

Restoring Loss: Performing Sovereignty in Hawai'i
by A. Saiki



Aloha 'oe, aloha 'oe
E ke onaona noho i ka lipo
One fond embrace, a ho'i a 'e au
A hui hou aku.

Lili'uokalani, [Aloha Oe](#)

Farewell to you, farewell to you,
O fragrance in the blue depths.
One fond embrace and I leave
to meet again.

translated by Mary Kawena Pukui [1](#)

1 A fond embrace. The loss of a friend, a lover? Who is leaving and why are they silent? What is it about the loss that reappears again and again? Who is that silent, invisible friend that Lili'uokalani addresses? This friend says nothing in return. The voice doesn't speak. It can't, it is in mourning. *Farewell to you, farewell to you*, she sings, *one fond embrace and I leave to meet again. Aloha Oe*. The most famous Hawaiian song was written in 1878 by a young Lydia Paki Kamekeha Lili'uokalani who 12 years later became Queen Lili'uokalani in 1891. It is the only song to which the city of Honolulu has dedicated a memorial. When the Brady Bunch went to Hawai'i, *Aloha Oe* sent them back to their Hollywood studio suburb. Elvis sang "*Aloha Oe*" in [Blue Hawaii](#). As the torch flame faded during the closing of the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, what should we hear but a chorus of 1500 voices echoing the farewell of *Aloha Oe*. In 1978 a century after the song was composed, a Japanese film studio produced a documentary on *Aloha Oe* for a national television series. The Kamehameha School Marching Band played *Aloha Oe* in Clinton's Inaugural Parade. Invariably we do meet again-- every time we hear those four famous notes-- composed first by humming, then by piano, made famous by orchestra, then legend by the Hawaiian steel guitar.[2](#)

Whom do we meet? a fictive friend? a lost lover? a prolonged kiss with a native stranger? Possibly, if we translate *onaona* as "the charming one" instead of "fragrance," as Pukui does in another translation of this song. Typically, when confronting the Hawaiian language, meaning is manifold. Some have claimed that every Hawaiian poem has at least four meanings: an ostensible meaning; a vulgar meaning; a mythico-historical-topographical meaning and a deeply hidden meaning. Mary Kawena Pukui contested this hypothesis claiming that there are only two meanings-- the literal and the *kaona*, or inner meaning-- the spirit.³ Whether two or four, there is a multiplicity of meaning-- they culminate into a homonymic discourse that celebrates the wit of the listener, the spectator.

This silent, invisible friend that Lili'uokalani addresses is also a place, fictional, historical and mythical. Her farewell is to Hawai'i and to her stolen title, Queen-- this is the loss that will reappear again and again.⁴

Hawai'i is the locale, the spirit by which all who are touched, continue to return. *Kama'ainas*⁵ return, tourists return, many to eventually settle. As every marketing strategist knows, to be touched by Hawai'i is to surrender to maudlin reminiscence. Island commerce depends upon the return of tourists to the islands, just as local businesses do with residents. The most popular songs, "island favorites," are songs about coming home, community, communality: a return to a place that is often mythologized in terms of monarchy-era, territorial-era, pre-development or pre-contact.

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Last night I dreamt I was returning
and my heart called out to you
To please accept me as you'll find me
Me ke 'aloha ku'u home o Kahaluu

Jerry Santos, [Ku'u Home o Kahaluu](#)⁶

This year marks the centennial of the unconstitutional overthrow of Lili'uokalani by American missionaries and businessmen. Many different communities have been actively participating in this observance. Several native Hawaiian groups have sponsored rallies and performances, churches have held observances, and local businesses have sponsored community support programs. These programs and performances are vast in scope and are directed to every community in Hawai'i. Chinese, Japanese and Filipino radio stations have programs addressing their own particular history with Hawai'i, focusing upon their arrivals as migrant workers. KHON, a subsidiary of NBC, broadcast a reenactment of Lili'uokalani's life. KCCN, a Hawaiian music radio station, regularly features short readings from Lili'uokalani's autobiography. The US flag, with much debate, was flown at half mast and the Hawaiian Monarchy flag was flown over Iolani Palace, the sight where Lili'uokalani surrendered the throne. At the University of Hawai'i, the Hawaiiana curricula was expanded and Hawaiian language classes tripled from the previous decade. The business community too, has taken full advantage of the Centennial. In a First Federal Savings and Loan advertisement, one could receive Stolen Kingdom: an American Conspiracy, simply by making a qualifying deposit of \$5,000 or more into a new or existing savings or certificate account. This year marks, if it has not already been decreed:

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the Year of the Hawaiian.

There is currently, in the contemporary climate of Hawai'i, a movement towards the immersion of language, history and identity into the Hawaiian community. This act of immersion-- of being Hawaiian-- becomes active when framed within a model of *restoration*. It is through an act of restoring that sovereignty groups attempt to reinstate; bring back to dignity or right and represent a model of an "original" event.

In an example constructed by Jean-Luc Nancy, the birth by the Holy Virgin signifies a sacred moment by which we begin to measure a restoration, a return, or a reinvention of the divine.⁷ During the Christmas season, we might witness this return as a plethora of electric-lit plastic reproductions of the Holy Virgin and baby Jesus, theatrical performances, television specials, and Christmas music. We might reinvent the sacred in sales and commerce, or take part in establishing moments of good will and sharing. Those who participate in Christmas, participate by restoring that which is lost: that manger, that star, those three kings bearing gifts, the miracle of immaculate conception.

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Just as Nancy allegorizes the birth by the Virgin Mary, by citing that a divine birth is always possible, I am framing the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom as that birth, the starting off point, the historical metaphor defining a new age of loss for Hawaiians. The overthrow signifies a model of restoring loss: performing sovereignty in Hawai'i.

Native Land and Foreign Narratives:

Lili'uokalani and the French Revolution

The term "restored behavior" refers to performance in a lineage of history and genealogy. Richard Schechner, illustrates that restored behavior means, "for the second to the *n*th time, performance is 'twice-behaved' behavior,"⁸ "it joins first causes to what happens at the end of time."⁹ This is manifested through what he calls "symbolic" and "reflexive" behavior. Restored behavior illustrates how a performance gives meaning to historical events, without which, celebrations and anniversaries and this centennial of the overthrow, would be meaningless. The model of restored behavior also parallels Victor Turner's paradigm of Social Drama/Ritual Process¹⁰ which is a process that responds unconsciously, or "preconsciously" to the major social dramas of its social context. This context privileges an event that is bound to historical metaphors and is posited in the environment of the object (or in the case of Schechner, the performance).

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By providing a reading of the phenomenon that is repeated in the unconscious (or preconscious) social context of Hawaii, we can look at the 1993 observation of the centennial of the overthrow as having been performed and celebrated in 1893, as well. This process of delineating restored behavior involves constructing or juggling historical metaphors, and read them as determined linguistic, historical and social codes.

Restoration is constituted upon the birth of an "original event." Whether that event is historically bound to a nanosecond, like a gunshot or the split of an atom-- or years, like a

war or revolution-- it is that event that signifies restoration. The act of restoring relies upon a conscious effort to return or to reinvent. It relies upon the restructuring of history and upon the re-establishment of an historical narrative. Restoration is motivated by a community pursuing or responding to a particular loss, or rather a historically or mythically bound origin. Further, restoration is a process directed toward meaning, postulating an understanding-- no matter how complex or tenuous-- and raising questions about restorative truth values: restored events.

During the centennial, the event restored is the moment when Queen Lili'uokalani surrenders her kingdom.

- 6 To restore an "original" position, we need to understand the events that led to the formation of the *Committee of Public Safety*, the committee which initiated the overthrow of the Queen. These elements, the record and the public event, are much broader than can be embraced here, however by focusing on the rubric of the event, we will come to the tensions that blister those restorative acts.

On January 17, 1893, 162 troops from the USS Boston land in Honolulu. The insurgents: Sanford Dole, Lorrin Thurston, and US Minister John Stevens declare themselves in power, institute martial law and seek diplomatic recognition. Queen Lili'uokalani yields her crown.

I, Lili'uokalani, by the Grace of God and under the Constitution of the Kingdom, Queen, do hereby solemnly protest against any and all acts done against myself and the constitutional government of the Hawaiian Kingdom, certain persons claiming to have established a provisional government of and for this Kingdom. That I yield to the superior force of the United States of America, whose minister plenipotentiary, His excellency John L. Stevens, has caused United States troops to be landed at Honolulu and declared that he would support the said provisional government. Now to avoid any collision of armed forces and perhaps the loss of life, I do under this protest and impelled by said force, yield my authority until such time as the Government of the United States shall, upon facts being presented to it, undo the action of its representatives and reinstate me in the authority which I claim as the constitutional sovereign of the Hawaiian Islands.

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[Lili'uokalani](#), January 17, 1893 ¹²

Following are some significant details that led to the overthrow. On January 29, 1891, Lydia Kamaka'eha became Queen Lili'uokalani. Knowing only too well the suffering of her people, her desire was to restore the monarchy. For the foreigners, particularly the merchants and industrialists, it was a chaotic time; the queen wanted to restore Hawaiian lands for her people. The sugar industry claimed that the land was rightfully theirs because sugar had played such a major role in the development of Hawai'i. The shipping industry claimed the harbors as their own. Many accused Lili'uokalani of wanting to overturn treaties and constitutions. She was determined to break the "Bayonet Constitution" forced

upon her brother King Kalakaua, which stripped away most of his powers and made him comply to an all white House of Nobles.¹³

8 In 1892, a small secret organization called the Annexation Club was formed. The members were mostly prominent white men of the business community. who joined in response to several events which menaced their common interests. First, there was a crisis in the sugar industry when the McKinley Tariff¹⁴ went into effect. Since the economy was sugar-based, it was clear that if annexation occurred, the tariff would be eliminated and losses could be avoided. Lili'uokalani had her own agenda responding to the recession that Hawai'i was now faced with. She passed a lottery bill which helped pay for public utilities, and she was about to legalize the importation of opium as Queen Victoria had done in England. Of course, this upset both the missionaries as well as the opium smugglers who relied on the ban to maintain their economic prepotence. Lili'uokalani, like Queen Victoria, thought that if the ban was lifted, the government could monitor and tax the import and distribution of opium. Without hesitation, ministers accused her of supporting gambling and intoxication; this confused many of the native residents. Although Lili'uokalani was seen as a devout Christian, she was portrayed by her opponents as betraying the teachings of the bible, and this did not benefit her royal public image.

9 On the morning of Saturday, January 14, Lili'uokalani told her cabinet that she would proclaim a new constitution that afternoon. The events of the overthrow transpire quickly. During the early afternoon, the annexationists drafted a declaration saying that because Lili'uokalani was guilty of treason for trying to issue a new constitution, the throne would be vacant. Threatened with a backlash from the business community, no new constitution was ever issued from Lili'uokalani's cabinet. The pro-annexation Committee of Public Safety formed and began recruiting armed supporters. At 8 p.m., Lorrin Thurston told the other insurgents that the US Minister to Hawai'i John Stevens had promised to support them. The next morning, on January 15, Thurston told two of Lili'uokalani's ministers that the C.P.S. would oust her from the throne even if she promised not to issue a new constitution. On Monday, January 16, the C.P.S. gave US Minister Stevens a formal written plea seeking strength from the US troops aboard the USS Boston stationed at Honolulu Harbor. Throughout the day, rallies condemning and supporting the queen were held around town. Later that afternoon, 162 troops landed in Honolulu even though the C.P.S. wanted them to come ashore the next day. On January 17, 1893, Sanford Dole agreed to head the Committee of Public Safety's provisional government and gave US Minister Stevens a letter formally announcing the annexationists plan to topple the monarchy. The C.P.S. declared themselves in power, instituted martial law and sought diplomatic recognition. In 10 minutes, US Minister Stevens stated that he had recognized the provisional government and shortly after that Lili'uokalani yielded her crown.

What was intended by this allusion to the Committee of Public Safety of Revolutionary France? The French C.P.S. was first established on April 6, 1793, and was a provisional committee created by the National Convention to coordinate the urgent measures deemed necessary to save the Republic. Consolidated by a decree on December 4, 1793, the C.P.S. had become the effective government of France by purging local governments and placing them under strict control.¹⁵ By appropriating the name, "Committee of Public Safety," the Hawaiian insurgents sought to create and sustain a symbolic model by which they could

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draw comparison. These insurgents legitimated their actions through the allegorization of, or reference to an historical event. By comparing Queen Lili'uokalani to His Majesty King Louis XVI, the anti-royalists could replay the events of the French Revolution, events that occurred 104 years earlier, in 1789. By appropriating the name "Committee of Public Safety," one hundred years after the French coined it and particularly after the notorious committee formed during the French Revolution, I'd suggest that the Hawaiian insurgents participated in an act of restoring an historical moment which sought to remind the Queen that if she didn't step down, "heads may roll," as it did exactly a centennial ago as King Louis XIV and Marie Antoinette lost their heads to the guillotine. Again, this act of restoring adopts an historical event and transmits those signifiers into a determined and willfull act. This act of restoring facilitated victory for Thurston, Dole and Stevens.

Currently the Hawaiian Sovereignty movement is involved in its own restoration. The unifying element for the movement is an ambition to restore Hawaiian lands to the Hawaiian people, or more precisely the *Kanaka Maoli*.¹⁶ There is broad momentum and sympathy for this movement. Discourse is framed within the argument of restoring loss. This loss is manifested most profoundly around the struggle for native lands.

Tired and worn, I woke up this morning
 Found that I was confused
 Spun right around, found that I'd lost the things that I couldn't lose
 Beaches they sell to build their hotels
 My father and I once knew
 The birds right along, the sunrise at dawn
 Singing Waimanalo Blues

Liko Martin/Thor Wold: [Waimanalo Blues](#)¹⁷

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There are several historical events that signify moments of loss in Hawaii. The assumptions associated with loss collapses easily because the value of loss is inextricably bound to the subject's position. Most obvious an example is the arrival of Captain Cook where one may lay claim that *Kanaka Maoli* culture was lost at the point of contact.

This tension is especially felt in renderings of pre-contact Hawaiian culture. Elaborate graphic designs on t-shirts and banners are very popular. A typical rendering might have a well-built muscular man in a loin cloth posing aggressively with a spear, and in bold letters read "*Kanaka Maoli*." The layering of signification here is rich, but in concert with my point, I'd suggest that that image of power and masculinity coupled with "*Kanaka Maoli*," establishes a hyper-inflated code of self-determination. Contained in that image suggests one singular historical event-- the death of Captain Cook. The empowered Hawaiian reestablishes a mythical *Kanaka Maoli* code whereby the spear connotes victory over a *haole* or foreign social conditions.

Another obvious loss is that of language, art and religion-- practice of an economic system as a whole. How this loss is struggling to be restored is manifested in the number of "immersion" schools that are thriving. These are primary schools which teach children the

12 Hawaiian language, culture, and history. One reason for its success and popularity is that many of the Hawaiian children are rightfully taught to feel pride for their heritage-- something that is not altogether present in either the public or private schools. According to Ke Kia'i,¹⁸ a monthly publication of the Native Hawaiian Advisory Council, these students are constantly in the average/above average percentile level in national testing. More often than not, Hawaiian children do poorly in the public education sector because of stereotypes and prejudices that have systemically placed the Hawaiian at a disadvantage.

A third loss, one that is still in the midst of restoration and at the heart of the sovereignty movement is the loss of land. This is an extremely critical and complex issue which I don't want to dismiss entirely, but would rather just add two points: that land was seized by much conniving and trickery during the reign of Kamehameha III; and that since most "Hawaiian land" exists in the form of estate trusts, native Hawaiians are indeed kept as wards of the state. More on this subject can be found in a recently published book by Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa.¹⁹

The fourth and final loss, I suggest, is the overthrow of Lili'uokalani. Although it is the loss of a monarchy which was modeled after French, English and Russian courts, it represents the loss of Hawaiian rule and a frustrated attempt to restore Hawaiian culture and land back to the *Kanaka Maoli*.

It is this systemic attempt to restore what was lost that gives the sovereignty community a functioning identity.

The Restored Moment: 1993

13 So far, I have attempted to develop a contemporary model by which we can understand the metaphoric events in Hawaiian history that, for the sovereignty community, determines loss.

Before I can proceed, I need to further clarify two concepts: the model and the metaphor. Following Marshall Sahlins constructions of model and metaphor, the model is the theoretical construction by which we can impose our criteria, our own structural determinations, which for better or worse, set the groundwork for exposition and interpretation. Metaphor is the system of signs enmeshed in a particular culture. The historical metaphor, is grounded in the work of Saussurian linguistics, whereby the meaning of the act of discourse may presuppose the contextualized object.²⁰ What was signified during the performances of the centennial observance were several moments in the history of native Hawaiians in which the culture, a once identifiable and codified subject, had been repressed and continue to be suppressed under the auspices of contemporary culture. The model is constructed around the opposition of *sovereignty* and *colonialism*. The performance visually recreated the anxiety through which contemporary pro-sovereignty groups could find and express their rage, and work to further restore a model of sovereignty. One performance, the reenactment of the overthrow sought to establish this model. Although I will further describe the performance, I want to suggest that construction of history from the point of view of the sovereignty movement was inevitable. In the discourse of sovereignty politics, the opposition is always prioritized, and however problematic the construction of opposition appears, it is the foundation for this

- 14 movement's intent for self-determination. Further, the condition for restoring historical events (historical metaphors) are self-determined. And I would suggest that the restored event is the metaphor that signifies a certain condition-- this condition being the construction of a model which in essence, could be named *loss*.

If just for a day our king and queen
 Would visit all these islands and see everything,
 How would they feel about the changes of our land?
 Could you just imagine if they were around
 And saw highways on their sacred ground,
 How would they feel about this modern city life?
 Tears would come from each other's eyes
 As they would stop to realize
 That our people are in great, great danger now.

*Hawaii '78. The Makaha Sons of Ni'ihau*²¹

Centennial Performance:

The Overthrow

- 15 Performances that centered around the centennial of the overthrow were numerous and diverse.

A popular radio station broadcast vignettes from Lili'uokalani's journal about her life and the events which led up to the overthrow.

Literature, ranging from books to newspapers to pamphlets, issued their interpretations of the historical moment. Many Hawaiian communities, having been on the fringe of society, entered into the glory and pride of their Hawaiianess. Some, like *Hui Na'auao*, was founded upon an "educational goal, using teaching methods grounded in traditional values." One of their flyers reads: "the project represents a healing and a new beginning... bringing together traditional values (past), the problems facing *na Kanaka Maoli* (present) and the prospects for resolution (future)." *Hui Na'auao* presented a performance of the reenactment and remains a central organization in the sovereignty movement. Other, fringe groups surfaced as well, such as Lenore Victoria Haunani Kialoa Ka'awa, who proclaimed herself queen of the Hawaiian islands. Her group, dressed in black and holding bibles, marched around Bishop Estate proclaiming sovereignty. Ka'awa said that the inspiration for the procession came from God through her dreams and is quoted as saying, "Jesus is going to restore the Kingdom of Hawai'i for us."²²

At the core of the centennial of the overthrow, six days of events were scheduled by the *Onipa'a*²³ Centennial Committee.

- 16 The first day, Wednesday, January 13, opening services were held. They were held in places specific to Lili'uokalani. At nine a.m. an opening service was held at the Royal

Mausoleum. At noon, there was the official opening ceremony at the statue of Queen Lili'uokalani who stands facing the rear entrance of the State Capitol. Kamaki Kanahale, a trustee of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) presented a 100 year old chant that his great-grandmother presented to the queen as a gift. Nearby, Kawaiaha'o Church and St. Andrew's Cathedral were supposed to have rung bells, ten times (once for each decade since the overthrow), but with respect to a Sovereignty coalition, didn't.²⁴ The Royal Hawaiian Band performed music written by Lili'uokalani at the bandstand at Iolani Palace. A 100 hour vigil began at the statue, and 100 torches were lit in front of Iolani Palace.

This opening ceremony was heavily laden with symbols of the Hawaiian Monarchy. *Kahunas* opened the ceremony with chants and prayers, creating a place of solemnity. These spiritual teachers blessed and consecrated the land for the performance. By invoking sacred presence at the Palace, they presented centrality, a locus. Mircea Eliade writes that this locus is "pre-eminently the zone of the sacred, the zone of absolute reality... the center of being." Further, he suggests that the path towards centrality is "arduous, fraught with perils, because it is, in fact, a rite of passage from the profane to the sacred, from the ephemeral and illusory to reality and eternity, from death to life, from man to the divinity." The center he also writes is "equivalent to a consecration, an initiation; yesterday's profane and illusory existence gives place to a new, to a life that is real, enduring, and effective."²⁵ Myth relies upon the consecration of a particular place, since without it, myth would lack the centrality that is essential in recognizing a return. The return is the rite of passage that is restored in speech and behavior, in performance and ritual. Precisely, it is the return that establishes recognition, identity, locality, and community. It is the return that is desired in any act of restoration. Restoration is fulfilled when the return is recognized and established. For the sovereignty movement (and probably the Hawaiian Nation as a whole), the consecration of a locale by a *kahuna* is the most sacred ritual. *Aina*,²⁶ or land, as a physical and spiritual concept in the Hawaiian worldview, is central to even the identity of the state, hence the motto: *Ua mao kea o ka aina i ka pono*. "May the life of this land be perpetuated in righteousness."

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On Thursday, at 8 a.m., *ho'okupu*²⁷ was offered at Iolani Palace, the central stage of the performance. At 11 a.m., there was a commemoration across the street at Ali'iolani Hale. At noon, the Royal Hawaiian Band performed near the Kamehameha statue, and again at 5 p.m. at the Iolani Palace Band shell. At 8 p.m. there was a four hour *kupuna* vigil, a ceremony performed by the "old-timers" born during the struggle of Lili'uokalani. *Kupuna* means grandparent, ancestor, or close friend of a grandparent's generation.. Like *ho'okupu*, *kupuna* also refers to a starting point, a source of lineage, a beginning. The importance of *kupuna* is central to *Kanaka Maoli* culture. It is an extended genealogical bond that traditionally traces centers, blood lines, events, etc. This then vitalizes the performance, and transcends the restorative act. The paved parking lot of Iolani Palace was imbued with the spirit of loss which made the *kupuna*, like a shaman, or in the words of Eliade, "a plaint instrument from some manifestation of the sacred."²⁸ The performance by the *kupuna* was reverent and authentic; hence, for the spectator, there was no feeling of re-enactment, rather only of presence, of witness to the historical event.

The prayers and chants of the *kupunas* established the most profound moment of the commemoration because there was no attempt of restoration or act of restoring.

Transference occurred naturally with the gathering of authentic and primary voices: those who had witnessed what was lost during their lifetimes and directly received what was passed down, the legacy of countless generations.

During the 100 hour vigil, adding to the candle and the prayers, traditional chants and hula were also performed. Women, mostly teenagers, but some children, danced the hula from the monarchy-era. There were short speeches by many outstanding members of the community, and the tone was elegiac. There was no doubt, that this was a ritual of mourning-- a passing of a distant relative made famous by stories, a lamentation.

On Friday, *Hui Na'auao*, a Hawaiian sovereignty coalition, began presentation of a three-day reenactment of the overthrow. This five-act play was site-specific and attempted to restore the historical events. The actors wore period costumes, and much of the text was pulled together from historical references. To see the play, to experience what happened, the audience had to move from place to place, and plan to be at the right place at the right time. Unfortunately, that day, the sound system was improperly functioning, so much of the dialogue was lost to trade-winds.

By looking at the costumes alone, the attempt at restoring this event was probably more carefully plotted than the *original* event. Dallas Vogeler, the director of the reenactment said, "The goal is to tell the truth, to educate ourselves and to allow ourselves to face this thing. There's something about seeing it in the flesh."²⁹ Ironically, there was little flesh. The performers, dressed in 19th century costume wore hats, long-sleeved gowns, suits and gloves. Little was visible, save what was above the collar. The palace guards wore uniforms and helmets, the ministers and businessmen, the carriage drivers and suitors wore suits, the women wore garden hats and *muumuus*, long gowns that covered their entire bodies. Lili'uokalani wore a queen's gown. Where was this flesh that Dallas Vogeler wanted us to see, and what does its hiddenness suggest for the sovereignty movement?

Imprinted upon the signifying paraphernalia of the performance was the clear mark of a christianized monarchy, one that had succumbed to the influence of the first missionaries some 70 years earlier. What trace was there then of the *Kanaka Maoli*? Somewhere, between first contact and the events of the overthrow, the *Kanaka Maoli* had surrendered their clothes (or lack of it) for suits and *muumuus*. In costume alone, the enactment of the overthrow established a victory for the first missionaries. Hiram Bingham, a Protestant missionary from Vermont wrote, "the appearance of destitution, degradation, and barbarism among the chattering and almost naked savages, whose heads and feet, and much of their sunburnt swarthy skins, were bare, was appalling. Some of our number, with gushing tears, turned away from the spectacle. Others, with firmer nerve, continued their gaze, but were ready to exclaim, 'Can these be human beings! ...Can we throw ourselves upon these rude shores, and take up our abode, for life, among such a people, for the purpose of training them for heaven?'"³⁰ It might seem then, that for the missionaries, the flesh "disappeared" upon first sighting of the "naked savage," when they turned away, refusing to see flesh and sunburnt skin. Immediately they set to task and the first priority for educating the *Kanaka Maoli* was to clothe them "properly." What trace was there of the *original* Hawaiian? What was left were the heads of the *Kanaka Maoli* mounted like busts on the clothed body of western civilization. Like social alchemists, the mission was to turn brown to white, naked to clothed, and savage to noble. I should also mention that *muumuus*

caused many women to catch respiratory diseases such as pleurisy because they swam in them and the fabric would slowly dry on their bodies.

What became evident in the performance was that the mark of the *Kanaka Maoli* could only be found in what was *not* seen. For example, the non-visibility of flesh invested in the fabric of the missionary tradition reinforced the (lack of) presence of the Hawaiian, and further inscribed the signifiers of loss. As the performance of language, religion, songs, dress, land blessings, etc., progressed, the spectator was led to mourn the loss, and attempt, as sovereignty groups do-- act upon restoring the loss. This meant that the spectator was to support the determined agenda by particular sovereignty groups (since there were more than one), and to find for themselves that position that one might play during this act of restoring-- or as a kind of Parousia, during the coming of a revolution. The determination of each sovereignty group was its attempt to define and restore the historical moment.

Refrain

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Ha'ina 'ia mai ana ka puana:
Kumaka ka ikena, ia Hi'ilawe.

Mrs. Kuakini, Hi'ilawe³¹

In closing, I should mention that the high point of the day was when two patriotic fanatics marched around the palace grounds with the American flag. A confrontation occurred when supporters of Hawaiian Sovereignty would not allow them onto the grounds. Ironically, the patriots shouted that it was "unconstitutional." Whose constitution? French? American? Hawaiian? This was *the* original conflict reenacted. It bore the traces of the moment when, one hundred years earlier to date, troops from the USS Boston landed at Honolulu Harbor and marched onto the same palace grounds, demanding Lili'uokalani surrender of the crown for writing a new Constitution. What was not written in the script of the reenactment was played out here, at the perimeter of the palace grounds. What is the necessary act of restoring loss?

There is the act within a play, the act towards a theatrical reenactment, and an act of realizing identity, community and sovereignty. These acts, together, determine the loss. It is true that what has been lost in blood, language, and custom will never be found or fully restored during restoration. What we find in community is a longing for a shared event. The strength and identity that defines community is built around the discourse of myth and its structures of restoring loss.

*Aloha 'oe, aloha 'oe,
e ke onaona noho i ka lipo.
One fond embrace,
a ho'i a 'e au, a hui hou aku.*

1. This translation is from Elbert and Mahoe, *Na Mele o Hawaii Nei* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1970) 35. Other translations exist but another worth considering is from a recording of chants and songs from the audio-recording collections of the Dept. of Anthropology at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, *Na Leo Hawai'i Kahiko* (Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1981). Mary Kawena Pukui translates *E ke onaona noho i ka lipo* as "thou charming one who dwells in shaded bowers". Both are correct and this suggests a fine example of the rich homonymic variation of meaning contained within the Hawaiian language.
2. George S. Kanahale. *Hawaiian Music and Musicians* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1979) 13.
3. Samuel H. Elbert and Noelani Mahoe, *Na Mele o Hawaii Nei* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1970) 17. For further analysis of this linguistic model, I suggest Marshall Sahlins's, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1981). Elbert and Mahoe tend towards Pukui's argument, although it seems that from other readings, particularly Sahlins, that the concept of *kaona* is less reducible than claimed by either. Multiplicity and homonymy in Hawaiian language and culture shall be my position throughout this work.
4. Among musicologists, *Aloha Oe* sparks debates about whether Lili'uokalani intended this to be a farewell song or a love song-- and if a love song, then to whom... Avoiding the issue of intentionality altogether, I'd like to just add that in line with the idea of homonymy, both seem plausible.
5. *Kama'ainas* means Native-born, or literally land-child. This and all future definitions of Hawaiian words will be from Mary K. Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *The Hawaiian Dictionary* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986 edition).
6. "With the love of my home, *Kahaluu*." But *ku'u* which I translated as a possessive pronoun also means to release, to free. *Kahaluu* is a rural district on the main island of Oahu that was developed as middle income housing for the military. *Olomana*. "Ku'u Home o *Kahalu'u*" *Olomana*. Seabird Sound SSCD 1001. 1976.
7. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community* (Minneapolis and Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991) 115. "Of Divine Places." In an earlier, and more ambitious draft of this paper, the issue of an inoperative community was prevalent and so Nancy's constructions were relevant. Here, in the scaled down version, Nancy serves as a reference or a reminder towards developing a future paper along this theme.
8. Richard Schechner *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985) 36.
9. Richard Schechner *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of

Pennsylvania Press, 1985) 79.

[10.](#) Victor Turner, "Are there Universals of Performance in Myth, Ritual and Drama?" By Means of Performance, ed. by Richard Schechner and Willa Appel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 16.

[11.](#) Joseph Roach, "Slave Spectacles and Tragic Octoroons: A Cultural Genealogy of Antebellum Performance" Theatre Survey 33. (November 1992) 167.

[12.](#) U.S. Congress, "Lili'uokalani to Dole, January 17, 1893" House Executive Documents (53 Congress 2nd Session, Washington DC. 1895) 866.

[13.](#) David Kalaukaua was Mo'i, or King from 1874-1891. He was manipulated or rather forced by foreign advisors to surrender his authority to a court, or a kind of House of Nobles.

[14.](#) The McKinley Tariff or McKinley Act removed the tariff on raw sugar entering the United States and in the process all but wrecked the reciprocity treaty with the Hawaiian kingdom. Sugar from foreign countries would be admitted free to the US, and the price of domestic sugar would be supported by a bounty of two cents a pound paid to producers. This would plunge sugar producers in Hawaii into financial bust.. Gavan Daws: 1968. *ibid.* 261.

[15.](#) "Decree Establishing the Levee en Masse (23 August 1793)" The Old Regime and the French Revolution. ed. Keith Michael Baker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1987) 341-355.

[16.](#) Kanaka Maoli refers to indigenous Hawaiians. The term Hawaiian, I feel has too many ambiguous connotations, and Kanaka Maoli which literally means indigenous people, is keeping with the solidarity of the community. Also, the term Hawaiian connotes those who identify with Hawaii as their culture or home, and not as their race. This distinction needs to be made, because historically, the term "Hawaiian" referred to those who had claimed an allegiance with Hawaii. When King Kamehameha III sought to redivide the land for Hawaiian people, many non-Kanaka Maoli people, insisted that because they had lived in the islands were Hawaiians. This is the tactic that many foreigners used to abuse land claims.

[17.](#) Waimanalo is a district on Oahu. Many prominent local bands have covered this song, but one band in particular, The Makaha Sons of Ni'ihau added "Nanakuli" to the chorus, another district on Oahu that suffers the same kind of loss. Country Comfort, "Waimanalo Blues" Best of Country Comfort. Mele Records. Mele 7000. 1980.

F [18.](#) Ke Kia'i "The Guardian", vol. 4, num. 2. A publication of the Native Hawaiian Advisory Council. March 10, 1993. 16-19.

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[19.](#) Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa. Native Land and Foreign Desires (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press 1992)

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[20.](#) Marshall Sahlins, *ibid* 6.

[21.](#) Makaha Sons of Ni'ihau. "Hawaiian '78." Live at Hank's Place. Poki Records SP7 9029. 1978.

[22.](#) Honolulu Advertiser, "Hawaiian group targets Bishop Estate to protest Overthrow" October 3, 1992.

[23.](#) Immoveable, steadfast, resolute, determined. (Onipa'a was the motto of Kamehameha V and Lili'uokalani). Fixed movement. Onipa'a is an interesting and ironic name for the centennial movement. As a trope, it is an oxymoron, and in the context of a centennial it connotes a nationalist rigidity positioning itself around a single reference point-- sovereignty.

[24.](#) Due to the sensitive issue of colonialization, Kawaiahau Church and St. Andrews Cathedral thought it might be disrespectful to participate in the mourning since the church and missionaries, as seen by many sovereignty groups, were responsible for eliminating Hawaiian culture.

[25.](#) Mircea Eliade *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954) 18.

[26.](#) The importance of aina means much more than land it also means earth, to eat, sexual intercourse, meal.

[27.](#) ho'okupu: to cause growth, to sprout; also Spirit, supernatural being. In this context, ho'okupu refers to a kind of gift giving-- a planting of mana.

[28.](#) Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism, Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) 23.

[29.](#) Honolulu Advertiser. "Hawaiians to re-enact overthrow of 1893" December 12, 1992.

[30.](#) Gavin Daws, "Missionaries and Merchants 1820-1839" *Shoal of Time*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968) 64.

[31.](#) "Tell the refrain: All eyes are on Hi'ilawe." Translated by Mary Pukui. Most Hawaiian songs include the line Ha'ina 'ia mai ana ka puana, in the song. It refers to not only telling the refrain, but also to what the song is about, and to whom it is dedicated. Ha'ina is also commonly translated as "Thus endeth my story." Hi'ilawe is a waterfall in Waipi'o, Hawaii where as the theme of the song suggests, one returns to escape the chatter of gossip.

[Note:](#) this paper was written during the Fall 1993 semester at NYU Performing Studies Program under Joseph Roach. This treatment is a sketch of what was to be my thesis for the program, and is incomplete.

November 1993
Word Count 5455/27 pages