



HAL
open science

The Polynesians of Hawai'i: Surviving a Biological, Political and Cultural Genocide

Alain Geoffroy

► **To cite this version:**

Alain Geoffroy. The Polynesians of Hawai'i: Surviving a Biological, Political and Cultural Genocide. *Alizés: Revue angliciste de La Réunion*, 1993, Integration and Segregation, 06, pp.115-128. hal-02350342

HAL Id: hal-02350342

<https://hal.univ-reunion.fr/hal-02350342v1>

Submitted on 6 Nov 2019

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

The Polynesians of Hawai'i: Surviving a Biological, Political and Cultural Genocide

*But they scorned our symbols. They scorned us.
They said, "Here. With these, you will prosper."¹*

*The doctrine of assimilation is a doctrine of
genocide.²*

*Alain Geoffroy
Université de La Réunion³*

Among the legendary places around the world which do not fail to stimulate western imaginations, the Pacific archipelago of Hawai'i undeniably conjures up paradisiacal, sunny life style, white coral beaches, top-level surfing and languorous nights bathed with balmy breezes. But beyond the remnants of the *aloha* tradition⁴ and the enchanting tropical landscapes, there remains a Hawaiian reality which often contradicts the mythical American melting pot. If the opulent aspect of downtown Honolulu, the beehive effervescence of Waikiki, the

1. "Women's Liturgy" in (Honolulu: The Hawai'i Area Office of the American Friends Service Committee, 1993), p. 22..

2. Charles Ka'ai'ai, in *He Alo À He Alo; Face to Face: Hawaiian Voices on Sovereignty* (Published by The Hawai'i Area Office of the American Friends Service Committee. Printed by Flambeau Litho Corp., Wisconsin, 1993), p. 71.

3. Université de La Réunion, Faculté des Lettres & Sciences Humaines, 15 avenue René Cassin, 97715 Saint-Denis Messag Cédex 9 (France).

4. A custom of *hospitality and friendly welcome to foreigners prevailing in many Polynesian islands*, turned nowadays into commercial slogans or local corporate names often connected with tourism, like the emblematic Aloha Airlines, one of the major Hawaiian airline companies.

indisputable economic accomplishment, the amazingly low unemployment rate⁵ may convince the heedless visitor that "Hawai'i, that masterpiece of the American system, makes the melting pot a success,"⁶ the shady circumstances of the establishment of this prosperity and the high tribute paid by the indigenous population for this materialistic boom make one suspect that this mild paradise must have a bitter taste in some Hawaiian mouths.

Scientists today do not know exactly when nor why the first Hawaiians came to the islands. Sailing all the way probably from the Marquesas — some 2000 mi. — on their huge double canoes, guided by their knowledge of stars, they would have reached the "Big Island"⁷ about 1,500 to 2,000 years ago.⁸ Being the most northern land in Polynesia, the unoccupied out-of-the-way islands were certainly less hospitable than the first colonists' homeland:

Except for a few species of birds (some known today only from fossil remains) and the young fronds or roots of a few kinds of ferns, the islands offered little for hungry people to eat. The colonists would have had to establish here all the plants and animals they depended on for food, medicines, utensils, and clothing.⁹

Few reliable data are nowadays available to reconstitute the pre-European history of the people of Hawai'i from the first settlements to the complex society which welcome Cook's arrival in January 1778. As a consequence, today's scholars generally agree that "we can be certain about almost nothing that happened in Hawai'i or to its people" before that date.¹⁰ However, the descriptions of the

⁵. The rate of unemployment in Hawai'i, the lowest in the United States, seems to remain untouched by the world economic crisis: in 1990, the labor force was estimated at 602,348 whereas unemployed people were 19,228, for a total population of 1,108,229 (last census of April 1, 1990). *The State of Hawaii Data Book, 1992, A Statistical Abstract* (Honolulu: DBEDT, March 1993), Tab. 345. Contrasting with the dramatic consequences of the 1991-92 U. S. recession, the longstanding healthy economy of Hawai'i produces a cheering 3 percent unemployment rate.

⁶. Our translation of: Jacques Chouleur, *Nord-Ouest Pacifique, Hawaii* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1991), p. 156.

⁷. Hawai'i, the biggest island of the archipelago, dominated by one of the highest island mountains in the world (Mauna Kea, 13,784 ft.).

⁸. No accurate dating has been possible so far, due to the inaccuracy of C-14 dating for relatively recent periods.

⁹. O. A. Bushnell, *The Gifts of Civilization, Germs and Genocide in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), p. 7.

¹⁰. Bushnell, *ibid.*, p. 1.

traditional society as it was observed by early Western explorers,¹¹ as well as the works of Native scholars who compiled their great knowledge of the past,¹² testify to the high degree of sophistication reached by the ancient Hawaiians in many fields. Feudalism developed in all the islands, largely based on the ruling chiefs' absolute control of the land and the priests' influence in almost every aspect of life. Private ownership of land was unknown and the kings redistributed the lands to the chiefs under them at their pleasure. The allocation of land conditioned the functioning of the whole social and economic system.

The *ahupua`a*, the subdivisions of a district, can be pictured as thin slices of a pie. The narrow end of the *ahupua`a* is at a central or inland mountain top, and it broadens out as it progresses towards the shore and out into the sea. Each *ahupua`a* was for the most part self-sufficient, producing everything needed by the people living within its boundaries. People did not live in villages: their homes were scattered over the area of the *ahupua`a*.¹³

Beyond the economic aspect, political prestige and religious authority, as well as social order, rested largely on privileges¹⁴ and the enforcement of severe taboos.

Moral order, or the code upon which determinations of "right" and "wrong" were based, inhered in the *kapu* or system of sacred law. It was the *kapu* which determined everything from the time for farming and warmaking to correct mating behavior among *ali`i* [chiefs] and *maka`ainana* [commoners] alike . . . Since the land was an ancestor, no living thing could be foreign. The cosmos, like the natural world, was a universe of familial relations.¹⁵

The arrival of the first Europeans and their settlement in Hawai'i soon jeopardized and eventually annihilated the foundations of the Hawaiian society: by questioning the relevance of the taboos¹⁶ and imposing private land property

11. See Cook's *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (London, Nichol & Cadell, 1784) or La Pérouse's *Voyage of La Pérouse Round the World, in the Years 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788* (London: Stockdale, 1798).

12. Such as David Malo's *Hawaiian Antiquities (Moolelo Hawaii)*, trans. N. B. Emerson (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1980).

13. Michael Kioni Dudley & Keoni Kealoha Agard, *A Call for Hawaiian Sovereignty* (Honolulu: Nā Kāne O Ka Malo Press, 1993), pp. 1-2.

14. Serge Dunis, in his work *Ethnologie d'Hawai'i* (Paris: Presses Universitaires Créoles / L'Harmattan, 1990), relates how the degree of incestuousness of the chief's marriage conferred him a corresponding prestige.

15. Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i* (Monroe, Me.: Common Courage Press, 1993), p. 6.

16. The first major *kapu* to be broken was the one which prohibited women to eat with men, when Liholiho, King Kamehameha's son, ate with Ka'ahumanu and other women *ali`i* (1819).

they ruined the political, social, and religious structures that held the different components of the Native society together: "Traditional ways came to be viewed as 'not as good as Western ways.' And what lay in the way of 'becoming Western' had to go."¹⁷ The decline of the traditional society entailed by the loss of Native values was under way. But one of the major factors that imperilled the survival of the Polynesian people in Hawai'i was of a still more subversive nature as it was not deliberately enforced nor directly encouraged by the White community. The very lives of the Hawaiians were rapidly endangered by the sole presence of foreigners, a lethal process which started as early as Cook's first visit to the islands.



The price of a long isolation

If some of the first settlers voyaged back and forth to their homeland until about 1300, their descendants eventually ceased to maintain any connection with central Polynesia and "not even a memory of the Marquesan home was kept, and Tahiti itself became no more than a legend. 'Kahiki' referred to any place beyond the horizon which Hawaiians no longer knew how to find."¹⁸ Undoubtedly, Cook's arrival in 1778 was seen as a true marvel by the Hawaiians who had been cut off from the rest of the world for so long. The high degree of Polynesian hospitality and the sailors' interest in the cordial Native women made contacts inevitable, despite Cook's awareness of their possible evil consequences:

As there were some veneral complaints on board the Ships, in order to prevent its being communicated to these people, I gave orders that no Women, on any account whatever, were to be admitted on board the Ships, I also forbid all manner of connection with them and ordered that none who had the veneral upon them should go out of the Ships.¹⁹

Of course, the arrival of Christian missionaries in 1820 hastened the process of disintegration of the *kapu* system.

17. Dudley & Agard, p. 3.

18. Bushnell, p. 17. "The small number of cosmopolitan or nonendemic plants and animals represented . . . is further evidence that the human population did not maintain a prolonged contact with their homelands" (22).

19. J. C. Beaglehole, *Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Resolution and the Discovery, 1776-1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 265.

Cook's order was disobeyed and his sailors irresponsibly offered the most poisonous gifts to their obliging hosts in exchange of their generous welcome. Not only did some Hawaiians contract venereal diseases, but also a variety of pathogenic germs normally present even in healthy persons, such as "tubercle bacilli, streptococci, enteric pathogens, at least commoner viruses, and probably other microbes as well."²⁰ The lightning spread of the alien germs caused violent epidemics that had been totally unknown in Hawai'i, making the efforts of the indigenous medicine-men to cure their fellow people ill-adapted and vain. Not only were they unable to diagnose the new infections, but they lacked the most elementary resources to fight them. Modern immunology reveals that the amazing virulence of the imported pathogens was due to a combination of factors contributing to a depressed immunity in people who lacked corresponding protective antibodies because "they had been isolated for so long" and "possibly because of the genetic constitution of whole families among the inbred population."²¹ The consequences for the native community were dramatic and are still actual today. Experts generally estimate the total Hawaiian population at about 300,000 in 1778²² and appallingly declining to just 29,000 in 1900.²³ No one exactly knows how many pure-blooded Natives live in Hawai'i today but "even the most generous estimates can manage to grant no more than 5,000."²⁴ Moreover, other factors linked with *haole* (foreign) occupation contributed early to the decrease of the Hawaiian population, such as urban living,²⁵ lowered birth rate,²⁶ and massive departures:

²⁰. Bushnell, p. 147.

²¹. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

²². Recent controversial studies deny the generally accepted figures of 300,000 and evoke a 800,000 to one million population in 1778. See David E. Stannard, *Before the Horror* (Honolulu: Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawaii, 1989).

²³. *Native Hawaiians Study Commission*, vol. 1., pp. 87-88.

²⁴. Bushnell, p. 23. The impossibility of defining pure-bloodedness accurately prohibits any reliable computation. In contrast to Bushnell's estimate, the 1989 figures showed that 8,843 people were labeled — or labeled themselves — "unmixed Hawaiians." Source: *The State of Hawaii Data Book, 1992*, Tab. 24.

²⁵. "Grogshop brawls and waterfront riots, vendettas for love or hate, lonely suicides, murders premeditated or fortuitous, accidents, manslaughter, drunkenness, family fights . . . [gave] burial grounds further reasons to expand." Bushnell, p. 292.

²⁶. "Since 1832, and probably beginning before that year, a genocidal decline in birth rate — or at the very least of the survival of infants — and probably an accompanying decline in fertility-fecundity of adults," *ibid.*, p. 269.

Thousands of native Hawaiians sought travel and adventure in distant shores. For many years, an average of 3,000 native Hawaiians departed annually on foreign whaling vessels and other trading ships. In 1850, some 4,000 native Hawaiians joined whaling ships as seamen — one-eighth of the adult native Hawaiian population. Few returned.²⁷

Today, the bleakest estimations prophesy the total disappearing of the Hawaiians of unmixed blood in the near future, "within two more generations — that is, by the year 2025."²⁸ Such predictions rest on two major determinants. First, "Hawaiians have the poorest health status of any group in the United States,"²⁹ which contrasts sharply with the high life expectancy enjoyed by other ethnic groups in Hawai'i:

Life Expectancy in 1980 (in years)³⁰

	global	male	female
Hawai'i total	78	75	81.5
Hawaiians	74	70.9	76

The second factor plays a much more decisive part in the shrinkage of the group defined as pure-blooded Hawaiians. When 32.8 to 45 percent of all marriages recorded in Hawai'i between 1980 and 1985 were intermarriages,³¹ 89.2 percent of Hawaiian men and 84.5 percent of Hawaiian women chose their spouse in a different ethnic group.³² Often linked to an unconscious underestimation of traditional values and a hope for social upgrading, these intermarriages — mainly Japanese oriented — tend to diminish the efforts of promotion of pure-blooded Hawaiians, but, as a counterpart, increase the numeric representation of "part-Hawaiians" to a substantial 20 percent of the total population: "in 1986, using Department of Health definitions of ethnicity," 203,355 part-Hawaiians were counted"³³ In 1989, out of a global population of 1,084,458 inhabitants, 8,843 were counted as unmixed Hawaiians, and 198,147

27. Rich Budnick, *Stolen Kingdom: An American Conspiracy* (Honolulu: Aloha Press, 1992), p. 31.

28. Bushnell, p. 271.

29. Dr. Jack Lewin, *Sunday Honolulu Star-Bulletin and Advertiser*, 9 July 1989, quoted in Bushnell, p. 271.

30. Source: Eleanor C. Nordyke, *The Peopling of Hawai'i* (2nd ed., Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989) p. 241.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 222.

33. Bushnell, p. 272.

part-Hawaiians.³⁴ They nowadays represent one of the best assets for the preservation of Hawaiian ethnicity as "bureaucrats decided to 'eliminate' the category for full-blooded Hawaiians because 'they were few in number and of questionable identity' as Nordyke stated."³⁵ Fortunately, it seems that even bureaucratic genocide did not prevent Hawaiians to overcome this long series of hardships. As John D. Waihee, the first person of Hawaiian ancestry to reach governorship in 1986, put it optimistically: "this race was near to extinction a century ago and has made a remarkable recovery since then."³⁶



A History of Dispossession³⁷

The process of dispossession of the Hawaiian people followed two main lines, closely linked to each other; one was brutal and led to annexation whereas the other was more perfidious resulting as it did from an unfortunate initiative of the Hawaiian sovereign. In 1848, under the pressure of his *haole* advisers, Kamehameha III, scared by the British takeover in 1843, unwillingly accepted for Hawaiian lands to be divided up three ways: one and a half million acres were given to the chiefs, another one and a half million were set aside as "government land," the rest being kept by the king — later called "crown land."³⁸ As a consequence of this "Great *Mahele*," parts of the chiefs' land, the crown land and the government land — *kuleana* — were set for sale to Native commoners, thus abolishing the traditional communal use of land and initiating private property. Though the decision may have been seen by Kamehameha as a last resort for commoners not to be spoiled of their lands by *haole* greed, few of them managed to acquire plots of land they could hardly afford. Moreover, the King's offer then was beyond Hawaiian comprehension:

³⁴ *The State of Hawaii Data Book, 1992*, Tab. 24.

³⁵ Bushnell, p. 272.

³⁶ Quoted in Nordyke, p. 32.

³⁷ Words borrowed from Dudley & Agard, pp. 1-23.

³⁸ See Donald D. Kilolani Mitchell, *Resource Units in Hawaiian Culture* (Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools Press, 1982), pp. 263-4.

Many Hawaiians could not understand individual ownership of land; they could not conceive of a system in which everyone did not have the right to use the land and its products. Of those who received grants, many lost their property due to taxes and the expensive rules of survey, filing and presentations of witness. By 1858 total *kuleana* land awards equalled 28,658 acres, less than one percent of all Hawaiian lands.³⁹

Far from favoring Hawaiian subjects, the land reform gave access to large-scale foreign land ownership, contributing greatly to native impoverishment and increasing their feelings of dispossession. Though the King's prospect was that "[his] Chiefs and [his] Hawaiian people may dwell and establish themselves firmly upon the land forever,"⁴⁰ the Privy Council soon allowed "all residents, even foreigners, unrestricted rights to buy and sell lands,"⁴¹ disregarding the original priority granted to Native Hawaiians.

Later on, after annexation, the U. S. Congress initiated the "Hawaiian Homes" program (1921) in order to reserve homesteading for persons of at least 50 percent Hawaiian blood. But due to the pressure of sugar interests, "the homestead trust consisted largely of the worst land in the territory" and as a consequence of repeated failures in the enforcement of the program, "thousand of acres of homestead land were transferred to federal and territorial agencies by executive orders and proclamations of federally appointed territorial governors."⁴² Though compensatory measures have been taken since statehood (1959) — such as the "Ceded Land Trust" or more recently Governor Waihee's action plan of 1991 — financial fallouts have been a long time coming.

Until 1980, however, not one penny of this income [ceded-land] ever made its way to these intended beneficiaries. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) was founded in 1980 and, for the first time, ceded-land income began to benefit Hawaiians directly. Not until 1990, however, was the full extent of this income determined.⁴³

Today's land polity still carries secondary stigmata of a past of injustice and dispossession for Native Hawaiians. Even if the present administration since 1954 is rather favorably seen by "the governed of Hawaii [who] consented sufficiently in what the Democrats did regarding land" because "anybody at all who owned real property, even on the most modest scale, was profiting by a sharp rise in

39. *He Alo A He Alo*, p. 161.

40. Translated from the *Privy Council Records*, III A: 69, quoted in Dudley & Agard, p. 12.

41. Dudley & Agard, p. 13.

42. H.K. Bruss Keppeler, Esq, "Native Hawaiian Claims" in *The Price of Paradise; Lucky We Live Hawaii?* (ed. by Randall W. Roth, Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 1992), pp. 198-9.

43. Keppeler, p. 201.

values,"⁴⁴ the situation of the most underprivileged sections of the population had not significantly improved.

[Some groups are] significantly absent from the record on land investment in the Democratic years, but not because the record is partially hidden. Most notable in this regard are Hawaiians and Filipinos.

These missing groups simply did not get in on the land boom as investors, in part because they simply were not politically well-connected, for the rest because they were not financially well situated to begin with. And of course those two factors are connected.⁴⁵

The noticeable absence of Hawaiians from the real estate manna and political mainstream echoes their double experience of dispossession in colonial times. Originating in *haole* sugar and military, strategic interests, officialized by the *mahele*, the political seizure of their past sovereignty became ineluctable under Kalàkaua's reign.

The Reciprocity Treaty with the United States signed by King Kalàhaua in 1875 boosted economic gains of the sugar planters but seriously limited Hawaiian sovereignty. Sugar could then be exported to the U. S. tax-free but it was agreed that "no harbors or territory would be ceded or leased to any other nation."⁴⁶ This exclusive clause clearly paved the way to a future cession of Pearl Harbor which became effective twelve years later. In his vigorous speech to U. S. Congress, General Schofield expressed the urgency of the American demand:

The Hawaiian Islands constitute the only natural outpost to defenses of the Pacific Coast . . . The time has come when we must secure forever the desired control over those islands or let them pass into other hands."⁴⁷

Despite the growing opposition of nationalist movements, the pro-*haole* "Missionary Party," supported by the "Honolulu Rifles," an armed wing of the "Hawaiian League,"⁴⁸ used threat to force King Kalàkaua to sign the "Bayonet Constitution" (1887) which gave control of the government to Caucasians by:

⁴⁴. George Cooper & Gavan Daws, *Land and Power in Hawaii; The Democratic Years* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), p. 446.

⁴⁵. *Ibid.*, p. 452.

⁴⁶. *He Alo À He Alo*, p. 163.

⁴⁷. Quoted in Trask, p. 11.

⁴⁸. A secret organization planning to dethrone the monarchy in the name of foreign interests.

- reducing the King to a ceremonial leader
- eliminating most of the monarch's power
- prohibiting the monarch from dismissing a Cabinet member without approval from the Legislature
- requiring the monarch to sign all bills and resolutions (even those he vetoed)
- establishing property and income requirements for voting and holding office
- requiring all voters to sign an oath supporting the 1887 constitution
- excluding all people born in Asia from voting.⁴⁹

Kalākaua's dream of a Polynesian empire under Hawaiian leadership to resist foreign alienation was over. When Queen Lili'uokalani succeeded him in 1891, amid a severe economic depression brought on by the McKinley Tariff,⁵⁰ she prepared a new constitution that would limit the extension of *haole* power and restore Hawaiian political rights as well as the monarch's prestige. As she herself put it: "the promulgation of a new constitution, adapted to the needs of the times and the demands of the people, had been an indisputable prerogative of the Hawaiian monarchy."⁵¹ In January 1893, backed by nationalist activist Robert Wilcox's Liberal Party in parliament and by Native population, the Queen announces her decision to proclaim the new constitution, an act that triggered off a decisive political crisis. Frightened by the unstable political context, Caucasian planters advocated a quick annexation that would definitely put an end to the menace of further protective tariffs on Hawaiian sugar exports to the United States. The pro-annexationists founded the radical "Annexation Club" which transformed itself into a Committee of Safety planning to dethrone the Queen with the complicity of U. S. Minister John Stevens. The Club's emissary Thurston was sent to Washington to see whether annexation would be considered favorably by President Harrison. The answer of Secretary of the Navy B. F. Tracy was crystal-clear:

The President . . . authorizes me to say to you that, if conditions in Hawaii compel your people to act as you have indicated, and you come to Washington with an annexation proposition, you will find an exceedingly sympathetic administration here.⁵²

On January 16, 1893, American troops were sent ashore and took position near the Government Palace under the false pretext of protecting American property. In the name of the Committee of Safety, Sanford B. Dole read publicly a

⁴⁹ Budnick, p. 68.

⁵⁰ The McKinley Tariff Bill (1891) overruled the provisions of the Reciprocity Treaty by raising duties on Hawaiian sugar exported to the U. S..

⁵¹ Lili'uokalani, *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen* (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle, 1964), p. 230.

⁵² Quoted in Budnick, p. 95.

declaration abrogating the monarchy and establishing a provisional government whose sole purpose was to seek a quick annexation. Alarmed by the turn of events and "to avoid any collision of armed forces and perhaps the loss of life,"⁵³ the Queen yielded her throne and asked for President Harrison's arbitration, confident that the U. S. administration would not recognize an act contradicting the principles of the American constitution.

However, despite the conclusions of the Blount Report pointing to an illegal political maneuver, and recently elected anti-annexationist President Cleveland's order to restore the monarchy, the Provisional Government maintained itself and declared itself the Republic of Hawai'i.⁵⁴ The situation remained unsettled until pro-annexationist McKinley was elected president and in 1998 Hawai'i was annexed.

Few Hawaiian voices then would have the opportunity to express themselves and claim for reparation, with the notable exception of Prince Kūhiō who courageously pleaded the cause of his people in Congress. In 1920, he obtained that public land should be set aside for people of Hawaiian blood so that they could regain some of their previous possessions. But this semi-recognition of the Hawaiian rights on their lands did not prevent the extension of military zones whose necessity had been rendered urgent by the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor.⁵⁵ The reason of State then justified further land misappropriation, and, added to the decimation of the Hawaiian race, seemed to sound the knell of a once prosperous indigenous past, at least until the recent revival of Native identity.



A forced cultural destitution

Hawai'i's face today displays every aspect of the American way of life and little elements recall the rich culture of its primeval civilization. Beyond the words *aloha* and *maholo*⁵⁶ and a few others which assume the minimum local color, the

⁵³. Lili'uokalani, p. 354.

⁵⁴. The Provisional Government was far from ever being a democratic institution: the local press was swiftly muzzled, outspoken opponents imprisoned, and Native Hawaiians were denied the right to vote...

⁵⁵. In 1943, U. S. Army confiscated Mākua Valley and ten years later, the U. S. Navy was granted exclusive rights to Kaho'olawe island.

⁵⁶. Extensively used in Hawai'i instead of "thank you."

visitor — or the resident — is rarely reminded that the Polynesian linguistic past of Hawai‘i has survived at all. On the contrary, the linguistic spectrum confirms the diversity of the imported population. Out of a total of 1,026,209 speakers of 5 years old and over, 771,485 speak only English at home when 254,724 use non-English tongues, among which 226,002 speak Asian or Pacific Island languages split up as follows:⁵⁷

Japanese	Chinese	Korean	Tagalog*	Vietnamese	Other**
69,587	23,366	14,636	55,341	4,620	58,452

* Filipinos

** Among which Ilocano (Filipinos), Visayan (Filipinos), Samoan, Hawaiian.⁵⁸

The relative part of the Native spoken language appears considerably restricted in modern Hawai‘i as are many more or less convincing revivals of Polynesian traditional culture, manifestly more destined to entertain tourists than to allow any authentic regeneration of the *aloha* spirit. Emblematically, the impressive Polynesian Cultural Center in Oahu, supposedly introducing visitors to the "diversity and spirit of the nations of Polynesia,"⁵⁹ definitely lacks the genuineness and rigor of a true sanctuary and brazenly betrays its attractive name. Designed as a sophisticated recreative park more than like a museum, it offers few valuable displayed artefacts,⁶⁰ and little more than a vague introduction to traditional dances during shows organized in a beautiful but americanized setting. This contributes to the spread of the largely shared belief that "Hawai‘i is as American as hot dogs and CNN News. Worse, Americans assume that if an opportunity arises, they too may make the trip, following along after the empire into the sweet and sunny land of palm trees and hulahula girls."⁶¹ This "predatory view"⁶² of their islands is often resented by Native Hawaiians who dream of a more spontaneous and authentic revival of their once prestigious culture. According to some Hawaiian views, the assimilative role of education has contributed to the devaluation of traditional values and accounts for the below-the-average academic success of Hawaiians. They claim for a different education, assumed by "non-Hawaiians working in cooperation with Hawaiians, particularly in validating

⁵⁷. *The State of Hawaii Data Book 1992*, table 28.

⁵⁸. *Ibid.*

⁵⁹. Borrowed from the leaflet distributed to visitors.

⁶⁰. Many of the artefacts on sale are imported from the Philippines...

⁶¹. Trask, p. 2.

⁶². Trask, p. 2..

Hawaiian culture, Hawaiian politics, Hawaiian art forms, validating that through the academic process."⁶³ Noticeably the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, though build on "ceded land," proposed no building dedicated for Hawaiian studies until October 1992 when ground was eventually granted for the Hawaiian Studies Center.



The sovereignty issue

Only the more recent years have brought a wide renewal of interest in the traditional values that were once shared by Native Hawaiians. In 1972, an indigenous organization, A.L.O.H.A.,⁶⁴ was founded to seek reparations from the U. S., demanding "a cash payment to the Hawaiian people for losses of lands, resources, rights, and revenues sustained as a result of the overthrow and subsequent annexation by the United States."⁶⁵ Pro-sovereignty organizations appeared, such as 'Ohana O Hawai'i (The Extensive Family of Hawai'i), or the P. K. O. (Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana), Nà 'Òiwi o Hawai'i (The Native Hawaiians), their fight for recognition culminating in Mililani Trask's call for a Constitutional Convention for a Hawaiian Nation (1987), in which a tentative constitution was drafted: the aim of Kà Lāhui Hawai'i (The Hawaiian Nation) was to obtain a legal status for Native Hawaiians similar to the one granted to Native Americans. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs, though solidly committed to the political future of Native Hawaiians, has a different status: as Dudley and Agard put it, this agency of the State of Hawai'i "is far too subject to control by the State to be entrusted with the sovereignty of the Hawaiian people."⁶⁶

Undoubtedly, the more than forty Native Hawaiian groups⁶⁷ demanding the restoration of the Hawaiian identity have had a decisive influence in the revival and acknowledgement of Native values occurring today. Though their declared intentions range from the institution of a status of Native Nation within the federal

⁶³. Interview with Peter Apo, in *He Alo À He AloI*, p. 87.

⁶⁴. Aboriginial Lands of Hawaiian Ancestry, created by Louisa K. Rice, comprising some 30,000 members today (Dudley & Agard, p. 109).

⁶⁵. Davianna McGregor-Alegado, "Hawaiians: Organizing in the 1970s," in *Amerasia*, n° 2, vol. 7, 1980, p. 45.

⁶⁶. Dudley & Agard, p. 118.

⁶⁷. Mahealani Kamauu, in *He Alo À He Alo*, p. 19.

United States⁶⁸ to a radical demand for complete independence and full nationhood,⁶⁹ many Hawaiian citizens would agree that the fight led by the pro-sovereignty movements will bear fruit in the future: "Hawaiians are legally and morally entitled to much more than the \$100 million-plus they are likely to receive from the State, sovereignty is not as crazy as it may sound, and it will happen."⁷⁰

The amazing economic success of Hawai'i must not conceal the failure of a system as regards a people who once welcomed the ancestors of those who thrive today, for as Mililani Trask, Governor of The Hawaiian Nation, put it, "all the statistics demonstrate that Native Hawaiians of 50% blood and more have the greatest need for housing, for food, for assistance; they suffer from the highest suicide rate, post- and pre-natal losses, drug use and incarceration."⁷¹ During his visit to Hawai'i in July 1993, President Clinton asserted that he would "address these concerns [Native Hawaiians'] in a positive way."⁷² May the materialization of this proposal help the Hawaiian people heal its wounds!



⁶⁸. The model often quoted being the Iroquois Nation.

⁶⁹. "There is to be no compromise. We must be an independent nation that is not tied to any other nation. There is to be no sub-status or affiliation with the United States or any other foreign government." Make'e Pono, "Sovereignty Now!", in *He Alo A He Alo*, p. 145.

⁷⁰. Bruss Keppeler, p. 195.

⁷¹. An Interview with Mililani Trask, in *He Alo A He Alo*, p. 114.

⁷². Excerpt from President Clinton's speech on Waikiki Beach, 11 July 1993, *The Honolulu Advertiser*, Monday July 12, 1993, p. A8.