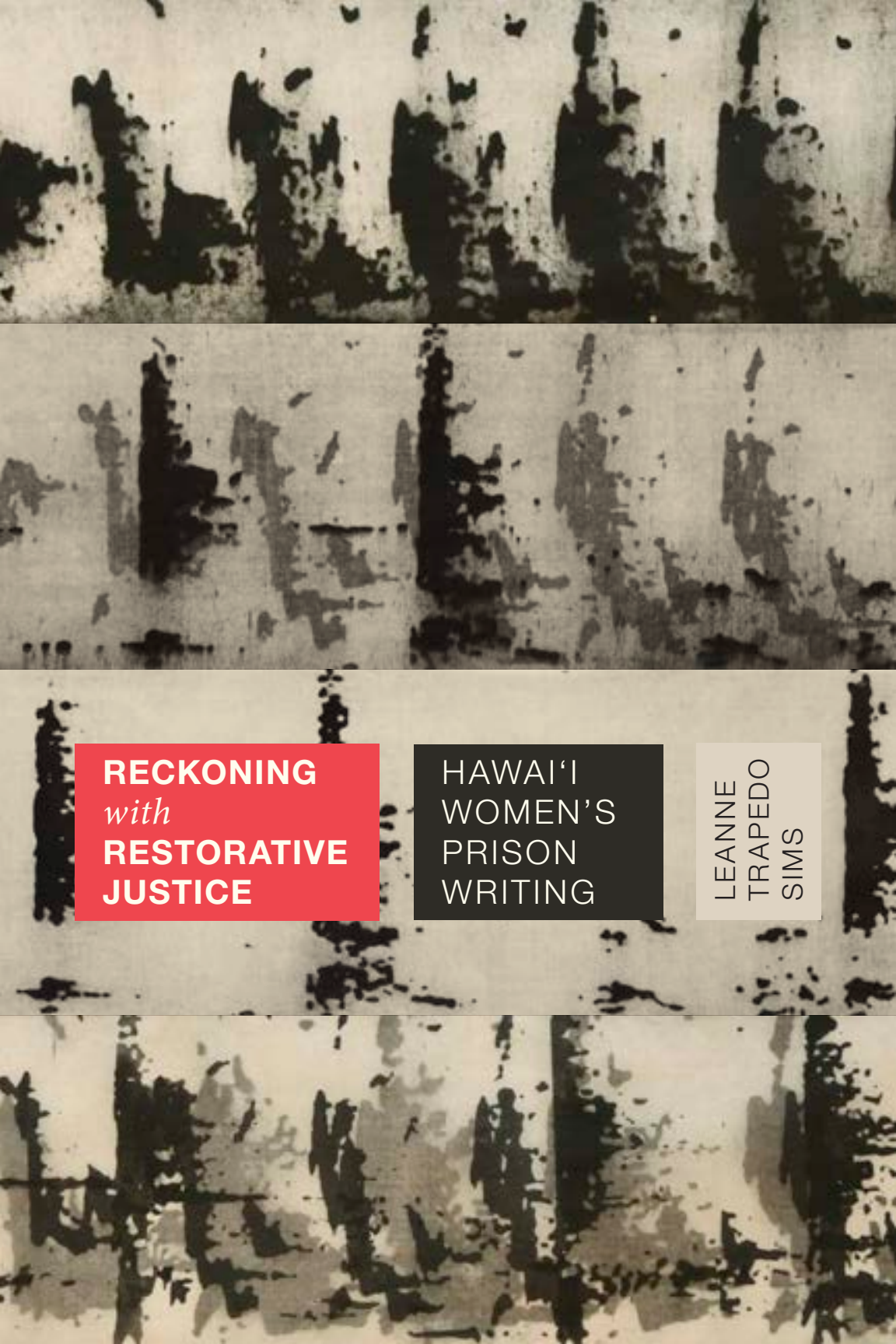

RECKONING *with* RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

HAWAIʻI WOMEN'S PRISON WRITING

LEANNE TRAPEDO SIMS

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For the beautiful women inside

& to
Vivacious Christine Wilcox, teacher, principal, mentor
For your wide heart
Who left the world far too soon

& to
Karen Newberry, who gifted me her life story
& who died on the outside

On the precipice of dawn: I lost my father to the pandemic
I dedicate this to you for your gift of compassion
~ Farrol Hyman Sims, MD

CONTENTS

ACO	adult corrections officer
CCA	Corrections Corporation of America
CPS	child protection services
DPS	Department of Public Safety
FMC	Federal Medical Center
GVI	Grand Valley Institution for Women
HYCF	Hawai'i Youth Correctional Facility
IL-CHEP	Illinois Coalition for Higher Education in Prison
KPWP	Kailua Prison Writing Project
NCTIC	National Center for Trauma-Informed Care
NHIS	Nānākuli High and Intermediate School
OCCC	O'ahu Community Correctional Center
ROC	Restore Our Community
SHU	segregated housing unit (solitary confinement)
WCCC	Women's Community Correctional Center

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

I implement *inside women*, rather than *inmate* or *prisoner*, to avoid reducing the women to their crimes. Here, I acknowledge the influence of the inside women at Grand Valley Institution for Women (GVI), a medium-security prison in Kitchener, Ontario. I participated in a one-week intensive workshop at GVI with the women through the Walls to Bridges Collective in 2015. The inside women challenged academics and activists to avoid using stigmatizing language when referring to people in prison.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have learned that writing, seemingly a solitary process, is not a solitary journey. Two women have inspired me with their intellect, grace, and acumen: Elizabeth Colwill, mentor and friend, who read the manuscript with the eye of an owl, graceful and discerning; and Miranda Outman—editor at *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society.*

As the conversation around prison abolition hurtles from the margins to the center in the midst of a global pandemic and the crisis of racial apartheid in the United States, I face a personal health crisis. I grapple with the limits of my own biological family, the surfaces of my skin, and the resilient ways in which intentional families live in locked-up spaces. The pain in facing one's mortality—the decay of the body—exacerbated by the exile from one's family of origin: a pressured abandonment in a world where so many on the margins are abandoned. I remember the words of one wise woman in my creative writing class at the sole women's prison in Hawai'i, Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC), who interrogated the freedom of those on the outside. She said: "Just because you are on the outside of these walls—doesn't mean that you are free."

These past two years have indeed been exigent ones that have shattered the skin of democracy as we witness the disproportionate collateral effects that the pandemic has wreaked on people of color: Black communities, Indigenous communities, and those who are economically and politically precarious. The global pandemic has brought into clear vision the imperative for change: a systemic and structural revolution; an uprooting of nationalism and colonialism; an abolition of tyranny, white supremacy, and privilege. Without such change, we remain in the abyss of despair. As the underpinnings of abolition feminism summon: we are not free until we are all free. In their book *Abolition. Feminism. Now.*, Angela Davis, Gina Dent, Erica Meiners, and Beth Richie summon a radical reconstruction rather than a neoliberal reform. They proffer the predominant question that preoccupies contemporary

abolitionists: "What would we have to change in our existing societies in order to render them less dependent on the putative security associated with carceral approaches to justice?"[1]

This book is a love letter to the inside women at WCCC, where I had the honor of facilitating creative writing classes and participating in the Kailua Prison Writing Project (KPWP). From 2012 to 2016 I was a feminist ethnographer—as contested as this category is within a carceral logic—guest, and creative writing teacher at WCCC as part of the KPWP, interviewing many of the inside women. I formed relationships with the women that persist today. While sitting in on the classes as a privileged guest from the "free" world and as a non-Indigenous and non–Pacific Islander woman, I found my own positionality as a white woman who has benefited from white privilege to be a troubled one. I spent years negotiating it, as both a feminist ethnographer and a facilitator, participating in classes taught by the director of the KPWP's creative writing program—Pat Clough—from 2012 to 2014; teaching my own poetry and performance lab (2015–16); and developing relationships over several terms that facilitated the interviews I conducted with the inside women.

These variegated relationships shape the terrain of my ensuing interpretations, which are representative not of all women's prison writing but of a singular women's prison in the Pacific. I have much gratitude and respect for the women I interviewed who shared their life stories with me. A big mahalo to Pat Clough and former warden Mark Kawika Patterson for allowing me to be a presence in the KPWP for years, as well as for facilitating the interviews with the inside women at WCCC.

So many others have held me along the way, among them my mentors and colleagues at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa: Robert Perkinson, Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez, Haunani-Kay Trask, Cynthia Franklin, Brandy Nālani McDougall, Meda Chesney-Lind, and Kapali Lyon. I especially thank Elizabeth Colwill, invaluable guide, who graciously gifted hundreds of hours to our conversations about women's life writing, the ethics of representation, and trauma. I am grateful to circles of activists, practitioners, writers, and editors: Honolulu prison activist Kat Brady and restorative justice attorney Lorenn Walker; my editors at Duke University Press, Gisela Fosado and Liz Smith; my lovely students at Northern New Mexico College, particularly Aaron Naranjo; other fierce activist students who have taught me along the way—Berenice Thompkins, Sophia Ventura-Cruess, and Kesha Jackson; my Knox College community; longtime friends in New York City; and recent friend (now family) Jonathan Arnon, with whom I was stranded during the

COVID-19 lockdown—I can never repay him for his generosity as my world imploded when I lost my father. Finally, my adorable and beloved fur friend, Daisy Arnon, who spent every night curled tight to my body, an example of the intuitive love in the feral world.

I extend gratitude to the American Association of University Women for the grant it awarded me in 2016. This support afforded me the time to write.

Much appreciation for *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* and the incisive conversations with its managing editor, Miranda Outman. The second chapter of this book appeared in the Autumn 2020 volume of *Signs* in a slightly altered form with the title "Reimagining Home: Redemption and Resistance in Hawai'i Women's Prison Writing." The fourth chapter appeared, in an altered form, in 2018 as the article "Love Letters: Performative and Biological Families in Hawai'i's Women's Prison," in a special issue of the journal *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*.

I have been honored to participate in radical collectives around prison activism, abolition, and coalition building in various geographic loci—from Hawai'i to Philadelphia, Canada, Illinois, and Mexico. I am inspired by the perennial labor and love of these collectives: the Illinois Coalition of Higher Education in Prison; Illinois Humanities Envisioning Justice; the Coalition against Death by Incarceration; Vera In Our Backyards Initiative; the Walls to Bridges collective in Ontario; and the Hilo-based 'Ohana Ho'opakele. Thank you, Ronald Fujiyoshi and Kaleihau Kamauu, for inviting me up to Mauna Kea in December 2019 and allowing me to join your meeting at the Church of the Holy Cross in Hilo. Thank you to all of the warriors who have informed and shaped my thinking.

I owe gratitude to my mother, Lilian Trapedo Sims, with whom I have a complex and inextricable bond.

Finally, this book would not be possible without the consent and trust of the women. Much gratitude and love.

INTRODUCTION

The American Gulag and Indigenous Incarceration in Hawai‘i

Writing is my passion. Words are the way to know ecstasy. Without them life is barren. . . . All my life I have been suffering for words. Words have been the source of the pain and the way to heal. Struck as a child for talking, for speaking out of turn, for being out of my place. Struck as a grown woman for not knowing when to shut up, for not being willing to sacrifice words for desire. . . . There are many ways to be hit. Pain is the price we pay to speak the truth.
~ bell hooks, *Wounds of Passion*

I write at a critical juncture within a circle of urgent conversations around mass incarceration and what Ruth Wilson Gilmore coined the "prison gulag."[1] Decarceration is no longer a fringe idea supported by radicals. In a pandemic that has ravaged the globe—an aperture into the inequity and apartheid state in the United States—we are compelled to act on decarceration. As a prison activist, abolitionist, and creative writing teacher in incarcerated spaces, and someone who spent over a decade in Hawai‘i, I transport a unique lens to speak about the particularity of incarceration in Hawai‘i. Some activists may counter the contradiction in occupying dual locations: teaching in prisons and working for abolition. These scholars, theorists, and activists contend that any work connected to the carceral space is an extension of state violence. I have had the privilege over several years to

participate in and facilitate creative writing classes within the carceral space, and my inside students attest to the power of transformational programming. Let us attend to those inside voices. Let us simultaneously attend to the ways in which "transformation can be coopted by or deeply embedded in notions of rehabilitation, treatment, and control—all carceral logics."[2] As inside writers astutely argue: "While often well intentioned in educational contexts, such discussions are often taken up by the general public as metamorphoses of 'prisoners' from 'uneducated' to 'educated,' 'deviant' to 'reformed,' and 'criminal' to 'citizen.' . . . [T]hese discourses of transformation can inadvertently result in saviorism, academic tourism, or outside people thinking that we're in need of redemption."[3]

Many outside students in the courses I have taught over the years, as well as many academics, consider themselves abolitionists without spending a day inside or meeting/communing with an inside person. Thus the ideological endorsement of abolition summons a particular privilege.

A Gendered Landscape

As a feminist ethnographer, I am suspicious of the distortion that quantitative data, particularly data aggregated by the state, leave in their wake. In the context of a gendered landscape, the data employ a binary approach to gender, which is illustrative of their limits.[4] There is a scholarly lacuna in the precarity of trans, queer, and nonbinary communities in the prison-industrial complex.

Women are entering prison at a staggering rate, yet they are anomalous subjects in our nation's gendered penal culture. According to statistical analysis from the Sentencing Project Research and Advocacy for Reform, the number of women in prison increased by more than 700 percent between 1980 and 2019, rising from a total of 26,378 in 1980 to 222,455 in 2019. The total count in 2020 was 152,854, a 30 percent reduction from the prior year—a substantial but inadequate downsizing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, in 2021 many states began to increase the number of incarcerated women.[5] One-third of these women are imprisoned due to drug offenses, and they share significant histories of physical and sexual abuse and high rates of HIV infection.[6] Figure I.1 illuminates the sharp rise in the number of incarcerated women, particularly in state prisons, since 1980. Women are nonetheless miserably neglected in terms of prison program funding and in prison scholarship; infantilized and silenced, they are the "disappeared" of the prison population.[7]

Women's plight in the prison-industrial complex resounds within a broader, and disturbingly American, narrative: the disproportionate incarceration of people of color in our prison-industrial gulag. Women of color, Native Hawaiian women, and other Pacific Islander women are disproportionately incarcerated both nationally and in Hawai'i. Prisons in Hawai'i indicate an ongoing colonial relationship to the United States, which overthrew the Hawaiian Kingdom by force. As an occupied people, Native Hawaiians have been subject to systematic surveillance and discipline that persist in the contemporary Hawaiian carceral system.[8] While historical and contemporary prison literature addresses the Black male as the most marked body in the prison-industrial complex, my intervention highlights the testimony of women, including that of Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander women, who are overrepresented in Hawai'i's carceral landscape. Clearly, state violence is the malefactor in Hawai'i as the linkages of multiple forms of interpersonal violence and trauma with colonialism are palpable in the contemporary landscape: from economic gentrification and displacement to perpetual land and cultural theft.

From 2012 to 2015, I was a researcher, participant ethnographer, and guest, and in 2015–16 a creative writing teacher at the sole women's prison on O'ahu—the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) that warehouses approximately three hundred women of mixed security levels. This book, rooted in these experiences, addresses a scholarly lacuna in a tradition that privileges male prison writing by examining women's prison writing in two gender-responsive programs: the Kailua Prison Writing Project (KPWP) and its adjacent Prison Monologues.[9] The majority of women in my writing classes at WCCC represent a range of Pacific intersections, and the philosophy of the writing program itself is rooted in Hawaiian practices of *ho'oponopono* (reconciliation and forgiveness) that resist state-sanctioned inscriptions on Indigenous bodies.[10] My work on expressivity (poetry, life writing, and performance) with the inside women counters the demarcation of a civic death for those incarcerated and emphasizes the specificity of inside women's voices in Hawai'i. The story that unfolds is a cartography—a bridge between social justice advocacy and scholarship that interrogates social justice failures in the contemporary carceral archipelago.

The inside women's diverse and multilayered experiences of trauma, as well as the nonviolent nature of many of their crimes, led me initially to perceive them solely as victims of the system. In fact, their poetry, prose, and interviews signal histories and self-understandings far more complex

than the polarizing labels of "victim" or "perpetrator" convey. The types of trauma I observed in speaking to the women and listening to their narratives include childhood, familial, and sexual trauma; the social trauma of poverty and homelessness; the trauma of arrest and incarceration; the trauma of perpetrating a crime; the trauma (for Hawaiians) of living as a colonized people. Not all the incarcerated women are Hawaiians and thus colonized subjects, but the majority of women incarcerated in Hawai'i share memories of trauma rooted in dispossession, poverty, and violence. However, the particular violence experienced by Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) women is part of Indigenous dispossession under a settler colonial regime that is an ongoing form of domination set on eliminating Kānaka at large.[11]

According to the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care, an "inmate" at WCCC is more likely to be Native Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian (40 percent); to be a victim of child or sexual abuse (60 percent); to be convicted of either a felony drug charge (35 percent) or a property offense (36 percent); to have experienced violence in her life (80 percent); to have a history of substance abuse (95 percent) and mental health issues (33 percent); and

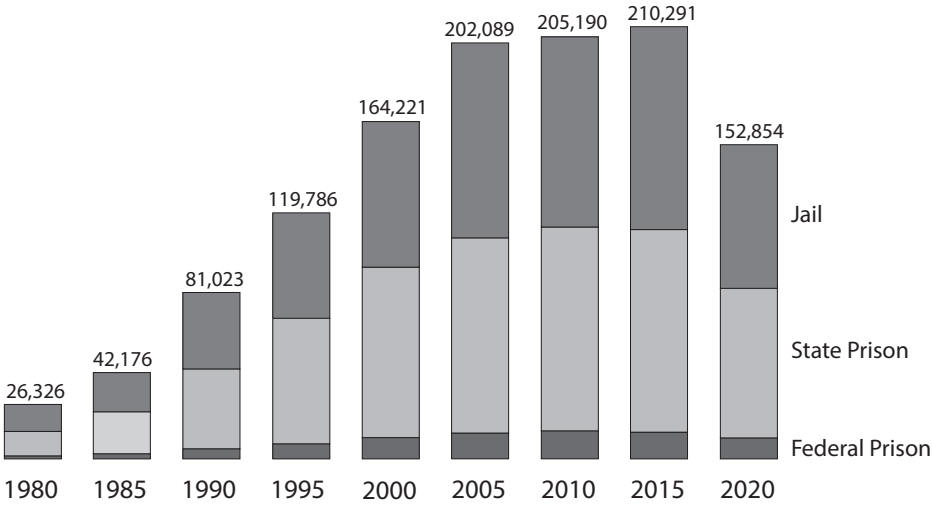

FIGURE 1.1. **Rise in Women's Incarceration, 1980–2020.** The number of women in US prisons and jails has increased sharply since 1980. Source: The Sentencing Project, "Fact Sheet: Incarcerated Women and Girls," based on "Historical Corrections Statistics in the United States, 1850–1984," "Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear" (1997–2020), and "Prisoners in 1980" through "Prisoners in 2020," US Bureau of Justice Statistics.

to be a mother of at least one child (60 percent).[12] Sixty percent of Native Hawaiian women at WCCC, 58 percent of women in prisons, and 80 percent of women in jails across the nation have children.[13] Two-thirds of mothers had custody of their children prior to entering prison. In Hawai'i, 44 percent of mothers who die in childbirth are Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, despite the fact that they constitute a smaller population of women in the state.[14] Many inside women thus face a particular gendered trauma due to the enforced rupture from their children.[15] Feminist prison scholar Beth Richie articulates the gendered trauma of incarcerated women:

> I cannot imagine a place where one might stand and have a clearer view of concentrated disadvantage based on racial, class, and gender inequality in the country than from inside the walls of a women's prison. There, behind the razor wire fences, concrete barricades, steel doors, metal bars, and thick plexiglas windows, nearly all of the manifestations of gender domination that feminist scholars and activists have traditionally concerned themselves with—exploited labor, inadequate healthcare, dangerous living conditions, physical violence, and sexual assault—are revealed at once. . . . The convergence of disadvantage, discrimination, and despair is staggering. In fact, it could be argued that prisons incarcerate a population of women who have experienced such a profound concentration of the most vicious forms of economic marginalization, institutionalized racism, and victimization that it can almost seem intentional or mundane.[16]

The nation-state's "get tough on crime" movement of the 1980s and 1990s and the War on Drugs campaign are largely responsible for the disproportionate rates of incarceration of Black, Latino, and Indigenous populations in the United States.[17] However, this ethos of punishment has been replaced in part by a contemporaneous national narrative that counters the devastating denial of Pell Grants to prisoners and encourages alliances between the university and the prison. Pell Grants for prisoners were reinstated nationwide in December 2020, reflective of the changing climate in penal reform yet ushering in some challenges to abolition.[18] Critical prison theorists Gillian Harkins and Erica R. Meiners trace the historical trajectory of the university-prison alliance in which they situate educational prison programs in one of two camps: redistributive justice predicated on human rights, and reformative justice based on moral and social reform.[19] The proliferation of educational prison initiatives that are both redistributive and reformative, such as the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program and the Bard

Prison Initiative, has connected "innovative college-in-prison programs across the country" in the belief that "a liberal education can transform the lives of individual students and public institutions more successfully than the prevailing responses to crime and punishment."[20] These programs reflect current national debates that question prisons' ability to maximize resource expenditure, quell crime, and reduce recidivism, while incurring collateral damage to entire communities. The programming at WCCC echoes these national reformist inclinations, yet it also takes inspiration from particular Hawaiian traditions of healing.

The WCCC, under the leadership of its former warden Mark Kawika Patterson, was more in line with the prison reform movement than the state aggression expressed in the War on Drugs. In late 2008, as warden, Patterson implemented a trauma-informed care initiative at the facility. The program acknowledges women's histories of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and the fact that their transgressions are primarily nonviolent. This initiative uses the framework of an Indigenous *pu'uhonua*, or a place of refuge.[21] According to the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care (NCTIC), "the spirit of pu'uhonua—the opportunity to heal and live a forgiven life—informs the vision that is changing the environment for both incarcerated women and staff at WCCC."[22]

As Warden Patterson explained in an interview with professor and activist Dr. Eiko Kosasa, this marked space of *pu'uhonua* was utilized in ancient times as a traditional pathway to absolution and reconciliation. A Native Hawaiian who had committed a transgression that could in turn endanger his or her life was able to enter the *pu'uhonua*, where, as Patterson explained, "nobody could touch *him*."[23] When he became the acting warden at WCCC in 2006, Patterson sought mentorship from his own minister from his school days at Kamehameha: "I asked him [his kahuna] can you please help me work out the place of our traditional pu'uhonua in our contemporary times and he answered, 'Kawika think of it this way—the women who come into your walls are like our people who came to the walls of the pu'uhonua. You need to embrace them and help them live a forgiven life.'" The programs within the trauma-informed care initiative that Patterson instituted address the various kinds of trauma experienced by the women inside, ranging from recent personal to collective historical trauma, including the 1893 overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. According to the NCTIC, the impact of historical trauma is particularly disquieting for Native Hawaiian women, who are disproportionately represented among the prison population. The study correlates the devastation to Native Hawaiian culture in which women

once played influential roles with a current state of precarity that produces "elevated suicide rates, substance abuse, mental health problems, coping mechanisms that appear self-sabotaging, unresolved grief, and physical ailments."[24] The trauma for Kanaka Maoli women as indigenous to Hawai'i is distinct from that of the other Pacific Islander women at WCCC. Pacific Islander is a marker for non-Hawaiian islanders, usually colonial migrants (American Samoans and Chamorros); immigrants (Western Samoans, Tongans); or those who hail from the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and have legal standing to be in Hawai'i or the United States as part of their respective compacts of free association (the Republic of Belau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands).[25]

As previously articulated, it is essential to witness that the violence that Native Hawaiian women experience is part of Indigenous dispossession under a settler colonial regime—an ongoing form of domination set on eliminating Kānaka at large, one way or another. This particularized violence is in distinct contrast to that of other racialized groups targeted for liquidation—because, unlike Kānaka Maoli, they are seen as part of surplus populations. Therefore, state violence is endemic to the trauma of Kanaka Maoli women because the multiple forms of interpersonal violence to which they are subjected are inextricable from the larger landscape of colonialism. Despite the persistent state violence perpetrated against Native Hawaiians, Native Hawaiian women have always resisted and have assumed central roles in the demilitarization of Hawai'i and the sovereignty movement. In *Nā Wāhine Koa: Hawaiian Women for Sovereignty and Demilitarization*, edited by Native Hawaiian scholar and activist Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, the narratives of the four wāhine koa (brave women) Moanike'ala Akaka, Maxine Kahaulelio, Terrilee Keko'olani-Raymond, and Loretta Ritte bear witness to the vital roles that Native Hawaiian women assume in the fight for unshackled futures.

Imagined by its founders as a place of refuge and transgression due to the then warden's envisioning of the WCCC as a *pu'uhonua*, the WCCC is a troubled site: a carceral landscape against a backdrop of colonialism, a space between hope and despair. My research illuminates the ways in which the KPWP, so warmly embraced by many inside women, remains embedded in a disciplinary system at the institutional, state, and national levels. That discipline takes both overt and covert forms, from the realities of sex with guards to the silencing—even within the KPWP—of women's intimate relationships with other women. My research holds in productive tension women's testimony of the immeasurable value of the KPWP and the ways in which the

carceral and colonial regimes continue to impinge upon the women's lives. On the one hand, the KPWP—a composite of the biweekly creative writing classes, the Prison Monologues, and the biannual prison publication *Hulihia* (Transformation)—is a cathartic medium that effects change.[26] The women who write in an incarcerated space perform resistance, even as they confound the anticipations of readers familiar with an incarcerated male authorship. Yet, as I explore in the ensuing chapters, resistance necessarily runs against institutional constraint. If the creative writing classes function as a haven for the women, as the women themselves attest, they are never immune to institutional intrusions and fracture.

The Program

The Kailua Prison Writing Project traces its origins to 2003, when its director and founder, Pat Clough, in concert with *kumu* (teacher) ʻIlima Stern, began the first of the biweekly creative writing classes at the facility. Clough is committed to the KPWP as a program that is steeped in a particular location in the Pacific; however, she does not employ a Pacific Islander canon in her classrooms. At the same time, she has resisted joining a national online community not only because she desires to protect the women's identities and regards online learning as lacking in the personal connections so necessary in the incarcerated classroom but also because she realizes that the particularity of Hawaiʻi separates the KPWP from other national initiatives. In the *Hulihia* prison journal, Clough incorporates local artists and a confluence of languages (including Hawaiian Creole English), which collectively situate the journal in the particularized landscape of Hawaiʻi.

In 2008, Clough chose the Kailua Prison Writing Project as an umbrella name to encompass the prison publication, *Hulihia*, and its new public initiative, the Prison Monologues, rooted in therapeutic modalities that echo traditional Hawaiian practices of *pono* (social justice) and *hoʻoponopono* (reconciliation and forgiveness). The program, via the Prison Monologues, soon grew into one of the "best received educational efforts in the system," reaching thousands of students in middle schools and high schools across the state.[27] The prison publication *Hulihia* was born from the writing classes, and in 2014 Clough planned to publish the tenth volume, with her biweekly creative writing classes reaching approximately six hundred women. Clough describes the KPWP and her collaboration with former warden Mark Kawika Patterson as a "magical confluence—a program that happened at the right place at the right time."[28] The program continued until 2014, when Clough

decided to take a hiatus and Patterson left WCCC to take on a position at the Hawai'i Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF), which sits calculatedly in "the school-to-prison pipeline" design, directly across the highway from WCCC.[29] With their dual departure, the program faced attrition. The short life span of the KPWP reflects national trends concerning the fragility of prison programming due to a lack of funding and a lack of continuity among staff and the women inside. The COVID-19 pandemic largely obliterated prison programming.[30]

Clough sees the KPWP as a "vehicle for learning [that] replace[s] traumatic history with a believable future after years of criminal behavior, drug use, and incarceration" and as a direct antidote to recidivism. Her belief is reflective of a contemporary climate in which scholars, prison practitioners, and some carceral workers claim that education, and specifically writing, directly reduces recidivism. Clough envisions the program as an auxiliary to the inside women's traumatic stories and sanctifies the act of documentation—"writing it all down"—for its power to redeem and heal. In this sense, the KPWP resonates with other creative writing programs in American prisons whose evolution was inspired by the PEN Prison Writing Program founded in 1971 by a collective of professional writers.[31]

It is no coincidence that PEN America was founded in an era of penal policy reform—a period of cultural, literary, artistic, and political change.[32] The advent of prison writing programs was spearheaded by professional writers (mostly poets).[33] Since that time, the Justice Arts Coalition has been "building a nationwide collective of people who are committed to increasing opportunities for creative expression in carceral settings, amplifying the voices of those most impacted by mass incarceration."[34] The thematic preoccupations of women's writing in the WCCC reflect the reformist mindset of the 1970s and depart from the politically driven writing of the 1960s that condemned the nation-state.[35] Despite the WCCC's place-specific programming, it is rooted in broader national trends that are both reformist and politically driven.

The Prison Monologues—abbreviated theatrical performances of the women's narratives culled from the creative writing classes at WCCC—began as an experiment for fellow "inmates" and visitors inside the prison.[36] In 2008, a board member from La Pietra Hawai'i School for Girls, a private school on O'ahu, came to the first *Hulihia* dedication in the courtyard of Maunawili "cottage" at WCCC.[37] Eight "inmates" from the creative writing class were invited to give a "dramatic presentation of their writings" at an assembly at La Pietra, which was prominently featured on local television

and in print media. From this invitation, the Prison Monologues flourished: the "inside" program grew in size and expanded to the "outside," reaching not only students but also professional practitioners in the carceral turf: social workers, pastors, parole and probation officers, educators, and judges. More recently the Prison Monologues program was featured at national conferences on Oʻahu: those of the Office of Youth Services and the Hawaiʻi State Coalition against Domestic Violence; the Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity; and the ʻAha Wahine Conference, a gathering of Native Hawaiian women from the community.[38] According to program publicity, "Nearing the end of 2012, the Prison Monologues had presented more than 40 programs at high schools, universities, [and] conferences on Oʻahu, Maui, and Hawaiʻi Island." Warden Patterson's decision to allow the women to travel in civilian clothes and fly to the outer islands suggests his allegiance both to the prison's potential as a "healing place" and to the women's ability to impact their audience. In the same way that Patterson envisions his work in the criminal "justice" system as a way of giving back to his own Native Hawaiian community, he imagines the Prison Monologues as an avenue for the inside women to give back to their communities and "live a forgiven life."[39]

Redemption is a premier character in the KPWP, and the women's testimony demonstrates that creative writing and performance can be transformative for the inside women who scribe and perform life writing, as well as for the audiences who witness the women's testimony. While many Americans may assume that the libertarian impulse of self-expression is a right, not a privilege, within the antidemocratic space of the prison that status of self-expression is ambiguous. In *The New Abolitionists: (Neo) Slave Narratives and Contemporary Prison Writings*, Joy James calls these antidemocratic loci, such as Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay, "dead" spaces. Yet James argues that the state, despite its abusive excesses, incongruously provides the possibility of emancipation and redemption.[40] The cacophony of voices within the carceral institution reinforces exacting cultural scripts and forms of redemption, lending disciplinary effects to therapeutic rhetoric. The audiences for the Prison Monologues—from school groups to carceral and legal workers—are moved by and co-opted in the performance of authenticity. This book interrogates how speech performs as "an occasion for agency" and suggests that even if testimony speaks truth to power, it may likewise "speak untruth in the interests of power."[41] As the narrative unfolds, it becomes evident that it is our *kuleana* (communal responsibility) to understand

the inside women's experience of testimony to and witnessing of national, institutional, and gendered violence as profoundly meaningful.

THE WARDEN'S TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE INITIATIVE

More than six feet three inches with a large, powerful frame, the former warden, Mark Kawika Patterson, favors lively aloha shirts and his large signature gold cross. He sports an effervescent smile and deep-set dimples. In 2019 Patterson was appointed by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to lead the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission to oversee the state's Department of Public Safety. The commission was approved by the legislature "in what was initially hailed as a major corrections reform."[42] Warden Patterson, who has more than thirty years' experience working in the criminal "justice" system in Hawai'i and Nevada, ushered in many initiatives to WCCC based on an innovative circle pedagogy that embraces Indigenous programming.[43] Circle pedagogy references a way of knowing that is antithetical to linear systems of knowledge making. Those innovations include the cultivation of *lo'i* fields on the facility's grounds; the translation of turn-of-the-century Hawaiian newspapers from Hawaiian into English; talent nights; reentry and transition planning circles; and the employment of "life maps" at parole hearings.[44] The translation of turn-of-the-century newspapers from Hawaiian into English is an example of the politics of Patterson's programming situated in the *pu'uhonua*, which privileges Native Hawaiians and brings visibility to the resistance of everyday Hawaiians to Queen Lili'uokalani's overthrow, which has been written out of the historical record.[45]

Patterson's inventive programming emerged from a state of crisis in the Hawai'i prison system. As a result of litigation pending in 1991 against the State of Hawai'i regarding its conditions of confinement for women, the temporary WCCC was remodeled and subsequently completed in 1994 as the state's primary women's all-custody facility. Today, the facility "houses" pretrial and sentenced female "offenders," who are of maximum, medium, and minimum custody levels. At that time WCCC contained four separate structures: 'Olomana, Ka'ala, Maunawili, and Ahiki cottages.[46] Each cottage operates in accordance with the stipulations of specific programs and classification levels. The facility offers a fifty-bed, gender-responsive substance abuse therapeutic community, Ke Alaula (Breaking of a New Dawn).[47] Other programming includes cognitive-based curriculum, parenting and education classes, domestic violence treatment, day reporting, and electronic monitoring

programs. The Project Bridge program is designed to "support female offenders in transitioning back to society through employment, education, and substance abuse treatment."[48] The Hina Mauka and Total Life Recovery (TLR) programs offer the women a path to recovery through access to spiritual transformation.[49] As 90 percent of the women's "crimes" are linked to substance abuse, and 75 percent of those women are victims of trauma, including domestic and sexual abuse, the former warden envisioned Hina Mauka—a program that targets substance abuse and promotes abstinence, in conjunction with spiritual transformation—as a pathway to the outside: "There isn't a single event of trauma that sent the women to prison, [rather] it is trauma that occurred over a long period of time, usually between the ages of 4–17. The women use substances to cope with their trauma. It is our job to break down the walls. Every one of my staff—from janitors to cooks to ACOs [adult corrections officers]—is trained to break down the walls [of trauma]."[50] In addition to offering in-facility programs, WCCC participates in many community service projects for state and county agencies and for nonprofit organizations.

At present there are plans to overhaul, expand, and modernize both the Oʻahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC)—one of the three men's prisons on Oʻahu and the largest facility in the state—and the WCCC, a subject of consternation debated by local community members and activists who call for a moratorium on prison growth in Hawaiʻi. Mirroring the neglect of women in the carceral landscape, there is more debate around the expansion of the male facility. The Hawaiʻi Department of Public Safety's November 2020 statement, titled "WCCC Improvements Moving Forward," outlines the department's plans that include the relocation of "female offenders from OCCC to the WCCC in Kailua, in order to improve living conditions while expanding treatment, rehabilitation services and access to family visitation." There is an emphasis on rehabilitation—one that dually summons the prison as an educational complex.[51]

Some of the "improvements" that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) proposes for WCCC include constructing a new housing unit and administration building; renovating the vacant Hoʻokipa cottage and support building for housing and support purposes; and improving internal circulation, on-site parking, and ingress and egress from Kalaniana'ole Highway. According to a DPS bulletin, "The improvements at WCCC will be similar in scale and appearance to a community college campus with spaces devoted to administration, housing, visitation, inmate services, among others with improved visitor and employee parking near the WCCC entrance."[52] It will

be curious to witness if the oversight commission and the fervent community support in favor of decarceration will halt this "recuperative" project.

PROGRAMMATIC RHETORIC INHABITS THE WOMEN'S WRITING

Many of the writers in the Kailua Prison Writing Project were processed through Hina Mauka or Total Life Recovery, and the rhetoric from these programs lives in their writing. While many inside women attest to a shift in the culture of the prison with the piloting of a trauma-informed care approach and see Patterson as a visionary, others critique this movement as a strategy to satisfy political agendas and obtain funding. In a similar vein, Gillian Harkins and Erica R. Meiners articulate that it is difficult to track the goals and commitments of college-in-prison programs because all programs must operate according to the rules and expectations of the Department of Corrections: "This can often require public relations materials or program rationales that favor aims of public safety, reducing recidivism, and moral uplift over aims of educational equity and social justice, regardless of the actual operating principles of the program on the ground."[53] In promotional materials, the KPWP appears almost as a holiday camp, replete with reformist and redemptive expectations that fuel a colonial imaginary. Consider, for instance, the bucolic and idyllic description of women at WCCC in "Creating a Place of Healing and Forgiveness: The Trauma-Informed Care Initiative at the Women's Community Correctional Center of Hawai'i": "A group of women in green work clothes poses for the camera, smiling broadly, proudly displaying a six-foot wreath they crafted from flowers and foliage grown on the grounds. Nearby, women tend rows of hydroponic salad greens and herbs grown for the facility's kitchen, while others clear brush by a rushing stream. In the welding shop, an artist works on a large sculpture of an orchid. Women living in an open unit whose walls are painted brightly with tropical birds and flowers prepare for their jobs in the community."[54] This text presents the prison as an open, rather than an enclosed, space—one in harmony with nature and replete with smiling women. Tessa informed me that this re-presentation of the prison as a harmonious and healing space was the template presented to visitors but was, in her view, discordant with the reality of the prison.

One can also see a delicate politics of representation at work in the highly successful Prison Monologues program, as part of and sustained by the KPWP. Whereas Pat Clough believed in the distinctive nature of a writing program in Hawai'i, the warden's initiative further developed this notion of "distinctiveness" by highlighting Indigenous ways of knowing. Although

Patterson faced condemnation by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and Hawaiian sovereignty groups for his positing of the prison—an anti-Indigenous space—as a *pu'uhonua*, his visibility and success as a prison administrator, his legibility in the Native Hawaiian community, and his public presence at TED Talks and other political forums positioned the Prison Monologues program as an authentic vehicle of restorative justice.

The politics of the program were shaped by Patterson's own perspective but also, in a sense, led to its demise. According to local prison scholars and activists, Patterson combatted professional jealousy, in a dis-eased system that does not look favorably on humanitarian feats. Clough explains that Patterson left WCCC because he felt he could accomplish more as an administrator at HYCF. In her words, "Mark always wanted to do work that would connect Women's with the youth correctional facility." As part of the larger national narrative of the "school-to-prison pipeline," HYCF tragically serves as a feeder program to WCCC.[55]

The State

According to the Prison Policy Initiative's 2023 report, Hawai'i has an incarceration rate of 439 per 100,000 people, which includes prisons, jails, immigration detention, and juvenile justice facilities. This speaks to the bleak reality that Hawai'i locks up a higher percentage of its people than almost any democracy on earth.[56] Taking into account probation and parole, more than 25,000 Hawaiians are under the supervision of the criminal legal system.[57]

Interrogating prisons in Hawai'i poses unique questions endemic to their location. Despite the fact that the program draws on Hawaiian healing practices, it is crucial to keep in mind that the state follows national patterns of incarceration in profoundly disturbing ways. According to local O'ahu feminist criminologist Meda Chesney-Lind and prison advocate Kat Brady, Hawai'i has followed the national trend not only in the overrepresentation of people of color but also in its castigatory and disproportionate imprisonment of parole violators and nonviolent offenders. The writers note that Hawai'i is fifth in the nation in its incarceration of repeat drug offenders.[58] Its pattern of imprisonment has a particular emphasis on Indigenous incarceration. Native Hawaiians are also significantly more likely to get diabetes, receive inferior education, face homelessness—Kānaka Maoli constitute 60 percent of the state's indigent population living on beaches and sidewalks—and suffer from the collateral ailments of poverty. These devastations reflect the continuation of colonialism in Hawai'i.

Although they represent only 21 percent of the state's population, Native Hawaiians constitute 39 percent of the adult incarcerated population, more than any other racial group.[59] Native Hawaiian women are more likely than their male counterparts to be overrepresented in the prison-industrial complex: 44 percent of incarcerated women are Native Hawaiian, compared with 37 percent of incarcerated men.[60] According to a report titled *The Disparate Treatment of Native Hawaiians in the Criminal Justice System*: "Given the 709 percent increase in the incarceration rate in Hawai'i over the last 30 years compared to the 262 percent increase in the national incarceration rate, it is worth considering that the increase in the incarceration rate of Native Hawaiians over the same time frame is greater than that for any other racial or ethnic group in the United States."[61] According to the report by the Prison Policy Initiative titled "Hawai'i Incarceration Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2010," the rates of Native Hawaiians in prison are probably underestimated, due to the mixed racial identities in Hawai'i and the vagaries of racial self-declaration.[62] Figure I.2 demonstrates both the overincarceration of Native Hawaiians in the state's criminal legal system and the confluence of racialized identities.

The overrepresentation of Native Hawaiians in the state's incarceration statistics follows a genealogy of national and global discrimination against Indigenous people in the criminal legal system. In the 1970s, many Native American women in the United States were granted parole only if they agreed to acquiesce to the nation's systematic sterilization program.[63] Critics have characterized Indigenous and Pacific Island communities as "unseen victims of a broken U.S. justice system."[64] Since 2010, the number of Native Americans incarcerated in federal prisons has increased by 27 percent. According to 2019 data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, Native Americans in the United States are incarcerated at over twice the rate of whites.[65] In a 2014 *Guardian* article, reporters Nick Evershed and Helen Davidson expose the rate of Indigenous imprisonment in Australia as thirteen times greater than the non-Indigenous incarceration rate.[66] The Bureau of Statistics offers sobering statistics that show the number of Indigenous Australians in prison has grown by more than 80 percent in ten years.[67] In *Women of Color and Feminism*, Maythee Rojas provides data that indicate Native Americans are twice as likely to be victims of violent crime as any other group. Domestic violence on reservations is a dire problem, and homicide, according to Amnesty International, was the third-highest cause of death among Native American women in 2005–6.[68] Prominent Native legal scholar Sarah Deer—citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation—reveals

that 90 percent of sexual crimes in Indian Country are perpetrated by outsiders.[69]

There is no federal prison in Hawai'i. Hawai'i's state prisons that fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Safety include the Hālawa Correctional Facility, which comprises a special-needs facility and a medium-security facility; the Waiawa Correctional Facility—a 334-bed, minimum-security male prison; the Kulani Correctional Facility near Hilo that warehouses two hundred men and was reopened in 2014 to mitigate some of the mainland transfers; the Women's Community Correctional Center; and the O'ahu Community Correctional Center. The OCCC is the largest jail facility in the state of Hawai'i and is situated on sixteen acres in the urban Honolulu neighborhood of Kalihi. The 950-bed facility houses pretrial detainees, and this is where most of the women at WCCC are housed prior to their trials. Currently there is debate about the planning and design of a proposed new O'ahu jail, expected to cost $525 million, to replace the crumbling OCCC.[70]

According to the Department of Public Safety website, several correctional facilities on the US mainland are contracted to house Hawai'i's prisoners in order to allay overcrowding. Red Rock Correctional Center and Saguaro Correctional Center, both located in Eloy, Arizona, are the most common destinations. Indeed, approximately one-third of Hawai'i's more than six thousand prison inmates have been transferred to private prisons on the mainland run by CoreCivic, formerly the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA). In 2010, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs released a report titled *The Disparate Treatment of Native Hawaiians in the Criminal Justice System*, which confirmed that Native Hawaiians are disproportionately sent to out-of-state prisons.[71] According to the Marshall Project, a leading news organization that promotes national attention to mass incarceration, "Hawaii first began sending prisoners en masse to mainland prisons in 1995, when it secured beds in a privately run Texas facility. Over the years, Hawaii expanded the practice, shipping thousands of prisoners to 14 facilities across eight states. Today, under a $30-million-a-year contract with CCA, the state sends all its overflow prisoners to Saguaro, which was opened just for Hawaii in 2007, with a blessings ceremony performed by Hawaiian 'cultural advisors' flown in from the islands. There are 1,391 prisoners from Hawaii housed at Saguaro, and last year [2015] they had 2,798 in-person visits."[72]

Prison transfers are not unique to the prison-industrial complex, but the geographic placement of Hawai'i as an island in the middle of the Pacific amplifies the exile that Hawaiian prisoners face. One of the unique ethical

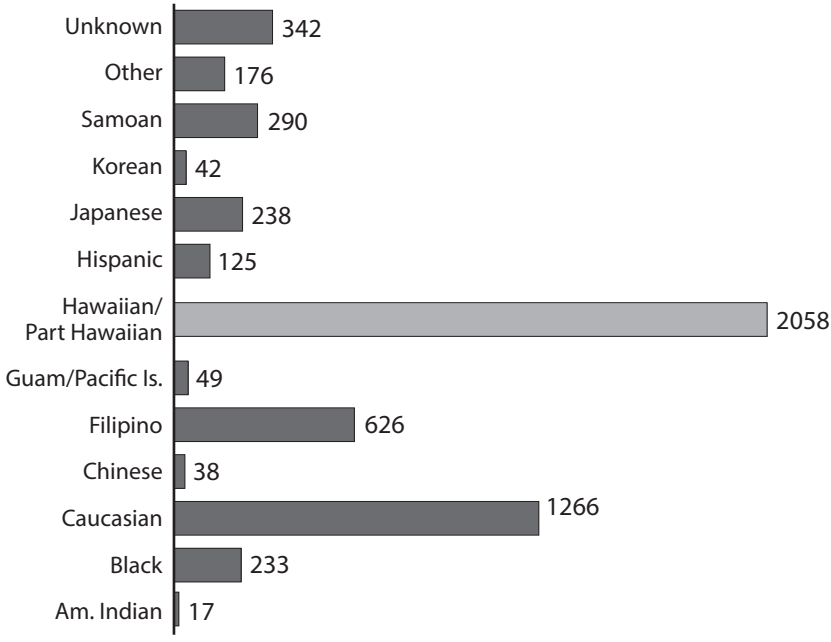

FIGURE 1.2. **Hawai'i Prison Population by Ethnicity.** Overincarceration of Native Hawaiians in the state's criminal legal system. Source: *Creating Better Outcomes, Safer Communities: Final Report of the House Concurrent Resolution 85 Task Force on Prison Reform to the Hawai'i Legislature*, based on Hawai'i Department of Public Safety, System Wide End of Month Data, July 2018.

and logistical problems that incarcerated Hawaiians encounter in the plight of prison transfers is a racial "misfiling." Hawaiians, sometimes a composite of multiple ethnicities, are not easily "legible" on the mainland, which has led to further stigmatization and at times brutality within the prisons.[73]

There are economic incentives for states that accept prisoners from Hawai'i, as well as large savings for the Department of Public Safety. Yet even some carceral administrators, such as the director of the Idaho Department of Corrections, understand that "any time you move inmates away from the people who can support them, away from where they're going to actually re-enter society, [I have to say] it is flat-out correctional malpractice."[74] Hawai'i pays CoreCivic about $70 a day to house each inmate at Saguaro, compared with an average of $140 a day for an inmate at any of the four prisons back home.[75] The incarcerated population in Hawai'i is predominantly a low-security risk—a fact particularly true of the women—yet prisoners

are deported to mainland medium-security prisons. Local research unveiled that most women in prison are nonviolent and should rather be serving their prison terms in gender-responsive, community-based programs in their home state.[76] The relocation to the remote and rural mainland prisons for Hawai'i's female inmates was a dire reality prior to 2016 as there was and still is only one overcrowded women's prison in the state. In 2016, former governor Neil Abercrombie mandated bringing all of Hawai'i's women who were incarcerated on the mainland back to Hawai'i; this urgent return was fueled by the persistent rape of the women by guards in the mainland prisons.[77]

While the male prison population in Hawai'i doubled between 1985 and 1995, the female population tripled, largely due to the sentencing and incarceration of female nonviolent first-time drug offenders. These statistics reveal that despite the rapid increase in the number of women who are incarcerated, they are neglected in programming, health care, and research in what is still perceived as a primarily male carceral space. Women in Hawai'i's prisons suffer a lack of female correctional officers, gender-responsive community-based programs, and rehabilitation programs.[78] Warden Patterson's trauma-informed care initiative, which was developed to address these gender inequities, focused on "reducing the use of restraints and isolation . . . since these interventions are likely to re-traumatize women who are trauma survivors and cause trauma responses in women who had not previously experienced trauma."[79]

The Nation

The carceral landscape in America as a whole remains a contested space. Many prison scholars argue that the skyrocketing rates of incarceration, the proliferation of multimillion-dollar industrial supermax prisons, the militant war against drugs, and the overrepresentation of minorities in the prisons represent an economic and racial crisis in America—a crisis that contradicts the myth of America as a benevolent democracy. Penal theorists argue that the contemporary climate is one of retribution and criminalization, evident in the expansion of the prison-industrial complex and its overtures to Dwight Eisenhower's military-industrial complex. According to the 2023 Prison Policy Initiative report, the American criminal legal system "hold[s] almost 2 million people in 1,566 state prisons, 98 federal prisons, 3,116 local jails, 1,323 juvenile correctional facilities, 181 immigration detention facilities, and 80 Indian country jails, as well as in military prisons, civil commitment centers, state psychiatric hospitals, and prisons in the

US territories."[80] Chesney-Lind and Brady note that the United States imprisons one out of one hundred citizens, establishing it as the world's largest incarcerator.[81] The shocking warehousing of US citizens in the nation's prisons or jails—a 500 percent increase over the past thirty-five years—and the disproportionate representation of nonwhite bodies among the incarcerated reflect the persistent racial and economic apartheid that exists in the United States.[82] According to a Prison Policy Initiative report titled *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2023*, Black people constitute 38 percent of the incarcerated population, despite representing only 12 percent of the total US population. Furthermore, there are 803,000 individuals on parole and a staggering 2.9 million individuals on probation. The Prison Policy Initiative cautions policy makers against mandating "alternatives to incarceration," such as probation, which potentially facilitates an extended criminalization of people who are not a threat to public safety.[83]

Scholars, including me, argue that the prison system has been designed to replace the earlier form of Black chattel slavery and functions today as an institutional, "sanctioned" arm to discipline minority populations. According to the Sentencing Project, more than 60 percent of the people in prison are now racial and ethnic minorities. One in every ten African American men in their thirties is in prison or jail on any given day in the United States. The disparate impact of the War on Drugs eventuates in disturbing realities: two-thirds of all individuals in prison for drug offenses are people of color.[84] According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, as of 2020 the rate of imprisonment of African American women (65 per 100,000) was 1.7 times the rate of white women (38 per 100,000).[85] The rate of Latina women (48 per 100,000) was 1.3 times the rate of white women.[86]

Even more bleakly, the statistics fail to show any correlation between the gargantuan prison-industrial complex and diminishing crime and recidivism rates. Many theorists argue that media coverage commands public opinion, which is vulnerable to bloated and counterfeit statistics.[87] The critics claim that the correlation between crime and the expansion of the carceral system is fabricated as statistics confirm a marked decrease in crime rates since the 1990s. There are devastating collateral consequences that perpetuate the effects of incarceration long after release. According to a 2018 Sentencing Project report, increasingly stringent laws and policies restrict people with a felony conviction—particularly convictions for drug offenses—from access to employment, welfare benefits, public housing, and student loans for higher education. Such collateral penalties pose barriers to social and economic advancement.[88]

In American society, the prison-industrial complex is viewed as a masculine space because men are disproportionately represented in its confines. Although there are many more men in prison than women, the rate of growth for women in prison since 1980 is double that of men. As of May 2022, one million women were under the supervision of the criminal legal system.[89] The increases in prison spending are concomitant with the escalation in the imprisonment of women. According to Meda Chesney-Lind and Lisa Pasko, the nationwide incarceration of women has increased sixfold in the past two decades due to factors other than a shift in the nature of women's crimes. Researchers of these trends have noted that the criminal legal system has become tougher on women at every level of decision-making, from arrests to sentencing to parole determinations—particularly for Black women.[90]

Contemporary terminology, such as the War against Crime and War on Drugs, posits the prison-industrial complex within a masculinist landscape of battle. As of 2019, 53 percent of women confined in state and federal institutions are Black, Latina, Native American, or Asian.[91] Men and women exhibit different patterns toward drug use: women tend to engage in self-injurious behaviors and are more susceptible to drug addiction as a means of escape, whereas men tend to externalize pain via violence. The bulk of women in prison are incarcerated for nonviolent drug or property offenses, with drug offenses as the dominant liability for female incarceration. Women drug offenders, particularly those of color, are far more liable to be arrested, convicted, and incarcerated than they were prior to the War on Drugs.[92] Luana Ross and Deena Rymhs argue that women of color, particularly Indigenous women disenfranchised from land, are twofold victims in the prison-industrial complex.[93]

Women's Prison Writing

The genres of prison writing and autobiography hail from gendered literary traditions that privilege political exile and resistance over rehabilitative domestic exile. Scholarship on incarcerated writing tends to highlight men's misadventures while it maligns women as "cultural outlaws" because inside women, more than their male counterparts, are judged as violating dominant social and gendered norms. My reference to domestic exile reflects how the women's writing at WCCC expresses a longing to repair exile from family, society, and community. Incarcerated writing showcases preoccupations with borders—spatial, geographic, somatic, gendered, and linguistic—and both vilifies the prison as a Hadean inferno and celebrates it as a pathway to self-edification. In light of the ambiguous nature of carceral writing, penal theo-

rists and creative writers have pointed to the intrinsic contradiction in the legal assignation of a "civic death" and the act of writing. If prisoners are civically "dead," their voices are accoutrements of an extended death and in that sense can be perceived as impossible voices. It is easy to see why legislatures, penal administrators, and the criminal legal system at large are invested in disciplining and patrolling the voices of those who are incarcerated. The very act of writing from a dead space and under the classification of a noncitizen is beleaguered. This type of civic death in America has its roots in the constitutional civic death of the slave.[94]

In this book, I examine the contradictions rife in this locked-up space and explore the ways in which healing might nonetheless transpire within a prison setting. The chapters that unfold reside at the nexus of critical literacy, feminist ethnography, and performances of trauma in a borderland space—the prison—that resist simplistic receptions. Drawing on qualitative methodologies such as interviews and participant observation, as well as on discourse analysis and penal, literary, performance, and trauma theory, my research not only interrogates the intersection of race and gender in contemporary literary texts but also emphasizes how women's prison writing redefines the literary.[95] Particular tropes distinguish women's from men's prison writing, with women's writing rooted in their specific experiences of sexual and domestic violence, their unique positioning as cultural outlaws, and the policing of women's writing that demands rehabilitative and domestic outcomes. In *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States*, Audra Simpson names the Indian stories as "alternatives . . . to the dominant discourses of literature and history only in that they are Indian stories, and Indian stories haven't mattered much." These "hidden transcripts" are similar to many of the hidden narratives of women's prison writing in Hawai'i.[96]

Despite the steady flow of scholarship on creative writing programs in male prisons, women's prison writing suffers a drought.[97] Part of this absence is due to the lack of funding for enrichment programming and the asymmetrical access to educational opportunities in women's prisons compared to men's prisons. The editors of *Women Prisoners: A Forgotten Population* argue that incarcerated women are recipients of meager programs because their crimes are not *sufficiently* violent—an underachievement in crime—and because they more passively accept substandard conditions in prison.[98] This assumption of women's "passive" acceptance is a gendered stereotype that essentializes women's "nature," and thus victimizes women.

Several prison scholars and writers have refracted the prison-industrial complex through the lenses of race, gender, sexuality, and class.[99] Their

approaches and methodological interventions are wide-ranging—ethnography, historiography, feminist criminology, sociology, autobiography, and literary criticism.[100] In writing this book, I have found inspiration in their work, as well as in anthologies such as *Wall Tappings: An International Anthology of Women's Prison Writings, 200 A.D. to the Present*; *Razor Wire Women: Prisoners, Activists, Scholars, and Artists*; and *Women, Writing, and Prison: Activists, Scholars, and Writers Speak Out*.[101] These gender-responsive collections focus on women's writing from inside the prison space and foreground the involvement of the inside women in all aspects of artistic creation. Visually, thematically, and ideologically, they resist the hierarchy inherent in many anthologies, as they showcase process in concert with product. *Razor Wire Women*, a collage of disquieting images, testimony, and intersectional theorizing, explores expressivity both inside and outside the prison-industrial complex. The anthologies reveal that the experience of imprisonment not only affects the individual woman but also injures the entire family and extended community. The autobiographical writing of inside women—unlike men's single-authored work—often appears in edited anthologies, offering a window on women's communal writing practices and on the politics of collaborative autobiographies in which the editor reframes or mediates the narratives.[102] Ashley Lucas, one of the editors of *Razor Wire Women*, insists that the women behind the razor wire—artists and writers—have the power to flesh out the missing details of their lives as countertexts to the nation-state's injurious and pathological phenotypes. As Lucas argues, the state concocts biographies based on a missing limb, a scar, a tattoo—visual evidence of the women in parts. Feminist academicians and practitioners like Lucas, by contrast, celebrate the women inside who "share their lives in art and poetry in brash celebration and utterances."[103]

Despite its cosmetics of complicity with the nation-state, the writing produced in the Kailua Prison Writing Project forms an archive of resistance.[104] The women's poetry generated in the project borrows from the tradition of prison autobiography—from Martin Luther King Jr.'s canonical "Letter from Birmingham Jail" to Angela Davis's *Autobiography*. Genres of carceral writing include testimony, testimonio, witness, apologia, confession, and conversion narratives, all of which occur across various writing forms: poetry, autobiography, memoir, political manifesto, and fiction. Davis's autobiography, an apologia (a defense of her political life), indicts the legal system and the revolutionary Black Panther Party for stripping women of political agency.

Autobiography as resistance, as deployed by Martin Luther King Jr. and extended by revolutionaries such as the Black Panthers, has today been re-

fracted through prison reform. Women's writing in the prison journal *Hulihia* performs dissent in its ability to reimagine and forge new multifaceted identities, yet it is simultaneously institutionalized as an alternative avenue for rehabilitation. Women's voices chosen for *Hulihia* are less overtly critical of the nation-state than was Davis's autobiography, but they nonetheless resist female passivity, the American Dream, and the carceral state. The women's opposition is animated in the forms, styles, and themes of their presentations. Women in my creative writing classes occasionally offer well-articulated appraisals of national and state corruption. In these ways, women's narratives of trauma perform as counternarratives to a civic death.

The inside women's writing is a radical genre because of its demand for what Deena Rymhs calls a "second hearing"—a demand for society, rather than the incarcerated, to change. Many prison programs consist of cognitive classes that ignore the reality of social, political, and economic disenfranchisement and insist that prisoners account for their actions, take responsibility for the violence they have "created," and transform *themselves*. By contrast, Indigenous carceral writing, argues Rymhs, summons an "alternate hearing" or "second hearing" for the incarcerated: one that disputes the legal and judicial parameters that are circumscribed by the courts and the penal system.[105] The second hearings expose the failings of the criminal legal system and work as a form of apologia by affording the prisoner the occasion to rewrite or refashion her life history through autobiography. The reader, witness to the histories of abuse, poverty, and racism, is correspondingly able to reframe her own perceptions of guilt. Here, criminality is reassigned from solely on the individual to include society and its negligent apparatuses as the writers "maneuver around . . . the constraints that the law places on self-representation."[106] I argue that in using the framework of literacy as a moral and cultural affirmation of belonging, the entombed prison (a dystopian space) becomes a utopian one, as illiterate subjects transform themselves into literate subjects. The restorative justice circles implemented by attorney Lorenn Walker at WCCC, the life-planning maps for parole hearings generated by the women inside, as well as the KPWP itself are examples of alternate hearings and avenues through which a woman can symbolically write herself back into society.[107]

Unsurprisingly, trauma narratives emerge as a dominant genre within the KPWP. The trauma narratives of inside women are deeply marked by gender, both because of the women's real experiences of personal trauma and abuse, and because of the modeling of certain scripts that authorize women's stories of victimization rather than political protest. The literary

canon that Clough implements in her classes does not model trauma narratives, as her archive primarily consists of triumphant, or "heroic," narratives that mirror what Clough perceives as the women's own heroic journeys. Yet due to the personal nature of creative writing and the fact that we tend to write what we know, Clough does not necessarily control the themes that emerge in her students' writing. The Prison Monologues' tripartite scheme of "Who We Were," "Prison Life," and "Reflections" more directly lends itself to the production of trauma narratives. The Prison Monologues is rooted in a tradition of atonement for crime(s), and its very structure requires women to take responsibility for the ways they have injured others.

In *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson posit "that there is a growing audience for life writing focused on grief and mourning," which coheres with the assignation of the civically dead. These authors argue that "life writing in its multiple genres is foundational to the formation of Western subjects, Western cultures, and Western concepts of nation, as well as to ongoing projects of exploration, colonization, imperialism, and now globalization." In our "contemporary culture of self-help," they claim, "personal narratives of debasement and recovery as models for conversion, survival, and self transformation" carry considerable currency.[108] Thus, Smith and Watson suggest, writers of traumatic narratives appeal to modern readers because they "mine the discontinuities, mobility, and transcultural hybridity of subjects-in-process."[109] Perhaps this reassembling of the human is desirable in our contemporary era of commodification in which product is reified over process. In this sense, narratives of trauma nourish our sense of cultural and communal loss in an industrialized, global, and media-dominated world.

Methodology and Archive

In *Women, Writing, and Prison: Activists, Scholars, and Writers Speak Out*, the practitioner scholars, who bridge activism and scholarship, caution against prison programs that operate from a deficiency and redemptive (rehabilitative) model that assumes the "inmates" need to change or that the facilitators can "save" lives.[110] These dominant models divert American society from addressing its endemic racial, political, and gendered violence. My experience as a creative writing instructor in a women's prison in Honolulu has taught me the importance of a critical self-reflectivity that grants greater latitude to the women themselves, fortifying lateral rather than hierarchical alliances.

The fraught trajectory of outsider ethnographers conveying disenfranchised voices is politically charged. Eve Tuck, a Native Alaskan academic, cautions outsider "communities, researchers, and educators" who work in Indigenous communities "to reconsider the long-term impact of 'damage-centered' research—research that intends to document peoples' pain and brokenness to hold those in power accountable for their oppression." Tuck critiques the deficit model for its reliance on a flawed "theory of change"—one utilized to "leverage reparations or resources for marginalized communities," while reinscribing "a one-dimensional notion of these people as depleted, ruined, and hopeless." Tuck "urges communities to institute a moratorium on damage-centered research to reformulate the ways research is framed and conducted and to reimagine how findings might be used by, for, and with communities."[111] Clearly, using this collaborative model—one concerned with "understanding complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives"—is fraught in an incarcerated setting.[112] Tuck compellingly unveils the violences that researchers perpetrate on Indigenous communities—"finger-shaped bruises on our pulse points"—with "characterizations [that] frame our communities as sites of disinvestment and dispossession; . . . spaces saturated in the fantasies of outsiders."[113]

When I sat in on the classes as a privileged guest from the "free" world and as a non-Indigenous and non–Pacific Islander woman, my own positionality as a hybrid (inside-out) body was an obstacle I spent years negotiating as both participant ethnographer and facilitator.[114] Participating in Clough's creative writing classes and developing relationships over several terms facilitated the interviews that I conducted with the inside women. These variegated relationships shape the terrain of my ensuing interpretations. As a facilitator in an incarcerated space, I employ autoethnography as a reflective practice to consider the process of transformation involved in reverse ethnography for both ethnographers and collaborators. Autoethnography is a mobile site that encourages an intersectional way of seeing and engaging with the carceral culture and is a useful tool for examining a space where unjust systems and processes are identified and interrogated.[115]

One of the integral components of feminist ethnography situated within a collaborative model is the ethical responsibility to exchange work with the community. Reading and writing in interaction with "subjects" is a central aspect of life writing and feminist ethnography. Feminist ethnography insists on a working through of relationships across boundaries of differential power—in the case of my research, the borders between those inside and outside. It was also difficult for me to share the manuscript for this book

with Pat Clough, the director of the KPWP. Due to my own experience as an educator, I am aware that opening up one's classroom to a guest involves vulnerability, particularly if a critical lens is employed. Yet critique is an essential component of academic work. Prior to submitting my manuscript to Clough, I reread each chapter, imagining her as my reader. This altered lens allowed me to rethink my initial critique. One feminist methodological praxis I incorporate here is the use of parenthetical notes to Clough that perform as an invitation to an extended conversation: an invitation that echoes circle pedagogy or Indigenous epistemologies. The responses from Clough, which I incorporate throughout, confirm the unique and transformational journey that we undertook together and reinforce the process of feminist ethnography: its collaborative nature, vulnerability, and limitations. Her response likewise employs the personal and the political:

> I'm not sure how to respond appropriately to such extensive analysis and storytelling. I think we both knew when we were talking, that our conversations mattered—mattered most because I was "unpacking" a program that grew from no plan, no particular curriculum. Since I was teaching in a new space, I figured I'd have to become an explorer and explore I did! The writing, the women themselves became deeply important to me. I didn't know that would happen. You seem to have captured much of that personal connection that unfolded for so many—first with their relationship with themselves and then with the witnesses to that unfolding—the other students and me.[116]

Sharing the work with the women inside also proved to be complicated. Just as the KPWP itself is vulnerable to attrition, by the time I was ready to share my work, many of the women inside had been paroled and inevitably had moved on to their lives outside. One woman with whom I had a close relationship died quite unexpectedly. One of the principal Prison Monologues women was extradited to another country, and others were difficult to reach. As the KPWP project folded and my contacts—Clough and the former warden—departed, access to the inside was limited.

Throughout the book, I use pseudonyms to protect the identities of the women and the teenagers. There are numerous ethical questions about the inclusion of high school youth who, like the inside women, constitute a vulnerable population. Clough and the Nānākuli students' English teacher, Christine Wilcox, provided me with all the correspondence between the women and the teenagers at two Title I high schools on Honolulu's leeward side—Nānākuli and Kapolei—and gave me permission to publish their

words. Wilcox tragically passed away from a glioblastoma in 2017, and although her absence leaves a gaping wound, memories of her endurance, spirit, and love of her students abide. In chapter 2, I implement the inside women's authentic names to accompany their published poetry to preserve and honor their authorship. The selection of pseudonyms in other chapters was fraught with complexity. I attempted to select names that cohere with the ethnicity of particular women; however, this resulted in an overrepresentation of Hawaiian and Pacific Islander names when in reality many of the women had assimilated "American" names. (In hindsight, this feels like a racial typecasting.)

I deliberately chose to begin and end each chapter with the women's voices, and chapter 4 with the teenagers' voices. In an homage to Kelly Oliver's articulation of witnessing as a radical act of "seeing otherwise" that summons mutual vulnerabilities across hierarchical divides, I desire the reader to experience the "stand-alone" text without my interruptions.[117] These unimpeded texts authentically reflect the testimony of the inside women and the teenagers. At the same time, I also conduct close readings of their poetry, as a writerly and methodological choice that foregrounds the women's testimony.

The following is a narrative that transported me to my inquiry, inspirations, and insights, which I offer as a gesture toward autoethnography. My personal genealogy is inextricable from a history of colonization. From a young age, growing up as a white person in apartheid in South Africa, I was aware of the devastation of economic, social, and political disenfranchisement. Far from our leafy suburb in Johannesburg—St. Andrews—sprawled the dilapidated shacks of Soweto, not unlike some of the public housing projects marking the Grand Concourse in the Bronx, where I worked years later as an HIV educator and activist, or the homeless shelters in which I taught creative writing.

When my family immigrated to Milwaukee in the late 1970s after the turbulence of the Soweto uprising, I found myself at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where I became involved in the divestiture and feminist/queer movements. My early academic formations were nurtured by Black feminist scholars. I found home in grassroots activism, which has informed both my academic research trajectory and my passion for community activism. For two decades I taught in the school-to-prison pipeline in multiple geographic and cultural loci. As a New York City teaching fellow, and later as a supervisor of educators in Hawai'i, I witnessed the limitations and violence(s) embedded in programs like Teach for America that displace local teachers.

Feminist carceral theorists and practitioners articulate the need for those working in prisons to be mindful of the expected narratives of inside women. Teaching writing in the prison, like teaching in all classrooms in the "free" world, is a besieged act—one that insists on a grappling with ethical dilemmas. Some of the ethical critical praxis that informs my approach as a facilitator of incarcerated and "free" classrooms is as follows: the circle pedagogy praxis of the Walls to Bridges Collective in Kitchener, Ontario; the Inside-Out circles in the United States as part of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program; and the testimony of feminist creative writing practitioners in the prisons.[118] These nontraditional or decolonizing pedagogical models insist on an ethical critical literacy praxis that resists the tendency toward enforced confessionals in the classroom. This approach reinforces what feminist prison writing practitioners Wendy Wolters Hinshaw and Tobi Jacobi identify as the necessary ingredients for an ethical critical literacy praxis that supports and sponsors inside women's contributions to their own self-representations, builds critical literacy about prison conditions both inside and outside, accelerates tactical redistribution of power, and creates solidarity across privilege.[119]

In the summer of 2015, I was awarded funding to attend the Walls to Bridges Prison Facilitator program in Kitchener, Ontario, in concert with the Faculty of Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University. The program is a five-day intensive training with primarily Canadian academicians and Indigenous activists at a women's multilevel-security federal prison: Grand Valley Institution for Women. I was trained in the logistics and ethics of establishing a pilot program, based on the Inside-Out program, which was originated by Lori Pompa at Temple University in Philadelphia. As the Daniel J. Logan Assistant Professor of Peace and Justice at Knox College, I am currently embarking on such a program with the Henry C. Hill Correctional Center in Galesburg, Illinois. The Walls to Bridges model offers "inside" and "outside" students the opportunity to embark on a semester-long seminar together within an incarcerated space, which works to reduce and interrogate stereotypes that cripple society in that it subverts hierarchies as "nontraditional" students educate "traditional" students and vice versa.[120] The weekly classes incorporate a circle pedagogy that foregrounds Indigenous epistemologies and collaborative dialogue aimed to foster egalitarian and collective learning. In *Turning Teaching Inside Out: A Pedagogy of Transformation for Community-Based Education*, editor Simone Weil Davis, who brought Inside-Out to Canada, articulates its radical pedagogical space as a dyssynchronous site of discomfort that embraces a politics of poetics

and critically dismantles the hierarchies embedded in higher educational institutions designed to privilege status quo rewards.[121]

I began my research in Hawai'i with the idea that I needed to learn from and listen to the women inside not only for their personal stories but also for the silences that lie behind them. As a guest in the writing classes, I became a part of this writing community, witnessing and at times sharing in the personal and familial narratives that extended far beyond writing. The relationships I developed in the writing classes facilitated the formal, taped interviews that I initiated at the prison in April and May 2013 and led to the invitation to teach creative writing.[122] From the summer of 2015 to May 2016, I taught my own creative writing class at the facility, with ten women enrolled. Class impressions and informal conversations with the women in my class, as well as the writing generated from the classes, have all informed and deepened my work.

Feminist prison scholar Lori B. Girshick articulates the fraught role that trust plays in ethnographic work within a carceral setting. Girshick is inspired by Kathleen Duff and Cynthia Coll's innovative interviewing protocol while conducting her own interviews with the inside women at Black Mountain Correctional Center for Women, which establishes a feminist lineage of carceral ethnographic work.[123] Duff and Coll focus on the process of exchange that led to authentic group dialogue—one that shifted the framework of power from why inside women should talk to ethnographers to one in which the women would "allow us to listen to them."[124] In a similar spirit, I designed semistructured interview questions, which I used as a guide to frame the interviews without allowing the questions to impede the flow of what we refer to in Hawai'i as "talk story." Personal narratives resist linear trajectories; thus I privileged a circuitous aesthetic and drew on feminist ethnography in search of a methodology that interrogates the hierarchy between interviewer and informant.[125]

My method sample consists of one-on-one interviews with seventeen women from Clough's beginner and intermediate writing classes, some of whom were also in the Prison Monologues program. I additionally had extensive and repeated conversations with three women from my own writing class from 2016 to 2017. The beginner class typically services twenty women, and the intermediate/advanced class enrolls thirteen women, many of whom have taken Clough's class three to five times.[126] For three terms from 2012 to 2014, I attended the biweekly writing classes and taught four creative writing classes at the facility as a guest teacher. I have detailed field notes from the classes that I attended as a guest and participant ethnographer.[127] I conducted fourteen formal, taped interviews at the facility in the intake sec-

tion and in an assigned visitor's office in the spring of 2013. Those interviews were arranged by the administration and lasted between 60 and 180 minutes. For the most part, I felt comfortable and at liberty to take my time during the interviews. Only once did a guard intrude when I had closed the door; he told me I needed to leave the door ajar. In 2014, I conducted three interviews with women who are past participants in both the creative writing classes and the Prison Monologues and who are now on parole. One of my former students has now been released and invited me to visit her in her transitional housing program, Women's Way, and participate as an active member in her Huikahi circle.[128] The demographics of the women whom I interviewed both formally and informally include women who range from their early twenties to their late fifties; one Black woman from the mainland (the only self-professed practicing Muslim in the prison); five white women from the mainland; and fourteen women all born in Hawai'i and from Filipina, Japanese-Hawaiian, Chinese-Hawaiian, Portuguese, Puerto Rican, Samoan, or Indigenous backgrounds. Three of the women are former Prison Monologuers, all of whom have been recently paroled.[129] From 2012 to 2013, I attended twenty Prison Monologues performances that included presentations at schools, residential treatments, community colleges, conferences, and events with audiences that ranged from intimate gatherings with forty people to an audience of fifteen hundred at Roosevelt High School. I informally spoke with some of the audience members who shared their overwhelmingly positive impressions of the performances with me.

I also analyze audience assessment conducted after the Prison Monologues presentations, based on correspondence between the new Prison Monologues Lab and the Nānākuli High School sixth-period English class (March 2014) and the Kapolei High School students.[130] Sources include the index cards designed by the students that outline their questions for the women about prison life, the women's responses, the English teacher's evaluation and correspondence, Clough's letter to the class, and formal student evaluation sheets from the Youth Challenge Center—a residential "boot camp" for juveniles at Barber's Point—and from the Bobby Benson Treatment Program in Kahuku. I also interviewed women who were active in the creative writing classes and who at the time constituted a peer-generated performance group on the outside, Voices from the Inside. These peer-mediated writing and performance groups are illustrative of contemporary pedagogical praxis that attempts to subvert traditional hierarchies of epistemological power structures.

In the following pages, I take the reader on a journey through this book's five chapters and the epilogue. Most of the chapters begin with an inside

woman's life story, and chapter 4 begins with a teenager's autobiography. I foreground the written testimony of the inside women and the students as a political tool to counter the civic death of the carceral space, particularly one located in the larger colonized landscape of Hawai'i. In searching for ways to honor the trust involved in offering personal testimony, I have benefited from scholarship that highlights the voices of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders such as *Nā Wāhine Koa: Hawaiian Women for Sovereignty and Demilitarization*, edited by Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua; Ty P. Kāwika Tengan's *Native Men Remade: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Hawai'i*; and Katherine Irwin and Karen Umemoto's *Jacked Up and Unjust: Pacific Islander Teens Confront Violent Legacies*. In "Shifting Ground: Translating Lives and Life Writing in Hawai'i," the introduction to a special issue of *Biography*, coeditors Cynthia Franklin and Miriam Fuchs articulate the praxis of linguistic translation and its power to transport to the "surface 'buried lives,'" as it pertains to Pacific Islanders.[131]

Chapter 1, "Pedagogy and Process," begins with the complicated classroom space in which the Kailua Prison Writing Project is situated. Simultaneously resistant to and complicit with dominant carceral tropes, this program's refusal of the therapeutic script lives alongside the embrace of the therapeutic. Here the reader witnesses an assortment of pedagogies: those performed in the Tuesday and Friday classes aligned with the KPWP's philosophy, and those performed by repeated institutional intrusions. The second chapter, "'Home': Trauma and Desire," moves from the mediated and communal space of the disembodied classroom to proffer a close literary analysis of the writing generated in *Hulihia VII: Writings from Prison and Beyond: "Home."* As writing subverts the state-sanctioned imposition of a civic death, so do the polyvocal poems in the prison publication repel reductive notions of home and emancipatory narratives. The *Hulihia* writings appear on the surface to diverge from the political, but, as I argue, the women's critique lives in the omissions, ellipses, eccentric grammatical usages, and counterperformativity of their writing.

Chapters 3 and 4 turn to the complex relationships between performance and audience. Chapter 3, "The Stage Away from the Page," moves from text-based testimony and performance to the public performances of the Prison Monologues program. Utilizing the lens of performance studies, I analyze the slippage between performativity and life writing, exploring the model of reform behind the Prison Monologues project and the tensions between the "sacredness of testimony" and the "commodification and consumption of testimonial discourse."[132] I explore the quandary of redemption sponsored

by the state as both censoring and productive, interrogating how the state exercises the performances for legitimacy. Patterson and WCCC are the recipients of much public praise for the KPWP, and for the Prison Monologues in particular, which reinforces the redemptive notion of the "prison as a healing place." Chapter 4, "Love Letters," is a participatory, performative dialogic between the Prison Monologues and the students at Nānākuli High School and Kapolei High School. In this chapter, I analyze high school students' reactions to female prisoner monologues in Hawai'i and frame these dialogues as Native Hawaiian epistemologies. This unique archive showcases a participatory life-writing exchange and the avenues in which trauma itself performs as the dialogic. By reading and analyzing the students' life-writing texts, which are direct responses to the narratives of memory, pain, and abuse of the inside women, I explore the nature of witnessing and attend to the cacophony of testimonies evoked. In this sense, unlike in the narratives about home in chapter 2, pain is sutured and testimony is restorative because of its corroborating "live" audience. As we uncover, spectacular bodies are fashioned, but, more prominently, a spectacular healing is performed.

At the end of 2019, I returned to Hawai'i to present an excerpt of "Love Letters" at the yearly national and international American Studies Association conference, where I was a panelist on the "Kanaka Maoli Childhood" panel sponsored by the Child and Youth Studies Caucus. Chapter 5, "Postrelease and Affective Writers," is informed by the interviews I conduct with one of the core Prison Monologuers, Reiko, who is now a student at Chaminade University; Nicole Fernandez, a prison administrator; Judge Karen Radius, who started the Girls Court in Hawai'i; Kat Brady, a longtime prison abolitionist and activist; Lorenn Walker, a restorative justice attorney; and Noriko Namiki, CEO of YWCA O'ahu and director of Fernhurst, which is one of the parole reentry locales that services released women from WCCC.

A few of the women are back inside.

It doesn't end when the class ends. It continues.

~ Kailani

NOTES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

1 Davis et al., *Abolition. Feminism. Now.*, 58.

INTRODUCTION

As I prepared the manuscript for this book, bell hooks passed away. I was introduced to her in Nellie McKay's African American Women Writers seminar at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. We all mourn hooks's passing and honor her indelible impact in this shattered world.

1 See R. Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*.

2 Barrett et al., "More Than Transformative," 18.

3 Barrett et al., "More Than Transformative," 18.

4 The Prison Policy Initiative has only recently added an interrogation of gender identity in its reporting. The 2023 report states: "The data available that are disaggregated by sex are also limited, in that they typically only differentiate between 'male' and 'female,' ignoring the reality that the gender identities of confined people (and all people, for that matter) are not limited to this binary. . . . This field of research has a long way to go before the data are consistently collected and reported by gender identity rather than an administrative categorization of 'male' versus 'female.'" Kajstura and Sawyer, *Women's Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2023*.

5 The Sentencing Project, "Fact Sheet: Incarcerated Women and Girls."

6 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Women and HIV in Prison Settings."

7 Scholars and activists such as Beth Richie, Angela Davis, and Andrea Ritchie have contributed immeasurably to transporting public attention to the incarceration of women—particularly Black women.

8 For an exploration of the historical incarceration of Kānaka Maoli—Native Hawaiians—and its contemporary implications, see Keahiolalo-Karasuda, "The Colonial Carceral and Prison Politics in Hawai'i."

9 For relatively recent anthologies by and about incarcerated women that fill the gap and speak to women's communal writing practices, see Jacobi and Stanford, *Women, Writing, and Prison*; Solinger et al., *Interrupted Life*; Lawston and Lucas, *Razor Wire Women*; and Jacobi, "Twenty-Year Sentences."

10 The direct translation for *hoʻoponopono* is "correct/mental cleansing: family conferences in which relationships were set right." This "setting right" is achieved through "prayer, discussion, confession, repentance, and mutual restitution and forgiveness." Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary.* However, as an external reviewer for Duke University Press pointed out, it is problematic to collapse the Indigenous model of *hoʻoponopono* with the Christian framework of forgiveness and reconciliation. Some Native Hawaiians are currently contesting the cultural appropriation of *hoʻoponopono* in restorative justice circles.

11 I want to thank an external reviewer at Duke University Press who encouraged me to foreground this idea.

Note: I use diacritical marks—kahakō (macron) and ʻokina—except in the case of texts derived from another source (quotation, proper name, or creative writing). For the name Kanaka Maoli, I use the macron when referring to the plural (Kānaka Maoli or Kānaka) but not when using the singular.

12 Penney, "Creating a Place of Healing and Forgiveness," 1. Here I use the word *inmate* because it is utilized in the publication.

13 Sawyer and Bertram, "Prisons and Jails Will Separate Millions of Mothers from Their Children."

14 "Working to Make Justice Healing and to Increase Peace," Hawaiʻi Friends of Restorative Justice newsletter (Summer 2022), University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa. These devastating statistics echo the fact that in the continental United States, the mortality rate for Black mothers is three times that for white mothers.

15 Kates, *Moving beyond Prison.*

16 Richie, "Feminist Ethnographies of Women in Prison," 438.

17 In 1994, Congress ended a prominent federal effort to support higher education behind bars. People incarcerated in state and federal prisons became ineligible for Pell Grants through a provision of the omnibus crime bill that President Bill Clinton signed into law. The House, then controlled by Democrats, approved the provision on a vote of 312 to 116. In December 2020, lawmakers expanded access to Pell Grants once again to include students who are incarcerated, as long as they are enrolled in prison education programs that are approved by their state corrections departments or the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and that meet other requirements. This was a focus of many panels and conversations at the Eleventh National Conference on Higher Education in Prison that I attended in Denver, Colorado, in November 2021.

18 I have a view into the power and limits of the reinstatement of Pell Grants based on my current work in Illinois as a member of the Illinois Coalition for Higher Education in Prison (IL-CHEP) and in my work establishing a higher education in prison program between Knox College and Henry Hill Correctional Facility in Galesburg. IL-CHEP foregrounds the experience and knowledge of the inside community.

19 Harkins and Meiners, "Beyond Crisis." The authors argue that the "prison uprisings throughout the 1970s—from Pontiac to Attica—pushed for greater access to relevant and quality education for people behind bars. These movements linked educational access to broader aims of self-determination, racial justice, and prison abolition and were connected to larger race radical freedom struggles of the period. In the wake of these legislative and activist demands, education programs in prison flourished. By the 1990s, hundreds of college programs awarding degrees were offered in correctional facilities across the country. . . . In 1994 the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act restricted access to Pell Grants for incarcerated people. . . . As a result, roughly 350 college programs in prison closed."

20 The Bard Prison Initiative, which houses the Consortium for the Liberal Arts in Prison, currently comprises fifteen institutions, including Wesleyan University in Connecticut, Grinnell College in Iowa, Goucher College in Maryland, and Bard College in New York: https://bpi.bard.edu. For an insight into the Bard Prison Initiative, see the documentary film *College Behind Bars*, directed by Lynn Novick (PBS, 2019).

21 Patterson was joined by executive director Toni Bissen and Puanani Burgess of the Puʻa Foundation, and University of Hawaiʻi psychologist Patrick Uchigakiuchi. In a television interview at Hawaiʻi Pacific University, Bissen articulates that the initiative used the acronym SPACE (staff, programming, administration, community, and environment)—all recipients for trauma-informed care training. The trauma initiative uses the framework of a *puʻuhonua* for women to "build their beloved community" and to transform their lives. According to a report by the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care: "The field of trauma-informed care emerged in the past 20 years. Rather than focusing on treating trauma symptoms, trauma-informed care is a philosophy for reorganizing service environments to meet the unique needs of survivors and to avoid inadvertent re-traumatization. Trauma-informed practices support resilience, self-care, and healing. In trauma-informed settings, everyone is educated about trauma and its consequences, and everyone is mindful of the need to make the environment more healing and less re-traumatizing for both program participants and staff." Penney, "Creating a Place of Healing and Forgiveness," 3.

22 Penney, "Creating a Place of Healing and Forgiveness," 1.

23 See Kosasa, "Journey to Justice." I italicize the word *him* because in this interview the warden uses the masculine pronoun.

24 Kosasa, "Journey to Justice."

25 I want to thank an external reviewer at Duke University Press who clarified the specificity of Pacific Islander as a marker.

26 For an exploration of the complex manifestations of *hulihia* in our contemporary political landscape, see Goodyear-Kaʻōpua et al., *The Value of Hawaiʻi 3: Hulihia, the Turning*.

27 This quotation is taken from testimonial language utilized in publicity materials, including by the State of Hawaiʻi, as well as in local newspapers.

28 Conversation with Pat Clough at a popular local café, Morning Brew, in Kailua, May 15, 2017.

29 Patterson has achieved success at HYCF in his implementation of a *pu'uhonua* where Hawaiian healing modalities are integrated with therapeutic programming. With his innovative vision, Patterson has spurred a 75 percent reduction in incarceration, which eventuated in a repurposing of the HYCF "campus" and three hundred acres of agricultural land. See Office of Hawaiian Affairs, "A Correctional Center Becomes a Pu'uhonua."

30 At the start of the COVID-19 outbreak in early 2020, I had just begun teaching a creative writing class at SCI Phoenix in Pennsylvania—a maximum-security men's prison—as part of Villanova University's program at SCI Phoenix. Formerly the Graterford Program, the Villanova program is one of the oldest continuously running degree-granting prison education programs in the United States. The pandemic ushered in a complete halt to my class as the men went into lockdown—the inhumane way in which prisons have addressed the pandemic crisis.

31 The PEN Prison Writing Program is part of the larger PEN American Center, founded after World War I to "[dismantle] barriers to free expression and reach across borders to celebrate, through writing, our common humanity." PEN America, https://pen.org.

32 The International PEN Writing Program began in the 1920s.

33 Today, American prison writing programs are infiltrated with educators—a movement away from artists as cultural ambassadors to one in which educators are heralded as transmitters of knowledge. A plethora of universities have now connected with prison writing programs, and the recent trend is to offer credit-based courses toward degree acquisition for those inside. Another burgeoning development is the proliferation of Inside-Out programs throughout the nation and globally. See Pompa, "Drawing Forth, Finding Voice, Making Change." Simone Weil Davis, who brought Inside-Out to Canada, wrote "Inside-Out," a metatextual exploration of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, which hosts campus-enrolled and incarcerated students together as classmates in postsecondary courses constructed around dialogue, collaboration, and experiential learning within a carceral setting. Similar to the praxis of theater, where the liminal and unexpected are transformative, Weil Davis celebrates the conspiracy of committing poetry, where a single poem can indeed alter our world. For another example of Inside-Out pedagogical praxis, see Shailor, *Performing New Lives*. I explore the ethics of pedagogical praxis in a prison classroom in chapter 1; as well as the summoning of a feminist-inspired and ethical critical literacy in the introduction.

34 Established in 2008, the Justice Arts Coalition (formerly the Prison Arts Coalition) serves as a national network for prison arts in the United States. Justice Arts Coalition, "Welcome to the Justice Arts Coalition (JAC)."

35 The inside writers Jack Abbott, Eldridge Cleaver, George Jackson, Angela Davis, and Assata Shakur, for example, held the nation-state culpable for its human rights abuses, particularly against Black and Latinx communities. Their prose, whether fictional, expository, or testimonial, can be articulated as "out-

law writing." Carceral writing can be read as diasporic writing: a writing of exile. Indigenous critical prison scholar Luana Ross and Canadian scholar Deena Rymhs—whose research on Indigenous writing focuses on issues of mobility and spatial politics—explore the pain of exile for marginalized communities that are already in exile: economically, spiritually, and culturally. Indigenous writers are doubly displaced, as they are frequently imprisoned on their Indigenous homelands, in wasteland spaces, proximate to reservations.

36 Here I use the word *inmate* because it is implemented in the Prison Monologues' promotional materials.

37 The following description is included in publicity materials disseminated at the Prison Monologues presentation to the PEN Women Writers' meeting, which I attended in Honolulu in 2013: "In 2008, the creative writing classes hosted its first book dedication in the prison facility courtyard. [Then] Governor Linda Lingle [the sixth governor of Hawai'i from 2002 until 2010] was present and celebrated with the women writers who read their best work. She then challenged them to keep writing, keep learning, to become role models for their children. Acclaimed by TV and print media at the debut event, one reporter suggested that all O'ahu's high schools should see the production. 'Prison Monologues' was born."

38 "The Pacific Rim International Conference, considered one of the most 'diverse gatherings' in the world, encourages and respects voices from 'diverse' perspectives across numerous areas, including: voices from persons representing all disability areas; experiences of family members and supporters across all disability and diversity areas; responsiveness to diverse cultural and language differences; evidence of researchers and academics studying diversity and disability; stories of persons providing powerful lessons; examples of program providers; and action plans to meet human and social needs in a globalized world." "Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity 2017," https://www.hawaii.edu/calendar/manoa/2017/10/09/31053.html. See the Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity website: https://pacrim.coe.hawaii.edu.

39 Here I refer to the criminal justice system, rather than the criminal legal system, to reflect the language utilized by the state. See Kosasa, "Journey to Justice." Also extracted from a conversation with Warden Patterson at the WCCC facility in 2013.

40 James, *The New Abolitionists*.

41 See Whitlock, *Soft Weapons*.

42 See AP News, "Hawaii Governor Withholds Funds for Corrections Oversight." In March 2021, Hawai'i lawmakers finally advanced a bill to grant additional funds for an all-volunteer corrections oversight commission that was accorded powers in 2019 but lacked sufficient funding to hire a staff. Governor David Ige withheld funds reportedly due to the economic recession that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. The additional funds have been supported by groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i and the Community Alliance on Prisons. I sat in on a few of the commission's meetings, which are open to the community. There was much concern about how the State was handling the pandemic and its deleterious effects on the inside community—both in Hawai'i and

in Arizona. The oversight commission is calling for a moratorium on the state Department of Public Safety's public-private partnership to fund a $525 million project to build a new Oʻahu jail complex in the Hālawa area.

43 See van Gelder, "Can Prison Be a Healing Place?"

44 A *loʻi* is a patch of land dedicated to growing kalo (taro). Hawaiians have traditionally used water irrigation systems to produce kalo. The *loʻi* is part of an *ahupuaʻa*, a division of land from the mountain to the sea. On reentry and transition planning circles, see Walker and Greening, *Reentry and Transition Planning Circles for Incarcerated People*.

45 For an extended analysis of recuperation of Indigenous resistance to American colonialism, evident in the 1897 petitions against forced annexation to the United States, see Noenoe K. Silva's *Aloha Betrayed*.

46 *Future of the Oʻahu Community Correctional Center* 14, "WCCC Expansion Planning Underway" (August 2017), https://dps.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Hawaii-OCCC_newsletter_Vol14_v8.pdf. I interrogate the Department of Public Safety's linguistic utilization of "houses," which conflates the prison with a home, rather than the warehousing of inside people for profit. Likewise, "cottages" serves to feminize the carceral space.

47 Hina Mauka developed Ke Alaula—a unique, therapeutic community-treatment program based on traditional Hawaiian culture and values. The program is the result of a collaboration between the state's Department of Public Safety and the WCCC warden and his staff. While outcomes are still being compiled for this relatively new program, testimonials from staff, families of clients, and clients themselves show the transformation taking place: clients growing in self-esteem, clarity of purpose, and resolve to build happier, healthier, and more productive lives. See the prison's website: http://dps.hawaii.gov/wccc.

48 "The Bridge is a fifteen-bed open housing unit (no corrections officers are stationed there) providing transitional substance abuse services and assisting women in developing mind, body, and spiritual wellness to support their reentry. Many women in the program have jobs outside the facility. They also participate in community re-integration activities to reduce the rate of recidivism and parole violations." Penney, "Creating a Place of Healing and Forgiveness," 8.

49 Total Life Recovery is a "faith-based, gender specific program that addresses every area of a woman's life mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically." Total Life Recovery, "Turning Stories into Life Changing Lessons." Note the utopic and redemptive language with which these programs are described.

50 In a 2013 interview with Dr. Eiko Kosasa at the facility, Warden Patterson made reference to these statistics, which he said are representative of national statistics on women and crime. Kosasa, "Journey to Justice."

51 "WCCC Improvements Moving Forward" is the fourth section of *Future of the Oʻahu Community Correctional Center* 26, "Improving Facilities on Oʻahu" (November 2020), https://dps.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Hawaii-OCCC_newsletter_Vol26-v4.pdf-11-19-20-RN.pdf.

52 "WCCC Improvements Moving Forward."

53 Harkins and Meiners, "Beyond Crisis."

54 Penney, "Creating a Place of Healing and Forgiveness," 1.

55 Patterson was invited as a keynote speaker to the 2015 Criminal Justice Forum in British Columbia. In his keynote, "The Cycle of Trauma in the Criminal Justice System," Patterson addressed how he "transformed both a youth correctional facility and a women's prison from a modality of punishment to one of treatment using the methodology of trauma-informed care." He stated, "To enhance gender-specific programming for incarcerated girls, HYCF continues collaborating with Project Kealahou [the New Pathway in Hawaiian] to positively impact the girls at the facility. Project Kealahou is twofold. Advocates/counselors from the program work directly with the girls who have been the victims of trauma. Additionally, Youth Correctional Officers who work with the female population receive trauma-informed training to enhance their sensitivity and to broaden their skills and knowledge." See the Office of Youth Services website: https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/oys/office/. Clearly, Patterson is invested in treatment over punishment.

Thanks to Warden Patterson's efforts, as of June 2022, there are no girls incarcerated in HYCF. See Healy, "Hawaii Has No Girls in Juvenile Detention." For a considered discussion of the racialized school-to-prison pipeline, see Meiners, *Right to Be Hostile*.

56 Prison Policy Initiative, *Hawai'i Profile*.

57 ACLU, *Blueprint for Smart Justice: Hawai'i*.

58 Chesney-Lind and Brady, "Prisons," 112.

59 There is much debate about carceral statistics and the percentage of Native Hawaiians in the state's prison population. I owe much gratitude to RaeDeen Keahiolalo-Karasuda's trailblazing work in Hawai'i's prisons. She argues that Native Hawaiians are underreported by the Department of Public Safety because people are comfortable with the approximate 40 percent assessment. Keahiolalo-Karasuda posits that Native Hawaiians constitute close to 60 percent of Hawai'i's prison population. Keahiolalo-Karasuda, "The Colonial Carceral and Prison Politics in Hawai'i," 4–6.

60 *The Disparate Treatment of Native Hawaiians in the Criminal Justice System*, 39. For these statistics, see Chesney-Lind and Bilsky, "Native Hawaiian Youth in Hawai'i Detention Center."

61 *The Disparate Treatment of Native Hawaiians in the Criminal Justice System*, 38.

62 Prison Policy Initiative, "Hawai'i Incarceration Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2010." Calculated by the Prison Policy Initiative from the US Census 2010 Summary File. According to this report, many part Native Hawaiians identify as Samoan or another racial classification, rendering the accurate representation of Native Hawaiians incarcerated in the state opaque. Government and media publications frequently do not utilize accurate Hawaiian diacritics.

63 I thank Brandy Nālani McDougall for her spring 2016 lecture in her Introduction to Indigenous Studies seminar at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (in which I was an instructor) that addressed the conditions under which Native Americans

were released from prison in the 1970s. From 1973 to 1976, 3,406 Native American women were sterilized without their permission. The US government recently admitted to forcing thousands of Native American women to be sterilized. Garcia, "8 Shocking Facts about Sterilization in U.S. History."

64 This is according to Flanagin, "Reservation to Prison Pipeline." The much-touted fact that the US "justice" system is "broken" is countered by prison scholars and activists, who argue that the US racialized legal system is working exactly in accordance with its design.

65 Wang, "The U.S. Criminal Justice System Disproportionately Hurts Native People." In South Dakota, the state with the fourth-highest percentage of Native American residents, Native Americans constituted over 52 percent of the federal caseload in Fiscal Year 2021 but only 8.5 percent of the total population. The trend continues across states with similarly substantial Indigenous populations; for example, Native Americans constituted over 26 percent of the caseload in Montana and 34 percent in North Dakota.

66 Evershed and Davidson, "Indigenous Imprisonment Rates Still Rising."

67 According to a report by Binghamton University, "Popularly conceptualized as the model minority, Asian and Pacific Islanders are not exempt from the increasing prison population in the United States. Between 1990 and 2000, the Asian and Pacific Islander prisoner population skyrocketed by 250 percent—an unprecedented rise in the prison population in their history. In addition to increasing incarceration rates, deportation has also increased in dramatic numbers, particularly in the Asian and Pacific Islander community." Thach, *Incarceration*, 5.

68 Rojas, *Women of Color and Feminism*, 75.

69 Deer, "Sovereignty of the Soul."

70 According to the local newspaper, the *Honolulu Civil Beat*: "The five-member Hawai'i Correctional Systems Oversight Commission voted unanimously to urge the State Department of Public Safety to create an advisory committee to 'review, and if necessary revise the planning that has been done to date, and to actively participate in the planning process going forward.' Ted Sakai, a commission member and former director of the Department of Public Safety, said that the latest draft plan for a new jail at the old Animal Quarantine Station site in Hālawa Valley calls for building a facility that can hold 1,380 male inmates." Dayton, "Corrections Commission Wants to Pause Planning on New Oahu Jail."

71 *The Disparate Treatment of Native Hawaiians in the Criminal Justice System*, 41.

72 Hager and Kaneya, "The Prison Visit That Cost My Family $2,370."

73 When men from the Hālawa Correctional Facility were deported to a Texas prison, they were not able to fit in with the Mexican gangs. They formed the United Samoan Organization (USO), the largest Hawaiian gang on the mainland. When they returned to Hālawa, they transported undue aggression and violence to the local prison culture. Interview with Kat Brady, *Star Advertiser*, June 27, 2012. For a complex portrayal of Native Hawaiians finding a connection to their lost Hawaiian identities in a maximum-security private prison in the Arizona desert, see the film *Out of State* (2017) by Native Hawaiian filmmaker Clara Lacy.

Native Hawaiian cultural ambassador Kumu Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu's restorative justice work at Hālawa is featured in the video OHAHawaii, "Healing in Hālawa with Kumu Hina." Kumu Hina, in a recent talk at a Peace and Justice Studies Association conference, had me rethink mainland as a colonial construct when she asked one of my Native Hawaiian students who grew up in Oregon: "Where is your mainland?" (heart/home).

74 Interview with Kat Brady, *Star Advertiser*.

75 Interview with Kat Brady, *Star Advertiser*.

76 Hawai'i State Legislature, S.B. 467 (Act 258), 2006, https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2006/bills/SB467_cd1_.htm.

77 See Urbina, "Hawaii to Remove Inmates over Abuse Charges." According to a *Hawaii News Now* article, "Status on Hawaii Inmates in Mainland Prisons," "When Governor Neil Abercrombie assumed office last year, he said his priority was to tackle the state's prison overcrowding problem—that includes bringing home some 1,700 Hawaii prisoners locked up in mainland corrections centers." Several women in my class and Clough's classes, as well as some of the women I interviewed, reported that they preferred mainland prisons because they offer "better" and more varied programming, are cleaner, and expose them to another world (most of these women had never left Hawai'i).

78 Nationally, women constitute 7.5 percent of the prison population, while in Hawai'i, women constitute 14.3 percent of the prison population.

79 Penney, "Creating a Place of Healing and Forgiveness," 1.

80 Sawyer and Wagner, *Mass Incarceration*.

81 Chesney-Lind and Brady, "Prisons," 109.

82 Nellis, "Mass Incarceration Trends."

83 Sawyer and Wagner, *Mass Incarceration*.

84 Fellner, "Punishment and Prejudice."

85 The Sentencing Project, "Fact Sheet: Incarcerated Women and Girls."

86 The Sentencing Project, "Fact Sheet: Incarcerated Women and Girls."

87 Chesney-Lind and Jones, *Fighting for Girls*; Tonry, *Thinking about Crime*.

88 The Sentencing Project, "Report to the United Nations on Racial Disparities in the U.S. Criminal Justice System."

89 The Sentencing Project, "Fact Sheet: Incarcerated Women and Girls."

90 See Richie, *Arrested Justice*; Chesney-Lind and Pasko, *Girls, Women, and Crime*.

91 Carson, "Prisoners in 2019," table 10. See Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*

92 See Chesney-Lind and Jones, *Fighting for Girls*; Owen, *"In the Mix."*

93 Ross, *Inventing the Savage*; Rymhs, *From the Iron House*, 13.

94 In 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment criminalized African Americans and ushered them into a "civic death." This normalized the legal and cultural disenfranchisement of African Americans in American society. Many theorists in the field of American crime and punishment witness the civic death of imprisonment as a continuation of slavery. See Perkinson, *Texas Tough*; M. Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*.

95 The following texts, which employ feminist perspectives on trauma theory, are primary influences on my argument that trauma studies intersects with prison

studies and women's life writing: Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*; J. Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*; Conway, *When Memory Speaks*; Cvetkovich, *Depression*; De Salvo, *Writing as a Way of Healing*; L. Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography*; Henke, *Shattered Subjects*; Maier and Dulfano, *Woman as Witness*; Whitlock, *Soft Weapons*; Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*.

96 Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 83. "Hidden transcripts" is a reference to Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*.

97 Women's programming, particularly in creative writing, is sparse, and few scholars have paid attention to this topic. Anthologies such as Jacobi and Stanford, *Women, Writing, and Prison*; Lawston and Lucas, *Razor Wire Women*; Scheffler, *Wall Tappings*; and Weil Davis and Roswell, *Turning Teaching Inside Out* are the exceptions. Wally Lamb and Eve Ensler have conducted creative writing programs in the York Correctional Institution in Connecticut and the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in New York, respectively. Nevertheless, the latter examples summon ethical considerations given that both Lamb and Ensler are celebrities and Ensler has been critiqued for employing "forced confessionals" in her writing classes, which feminist prison practitioners caution against due to their potential for traumatic reinjury. See Lamb, *I'll Fly Away*; Ensler, *What I Want My Words to Do to You*.

98 Fletcher, Shaver, and Moon, *Women Prisoners*.

99 Some of the notable scholars who view prisons refracted through race, gender, sexuality, and class include Michelle Alexander, Andrea Ritchie, Angela Davis, Beth Richie, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, and Meda Chesney-Lind.

100 Many of these theorists call for the downsizing of the industry, while others, like scholar-activists Angela Davis and Ruth Gilmore, agitate for the abolition of the prison-industrial complex—a position that I, too, endorse.

101 Scheffler, *Wall Tappings*; Lawston and Lucas, *Razor Wire Women*; Jacobi and Stanford, *Women, Writing, and Prison*.

102 For an example of pedagogical anthologies, see Lamb, *Couldn't Keep It to Myself*.

103 Lucas, "Identifying Marks: What the Razor Wire Hides," epilogue to Lawston and Lucas, *Razor Wire Women*, 301–3.

104 Formative prison autobiographies Davis, *Angela Davis*, and Shakur, *Assata*, contest the notion of imprisoned women as apolitical.

105 Rymhs, *From the Iron House*, 13. I explore the "second hearing" and secondhand witnesses in both chapters 1 and 4.

106 Rymhs, *From the Iron House*, 14.

107 I wish to thank Lorenn Walker for providing me with a writing room of my own during my 2019 visit to Hawai'i.

108 Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, 124.

109 Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, 125.

110 Jacobi and Stanford, *Women, Writing, and Prison*, 100–102.

111 Tuck, "Suspending Damage," 409.

112 Tuck, "Suspending Damage," 416.

113 Tuck, "Suspending Damage," 412.

114 Many prison ethnographers, academics, and practitioners articulate the difficulty in inhabiting the role of both ethnographer and teacher in an incarcerated space. In "Closed Doors: Ethical Issues with Prison Ethnography," John M. Coggeshall unveils the particular obstacles involved in both teaching and conducting ethnography in a medium-security male prison in a place he never names. Ultimately, Coggeshall discloses that he felt a moral ambivalence toward his informants, the "inmates," and was encumbered by the necessity to choose between the institution and his informants/students.

115 Other autoethnographies that inspire this monograph include Julie Taylor's *Paper Tangos* for its use of poetics and the evocation of place, Karen McCarthy's *Mama Lola* for its use of parallel voices of ethnographer and informant, and Alice Goffman's *On the Run* for the complex issues it raises about class and racial appropriation and ethics. For a methodological text on feminist ethnography, see Ettorre, *Autoethnography as Feminist Method*.

116 Clough shared this with me in an email correspondence on June 18, 2017, after she read the manuscript for this book. Her reading ushered in several email exchanges, which I have incorporated into the final book.

117 Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*.

118 See Hinshaw and Jacobi, "What Words Might Do." Also see Weil Davis, "Inside-Out," 163–75.

119 Hinshaw and Jacobi, "What Words Might Do." See also Collis, Davis, and Smith, "Breaking Free while Locked Up," 171, in Hinshaw and Jacobi's special issue of *Reflections* (19, no. 1). This tactical redistribution of power is inspired by feminists committed to social justice. See Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*; Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders*.

120 Hinshaw and Jacobi, "What Words Might Do"; Weil Davis, "Inside-Out."

121 Weil Davis, "Inside-Out."

122 The interviews accompanied a consent form that was signed by all participants, according to IRB requisites.

123 Girshick, *No Safe Haven*.

124 Duff and Garcia Coll, *Reframing the Needs of Women in Prison*, 16.

125 I applied for and received IRB approval on February 21, 2013, to conduct my interviews at WCCC. On February 21, 2014, my IRB approval was renewed for an additional year.

126 The number of women in the classes shifted over the term, with the beginning class being more volatile. Midway, some women were dropped from the class due to behavioral and administrative infractions. At times, there were issues with "wives" taking the class together and disrupting the class community.

127 Clough's class terms run for ten weeks, and there are two terms per year.

128 Huikahi (literally "individual and community") is an Indigenous form of restorative justice. Women's Way is a parole reentry and drug treatment program. Unfortunately, Tessa, who wrote humorous poems, such as "Fat Lips," and was a fan of Angela Davis, was returned to WCCC after a couple months at Women's Way due to a violation of its rules: the use of her cell phone. Tessa accompanied

me to Angela Davis's keynote address "Freedom Is a Constant Struggle," at the University of Hawai'i Mānoa Campus, on April 8, 2016.

129 At the time, Vailea, one of the original Prison Monologues women, was participating in the "outside" Prison Monologues group—Voices From the Inside, which included two other Prison Monologues alumnae. Voices From the Inside was active in addressing the broader community, performing for school groups and conferences.

130 After Vailea, Ivelisse, and Reiko were released from prison, the Prison Monologues lost its core members. Only Liezel remained. Clough established the Prison Monologues Lab, which Liezel led over the summer of 2014 when Clough left for California. I attended a few initial rehearsals and laboratory workshops. Up until early 2015, the group was still in training and had not reached the polish and cohesion of the more established Prison Monologues group. At the first lab rehearsal, Clough disseminated a Prison Monologues expectation guide that addresses credibility, timing, standards, investment, the role of writing, presentation skills, and practice. The guide includes a self-assessment related to teamwork, honesty, leadership, initiative, motivation, and the "serving versus helping philosophy."

131 Tengan, *Native Men Remade*; Franklin and Fuchs, "Shifting Ground." Irwin and Umemoto's *Jacked Up and Unjust* is a nine-year ethnographic collaboration with inner city and rural young people in Hawai'i who confront racism, sexism, poverty, and political negligence.

132 Whitlock, *Soft Weapons*, 119, 122.

1. PEDAGOGY AND PROCESS

1 Allyson wrote "Governmental Seduction" in response to the HBO series *Def Poetry*, which the students viewed in my Friday class in November 2015.

2 Allyson's poem began (as she articulated in class) as a personal ode of seduction that journeyed, perhaps not so strangely, into a critique of the nation-state. Here the erotic sits close to systemic tentacles of power.

3 I use the word *sacred* in this chapter to foreground the transformative nature of life writing in this particular class based on my observations, facilitation of the class, and, foremost, the testimony of the inside women in the interviews I conducted. The healing that occurs in this incarcerated classroom approximates liberation because of the transformational potential this community of writers has for the writers in the class. As the idea of the sacred carries a fraught genealogy, I use this word divorced from any religious context.

4 The idea of "self" is part of the rhetoric omnipresent in the Hina Mauka and Total Life Recovery programs. The women frequently refer to "self" without an article before it as though it is a psychological and epistemological containment.

5 I interrogate the notion of freedom as the inside women reminded me that communities on the outside are often not free psychologically, spiritually, or emotionally.