HAWAIʻI IS MY HAVEN

RACE AND INDIGENEITY IN THE BLACK PACIFIC

NITASHA TAMAR SHARMA

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At home in the islands
At home
In the middle of the sea.

THE BROTHERS CAZIMERO, "HOME IN THE ISLANDS"

Some of the greatest things about being of African descent can't ever exist in America.

BLACK TRANSPLANT TO HAWAIʻI

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WHO IS THE BLACK WOMAN IN HAWAII?

What pulls a person
to a family
to a group?
What does one seek
in a race?
If there is no family
no group
of one's own
How does one satisfy
the taste?
Mechanical to seek
Inevitable to greet
Those others from
Another tribe and place.
Survival is the aim
Communication tames
And trust, not fear
Fills the space.

KATHRYN TAKARA, 1977

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CONTENTS

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HAWAIʻI IS MY HAVEN

> *Field Notes, August 2009*
>
> I met E, a Black nurse from Mississippi, for our interview during her lunch break in the courtyard of Queen's Hospital in Honolulu. She said, "Hawaiʻi is my haven. It's beautiful: the ocean, the beach, the mountains, and mostly the people feel aloha, the spirits. . . . It feels like in Hawaiʻi you can escape your Blackness."

"Haven." "Sanctuary." "Reprieve." These are the words Black residents use to describe Hawaiʻi. They also experience racism, ostracism, and erasure. I illustrate this duality of Black life in Hawaiʻi through the life stories and experiences of hundreds of people of African descent. They include locals who were born and raised in the Hawaiian Islands as well as transplants, like the nurse Ellen, identified as "E" in my field notes, who moved here as adults. The title of this book came from my conversation with Ellen, whom I interviewed in 2009 (just my second interview of the project). While I have stayed in touch with her over the past decade (she read my work and let me identify her), it was only years later that I learned that Ellen had won one of the largest damage awards in an employment discrimination case in the Islands (figure INT.1).[1] When she mentioned her troubling encounters with fellow nurses at our initial interview, she had confided in me, saying, "It's good to speak to another minority that understands." Ellen personifies the irony of attempting to "escape" one's Blackness—or, rather, escape denigrating ideas about Blackness—while facing antiBlack racism in a place of sanctuary.

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Figure INT.1 Ellen Harris, a Black nurse, in 2018 won one of the largest damages awards for employment discrimination in Hawai'i. Source: KITV Island News.

Hawai'i Is My Haven is the first ethnography of Hawai'i's Black civilian residents—a population virtually absent in the popular and scholarly imagination of the Pacific, with the exception of former President Barack Obama. "You can't really understand Barack until you understand Hawai'i," says Michelle Obama.[2] The former president concurred that the Islands shaped him when he explained, "No place else . . . could have provided me with the environment, the climate, in which I could not only grow but also get a sense of being loved. There is no doubt that the residue of Hawai'i will always stay with me, and that it is part of my core, and that what's best in me, and what's best in my message, is consistent with the tradition of Hawai'i."[3]

Yet in his memoir, Obama also describes the racism he faced growing up in Honolulu.[4] Like almost one-fourth of the population of Hawai'i, Obama is multiracial, representing the almost 50 percent of Hawai'i's Black residents

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who identified as more than one race on the 2010 census.[5] Black locals, or African-descended people who are born and raised in the Islands like Obama, often do not have access to Black communities in contrast to Black transplants who move to the Islands as adults from elsewhere, including members of the US armed forces. Raised within nonBlack families, it is their local Hawaiian and Asian community members who inform their feelings of belonging.

Black residents, both local and transplant, are a present absence: although more Black people live in Hawai'i than Sāmoans, who have a significant local imprint, few people recognize them. Hawai'i is at once a site of proliferating Blackness, through the popular local adoption of Black culture, and of Black absence, which includes the denial of the Black civilians who live among us. This absence is due both to the reduced *salience* of Blackness in the Islands, referred to in Ellen's discussion of "escape," and to the displacement of Black people onto the continental United States.

Contesting their erasure, Hawai'i's Black residents were impossible to ignore during the marches, rallies, and vigils held across the Islands in honor of George Floyd, an African American man who was murdered by a Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin, on May 25, 2020. Among the attendees at local events were Black transplants who remarked on this unique moment of potential social transformation. In response to a youth-organized "Hawai'i for Black Lives" march on June 6, 2020, which drew nearly ten thousand people to the state capitol building, retired professor and Morehouse College graduate Robert Steele reflected, "One of the unique things not only here but nationally or internationally is how [rally organizers] hold a demonstration. The whole movement is so ethnically diverse. In fact, the majority of participants are people of color, which is so gratifying."[6] A Black man from Georgia who attended an event a week earlier at Magic Island in Honolulu that drew around two hundred people to memorialize Floyd highlighted Hawai'i's uniqueness: "This is a fantasy to me, people of different hues, different backgrounds all together," he said. "This is how it should be."[7]

The realities of racism, however, cloud sunny depictions of Hawai'i as a multicultural and harmonious society. A Black Hawaiian community organizer, Shayna Lonoaea-Alexander, told a reporter that "a lot of folks believe that because Hawai'i is a melting pot that anti-blackness doesn't exist here. . . . Anti-blackness and racism exists in Hawai'i and it's unacceptable and it's on all of us to fight for Hawai'i, to fight for a country where being black isn't a death sentence."[8] Dr. Akiemi Glenn, a Black transplant to Hawai'i, explains in a June 2020 interview at the height of protests,

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Figure INT.2 *All Colors Are in This Together. #blacklivesmatter*. The Maui surfer, Roderick Nathan, holds a surfboard commemorating George Floyd during a paddle out in honor of Black men and women murdered by the police. Photo by Conan Gentil, May 31, 2020.

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> In addition to watching the stuff that's happening in North America over the last week, we're . . . grappling with the blatant and often unrecognized antiBlackness that's a part of Hawai'i culture. I'd be remiss to talk about what's happening in North America without also contextualizing threats that have been made against Black people even . . . here in Hawai'i. . . . As people here have been organizing vigils and demonstrations and socially distanced gatherings, there have also been calls for nonBlack locals to come and keep an eye on us to make sure that we don't become violent.[9]

Glenn, the cofounder and executive director of the Pōpolo Project, an organization documenting Black life in the Pacific, deciphers these responses as local adoptions of antiBlack racism: "So even though we live here and we are part of this community, there's still this suspicion of criminality that's associated with any kind of Black people and Black gatherings."[10]

Hawai'i's Black population faces global antiBlack racism and local erasure simultaneously. On the one hand, locals presume that the Black people they encounter in Hawai'i are temporarily stationed in the Islands as part of the US military, and thus as agents of state power. On the other hand, local and tourist framings of the Islands as devoid of Black civilians allow this place to imagine itself as free from the racial problems that beleaguer the United States.[11] As a result, Black locals appear an oxymoron, an impossibility. Speaking of sentiments expressed by Black community members in Hawai'i surrounding weeks of activism in response to George Floyd's murder, Glenn explains, "Many folks are feeling very tired. . . . But what I think that tiredness is about is that exhaustion comes with constantly having to explain yourself and your humanity. And for many Black locals, having to explain that we live here, and that we are part of this community" and "part of the local people."[12] Black people are not considered to be from the Islands but rather are an ignored minority in a mostly nonWhite place. It is more the case that Blackness has been adopted by Pacific Islanders who embrace Black cultural forms, such as reggae and Rastafarianism, and Black politics, including the ideologies of the Black Panthers expressed by the Polynesian Panthers in Aotearoa/New Zealand, without concrete reference to or knowledge about the African diaspora. This reduction of Blackness to culture and ideology results in the excision of actual African-descended people from our local and scholarly understanding of Hawai'i.

The prioritization of frameworks of culture and ethnicity in tourism, local discourse, and research on Hawai'i contributes to the erasure of Hawai'i's Black civilians. Without an analysis of *race*, we cannot understand, or even *see*, Black life in the Pacific. In a June 2018 interview during one of her visits to

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Hawai'i, the cofounder of the Black Lives Matter movement Patrisse Khan-Cullors stated:

> Black struggles and freedom struggles, in particular, have had such an important impact on the globe. Everywhere I go, Black Lives Matter is understood as part of a long legacy, a movement, of Black people trying to fight for our freedom. It doesn't always mean that it's going to translate into a particular place. . . . *Maybe Black Lives Matter doesn't make sense here, but maybe the conversation about Blackness makes sense here*. And how do we translate that. . . . Let's talk about Blackness and its relationship to our context [in Hawai'i], not Black Lives Matter in the US. (italics added)[13]

Khan-Cullors's sentiment that Black Lives Matter may not "translate" or "make sense" in Hawai'i is uncanny in light of the protests during the summer of 2020. Her comments illustrate the widespread erasure of Black residents described by Glenn. Discussions of Blackness in Hawai'i before 2020 and even during these international uprisings pivoted to Melanesians, anti-Micronesian racism in Hawai'i, and reflections on the widespread adoption of reggae and hip hop. Few acknowledge the presence of Black people living within these communities, except for Black community leaders like Joy Enomoto, an artist and activist who is Black, Asian, and Hawaiian, and Akiemi Glenn, a Black, Asian, and Native American linguist with genealogical ties to the areas now known as North Carolina and Virginia. They have both been called on to "translate" the importance of the recent Black protests taking place across the nation to the Hawai'i context.

I join these efforts to address Khan-Cullors's call for a conversation about the value of Black life in the Pacific by providing the necessary context: mapping the histories, lives, and politics of Black people in Hawai'i. To realize the potential of solidarity that Khan-Cullors, a queer Black woman artist, organizer, and freedom fighter, hopes for requires us to address locally specific tensions that stall Black and Hawaiian comradeship.[14] Khan-Cullors's travels across the Pacific led her to recognize the intersection of race and indigeneity. She observes, "Hawai'i has always been an interesting place for me when I think about indigeneity and Black Indigeneity in particular. . . . I've learned much more about colonialism in Hawai'i and the US military's impact here in Hawai'i and the kind of role Black Lives Matter has the opportunity of playing when it comes to having a broader conversation about globalization and a broader conversation about solidarity work."[15] In the Islands, the local context necessary for understanding the particular contours of Black life includes its colonial history, military occupation, and Asian settler colonialism. This

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Figure INT.3 Dr. Akiemi Glenn, executive director of the Pōpolo Project. Photo by Michael McDermott.

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setting informs clashing ideas about what issues matter locally and how best to go about addressing them—dynamics that shape Black and Hawaiian relations.

Some of the tensions framing relationships between Black and Hawaiian people convened around two movements that reached a crescendo in 2020, both of which I consider to be struggles for liberation: the Movement for Black Lives against police brutality and Kānaka (Native Hawaiians, or Hawaiians) self-determination represented by the kiaʻi, or Native Hawaiian protectors. The kiaʻi stationed on Maunakea, a mountain of ancestral significance that has also been claimed as a site for astronomy, have mobilized to stop the desecration of their land proposed by the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope.[16] Earning global support, the protectors went to the mountain on the Big Island of Hawaiʻi to disrupt a planned groundbreaking ceremony on October 14, 2014. Hawaiian activists, including the kūpuna (elders), have since camped out in the cold and faced arrest while successfully blocking the ongoing march of the settler state's attempt to bulldoze Hawaiians' rights to make decisions about their land.[17]

Native Hawaiian activists have been guided by their kuleana (rights and responsibilities) and the practice of kapu aloha, or "the commitment to nonviolent direct action" that fosters "compassion and respect while engaged in politicized expressions of outrage and disobedience."[18] The same principles of kuleana and kapu aloha guide the protests against antiBlack racism in Hawaiʻi. More often, however, locals frame the struggle for Kānaka self-determination on the one hand and the desire for the recognition of Black humanity on the other hand to be discrete and contestatory aims. More concerning, when African-descended people in Hawaiʻi do voice their concerns in ways informed by a legacy of Black struggle, other locals dismiss their problems and disparage their strategies as not representative of "aloha." The Hawaiʻi reporter Anita Hofschneider reflected on this contradictory response to Black and Hawaiian activism: "Social media posts also compared violent protests [against police violence] on the continent with peaceful Native Hawaiian protests in Hawaii against the Thirty Meter Telescope on Mauna Kea."[19] She interviewed the Black Hawaiian organizer Shayna Lonoaea-Alexander, who explained, "There's a lot of online discourse right now around Kanaka (Native Hawaiians) trying to police the way black folks are grieving and protesting and I think it's so unacceptable," she says, speaking of the depiction of Black protest as "violent."[20] Lonoaea-Alexander calls out the lack of reciprocity between Hawaiian and Black activists, saying, "We asked the world to stand with us [Hawaiians] (on Mauna Kea) and I think that the world really responded but when black folks

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are asking it's a different story. . . . I'm tired of people who look like my dad or my brother or my sister being killed."[21]

Despite these divisions, the Movement for Black Lives and kiaʻi protecting the Mauna against desecration are fighting against the same sources of oppression: state-sanctioned violence, racism, and colonialism. The police enforce the White supremacist settler state even when the officers are nonWhite and are even one's family members, as they often are in Hawaiʻi. By extending themselves to learn about Black struggles, two Hawaiian collectives cultivating Hawaiian knowledge and fighting for Indigenous self-determination, Puʻuhonua o Puʻuhuluhulu and the Hawaiʻi Unity & Liberation Institute (HULI), issued a "Joint Statement of Solidarity for the Protection of Black Lives" on June 5, 2020. The statement proclaimed their solidarity with Black communities fighting against police violence:

> While we share in histories of oppression and colonialism, we recognize and understand that our lived experience is not the same as the Black experience in America and we refuse to use Kapu Aloha to judge their response to struggle for survival. We acknowledge with great pride and humility the influence that black struggle has had on the Hawaiian movement and political consciousness and call upon the lāhui (Hawaiian Nation) to learn about the relationship between black and Hawaiian struggle.[22]

The statement frames Black and Hawaiian people, experiences, and politics as distinct and calls for Kānaka to learn about their political cross-fertilization. They also recognize "our Black Hawaiian relatives," people whose voices I center in this ethnography: "Anti-blackness is a problem in our communities, and we must work to understand the many forms that it takes in Hawaiʻi. We must address this issue together and commit to stand as kiaʻi (protectors) against anti-blackness and racism," the statement urges.

This book offers a framework for understanding these discussions that acknowledge agency and oppression. *Hawaiʻi Is My Haven* maps the context and contours of Black life in Hawaiʻi that frame relationships among people in the Islands. It centers both Black locals and Black transplants to Hawaiʻi who encounter a life of integration and invisibility. My focus on Black residents includes Black Hawaiians, or the children of Black and Native Hawaiian parents, who do not abide by either the local Hawaiʻi or North American academic framing of Black and Indigenous people as disparate groups living in distinct geographies and advocating divergent politics. The kuleana of Hawaiʻi residents to urgently address antiBlack racism and Indigenous self-determination

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in a settler state is clear in the current predicament of Black residents. Akiemi Glenn expresses the specific needs of Hawai'i's Black residents during a period of mourning in the summer of 2020: "Of course, we are feeling the 'eha (hurt, pain) and the heaviness of what's happening in North America very much, but we also love Hawai'i and will behave accordingly as we are grieving."[23]

Black people grieve in a place they may consider their haven and sanctuary, far from the Middle Passage and the Black Atlantic.[24] Black transplants grew up in Black communities, and their perspectives are informed by the history of slavery and antiBlack racism. Their worldviews are challenged in the Black Pacific, where Indigenous epistemologies and local cultural practices take precedence. They are part of a two-centuries-long lineage of Black arrivals who have experienced historical acceptance and integration into Hawaiian society. This is what shapes a sense of optimism and possibility for African-descended people, notably personified by Obama. However, Black residents, both locals and transplants, also trouble this positive depiction through their accounts of invisibility and experiences with antiBlack racism in contemporary Hawai'i. Shifting the focus from what is exceptional about Obama, I ask, What alternative to elsewhere, and particularly the continental United States, does Hawai'i provide to members of the African diaspora? How is it that Black civilians experience antiBlack racism yet nonetheless declare Hawai'i to be their haven?

The Difference of Hawai'i

[The Kingdom of Hawai'i was] a neutral country, that sought to have friendly relations with countries throughout the world, that gave a home to people of multiple ethnicities that wanted to be here at a time when in other countries, they were enslaved.

NOELANI GOODYEAR-KA'ŌPUA, 2018

I can remember when Hawai'i became a state; I was just a little girl [in Alabama], and all the Black people were so excited. Because it was basically a nonWhite state. And we knew that. And so it was exciting that this kind of a thing could happen. [Us] not understanding all of the history, of course, and the dispossession and the overthrow—any of that. But it was just this model of equality, if you will, that was so incredible.

BLACK LONG-TERM RESIDENT

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Hawai‘i, a place with no clear demographic majority, has been heralded as an ideal multicultural society because of its racial and ethnic diversity.[25] In his visit to the Islands in 1959, the year of statehood, Martin Luther King Jr. commended the Hawai‘i State Legislature: “I come to you with a great deal of appreciation, I should say, for what has been accomplished in this beautiful setting and in this beautiful state of our Union,” particularly, he noted, “in the area of racial harmony and racial justice.”[26] Today, nearly one in every two marriages is interracial or interethnic, resulting in a large number of multiracial people, at almost a quarter of the overall population. Of Hawai‘i’s 1.25 million residents, Asians make up 41 percent, Whites 24 percent, and Native Hawaiians approximately 20 percent.[27] Yet all this attention to Hawai‘i’s diversity curiously neglects a group so central to America’s understanding of itself: Black people.

Residents and representations of Hawai‘i remain silent on the question of its Black population, except for individuals in entertainment and politics.[28] They include Barack Obama, Janet Mock, and Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson—figures who are often read nationally as Black, but locally as multiracial. The invisibility of the Islands’ Black population in today’s scholarship on Hawai‘i and on the African diaspora, tourism literature, and local discourse could be due to Black people’s small demographics, at 3.5 percent in 2018. However, their population has increased every decade for the past eighty years.[29] The historical and current erasure of Black people is belied by their growth (a 16 percent increase in the last decade) and the prevalence of Black popular culture. Blindness to the contemporary presence of Black men and women mirrors a historical omission of what has been an almost 250-year-old story.[30]

Subject to hyperbole, Hawai‘i is described by the popular press as “the most isolated population center on the face of the earth.”[31] Indeed, it takes a five-hour flight to get to Hawai‘i from California, and almost nine hours from Japan. The Hawaiian Islands, in the center of the largest ocean on earth, consist of eight main islands: the Big Island of Hawai‘i, Kaua‘i, Maui, Lāna‘i, Kaho‘olawe, Moloka‘i, Ni‘ihau, and O‘ahu. O‘ahu, the site of this ethnography, houses the state capital of Honolulu, the Islands’ largest and most populated city, within which lies the tourist mecca of Waikīkī. These islands, together with numerous other isles and atolls, appear discrete, reachable by airplane, boat, and canoe. Yet they form an archipelago united undersea by a volcano chain, and united politically between 1795 and 1810 by King Kamehameha I.

The Hawaiian scholar Ty Tengan summarizes, “Despite the establishment of a monarchy (1810) and international recognition of the Hawaiian Kingdom’s

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independence (1843), the nation suffered an overthrow (1893) backed by the U.S. military and annexation (1898)—both done illegally."[32] After the 1893 coup against the reigning queen, President Cleveland admonished, "It appears that Hawaii was taken possession of by the United States forces without the consent or wish of the government of the islands. . . . Therefore the military occupation of Honolulu by the United States . . . was wholly without justification, either as an occupation by consent or as an occupation necessitated by dangers threatening American life and property."[33] Congress refused the President's orders to reinstate the Queen.

In light of this history and with respect for Hawaiian self-determination, I do not typify Hawai'i as a state or conflate it with the rest of the United States. Rather, I refer to the continental United States or the contiguous forty-eight states (rather than "the mainland," a term that decenters the Islands) in distinction to this unique site. Hawai'i is a state that is not a state. It houses the US Indo-Pacific Command. It is a place illegally occupied by the United States. It is a site of active Indigenous resistance for an independent nation.

Whereas residents are profoundly aware of Hawai'i's colonial history of usurpation, scholars and the tourist industry advance representations of Hawai'i as a site of exception, the epitome of a harmonious multicultural and multiracial society that forecasts national demographic changes. Social scientists affiliated with the Chicago school of sociology focused on its diversity, group relations, and mixed race marriages and their children to depict Hawai'i as a "racial frontier." The demographer and University of Chicago graduate Romanzo Adams came to O'ahu in 1920 when the college became the University of Hawai'i, and he founded the departments of sociology, economics, anthropology, and social work. Adams was followed by fellow Chicago graduates Andrew Lind (arriving in 1927 and retiring in 1967) and Robert Park (1931–1932), both of whom studied race and Island demographics.[34] Shelley Lee and Rick Baldoz review how these early social scientists conceived of Hawai'i as "racial laboratory," a "fascinating interracial experiment station," whose study could "yield insights about racial dynamics and social change that might be brought to bear on understanding and solving race problems in other parts of the United States."[35] Today, Hawai'i's demographics and multiculturalism continue to interest not only scholars but also mainstream Americans, whose perceptions of the isles are shaped by a tourism industry invested in obscuring its direct links to militarism, plantation histories, and the illegal overthrow of the monarchy. It is this history, however, that shapes the contours of Black life in Hawai'i.

This history—including the absence of a slave past—plays out in contemporary group demographics and dynamics. The Black and White binary

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is not primary; immigrants do not refer to Latinos (who constitute a full 10 percent of the population); disenfranchised groups include Hawaiians, Sāmoans, and Filipinos, as well as recent Micronesian immigrants; and local Chinese and Japanese, along with haole, or White people, have political and economic clout.[36] Rather than viewing the Black population as the primary native-born minority, locals consider them (along with Whites) to be sojourners, cultural outsiders, and part of an unwelcome military presence, or else athletes or reggae artists. The conception of Black people as arrivals from elsewhere and unfamiliar with local culture informs the subjectivities of Black transplants. They come mostly from the United States, but also from Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Caribbean, and find themselves to be just one among many nonWhite groups. In a similar reversal of their racialization in the continental United States, Asians are often presumed to be island-born residents who have created local culture through their linguistic, culinary, and other practices from the mid-nineteenth-century plantation times to the present. Much of this, along with the large mixed race population, marks Hawai'i as exceptional.

Black life in Hawai'i is exceptional as well, distinct from elsewhere. Black people made up 3.5 percent of Hawai'i's population in 2018, or 48,863 residents, making them the sixth-largest group, just after Chinese.[37] One-quarter of the Black population is Island born, with the rest coming mostly from the continental United States (5 percent are born abroad).[38] In a 2014 article in *Black Enterprise* crowning Hawai'i the state with the highest Black household wealth, Kenneth Clark extols: "Topping our list is one of the most beautiful places created by God's design. Better known as 'Paradise,' black residents who live in Hawaii make the most . . . at a whopping $66,629."[39] People of African descent also have the Islands' highest rate of high school graduation and employment while being the "race least likely to be in poverty in Honolulu."[40] What accounts for these economic opportunities and racial trends for Black residents? The answer partially rests in the institutions that bring them here.

The armed forces employ one-fifth of the entire Black population in Hawai'i, who, along with their dependents, make the military the second biggest employer of Black residents. More than 30 percent of Black civilians are veterans.[41] Thirty-three percent of Black residents work for the federal and state government.[42] These statistics may account for why the Black online source TheRoot.com named Hawai'i the "number one best state for Black people" in 2014.[43] Certainly, these figures reflect a version of Black success that some people may contrast with the rest of the nation. The conflation of "Black" with "military" is hegemonic in Hawai'i; it is difficult to overstate its effect on all Black residents. At the same time, this conflation is historically

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inaccurate and denies the realities of Black nonmilitary civilians. This ethnography expands the focus on Black soldiers in the Pacific to include Black locals, or Hawai'i-born-and-raised people of African descent, who are mostly multiracial, primarily raised in nonBlack families, and occupy a range of class statuses.

Hawai'i Is My Haven breathes life into these facts and figures, illustrating the contradictions of Hawai'i as both a sanctuary and site of antiBlack racism. After all, Black residents pay the most for rent, work more hours than all other groups, and are the tenth-highest-paid group.[44] These figures do not relate what emerges as the central theme from my interviews with sixty African-descended locals and transplants: this predominantly nonWhite society with a significant Indigenous population moderates White racism and thus expands the opportunities for Black people.

An Ethnographic Account

This inaugural ethnography of Hawai'i's Black population—also the only ethnography of African American civilians in Oceania—draws from a decade of fieldwork to address two questions: What does the Pacific offer people of African descent? And what do Black transplants bring to Hawai'i that leads to a deeper understanding of the Islands? Black locals recount how Blackness resonates differently—as both more expansive and less salient—than elsewhere, specifically the contiguous forty-eight states. Black transplants, on the other hand, bring with them a *racial lens*, or an analytical view that, in contrast to dominant representations of the Islands, both sees and dissects racism as a central component of local power dynamics. Transplants insist that a racial hierarchy prevails in this "Pacific paradise"—albeit, they find, not a Black and White one.

Hawai'i offers an alternative to life otherwise: a society that prohibited slavery in the nineteenth century and a site of "less pressure" today.[45] Participants describe their relief from relentless structural, police, and class oppression and from what they describe as the expectations of "being Black" in their daily lives. Nonetheless, Black men and women living in Hawai'i experience racism, within the intimacies of their homes and as they navigate the institutions that hire them. Whereas the general Island ethos amplifies cultural and ethnic differences to celebrate multiculturalism, Black people who move here highlight the vectors of racism that they confront. At the same time, the large Asian population, significant Indigenous presence, and notable Black absence confound them. Upon arrival, they see that in these Pacific islands, the targets of racism are not always Black, and the perpetrators are not always White.

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A living contestation of White supremacy, Hawai'i offers a contrast to US racial formations. For over two centuries, Black people have experienced integration and acceptance in Hawai'i rather than segregation and systemic oppression. Black locals, who are raised in a place that lacks a large Black presence (or Black Metropolis)[46] and where nearly a quarter of people are multiracial, offer a different orientation to debates about Blackness and multiracialism within African American studies and mixed race studies. This place has been home to generations of island-born people of African descent, from the children of Cape Verdean mariners' unions with Hawaiian women in the early nineteenth century to the people I interviewed who have Black fathers and Hawaiian, Korean, and other nonWhite mothers. Rather than signaling the end of racism or upholding the sociological fantasy of Hawai'i as a "fascinating interracial experiment," Black multiracial people in Hawai'i emerge from the entangled tentacles of oppression.[47] These processes, including colonization, dispossession, exploitation, disenfranchisement, racism, and militarism, shape the lives and perspectives of Hawai'i's Black civilians.

The historical scholarship on this population is scant, based largely on nineteenth-century missionary and shipping archives. In other words, much of it comes from European and American perspectives. Other work details the military history in the Pacific with a focus on World War II, which created a diaspora of African American soldiers—and their children—across Oceania, from Hawai'i to Sāmoa, from New Hebrides to New Caledonia. Important exceptions include the narratives of women scholars and artists of African and Pacific Islander descent, including Teresia Teaiwa, Courtney-Savali Andrews, and Joy Enomoto.[48] Important recent scholarship on Hawai'i draws from Hawaiian language sources;[49] however, in centering Hawaiian-haole relations and Asian plantation histories, they have not looked for Black figures before the twentieth century. Twentieth-century sociologists, demographers, historians, and Black scholars living in Hawai'i provide the most relevant studies, but none charts the *lives* of Hawai'i's Black population.

Linking the current civilian presence to Hawai'i's history expands our understanding of the Islands beyond multiculturalism and the armed forces. Encounters between Black people from elsewhere and those from the Islands highlight locals' (including Black locals') unawareness about the history and concerns of the African diaspora. As a result, this expanded knowledge provides people of African descent with a location and sense of belonging. At the same time, Hawai'i and its residents offer African Americans and other members of the African diaspora ways of thinking about the self that decenter "Middle Passage epistemologies," which, according to Michelle Wright, follow a

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"linear progress narrative" that fixes the Middle Passage as definitive of Blackness.[50] I heed Wright's call to look to examples that fall outside the "Africa to America" narrative. What happens over time—and sometimes quickly—is that people begin to foreground connective relationships to land, people, and ancestries in ways not determined by the boundaries and histories of White-ordained racial formation.

My articulation of the Black Pacific does not erase Native Hawaiians but rather engages them in their home, where African-descended people find themselves read through Native Hawaiians' historical engagements with Blackness.[51] This includes Hawaiians' reverence for Pō (the generative darkness); haole missionaries' historical transference of their ideas of Black inferiority onto Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians); the European construct and ensuing Pacific Islander adoption of the colonial divisions of the Pacific, including Melanesians; and the global influence of Black expressive forms.[52] (I use "Kanaka," "Kanaka Maoli" (Kānaka, plural), and "Kanaka ʻŌiwi" interchangeably with "Hawaiian" and "Native Hawaiian." "Hawaiian" does not refer to everyone from the Islands (e.g., I say that I am from Hawaiʻi, but I am not Hawaiian); it is not like calling someone a "New Yorker." These terms refer only to the Indigenous people of Hawaiʻi—to those with Hawaiian ancestry who are the descendants of the first inhabitants of the Hawaiian Islands.)[53] I add to these various layers and valences of Hawaiʻi's engagement with Blackness a missing component: the actual experiences of members of the African diaspora in the Pacific, Black people in the Hawaiian Islands.

This project speaks across the "studies": it addresses debates between Black studies and critical mixed race studies (see my analysis of multiracialism in chapter 2); it brings Pacific Islands studies into conversation with Black studies (chapter 3); and most centrally, it addresses tense debates between Black and Native studies that center historical and political disputes (discussed at length in chapter 5). My ethnographic illustration of Black and Hawaiian encounters expands theories of (Asian) settler colonialism, Black agency and abjection, and the Black/White, local/nonlocal, and native/settler binaries—all more fully discussed across the chapters. Documenting daily life fleshes out, and in some cases directly contests, totalizing abstract theories of Black life and death, Native erasure, and frameworks that prioritize some forms of oppression over others. It also animates the Islands as more than a primarily Asian locale. This is not a binary analysis. Unlike many scholars of transpacific studies, I expand beyond the "cultures of the Asian diaspora" by stopping *in the Pacific*.[54] Additionally, whereas North American studies analyze triangulated Native-Black-settler (White) relations, Hawaiʻi-based scholars analyze

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the relationship of Native Hawaiian-Asian-haole triangulation. How do Black people emerge within this paradigm? How do they disrupt it? I theorize the relations between Hawaiians, Asians, and Black people while decentering haole.

Less studied—and the focus of my project—is the role of race and racism in Hawai'i.[55] Members of the African diaspora illustrate how central these systems are to understanding life *for all people* in the Islands. Black transplants bring an explicitly racialized framework—a racial lens—to the Islands. Black Americans often grow up within a particular set of relations informed by the history of slavery, segregation, and antiBlack racism. This framework allows them to understand group dynamics through a continental US perspective that includes an awareness of the differential access to resources based on race. Along with a Black/White understanding of difference, they may advance the one-drop rule, or the rule of hypodescent, which states that if you have a "drop" of Black blood, you are (just) Black. At the same time, they also bring knowledge of counterhegemonic ideologies of Black resistance, cultural expressionism, and a deep sense of connectivity among members of the African diaspora. A racial lens includes an analysis of White supremacy and a deep awareness of the workings of racism that they see as crossing oceans to settle in a place where haole are not a majority. This perspective contests depictions of Hawai'i as a "multiracial paradise," challenging locals' tendency to view racism as a problem that happens "over there," as a problem only plaguing the continental United States. At the same time, Black transplants encounter a site of persistent Indigenous resistance against haole oppression—resistance they relate to and consider as a model for liberation. Local dynamics and Native politics reorient people who are used to understanding their position as oppressed within a Black and White binary.

The Black Pacific

"The Black Pacific," a term used to describe the movements of African-descended people, aesthetics, and politics across Oceania, is a growing area of study generally attended to by historians.[56] Whereas the majority of the literature on the Black Pacific centers the military and reads Blackness as embodied by either Black American soldiers or else in reference to cultural and political formations (reggae, Black Power ideologies, and aesthetics), I center the lives of civilians who identify as Black and as members of the African diaspora. I use the Black Pacific as an ethnographic, conceptual, and geographic concept. The Black Pacific is descriptive—it includes my ethnographic charting of the daily lives of African-descended people in a Pacific site. It is geographical, focusing

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on a place deemed "the most isolated place on earth" that is intimately tied to global imperial powers (the United States and Japan). It is contemporary, in contrast to studies fixated on World War II. And it is conceptual, offering a counterpoint to the Black Atlantic, bringing Pacific Islands studies into conversation with Black studies.

Scholars who use the term "the Black Pacific" include those who skip *over* the Pacific to speak about the Americas and Asia, including the study of African American men in East and Southeast Asia and other Afro-Asian projects.[57] In these works, as in much of transpacific studies, peoples and societies are evacuated from Oceania, which emerges as a vast, watery "flyover" expanse, a place not productive on its own. The Hawai'i-based scholars Paul Lyons and Ty Tengan explain, "'Asia-Pacific' and the 'Transpacific' often sublate Pacific Island and Islander priorities within models that originate outside of the Islands."[58] Engaging a Pacific society on its own terms involves grappling with a deeply local context.

An ethnography of the Black Pacific that centers people associated with transatlantic slavery brings the Black Atlantic theorized by Paul Gilroy into conversation with Pacific indigeneities.[59] It thus contributes to research on the appeal of Black politics and aesthetics across Oceania, which includes Robbie Shilliam's analysis of Rastafarianism in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Bernida Webb-Binder's study of Black Pacific art in the United States and Aotearoa, and Gabriel Solis's examination of music in Australia and Papua New Guinea, islands whose people have been considered Black.[60] Power is at play not only among Polynesians, Micronesians, and Melanesians but also within these categories of people as they consider notions of Whiteness and Blackness.

White colonizers parsed Pacific Islanders into a tripartite racial taxonomy of Melanesians, Polynesians, and Micronesians, informed by their encounter with Africa. Melanesians, so named owing to their melanin, emerge in discussions of Blackness in the Pacific as the result of cartographies of European colonial racial taxonomies. Pacific Islanders have generated their own conceptions of Blackness and darkness. This includes Hawaiians' reverence for Pō, or darkness, and the identification of some Indigenous Australians and Papua New Guineans with Blackness and as Black. Together, these colonial and Indigenous conceptions shape the experiences of Black people in Hawai'i—experiences that, for African Americans, are distinct from those of both Africans and Melanesians.

The racial dynamics that exist in the Pacific contextualize but do not explain the experiences of the people in my study. This project focuses primarily on African Americans and people who identify as part of the African diaspora rather

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than on Melanesians, whom the Fijian scholar Ponipate Rokolekutu describes "as the black people of the Pacific."[61] "In mapping Oceania," writes the political scientist Tarcisius Kabutaulaka, "Melanesia was the only subregion named after the skin color of its inhabitants: the 'black-skinned people' or 'black islands.'"[62] Linked to colonial constructs of Africans, this informs Melanesians' placement at the "bottom" of the racialized hierarchy of Pacific Islanders. Rokolekutu explains, "Oceanian epistemologies are deeply racialized." He continues: "The European discourse on race has subsequently informed racialized epistemologies and racial categorization in Oceania. Melanesia[ns] are represented as inferior while a degree of deference is accorded to Polynesians. Both Melanesians and Polynesians have internalized such perceptions which subsequently dictates race dynamics in Oceania."[63]

Blackness is a concept rather than an essence, an ideology rather than biology. As such, the people of Oceania have adopted these constructs that inform their relations. Hawaiians were conceived of by Europeans as "almost White" Polynesians and thus granted higher status than Micronesians or Melanesians—the latter considered "Oceanic Negroes" or "ignoble savages"—who lacked the former's societal development, physical beauty, and potential.[64] Yet in the nineteenth century, Hawaiians too were called "niggers" (a term that I never say aloud in any iteration), as well as "Indians," while today Micronesians are targets of antiBlack racism in Hawai'i.

Africans and African diasporic people from North America, Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean are read *through* and also *separately from* these legacies and meanings of Pacific Blackness. Melanesians and some Indigenous Australians share with African-descended people the denigration of their darkness, connecting them to colonial constructs of African inferiority, an antiBlack ideology fueled by White supremacy that belts the globe.[65] They are also bonded through their resistant and powerful identifications as Black.[66] Yet African Americans, rather than Melanesians, find that they are the ones viewed as the repositories of "the Black experience" that people in Hawai'i imagine when referring to Blackness. When African Americans move to the Pacific, therefore, they are interpolated through these existing ideological layers. At the same time, they serve as representatives of hegemonic Blackness (including Black politics, popular culture, and notions of racialized violence and sexuality) that circulate the globe, and are intercepted in specifically Black American ways.

Colonists may have tried to fix people of Oceania into Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia, yet in practice, people fuck with conceptions of who is what, including who and what "Black" is in the Pacific. Hawai'i does not

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conform to the Black/White binary of the continental United States in part because of its large Asian demographic, strong Native Hawaiian presence, and mixed race population. Yet perhaps the most evident example of resistance to the White racial hierarchy is simply the nonsalience of Blackness in Hawai'i and Hawaiians' historical acceptance of African diasporic people. Blackness is expansive—it refers to politics, to aesthetics, and to populations that circulate the oceans. Blackness does not conform to taxonomic categories and does not stick fixedly to bodies. The Canadian Black diaspora studies scholar Rinaldo Walcott says that "the wonderful thing about blackness is that it is a sign in which we are not exactly sure what might sit underneath it or what might sit within it, but yet there is a history that shapes what we mean by it when we invoke it."[67]

(Mixed) Race and Indigeneity

I place race at the center of this study without forcing US-centric models on the Hawai'i context. Race, along with indigeneity and settler colonialism, explains the relationship between Black, Hawaiian, and Asian people; highlights the dynamics of belonging; and challenges the dominant theories of ethnicity and culture as the operative dynamic among groups in the Islands. Ethnicity is an individual's chosen identity, including cultural practices and ancestry. On the other hand, race is not always a selected identity and is often imputed on people. A racial analysis centers historical processes of racialization and racism, which highlight power and inequality among groups. People can thus have racial and ethnic identities (e.g., being identified as Black and identifying as Nigerian, or identifying as Black and Nigerian). People across the United States are also identifying in growing numbers with more than one racial category, or as multiracial—the fastest-growing population in the United States. If the scholarship on Hawai'i has focused on ethnicity—despite earlier Chicago school scholars' research on "race"—less studied and the center of my argument is how groups in Hawai'i are differentially racialized for the economic and political gain of powerful interests and institutions.

People also identify along the lines of race *and* indigeneity, such as the Black Hawaiians in this project, or people with a Black parent and a Native Hawaiian parent. I maintain the specificity of Kānaka indigeneity rather than viewing Hawaiians as just another ethnic group or racial category. At the same time, Hawaiians and other Indigenous people have been racialized through colonization and disempowerment. Although race and indigeneity are distinct processes and categories of identity, law, and materiality, they overlap in

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important ways for Black residents of Hawai'i, and particularly Black Hawaiians. The Islands' history, Kanaka Maoli practices, and local culture inform how people understand and express themselves here, expressions that arrivals from elsewhere may find puzzling.

Exchanges among groups in Hawai'i unsettle both hypodescent and the expectation that people identify monoracially, or with just one race. Black locals disagree with scholars who argue that the category of Black is expansive enough to acknowledge multiracialism.[68] People I interviewed forgo a "Black-only" identity and instead adopt the Hawaiian practice of hyperdescent, whereby they acknowledge all their ancestries. Rather than interpreting this as antiBlack, a flight from Blackness, or internalized racism, I read such choices through Kanaka epistemologies that reveal practices of expansive inclusion.

Critics of multiracialism argue that discussions of "mixed race" lead to the quantification of what is a socially constructed process of racialization. In Hawai'i, the quantification of race coexists with an elastic handling of ancestry. Federally imposed policies still require evidence of blood quantum to be eligible for certain material resources. However, people debate who is and is not Hawaiian "enough" by calling on ancestry as well as cultural capital and knowledge. Both Hawaiian and Black people, despite their multiple ancestries, often highlight their Hawaiianness or Blackness, respectively. As Brandon Ledward writes in his study of Hawaiian hapas (multiracial people), "rather than playing up our many ethnicities often times most of us choose to posture ourselves as simply Hawaiian."[69] Yet, after living in the Islands for some time, Black transplants, who formerly identified as Black only, tended to recount all their ancestries when asked, "What are you?" The Black Pacific provides opportunities for expansive identifications because of both the relative invisibility of Blackness and the prominence of Indigenous epistemologies. At the same time, Black locals are integrated into local nonBlack networks of kin and community and may not learn about the African diaspora. They come up against racial authenticators from elsewhere who apply stringent conceptions of hypodescent and monoracialism that shape Black locals' ambivalence to Blackness.

Analyzing how Black Hawaiians navigate ideas of Blackness alongside Kanaka ideas of genealogy and belonging brings Black studies into conversation with Pacific Islands studies. Brandon Ledward explores group dynamics among Hawaiians whose communities are filled with people of multiple ancestries. Ledward wants to "examine the implications of multidentity among Hawaiians who feel strong connections to diverse ethnic groups."[70] His ethnography illustrates "social factors contributing to the notion of 'Hawaiian enough'

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and discuss[es] the implications processes of racialization have within the contemporary lāhui Hawai'i (Hawaiian community)."[71] The vast majority of Hawaiians—like African Americans—are of mixed ancestry (Ledward says up to 98 percent of Kānaka Maoli).[72] His study of "hapahaole" (people with Native Hawaiian and European ancestries) attempts to bridge the divide of hapa and Hawaiian as separate categories, which emerges as one impact of US racialist thought on Hawaiian epistemologies that my research also emphasizes.[73]

If the experiences of Black people in Hawai'i seem primarily to highlight how race operates, the lives of Black Hawaiians reveal how race and indigeneity intersect. While Ledward looks at White and Brown Hawaiians, or Hawaiians who cross the categories of Hawaiian, local, and haole, Black Hawaiians reflect the unique ways that Blackness (rather than haoleness) functions and is de/valued within Native communities. The historical racialization of Black people and the local emphasis on being Native Hawaiian explains why participants in this project who have Hawaiian mothers and Black fathers identify as both Black and Hawaiian. Hawai'i's unique context reveals the problem in critiquing this mode of multiracial identification—a critique (often accompanied with suspicion) that emerges from mapping a continental Black/White, monoracial, and hypodescent framework onto both the Pacific and multiracialism.

Black Residents and Asian Settler Colonialism

The work on settler colonialism in Hawai'i has not yet taken Black people into account. Even in the most recent books on Hawai'i, one cannot find the terms "Black" or "African American" (or even "race") in their indexes. If in the continental United States, settler colonialism is viewed as a White/Native structure of Native erasure that relegates Indigenous peoples to the past, Native Hawaiians, at 20 percent of the population, are undeniably contemporary, present, and agentive. This reorients the meanings of race and indigeneity—as well as belonging in a settler state—for people of African descent.

This book bridges continental discussions of settler colonialism that theorize the role of Black people within the native/setter binary with those in Hawai'i that analyze Asians and other immigrants as settlers. Evelyn Nakano Glenn calls out comparative race studies for its erasure of Indigenous people and complicity with Native dispossession. Glenn, drawing on Patrick Wolfe's definition of settler colonialism as a structure and not an event, applies an intersectional approach to the conditions faced by communities of color.[74] She encourages fellow ethnic studies scholars to see how a "settler colonialism

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framework can encompass the specificities of racisms and sexisms affecting different racialized groups while also highlighting structural and cultural factors that undergird and link these racisms and sexisms."[75]

Bridging ethnic studies and Native studies, *Hawai'i Is My Haven* contributes a Pacific perspective to new work analyzing Native and Asian immigrant relations in North American settler state contexts while I decenter the hegemony of the study of Asians in Hawai'i.[76] I do so by foregrounding the voices of Native Hawaiians. This project engages the robust theorization of (Asian) settler colonialism in Hawai'i and the scholarship on Hawaiian politics, grounded in the ideas of Haunani-Kay Trask. These contributions, as seen by any number of panels at the annual Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) conference, have primarily been about the *conceptual* contribution of Hawai'i and Pacific Islands studies scholarship to (North American) Black and Native relations. Zeroing in on Black and Native interaction *within* Hawai'i reorients debates in Black and Native studies about group connections, tensions, and liberation. It illustrates, as Tiya Miles and Sharon Holland do in their volume centering North America, how "people of African descent transported and transformed cultures, created intersectional communities, and built metaphysical as well as physical homes on Native lands and within Native cultural landscapes."[77] Like scholarship on the Caribbean, however, it expands debates between Black and Native studies that privilege the Americas.[78]

If Black people are relatively invisible, Asians form a substantial presence in the Islands, where settler colonialism and localness are primary formations. Asians, including Asian multiracial people, made up over 56 percent of the population in 2015.[79] Okinawans and Japanese are the highest per capita income earners and have the highest rates of homeownership.[80] As the Hawai'i expert Jonathan Okamura explains, "Since the 1970s, ethnic relations in Hawai'i have become increasingly structured by the economic and political power and status wielded by Chinese Americans, Whites, and Japanese Americans over other ethnic groups."[81] It is Asian—not White—settler colonialism that emerges as a living, obvious, and maintained structure.

Asians in Hawai'i are defined not only by their settler status but also by their various racialized positions. They contribute to the perpetuation of local culture and differentially face the effects of unequal resource distribution. The plantation economy of prestatehood Hawai'i brought waves of plantation workers from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and elsewhere. This history of exploitation has become the dominant narrative drawn on by Asians not indigenous to the Islands to justify their belonging. However, the framework of Asian settler colonialism reveals how claims to a local identity

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provide cover for the ways various Asian groups advance the settler state and dispossess Hawaiians of their land and rights to self-determination.[82] After statehood, these various ethnic groups have come to occupy highly uneven positions of political and economic power. The Islands are home to a diversity of Asian communities, from those running political and economic life to the precariously housed hotel workers. As a result, Okamura has articulated why "there are no Asian Americans in Hawai'i," whereby "ethnic," or what I consider racialized, distinctions (Japanese, Filipino, etc.) within this lumping category are primary.[83] This explains why, for instance, someone may describe a neighbor as a "local Japanese" or may self-describe as being a "Filipino from Wahiawā," rather than identifying as "Asian American," as is more common in the continental United States.

In their study of Asian and Native relations in North America, Karen Leong and Myla Carpio explain, "Because the settler state works to eliminate Indigenous claims to the land, immigrant groups' conditional inclusion requires complicity in ignoring these Indigenous claims as well."[84] This is relevant to Hawai'i, where Harry Kim, mayor of Hawai'i County on the Big Island, explains how to "trample the souls" of Native Hawaiians in his advancement of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on the sacred land of Maunakea—a move contested by Kānaka Maoli and other residents.[85] Asian complicity in Native dispossession through their participation in settler colonialism takes place *alongside* Asian antiBlack racism: this is the same mayor who jokingly referred to a Black professional as "that colored guy." If, as J. Kēhaulani Kauanui shows, "Asian groups were racialized in contrast to Native Hawaiians vis-à-vis the haole," Black people have been both compared *and* contrasted with Kānaka to differing ends.[86]

Black locals, including Black Hawaiians and Black Asians, develop our understanding of settler colonialism, the development of racialized indigeneity, and the resonance of local identity. They include Hawai'i-born Black children who are raised in nonBlack communities and identify strongly as local. As a result, Hawai'i's Black residents do not fit neatly into the important critique waged by Hawaiian and Asian settler ally scholars who reveal how Asians in Hawai'i (especially the political elite) deploy "local" to deny their role in settler colonialism and advocate anti-Kanaka policies.[87] A local or nonlocal identity emerges as central categories of non/belonging in this study. Are Black people local? Black locals highlight the salience of this identity, disrupting efforts to consider "local" as only a problematic identity in debates over settler colonialism. Scholars who only analyze ethnicity cannot respond to these questions

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when they neglect a racial analysis, deny indigenous specificity, and downplay both racism and material inequalities.

Haunani-Kay Trask's specification of "settlers of color" frames the field of Asian settler colonialism, raising the question of other nonWhite people in settler states. Are Black people settlers? This question of the structural relation of Black people to Native dispossession has arisen in some work focusing on Black and Native studies. "Black dislocation within the settler state is always an unfinished and incomplete project," write Eve Tuck, Allison Guess, and Hannah Sultan.[88] "Policing tactics, gentrification, vigilantism, and political isolation find justification in the settler colonial truism that Black people should not be where white settlers want to be."[89] They echo critiques of Asian settler colonialism: "Yet the struggle to resolve Black dislocation can obscure the face of Indigenous erasure and resilient, radical relationships to the land. There isn't something easy to say about this."[90] Indeed, my interlocutors reflect on these politics, as I do by raising the question of Black agency in aligning with the US military occupation of Hawai'i. I also turn to the historical, political, and cultural cross-pollination that characterizes Black and Hawaiian relations. This book does not conflate Black and Hawaiian struggles for self-determination but rather looks to what emerges once we bring together Black and Hawaiian people, race and indigeneity, a racial lens and Kanaka epistemologies, in our analysis of the descendants of enslaved people living in a nonWhite settler state.

On Relations and Relationality

Hawai'i presents an alternative to elsewhere because of its nonWhite demographics and strong activist movements that critique US hegemony and imperialism. Not just a confrontation to White supremacy, it is a place where even aspirations to Whiteness are disparaged. Black people experience the pleasure of being part of a multitude of communities of color while reflecting on accountability for settler colonialism and military occupation, which are ever-present structures of life in many parts of the Pacific. Race, too, is an organizing force in the Hawaiian Islands.

Race both offers a top-down analysis and requires our attention to the adjacent everyday dynamics of a person's life. Race, combined with indigeneity that highlights connectivity, genealogy, and place-based identities, strengthens our understanding of Black life in the Pacific. At the individual level, we see how Black residents negotiate historical tropes of Blackness, antiBlack racism,

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and the perception that they are not local. These racialized processes intersect with the experiences of other groups, including Native Hawaiians' histories of colonization, kuleana (responsibility, privilege), and ideas of belonging, along with Asian groups' uneven rise to power and their contributions to local culture.

I detail the agency *and* oppression of Black, Hawaiian, and Asian people vis-à-vis global systems of racial power and capitalism (e.g., White supremacy, slavery, plantation economies, settler colonialism). While this context frames this ethnography, I highlight on-the-ground relations. These not only humanize global processes but trouble facile theoretical claims, including binaries, "Oppression Olympics," identity-based generalizations and cancellations, and uncritical celebrations of an alliance. I reveal, for instance, how Native Hawaiians are oppressed *and* are antiBlack, both within the context of colonization. Conversely, I show how Black people in Hawai'i face racism *and* are part of a tourist economy and occupying military force. NonWhite groups internalize and exert colonial and racist ideologies in the painful recollections of Black locals. Beyond ideology, the *practices* that inform(ed) slavery, genocide, labor exploitation, war, and diaspora also converge in contemporary life, including for those who emerge from these histories and are Black and Native, Black and Asian, and Black and Latina/o. Black Koreans and Black Okinawans recount their experiences with invisibility and the antiBlack racism they face within their Asian communities. They cannot escape racism, even on these promising shores. Black Hawaiians as well as Black Sāmoans, central to this ethnography, illustrate how people living within, among, and *beyond* these categories conceive of their relations to others in ways that privilege connections.

Native dispossession and the denigration of Blackness do not go uncontested. The combination of Indigenous epistemologies, illustrated in contemporary movements for self-determination and cultural revitalization, and the racial lens employed by Black transplants work hand in hand toward decolonization and antiracism. Black people navigate the imbrications of White supremacy and Hawai'i's occupation, but their relationships and sense of self are never fully determined by them. Because I root my analysis in the history of Hawai'i, we see how the norms in the Hawaiian Kingdom still inform contemporary life through the persistence of Kanaka epistemologies and practices. I share the desire articulated by Tuck, Guess, and Sultan, who discuss Black and Indigenous people on the "selfsame land" "to supersede the conventions of settler colonialism and antiblackness toward another kind of futurity."[91] In light of the antagonisms reflected in a range of scholarship, I join their turn toward

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"the need for more thought and attention given to the relationships between Indigenous peoples and Black peoples."[92]

The lives of the participants in this project emerge from the intersection of racism and colonialism; their actions reveal the link between antiracism and decolonization. While we may know this politically and intellectually, we have few examples of how this is *lived*, contributing to the literary and historical analysis of Black, Asian, and Native relations. What this ethnography shows is that no one exists outside of antiBlack racism, settler colonialism, and occupation; nor do one's given identities ("Kanaka," "settler," "African American") *determine* our relation to these systems. It is our standing vis-à-vis institutions of oppression—within and outside of them—that gauges our contribution to maintaining or decimating them.

One's positionality crafts conceptions of one's kuleana, or responsibility. The Kanaka scholar Hōkūlani Aikau describes kuleana as a central component of living responsibly with "critical positionality and reflexivity. Kuleana is not static, is not fixed; it is about understanding yourself in relationship to the place where you are."[93] It is a constellation of "responsibility, authority, and obligation" and thus shifts accordingly.[94] But it is the *actions* of people—not just their identities—that determine whether we uphold or undermine racism and colonialism. Hawai'i, and especially contemporary movements in the Islands, requires residents to reflect on their accountability and responsibility to this place and to one another. Analyzing the intersection of race and indigeneity includes how members of the African diaspora contend with living as people not indigenous to Hawai'i.

Critical self-reflection, together with action based on one's kuleana, creates a sense of we-ness among those working with expansive notions of community.[95] "What linked land taking from indigenes and black chattel slavery," explains Glenn, "was a private property regime that converted people, ideas, and things into property that could be bought, owned, and sold."[96] Yet current practices of self-determination and visions of the future in the Islands challenge imported colonial practices that were not only statist and proprietary but also based on the denigration of Native Hawaiians and Black people.[97] The lives and ideas of those living in and creating the Black Pacific expand academic debates, model both limited and expansive politics, and paint a fuller picture of daily life that moves us from a race-only, ethnicity-only, or native/settler-only lens to one that accounts for these, as they articulate.

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Methods, Participants, and My Story

Born and raised in Hawai'i, I am the daughter of an immigrant father from rural North India and a Brooklyn-born Jewish mother who is the daughter of immigrants from Russia. I am Indian and White, neither Hawaiian nor Black. My parents, professors at the University of Hawai'i (history and Asian studies) for forty years, raised my brother and me in a middle-class home in Mānoa Valley in Honolulu on the island of O'ahu. I considered myself and was considered by others to be a local girl. People knew that I was Brown but not Hawaiian, given the close-knit nature of Hawaiian communities. Other youths teased me for my Indianness and demanded clarification: as Jay-Z once rapped, "Are you red dot or feather?"[98] I attended local public schools: Noelani Elementary School in Mānoa Valley, followed by Stevenson Intermediate and Roosevelt High School in Pauoa, attended also by several participants in this project. On alternating yearlong sabbaticals, my parents relocated us to live in my father's North Indian village of Kota, the Indian city of Jaipur in Rajasthan, and Queens, New York. Otherwise, at home in the Islands, I played soccer, learned ballet, and played violin in the Hawai'i Youth Symphony. But it was hula that most formed me, that most informed me about my birthplace—its stories, histories, people, plants, and practices. I danced first with Auntie Maiki Aiu Lake above Puck's Alley at the mouth of Mānoa Valley. After she passed away, I joined Hula Hālau Na Hanona under Kumu (teacher) John Keola Lake at St. Louis High School for almost a decade, until I left for college in California. This book—like all my scholarship and teaching—is shaped by this marriage of factors.

I offer this ethnography as someone trained in anthropology and housed in ethnic studies (aka race studies). While too many people have heard me joke about being "divorced from anthropology," it is true that I had a vexed relationship with the discipline. Its scholarship (and scholars!) did not encourage my interests, which have always focused on the United States (not "there"), on communities and concerns (too) close to me, and on race and racism (instead of cultural difference). That said, anthropology equipped me with the ethnographic method that I remain committed to, while my political and intellectual motivations align comfortably with comparative race studies as a professor of African American studies and Asian American studies.

Hawai'i Is My Haven expands my previous ethnographic analysis of Black and Asian relations. The goal of my work is to detail interminority racisms shaped by White supremacy to illustrate the formation of on-the-ground solidarities. I illustrate existing models of antiracism that consider the liberation

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of all people. My work past and present decenters Whiteness and looks to understudied collectives through a focus on race and culture and, in this book, indigeneity—whether South Asian American hip hop artists, rappers in the Middle East, or Black people in Hawai'i. Working to eradicate racism that differentially affects all nonWhite people (and, yes, affects White people too—but that's not my concern), I chart the everyday lives of people who cross theoretical and commonly accepted boundaries of race, place, and politics. Their understandings of the world provide theories of difference and solidarity. Understudied, unique, and small populations, owing to their "difference" from normative expectations, *show us* (and thus disrupt) naturalized categories as they navigate divisions, including those among presumably incommensurable groups. This explains why so much of this ethnography centers Black people in the Pacific and multiracial people within Black studies.

After my father, Kumu John Lake (a voracious storyteller and cigarette smoker, just like my father) was the most influential man in my life. More than a hula teacher, this esteemed elder took our hālau (hula school) across islands to Maui, and across the Pacific to Aotearoa/New Zealand for exchanges with Maori, whom we later hosted. Our hālau comprised younger and older dancers, men and women, straight, gay, and māhū (third gender, for those who do not identify as only male or only female). Sāmoan and Tongan football players, Japanese, Indian, Hawaiian, and hapa haole Catholic and public school girls—we all together practiced complicated ka'i (entrances), dances, and ho'i (exits), with the better dancers in synchrony up front, me and the others in the back.

Kumu Lake drove us in his van up to the mountains on the other side of the Pali, where we climbed the deep crevasses etched by rain. He narrated the Hawaiian names of the plants and flowers we picked to make haku lei for our heads, wrists, and ankles for our performances at the Prince Lot Hula Festival. We pretended to listen but were more interested in sliding down the muddy mountains on the wet ti leaves we gathered. He had us memorize oli (chants) in 'ōlelo Hawai'i (I always lip-synched, never really dedicated the time to learn them); he gave us Hawaiian names, equipped us with the skills, and guided us through 'ūniki (a rigorous graduation process, which I failed to complete). He told us about Hawaiian history, the meaning of every step in each song, and gave us printed sheets with the words and movements to scores of 'auana (modern) songs and hula kahiko (ancient) chants. I still have these materials stored in an aged yellow three-ring binder in my old woven hula bag, stuffed with my instruments—the 'uli 'uli, pu'ili, ipu, along with the ipu mat; my green hula skirt that we printed with tapa now fits my daughter. The dark

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golden yellow ʻilima lei I painstakingly made, feather by feather, for weeks under his guidance is stored safely in a plastic cookie dough container.

Writing this book has been an interrupted yet long-term return home that rewarded me with memories informing my fieldwork and analysis. While my home is still there (my mother retired and still lives in my childhood house, where I edited the final version of this book during COVID-19), my father and Kumu Lake have passed on. As they and others left, my own family has grown during fieldwork, first with one child and then another. Each research trip involved at best, with no delays from a Chicago airport, a nine-hour flight (for a family of four, recent trips cost at least $3,000). My children got to play in the same backyard that I did at their age, helping my mother collect coconuts and rotting mangoes from her yard, and swimming in the same outdoor Mānoa public pool that I did. I have been able to watch the Wednesday night fireworks from the Ilikai Hotel with my mother after witnessing in awe how this almost eighty-year-old still paddles with the Anuenue canoe club, near the Hilton Hawaiian Village in Waikīkī. It allowed me to reconnect with my home after years of the growing sense that I was read as being from "the mainland," despite my Hawaiian jewelry and familiarity with Sāmoan doormen, as a result of too much time away from home.

This project reflects my love of Hawaiʻi and gratitude to the people of Oʻahu who raised me and shaped who I am. Hawaiʻi has always been home and a gift to me. My father's generous outlook, my mother's political radicalism, and Kumu John Lake's wisdom inform my kuleana. This ethnography is my attempt to tell these stories and to engage with their theoretical and political implications.

I began fieldwork in 2009 and over ten years have spoken to hundreds of island residents in addition to the sixty people I formally interviewed, many of them several times. My work centers the voices of those who self-identify as Black—people of African descent who are members of the African diaspora. After arranging childcare, I rode my father's scooter or drove my mother's car to meet generous participants at coffee shops in Mānoa and across Oʻahu, the university's Campus Center, and in people's homes. Interviewing was always a pleasant and often exhilarating experience, despite my constant low-grade anxiety that preceded each meeting ("Why am I an ethnographer? Do I have to do this interview?") as a result of feeling that I was taking and not returning something from participants when I asked them to share their stories. Part of this stemmed from the ethics of ethnography, as well as my fatigue from the heat and my persistent allergies. It was, however, always worth it, as I experienced the postinterview rush of inspiration that amplified my interest in these

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questions. Conducting this project in my hometown was deeply satisfying, as I was familiar with the topography, could easily suggest and find places to meet people, and understood historical dynamics and local references.

No less important, the dress code demanded a casual approach—thus my uniform of tank top, flowing and comfortable cotton culottes, and plastic slippers (slippas) worked well for me as I conducted my first stint of fieldwork throughout my first pregnancy. I began this project in the year I was on leave from my university in Evanston and lived in Hawai'i. During that year, I got married and became pregnant with my daughter, and my father died. He was crucial to the initial drive of my project, urging me to contact potential interviewees, including people like Ellen, the Black nurse who befriended him during his frequent hospitalizations. My mother, also a professor, doubled his effort over the past decade, introducing me to her students who were multiracial Black Asian transplants taking her courses in Asian studies. As my father's health deteriorated, he was bedridden at the Queen's Medical Center. He couldn't speak well, and then not at all. Indian family and community members brought his favorite parathas and sweets, even after he couldn't or wouldn't eat. And yet he always listened to my chatter about the progress of my pregnancy, my husband's career, and updates about my research. His hands float across this project, revealed through participants that he enlisted for me as we sat at a coffee shop in Mānoa Marketplace earlier in the year before he was sick. While my mother is the anthropologist who inspired my career, I learned how to be in the world as a social and empathetic person from my father.

Fieldwork consisted of the staples of ethnography: heavy hanging out, formal and informal interviews, and participant observation. I took notes wherever I found myself—at nightclubs, the beach, and house parties. I recorded interviews that were between one and two hours long and had them transcribed by hired students and rev.com. I coded and analyzed them both by hand and with Atlas.ti, a qualitative software analysis program I know I am supremely underusing. I wrote the book using the software program Scrivener, a writer's dream. Informing my analysis was my engagement with Black studies; the scholarship on race, ethnicity, and the history of Hawai'i; Native studies; critical mixed-race studies; and the work on the nineteenth-century Pacific.

The historical context for this contemporary ethnography emerged from my archival research of shipping logs, missionary journals written in English, and official correspondence and newspapers in 'ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian language). Except for the basics I learned from Kumu Lake long ago, I do not speak 'ōlelo Hawai'i, and thus my research on nineteenth-century Hawai'i is

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limited. What I found suggests provocative traces of Black life in the 1800s, recorded not just in missionary journals and other English-language texts. I also searched hundreds of Hawaiian-language sources in the rich digital collection of the Hawaiian Mission Houses for particular terms to get a picture of how words for blackness and darkness developed as descriptors for things and then later for people. I scoured the correspondence of the monarchs and chiefs in the Aliʻi Letters Collection and the newspaper *Ka Lama Hawaii*; upon finding the terms, I solicited the assistance of colleagues who spoke ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, including Drs. Hiʻilei Hobart and Charles Langlas, to help me correctly interpret their context. For other chapters, I also analyze contemporary media and social media accounts, including local and national newspapers. Census and demographic information from a range of sources, including Hawaiʻi economic and population reports, has been key to illuminating the Black presence in the Islands that has so curiously and almost completely fallen under the radar.

I spoke to hundreds of people—any Black person I could meet on Oʻahu (and I Skyped with those on outer islands) and many nonBlack residents. University of Hawaiʻi professors led me to students and Black faculty; high school friends pointed me to former classmates; new friends and family introduced me to others. I interviewed nurses, bartenders, DJs, lawyers, and security guards. However, it was only after coding, reading each interview and other source materials scores of times, and analysis that I created the primary groupings of people that structure this ethnography. These primary categories include Black locals and Black transplants; long-term residents (I also call them "old-timers") and newcomers; locals (those born or at least raised in the Islands); and nonlocals (those who moved to Hawaiʻi after high school). This book also highlights the experiences and perspectives of nonWhite dual minority biracial people, whom I call Black hapas or multiracials (more on the term "hapa" in chapter 2).

The first group consists of nineteen Hawaiʻi-born or Hawaiʻi-raised Black *locals*, who grew up mostly in their nonBlack mothers' communities in the Islands. Forty-one people make up the second group, *transplants*. Transplants are roughly divided into *long-term residents* (who had generally lived in Hawaiʻi for over ten years) and *newcomers* (more recent arrivals at the time of our interview). Overall, almost half, or twenty-eight of the sixty participants, were multiracial, including fourteen locals and fourteen transplants. There are thirty-eight men and twenty-two women; one man identifies as gay, and two women are queer identified, including one who is gender nonconforming. Black transplants and locals offer distinct life stories, with different orientations to

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Black history and politics and uneven access to Black communities, families, and cultures. Together, along with the epistemological topography of their childhoods, these shape residents' identifications with Blackness, localness, and belonging in Hawai'i.

Many of these people stay in touch with me, sending me emails and Facebook messages updating me about their battles with cancer, the development of Black social life in Hawai'i, and their lawsuits against workplace discrimination. Right now our conversations are consumed by the protests against anti-Black violence emerging from the murders of Black people including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Nina Pop, and Ahmaud Arbery. They keep me abreast of new events centered on vigils and BLM protests in Hawai'i, the growing Black community, and happenings at the university, where Black students and faculty come together to create spaces of belonging. I have stayed in touch with many of these people, as well, by sharing my writings, sending them my publications, and, of course, explaining why it has taken so long for the book to come out. Facebook has been a particularly critical technology for maintaining contact, allowing me to keep abreast of their lives, including changes in their work, the growth and contractions of our families, and evidence of our aging. It has also led to real and long-term relationships with them, as we could communicate about when we were next going to be in the same place and arrange to meet up—at least we did before COVID-19 upended our lives.

This is a ground-up ethnography. It is not determined by the most current debates and categories but rather hopes to ground some of the tendencies toward abstraction on the question of Blackness and characterizations of interminority relations, as well as some Black and Native studies scholarship. I highlight the influence of Native Hawaiians, Kanaka epistemologies, and local culture. I focus first and foremost on the islands of Hawai'i (with a bias toward its largest city, Honolulu, on the island of O'ahu) and the words, perspectives, and experiences of Black people who live in the Islands as non-military-affiliated civilians. Their generosity and stories filled the hundreds of hours, thousands of pages, and years of fieldwork this book emerges from.

I do not recall growing up with any kind of Black community in Honolulu—most of the people I knew and saw around me were hapa haole (mixed race), Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, haole, Sāmoan, and Hawaiian. When I return home now, my family hangs out at Kaimana Beach with members of these groups along with Black residents of Hawai'i. We are invited to attend events hosted by Black collectives, usually by women who have come to the Islands alone or with their children. I interact with a significant number of Black scholars,

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from new hires at the university to emerita faculty who still live on Oʻahu. Social, arts, and political events advocate food sustainability, Black performance, and conversations with Hawaiians about coalitions. My family, including my Black and Hungarian Jewish husband (who in Hawaiʻi is sometimes read as Sāmoan), and our two children are integrated into Black communities in Chicago. Unlike the Honolulu of my childhood, in which Blackness was invisible outside the military context, my family now experiences Oʻahu as a Brown place of fellow multiracial people with a growing Black population whose cultural presence is strong, respectful, and respected, and not necessarily affiliated with the military. Things have changed over time. Given the rising demographics of Black people in Hawaiʻi over the past century, I chart this change and what it means for all of Hawaiʻi's people.

Conclusion

Hawaiʻi Is My Haven animates the liminal as a center for theorizing: the Black Pacific, the nonWhite multiracial (a mixed race person who does not have a White parent), and the porous boundaries and critical nexus between race and indigeneity. Hawaiʻi has long offered people of African descent an alternative to the places from which they came, yet US notions of race and White supremacy travel across the ocean through colonialism, militarism, and the tourist economy. Life stories of Hawaiʻi's Black civilians foreground experiences with racism that trouble images of its welcoming multiculturalism. At the same time, this society provides an alternative for members of the African diaspora, who describe Hawaiʻi as their haven. They also express feeling a respite—a space to breathe—away from the "pressures" that come with being Black in the continental United States. Racism reinforces their racial lens, while Native Hawaiian practices allow them to be "Black and _____" rather than "Black only," represented by the significant number of Black people who identify with more than one race on the census.

The Pacific expands conceptions of Blackness. In Hawaiʻi, Black people adopt Kanaka practices to develop what the activist and Black feminist scholar Angela Davis describes as the necessary expansive and inclusive community formations for revolutionary transformation, in contrast to identity-based communities, which can be exclusive and narrow.[99] The perspectives of African-descended people living in Hawaiʻi, informed by the history of both the African diaspora and the Pacific, illuminate a Black Pacific worldview that weaves together a racialized understanding of power with an indigenous understanding of place and people—and the connections among them. These

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illustrations contest the scholarship that, while understandably focused on Black death, also portrays Black life as only abject.[100] Hawai'i enables a sense of optimism and possibility embraced by many participants.

Between the introduction and the conclusion, this book offers five chapters that articulate Black life in one part of the Pacific. Chapter 1, "Over Two Centuries," charts the history of Black people in Hawai'i from the beginning of the nineteenth century who went on to play critical roles in Hawaiian society. Often citizens of the Kingdom, they also were central to the racialization of Hawaiians by haole. These ideas shifted considerably with the twentieth-century association of Black people with the US military. The persistence of Kanaka epistemologies and the tendency to integrate Black people within their communities and families intersected with the increasingly negative twenty-first-century reception of Black transplants.

The next two chapters focus on the experiences and perspectives of Black locals (chapter 2), which contrast with Black transplants (chapter 3). Black locals' life stories may be the most understudied of the Islands' populations. However, they answer the question of what the Pacific offers people of African descent. With an analysis of their demographics, identifications, and conceptions of Blackness, they chart the effects of racial invisibility as well as the opportunities of expansive belonging offered by local practices and Kanaka approaches to genealogy. Chapter 2, "'Saltwater Negroes'" (a term used by one local Black Sāmoan), takes on the charge that multiracialism is a form of antiBlackness while engaging questions of race and localness, making a case for the meaningfulness of local identity. Black locals, including Black Hawaiians, Black Sāmoans, and others, reveal how and why the Pacific is a place of expansive Black belonging. (Mixed) race, indigeneity, and local culture together forge the dynamics through which non/belonging and affiliation are assessed and asserted.

Chapter 3, "Less Pressure," focuses on transplants, or African-descended people who moved from North America, Asia, Europe, the Caribbean, and Africa to the Islands as adults. It charts their reasons for doing so and identifies how their preconceptions of Hawai'i aligned with their actual experiences. Illustrating a racial lens, their perspectives, formed in parts of the world with a greater Black presence, illuminate how power operates here. This chapter enters debates on (Asian) settler colonialism, addressing whether or not Black people can be settlers while also explaining why some consider Black absence to be a source of liberation. It also documents the strong imprint of the Islands on its residents, including these transplants whose views about race and Blackness are challenged in this "haven."

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Chapter 4, "Racism in Paradise," the first substantive documentation of antiBlack racism in Hawai'i, brings the experiences of Black locals and transplants together. Through an analysis of antiBlack racism at home, school, and work, and in encounters with the police, we see the limits to depictions of Hawai'i's celebrated diversity. At the same time, locals and transplants diverge in their *analysis* of racism, including their perspectives on local humor as a way to contend with difference. Transplants call out and contest racism (often through the courts) because of their identification and racial analysis of local dynamics (racial lens). How does this explicit reckoning with antiBlack racism come up against local dismissals that Black people have a "chip on their shoulder" or don't understand local culture? Tensions between these interpretations have come to a head in local reactions to Black Lives Matter protests against police violence and the ongoing erasure of Black people in Hawai'i. Transplants' racial lens gives voice and structure to racism in the Islands and, along with the painful childhood memories of Black locals and accounts of their interactions with police, makes a resounding call for critical reflection of all island residents for our role in antiBlack racism—and our kuleana to challenge it.

Chapter 5, "Embodying Kuleana," centers Black and Kanaka positionalities and relations, framed by a discussion of Black and Native studies. It foregrounds the voices of Black Hawaiians but expands out to Black residents' reflections on land, sovereignty, and belonging. This final substantive chapter shows how US histories of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and police violence, as well as class status, inform Black transplants' views on Hawaiian movements for self-determination. They revert not so much to native/setter or local/nonlocal divisions as they draw links across African American, Native American, and Hawaiian histories. Together, they map overlapping pasts and a shared present and chart routes that Black and Hawaiian people together can navigate toward liberated futures.

I end with a conclusion that reveals how people are neither just trapped by colonial categories and racist ideologies nor simply reactive to them. Rather, through everyday strategies, political exchange, and knowledge production, people in Hawai'i exceed these constructs as they consider their kuleana and act with accountability. I offer suggestions for how to bring settler colonialism and racism into account through the greater incorporation of Black people into our learning in the Islands. If knowledge is power, then in looking to the knowledge that circulates between Black and Native people, we can find existing models for antiracism and decolonization.

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NOTES

Introduction: Hawai‘i Is My Haven

1 “Jury Awards Former Queen’s Nurse.”
2 Rucker, “Hawai‘i’s Influence on Barack Obama.”
3 Obama, in Glauberman and Burris, *Dream Begins*, 4.
4 Obama, *Dreams from My Father*.
5 “Demographic, Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics,” 28. Forty-one percent were “Black in combination with another race” between 2011 and 2015.
6 Lee, “Thousands Show Up across Hawaii.”
7 Tsai, “All We Want.”
8 Hofschneider, “Many in Hawaii Grieve.”
9 Glenn, “African American Solidarity.”
10 Glenn, “African American Solidarity.”
11 Mahalo nui loa to Hi‘ilei Hobart for this important framing.
12 Glenn, “African American Solidarity”; Hofschneider, “Many in Hawaii Grieve.”
13 Patrisse Khan-Cullors, interview with Pōpolo Project, June 2018. In the same interview, she stated, “But, that doesn’t mean that there aren’t very important conversations that Black Lives Matter has initiated that can happen everywhere. We *have* to talk about Blackness. We *have* to talk about how many Indigenous Hawaiians are actually Black! What does it mean to claim Blackness? What does it mean to have a Black politic? And this idea that Black Lives Matter isn’t a separate struggle for Black people to take on. It’s actually a struggle for every single one of us. Because *really* and *truly* when Black people get free, everybody else gets free.”
14 https://patrissecullors.com/about.
15 Khan-Cullors, “Interview with Pōpolo Project,” pt. 2.
16 Hobart, “At Home on the Mauna.” “Thirty Meter” refers to the diameter of the telescope’s lens.
17 Casumbal-Salazar, “Where Are Your Sacred Temples?”
18 Casumbal-Salazar, “Where Are Your Sacred Temples?”
19 Hofschneider, “Many in Hawaii Grieve.”
20 Hofschneider, “Many in Hawaii Grieve.”
21 Hofschneider, “Many in Hawaii Grieve.”
22 Pu‘uhonua o Pu‘uhuluhulu and Hawai‘i Unity and Liberation Institute (HULI), “Joint Statement of Solidarity for the Protection of Black Lives,” June 5, 2020.
23 Glenn, “African American Solidarity.”
24 Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*.

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25 Epigraph: Professor Goodyear-Kaʻōpua was describing the history of Hawaiian independence. On a Wednesday in 2018, people gathered at the ʻIolani Palace in Honolulu to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

26 King, "Address to the House of Representatives," 278.

27 "The Population of Hawaiʻi by Race/Ethnicity: U.S. Census 1900–2010," Bureau of the Census 2010 Summary File (SF1), June 16, 2011; Stannard, "The Hawaiians"; United Status Census Bureau, FactFinder, http://factfinder.census.gov. Asians, who are not generally lumped together as one racial demographic in Hawaiʻi, do not form a majority because of key ethnic group distinctions.

28 The Hawaiʻi journalist Eric Stinton's excellent eight-part series on Black people, history, and culture in Hawaiʻi celebrating Black History Month in 2020 is a notable exception. Stinton, "Black History in Hawaii."

29 The 2010 Census counted 38,820 Black or African Americans, alone or in combination, while, for instance, Sāmoans were counted at 37,463. State of Hawaiʻi, "Sāmoan Population by County," 5.

30 Ikeda, foreword, n.p.; Nitasha Sharma, "Pacific Revisions of Blackness."

31 "Hawaii Facts and Trivia," https://www.50States.com/facts/hawaii.htm.

32 Tengan, *Native Men Remade*, 2.

33 "Grover Cleveland on the Overthrow."

34 For more on these sociologists' work on race in Hawaiʻi, see Pierce, "Creating a Racial Paradise."

35 Lee and Baldoz, "A Fascinating Interracial Experiment Station," 88. For critiques of these early sociologists, see Okamura, "Illusion of Paradise"; Pierce, "Creating a Racial Paradise."

36 Initially referring to any foreigner to Hawaiʻi, "haole" today refers to White people, whether they come from the Islands or elsewhere. I use the term interchangeably with "White."

37 "Demographic, Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics," 2; Okamura, *Ethnicity and Inequality*, 22–23.

38 "Demographic, Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics," 2. These numbers include people who selected Black or African American alone or in combination.

39 Clark, "10 Best States for Black Household Wealth."

40 Their high school graduation rate was listed at 97.48 percent, while Black people in Hawaiʻi were 8.57 percent below the poverty level. World Population Review, "Honolulu, Hawaii," http://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/honolulu-population. Sources on Hawaiʻi that provide demographic data do not usually include Black people; I was unable to confirm the statistics in this source. Okamura explains that Hawaiʻi has the only statewide (public) school system in the United States; thus the funding system does not have the imbalances of other states with multiple school districts. Okamura, *Ethnicity and Inequality*, 65.

41 World Population Review, 22. Compared with less than 6 percent each for Asians and Hawaiians, according to World Population Review, "Honolulu, Hawaii."

42 "Demographic, Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics," 9.

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43 Belton, "5 Best States for Black People."
44 "Demographic, Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics," 19. Almost 80 percent of Black people in Hawai'i work more than thirty-five hours per week (11).
45 For another explication of the concept of "otherwise," see Crawley, *Blackpentacostal Breath*.
46 Drake and Cayton, *Black Metropolis*.
47 See Lee and Baldoz, "Fascinating Interracial Experiment Station."
48 Teaiwa, "Black and Blue in the Pacific"; Andrews, "'Something within Me'"; Enomoto, "These Could Be Evidence." See also an important discussion about Hawaiian and Black relations in Jamaica Osorio, "E Iho ana 'o Luna."
49 Beamer, *No Mākou Ka Mana*; Arista, *Kingdom and the Republic*; Malo, *Mo'olelo Hawai'i*.
50 Wright, *Physics of Blackness*.
51 Many thanks to Vicente Diaz for a deeply generative conversation about layers of Blackness in the Pacific.
52 Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians*; Warren, "Theorizing Pō."
53 "Kanaka" was a term that haole colonizers used derogatorily to refer to a Hawaiian person and has since been adopted by Hawaiians as a way to refer to themselves. "Kanaka Maoli" means real or true person; "Kānaka Maoli" (plural) means real or true people. "Hawaiian" does not refer to someone from Hawai'i (e.g., it is not like "Californian") but refers specifically to someone with native ancestry. The Hawaiian language scholar Charles Langlas, personal communication, May 4, 2020. See D. Chang, *World and All the Things*, 263.
54 D. Chang, *World and All the Things*; See Kim and Sharma, "Interventions in Pacific Islands Studies."
55 By "race" I refer to the process of racialization in the United States, or the ideological processes by which dominant groups categorize others based on phenotype and develop ideas that are imputed on those Others, who are de/valued within a hierarchy. This process is amplified by racism, in which the ideologies of racialized Others are then called on to justify their exploitation and decimation (genocide, slavery, indentured servitude) for the material benefit of those in power. This notion of race is constructed over time, and sometimes quickly, through systemic dispossession (such as access to land rights) and exclusion (from the nation, from the right to live, from accessing health care, for example). However, people engage the process of race-making, contesting the devaluation of nonWhite identities.
56 See, e.g., Horne, *White Pacific*; Taketani, *Black Pacific Narrative*; Smyth, "Black Atlantic Meets"; Okihiro, "Afterword."
57 Schleitwiler, *Strange Fruit*; Lucious, "In the Black Pacific"; Cloyd, *Dream of the Water Children*.
58 Lyons and Tengan, "Pacific Currents."
59 Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*.
60 Shilliam, *Black Pacific*; Webb-Binder, "Affinities and Affiliations"; Solis, "Black Pacific."
61 Rokolekutu, "Heterogeneity."

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62 Kabutaulaka, "Re-presenting Melanesia," 112.
63 Rokolekutu, "Heterogeneity."
64 Kabutaulaka, "Re-presenting Melanesia," 113–15; Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians*.
65 Du Bois, "Color Line."
66 Solis, "Black Pacific."
67 Walcott in Spady, "Reflections on Late Identity," 102.
68 Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes*.
69 Ledward, "Inseparably Hapa," 20. See also Ledward, "On Being Hawaiian Enough." "Hapa" is a Hawaiian term meaning "part" and is used to mean "of mixed blood" in Hawaiian Creole English or pidgin English. While Ledward uses it to refer to Hawaiians, many people in Hawai'i, as well as across the United States, have erroneously adopted the term to only refer to Asian and White multiracial individuals and without acknowledging Hawaiians or the word's etymology. Dariotis, "Hapa."
70 Ledward, "Inseparably Hapa," 35.
71 Ledward, "Inseparably Hapa," 47.
72 Ledward, "Inseparably Hapa," 8.
73 Ledward, "Inseparably Hapa," 10.
74 Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism."
75 Glenn, "Settler Colonialism as Structure," 52.
76 K. Chang, *Pacific Connections*; Shah, *Stranger Intimacy*; Mawani, *Across Oceans of Law*; Leong and Carpio, "Carceral States." See also J. Chang, *Chino*.
77 Miles and Holland, *Crossing Waters*, 2–3. This important volume includes a chapter on Hawai'i.
78 S. Jackson, *Creole Indigeneity*; see also Newton, "Returns to a Native Land."
79 "Latest Census Data."
80 "Demographics, Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics," 12, 14.
81 Okamura, *Ethnicity and Inequality*, 57.
82 Fujikane and Okamura, *Asian Settler Colonialism*.
83 Okamura, "Why There Are No Asian Americans."
84 Leong and Carpio, "Carceral States," vii; Karuka, *Empire's Tracks*.
85 Callis, "Kim Finalizing Maunakea Committee."
86 Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*, 75.
87 Trask, *From a Native Daughter*; Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire*; Fujikane, "Mapping Wonder."
88 Tuck, Guess, and Sultan, "Not Nowhere."
89 Tuck, Guess, and Sultan, "Not Nowhere."
90 Tuck, Guess, and Sultan, "Not Nowhere."
91 Tuck, Guess, and Sultan, "Not Nowhere."
92 Tuck, Guess, and Sultan, "Not Nowhere."
93 Aikau et al., "Indigenous Feminisms Roundtable," 86–87.
94 Aikau et al., "Indigenous Feminisms Roundtable," 87.
95 Aikau et al., "Indigenous Feminisms Roundtable," 88.
96 Glenn, "Settler Colonialism," 67.
97 Aikau et al., "Indigenous Feminisms Roundtable."

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98 Jay-Z, "Girls, Girls, Girls."
99 Davis, "Grace Lee Boggs in Conversation with Angela Davis."
100 Wilderson, *Afro-pessimism*.

Chapter 1. Over Two Centuries

1 Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians*.
2 Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*.
3 David Chang's analysis of nineteenth-century Hawai'i highlights the agency of influential commoners who cultivated their knowledge and alliances. D. Chang, *World and All the Things*, 31–32.
4 Stannard, *Before the Horror*.
5 Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, 10.
6 Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, 15; Beamer, *No Mākou Ka Mana*.
7 Elisa Joy White, in Okino, *Holding Fast the Dream*. This is the only full-length documentary on Black people in Hawai'i.
8 White, in Okino, *Holding Fast the Dream*.
9 J. Kēhaulani Kauanui charts how quantification of Hawaiian ancestry, or blood quantum eligibility for lands, became lodged into policy through the 1921 Hawaiian Homes Commission Act. Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood*.
10 Kauai, "Color of Nationality," 102.
11 Beamer, *No Mākou Ka Mana*; see also Arista, *Kingdom and the Republic*. These scholars contest narratives that overstate the missionary influence by drawing on Hawaiian-language sources that highlight Kānaka adaption and negotiation, rather than just reactive resistance. Arista notes how the 1825 kapu (chiefly legal pronouncement) enacted by Hawaiian ali'i restricting Hawaiian women from going on board ships for sexual relations was *not* simply their enforcement of Christian influence. Rather, it reflected the ongoing influence of ali'i over Hawaiians and foreigners alike.
12 Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*.
13 Lili'uokalani, *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen*.
14 Pro-annexation forces brought forth the Newlands Resolution requiring a majority rather than two-thirds vote to pass. This resolution was mentioned in the 1993 Congressional Joint Resolution "to offer an apology to Native Hawaiians on behalf of the United States for the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii," https://www.hawaii-nation.org/publawall.html. See Kauanui's critique of this apology in *Paradoxes of Hawaiian Sovereignty*.
15 Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, 244.
16 Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, 244.
17 Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians*.
18 Merriam-Webster Dictionary, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pacific#other-words.
19 Du Bois, in Bolden, *W. E. B. Du Bois*, 163; M. Jackson, introduction, xv.
20 Horne, *White Pacific*, 10.
21 Nitasha Sharma, "Over Two Centuries."
22 I discuss the history and politics of the term "local" in chapter 2.

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