

The concept of kama‘āina also exemplifies this cooption. Kama‘āina is a Hawaiian word meaning “child of the land.” Therefore, it expresses a key concept of indigeneity: genealogical descent from land. However, the way in which it is used in common practice does not refer to Hawaiians only. Rather, kama‘āina is used to describe *all* the people of Hawai‘i (Conte 2016:103; Yamamoto 1979:101). Kama‘āina, in this usage, opens up the indigenous Hawaiian concept of genealogical descent from the land to include all locals. In this way, localness coopts a Hawaiian concept in order to legitimize local connection to the land. This cooption is made more explicit when considered in relation to its most common usage in scholarship. Scholars tend use kama‘āina to describe the descendants of missionaries, the haole elite, in the 19th and 20th centuries (Imada 2004:118; Miyares 2008:517; Okamura 1980:128). Typically, kama‘āina is used to separate this group of people from haoles from the mainland. However, the fact that it used to describe the group in power at that time highlights the exploitative nature of cooption.

In Hawaiian reggae, this cooption is evident from the ways in which sounding Hawaiian is coopted to signify localness. First, most musicians and listeners of Hawaiian reggae understand that Hawaiian reggae fundamentally sounds Hawaiian. Hawaiian instruments, forms, language, and identity of the musicians occur more often than such instruments, etc. from other cultures or identities. There is also a strong current of political consciousness having to do with sovereignty. However, this fundamental Hawaiianness is often obscured to be made applicable to all locals. Second, Hawaiian reggae musicians and listeners consider Hawaiian sounds to be the most “unique” and expedient way to localize their music in relation to reggae from other localities.

Musicians and listeners of Hawaiian reggae tend to agree that the genre sounds fundamentally Hawaiian. One way that this occurs is through characterizing Hawaiian reggae as Hawaiian music outright. Scholars such as ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui consider Hawaiian reggae to be under the umbrella of contemporary Hawaiian music. She argues that it is a mixture of Hawaiian traditions that stretch back to pre-contact times mixed with African-diasporic music (2006:273). This categorization is also understood outside of academia, as exemplified by an article from *Honolulu Magazine*. In the article titled “100 Years of Hawaiian Music,” author Michael Keany frames Hawaiian reggae as the primary innovation in Hawaiian music during the 1980s (Keany 2010). Further, Brother Noland’s website states that although he is known for his “unique interpretations” of songs, he “remains respectful of traditional Hawaiian music and culture.” Further, his website describes him as someone who has “deeply influenced contemporary Hawaiian music” (brothernoland.com 2017).

The genre also sounds fundamentally Hawaiian because of its historical ties to Hawaiian sovereignty. Reggae was first adopted into Hawai‘i-based music in the political context of the Hawaiian Renaissance and sovereignty movement. Musicians then deployed it in political songs like “Hawaiian Lands” to protest haole settler colonialism against Hawaiians specifically. In addition, it was widely believed that the musicians of this genre had to be Hawaiian. Brother Noland, for instance, states explicitly on his website that he is a “traditional Hawaiian man,” who is a “steward of the land” and interested in preserving Hawaiian customs and wildlife. He has also created a foundation called the Hō‘ea Initiative that teaches “at-risk youth” to live off the land and ocean using traditional Hawaiian knowledge (hoeainitiative.com 2016). Therefore, Brother Noland foregrounds his political activism and Hawaiian identity as an integral part of his musicianship. In addition, the

explicitly political nature of Bruddah Waltah’s “Hawaiian Lands” indicates his investment in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. Further, the chorus—“Keep Hawaiian lands in Hawaiian hands”—has become a slogan used throughout the Hawaiian sovereignty movement (Perry 2014:274). Another Hawaiian reggae musician, Fiji (George Brooks Veikoso, who is Fijian), states explicitly the importance of politics and being Hawaiian at this time:

“I landed in Hawaii at a tender age of 13 years old and I’ve been in America ever since... People I looked up to are like Bruddah Waltah, Mana’o Company [sic], and Kapena... It was such a renaissance time for our music. It was a time when we were trying to distinguish our type of reggae. Hawaiian reggae is kind of like a political activist type of music. It stands for the indigenous people on one side and also for the musicianship coming off the rock (Hawaii) on the other... Back in the day, I was a bit of an outcast. You know because I wasn’t Hawaiian. I’m not saying that in like a social way, I’m just saying it wasn’t my time yet. But I was kind of a nudge. I went in and did a lot of background for a lot of songs.”

(Puet 2015)

In this interview with the *Huffington Post*, Fiji explicitly states that Hawaiian reggae of this time was political and involved in indigenous activism. It is clear, then, that Fiji believes that Hawaiian reggae of this time period was aligned with the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. He also points out that being Hawaiian was fundamental. Further, the fact that he is not Hawaiian prevented him from being successful as a solo figure; he was constantly relegated to the “background.”

A fundamental Hawaiianness is audible in “Fish and Poi,” the song “He ‘Ono” by the Ka‘au Crater Boys, and “Da Kine.” At the same time, Hawaiianness is obscured through the inclusion of non-Hawaiian localness and the global. These elements make the music applicable to non-Hawaiian locals.

In “Fish and Poi,” the food referenced is primarily derived from traditional Hawaiian foods. Poi, the staple of the pre-contact Hawaiian diet, laulau, pipikaula, and lū‘au are all

derived from pre-contact Hawaiian foods in some fashion. The singer, Sean Na‘auao, also emphasizes the importance of his own Hawaiian identity by singing that his nostalgia for this food is “just the Hawaiian in me.” Further, the instruments and singing style reference hapa haole and slack-key guitar music. Sounds of the ‘ukulele predominate along with an acoustic guitar that plays conventionalized Hawaiian melodic lines. Simultaneously, the multicultural references in this song obscure this Hawaiianess by making the song applicable to non-Hawaiians. Na‘auao’s references to poi mochi, beef or tripe stew, etc. are largely not Hawaiian. In addition, Na‘auao departs from the Hawaiian “style” of this song about two thirds of the way through, where he performs a verse in the style of 1990s dancehall. Dancehall is one of the most popular music genres from Jamaica in a global context, and electronic instruments and toasting (speaking over the music, which inspired rap) are characteristics of this genre. Na‘auao sings in a version of Jamaican patois, and is accompanied by electronic instruments typical of this genre. This verse breaks out of the specifically Hawaiian and therefore obscures it. Because dancehall is global, it is applicable to all locals, and thus can be used to localize the music beyond Hawaiianess.

In the song “He ‘Ono” (“How Delicious”) by the Ka‘au Crater Boys (1996), Hawaiian food is also emphasized. The whole song except one verse is in the Hawaiian language:

Verse:

Keu a ka ‘ono ma ke alopiko la
 Kahi momona piko ka nenue la
 Lihaliha wale ke momoni akula
 ‘O ka ‘ō‘io halale ke kai la
 ‘O ka ‘ōpelu e pepenu ana la
 He ‘ono tomito ho‘i tau i
 To pu‘u te momoni aku

*Oh, how delicious is the belly
 The fattest part of the nenue (pilot) fish
 So rich when swallowed
 The ‘ō‘io (bone fish) with thick gravy
 The ‘ōpelu (mackerel), dunked in sauce
 Very delicious
 A delight for the throat to swallow*

(ho‘omanawanui 2006:289-290)

Verse:

Sure, make a beef stew heavy on the extra salad
Two scoops rice on a hamburger bun
Hot dog, kimchee, chili pepper water
Akule, aku, mahimahi sandwich
Top it all off with the Kikoman shoyu (*soy sauce*)

(Flashlyrics.com n.d.)

Although “He ‘Ono” describes a number of local foods hailing from many different places, like American hot dogs, Korean kimchee, and Kikoman soy sauce, the foods most often referenced are Hawaiian. These Hawaiian foods consist of Hawaiian fish such as nenuē, ō‘io, etc. At the same time, the fish are glorified in a manner that evokes mele which honor people, places, and important elements of Hawaiian culture. The instrumentation is also more “traditional.” It involves only the ‘ukulele and acoustic guitar, which evokes hapa haole music (although the instruments were established as Hawaiian earlier in the 19th century). The vocal style, ornamentation, and oom-pah bass line also reference hapa haole music. At the same time, the presence of the somewhat incongruous final verse obscures the Hawaiianness to some extent. By listing foods that are applicable to all locals, in English, Hawaiianness becomes yet another local culture on some level.

In “Da Kine,” the importance of being Hawaiian is emphasized in these lines from the chorus: “These are Hawaiians...they know what is da kine” Hawaiians are the only group of people to appear in the chorus, and further, they are the only group that is singled out for having knowledge of da kine. Besides this emphasis, the notion of kaona is evident in this song. Because the meaning of da kine is left largely open, knowledge of conventional meanings and context is necessary. Judging from the comments that vilify haoles and

Micronesians for not understanding this song, the fact that this knowledge is only available to certain people is framed as positive. At the same time, these references to Hawaiianness are greatly outnumbered by Labrado's copious references to a multicultural Hawai'i.

Hawaiianness is so deeply embedded in the genre of Hawaiian reggae that Hawaiianness is recognizable even when it is not apparent on the surface. Several YouTube comments on a fan-made video that accompanies "It Is Wut It Is" by Irie Love feat. Fiji (2011) exemplify this. Fiji is not Hawaiian, and it is unclear if Irie Love is Hawaiian. Further, there is not much in this song that sounds Hawaiian. However, several commenters of this video hear it anyway:

"Dis is: HAWAIIAN"

"Hawiins [sic] are the GREATEST song writers on the PLANET!! And im [sic] Maori :)"

"Proud to be 1 hawaiian. Dis da jam cus."

(taliahayden 2011)

The first commenter hears this music as sounding Hawaiian, and the second assumes that either or both Irie Love and Fiji are Hawaiian. The third commenter considers the song Hawaiian in a manner that affirms their Hawaiian identity. Although there is little evidence of Hawaiianness in the song itself, these commenters believe it to be fundamentally Hawaiian. Sounding Hawaiian, in this case, refers to the genre framing—the fact that it is Hawaiian reggae. At the same time, however, most of these commenters do not mention anything related to specific Hawaiianness. The song itself sounds like it could be from the mainland U.S., or any other locality. Like "Fish and Poi," sounding global allows the genre to be applicable to all locals beyond Hawaiians and obscures Hawaiianness.

Finally, Hawaiianness is used in Hawaiian reggae to make it “uniquely” local. In the context of global popular music, Hawaiianness is the most unique aspect of Hawaiian reggae. Therefore, Hawaiianness is invoked to distinguish Hawaiian reggae from other sorts of reggae. For example, the radio personality DJ Caju of the radio show “Mokupuni Vibes”⁹ describes localness in this way. On a special broadcast of this show, which aired on September 14, 2008, he traces the history of reggae music in Hawai‘i. He describes the ways that local musicians have or have not taken reggae “in a new direction” that is “unique to this place”:

“How have local musicians been able to combine Hawai‘i’s languages and musical styles with reggae in a way that works? For example, have we heard reggae being blended with hula beats to form a new rhythm? Have artists tried writing lyrics of reggae songs in Hawaiian, or in the local pidgin dialect? Are Hawaiian instruments being incorporated into reggae in Hawai‘i?”

(DJ Caju 2008)

All the characteristics that DJ Caju lists are specifically Hawaiian, except for pidgin. From this list, then, it appears that he believes that it is primarily Hawaiian material that makes Hawaiian reggae music “unique to this place.” In addition, DJ Caju also claims that most Hawaiian reggae music nowadays does not take the “sound of the music in a particularly Hawaiian or local direction.” However, he contends that there are a few active musicians who do this, and plays seven songs that exemplify this sort of music. These songs are distinguishable as unique because they all sound Hawaiian. The first, second, and fifth songs are almost exclusively in the Hawaiian language, the third uses a traditional nose flute, the fourth uses ‘ukulele and vocal vibrato that sounds like an ornament often used in mele and hapa haole music, the sixth is about Hawaiian sovereignty, and the seventh is in the Hawaiian language, uses ‘ukulele, and is almost exclusively about sovereignty. Unlike songs

like “Da Kine,” “Fish and Poi,” and “He ‘Ono,” the aspect that distinguishes DJ Caju’s unique music from global reggae is its Hawaiian elements. There is little if no reference to other local culture. Sounding specifically Hawaiian, then, makes Hawaiian reggae unique.

Chapter 5

Island

Localness in Hawaiian reggae is rootedness in and affective connection to Hawai‘i as place, multicultural inclusion and equivalency, opposition to a global outside, and a cooption of Hawaiianness. All of these characteristics involve a connection to Hawai‘i as land/place/island/’āina, but the way in which this connection is made is problematic in part. Although local connection to the land is real and legitimate (Stillman 2011c), its problematic nature must be critiqued. The ways in which local connection and cooption shift and cycle in Hawaiian reggae are apparent in the discourses surrounding the word “island.” Island is often used to signify local ideas like inclusivity and connection to land, and also to enact and obscure cooption of Hawaiianness.

Indigenous studies typically does not recognize or condone a connection to the land that is not indigenous, in other words, genealogical. For this reason, some scholars argue that all non-indigenous people are settlers. For example, Haunani-Kay Trask argues that “local” is merely a gloss for “settler” (2008:46). She unequivocally states that “only Hawaiians are Native to Hawai‘i. Everyone else is a settler” (50). She contends that this is because Hawaiians are the only people who have a “land base” in Hawai‘i, and that this connection to the land is genealogical and was established over two thousand years (ibid). Other scholars identify intermediate groups between settler and indigenous, but they also have no connection to the land. Jodi A. Byrd uses the category of “arrivants” as an intermediary category to distinguish people who have been forced to migrate to the Americas because of European or Euro-American colonial violence elsewhere (2011:xix). The ways in which Micronesian people have been driven out of their land, causing them to migrate to Hawai‘i,

are a primary example. Similarly, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang use the word “immigrant” to denote people who are “beholden to the Indigenous laws and epistemologies of the lands that they migrate to” (2012:6). In this formulation, anyone who is not indigenous can be an immigrant if they follow indigenous laws and customs. Settlers, on the other hand, replace and destroy these laws and customs. Byrd recognizes that people who are forced to live on another’s land do not perpetuate violence in the same way that settlers do. Tuck and Yang acknowledge that people who are not indigenous may not perpetuate settler structures by being beholden to indigenous laws. Supporting Hawaiian sovereignty, especially through protesting problematic legislation or financially supporting such efforts, would exemplify such action. Neither arrivants nor immigrants are connected to the land at all; rather, they are differentiated from settlers and indigenous people by their distinct relations with settler colonialism.

Why does indigenous studies only legitimize genealogical connection to the land? First, indigenous people *are* the only people with this connection. Second, preventing other groups from establishing a connection to the land is a strategy of resistance. This automatically delegitimizes settler attempts to “indigenize” themselves to the land, which they have used to authorize the oppression of indigenous people and stealing of indigenous land. However, this second issue also denies the possibility that non-indigenous people could be connected to the land *differently*. Localness is one such way that non-indigenous people can be connected to the land. It is not genealogical, but established through rootedness, affective connection, multiculturalism, common values and culture, opposition to the global, etc. I want to recognize that local connection to the land is real, and in doing so, condone it. However, I do not condone the fact that it coopts Hawaiian indigeneity, and that locals use it

as a screen to delegitimize Hawaiians' status as indigenous people. I want to condone the possibility of local connection to the land outside of Hawai'i and the ways that local connection is established in Hawai'i that do not rely on colonialism. At the same time, I want to critique the problematic aspects of local connection in Hawai'i.

The ways in which connection and cooption coexist in Hawaiian reggae are exemplified in the shifting meanings of the word "island." This term came into use in the 1990s, when Hawaiian reggae first started to gain widespread popularity. This popularity caused a backlash against the genre: Hawaiian culture bearers and elders perceived reggae as yet another form of global culture that was displacing and erasing Hawaiian culture (Berger 2012:393; ho'omanawanui 2006:298). Further, they argued that Hawaiian musicians could not perform Jamaican music authentically because they were not Jamaican. These culture bearers argued that Hawaiian musicians could only perform Hawaiian music authentically (ibid). The threat of reggae was so pressing that a public conference was held on October 30, 1991, at Windward Community College, in which Hawaiian reggae enthusiasts and Hawaiian music purists and culture bearers debated the value and threat of reggae (394). Hawaiian cultural bearers like kumu hula (hula teacher) Frank Kawaikapuokalani Hewett and all-Hawaiian music radio show host Frank B. Shaner denounced Hawaiian reggae. Hewett declared, "Now[adays], we [Hawaiians] think it's better to be like anybody else [other] than like what we are. Stop following fads and be original!" Shaner agreed, "All the focus now is on Jamaica, and we're not teaching the young people our Hawaiian style" (395).

One of the controversial topics that they discussed was the name of the genre; at the time, it was known as Jawaiian. People representing the radio station KCCN/FM 100, the first station to broadcast Hawaiian reggae music only (Tatar and Berger 2012b:673), had to

defend their use of the word *Jawaiian* to describe the music that they played. Hawaiian music purists claimed that it was not a real word (Berger 2012:394), and KCCN responded by calling the music “island music.” Promoters of Hawaiian reggae followed suit, and currently, commercial enterprises that involve Hawaiian reggae avoid using the word *Jawaiian* (395). But what is so wrong with *Jawaiian*, and why is island music better?

The word *Jawaiian* betrays the two primary influences of this music—Jamaican reggae and Hawaiian music. To Hawaiian music purists, the problem seems to be both elements. These purists believe that Hawaiian reggae does not sound Hawaiian enough to qualify as Hawaiian music. Hewett’s and Shaner’s comments, for instance, indicate that they both believe that Hawaiian reggae does not sound Hawaiian. Hewett argued that Hawaiian reggae musicians do not sound “like what we are,” and Shaner contended that “we’re not teaching young people our Hawaiian style” (Berger 2012:395). At the same time, the too-great presence of an outside or global music threatened the existence of Hawaiian traditions—as Shaner stated, “all the focus is now on Jamaica” (ibid). As a result, Hawaiian music could not be associated with Jamaican music, and Jamaican music needed to be expunged. The word *island*, then, solves both of these problems because it discursively obscures the Hawaiianness and the Jamaicanness at the same time. The word obscures rather than erases—Hawai‘i and Jamaica are both islands, and the actors involved continue to be aware of both of these influences. John Berger, for instance, refers to the term *island music* as a “fig leaf” that allowed KCCN to continue to play the same music that caused the backlash in the first place (2012:395).

But what does *island* mean, then? Because Hawaiianness and Jamaicanness are obscured, *island* often becomes a stand-in for local. *Island* zooms out from the specifically

Hawaiian, and thus opens up Hawaiian reggae to non-Hawaiian local influence in a more visible and audible manner. Island, then, becomes aligned with the multicultural inclusivity, rootedness, and affective connection to place associated with localness. This inclusivity and rooted, affective connection reconfigure global influences to make them connect to Hawaiian land, yet *at the same time*, these elements merge to become oppositional to the global or to a marginalizing force. Island, then, also marks a specificity opposed to the global¹⁰. In addition, island perpetuates processes of settler colonial cooption. Cooption occurs because Hawaianness is obscured, but its fundamental presence is still recognizable.

Interviews with well-known Hawaiian reggae musicians Anuhea (Rylee Anuheake‘alaokalokelani Jenkins) and Fiji exemplify the multiple meanings of island. In an interview with ABC News, Anuhea describes her music as “island reggae, pop, R&B. A combo of all of that.” Her explanation of island reggae follows:

“I feel like there’s different types of reggae....There’s California reggae, Jamaican reggae—which we all love in Hawaii, but there’s a new kind that we kind of have named Jawaiian—it’s like Jamaica-Hawaiian...that’s what I think when I reference island music.”

She then describes the ways in which she has changed her style over the course of her career:

“I think I’m kind of leaning more toward island reggae now that I did in the beginning, to be honest...I think I’m not afraid to write songs with that island vibe anymore. I think in the beginning I was like, maybe steering—keeping in [sic] contemporary ‘cause I was afraid it wasn’t going to take off, but now I’m just kind of doing what I feel a little bit more....”

(ABC News 2016)

The way in which Anuhea uses the term “island” is constantly shifting, even within this short excerpt. She establishes it as something highly inclusive yet specific and grounded in Hawai‘i. Her first use of island establishes island reggae as one style among several that

influences her work. Although she does not categorize her music as island reggae, other listeners of her music often highlight her “island” influence over other genres (Yonover n.d.; billboard.com 2017). The interviewer and author of this article, for instance, frames Anuhea as an island reggae musician in the first sentence: “Anuhea Jenkins has made a name for herself as an island reggae singer...” Island reggae, then, is both the genre that Anuhea performs and a genre that influences her work. The variable nature of the way that she and others frame her music, and the fact that she cites multiple generic influences on it, indicate an inclusivity. This inclusivity is paralleled in the multiculturalism and openness to the global that are key aspects of localness.

At the beginning of her description of island reggae, Anuhea uses island to mean local to Hawai‘i. This localness is not the localness specific to Hawai‘i’s history; rather, it is it “not global.” It is equivalent to other localities like California and Jamaica (“California reggae, Jamaican reggae”). However, she immediately complicates this statement by claiming that reggae in Hawai‘i is different in a specific or special way. She states that although people in Hawai‘i “love” reggae from other localities like California and Jamaica, reggae is different in Hawai‘i. It is a “new kind” that she describes as “Jawaiian” and “Jamaican-Hawaiian,” and therefore not equivalent to reggae from other localities. In fact, island reggae is so specific that she was initially afraid it would not make her music widely popular (“I was like, maybe steering—keeping in [sic] contemporary ‘cause I was afraid it wasn’t going to take off”). This specificity alludes to Hawai‘i as “special place” (Rosa 2014:104), a place of home and roots. It is also oppositional—so specific that it is not understandable beyond certain boundaries. It is unclear what boundaries Anuhea refers to, however. They could be the boundaries of the Hawaiian reggae scene in Hawai‘i and/or

among a Hawai‘i diaspora, or beyond the boundaries of Hawai‘i regardless of music genre. Nevertheless, Anuheha initially believed that this specificity would preclude affinity or understanding beyond the people who understand, preventing her from becoming a successful musician. This understanding is that of island or local music and culture, which is often purposefully made to be understandable to local people only. The oppositional nature of localness is thus present in these two meanings of island.

Finally, Anuheha makes the term island specific to Hawai‘i through making it Hawaiian. Not only does she use the term Jawaiian to describe island reggae, but she goes on to define it as “Jamaican-Hawaiian.” She therefore locates the origins of island music in Hawaiian music (and Jamaican music). At the same time, Hawaiianness becomes a way to distinguish island music from any other localized reggae. Because she typically uses the term island and not Hawaiian to describe her music, the constitutive Hawaiianness becomes obscured. As a result, the term island music coopts Hawaiian music.

Similarly, the ways in which Fiji uses “island” in the interview cited earlier follows some of these facets of localness. Like the author of Anuheha’s interview, the author of Fiji’s interview labels Fiji’s music as island from the start: “It’s reggae, R&B, hip hop...it’s island music.” Fiji agrees, and discusses what island music means to him:

“I learned a lot from the Jawaiian movement. . . .It was a time when we were trying to distinguish our type of reggae. . . .Jawaiian is a kind of political activism type of music. It stands for the indigenous people on one side and also for the musicianship coming off the rock (Hawaii) on the other. . . .Know this. Jawaiian will always be the undertone of our music no matter what. It’s definitely all island reggae. The thing some folks don’t understand about our music is that our music is very wide spread. It’s a mixture of not just reggae but R&B and other influences. We have an acoustic side with a lot of beautiful harmonies. It’s not one dimensional and it will never be that.”

(Puet 2015)

Like Anuhea, Fiji considers island music inclusive. It is flexible and open to the influences of many different genres; he cites the influences of R&B and characterizes island music as “wide spread” and “not one dimensional.” His interviewer seems to cement this inclusivity by describing Fiji’s music as having the ability to “[take] you anywhere you choose.” However, rather than equating island music with Jawaiian music like Anuhea, he considers Jawaiian a fundamental influence on island music (“Jawaiian will always be the undertone of our music...”). Island, then, becomes open to influence on another level and even more in alignment with the local.

At the same time, considering Jawaiian an influence on island music reveals the mechanism of coopting Hawaiianness. Fiji considers Jawaiian music “indigenous” and a conduit for “political activism.” Although he does not state this, these characteristics would cause certain actors to consider this music to sound Hawaiian. Because Fiji appears to consider Jawaiian music Hawaiian in some fashion, this statement points to island music’s fundamental reliance on Hawaiian music. However, the fact that he considers Jawaiian an influence (“undertone”) rather than an earlier version of the same music obscures this Hawaiianness. Fiji seems to make this implication more explicit in the next sentence (“It’s definitely all island reggae”). Here, Fiji appears to argue that Jawaiian is one influence among many, like R&B, etc., which he lists in the next few sentences.

Simultaneously, Fiji’s claim that “it’s definitely all island reggae” could be interpreted to mean that Jawaiian *is* island reggae. This interpretation is also supported by the following sentences that describe the various influences upon island music. Because Jawaiian music has also been open to these influences since its inception, Fiji could be discussing both in the same sentence. This move simultaneously coopts and obscures Hawaiianness. Fiji

initially frames Jawaiian as merely an influence on island music, and so keeps the two separate, but then seems to blur their boundaries by appearing to speak about Jawaiian and island music at the same time. In this way, Fiji's claim that Jawaiian influences island music obscures the foundational relation of Jawaiian to island music. He then acknowledges this foundational relation by appearing to speak about the two genres as if they were the same.

Additionally, Fiji appears to contend that the quality that makes his music "island" is its Jawaiian undertone. Although it could be argued that reggae might play this role, Fiji's emphasis of Jawaiian music over reggae and all other influences betrays Jawaiian as the primary element that island-izes his music. Therefore, judging from this interview, Fiji considers Jawaiian to be Hawaiian music, an influence *on* island music, to *be* island music, and the distinguishing feature that makes his own music island music. As demonstrated in varied usages of the term "island" in Hawaiian reggae, local connection and cooption of Hawaiianness are constantly shifting.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In the genre of Hawaiian reggae, the categories of localness and Hawaiianness cycle through purity and multiplicity in relation to a dual notion of connection and cooption. The global is an ever-present and shifting category throughout this cycling. Localness involves rootedness in and affective connection to place, multicultural inclusion and equivalencies, opposition to an “outside” or the global, and cooption of Hawaiianness. Localness becomes legitimized in part because it coopts Hawaiianness to connect to the ‘āina; Hawaiianness is made to represent localness. Although cooption and other settler colonial processes that legitimize localness make it highly problematic, it is the reality of many people. Hawaiian reggae’s openness to global influence, its fundamental Hawaiianness that is also obscured, the idea that Hawaiianness makes the genre uniquely local, and the shifting meanings of the word island exemplify these processes.

The ways in which localness and Hawaiianness cycle and interface with notions of place and indigeneity could inspire other studies of localness and place. How do discourses of localness and place oppress indigenous people elsewhere? How does culture, like music, perpetuate or resist such discourses? In addition, how does recognizing the category of localness as a legitimate way to connect to the land challenge the ways that indigenous studies considers intermediate categories between settler and indigenous? The categories of Middle Eastern, Latin American, Asian, etc. “arrivants” and “immigrants” in the mainland U.S. could be joined by some other category that takes into account the children and grandchildren of people who fall into these categories. They are typically relegated to a category of liminality, belonging neither here nor there, but nonetheless fundamentally

constituted by growing up in this place. How does indigeneity relate to this “third space?”

What of black people, whose ancestors were forced to travel to the U.S. four hundred or so years ago but are violently prevented from entering the white American nation, in addition to indigeneity? Is it possible for white people to be connected to place that is not fundamentally settler and that takes into account indigeneity, or does their historical position of power forever preclude them from any other category? Localness is specific to Hawai‘i; it was created in order to solve problems specific to the peoples and settler colonial history of this place. Have other categories been created in settler colonial societies that do similar discursive work to localness? What other categories in other societies exist in relation to the indigenous and the settler? And finally, how does culture like music reproduce and/or complicate these discourses?

Notes

1. Musicians and listeners tend to refer to the genre as “island music,” “island reggae,” or “Jawaiian” more often than “Hawaiian reggae.” In this thesis, I have chosen to call the genre “Hawaiian reggae” for several reasons. Musicians and listeners tend to use island music or island reggae most often, but these terms obscure the fundamental influence of Hawaiian music on the genre. Although Jawaiian clearly points to this Hawaiian influence, fewer people use the term, and some musicians and listeners actually consider it a different genre from island music or island reggae. The term Hawaiian reggae acknowledges this fundamental Hawaiian influence by foregrounding it, and additionally, has a much wider scope. Hawaiian reggae alludes to one of the genre’s more recent characteristics—being a Hawaiian “brand” of reggae music that circulates globally. Because “Hawaiian” is detached from “reggae,” it becomes equivalent to reggae from other localities in a global context (like South African or New Zealand reggae). Therefore, the term Hawaiian reggae is broader than the others and can encompass the many facets of the genre.
2. In indigenous studies and Hawaiian studies, it is common to refer to Hawaiian people as either Kānaka Maoli (true or indigenous people) or Kānaka ‘Ōiwi (people of the bone). Using these terms combats colonial processes that have erased Hawaiian culture. For example, the Hawaiian language was banned by the haole businessman-controlled provisional government in 1896 (Imada 2004:118) and the language nearly disappeared. Using Hawaiian language terms also shifts away from English, the language of the colonizer. However, I am choosing to use Hawaiian throughout this thesis because this is how people within the genre of Hawaiian reggae refer to themselves and other actors. I add the term indigenous when I want to emphasize this aspect of identity and culture.
3. For example, Elizabeth Tatar points out the ways in which tradition in the performance of mele has shifted regarding movement. In the “past,” facial expressions were an important part of the performance of mele. However, nowadays, some chanters perform with a “deadpan” expression in contexts where maintenance of tradition is important (Tatar and Berger 2012a:105).
4. Stillman’s later work disagrees with this point (see Stillman 2011a).
5. I add that besides being a sport available to all locals in Hawai‘i, which would indicate a local audience, surfing is also the subject of a pre-contact genre of mele called mele he‘e nalu (Tatar and Berger 2012a:96).
6. “Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono” was originally spoken by Kamehameha III after Hawaiian sovereignty was restored in 1843. Earlier that year, Lord George Paulet over-stepped his bounds, and seized the Hawaiian government buildings in Honolulu. He then issued a proclamation annexing Hawai‘i to Great Britain. Queen Victoria sent an envoy to restore the monarchy, and Kamehameha III uttered this phrase after the monarchy was restored (“Statement” 1972). The phrase was eventually

- incorporated into the seal of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, but it was then coopted by the Republic of Hawaii after the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. It was later adopted as the seal of the State of Hawaii (Saranillio 2015:287). The phrase has since been used in association with the Hawaiian sovereignty movement.
7. Settler societies have used discourses of blood quantum to “disappear” indigenous people through framing people with more indigenous blood as “more” indigenous. Therefore, as time would go on, increasing numbers of indigenous people would possess “less” indigenous blood, and so would lose their claim to the land. Variations of such discourses of blood quantum have been mobilized in Hawai‘i and the mainland U.S. (see Arvin 2015b; Kauanui 2008; Wolfe 2006).
 8. The possibility that people of color can be settlers has been controversial, and is often referred to as the “settler of color critique.” Authors included in volumes such as *Asian Settler Colonialism*, edited by Candice Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura, point out that people of color often perpetuate systems of settler colonialism by opposing indigenous sovereignty and claims to the land. However, other scholars like Nandita Sharma and Cynthia Wright (2008-9) argue that framing people of color as perpetual settlers is neo-racist. They contend that this framing also ignores the fact that people have always migrated, and assumes that all non-indigenous people must be expelled from indigenous land. Responses to Sharma and Wright’s article have claimed that these scholars misunderstand the settler of color critique. Dean Itsuji Saranillio, for instance, argues that Sharma and Wright equate settlerism with mere presence on the land, rather than the dispossession and oppression of indigenous people (2013:284).
 9. Mokupuni means “island” in the Hawaiian language. The show was aired on KTUH, the radio station broadcast from the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa.
 10. Besides using the word “island” to mean “local,” Hawaiian reggae musicians and listeners often also use the word to establish global connection. For example, they commonly use the term “island style” to explain why reggae became so popular in Hawai‘i (Yonover 2014; Weintraub 1998:79). Island style establishes a naturalized affinity between Jamaica and Hawai‘i as places with similar “‘island’ lifestyles, attitudes and climates” (Weintraub *ibid*). The word island also connects Hawai‘i to other islands with affinities for reggae, especially in the Pacific. YouTube videos with songs by Fiji and O-shen, who were originally from Fiji and Papua New Guinea respectively but live in Hawai‘i, are often filled with comments like: “PNG [Papua New Guinea] girl for life” (FijiMagnum 2009), “Love from palau,” and “Fuck Hawaiian this Poly [Polynesian] swag” (taliahayden 2011).

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