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CHALLENGES AND PRIVILEGES, ENTANGLEMENT AND APPROPRIATION: RHETORICAL PRACTICES OF ASIAN AMERICANS FROM HAWAI'I

By

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ABSTRACT

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By

Robyn Tasaka

Asian American rhetoric tends to focus on recovering undervalued traditions and making a space for ourselves. The impetus for this subfield is that without it, the rhetorical practices of Asian Americans are ignored. Thus the focus of Asian American rhetoric tends to be on its underdog status: what Asian Americans are overcoming. We might also consider other aspects of our rhetorical practices.

In this project, I aim to contribute to Asian American rhetoric through my focus on Hawai'i club websites, which incorporate text and image into representations by and of one group of Asian Americans. As Asian American rhetoric scholar Morris Young has pointed out, Hawai'i clubs, which are based on college campuses and have as members primarily students from Hawai'i attending college on the continent often represent themselves in problematic ways. The trouble stems primarily from clubs' representations of themselves as Hawaiian, despite most members being Asian American. While this disconnect may appear unremarkable to a continental audience, the differences between Asian Americans studying on the continent and indigenous Hawaiians are profound.

Considering these problematic representations, I conduct textual and visual analyses of club websites both generously and critically—taking into account how they reflect members' privileges as well as their adjustment to the continental context, including new perceptions of their race and/or ethnicity and anxiety about losing their

place in Hawai'i. I find club members negotiating multiple audiences—specifically a Hawai'i and a continental audience. Club websites also depict members' movement between cultures—from Hawai'i to the continent, or from the colony to the metropole. I then turn to club members themselves, assessing through interviews further insight into the motivations behind representations on club websites. That is, why do club websites represent themselves primarily through Hawaiian and Hawai'i culture? Why not Asian or Asian American culture?

This project works to complicate views of Asian Americans both within composition and rhetoric and more broadly, helping to improve our understanding of how Asian American rhetoric reflects both disadvantage and privilege and how the negotiation of the different meanings of Asian American in Hawai'i and on the continent are reflected in rhetorical practices.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

[D]oing Asian American rhetoric is an act always situated in a space of linguistic, cultural, and transnational multiplicity and fraught with histories and memories of asymmetrical relations of power and domination.

LuMing Mao and Morris Young, *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric*

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. In occupying their privileged position, these groups intermarry with one another, send their children to the same exclusive private schools, reside in the same affluent neighborhoods, and socialize with each other at the same private clubs.

Jonathan Okamura, *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawai'i*

It is this background—my scholarly and geographic homes, the subfield in which I see my work and the context in which I grew up—that pushes me to consider the influences of Asian American identity on rhetorical practices. LuMing Mao and Morris Young, in their introduction to *Representations*, an anthology on Asian American rhetoric, emphasize that this rhetoric, like others, is dependent on context. Mao and Young identify language, culture, nation, history, memory, and disparities in power as aspects of context particularly significant to Asian American rhetoric.

Sociologist Jonathan Okamura describes significant differences between ethnic relations in the Hawai'i and U.S. continental contexts, particularly for individuals of Chinese and Japanese ancestry. For members of these Asian American groups, the Hawai'i context is vastly different—especially in terms of the power disparities Mao and Young highlight. Taken together then, Mao and Young, in asserting the situatedness of Asian American rhetoric, and Okamura, in detailing the ethnic context of Hawai'i, gesture toward the value of studying the rhetoric of Asian Americans (in particular those of Chinese and Japanese ancestry) from Hawai'i in order to expand

understandings of Asian American rhetoric. Studying Asian American rhetoric in the Hawai'i context enables considerations of how this rhetoric reflects not only challenges, but also privileges. Considering privileges as well as challenges ensures that we attend to the use of Asian American rhetoric not only to oppose, but also to reify, dominant discourses, holding us responsible for the privileges we exercise in certain situations.

My work in this dissertation focuses on Hawai'i clubs, which are based on college campuses and comprised primarily of students from Hawai'i, largely of Asian ancestry, attending college on the U.S. continent. On club websites, as on many websites, Hawai'i clubs and their members negotiate multiple audiences. The most significant audiences, based on analysis of club websites and interviews with members, are the Hawai'i (i.e. family and friends "back home") and continental (i.e. their peers at school) audiences. In representing themselves to these audiences, club members draw on multiple aspects of their identities—"American," "Local"/"Hawaiian," person of color, and Asian American. In representing themselves through these, club members take care to maintain the "American" and "Local" identities most valued both on the continent and in Hawai'i by presenting themselves as ideal multicultural subjects, embodying highly valued "difference" and "diversity" but in "safe" ways that do not threaten the status quo—or their membership in "American" and "Local" communities.

Contributions to Asian American Rhetoric

This study contributes to the burgeoning subfield of Asian American rhetoric, considering what the construction of this rhetoric as a minority discourse elides. Asian American rhetoric brings together Asian American studies and composition and rhetoric in considering Asian Americans as rhetorical agents. Scholarship on Asian American

rhetoric contributes to the limited work on this group in composition and rhetoric and limited conceptions of Asians and Asian Americans more broadly. Studying Asian Americans is crucial in order to expand the ways we think about this group in composition and rhetoric, where people of color are primarily discussed as basic writers or English language learners. In Russel Durst's chapter, for example, on research on postsecondary composition from 1984 to 2003, the section on race and ethnicity is dominated by texts that focus on students of color as disadvantaged (86). While calling attention to the challenges people of color face is undeniably important, especially for teachers who hope to address students' needs, this existing body of work provides an incredibly narrow view of what it means to be a person of color.

Scholarship in Asian American rhetoric has begun to address these limitations. Mao and Young, for example, emphasize the diversity of Asian American rhetoric, saying, "like any other ethnic rhetoric, [it] is infused with competing voices, internal contradictions, and shifting alliances at every given discursive moment," comprising diverse national origins, for instance (9). Even when not specifically addressing diversity, Mao and Young's emphasis on context gestures toward it. Asian American rhetoric, they say, is always geared toward its specific circumstance; that is, it is "always situated in a space of linguistic, cultural, and transnational multiplicity and fraught with histories and memories of asymmetrical relations of power and domination" (Mao and Young 20-21).

The diverse and contextual nature of Asian American rhetorical practices (not unlike other rhetorical practices) stems in part from its interaction with other cultures. As Mao and Young say, "Asian American rhetoric can take on discursive features that

are suggestive of other rhetorical traditions and/or are being appropriated by the dominant tradition" (21). They add, "It is these moments of entanglement that call for further systematic investigations where boundaries of different cultures, traditions, and identities conflate, and where acts of conflict and interdependency abound" (Mao and Young 21). That is, Mao and Young encourage attention to these unavoidable "entanglements" and blurred "boundaries" of Asian American rhetoric, insinuating that this rhetoric should not only be an object of celebration, but also of interrogation.

Despite acknowledging the variation in Asian American rhetoric and encouraging interrogation alongside celebration, however, Mao and Young's focus on Asian American rhetoric as a "minority discourse" counters, to some extent, their efforts detailed above (5). They define Asian Americans as "on the margin of culture" (Mao and Young 6). Asian American rhetoric, they say, enables members of this group to "resist social and economic injustice and reassert their discursive agency and authority in the dominant culture" (Mao and Young 3). Furthermore, they say, "The emergence of Asian American rhetoric speaks to this desire to give voice to the voiceless and to accord long-overdue legitimacy to those ways of speaking that have long been the stuff that Asian Americans are made of" (Mao and Young 4). Asian Americans are constructed as "voiceless" victims of "injustice" who must "reassert" themselves. This assumes Asian Americans are not part of dominant culture and lack a strong voice. These arguments make sense in the context of the continental U.S. They are less appropriate, however, in Hawai'i, where, despite exposure to dominant U.S. constructions of Asians and Asian Americans through, for example, popular media, the

day-to-day lived experience of Asian Americans is quite different than on the continent. This leads me to wonder:

- Given that the Hawai'i context is likely to construct an Asian American identity that does not fit the parameters often assumed in Asian American rhetoric, what can the rhetorical practices of Asian Americans from Hawai'i contribute to scholarship in Asian American rhetoric?
    - How do privileges of belonging to (1) an Asian American majority and/or (2) a politically and socioeconomically dominant ethnic group influence identity constructions of Asian Americans from Hawai'i?
    - How does the challenge of adjusting to the minority status of Asian Americans on the continent influence the identity constructions of Asian Americans from Hawai'i?
    - How do Asian Americans from Hawai'i use cultural resources gained through (1) generational status (i.e. engagement with U.S. pop culture and English language ability) and (2) upbringing in Hawai'i to represent themselves?

While the significance of context is emphasized in Asian American rhetoric then, my study provides greater understanding as to how particular contexts influence Asian American rhetorical practices. That is, how the Hawai'i context—in which (1) individuals of Asian ancestry make up the largest segment of the population, (2) individuals of Chinese and Japanese ancestry hold socioeconomic and political power, and (3) a "Local" Hawai'i identity is most valued—influences club members' identity

construction, in part, discouraging their use of Asian American and person of color identity markers.

Focusing on the Hawai'i context highlights the importance of attending not only to how Asian Americans speak back to the dominant discourse, but how we exercise our own power and privilege as well, supporting dominant discourses, for example, that ultimately maintain our privilege in Hawai'i. This is what the construction of Asian American rhetoric as "minority discourse" elides. In this study of one group of Asian Americans from Hawai'i, I find them speaking back to some dominant representations by sustaining others. Attending to Asian Americans' uses of power and privilege alongside the challenges we face provides a fuller and more responsible picture of rhetorical practices, never ignoring the challenges, but simultaneously holding ourselves responsible for the privileges we do exercise.

Club Members' Privileges Within the Ethnic and Racial Context of Hawai'i

In order to better understand the affordances the Hawai'i context offers Asian American rhetoric, some understanding of this context, in particular in relation to race and ethnicity, is needed. Ultimately, because of the numbers of those of Asian ancestry in Hawai'i along with the dominance of those of Chinese and Japanese ancestry, club members have trouble relating to experiences of racism. As previously mentioned, being Asian American in Hawai'i is quite different than it is on the continent. Okamura further explains:

> In Hawai'i, Whiteness has been decentered by local identity and culture, particularly since the reconstruction of local identity in the 1970s. White is not the "unmarked category against which difference is constructed" (Lipsitz 1998:

1) and that serves as the unquestioned normative standard by which non-Whites are evaluated, as it does in the continental United States. (*Ethnicity* 128-29)

That is, while on the continent, the invisible norm is white, with all other "difference" needing to be accounted for, in Hawai'i, "Local," which generally refers to those "from" Hawai'i and includes most individuals of Asian ancestry,[1] is the norm. So while Asians on the continent are often conspicuous, the same is not true in Hawai'i.

In addition, in Hawai'i, Chinese and Japanese Americans are politically and socioeconomically dominant, as seen in the epigraph from Okamura. This means that individuals from these backgrounds have grown up seeing role models of their ethnicity. Among public school teachers, for example, the largest group (38%) is Japanese American, a statistic Okamura says "has probably been the case since the 1960s" (*Ethnicity* 66). As a result Japanese American school children in Hawai'i grow up seeing people of their ethnicity well represented in respectable roles. Hawai'i's ethnic and racial demographics and culture provide a unique context in which to consider Asian American identity as Asian Americans from Hawai'i will likely see themselves differently—at the center of things, to paraphrase Mike Rose—than those on the continent do (178).

Constructing Oneself as "Local"

In addition, in Hawai'i, those of Asian ancestry may not think of themselves as Asian American since "Local" identity is seen as just as or more important than race or ethnicity. To explain, the identity marker "Local," as in many other parts of the world, indicates someone who is from a particular place. In Hawai'i, however, "Local" takes

[1] Okamura claims that "Local" is also used to exclude recent immigrants from Asia and the Pacific (*Ethnicity* 127).

on greater meaning. As Young says, "Locals" "see themselves as distinctly different from the mainland" ("Native Claims" 92). According to Okamura, "local tends to be privileged, although not necessarily empowered, over nonlocal categories, including Haoles [whites], African Americans, Asian and Pacific Islander immigrants, tourists, the military, and foreign investors" (*Ethnicity* 122). This is because "Locals" are constructed as belonging in Hawai'i, as having a claim to Hawai'i that members of these other groups do not. In addition, "Local" is seen as opposed to and marking values different from those of these other groups.

The term "Local" has a complicated history,[2] but in order to understand how it functions for club members in this study, what is most important is a sense of popular perceptions of the term, particularly in relation to the more typical racial and ethnic identity markers applied on the continent. According to Mari Matsuda, a critical race scholar who grew up in Hawai'i, "Sometimes when Hawaii Japanese go to school on the mainland, they run into the Asian-American movement, and they are confused because they do not think of themselves as 'Asian.' They think of themselves as 'local'" (187). While we are familiar with the term "Asian American" and know that it is how we are identified, for example, on the U.S. Census, Okamura explains that this label is not very useful in Hawai'i as different Asian ethnic groups "constitute major or at least significant segments of island society" and the experiences of "Local" Filipinos differ greatly from that of Japanese Americans which bears little resemblance to the experience of Korean Americans (*Ethnicity* 17). While continental Asian American communities are also quite diverse, the umbrella term "Asian American" seems to fill a

[2] Okamura details changes in the meaning of "Local" over time on pages 113-123 of *Ethnicity and Inequality*.

greater need on the U.S. continent, to unite this group in a context where whites are the majority.

I want to pause for a second here to make clear that, while, throughout the dissertation, I refer to the U.S. "continent" and to experiences of Asian Americans from Hawai'i on the "continent," I realize that the continent is large and that experiences will differ, for example, from Irvine, California to South Bend, Indiana to Wellesley, Massachusetts. I realize that Asian and Asian American populations vary across the continental U.S., from Chinatowns to college towns to rural areas. I understand that Asians and Asian Americans are perceived very differently in these different contexts—as international students or adoptees, as gang members or technology workers. Yet the variation of Asian American experience in different continental contexts is not the focus of my research. I maintain that no matter the specific continental context Asian Americans from Hawai'i enter, there are key differences from the Hawai'i context that we all face.

While those from Hawai'i understand we are Asian American, for example, upon moving to the continent, we live this categorization for the first time—being seen as Asian American (or Asian) rather than as "Local," Japanese, or Chinese and being read through that lens. The term "Local" is also intertwined with perceptions of Hawai'i as multicultural utopia. That is, to identify as "Local" (a Hawai'i label) is to identify with "Local" values, including the popular perception of Hawai'i as multicultural utopia. To become Asian American (a continental label) means seeing race as those on the continent do—taking race too seriously, according to popular views in Hawai'i. As I explain elsewhere, "Making jokes about race is seen as characteristic of local identity,

while non-locals, especially those from the U.S. mainland, are viewed as being too uptight when it comes to ethnic humor" (Tasaka 156). This shift from "Local" to Asian American then marks a significant shift in worldview.

The Difficulty of Seeing Racism in Hawai'i

While the "Local" label is valuable for naming the experience of individuals of Asian ancestry from Hawai'i (rather than from the continental U.S. or from Asia), claims to "Local" identity might also be viewed through recent critiques. According to Native Hawaiian scholar and activist Haunani-Kay Trask, the term "Local" is used by Asian settlers to support claims to land and political control of Hawai'i, positioning them, unlike whites, as having as much right as indigenous Hawaiians to these ("Settlers" 4). Patricia Halagao's work supports Trask's assertion of the dubious value of "Local" to settlers, as among Halagao's University of Hawai'i students, she finds, "The local middle-class Japanese students emphasized the local identity over ethnic differences. Instead of acknowledging inequities between ethnic groups, they turned to commonalities and referred to everyone as 'being just local'. This was similar to the studies of White students who perceived 'everyone being American'" rather than being attentive to ethnic and racial inequalities (Halagao 46). In other words, while the term "Local," like "American," often appears to be used to promote unity and multicultural ideals, it covers over history and hides material differences.

According to Candace Fujikane, who teaches English and cultural studies at the University of Hawai'i, the term "Local" gained popularity in the 1960s and 1970s in demonstrations to prevent evictions of "Local" residents by outside developers ("Reimagining" 45). In its function over the years, the term bears some similarities to

"Asian American." Both labels, for example, served to unify a group: "Asian American" brought individuals of different Asian ethnicities to see themselves as similar (Wei 1) and "Local" was first used during "the Massie trial of 1931, when Hawai'i-born residents of Hawai'i were allied in opposition to continental power represented by military servicemen" (Fujikane, "Reimagining" 45).[3] The 1960s and 1970s were also key moments for both terms, as this is when "Asian American" emerged and when "Local" gained popularity. And today, there are concerns that the terms have become meaningless. Steve Louie, for example, worries that what began as the Asian American movement is now only "AzN PrYde," which has "more 'us' or 'us-first' consciousness" (Louie and Omatsu xvi). Fujikane says, "Increasingly, the local seems to serve less as a catalyst for change than as a device for maintaining racial hierarchies in Hawai'i" ("Reimagining" 45).

The problem with claims to "Local" identity in particular, however, is its deployment against Native Hawaiians. While similar to Louie's concerns with "AzN PrYde," the political and socioeconomic dominance of Chinese and Japanese in Hawai'i adds weight to this turn that perhaps "Asian American" has also taken. Given the power of Chinese and Japanese in Hawai'i, this deployment of the "Local" against Native Hawaiians is the status quo, coloring dominant views in Hawai'i, for example, of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement as "a dangerous threat to ethnic harmony" (Okamura, "Illusion" 283).

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[3] The Massie trial refers to a case when five "Local" men ("two Native Hawaiians, two Japanese Americans, and a Chinese-Hawaiian") were accused of raping a white woman whose husband was in the U.S. Navy (Okamura, *Ethnicity* 113). According to historian John Rosa, "the case itself and subsequent narratives of it 'have consistently served as a means to express local identity'" (qtd. in Okamura, *Ethnicity* 113).

The inequalities between those of Asian ancestry and Hawaiians in Hawai'i, in which Asian Americans, as "settlers" who "are complicit in U.S. colonial practices and benefit from the American theft of Native lands," provide a way to consider Asian Americans as, not the victims of institutional racism, but instead its beneficiaries (Fujikane, "Sweeping" 164). Those of Asian ancestry in Hawai'i have faced many struggles; in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, immigrants from China, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines were brought to Hawai'i by American planters to do backbreaking work on the plantations (Takaki 135-36). They were subject to "numerous restrictions [that] governed work, housing, and social life and were enforced through fines, docking of time and wages, imprisonment, and corporal punishment" (Okihiro 34). Through the formation of multi-ethnic labor unions beginning in 1920, Asians in Hawai'i began to gain political power (Tasaka 155). No matter the struggles Asians have faced, however, according to Trask, their rights to Hawai'i are not the same as those of Native Hawaiians ("Settlers" 6). This context shows the limits of constructing Asian American rhetoric as a minority discourse. The Hawai'i context for Asian American rhetoric tweaks this "minority" construction, considering the ways club members are and are not disadvantaged minorities, and, drawing on Mao and Young, how power differentials, both those that privilege and disadvantage them, influence their rhetorical practices.

The emphasis on "Local" culture and identity, for example, makes it difficult to see racism in Hawai'i. Multiculturalism can be seen everywhere in the islands—from meals to classrooms and even within families. This likely encourages the situation Okamura describes, in which "the great majority of island residents supports the

Hawai'i multicultural model or the general belief in the positive nature of island ethnic relations" (*Ethnicity* 15). That is, residents of Hawai'i tend to see the islands as a multicultural utopia, a model for the U.S. continent. As I have explained elsewhere, the rose-tinted celebration of multiculturalism in "Local" culture has been critiqued by scholars like Darlene Rodrigues, who argue that this "can make it more difficult to bring up the racial injustices one does experience" (Tasaka 156). Halagao offers a similar explanation for the widespread denial of racism in Hawai'i, speculating in the context of her University of Hawai'i classroom, "Students of colour may not realise they hold racial privilege because they are conditioned to believe only Whites hold privilege or that Whiteness equals oppression (Howard, 1999)" (Halagao 47). Similar to Mao and Young's emphasis on Asian American rhetoric as "minority discourse," the belief that only whites hold privilege does not fully account for the Hawai'i context. Seeing Asian American rhetoric as "minority discourse" only tells part of the story. Dominant racial hierarchies that position whites opposite people of color do not ask us to consider how we may be privileged in other ways. This may be true in some continental contexts as well as the Hawai'i context. In Hawai'i specifically, however, in combination with conceptions of the "Local," constructions of only whites as privileged enable individuals of Asian ancestry, some of whom are quite privileged in terms of ethnicity and social class, to overlook inequalities, focused only on their challenges at the expense of others'.

In the context of this study, these critiques of the "Local" indicate that while the identity marker is valuable for indicating significant differences between Asians in Hawai'i and those from the U.S. continent or from Asia—differences on which my

study is largely based, the insistence on "Local" identity may also indicate a desire to cling to the political and socioeconomic power some Asian ethnic groups hold in Hawai'i, gained at the expense of Native Hawaiians. While this may be intended to ease their adjustment to the continent, it is an example of a rhetorical practice that evidences the privileges and power used by some Asian Americans against indigenous Hawaiians. While "Local" identity may in some sense "accurately" represent Asian American lives in Hawai'i, it also maintains the privileges we enjoy there, but not on the continent. "Local" identity and critiques of it are key in my analysis of how club members choose to represent themselves with Asian/Asian American, "Local" Hawai'i, and indigenous Hawaiian culture. They obviously see value in "Local" culture for representing themselves, but critiques of the way the "Local" is deployed gesture toward asymmetries of power at work.

Despite critiques of the "Local" detailed above, however, I continue to use the term as it reflects the self-perceptions of Asian Americans from Hawai'i better than the recently proposed "settler" does (Trask, "Settlers"; Fujikane, "Introduction"). This is key as my focus is on how Asian Americans from Hawai'i perceive and represent themselves. It makes little sense to say that Asian Americans from Hawai'i represent themselves as "settlers" through references to Hawai'i's food and multiculturalism. Asian Americans from Hawai'i rarely represent themselves as settlers; this is the problem that scholars like Trask and Fujikane identify. In addition, despite its problems, "Local" continues to be a valuable term for differentiating Asian Americans from Hawai'i from those from the continent or from Asia. While Trask critiques this "special" construction, which gives "Locals" a claim that continental Asian Americans

lack, I maintain that there are significant differences between the Asian American experience in Hawai'i and on the continent. This is a primary premise of my project and "Local" helps to emphasize that, not to provide "Local" Asians a sense of belonging in Hawai'i, but to reflect the sense of belonging they do have. I use quotation marks then around the word "Local" in order to call attention to the inaccuracies of popular claims to "Local" identity given existing critiques. In this way, I aim to draw on the value of the term for reflecting the views and lived experiences of Asian Americans from Hawai'i while acknowledging its problems. I also capitalize "Local" in order to indicate its use as a specific identity marker for those who have spent a significant portion of their life (and were most often born and raised) in Hawai'i.

On a related vocabulary note, while "Local" is inclusive of Native Hawaiians, it is important to understand that the term "Hawaiian" is not parallel to a term like "Texan" (meaning someone from Texas), but is reserved for those who have at least one ancestor who lived in Hawai'i prior to 1778[4] (Hawaii State Constitution, in Young), in contrast to other "Locals" who are descended from immigrants to Hawai'i. Throughout the dissertation, I use "Hawaiian," "indigenous" and "Native Hawaiian" as synonyms.

Ethnicity, Social Class, and Private and Public Education

I have described the majority status of Asian Americans in Hawai'i and the political and socioeconomic dominance of those of Chinese and Japanese ancestry. When I speak of club members as privileged, I refer to other characteristics as well. In particular, participants and other club members can also be seen as privileged in terms of education, based on the high schools they have attended. All but one participant is a

[4] 1778 is "the commonly recognized date of Western contact" (Young, "Native Claims" 86).

graduate of a private high school; four are alumni of Punahou School, which also graduated Barack Obama and America Online CEO Steve Case. The one participant who graduated from a public high school attended what Okamura characterizes as "one of the academically better public schools" with "among the lowest dropout rates" (5% in contrast to 29% at the high school with the highest drop out rate) (*Ethnicity* 39, 69). As touched on above, club members are also privileged in terms of their matriculation, not only at postsecondary institutions on the continent, but often competitive ones at that. As Okamura says, these educations come at "considerable financial cost" (*Ethnicity* 39).

As all but one of my participants is a graduate of a private high school in Hawai'i and Okamura says that graduates of these schools are highly likely to attend college on the continent (*Ethnicity* 73), I would also like to provide some context for the public/private divide in Hawai'i. As Okamura tells it, in Hawai'i private schools provide an escape, for those who can afford it, from Hawai'i's under-funded public school system (*Ethnicity* 71). While nationally, annual spending per student has increased, in Hawai'i, it has decreased (Okamura, *Ethnicity* 66). There are many private schools in Hawai'i, but those generally seen as most prestigious are Punahou School and 'Iolani School (from which four and three participants graduated respectively). The status of these schools can be seen in their famous alumni; in addition to those from Punahou previously mentioned, 'Iolani graduated Honolulu mayor Mufi Hanneman and Sun Yat-sen, a key political leader in China in the early twentieth century. Both schools then have educated men who eventually came to be quite powerful—whether in Hawai'i or more broadly. The cost of attending these schools also ensures that students

are in large part limited to the well off; Punahou School's tuition for the 2006-2007 academic year was $14,725 (Okamura, *Ethnicity* 72).

Private schools in Hawai'i, more than public schools, are seen as preparing students for "entry to a prestigious college" (Okamura, *Ethnicity* 57). According to Okamura, "At the better private high schools, the entire graduating class continues on to college, the great majority of them in the continental United States, including the most academically renown[ed] higher education institutions in the nation" (*Ethnicity* 73). In 1998, for example, 87% of Punahou graduates enrolled at postsecondary institutions on the continent, while this was the case for only 5% of the graduates at a public high school that serves primarily students from less politically and socioeconomically powerful ethnic backgrounds (Okamura, *Ethnicity* 39).

Understanding club members' privileges provides a frame for reading their use of devalued images and practices (e.g. exoticized Asia, "quaint" Hawai'i, Pidgin, Hip Hop Nation Language), that is, for understanding to what extent the show of pride in these images and practices should be seen as reclamation in defiance of dominant standards and to what extent resulting from the privilege of those whose central position—based on standardized language ability, academic achievement, and financial power—is unquestioned. Given the context of Hawai'i, club websites provide a context for considering site authors and other club members, one group comprised largely of Asian Americans, as both challenged (as members of an ethnic minority group on the continent) and privileged (as often late-generation native English speakers from ethnic groups dominant in Hawai'i).

Hawai'i Clubs on Continental College and University Campuses

I turn now to Hawai'i club websites as a site for studying the rhetorical constructions of Asian Americans from Hawai'i. The Hawai'i clubs I focus on are based on college campuses and have as members primarily students from Hawai'i attending college on the continent. For the most part, club websites say the purpose of their clubs is to provide a home away from home for students from Hawai'i and to spread Hawai'i culture. In this way, they are similar to international students' organizations or other student of color clubs, which address the unique challenges these students face on college campuses.

Hawai'i club members are primarily, but not all, of Asian ancestry. On the University of California, Irvine Hawai'i club website, for instance, of the eleven club officers and members for whom information about ethnic background is provided seven (63%) identify as having Asian ancestry.[5] On the University of Pennsylvania Hawai'i club website, of the eight officers listed, all have Asian (Japanese, Chinese, and Korean) surnames. While this data perhaps problematically conflates ethnic/racial self-identification with the patrilineal identification practices by which most of us get our surnames, it provides a sense of the Asian American population in Hawai'i club. It also aligns with all participants' descriptions of their clubs as "mainly" or "mostly" comprised of members of Asian ancestry. In presenting data on the racial make-up of clubs, I want to acknowledge that while club members are not all of Asian ancestry, a large number of them are. Though this count may not be perfectly accurate, it provides an idea of the number of those of Asian ancestry, thus supporting my reading of (1) club

[5] The other four describe themselves as Hawaiian, white, or Mexican and white.

members as negotiating perceptions of their Asian appearance in Hawai'i and on the continent and (2) club websites as Asian American rhetoric. While I do not want to erase or ignore those members who are not of Asian ancestry, in reading these websites as examples of Asian American rhetoric, my focus is on how club members, who are largely of Asian ancestry, negotiate perceptions of their Asian appearance in Hawai'i and on the continent.

While Hawai'i club populations are largely Asian American, however, one participant, Lauren,[6] sees them as quite different than other Asian American student organizations, specifically groups like the Hong Kong Student Association and Korean Student Association. She says of the Hawai'i club:

> We're the only group in APSC [Asia Pacific Student Coalition, an umbrella organization that Hawai'i club, Hong Kong Student Association, Korean Student Association, and other clubs belong to] that isn't completely based on race, but on geography. ive been able to just make that bridge, overlook the fact that we represent this "asian" group, even though our common bond is simply where we're from. i think for the most part we look at it and chuckle.[7]

Lauren contrasts the Hawai'i club she belongs to with these other clubs, saying that these others put a greater emphasis on race. Along with her statement, other data also encourage me to see key differences between Hawai'i clubs and other, in particular Asian American, college student organizations.

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[6] Participants are identified by pseudonyms throughout the dissertation.

[7] As interviews were conducted via internet chat, participants often followed the conventions of the genre, limiting capitalization and punctuation, for instance, and typing for speed rather than spelling accuracy. I have reproduced participants' responses as they gave them, inserting punctuation and correct spellings when necessary to aid readers' comprehension.

Hawai'i clubs seem to differ from other Asian American campus organizations in part based on the history of their formation. Young found that many Hawai'i clubs originated in the 1990s ("Native Claims" 98), and while the start dates of the clubs included in my study range from the 1970s to 2000,[8] Hawai'i clubs generally do seem to have started later than the campus organizations, formed in the 1970s, that grew out of the Asian American movement. In Steve Louie and Glenn Omatsu's *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment*, for example, several contributors who participated in the Asian American movement describe their role in founding campus organizations like the Asian Students Union at San Francisco State University (43) and Kababayan (a Pilipino American student group) at University of California, Irvine (UCI) (53). The impact of these roots can be seen in current club activities. Tomo No Kai, for example, a Japanese/Japanese American club at UCI also was formed in the 1970s and one of its annual activities is a trip to Manzanar, a camp where Japanese Americans were interned during World War II ("About Us," *UCI*). This activity reflects the influence of the Asian American movement, which saw Japanese American internment as a key issue (Louie and Omatsu 43).

Hawai'i clubs, with later roots, seem to have a different origin. Young reads the 1990s founding dates many Hawai'i clubs claim in relation to the hundred-year anniversary of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, "which put Hawai'i and Hawaiian culture in the spotlight (not only nationally, but in the local consciousness as

[8] Of the club websites included in this study, the following information about their origin is provided. According to the University of Oregon website, their 2007 lu'au was their 32nd annual, indicating that their first lu'au took place around 1975. According to the UCI site, their club started in 1985. The Northwestern club says its 2009 lu'au was its 23rd, indicating that their first took place around 1986. Notre Dame had a Hawai'i club from 1951 to 1966, but they say the club went dormant and reappeared in 1981. The Menlo club puts its origin in 1990 and the Wellesley club in 2000.

well) and the explosion of the World Wide Web [which] made connections among displaced Locals easier" ("Native Claims" 98). While some Hawai'i clubs may have roots in the Asian American movement, I read their formation also in the context of 1990s multiculturalism. I find it similar to the Mehndi night that the South Asian students club at Smith College organizes, which Sunaina Maira discusses. While Maira does not discuss the formation of the club itself, she places the origins of the event in the 1990s (230). According to Maira, one reason Mehndi night is successful is because "it plays an important role in the multicultural economy of the liberal arts college" (230). She further explains:

> The organizers are strategic about marketing the event to meet the institution's multicultural agenda, using it to fulfill the resident life policy on "diversity" programming requirements. Clearly, these women understand that multiculturalism in higher education is about the negotiation of resources and the performance of a certain liberal politics of cultural difference, and they have staged the reappropriation of Indo-chic to their own (material) benefit. (Maira 231)

While neither participants nor Hawai'i club websites explicitly discuss the role of their club within university multicultural programming, they can be read as fulfilling this same purpose that Maira describes for Mehndi night. She says "part of the big draw [of the event] is cheap Indian food and Indian dance performances, so participants at the event can consume 'Indian culture' visually and orally" (Maira 230). The parallels of this event to the annual lu'au most Hawai'i clubs host, where hula is performed and Hawaiian and "Local" food served, are evident.

In other ways too, Hawai'i clubs can be seen operating in service of colleges' and universities' "multicultural agendas." Many institutions, for example, take pride in the "diversity" of their student population, publicizing the demographics of students' racial backgrounds and home states in their recruiting materials. Some Hawai'i clubs play a role in this recruitment as well. At the University of Pennsylvania, according to Lauren, the Hawai'i club helps recruit students from Hawai'i. The club is provided with a list of accepted students' names and phone numbers and members call each student "personally to ask if they have questions and encourage them to come." Given Hawai'i's racial demographics, these institutions are likely eager to recruit these students in order to boost the number of students of color and Hawai'i clubs help them fulfill this purpose, albeit in a small way.

In contrast to other Asian American student organizations, Hawai'i clubs also seem more focused on performance, which also aligns them with the multicultural goals of colleges and universities as performances provide visible and consumable signs of difference. While groups like Kababayan and Tomo No Kai also host events where they perform for outsiders, these are less central than the lu'au is for many Hawai'i clubs. Tomo No Kai, for example, lists what is likely a performance-based event, Cultural Night, where they "celebrate the beauty of Japanese culture" among other key events, including a basketball tournament, the Manzanar trip, and another event related to Japanese American internment ("Welcome!"). In contrast, for the UCI Hawai'i club, "The biggest cultural event for our club is our annual Lu'au" ("About Us," *Na 'Opio*). The focus on this event is also indicated in their website design; of the items listed in the navigation, "Lu'au" is highlighted in a different color so that it stands out from the

others ("About Us," *Na 'Opio*). Participants also describe lu'au as the major event of their Hawai'i clubs.

On a related note, Hawai'i clubs and other Asian American student organizations view the role of education in their clubs differently. I see this as closely tied to the idea of performance, as in their annual lu'au, Hawai'i clubs often claim to be not only performing for, but also educating outsiders. Where Hawai'i clubs focus on educating outsiders, however, other Asian American organizations also educate themselves, perhaps evidencing a more reflective attitude. Tomo No Kai and Kababayan, for example, see the education of their members as part of their clubs' project. Tomo No Kai, for example, aims to edify its members through the trip to Manzanar ("About Us," *UCI*). Kababayan sponsors study hours for club members and describes academics as a main focus of the club ("About Us," *Kababayan*). While Hawai'i club members, like most college students, devote much time to academics, they see this as outside the purpose of the club. One UCI Hawai'i club member, for example, writes in a newsletter posted on the club website, "[The Hawai'i club's] Camping trip, ski trip, and Vegas trip are all definitely worth going to even if you have 3 midterms during the week after (just study lots in advance)" ("NOOK Newsletter," 17 October). Thus, academics are seen as something that must be taken care of so that one has the time to participate in Hawai'i club social activities.

Considering these clubs in relation to the Asian American movement, the focus on education in Tomo No Kai and Kababayan perhaps comes from the sense that their history has been kept from them. Louie and others active in the Asian American movement, for example, describe starting Asian American history classes or study

groups on various college campuses in order to address this issue (Louie and Omatsu xxi). The different approach of Hawai'i club members perhaps is a reflection of their education in Hawai'i; that is, they are less likely to feel their history has been kept from them given the dominant role of Asian Americans in general and Japanese and Chinese in particular in Hawai'i. Hawai'i club members will have learned the history of Hawai'i in school, for instance, and had at least Japanese and Chinese celebrations like Girls' Day, Boys' Day, and Chinese New Year acknowledged at school and even incorporated into the curriculum. As a result, perhaps Hawai'i club members feel they already know "their" history—whether Hawai'i, "Local," and/or Asian/Asian American. They feel their job is to teach what they know rather than to further examine it themselves.

In addition, the use of the term "club," which all Hawai'i clubs use, also points to a difference from other Asian American organizations. "Club" carries a more social connotation in contrast to terms like "union," "alliance," or "caucus." These other terms provide more of a sense of uniting in order to take some kind of political action.

Hawai'i clubs then appear to be similar to Asian American student organizations, international student organizations, and other clubs for students of color in their support for club members who face unique challenges on campus. They differ from these other organizations, however, in that they tend to be more focused on the social and on performance and do not build education and reflection into their clubs' purpose.

Why Hawai'i Clubs?

Hawai'i clubs provide a case for considering the influence of the racial and ethnic context of Hawai'i on Asian American rhetorical practices. On club websites, Hawai'i

clubs and their members negotiate multiple audiences and cultures. The most common target audiences mentioned by participants are current and prospective members.[9] Yet all express concerns with how club websites will be read by continental audiences in other parts of the interview. This is especially notable as this continental audience is the only audience that is mentioned by all participants. That is, while Hawai'i outsiders are not identified by any participant as a target audience, all participants ultimately express concerns with this group's perceptions.

Hawai'i club websites then reflect the self-representation of club members to both continental and Hawai'i audiences. They also reflect the identity constructions of club members who are from Hawai'i, but have recently relocated to the continent. As a result, on Hawai'i club websites, constructions of Asian Americans in Hawai'i and on the continent come together, evidencing the negotiation of these constructions vis-à-vis one another. In this way, club websites, as a place where continental and Hawai'i contexts and audiences meet, provide an ideal site for observing the influences of the Hawai'i context and its privileges and challenges on Asian American rhetoric.

Club Websites Reflect Citizenship and Belonging in Multiple Communities

Key in existing Asian American rhetoric scholarship is the theme of "citizenship," or relation to mainstream America. In Young's *Minor Re/Visions*, for example, he considers the relationship between citizenship and literacy for Asian Americans. He reads two literary works by Hawai'i authors as "narrative re/visions of citizenship written in response to the anxieties about race, class, and language generated by

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[9] Four participants each mention current and prospective members. Three participants mentioned partner organizations and two mention parents of members. The total adds up to more than nine because some participants mentioned multiple audiences.

attitudes created by the plantation and the English Standard school" (*Minor Re/Visions* 134).[10] That is, the protagonists in these texts, in part because of their language use (i.e. use of Pidgin or Hawai'i Creole English), are perceived as distant from "American" culture, yet they also "use language and literacy to re/vision their own places in their own stories," or to negotiate that distance (Young, *Minor Re/Visions* 134).

Mao and Young also describe, as part of the purpose of Asian American studies, "the writing of Asian Americans into the national American narrative," which similarly functions to mark citizenship. They see Asian American literary authors, for instance, "expand[ing] the boundaries of what are defined as American cultural texts and of who can write those texts" (Mao and Young 8-9). Mao and Young say there is a "tension or contradiction" in "translating and transforming our experiences into the larger American imaginary" (21). Yet marking our "Americanness" is in many ways valuable, given constructions of Asians in the U.S. as perpetual foreigners (Lee and Zhou 10). Concerns with representation and identity are similarly key in Asian American rhetoric, emerging out of "the over-determination of racial, ethnic, and cultural categories" (Mao and Young 16). That is, because race, ethnicity, and culture are assumed to count for so much, Asian American rhetoricians must take as a primary concern the preconceived notions others have of us as Asian and Asian American.

For Hawai'i club members, however, the need to mark themselves as "American" works differently than it does for other Asian Americans, including those

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[10] As I explain in "Rhetoric of the Asian American Self":

> From 1924 until 1948, Hawai'i's public school system was divided into English Standard and non-English Standard schools, with students technically divided by English ability, but in reality, segregated by race. The system was designed to allay the concerns of "Americans [who] know that their impressionable children, literally surrounded throughout the school-day and at playtime by these swarms of Orientals, will unconsciously pick up and adopt Oriental manners and mannerisms" (quoted in Young[, *Re/Visions*] 116). (Tasaka 155)

in the Hawai'i context that Young describes. In Young's analysis, Hawai'i's early twentieth-century education system, which privileged whites over Asians, plays a significant role. He cites a 1920s youth of "the white privileged class" who says, "It's all settled then; we, the Punahou [School] boys, will be the lunas [managers] and the McKinley [High School] fellows will carry the [sugar]cane" (Takaki, *Strangers* 172, qtd in Young 119). But what of today's Asian American graduates of Punahou? In contrast with the Asian Americans in Young's examples, it is unlikely that Asian American graduates of elite private schools face the same issues of citizenship—at least within the Hawai'i context. The desire to mark oneself as "American" is significantly strengthened, however, by club members' shift to the continent, as they move from a place with a large Asian American population to one where individuals of Asian heritage comprise a much smaller percentage of the population. Thus, part of club members' adjustment to the continent entails reconstructing their identities in relation to the different ways they are perceived on the continent and in Hawai'i so they can have a sense of belonging in both locations.

Club members negotiate not only "Americanness," however, but also membership in other communities, for example, a "Local" Hawai'i community. On their websites, club members carefully walk the line between membership in a "Local" community and claims to "Hawaiianness." While they evidence a concern with marking their belonging in the U.S. then, club members are also careful to signify their identities relative other communities as well—marking themselves as insiders or outsiders so as to account for their "difference" without jeopardizing the "American" and "Local" identities that are most highly valued in Hawai'i and on the continent.

As a result of these multiple negotiations, in the context of this study, I find "citizenship" less useful than "belonging." Part of my opposition to "citizenship" has to do with its legal connotations; the vast majority of participants and club members are born U.S. citizens and, more importantly, my concern is not with legal markers, but with perceptions. That is, the communities that club members aim to present themselves as affiliated with (or not). I define belonging as referring to one's being seen within a certain community based on one's identity. One can be seen as being "American" then and thus belonging with other "Americans" or belonging—having the right to be, or expected to be—in the U.S. One can be seen as "Local" and thus belonging with other "Locals" or belonging in Hawai'i. I see belonging as in many ways similar to citizenship; perhaps a key difference is that while one generally is a citizen of only one nation (something like "dual citizenship" being the exception rather than the rule) one can—and often does—belong to many communities. Club members' negotiation of multiple communities is key and "belonging" enables exploring that negotiation.

On club websites, for example, members reflect their belonging in different communities with several available identity markers. In negotiating these identity markers, club websites evidence care in using those that pose greater risks (i.e. person of color, Asian American, "Hawaiian") and holding on to those that are most valuable (i.e. "Local," "American") in their self-portrayal to Hawai'i and/or continental audiences. That is, club members are in some sense privileged in that they have access to all of these identity markers and cultural resources—that is, they are U.S. citizens, engaged with U.S. popular culture, native speakers of English, recipients of prestigious educations, and have access to "Local" and Hawai'i culture as well as Asian and Asian

American culture. Yet their access to these resources means they have much to lose and must operate carefully in order to hold on to these identities. In negotiating these identity markers, those most valuable to club members are "American" and "Local" identities as both are viable and valuable on the continent and in Hawai'i.

Ultimately, club websites reflect members' negotiation of Hawai'i and continental audiences. To a Hawai'i audience, it is beneficial for club members to construct themselves as "American" and "Local." "American" connotes financial success and worldliness. While club members value this, however, holding on to the "Local" is also important because it represents home and their roots. We might say that this desire to hold on to "Local" identity also reflects the significance of "Local" culture and being "Local" for who club members are. Portraying themselves as people of color or Asian Americans has limited value because these are seen as "political" markers that signify race-based associations, which have been problematized as threats to multiculturalism both in Hawai'i and on the continent.

Methodology and Methods

This study is framed in large part by my own experiences, which, in relation to club members' are similar in some, but not all, ways. On one hand, as students from Hawai'i attending school on the continent, we have much in common. I understand what it means to be from Hawai'i and what it means to leave. I understand how one may have little appreciation for the islands while living there and how this can change after moving away. I understand both the positive reactions and the misunderstandings when reporting on the continent that one is from Hawai'i. I know what it is like to migrate from an area with a large Asian American population to one that is more than 80%

white. In addition, like many of my participants and other club members, I am not Hawaiian, but of Chinese and Japanese ancestry. And while I attended a public high school, it is the same one that one of my participants attended, categorized by Okamura as "one of the academically better public schools" (*Ethnicity* 39, 69).

In other ways, however, club members and I are positioned quite differently. I spent only one year of my undergraduate career on the continent for a variety of reasons, but partially due to finances. As a result, I have never belonged to a Hawai'i club. In addition, unlike most club members, I did not spend an extended amount of time on the continent until I began doctoral work; based on age and the graduate school context, I had less need for the support of something like a Hawai'i club. As part of a relatively small graduate program, I was not lost in a sea of 30,000 as I imagine some freshmen can be. And still, in Michigan, I find myself in an unofficial Hawai'i club of sorts: a small group of graduate students, faculty, and others with ties to Hawai'i and the Pacific. Like the Hawai'i club members in this study, we share Spam musubi and other "Local" food with each other. We spend holidays together when unable to travel home. I understand the desire to be with others from Hawai'i and even the desire to perform that identity for outsiders.

The Affordances of Grounded Theory

Being an insider, in those ways in which I am, brings certain challenges. Grounded theory, however, helps me to view my personal connection as an advantage, albeit one I must work with carefully. Grounded theory enables me to draw on my experiences and insider knowledge as a Japanese and Chinese American from Hawai'i who, like club members, has migrated to the continent for higher education. At the same time, I need

to question my own perspectives; I need "not to take [my] own categories for granted but interrogate them as much as [I] do the categories provided by participants/informants" (Clarke 141). I should not assume that because of our similarities, participants will feel and see things the way I do.

While qualitative research may seem to lack objectivity in contrast with quantitative research, grounded theory turns this into a strength. Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss encourage researchers to see themselves "as a research instrument" with an undeniable effect on research findings (13). That is, grounded theory encourages drawing on personal experience but also reflecting on how one's experiences and position influence analysis. Throughout the research process, I considered, for example, my positionality relative to club members—in terms of age, ethnicity, social class, education. According to Corbin and Strauss, "we must be self-reflective about how we influence the research process and, in turn, how it influences us" (11). Questioning my own motives in this way is valuable in any kind of research, but especially in a project so close to my own life experiences.

Grounded theory guides my research questions, in particular my attention to club members' privileges and challenges, which developed out of the club websites themselves as well as literature on Asian American rhetoric and race in Hawai'i. My research questions were relatively open-ended. I expected that the unique ethnic/racial context of Hawai'i might inflect the rhetorical practices of Asian Americans. I expected that factors like majority and minority status and political and socioeconomic position were key aspects of the ethnic/racial context that would influence rhetorical practices, in particular self-representational ones. And Young's work pointed toward Hawai'i club

members' self-representation as Hawaiian, leading me to attend to club members' self-representation in terms of racialized cultures. Grounded theory, however, enabled me to stay open to other factors raised in the data. Rather than focusing narrowly on only, for example, race or gender, grounded theory enables researchers to consider experiences in more multidimensional ways. Adele Clarke, in *Situational Analysis*, agrees that grounded theory "enhances our capacities to do incisive studies of differences of perspective, of highly complex situations of action and positionality, of the heterogeneous discourses in which we are all constantly awash, and of the situated knowledges of life itself thereby produced" (xxiii). It is because of the complexities of the contexts (both Hawai'i and continental) of Hawai'i clubs and their members (as in some ways privileged and in other ways not) that grounded theory was especially valuable for considering Hawai'i club websites.

Grounded theory also guided my "simultaneous collection and analysis of data," encouraging me to be attentive to where Hawai'i club websites and participants directed me, "to remain attuned to [...] subjects' views of their realities, rather than assume that we share the same views and worlds" (Charmaz 510, 515). In an effort to accomplish this, I applied codes to the website data. According to Corbin and Strauss, coding means "taking raw data and raising it to a conceptual level" (66). I used codes in order to see the data in a different way, to see what came up repeatedly, for example. My codes were grounded in both the data and existing literature. Based on Young's discussion of club members' self-representation as Hawaiian, for example, and my own observation of the prevalence of Hawaiian and "Local" culture on club websites, I attended to the various cultures referenced on club websites. Young also wondered why clubs perform

hula and not Chinese lion dances or Japanese bon dances. Thus, when I came across an image of a Buddhist temple on the Northwestern site, I took note as, in representing themselves with Asian culture, this seemed somewhat at odds with Young's description. I later found that other club websites as well occasionally referenced Asian/Asian American culture. By coding these, I was able to pull them together and consider references to Asian and Asian American culture as a category, considering how this culture was represented and discussed. Scholarship that discussed perceptions of Asian Americans as foreigners encouraged me to attend to the ways club websites invoked what I labeled "College/Continental" culture, that is, references to "typical" college activities like attending football games or continental locations like the names of cities. Thus, based on existing literature and data, I coded club websites' references to Hawaiian/"Local," Asian/Asian American, and College/Continental culture.

Coding club websites according to the cultures referenced provided me a sense of the frequency with which they invoked various cultures as well as how they did this. I then looked to interview data and scholarly literature to explain these references on club websites—what did participants and the published literature say about these different cultures and the ways they might be used? Several participants, for example, commented, often disparagingly, on Asian/Asian American and other single-race/ethnicity "cliques" on the continent, pointing to one explanation for the emphasis on "Local" culture rather than race on club websites.

Corbin and Strauss similarly emphasize that the core concepts of research should emerge from the data (160). Thus, my concept of adjustment reflects club website discussions of the difference between Hawai'i and continental contexts. The

concept of belonging comes from participants' discussions of single-race/ethnicity "cliques" on the continent and their felt distance from continental Asian Americans. The concept of privilege arises from considerations of club members' embrace of Hawaiian and "Local" culture in particular, especially in light of participants' discussions of Hawai'i's inferiority. That is, this concept arose from my attempt to make sense of these two seemingly contradictory pieces of data.

Ultimately I approached data analysis with an eye toward what was important to participants and other club members. In grounding my analysis in this way, I aim to tell a story that comes, not from my imposition on the data, but from the interaction between myself as a researcher and the information shared by participants and on websites. As Corbin and Strauss say, in data analysis, the researcher should "put[...] aside preconceived notions about what the researcher expects to find in the research, and let[...] the data and interpretation of it guide analysis" as much as possible (160).

In creating space for and keeping me attentive to complexities, grounded theory enables work that "reject[s] as inadequate the too pat simplifications common in narrow versions of identity politics, the kinds of gratuitous and hence patronizing empathy that can essentialize and/or revictimize" (Clarke 76). It enables me to recognize and explore the ways Hawai'i club members are constrained and challenged, but also the ways they are privileged and perhaps constrain others. I do not intend either to glorify or condemn clubs and their members, but to take into consideration as much of their complexity as I am able. While no methodology can do everything, grounded theory helps me to carry out this project in a responsible manner by keeping me aware of the perspectives that I

am missing. While grounded theory cannot tell me *the* answer, it reminds me that I am only finding *one* answer.

Website Selection

As my goal is to investigate and better understand Asian American rhetoric in terms of identity construction and self-representation, my data includes Hawai'i club websites and interviews with club members. My goal in looking at club websites was to study how clubs and club members marked their affiliations with various cultures, specifically indigenous Hawaiian culture, as the relationship between primarily non-Native club members and indigenous Hawaiians presented one key arena for considering club members' privileges. I elected to focus on nine Hawai'i club websites. These were selected from the initial 24 sites returned via a web search for "Hawaii clubs" (excluding unrelated sites like those for the Hawaii Yacht Club and Hawai'i nightclubs as well as regionally-, rather than university-, based Hawai'i clubs like those in San Diego and North Carolina).

I focused on university-based Hawai'i clubs because they are primarily comprised of young adults who have grown up in Hawai'i and have recently migrated to the continent for the first time. The North Carolina (regional) Hawai'i club, in contrast, says of its members, "Most of us were previous residents of Hawai'i or have family connections there; some just love Hawai'i" (*Ka Pu'uwai*). While to some degree this describes the membership of university-based Hawai'i clubs as well, despite the diversity of university-based club members' experiences, the college context provides a certain degree of uniformity. In contrast, for example, given the age range of members of regionally-based clubs, members may include members of the armed services

formerly stationed in Hawai'i, who Okamura says are somewhat isolated from Hawai'i life more broadly (*Ethnicity* 25), or others who are perhaps not from Hawai'i but had lived part of their adult life there. As my focus is on the influence of the Hawai'i context for the identity construction and representation of Asian Americans, I limited my sample to university-based Hawai'i clubs as they provide a population that has spent their formative years in Hawai'i. My focus on university-based Hawai'i clubs also reflects the prominence of these relative to regional clubs. My web search, as I have indicated turned up only a few regional clubs but 24 university-based clubs.

Of these 24 websites, I included in this study those that had been updated since 2006, reasoning that sites that had been revised in the past two to three years were more likely to reflect decisions made by current members, rather than alumni. The nine selected sites represent Hawai'i clubs at University of California, Irvine; Menlo College; Northwestern University; University of Notre Dame; University of Oregon; University of Pennsylvania; Stanford University; University of Washington; and Wellesley College. The websites reflect geographic diversity, corresponding to schools in California, Washington state, the East coast, and the Midwest. Both public and private institutions as well as schools of varying size are represented. (Further information about the location and demographics of these institutions is provided in Appendix A.) This sample does not necessarily, however, reflect Hawai'i clubs as a whole.

Another limitation of this study is that these websites are becoming outmoded. Though I chose to focus on websites that had been updated most recently, several participants commented that their club's website was out of date. One participant also

mentioned that her club is moving away from this type of website format, as social networking sites like Facebook, which current and potential members already use, are more useful for publicizing events and other communicative needs. It remains to be seen how representations will change as the clubs shift to other genres like Facebook and Google groups. While I have not closely examined Hawai'i club Facebook and Google groups, my initial impression is that these are more narrowly aimed at current and prospective club members, while the websites, though most participants claim they target these same audiences, clearly take into account more general (in particular, continental) audiences. The Facebook and Google group formats encourage this as they target narrower communities. While the University of California, Irvine (UCI) Google group is public, for example, without images, there is little draw for non-members. In addition, the narrowed community is a well-known and appreciated aspect of Facebook; Facebook's use of "networks" enables users to communicate only within a limited population, unlike MySpace and other "public" websites. As danah boyd says, "Parents weren't nearly as terrified of Facebook [as they were of MySpace] because it seemed 'safe' thanks to the network-driven structure." While these networks can be quite large—the Michigan State University one, for example, potentially includes all living alumni—they are more limited than the audience of a completely public website. These networks enable users to limit who sees what they post. The UCI Hawai'i club has taken advantage of this feature, making their Facebook group "closed," meaning "Members must be invited or approved by an admin[istrator]" of the group. Thus the club websites, in contrast to their Facebook and Google groups, provide a better opportunity for observing how club members negotiate multiple audiences, a key

concern given my focus on their identity constructions in response to both the Hawai'i and continental contexts.

Participants and the Online Chat Interview

While club websites enabled me to see how club members represented themselves, they could not tell me why or how these representations reflect the influence of the Hawai'i and/or continental contexts on club members' self-perceptions. Thus, through interviews with club members, I aimed to get a sense of club members' backgrounds, self-perceptions, views of their environments, perceptions of website excerpts, and thoughts about their audiences in order to gain an understanding of how these impacted website representations. Participants were solicited through information provided on the nine selected club websites. On some websites, members' email addresses were provided. On other websites, email addresses were listed only for club officers. On still other websites, no email addresses were given, but members' names were. I sent the solicitation email (reproduced in Appendix B) to every address provided. If no email addresses were provided, I searched for this information on university websites. I sent the email out in December 2008 (around the end of the fall term for most institutions) and re-sent it again in January 2009 to members I had not heard back from.

I pursued interviews with each person who responded to my solicitation and was able to interview nine participants from four institutions (Northwestern University, University of Notre Dame, University of Pennsylvania, and University of Washington). First through fourth year students were represented. Five participants were female and four were male. A few participants were club officers who had direct input in their club's website while others said they primarily belonged to their club in name only (i.e.

they were on the roster or email list) and had not participated in many activities. All participants are of Asian ancestry. Three are Japanese. One is Chinese and one Korean. Three are of mixed ethnicity (one is Japanese and Chinese and two are Okinawan in addition). One is mixed race (Japanese and white[11]). Two participants (Jason, who is Chinese, and Michelle, who is Korean) speak languages other than English at home (Cantonese and Korean respectively). All but one participant lived their entire lives in Hawai'i before moving for college; Michelle is the exception, having lived in Korea for the first couple of years of her life.

Interviews were scheduled over email. Participants were provided with the materials (consent form and interview supplement) they would need for the interview and a time was arranged to "meet" via online chat. The consent form was reviewed with participants through online chat. Participants electronically signed and submitted consent forms via email before beginning the question and answer portion of the interview.

In my initial contact with potential participants, I highlighted my similarities with them, reporting that I was from Hawai'i and had "spent several years living on the continent." In introducing myself in the initial email, I also indicated my high school alma mater and year, using this practice, ubiquitous in Hawai'i, to mark my roots there (Lum 11). Participants may also have deduced from my surname that I am of Japanese ancestry, which may have encouraged participants of Japanese ancestry to feel we shared some similarities. In the interview itself, I aimed to interact with participants as

[11] While this participant did provide details of her European ethnicities, I do not include them here in order to protect the participant's anonymity and because this is not relevant to the focus of my study.

equals by, for example, using somewhat informal language as is characteristic in the chat environment and acknowledging that while I understood that they could read the consent form independently, we were required to review it together.

Interviews were conducted via online chat. As the target participants were college students in the U.S. it was not believed that the chat environment would be a hindrance either in terms of participant access or comfort with the interface. In addition, as participants were living all over the U.S., face-to-face interviews in each locale were not feasible. Participants were able to use the chat program of their choice.

Conducting interviews via online chat enabled me to gain valuable insights on the backgrounds, opinions, and self-perceptions of Hawai'i club members attending school in diverse parts of the U.S., but the online environment did pose some challenges. One was the lack of visual cues; that is, after posing a question, I was sometimes unsure whether participants were in the process of composing an answer or needed me to clarify my question. In addition, while online chat is ubiquitous among college students in the U.S. I still wonder whether participants would have shared more in verbal interviews than they did in the chat environment. Despite facility with typing, speaking may still be easier, enabling one to communicate more information with less effort. In addition, as scholars of online communication have noted, tone is difficult to convey in text-only environments (Stone 37). This made it difficult to judge elements like participants' unstated opinions on my questions.

Face-to-face interviews, in contrast with those conducted in chat environments, may also facilitate a stronger rapport between interviewer and interviewee. In previous experiences with face-to-face interviews, I had noticed that my gestures (e.g. nodding)

and facial expressions could show interviewees that I related to their experiences. In the chat environment, I made an effort to show my understanding through text, yet interviewees and I still may not have been able to connect to the same degree that we might have in a face-to-face interaction.

While the chat context had some shortcomings, however, it may also have encouraged participants to disclose. One of my participants, Dan, for example, admitted that his club sometimes did things in the moment that were probably not very wise when one took the time to think about it. He described a photo from another club's website as "definitely mocking polynesian culture, but it's also something we've done in the past as a joke for our luaus. I believe we have some pic[ture]s similar to this, and I'd probably end up putting it on the website, but I realize that it could easily be seen as disrespectful." Dan further explains:

> [A]t [the club's annual] luau, there is a predominant "collective" mentality; all the club members spend a good amount of the semester cooking, decorating, practicing hula, flyering; it really becomes an "us" thing, and definitely something that might seem like a good idea at the time could be seen as offensive later. I'm conscious of when people unintentionally disrespect asian culture, I wouldn't want to do the same [to] polynesian culture.

This statement, as it portrays Dan and his club in a rather negative light, surprised me and led me to consider how the relatively distant nature of the chat environment might have encouraged him to share information he would have been less comfortable sharing face-to-face. As Barbara Monroe says, "CMC [computer-mediated communication] can too easily become the site for [...] intimate disclosure," presumably because these

environments sometimes give users the sense that they are not interacting with real people (77). As a result, conducting interviews via online chat may have enabled me to gain information I would not have had access to in a face-to-face environment. Ultimately conducting interviews via online chat had both benefits and shortcomings, but allowed me to do the work I needed within existing constraints.

Parsing Data into Meaning-making Units

In analyzing data, my goal was to uncover key themes by considering the influences of club members' privileges and challenges on their use of various cultural resources to represent themselves on club websites. I divided data into manageable, meaning-making pieces using Gregory Colomb and Joseph Williams' concept of the discourse unit (d-unit). D-units enabled me to create manageable units to facilitate analysis, while staying grounded in the data. Colomb and Williams propose the d-unit in order to better reflect how readers experience texts. "[W]e have become increasingly certain," they say, "that we understand individual sentences not in isolation, one by one, but rather by interpreting them in context" (Colomb and Williams 87). This context entails a great many things, yet we have trouble talking about context even at its most basic level: "that land beyond the sentence where the familiar terminology of subject and verb, noun and adjective, predicate and complement give way to the almost useless generalities of topic sentence and paragraph, of beginning, middle, and end" (Colomb and Williams 88). Thus, Colomb and Williams propose the d-unit as a unit of analysis that better maintains readers' experience of the context or "coherence" within a text. As meaning-making units that cohere within themselves, d-units enable me to balance the need to parse data for analysis, while maintaining a semblance of the context in which it is

grounded and thus still experiencing the text as coherent and contextual as other website audiences do. This is especially important as I am concerned with how club members' represent themselves to these audiences. In parsing data into d-units then I often started with the units (e.g. paragraphs) site authors themselves had delineated, only deviating from these when one paragraph, for example, dealt with multiple issues. This enabled me to balance club members' own delineations of meaning with the need to make data manageable. D-units are large enough to make meaning, but small enough to be focused, enabling me to see segments of data in which various cultures (e.g. Asian/Asian American, Hawaiian, "Local") are invoked.

According to Colomb and Williams, d-units are comprised of Issue and Discussion of this issue. A paragraph in which the first few sentences introduce an Issue and the remainder discusses this issue, for example, is a d-unit.[12] Images can also function as Issue, Discussion, or both. In the lu'au flyer posted on the University of Pennsylvania Hawai'i club website (Figure 1), for example, I read the lu'au as the Issue while the other information provided on the flyer, including the location on campus (Houston Hall), funding from the Students Activities Council (SAC), color scheme, palm trees, and statue of King Kamehameha with cape, spear, and helmet, functions as Discussion, expanding on the Issue. That is, the Discussion tells us, in part, that the lu'au is affiliated with the university and with a regal, exotic, tropical, picturesque, and perhaps violent or war-making Hawai'i. D-units enable me to attend to club members'

[12] Colomb and Williams make clear that while the Issue bears some resemblance to the traditional topic sentence, one significant way they differ is that the Issue may consist of more than a single sentence (108). In addition, while a traditional topic sentence is required to both (1) introduce the issue and (2) communicate the main point of the paragraph, the Issue must only accomplish the first task, while the main point may be stated at the end of the d-unit (Colomb and Williams 109).

own ways of making meaning, for example, their decision to represent the lu'au with these colors, images, and the theme "One Love."

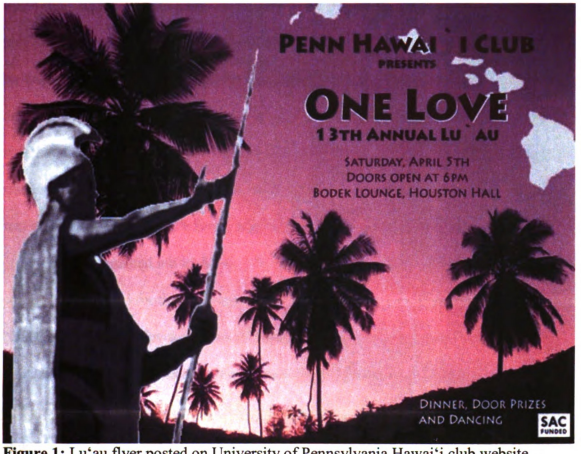

Figure 1: Lu'au flyer posted on University of Pennsylvania Hawai'i club website

D-units can also be nested so that while a single paragraph functions as a d-unit, along with surrounding paragraphs, it may also function as the Discussion of a larger Issue, thus also being part of a larger d-unit (Colomb and Williams 104). In the context of club websites, for example, an entire website is a d-unit in that it comprises information that functions as a Discussion of the club (the Issue). Yet each page of the website is also a d-unit. On the homepage of the Wellesley College Hawai'i club website (Figure 2), for example, I would again read the club as the Issue while all the other elements on the page function as Discussion, relating the purpose of the club, for instance. D-units are also, however, nested within this single page. I read the title of the

page ("Hui O Hawaii: Wellesley College Hawaii Club") and the floral images alongside it, for example, as a d-unit that gives readers an overview of the website. I read the "e komo mai" text, the photo below it, and the paragraph alongside the photo as another d-unit, which provides additional introductory information about the purpose of this website. With the purpose of having manageable, meaning-making chunks, I analyzed data at the level of the smallest d-unit. That is, while I could read this entire page as a d-unit, I instead analyzed data at the level of the smallest d-units within it, that is, the smaller d-units detailed above (i.e. the title and floral images as one d-unit; the main text of the page, including "e komo mai," the photo, and paragraph as another).

D-units enabled me to divide data into manageable and coherent chunks that could then be coded for the language(s) used and cultures (e.g. Asian/Asian American, "Hawaiian"/"Local") invoked. This in turn helped me see patterns in the cultures and languages used on club websites to represent clubs and their members. Analyzing data at the level of the d-unit also, to some degree, enabled me to follow club websites' and club members' own ways of making meaning.

Figure 2: Screenshot of Wellesley College Hawai'i club website

Conclusion

In this chapter I have aimed to provide sufficient background on my study, including my methodology and methods, the context of Hawai'i clubs and Asian Americans in Hawai'i, and key themes, in order to support the discussion of website and interview data that follows. While Hawai'i club websites are only one of many contexts in which Asian American rhetoric might be studied, they provide a key area for research because of the dominant role of Asian Americans in Hawai'i, which requires consideration of both privileges and challenges of Asian American identity. Through detailing the use of various cultural resources on club websites in light of club members' privileges and challenges, I argue that, as individuals at the crossroads of many cultures, club members carefully walk the lines of these memberships, claiming what they are sure they can in

order to improve others' views of them (e.g. as friendly, special, "typical" American college students), but careful not to overstep their bounds, less they risk losing this sense of belonging, particularly as "Local" and "American," those identities most valued both on the continent and in Hawai'i.

In Chapter 2, I account for this in terms of the limited references to Asian and Asian American culture on club websites, framing this in terms of participants' felt distance from continental Asian Americans, but also their desire to separate themselves from groups they perceive as more politicized: those defined by "race" (as opposed to "culture") and who have experienced struggle. In Chapter 3, I argue that club members, in representing "Local" and Hawaiian culture on their websites, carefully police boundaries of what they can claim as "theirs" (i.e. "Local" but not Hawaiian culture) and present "Local"/Hawaiian culture in a non-threatening way: translating, educating, and focusing on entertainment and food rather than values that might challenge their continental peers. In Chapter 4, I discuss the use of Hip Hop Nation Language (HHNL) on one Hawai'i club website, arguing that club members stick to forms of HHNL that have been appropriated by the mainstream media in order to present themselves as "American," but not necessarily aligned with or sharing commonalities with the African American community with which hip hop is strongly affiliated. In this way, club members are able to take on only the connotations of hip hop favored by the mainstream media (e.g. hip, hypermasculine) rather than less favorably viewed connotations (e.g. racial unity). In Chapter 5, I bring the previous chapters together, pointing toward broader implications for Asian American rhetoric and pedagogy. Ultimately, club members draw on the various cultural resources detailed in these

chapters in order to present themselves as ideal multicultural subjects, embodying highly valued "difference" and "diversity" but in "safe" ways that do not threaten the status quo—or their membership in "American" and "Local" communities.

Chapter 2

"It's Too Asian!": Felt and Desired Distance from Continental Asians and Asian Americans

In his discussion of Hawai'i clubs in the 2004 *College English* article "Native Claims: Cultural Citizenship, Ethnic Expressions, and the Rhetorics of 'Hawaiianness,'" Morris Young focuses on the problematic ways they conflate indigenous Hawaiian and "Local" Hawai'i identities on their websites, ultimately marking primarily non-Native members with indigenous Hawaiian language and imagery (96). He describes the way, for example, one club "integrates Native Hawaiian language in its welcome (as well as in the club's name[])" and the way another refers to members as "Hawaiian," a term that in Hawai'i, as discussed in Chapter 1, is reserved for indigenous Hawaiians (Young, "Native Claims" 96-97). Young questions the emphasis on club websites of Hawaiian culture and raises other possibilities, asking, "Why [do clubs perform] hula and not a Japanese Bon dance or a Chinese lion dance?" ("Native Claims" 98). He proposes these as "Local" traditions, but they are also, of course, Asian, brought to Hawai'i by Japanese and Chinese immigrants in the early-twentieth century and incorporated into Hawai'i's culture. While quite clearly part of "Local" culture, as in Hawai'i bon dances are attended not only by those of Japanese ancestry and Chinese lion dances are performed at the grand opening of many businesses, no matter the ethnic background of their proprietors, these also function as markers of Asian culture. That is, references to Japanese bon dance or Chinese lion dance on club websites would serve to mark clubs as Asian.

Aligned with Young's critique, I also find club websites focusing predominantly on indigenous Hawaiian culture in addition to "Local," although not necessarily

Asian/Asian American, culture and similarly wondered why, given the large number of members of Asian heritage, references to Asian and Asian American culture are so limited. We might view this positively: club members are recognizing Hawaiian culture and dedicated to sharing it with their continental peers. Like Young, however, I also wonder, "What does it mean for Hawai'i students, often non-Native Locals, to represent Native Hawaiian culture?" ("Native Claims" 95). In other words, why do non-Native "Locals" represent themselves in this way? I approach this question in this chapter by exploring why club members do not represent themselves with Asian/Asian American culture. I argue that the limited references to Asian/Asian American culture on Hawai'i club websites reflect club members' understanding of the differences between their experiences and those of continental Asian Americans, but also a desire to separate themselves from what they perceive as single-race/ethnicity groups that are popularly problematized as overly political, self-segregating, and unnecessarily militant.

I begin this chapter by providing an account of the limited references to Asian and Asian American culture on club websites and in participant interviews. I then consider these limited references through participants' felt distance from continental Asian Americans, multicultural ideals both in Hawai'i and on the continent, and the privileges club members have enjoyed, based in large part on their upbringing in Hawai'i. This analysis is interspersed with case studies focusing on individual participants, which illuminate how these various pressures are navigated differently by individual club members based on their specific contexts.

Before going any further, I want to reiterate that not all club members are of Asian ancestry. Many—perhaps even most—however, are. All my participants, for

example, are of Asian ancestry, including one who is mixed race. Club members of Asian ancestry may be more highly represented as participants in this study than in Hawai'i clubs in general, however, as the title of my project, which was provided to potential participants on consent forms, identified my focus on Asian Americans. Participants also identify their clubs (those at the University of Notre Dame, Northwestern University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Washington), however, as having members of primarily Asian, Japanese, and/or Chinese heritage. One participant, Chris, for example, who is a member of the University of Washington club, specifically says that his club has "a handful of [indigenous] hawaiians" along with "a lot of [...] japanese. almost all [...] asian[s], and [...] like 5 white people." Ethnic studies scholar Jonathan Okamura also speaks to the likelihood that club members have Asian heritage, as he identifies Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Whites as those Hawai'i residents who most often attend college on the continent (*Ethnicity* 3). Despite the large number of members of Asian ancestry, however, as previously stated, club websites do not often make reference to Asian and/or Asian American culture. Only about 50 d-units reference Asia/Asian America on the nine websites combined, in contrast to the uncountable references to indigenous Hawaiian and "Local" culture.

Limited Use of "Asian American"

The limited reference to Asian American culture can be seen specifically in the infrequency with which the term "Asian American" itself appears on club websites: "Asian American" is only used in reference to the official titles of institutional units. Several members of the UCI club, for example, introduce themselves as Asian

American studies majors. They do not elaborate much on what this means; one immediately goes on to say he is hoping to get his teaching certificate in the future. Another follows the sharing of her major with "yea, yea Asians represent!" and a third follows it by saying she "doesn't like sushi even though I'm Japanese." Alex,[13] the Asian American studies major who encourages Asians to "represent," perhaps speaks to a need for unity against racism, particularly as she invokes this phrase associated with hip hop and African Americans. Her statement may also, however, reflect the brand of "AzN PrYde" that Steve Louie critiques as having "no rhythm and [...] no soul—it doesn't reach out. There's more 'us' or 'us-first' consciousness in Asian communities than at any time in our American history" (xvi). As Alex makes no other references to Asian America, it is difficult to say for sure how she wants her academic major to be read; that is, whether she intends to point toward the experiences of racism that "Asian American" originally highlighted.[14] Nicole, the Asian American studies major who expresses distaste for sushi, though she is not from Hawai'i, intrigues me with her juxtaposition of academic major and food preferences in the same sentence. Like club members more generally, she too seems to be trying to differentiate herself from other Asians or other Japanese, or perhaps disrupt stereotypes of these groups.

The term "Asian American" is also used on the Northwestern University and University of Notre Dame club websites in reference to institutional units. The

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[13] While interview participants are identified by pseudonyms, real first names are used for club members when this information is made publicly available on club websites.

[14] As William Wei says in *The Asian American Movement*, "Not until the civil rights movement of the 1960s exposed the pervasive problem of racism in U.S. society and raised questions about exactly how democratic the nation's political system in fact was did members of the various Asian ethnic groups begin to think of themselves, and to act politically together, as Asian Americans" (1).

Northwestern site uses the term in explaining club officers' interaction with other campus groups. One of the duties of the club's co-presidents, according to the site, is to "serve as liaisons between the NU [Northwestern University] Hawaii Club and the Office of Asian and Asian American Student Services." The University of Notre Dame club also explains its affiliations with Asian American groups on campus, describing a campus event called Asian Allure as follows:

> Each year, the Asian American Association of Notre Dame produces a Fall performance showcasing the Asian-American cultural clubs on campus. Hawaii Club has participates [sic] by offering a number of polynesian [sic] dances ranging from Hula Kahiko and Hula Auana to Tahitian. For more information, visit the Asian American Association website.

On these websites, as can be seen, "Asian American" is also used only in the official names of university organizations.

Interviewees, all of whom are of Asian ancestry and from Hawai'i, also make little use of "Asian American." In response to the question, "What is your racial and/or ethnic background?" only one participant initially responds with "Asian" and he specifies his ethnic heritage as well.[15] He and two other participants also use the term "Asian" in response to the subsequent questions, "Is this how you always describe your race/ethnicity? Have there been times in your life when you described it differently?" The majority of participants, however, do not use "Asian" or "Asian American" at all. In addition, those who do use "Asian"—and never "Asian American," seem to do so not

[15] I purposely left this question rather broad in order to allow participants to represent themselves by race and/or ethnicity as they saw fit.

to indicate an experience of racism, which this term can convey (Wei 1, Iijima 7), but to make their heritage more easily understood.

Amy, for example, says she typically describes herself as "hapa, and then people are like huh? then i say i'm half white [and] half asian and if they want specifics[, then] i name" the ethnicities. She adds, "sometimes i'll say half japanese [and] half white because the japanese part is interesting to people (cuz everyone up here [in the continental U.S.] is a mixture of white) so my white mix isn't special." In other words, Amy prefers to identify herself as hapa, but since this term is unfamiliar to many, she often has to explain by saying that she is "half white [and] half asian." Yet sometimes, "Asian" is not specific enough to be "interesting to people" or to give them the answer they are looking for and she says "Japanese" instead. To summarize, Amy does not use the term "Asian American" and her use of "Asian" seems to be primarily about making her heritage understandable to others rather than invoking the experience of racism that "Asian American" can invoke.

Another participant, Patrick, says, "on the mainland, unless I'm talking to other asian people, [saying that I am] asian/pacific islander seems to be sufficient [...] only when i talk to asiany [sic] people do i get asked about my ethnicity. otherwise i assume, it's just assumed im asian and that's it." That is, Patrick finds that "asian/pacific islander" is enough to account for his visible difference. He too uses "Asian" (but not "Asian American") simply to satisfactorily answer others' inquiries.

A third participant, Cara, answers my first question by saying she is "Japanese." In response to the second question, however, she says she sometimes describes herself as "japanese-american...when questioned this way for demographics and sometimes just

asian if it's a broad situation." Cara further explains, "sometimes just being categorized as 'asian' says a lot." For example, in regards to "taking off my shoes when i enter some non-asian household...being asian serves as an explanation or reason" if someone asks why she does this. Overall, participants' limited use of "Asian" is not about marking an experience of racism but making their phenotype or cultural practices comprehensible to others.

Participants' use of "Asian" and avoidance of "Asian American," together with the limited use of "Asian American" on club websites points toward the employment of these terms primarily as neutral labels. That is, on websites, "Asian American" is used only in reference to official titles of university units. Participants do not use "Asian American" and employ "Asian" to account for their phenotype and cultural practices rather than to mark an experience of racism. Ultimately, club members do not seem to find "Asian American" to be of much use. In the remainder of this chapter, I consider several reasons for this limited use of "Asian American," including club members' felt distance from continental Asian Americans, multicultural ideals both in Hawai'i and on the continent, and club members' privileges.

Felt Distance from Asia and Asian America

The limited references to Asia and Asian America on club websites, along with participants' discussions of these references and their experiences on the continent, show participants' (and perhaps other club members') felt distance from Asia and continental Asian Americans. One of the ways I assessed participants' opinions on marking the club with Asian and/or Asian American culture was through the image of the Byodo-In Buddhist temple, which is located on the island of O'ahu (Figure 3). This

image was one of several featured photos that cycled through a spot located directly under the Northwestern University club's name on their website (Figure 4). I

Figure 3: Photo of the Byodo-In Buddhist temple posted on the Northwestern University Hawai'i club website

asked participants their opinions on whether an image like this should be used on their club website. One of my participants, Lauren, a junior at the time of the interview, says of the image, "i feel embarrassed, but I don't know what/where that is. [Is it in] manoa? [Or] nuuanu?" She says she "definitely" would not use the photo on her club's website, explaining that it is "not relevant to neither hawaii kids nor mainland kids. it's pretty. but it looks like it could be any place in asia." She continues:

> I think even the association of hawaii with asia can trip people up sometimes. it just so happens that most kids from hawaii are asian. and we got coined into APSC [the Asian Pacific Student Coalition at the University of Pennsylvania]. we're the only group in APSC that isn't completely based on race [like the Japanese Student Association, Hong Kong Student Association, and Korean Student Association], but on geography. ive been able to just make that bridge, overlook the fact that we represent this "asian" group, even though our common bond [in the Hawai'i club] is simply where we're from. i think for the most part

we look at it and chuckle. I guess from APSC's perspective [the Hawai'i club is an Asian group]. At times they can be pretty gung-ho about the representation of minority groups on campus. but from [the perspective of] SAC [the Student Activities Council, which supports all undergraduate organizations], and most ppl [people] on campus they see us as Hawaiian,[16] not Asian.

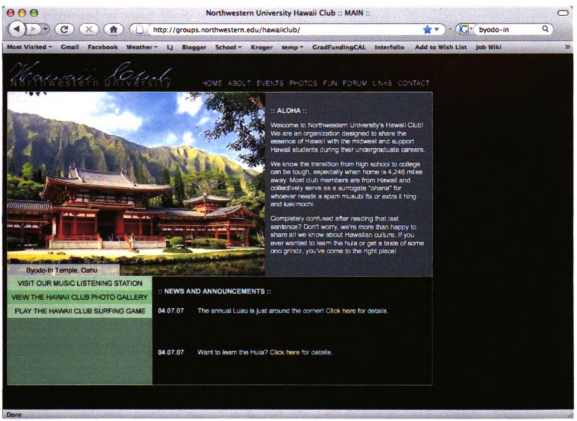

Figure 4: Screenshot of the Northwestern University Hawai'i club website

[16] Lauren uses "Hawaiian" throughout her interview to refer to people from Hawai'i, just as terms like "Californian" or "Michigander" are commonly used on the continent. I read her use of "Hawaiian," inaccurate in a Hawai'i context, through Young's description of the "difficulty of maintaining a distinction between Local and Native Hawaiian identities when away from the organizing structure of Hawai'i" ("Native Claims" 94). Young describes the issues of "history, culture, and modernity, not to mention race, ethnicity, class, and language" he needed to explain on the continent in order to make clear he was not Native Hawaiian and says, "it certainly would have been easier to just give in and say, 'Yes, I'm Hawaiian'' ("Native Claims" 94). I read Lauren as acceding to the continental definition of "Hawaiian."

I find interesting both Lauren's characterization of the image of the temple as "too Asian" and her description of the way "the association of hawaii with asia can trip people up." According to her, there is a problem with outsiders (both Asians and non-Asians on the continent[17]) thinking that club members are more "Asian" than they perceive themselves to be. While continental Asian Americans may also feel this way—being expected to speak their heritage language, for example, participants seem to see those from the continent as the "real" Asians. Another participant, Dan, for example, says, "In Hawai'i, I feel like all the traditions kind of mix together to a point where Asians here [in Hawai'i] will not really know about real Asian traditions as they are performed back in the home countries, or how people with strong roots still perform them today." In other words, in Hawai'i, we don't know the true culture of Japan and we don't have "strong roots" because our traditions get mixed up with other traditions. Other participants as well give the impression that continental Asian Americans are more likely to speak their heritage language, again contributing to participants' impression that these are the "real" Asians, with whom they have little in common.

Other participants also describe their felt distance from other Asians on the continent, who they see as having closer ties to Asia. In terms of language, for example, Patrick, a fourth-year student at Northwestern University at the time of the interview, says that upon moving to the continent, "i guess i realized that i'm not really japanese or chinese because even outside of campus being japanese or chinese means being 100% and often times speaking the language. i mean [based on those terms] i'm just

[17] It is also interesting that Lauren constructs Asian Americans especially as misperceiving Hawai'i club members as "too Asian," given the distinction she draws between APSC's perception of the Hawai'i club on one hand and SAC's and other students' perceptions on the other.

american." That is, he felt more Japanese/Chinese/Asian in Hawai'i; migrating to the continent has made him feel more "American" in contrast to others of Asian ancestry. Thus, part of the distance from Asia and other Asian Americans seems to be based on generation and language, as it seems that those whose families have immigrated more recently are more likely to speak their heritage language. As another participant, Dan, a senior at the time of the study, says, at the University of Pennsylvania, "the majority of Asian students are international or 2nd generation. There are very few who are like me," which based on other comments he made, I take to mean there are few who are fourth-generation and, in his words, have "not much Asian tradition remaining." In contrast, Dan felt that where he grew up in Hawai'i, most people were like him, as he describes it, "naturalized Asian American."[18] [19]

Besides their felt distance from continental Asian Americans in terms of generation and language ability, however, participants also express a distance based on (lack of) experiences of racism. In some sense, Lauren's apolitical desire, particularly in contrast to other members of APSC, reflects her and other club members' experiences in Hawai'i. In contrast to the Hawai'i club, she describes other groups in APSC as "gung-ho about the representation of minority groups on campus" and explains that,

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[18] While "naturalized" generally is used to refer to citizens who were born elsewhere but become U.S. citizens, Dan seems to use the term to mean native-born. Perhaps he means that his family has become "naturalized" over the generations.

[19] While there are also many first- and second-generation Asian Americans in Hawai'i, perhaps they do not live in the same neighborhood Dan does or are less noticeable because of the number of third- and fourth-generation Asian Americans. As Okamura says, public schools in Hawai'i have "a relatively high proportion of English for Second Language Learners (ESLL), who are predominantly Asian and Pacific Islander immigrants. More than 18,000 students, who represent 10 percent of the public school enrollment, are in ESLL programs (Martin 2005e: A1). At some schools in primarily Filipino immigrant communities, ESLL students are a majority of the student body" (Okamura 68).

based on her experiences in Hawai'i, she cannot really relate to this. In describing the friends she has made in college, she says:

> i can't identify as well with asian americans who identify in some way with racial struggle. that sounds convoluted. there are asian amerians who are really hard core involved with APSC, and other minority groups, and their substituent groups (ie: CSA [Chinese Student Association], JSA [Japanese Student Association], KSA [Korean Student Association]). they feel like true minorities, and i get the sense they feel like they've had to struggle against it growing up. it's weird to me. And I realize it's because we grew up in sucha special place, it made us color-blind to the minority experience. My asian friends don't come from taht schema. but i do like a lot of the APSC people. I really want to get Hawaii club more involved with those asian ties to campus. it gives us more of a voice.

In explaining this felt distance by characterizing Hawai'i as "a special place," Lauren risks furthering the stereotype of Hawai'i as multicultural utopia, but this characterization reflects her experience in Hawai'i. For her, Hawai'i has felt like a multicultural utopia. She is in no way alone in this belief, as "the great majority of island residents supports the Hawai'i multicultural model or the general belief in the positive nature of island ethnic relations," as discussed in Chapter 1 (Okamura 15). Despite potential problems with Lauren's characterization of Hawai'i as "a special place," however, her assertion that she has not felt this "struggle" that her Asian American peers on the continent have felt is important in understanding the distance

that she—and perhaps other club members as well—feel from continental Asian Americans.

Case Example: Jason and Patrick: Staying "Local"

Perhaps resisting a continental Asian American identity, some participants hold closely to race relations in Hawai'i as an ideal, maintaining their claim to "Local" values and identity. Jason, for example, comments that Asians and Asian Americans on the continent socialize primarily in single-ethnicity or single-race groups. He contrasts this with social activity in Hawai'i, saying, "i think hawaii may be the most progressive in terms of race/ethnicity in that there's no need to section your race off from others. i guess i'm exaggerating a little, but it [is] still weird to see taiwanese kids sitting away from chinese kids, who sit away from koreans and african-americans, etc."[20] *To a degree, Jason's assertions reflect his privileged upbringing in Hawai'i—he has never felt the need to seek out members of his race or ethnicity for social purposes.*

He and other participants have, in fact, often found themselves in these groups without even trying. Perhaps these groups seemed to be formed effortlessly or appeared less conspicuous than they do on the continent because of the large number of "Local" Asians in Hawai'i. Jason, for example, says the community he grew up in was "asian and white mainly. and some mixed," while Patrick says the population at his "high school was like filipino, chinese, korean, Japanese." Other participants have similarly had the support of Asian social groups growing up yet find these objectionable in the

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[20] To some extent, I question Jason's characterization. At my high school, for instance, there was some ethnic segregation. I remember one day realizing that the majority of my friends were of Japanese or Chinese ancestry, although there were also Filipinos, Caucasians, and Native Hawaiians at my school. Thus while I have heard statements like Jason's from other "Local" Asians as well, I am not sure it is a completely fair characterization; perhaps the racial and ethnic segregations in Hawai'i are simply ones that we are used to or that seem natural to us.

continental context perhaps because they are more conspicuous and thus look like self-segregation.

In addition, despite the critiques participants leveled at these social groups, Hawai'i clubs might also be described as single-race cliques. While club rosters to some extent reflect diverse memberships in terms of ethnicity and race, they are still heavily Asian American. Yet it seems that by defining the club by geography and culture (i.e. Hawai'i Club) rather than by race or ethnicity (i.e. Japanese Student Association, etc.) club members can assure themselves that, as Lauren says, "[I]t just so happens that most kids from hawaii are asian."

While I find participants' critique of single-race/ethnicity social groups suspect, participants do experience these groups as a challenge. That Jason and other participants are bothered indicates that these groups pose a problem for them. Perhaps they feel they should participate in these groups because of shared heritage. Some participants reveal prior expectations that they would connect with others of Asian heritage on the continent. Patrick, for example, expresses his disappointment that this is not the case; he says, "it's hard because most of the asiany people here [at school] are friends with people who speak chinese or korean or japanese. so most of my friends are white [because I am only fluent in English]." This explanation of why most of the people he spends his time with are white only makes sense alongside an expectation that he would (or should) spend his time with Asians and Asian Americans. In addition, this statement was part of Patrick's response to my question about "challenges" he has faced in college; he was explaining why he has had trouble making friends. By saying

"it's hard," it seems that Patrick would have liked to be friends with Asians and Asian Americans.

Yet Jason's and Patrick's derision toward these single-race/ethnicity social groups indicates that they are not part of these groups; perhaps they choose not to or feel they don't fit in. Fitting into these groups is perhaps especially challenging for participants of mixed ethnic or racial heritage. Patrick, for example, who is of Chinese, Japanese, and Okinawan ancestry, says, "all the asiany people i've met in illinois form groups around a single ethnicity, and mixed people usually don't count." He explains, "on the mainland [being mixed] means nothing." In contrast, "in hawaii it just means you're local." Thus, while people of mixed ethnicity are comprehensible in Hawai'i (through the term "Local"), Patrick feels that among continental Asian Americans, there is no group that understands and accepts him; he doesn't "count." Furthermore, his mixed ethnicity means that Asians and Asian Americans on the continent do not see him as Asian. He explains, it "seems like [...] if you're not part of their [other Asians' or Asian Americans'] ethnicity group and they can't readily identify you with another asian ethnicity then you're american."

Participants' statements on these groups reflect both their privileges (as those who have not felt the need for single race or ethnicity social groups) and race-/ethnicity-based challenges (as they wrestle with what the existence of these groups means for their own Asian American identities). While participants in some sense feel rejected by these groups, who they claim socialize in their heritage language or only accept members of their same ethnicity, their criticism of these groups also indicates that participants have found ways of being Asian American on the continent

unappealing. This is especially true for those of mixed-race or mixed-ethnic backgrounds, but for others as well who prefer "Local" identities and attendant constructions of race to continental "Asian American" identities.

Multicultural Imperatives in Hawai'i and on the Continent

Lauren's characterization of Hawai'i as "a special place," where she has not experienced the struggle that would align her with continental Asian Americans, also supports constructions of the islands as multicultural utopia. In her extended quote above, I wondered why it was so important for her to emphasize that the Hawai'i club is based on geography rather than race. She seems uncomfortable with the idea of belonging to a race-based group and emphasizes, "[I]t just so happens that most kids from hawaii are asian."

Patrick also evidences a desire to avoid racial terms in his use of the word "asiany" rather than "asian." He uses this term, for example, in comments like, "nationality seems to be a big thing in hawaii and to some extent in asiany culutre on the mainland" and "all the asiany people i've met in illinois form groups around a single ethnicity." When I asked him about his use of "asiany," he said, "idk [I don't know] i suppose i just use [the] word to describe asian things?" Thus, his use of "asiany" rather than "asian" does not seem to reflect a significant difference in meaning, but instead his reluctance to categorize culture and people as "Asian," a racial term. Perhaps he sees "asiany" as a more descriptive word with softer boundaries, the suffix "y" functioning like "-ish" or "-esque" to connote the nebulous influence of Asia rather than a definitive, essentialist marker.

This shying away from race-based definitions can be seen as, in some sense, influenced by multiculturalism and "Local" culture in Hawai'i. "Asian American" is a continental term, as Matsuda and Young have said, so for those from Hawai'i, it is not only infrequently used and perceived as of little use, but would mark club members as holding continental rather than "Local" views, thus risking their "Local" identity.

The limited references to "Asian America" can also be seen as part of the national zeitgeist. This can explain the function of these limited references not only for club members from Hawai'i, but also for those Asian American club members from the continent[21] like Nicole, the Japanese American who doesn't like sushi, discussed above. In today's context, where the celebration of "multiculturalism" is ubiquitous, it can be difficult to talk about the importance of race-based associations. Matsuda, for example, describes the way youth of color are criticized for segregating themselves, saying, "The cluster of African-American or Asian or Latino students huddling in the corner of the cafeteria is seen as excluding the roomful of Anglos, not vice versa" (14-15). bell hooks similarly discusses critiques of Black nationalism as "native essentialism, rooted in notions of ethnic purity that resemble white racist assumptions" (30). Race-based associations clearly are problematized. The Black Panthers, for example, in the very popular and critically-acclaimed movie *Forrest Gump*, are portrayed as suspicious of and preferring not to associate with whites as well as violent toward women. They are seen as overly political, self-segregating, and unnecessarily militant.

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[21] Of the UCI officers and members for whom information is provided, 61% (11/18) are not from Hawai'i. Of these, at least 45% (5/11) are Asian American. (A sixth club member, whose last name is Reyes, does not report his race or ethnicity. The Spanish last name may indicate Filipino ancestry but I cannot say for certain.) Of the other officers and members who are not from Hawai'i, one is Native Hawaiian and one is biracial (Mexican and white).

In this context, emphasizing geography and "culture" rather than race, as Lauren and other club members do, makes the Hawai'i club seem friendlier. In contrast to the race-based unions discussed above, emphasizing "culture" sends the message, "We just like to eat the same things. If you want to eat them too, you can come." The emphasis on culture over race is in some sense also promoted by university non-discrimination policies, as a club reserved only for members of a certain race is illegal. In light of this, Lauren's description of other organizations as "race-based" must reflect practice and (her and/or others') perceptions rather than official club policies. The Korean Student Organization at Michigan State University, for example, in a blurb on the university Student Life website describes its purpose as "To form a sound community and to exchange Korean culture and traditions with other communities" ("Registered Student Organizations"). I expect that the Japanese and Korean Student Associations at the University of Pennsylvania have similar purposes. Their membership cannot legally be race-based either. Thus, the difference Lauren is drawing is not an official one; rather, she perceives other clubs as race-based because they are focused on, in her view, race- rather than place-based cultures. Hawai'i clubs, in contrast, downplay race by minimizing references to Asia and Asian America, and this helps them to fit more easily into both Hawai'i and continental multicultural ideals.

Case Example: Michelle: Becoming "American"

Michelle, like Jason and Patrick, critiques single-race/ethnicity "cliques" on the continent, but she also prefers the way she is seen in terms of race and ethnicity on the continent to the way she is seen in Hawai'i. Michelle says that at the University of Notre Dame, "i don't feel as if i'm intensely labelled by the culture and community of

asians/koreans in hawaii. people here don't have any real stereotypes or opinions about me and i don't feel like my ethnicity is in any way an issue." Michelle feels there are more stereotypes in Hawai'i, *"like [...] it'll be joked around or talked about that koreans are hot-tempered and what-not, chinese are cheap, etc."* Unlike Jason and Patrick then, who reject Asian American identity in favor of "Local" identity, Michelle rejects it in favor of "American" identity.

Like Jason and Patrick, Michelle does not seem interested in an "Asian American" identity. She constructs herself as different from other Asians—whether they are from Korea, Hawai'i, or the continental U.S. While her experience in South Bend is positive, she says, *"my friends have issues though with how guys here aren't attracted to asians."* I ask her how she accounts for the differences in their experiences and she says:

> *[M]aybe it's because i don't look FOB [fresh off the boat, a derogatory term for recent immigrants]? the girls i've talked to who agree with that issue [of males in South Bend not being attracted to them] definitely look full asian right off the bat. i guess i seem a little different. i don't have the tiny eyes, my haircut[']s not those typical asian hairstyles and i've never really looked for a boyfriend or anything of that sort within the notre dame guys. sure i'd check out guys and what-not but for a while i had a crush on someone back home and when i got over him i was looking around but was never disappointed by guys not being attracted to me? i'm pretty outgoing and will go up to strangers and strike up conversation. i've never tried to attract a guy that way though. and my current boyfriend isn't from notre dame - he grew up in south bend.*

Michelle constructs herself as looking less Asian, or less foreign than others of Asian ancestry. She also describes herself as more "outgoing." In addition, she also seems to be saying that there is a significant difference between looking for a boyfriend among Notre Dame students and outside the university. In any case, Michelle clearly separates herself from other Asians and in ways that fulfill stereotypes and derogatory views of Asians as unattractive and too reserved.

Where Michelle differs from Jason and Patrick is that, while they all find little use for Asian America, for her, "Local" identity is less appealing, perhaps because of stereotypes of Koreans in Hawai'i. Michelle also says that she has never felt "Local," explaining, "i've lived in hawaii my whole life but was never immersed in the local culture enough to consider myself local. i stopped speaking pidgeon when i hit middle school, i've never learned how to surf or dance hula even though i've always wanted to." She attributes this to her immigrant parents' restrictions on her activity, explaining, "i'm the oldest [child in my family] and my parents are really dependent on me. they were also very protective. and i never got an opportunity to hang out with people after school or do anything of that sort. i never explored the island till my senior year [of high school]." Ultimately, Michelle does not seem to feel "Local," both because of the stereotypes she faces in Hawai'i and her felt lack of engagement with "Local" culture.

In contrast, Michelle, in some sense, seems to idealize South Bend, Indiana and her white friends there. While I sympathize with her assertions about perceptions of Koreans in Hawai'i, I am skeptical that she is not seen through stereotypes in South Bend. I suspect that those in South Bend simply have other stereotypes, perhaps ones

that she is more comfortable with. Michelle says, for example, "i guess i'm also seen as a littlet more exotic? b/c [because] i don't hang out with koreans really - my group of friends are all caucasian so i'm kind of the odd-ball in a good way and i've been told i'm really attractive which is weird for me." Michelle seems to construct it as a positive that she socializes primarily with Caucasians, which seems to point toward her desire to construct herself as "American," in the sense of being able to get along (with whites) on the continent.

Privileges: Language, Generation, and Majority Status

As previously stated, Lauren's characterization of Hawai'i as "a special place" supports constructions of the islands as multicultural utopia. Yet we can also read this characterization as a reflection of her privilege as someone of mixed Japanese and Chinese ancestry. As discussed in Chapter 1, Japanese and Chinese in Hawai'i are socioeconomically and politically privileged. Thus, while Lauren characterizes Hawai'i as "a special place" because she has not experienced "racial struggle" there, not everyone would agree with her. Patricia Halagao, for example, in "Questioning the *Aloha* in a Multicultural Teacher Education Course," describes the way students who were "Disadvantaged minorities" in Hawai'i "wrote about being stereotyped, denied service in stores, and [being] told by a ['Local'] Japanese teacher that 'she was not college material'" (45). Similarly, as Michelle says, she feels the effect of stereotypes less at the University of Notre Dame than in Hawai'i. While, as stated above, I am skeptical of Michelle's assertion that she is not seen through stereotypes in her school environment, her description of stereotypes in Hawai'i reveals the way Lauren's positionality influences her statement. This shows how the idealization of race relations

in Hawai'i, and perhaps the valuation of "Local" over Asian American identity, reflects Lauren's and perhaps other club members' privileged positions. In other words, club members' allegiance to multicultural ideals can be seen as a reflection of their privileges.

In addition to the privilege of belonging to an Asian majority, we might also view club members' status as late-generation Asian Americans as a marker of privilege. In marking their distance from continental Asian Americans through limiting their references to Asia/Asian America, for example, perhaps club members also aim to separate themselves from constructions of Asians as perpetual foreigners. As Dan says, in contrast to continental Asian Americans, he's just "American," a privileged and highly valued position, given continued immigration to the U.S. The status of native-born Asian Americans can be seen as privileged in contrast to the pejorative construction of Asians as perpetual foreigners. Sociologists Min Zhou and Jennifer Lee, for example, say:

> [N]ative-born children and grandchildren of Asian ancestry feel a sense of ambivalence toward newer arrivals. Because about two-thirds of the Asian American population is first-generation, native-born Asians must now confront renewed images of Asians as "foreigners." Resembling the new immigrants in phenotype, but not necessarily in behavior, language, and culture, the more "assimilated" native born find that they must actively and constantly distinguish themselves from the newer arrivals. The "immigrant shadow" looms large for Asian American youth and can weigh heavily on the identity-formation of native-born youth. (13)

Zhou and Lee do not discuss immigrants from Asia as having "a sense of ambivalence" toward or needing to "distinguish themselves" from native-born Asian Americans. While this may reflect the large ratio of immigrant versus native-born Asian Americans on the continent or dominant constructions of Asian Americans as immigrants, it also seems to reflect the privileged status of native-born, late-generation Asian Americans (e.g. most participants), in contrast with more recent immigrants, who participants accurately perceive as more highly represented among continental Asian Americans.

It is also telling that Dan (and other participants) conflates international students and Asian Americans, given that the distinction between immigrant and native-born Asian Americans is usually seen as significant. Dan opposes a grouping of both international and second-generation Asian Americans to his own fourth-generation status. The significance of generational difference can be seen in Sivagami Subbaraman's taking care to point out the generational status of those her work is concerned with (574n). Zhou and Lee also describe important differences between generations of Asian Americans, explaining, "Similar to other Americans in speech, thought, and behavior, native-born Asian Americans and their foreign-born counterparts often hold contradictory values and standards about fundamental issues such as individualism, civil liberties, labor rights, and ultimately, the ideology of assimilation" (14). And international students, though foreign-born, are not necessarily even immigrants as they may return to their home countries. Thus, the conflation of international students and second-generation Asian Americans elides significant differences between these groups.

Based on factors like language and generation, however, participants seem to see international students from Asia and continental Asian Americans as having more in common than they do with either group. While continental Asian Americans may claim "Americanness" by differentiating themselves from international students, club members make this same move by separating themselves from all of Asian ancestry on the continent—whether U.S.-born or international students. On one hand, this may support participants' claims of felt distance from all of Asian ancestry on the continent; the distance is so great that distinctions within the opposing group are meaningless. On the other hand, participants' conflation of international and native-born Asian students also reflects their privilege as late-generation Asian Americans; their own generational status helps them differentiate themselves from all others of Asian ancestry on the continent in the project of constructing themselves as more "American."

Participants' construction of continental Asian Americans as having closer ties to Asia is also interesting since there are ways that Asians in Hawai'i might be seen as having strong ties. The entrenchment of bon dance in "Local" culture, for example, supports ties with Japan. "Local" newspapers print the bon dance schedule every summer and there is a bon dance culture in which some youth grow up, attending with their parents and extended family as children and with their own friends from high school on. In addition, the popularity of bon dance is related to the significant presence of Buddhist churches in Hawai'i, which themselves seem to signify connection with Japan. Thus, there are ways that those of Asian ancestry in Hawai'i may be closely engaged with Asian culture. This leads me to question participants' claims of felt distance from Asian and Asian American culture. While the limited references to Asian

America on club websites may reflect members' felt distance, they may also mark club members' desire to distance themselves from continental stereotypes of Asia, particularly that of the "foreigner." As Zhou and Lee say, native-born Asian Americans often feel the need to separate ourselves from immigrants. While continental Asian Americans aim to do this as well, club members perhaps find it beneficial to separate themselves even further, by marking their distance with continental Asian Americans who may also be native-born, but are perhaps more likely to be second-generation than third or fourth.

In addition, participants' categorization of continental Asian Americans as speaking heritage languages may also be read as classifying participants, in contrast, as privileged. While speaking a heritage language does not preclude skill in standardized English and participants' continental Asian American peers are especially likely to be skilled in standardized English since they attend the same, often competitive, postsecondary institutions, continental Asian Americans' use of their heritage languages may also be read as a sign that they are more comfortable in these languages—at least in some contexts. If continental Asian Americans primarily socialize in their heritage language, as participants claim, it seems that these continental Asian Americans are either more comfortable (and skilled) in their heritage language than in English or find a value to using it that may arise from prior challenges not experienced by participants and other club members. Perhaps these continental Asian Americans have previously been prevented from using their heritage languages and thus embrace it now[22] or

[22] Prashad for example describes the way some South Asian Americans find themselves for the first time with others of their race and ethnicity in college. He says of South Asian students:

perhaps they have faced rejection from others and for that reason prefer to socialize with speakers of their heritage language. As Matsuda says, students of color are often inaccurately seen as excluding others (14-15). Similarly, Vijay Prashad, in *The Karma of Brown Folk*, describes South Asian social groups at U.S. universities as a "*consequence* of the social segregations on college campuses" (190-91, emphasis mine). Matsuda and Prashad view single-race and ethnicity social groups as a reflection, rather than a cause, of segregation. It seems the single-ethnicity groups that participants describe can be viewed similarly; the groups are formed in response to their own exclusion, despite participants' feeling that these groups exclude them.

Ultimately, participants' English language abilities and, in Dan's terminology, "naturalization," which contribute to their felt distance from continental Asian Americans and subsequent minimization of references to Asian America on club websites, also reflect their privileges as native-born, late-generation Asian Americans who have not previously been members of racial minorities in their hometowns or schools. While participants perceive these factors as a challenge, as they prevent them from connecting with continental Asian Americans, it behooves both participants and those who hope to understand club members' self-representations to understand that while club members' limited references to Asian/Asian American culture may reflect their felt distance from continental Asian Americans and the multicultural ideals of both

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> For children of professionals, an adolescence without too many desi companions or acquaintances is suddenly transformed into a college experience surrounded by those of South Asian ancestry (a consequence of the social segregations on college campuses). The sheer density of desis provides the possibility for "reverse assimilation," the rediscovery of one's ethnicity and the urge to engage that difference in one's social life. (*Karma* 190-91)

Hawai'i and the continent, these in turn—the felt distance and allegiance to multicultural ideals—may also reflect club members' privileges.

Case Example: Dan: Becoming Asian American I

Dan says that his experience on the continent has led him to see his ethnic/racial identity in a new way. I argue that he becomes Asian American in that he adjusts to continental expectations of what someone "Japanese" should be, yet he does not engage with the claims of racism that "Asian American" can convey. Dan says, being Japanese "didn't mean anything to me when I was in Hawai'i. [...] it actually means more to me now, because I realize that other people will judge me based on that; I'm taking Japanese right now, and I'm trying to learn somewhat more about my culture." It seems that it is only since migrating to the continent that Dan has taken up Japanese language study in order to learn more about his heritage. He did not grow up with the language, as he says, "Even my grandparents do not speak/read Japanese with any fluency, so I had no shot." That is, Japanese language was not something he learned from his family. And he describes conversations he has had on the continent in ways that show how his deficiency in language has been brought to his attention; when meeting people, he says, the conversation "usually goes something like this":

where are you from?

Hawaii.

no, where are you really from?

I'm Japanese.

Cool, do you speak?

no, I'm 4th generation, my grandparents didn't speak.

oh.

Dan's interpretation of these introductory conversations shows others'—or his perception of others'—(1) disappointment in his inability to speak Japanese, (2) view that language ability is a key virtue of Japanese heritage, and (3) sense that this inability makes his ancestry meaningless. His experience on the continent leads him to believe that he should speak Japanese.

Dan has chosen to address these issues, in part, through language study, taking three semesters of Japanese—presumably in college, based on his other statements and his status as a fourth-year college student. It seems that learning about his heritage is Dan's way of bridging the gap he feels from continental Asian Americans; it is, in other words, his way of becoming Asian American, as it is on the continent that he feels this expectation that he be familiar with Japanese language and culture. As he explains, "To better relate with other Asians [...] I think it's important to know the true culture. In Hawai'i, I feel like all the traditions kind of mix together to a point where Asians here [in Hawai'i] will not really know about real Asian traditions as they are performed back in the home countries, or how people with strong roots still perform them today." Because of the mixing of cultures in Hawai'i, Dan had not felt that he needed to know "the true culture" of Japan, but on the continent, he does feel this pressure.

Significantly, while Dan's Asian American identity develops in response to continental pressures, it can be easily transported to the Hawai'i context without threatening his "Local" identity. This is because Japanese culture is celebrated in Hawai'i as part of "Local" culture—in the aforementioned bon dances and in Boys'

and Girls' Day celebrations in elementary schools (where children will make carp out of construction paper in art class, for example). While Dan is in some sense becoming Asian American, he is not doing so by claiming a continental Asian American experience of racism. This is key as this is what enables him to hold on to his "Local" identity and to some degree, his "American" identity too, as by focusing on Japanese language and culture "back in the home country," Dan is not likely to focus on racism in the U.S, which could lead to his being seen as a threat to multicultural ideals.

Case Example: Lauren: Becoming Asian American II

While Lauren, as a result of having lived in Hawai'i, feels she cannot relate to continental Asian Americans' sense of struggle, her descriptions of her work with the Asian Pacific Student Coalition (APSC) evidence a coming to see herself as Asian American rather than "Local" Asian, "Local" Japanese, or "Local" Chinese. While she says that she cannot always relate to other APSC members, she also describes the value of this coalition, an understanding perhaps developed in her past few years on the continent.

Lauren seems to have gained, through her experience at the University of Pennsylvania and participation in APSC, an understanding of what it means to be Asian American on the continent. She recognizes the value of having "asian ties" on campus and the need to have a voice—concerns which are not very relevant for "Local" Japanese and Chinese in Hawai'i given their socioeconomically and politically dominant positions. Lauren's involvement with APSC has also given her a sense of connection between different communities of color in the U.S. She says her college experience has provided:

exposure to people of ALL back grounds. the light i see at the end of the tunnel is a lot more racial melding now than even what I saw in freshman year. APSC really pushes these collaborations between groups. there was a huge collage [collaborative event?] between the asian, black, and latino frats. they brought in an original black panther to speak and a leader from the other activist groups for asians/latinos.

The specifics of the coalition Lauren describes make it strictly continental. African Americans make up only 2.8% of Hawaii's population (Okamura, Ethnicity *28-29) and while Latinos make up 7.2%, as Okamura says, "many islanders would be surprised to learn there are supposedly many more of them than full Chinese Americans" (*Ethnicity *28). African Americans and Latinos in Hawai'i, according to Okamura, are "segregated [from the general population] and transient" because they are often stationed in Hawai'i through the U.S. military (*Ethnicity *28, 122). As a result, members of these groups are not seen as "Local." Given the dominance of the "Local" in constructions of the self in Hawai'i, it seems unlikely that many there would see Black Panthers or Latino activists as relevant to their experience and identity.[23] As a result, these connections with Black and Latino communities can be read as marking Lauren's transition from "Local" (a Hawai'i identity) to Asian American (a continental identity), or at least developing an understanding of what it might mean to be Asian American on the continent.*

That said, seeing connections between communities of color is in some ways quite radical. As Prashad says, "That this solidarity requires a tremendous act of

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[23] This perceived disconnect is likely also influenced by the popular demonization of groups like the Black Panthers, as previously discussed.

production shows it is not 'natural.' [...] There is no ontological necessity for this solidarity to be produced" (Karma *197). The road Lauren takes to becoming Asian American is not necessarily the road that will be taken by all; there are different ways of becoming Asian American as can be seen in Dan's experience. While coalitions with the specific communities of color Lauren mentions (Blacks, Latinos) are definitively continental (rather than "Local"), being Asian American on the continent does not necessarily entail participating in these coalitions. There are many continental Asian Americans who do not see themselves in coalition with Blacks and Latinos. As Prashad says, "all people of color do not feel that their struggle is a shared one. Some of my South Asian brethren, for example, feel that we should take care of our own and not worry about the woes of others, that we should earn as much money as possible, slide under the radar of racism, and care only about the prospects of our own children"* (Everybody *ix). In other words, there are Asian Americans who buy into the "model minority" myth and the distance it puts between Asian Americans and other people of color.*[24]

Are Participants Asian American?

Ultimately, Jason, Patrick, Michelle, Dan, and Lauren reveal varied approaches to the negotiation of "Local," "American," and Asian American identities. Some club members may choose not to become Asian American, preferring the values of "Local" or "American" identities. Those who choose to become Asian American may do so in different ways, responding to their continental experiences either by turning to their

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[24] As David Palumbo-Liu says in *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*, "the model minority myth reifies Asian American identity and deploys this reification programmatically against other groups, mapping out specific positionings of minorities within the U.S. political economy" (174). Prashad also discusses this in *The Karma of Brown Folk.*

heritage country or engaging with the definition of the Asian American movement, which recognizes a common encounter with racism.

Given participants' felt distance from continental Asian Americans, I have wondered whether it is appropriate to study club websites as Asian American rhetoric; that is, whether it is fair to categorize club members as Asian American. As Matsuda says, Japanese from Hawai'i tend to think of themselves as "Local" rather than Asian American (187). She concludes, however, "We are both" (Matsuda 187). Matsuda also hints that "Local" Japanese become Asian American on the continent, through the experience of race- and ethnicity-based challenges; she says, "We may have thought we were all very different from one another [before we immigrated to the U.S.], but the ideology of yellow peril treated us all the same" (174). While Matsuda specifies that Asian America is formed in the U.S. rather than in Asia (173), I would add that it also originates on the U.S. continent rather than in Hawai'i since in Hawai'i, as in Asia, we think of Asian ethnic groups as very different. This can be seen in Okamura's work, for example, in which he discusses the differential status of "Local" Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Filipinos. While Asian Americans on the continent may also identify primarily by ethnicity rather than as Asian American (Zhou and Lee 12), the pan-Asian coalition seems to serve a greater function there to unite members of a numerical minority.

Despite this distance, however, between "Local" Asians and Asian Americans, participants do understand themselves—to some extent—as Asian American. When asked how he describes his race and/or ethnicity to others, Patrick says, "well on the mainland, unless i'm talking to other asian people, asian/pacific islander seems to be

sufficient," acknowledging the API categorization, a relative of "Asian American," used in the census and on the continent.[25] Cara, when asked her racial and/or ethnic background, describes herself as Japanese, but when asked whether she always describes herself this way, says that she labels herself "japanese-american...when questioned this way for demographics and sometimes just asian if it's a broad situation." She understands that while she might primarily define herself as Japanese, she is sometimes better comprehended by others as Japanese American or as "asian as compared to caucasian." That is, the ethnic designation is not always seen by others as significant and the designation "American" is sometimes more relevant than others. Cara also explains that "being asian serves as an explanation or reason" in explaining some of her practices to non-Asians. Thus, while Asian American may not be the primary way participants identify themselves, they see themselves through multiple labels and understand that one way others see them is as Asian American.[26] Cara also acknowledges the significance of Asian American history for her, recalling Matsuda's claim that "Asian" (as opposed to Japanese, Chinese, etc.) identity is formed in the U.S; Cara says, "it's not so much japan's history that influences my life, but the history of japanese in the us [U.S]."

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[25] In contrast, in Hawai'i, "API" is not a very useful category as it serves to describe over 60% of Hawaii's population and conflates ethnic groups with very different experiences.

[26] Participants' application of multiple labels to their racial/ethnic identification seems to reflect an adjustment to audience. Multiple participants, for example, said they adjust to what their audience wants to hear. Amy, for example, said she names the specific ethnicities "if they want specifics" and has also adjusted her answer based on what her audience finds interesting. She says, "sometimes I'll say half japanese [and] half white because the japanese part is interesting to people (cuz everyone up here [on the continent] is a mixture of white) so my white mix isn't special." Here, Amy reflects an adjustment to context as well. Lauren similarly talks about adjusting to audience and context. She says, "There aren't very many Japanese people on the East coast. so I like reporting that I'm japanese."

In addition, Nguyen and Tu describe the way the term "Asian American" has always been fraught and is by no means homogenous (4). Thus the fact that participants and other club members seem in some sense marginal to "Asian America" is not a reason to avoid describing them with this label. Zhou and Lee say that other Americans of Asian heritage as well do not always use the term "Asian American"; they explain, "Although the category 'Asian' is both convenient and instrumental, behind closed doors, few Americans of Asian ancestry actually identify themselves as Asian, and even fewer as Asian American. Instead, they identify with their specific countries of origin such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Indian, Vietnamese, and so on" (12). This seems true of participants as well in that many identify by ethnicity first. Zhou and Lee and Nguyen and Tu acknowledge problems with the label "Asian American." Zhou and Lee say that we should not "lose sight of the fact that 'Asian American' is [sometimes] an imposed identity" (14). Yet both pairs of scholars agree that "Asian American" is useful as a category of analysis (Zhou and Lee 14).

Ultimately it is fruitful to see the practices of Asian Americans from Hawai'i, alongside the practices of other "Asian Americans," as complicating and expanding Asian American rhetoric rather than located outside it. The experiences of Asian Americans from Hawai'i are not completely isolated from those of continental Asian Americans; rather, some continental Asian Americans—for example those of late generation or who grow up in ethnic enclaves where they do not feel like minorities—may have some commonalities with those from Hawai'i. Zhou and Lee, for instance, describe second-generation Asian Americans who "grow up in affluent middle-class suburban neighborhoods [having] little contact with their working-class co-ethnics in

urban enclaves, and show[ing] limited interest in working-class issues" (13). Based on class status, the practices of my participants and other club members may overlap with the interests of this group in some ways. Mike Rose, in *Lives on the Boundary*, for example, describes students of color who:

> grew up with the protections of middle-class life [and] knew of the wrongs done to their people, but slavery and Nisei internment and agricultural camps seemed so distant to them, something heard in an incomprehensible past. Their own coming of age had been shaped by their parents' hard-won assimilation, the irony of that achievement being an erasure of history for the children of the assimilated. These students had passed through a variety of social and religious clubs and organizations in which they saw people of their race exercise power. They felt at the center of things themselves, optimistic, forward-looking. (178)

Like Lauren, they do not feel they have suffered. Thus, despite participants' felt distance from continental Asian Americans I continue to see them as "Asian American," because of their own categorizations, generally understood definitions of "Asian American," and the value this categorization affords for scholarship and pedagogy. Reading club websites as Asian American rhetoric contributes to current conversations in the field, particularly on the key themes of citizenship and representation.

Conclusion

As a lens for studying Hawai'i club websites, Asian American rhetoric draws our attention to several key themes. Most important in considering references to Asian and Asian American culture are the themes of citizenship and representation. While club

members, like many Asian Americans, are concerned with marking their "citizenship" in terms of their belonging in the U.S., as discussed in Chapter 1, club websites show members negotiating their belonging not only as "Americans," but also as "Locals," Asian Americans, and people of color. In this chapter, I have examined the undesirability of Asian American identity for club members based on their felt distance from continental Asian Americans, allegiance to multicultural ideals in Hawai'i and on the continent, and privileges of generation, language ability, and majority status in Hawai'i. In light of constructions of Asian Americans as foreigners, in *Minor Re/Visions*, Young focuses on uses of literacy to prove "Americanness," that is, citizenship or belonging as "Americans" (3, 12). In this chapter, I have begun to examine not only club members' belonging as "Americans," but also as "Locals" and Asian Americans. Considering these multiple axes of belonging provides greater insight into the meaning of citizenship. Examining belonging in Asian American and "Local" communities alongside "Americanness," for example, reveals details about what aspects of each of these identities is actually valued—and devalued.

Asian American identity, for example, insofar as it appears to threaten multicultural ideals, has little value for club members because it risks their "Local" and "American" identities. As "Local" identity is privileged in Hawai'i (Okamura, *Ethnicity* 122), we can read club members' resistance to Asian American identity as an attempt to hold on to their privileged position there. We can also read this resistance, to some degree, as an attempt to hold on to—or gain—some degree of privilege on the continent. Despite narratives of Hawai'i's inferiority, based on club members' socioeconomic class backgrounds, ethnic heritages dominant in Hawai'i, prestigious

high school alma maters, and matriculation into competitive postsecondary institutions, they have good reason to believe they can be successful on the continent. While on the continent they are part of a numerical minority and have concerns about whether they can "play ball," to some extent, they carry their privileges with them—prestigious educations and socioeconomic class, after all, do not simply disappear. In addition, despite no longer living in a place where members of their race and/or ethnicity are in power, club members carry with them the privilege of having had numerous role models of their race and/or ethnicity.

In the context of this study, I argue that the value of "American" identity for club members is that it marks success. In a continental context, to prove one's "Americanness" is to establish one's equality to (white) peers. This aligns with the concerns with ("American") citizenship that Mao and Young discuss in *Representations*. The Hawai'i context enables us to see more clearly how "Americanness" is equated with success, a continental education valued over a Hawai'i one, for example. This successful "American" identity can be jeopardized by claims to Asian American identity insofar as "Asian American" was defined by the Asian American movement as a means to gain unity in order to fight racial injustice (Wei 1, Iijima 7). Paradoxically, while the Asian American movement aimed to secure success in terms of justice, to the extent that this movement and its claims of racism are today seen as radical and outdated, claiming an Asian American identity on their terms may jeopardize club members' claims to equal status as "Americans." As Louie says, in *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment*, "Conventional wisdom in 2001's Asian America dismisses our radicalism as youthful excesses" (xx). Claims to Asian

American identity, insofar as they point toward an experience of racism, are seen as unwarranted. As previously mentioned, hooks discusses similar critiques of Black nationalism (30). In other words, claiming a race-based identity that might in any way be perceived as excluding others can be—and often is—perceived as racist. That is, to claim Asian American identity beyond the term's use as a neutral marker of lineage and government-sanctioned support, because it is viewed as self-segregation or essentialism, jeopardizes claims to equal "Americannness."

Considering club members' belonging as "Americans," "Locals," and Asian Americans then, alongside the privilege they have enjoyed in Hawai'i and may (yet) enjoy on the continent, draws into question the pursuit of citizenship. Yes, "American" citizenship is an important concern given dominant constructions of Asians as foreigners, but how exactly are we defining citizenship? Trask discusses the value of "Americanness" for "Locals" as follows:

> [T]he issues before "locals" have merely to do with finding a comfortable fit in Hawai'i that guarantees a rising income, upward mobility, and the general accoutrements of a middle-class "American" way of life. [...] Simply said, "locals" want to be "Americans." But national identification as "American" is national identification as a colonizer, someone who benefits from stolen Native lands and the genocide so well-documented against America's Native peoples. ("Settlers" 20)

In Trask's view, the claim to "Local" identity carries the same aspirational values as claims to "American" identity, yet elides responsibility for American misdeeds. In a similar vein, I argue that the value of "Americanness" for club members is the income

and upward mobility Trask describes. Dan, for example, sees himself as "American" because he is fluent only in English, rather than in Japanese. That is, he defines "Americanness" as based on English language fluency, a skill that supports upward mobility in most parts of the U.S. I also argue that Asian American identity is perceived as a threat to "Americanness" in ways that reinforce status quo multicultural ideals and discourage discussions of racism. This leads me to wonder what considerations of "American" citizenship in relation to belonging in other communities might reveal.

As I have touched on a bit already, another key theme in Asian American rhetoric involves representations and identity. According to Mao and Young, part of the goal of *Representations*, the title alone indicating the significance of this theme, was "to investigate specifically how Asian Americans use the symbolic resources of language in social, cultural, and political arenas to disrupt and transform the dominant European American discourse and its representations of Asians and Asian Americans, thus re-presenting and reclaiming their identity and agency" (2). This chapter shows that club members are in some sense responding to dominant constructions of Asian Americans, as Mao and Young indicate is a key part of the project of Asian American rhetoric. In limiting references to Asian/Asian American culture on club websites, for example, club members in some sense represent their "Americanness" or their distance from Asian culture, perhaps attempting to disrupt dominant constructions of Asians as foreigners.

Yet in interviews with participants, the distance they feel from Asian culture is based in part on their perception that continental Asian Americans, whose families have often (or are perceived as having) immigrated more recently, are "more" Asian. This is

problematic, to some extent, because of the perceived hierarchy that encourages native-born Asian Americans, for example, to distinguish themselves from foreign-born (Zhou and Lee 13). Because of this perceived hierarchy, this distance can be read as constructing participants as superior, in effect reinforcing dominant stereotypes of Asians and Asian Americans, as club members distance themselves from more foreign Asians. This again has implications for citizenship as it encourages us to consider how Asian Americans marks their "Americanness." Based on the perceived hierarchy between U.S.- and foreign-born Asian Americans described by Zhou and Lee, one way to do this is by constructing oneself against those one perceives as "more" Asian. Participants' responses show that they perceive these constructions of themselves as "Americans" as a response to a challenge posed by other Asian Americans (i.e. the need to define oneself accurately) and as amending for their perceived lack of Asian authenticity. Dan, for example, expressed anxiety about not knowing his "true culture." Thus, while "American" is often seen as privileged over Asian, it can be difficult to see how one is drawing on one's privileges of generation and language when one is simultaneously focused on dominant perceptions and concerns about what one "should" be. Again, Dan's efforts to learn Japanese language in order to become Asian American reveal concerns with authenticity. Asian American rhetoric scholars concerned with dominant representations then, in considering how Asian Americans challenge these constructions, might also attend to who may be hurt in the process.

Hawai'i club websites and members gesture toward ways to expand on key themes in Asian American rhetoric scholarship. To summarize the data presented in this chapter, participants who see race relations in Hawai'i as superior, and thus prefer to

think of themselves as "Local" rather than as Asian American have little reason to mark themselves with Asian and Asian American culture. Their negotiation of not only "American," but also "Local" and Asian American identities reveals the value of different identity markers for club members and encourages us to consider what is gained and lost in efforts to challenge dominant representations in the quest for citizenship. The limited references to Asian/Asia American culture on club websites can also help explain their alternate reliance on Hawai'i as an identity marker, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

"We're More Than Happy to Share All We Know": The Value of "Local" and "Hawaiian" Identities in Accounting for Club Members' "Difference"

In Chapter 2, I argued that marking themselves as Asian American, for a variety of reasons, has little value for club members. In this chapter I turn to club members' efforts to instead mark themselves as "Local" and "Hawaiian." That is, if, as argued in Chapter 2, club members' limited references to Asian and Asian American culture reflect (1) their felt distance from continental Asian Americans, (2) multicultural ideals both on the continent and in Hawai'i, and (3) club members' privileges in terms of generation, native English-language ability, and majority status in Hawai'i, in what ways are "Local" and/or "Hawaiian" identities preferable? How does the embrace of "Local" and "Hawaiian" identities reflect the influence of the above factors on club members?

As stated in Chapter 2, in "Native Claims," Young expresses concerns with Hawai'i clubs' self-representation as Hawaiian and wonders why they don't instead represent themselves with "Local" culture (98). Like Young, I also find the Hawaiian and the "Local" conflated on club websites. Yet I also find evidence that club members are to some degree aware of these kinds of critiques. In contrast to website representations, for example, in interviews, participants carefully police the boundaries between the two. In addition the enthusiastic embrace of "Local" culture both on club websites and in interviews reflects participants' understanding that this is a more appropriate marker than Hawaiian culture given their positionality. In other words, to some degree, club members understand that they need to exercise caution in their claims to "Hawaiian" identity. They understand that references to Hawaiian culture mark them

as Hawaiian and that a Hawai'i audience will see this as inauthentic, thus jeopardizing club members' "Local" identities. Yet websites rely heavily on Hawaiian culture—because there are affordances to marking themselves this way for a continental audience. In representing themselves as "Hawaiian" and "Local" then, club members are carefully negotiating Hawai'i and continental audiences' different understandings of these identities.

While "Local" identity can be said to belong to non-Native club members in a way that Hawaiian identity does not, continental conflations of the two lead to problems with club members' marking themselves as "Local" as well. And while participants are careful to delineate the two in interviews with me, as Young says, they are often conflated on club websites. Because of this, claims to "Local" identity wind up constructing members quite similarly as claims to "Hawaiian" identity. And while Young notes the challenge of explaining the difference between the two in continental contexts ("Native Claims" 94), because of the affordances of "Hawaiian" identity for club members, they also benefit from this conflation. Thus, while it is crucial that club members' reflect "Local" understandings of the two identities to prove their "Local" identity to a Hawai'i audience, they have little reason to clearly delineate the boundaries between "Local" and Hawaiian for continental audiences.

I find club members' claims to "Local" identity problematic in other ways as well. While "Local" culture can be said to "belong" to club members in a way that Hawaiian culture does not, critiques of claims to "Local" identity, as detailed in Chapter 1, encourage me to interrogate this as well. What are club members claiming when they assert "Local" identity? Why claim this identity? And again, club members seem to

have some understanding of these critiques as well. This too is evident in interviews, where participants rarely use the term "Local." Participants' and other club members' apparent awareness of the need to police their identity claims gestures toward an understanding of their different audiences and the need to appropriately tailor their message.

Before I go on, I should explain that as a result of the conflation of "Local" and "Hawaiian" on club websites and in the minds of continental audiences, in this chapter, I sometimes discuss club members' claims to each separate identity and sometimes of the two together. That is, when club websites do not clearly delineate between "Local" and Hawaiian, I argue that they construct themselves as "Local"/"Hawaiian"; while the two identities are different, in website representations and in the minds of audiences, they are not. In addition, the use of quotation marks around "Hawaiian" indicate that club members are representing themselves as "Hawaiian" based on continental perceptions which have little to do with the distinctions made between "Locals" and Hawaiians in Hawai'i.

In this chapter, I argue that, for club members, in contrast with Asian American identity, "Local" and "Hawaiian" identities are more desirable as they enable them to mark their distance from continental Asian Americans and to fit in to multicultural ideals on the continent. Yet as with the limited references to Asian/Asian American culture discussed in Chapter 2, the desirability of marking themselves with aspects of "Local" and Hawaiian culture depends on club members' privileges as students at relatively prestigious postsecondary institutions on the continent.This chapter is organized according to the three issues introduced in Chapter 2. First I consider the

affordances of "Local" and "Hawaiian" culture for representing club members' distance from continental Asian Americans. Next, I examine the way "Local" and "Hawaiian" culture fit, are perceived as fitting, and/or are manipulated to fit with multicultural ideals on the continent. Lastly, I look at how club members' embrace of "Local" and "Hawaiian" culture is enabled by their privileges.

I examine club members' construction of themselves as "Local" and "Hawaiian" through references to Pidgin and Spam. I have chosen to focus on these because Hawai'i residents often see these as key markers of "Local" culture and identity. Okamura, for example, describes a 1996 feature in *The Honolulu Advertiser*, a daily Hawai'i newspaper, in which "Locals" are constructed in part as speaking Pidgin, eating plate lunches,[27] and "overweight," perhaps symbolic of consumption of fatty Spam and the meat and rice of Spam musubi as well as plate lunches (*Ethnicity* 115). This representation is constructed in part by newspaper readers and highlights Pidgin and food as key elements of "Local" identity. Interview and website data show that, to some extent, club members also see food and Pidgin as key to their identity. References to food, for example, are abundant on websites, as discussed below. In addition, among the aspects of Hawai'i that participants say they miss when on the continent, food is one of the most frequently mentioned. Pidgin is also one of the most frequently used languages on club websites after English and alongside Hawaiian. [28] Participants also seemed to

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[27] A plate lunch includes rice, macaroni salad, and a meat, for example, teriyaki beef or barbeque chicken.

[28] Other, less frequently used languages include Spanish, Japanese, and Hip Hop Nation Language, the last of which will be discussed in the following chapter.

have more interest in Pidgin than Hawaiian, as they tended to focus on this language in discussing a website excerpt that used both languages (in addition to English).[29]

While the newspaper article mentioned above references plate lunches as the quintessential "Local" food and these are mentioned on club websites as well, I focus on Spam and Spam musubi as references to these are much more frequent on club websites and in interviews. This may be a reflection of dormitory life on the continent as the ingredients for Spam musubi (dried seaweed, rice, and Spam) are easily shipped from Hawai'i and it is easy to make Spam musubi in a dorm room. It may also be a reflection of perceptions of Spam on the continent as will be further discussed below.

Marking Distance from Continental Asian Americans and Stereotypes of Asians

Representing themselves as "Local" and/or "Hawaiian" rather than as Asian American enables club members to mark their distance from continental Asian Americans and stereotypes of Asians in several ways. This works because of the differences between "Local" Hawai'i culture and Asian/Asian American culture, but also because Pacific Islanders are in many ways imagined quite differently than Asians.

One way that clubs mark themselves as "Local" and/or "Hawaiian" is through the use of Pidgin (or Hawai'i Creole English). Lauren, for example, supports the use of this language on club websites, saying, "Hawaii is unique in that we're part of the US,

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[29] Chris, for example, says he likes that the excerpt "doesn't [...] use the slang in a rude way." It seems unlikely that he would refer to Hawaiian as "slang" since it is considered a language in a way that Pidgin is not. Hawaiian language classes, for example, are offered at the University of Hawai'i and at some high schools, there are Hawaiian-language immersion schools, and Hawaiian is one of the official languages of Hawai'i. African American Language, like Pidgin, is similarly, as Geneva Smitherman says, "Often inappropriately dismissed as 'Black slang'" (279). Participants may also, however, have commented more on Pidgin than Hawaiian because the only Hawaiian word used in the website excerpt is "ohana," which due to its being featured in the Disney movie *Lilo and Stitch*, has become somewhat familiar to continental audiences to a degree that participants might not be concerned about it "driv[ing] non-HI [Hawai'i] kids away from the club," as Cara puts it.

but definitely different. We have our own little cultural niche. sometimes I feel like I'm from a different country [...]. language seems to be a huge component of what makes us unique. most people dont know the history of pidgin, the mish-mash of languages." That is, Pidgin is valuable as a "unique" language of Hawai'i. According to Lisa Linn Kanae in *Sista Tongue*, "The blending of Hawaiian, English, and Cantonese [which] created many of the Pidgin words we use today" began in trade routes between the U.S., Hawai'i, and China in the late 1700s and early 1800s. With the subsequent growth of the plantation industry, laborers were brought to Hawai'i from China, Japan, and the Philippines beginning in the late 1800s and early 1900s. These laborers picked up and developed Pidgin as "the only feasible means of communication between the different ethnic groups" (Kanae).

Use of Pidgin Opposes Emasculation of Asian Males

It is clear that club members perceive Pidgin as marking them as "Local"/"Hawaiian," as a club newsletter posted on the University of California, Irvine (UCI) Hawai'i club site, for example, defines Pidgin as the "Language of mokes" ("NOOK Newsletter," 20 February). "Moke" is defined in the Pidgin dictionary *Pidgin to Da Max*[30] as "Local boy whose idea of a good time is to broke some body's face" (Simonson, Sakata, and Sasaki). While continental audiences are unlikely to know what a "moke" is, their association with Pidgin on the UCI site shows club members' perception at least of how

[30] *Pidgin to Da Max* was originally published in the 1980s and recently celebrated with a 25th anniversary edition. While the text often takes a humorous tone, it is perceived as providing an accurate account of Pidgin. A reviewer describes the original *Pidgin to Da Max* as having "all da words we wen grow up wid" (Command). Another reviewer says the book has never been out of print and points out that since 300,000 copies have been sold, "It means about one in four Hawaii residents has a copy" (Burlingame). He describes the book as having "a finger on the hidden pulse of Hawaii" (Burlingame).

Pidgin marks them as "Local" and as aggressive and physically strong in contrast to dominant stereotypes of Asian males.

As Lisa Nakamura says in *Digitizing Race*, "The Asian American man is figured within the discourse of the contemporary dandy or metrosexual at best, outright queer at worst" (190). This stereotype is demonstrated in "a humorous piece on the convergence between 'Asian' and 'gay' sartorial profiles" printed by the men's magazine *Details* (Nakamura, *Digitizing Race* 185). Zhou and Lee note the similar media portrayal of "feminized and asexual Chinese men such as Charlie Chan" (10). Asian American literary scholar Lisa Lowe traces the history of this feminization, saying:

> In conjunction with the relative absence of Chinese wives and family among immigrant "bachelor" communities and because of the concentration of Chinese men in "feminized" forms of work—such as laundry, restaurants, and other service-sector jobs—Chinese male immigrants could be said to occupy, before 1940, a "feminized" position in relation to white male citizens and, after 1940, a "masculinity" whose *racialization* is the material trace of the history of this "gendering" (emphasis in original, 11-12)

Thus, for Asian American men from Hawai'i, markers of the Pacific may be desirable as a way to separate oneself from these dominant constructions and instead align oneself with more masculine stereotypes.[31]

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[31] The use of Pacific island culture to mark male club members as masculine can also be seen in the adoption of the haka in lu'au performances. According to the UCI 2008 lu'au program, which is posted on their website, the only dances which are performed solely by male club members are two haka, establishing haka as only appropriate vehicles for men and *the* only vehicles appropriate only for men ("'Ike Mua"). In contrast, some hula numbers, for example, are danced by both men and women while others are performed only by women. The haka then seems to fulfill a special role in this club's lu'au as the men's dance. Seeing the haka in the lu'au program surprised me, as it is not Hawaiian (although UCI also includes other Maori,

On club websites, the association of Pidgin with a more "masculine" "Local" identity is also explained, to some degree, to continental audiences. In the same newsletter in which Pidgin is defined as the "Language of mokes," the following example of the usage of "moke" is given: "Eh brah, no mess wit dat moke, he goin give you dirty lickens" along with a "translation": "Don't mess with that behemoth of a man, or else you might get beat up" ("NOOK Newsletter," 20 February). Again, this points to—and explains to continental audiences—the way Pidgin marks an identity opposed to dominant constructions of Asians. This excerpt again emphasizes physical aggressiveness in addition to size, qualities often associated with masculinity.

Use of Pidgin Despite Limited Skill

The perceived value of Pidgin for constructing club members' identities can also be seen in their use of it despite apparently limited skill. No participants, for example, describe themselves as speakers of the language. I asked participants what languages they spoke and none mentioned Pidgin. The languages early participants did mention were Japanese and Mandarin, which they had studied in school, and Cantonese and Korean, which two participants said they spoke at home. After these early interviews, I began to wonder whether participants considered Pidgin a language and thereafter

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along with Tongan and Tahitian performances in its lu'au). Based on its performance only by men, it seems the haka may be incorporated in the lu'au, in part, because of the affordances of its masculine associations.

To explain, the haka has been popularized globally by the New Zealand rugby team the All Blacks, in part through a 1999 Adidas ad (Jackson and Hokowhitu 128). According to Steven Jackson and Brendan Hokowhitu, who both teach at the University of Otago in New Zealand, the haka is often misunderstood as a "war dance" and functions for the All Blacks, in part, to "intimidat[e] the opposition" (128). As a result of these associations, club members may use the haka in order to represent themselves as warriors and as intimidating, in contrast with stereotypes of Asian males. This function of the performance is highlighted by a member of the UCI club; in a report on an event in which club members danced, she says, "All the dances were performed beautifully or should I say were very intimidating (that's for you Haka boys)" ("Na 'Opio," 7 March).

specifically asked future participants whether they spoke Pidgin. Of three participants asked expressly about Pidgin, all said they did not speak it. In addition, a fourth participant volunteered that she does not speak the language. Participants also used Pidgin very sparingly in interviews, only using the most common vocabulary, for example, like "hapa" or in discussing the terms used in website excerpts I provided.

Of course it is also possible that participants were following my lead in sticking to primarily standardized English (and online chat conventions[32]) during the interviews. As self-described "Pidgin guerilla" Lee Tonouchi says, students are not likely to use Pidgin in the classroom if their teacher does not; participants may also have seen me as an authority figure similar to a teacher (*Da Kine* iv). Nevertheless, that 100% of participants with whom Pidgin ability was explicitly discussed said they do not speak it, I do not have a lot of faith that Pidgin skills are well developed among other participants and club members.

Participants' limited skill can also be seen in the use of Pidgin from external sources, for example, in the "Hooked on Eh-Brah Phonics" and "You Know You're Hawaiian If..." texts posted on the Northwestern University Hawai'i club website. These both appear to be memes as three participants who were not members of the Northwestern club were familiar with the former text, saying they had seen it "around online." In addition, a web search of one of the key phrases from "Hooked on Eh-Brah Phonics" brings up 44 websites (mostly social networking profiles and blogs) on which the same text is reproduced. A similar search for a key phrase from the "You Know

[32] Participants followed chat conventions, for example, neglecting capitalization, writing in additive form, and using abbreviations like "lol" and "jk." I first took this as a sign that they were comfortable enough with me to communicate informally, but the use of these conventions may also reflect a sense of appropriate language for the context of the chat interview.

You're Hawaiian If..." list brings up over 100 websites, many of them also blogs and social networking profiles, plus message boards. In addition, the "You Know You're Hawaiian If..." text sounds similar to Okamura's description of the "'You know you're local if...' lists regularly sent by e-mail among Hawai'i residents [that themselves] likely originated after 1996 when the *Honolulu Advertiser* asked its readers to complete the above phrase and published the results" (*Ethnicity* 115). Participants' descriptions of themselves as unskilled speakers of Pidgin helps explain why the language is primarily used on the Northwestern site in these borrowed lists—because club members lack the skill to compose in Pidgin themselves. Yet they apparently still find it important to use Pidgin to represent themselves. On other clubs' websites too, Pidgin vocabulary over grammar is emphasized and very established, quintessential vocabulary at that.[33] As anyone who has studied a second language knows, vocabulary is much easier to learn than grammatical patterns. This again points to club members' desire to use Pidgin, perhaps to mark themselves as "Local" or "Hawaiian" rather than Asian American, despite limited skill with the language.

Spam Separates Club Members from Continental Asian Americans

Alongside the use of Pidgin, references to Spam luncheon meat, which is constructed as a marker of "Local" identity both by participants and on club websites, serve to differentiate those from Hawai'i and those from the continent. Spam is ubiquitous in

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[33] Many of the terms, for example, are included in *Pidgin to Da Max*, a classic, but extremely concise, dictionary. Only 8 entries are listed in the A section, for instance (Simonson, Sakata, and Sasaki). The vocabulary used both on club websites and logged in *Pidgin to Da Max* include "moke," "shoots," "plate lunch," "grind," "howzit," "ono," "da kine," and "shaka." In addition, the definitions that *Pidgin to Da Max* provides for some of these also points to their quintessential nature. "Plate lunch," for example, is defined in *Pidgin to Da Max* as the "State food of Hawaii" and "da kine" as "the keystone of pidgin. You can use it anywhere, anytime, anyhow. Very convenient. What would we do without DA KINE?" (Simonson, Sakata, and Sasaki).

Hawai'i. According to sociologist George Lewis, citing a Hormel press release, "The state of Hawaii leads the United States on a per capita consumption basis, accounting for close to five million cans of Spam—or close to five cans per year, per resident" (90). In addition, Spam is strongly associated with "Local" identity. Lewis argues that because Spam "is not specific to any" ethnic group in Hawai'i, it "can be seen, symbolically, as a cultural unifier. Spam cuts across—and unifies—the multi-ethnic cuisines and cultures of Hawaii. Moreover, it does so by invoking the humble and local roots of the culture, while at the same time reminding locals of how they are able to appropriate the culture of the exploiter [the U.S.] and turn it into local meaning" (92). That is, as a U.S. product, Spam is seen as a cheap, throwaway food—trash that "Locals" were able to transform into treasure. In addition, as a cheap source of protein for plantation workers, Spam is seen as part of Hawai'i's history, a link to the past, with the plantation often viewed nostalgically as the cradle of "Local" culture.

In two "shout-outs" on the UCI site,[34] Spam is referenced as an identity marker between club members—likely those from Hawai'i and those from the continent given that there seems to be almost as many members from the continent as from Hawai'i in this club.[35] One shout-out says, "Dan - I fear your couches and spam. especially spam" ("Na 'Opio o Ka 'Aina," 25 October). Another says, "Meaghan = how do you like the spam?" ("Na 'Opio o Ka 'Aina," 25 October). Given the ubiquity of Spam consumption

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[34] "Shout-outs" are a feature included in UCI newsletters in which club members write short notes to each other, somewhat in the format of messages written in yearbooks, as they sometimes express gratitude, reach out in a friendly manner, or reference inside jokes.

[35] Of eleven members who share biographical information in club newsletters, five say they are not from Hawai'i. (Most say they are from California, one says he is native Hawaiian and a few say they are of Asian ancestry.) ("Na 'Opio o Ka 'Aina," 7 March; "Na 'Opio o Ka 'Aina," 25 October; "NOOK Newsletter," 17 October)

in the islands, these messages are most likely exchanged between members from Hawai'i and those from the continent. Given the association of Spam with "Local" identity, however, no matter by and to whom they are composed, these shout-outs evidence the use of the luncheon meat to mark identities in relation to Hawai'i and the continent.

As members of the same club who have chosen to address each other in the club newsletter, the authors and recipients of these shout-outs likely get along regardless of their dietary choices. In other cases, however, club members may want to mark their distance from continental Asian Americans. As discussed in Chapter 2, several participants spoke disparagingly of single-race or -ethnicity "cliques" on campus. Some participants also specifically defined these "cliques" as formed by individuals of Asian ancestry. Michelle, for example, says, "even though asians [...] are in the minority [at my school], it seems as though there are a lot more asians than the statistics say because they all hang out together. they're very cliquey." Jason and Patrick also refer to individuals of Asian ethnicities as socializing in single-race/ethnicity groups. In contrast to these so-called Asian "cliques," Hawai'i is imagined in dominant constructions as friendly and welcoming. Paul Lyons, for example, in *American Pacificism*, defines hospitality as one of the "aspects of Oceania most attractive to tourists" (123). Thus, references to Hawai'i can mark club members as friendly "Hawaiians" rather than "cliquey" Asians.

Dominant perceptions of Hawai'i enable club members to inflect their Asian phenotype in other ways as well. While Asians are often perceived as overly studious, for example, "derogatively stereotyped as 'nerds' or 'geeks'" and seen as "the model

worker[s], the overachiever[s], the math maniac[s], or the science/computer nerd[s]" (Lee and Zhou 1, 10), Hawai'i is constructed as laid-back (Lyons 148). Hawaiians have also been constructed as assimilable (Lyons 28, 134), in contrast to perceptions of Asians as perpetual foreigners (Lee and Zhou 10). Obviously, stereotypes of Hawaiians are not inherently preferable to those of Asians, but they may appear this way to club members who face stereotypes based on their Asian phenotype. Because of their physical appearance, club members will be seen as Asian. That is, no matter how much they mark themselves with "Local" and Hawaiian culture, they will not only or fully be seen through stereotypes of Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders. These stereotypes then, enable club members to inflect perceptions of them as Asian—perhaps encouraging others to see them as a balance between the opposing ways Asians and Pacific Islanders are viewed. For better or worse, stereotypes of Hawaiians provide a tool for club members to mark their identities as different from continental Asian Americans.

While club members may aim to mark a real felt distance from the experiences of continental Asian Americans, the desirability of "Local" and "Hawaiian" identity for those of Asian ancestry is evidenced as well by continental Asian Americans' idealization of Hawai'i. That is, felt distance from continental Asian Americans alone does not account for club members' construction of themselves as "Local" and "Hawaiian." To some degree, the idealization of Hawai'i by continental Asian Americans reflects their majority status in Hawai'i. Keiko Ohnuma, for example, in "'Local' Haole—A Contradiction in Terms?" describes herself as "an Asian-American who came to Hawai'i (as many of us do) with the idea that I might finally find a place where I 'fit in' – neither wholly American nor Asian" (273). That is, based on its

demographics—and perhaps its physical location between Asia and the U.S. as well, Hawai'i is imagined as an ideal environment for Asian Americans. I believe "Local" and "Hawaiian" identities are also valuable to those of Asian ancestry more broadly—that is, for continental Asian Americans as well—because "Local" and Hawai'i identities are perceived as representative of an individual who is Asian on the outside, but less so on the inside, providing an answer to those expectations to speak one's heritage language that Dan described, but also encouraging others to see one outside stereotypes of Asians. That is, "Local" and "Hawaiian" identities inflect Asian appearance with stereotypes of Hawai'i and Hawaiians as detailed above, tempering stereotypes of Asians with their opposite. For continental Asian Americans, "Local" culture and Hawai'i are perceived as providing a desirable context because they account both for Asian appearance and distance from Asia. As will be discussed in the following section, "Local" and "Hawaiian" identities are also desirable for their fit—or perceived fit—with multicultural ideals on the continent.

"Local" and Hawai'i as Multicultural Ideals

As discussed in Chapter 2, one of the risks to club members of Asian American identity is that its claim to a shared experience of racism can be perceived as a threat to multicultural ideals. For club members, both "Local" and "Hawaiian" identities can avoid this problem. As will be detailed in this section, popular definitions of the "Local" in Hawai'i align with the principles of multiculturalism; thus, "Local" identity provides a familiar model for club members to account for their difference without being perceived as a threat. Furthermore, club members themselves define "Local" identity to a continental audience, so while "Local" identity could be—and in fact has been—used

to mark unity against the more powerful, club members focus on aspects of "Local" culture like food and Pidgin, which can be seen as adding diversity to "American" culture rather than threatening its values. In this way club members further ensure that "Local" identity will be welcomed rather than seen as a threat. Dominant constructions of Hawai'i also depict it as a good fit with multiculturalism as Hawai'i is most often seen as an entertainment destination for continental residents. This construction of Hawai'i too is further promoted through club members' focus on food and Pidgin. While Pidgin, as a language that potentially excludes continental audiences, might be seen as threatening, club members' explanations make it comprehensible so that continental audiences can take part in it and do not feel excluded.

As introduced above, popular constructions of "Local" identity in Hawai'i support multicultural ideals. In a survey Okamura conducted of students in his University of Hawai'i ethnic studies course,[36] one criterion of "Local" identity commonly mentioned "was having the 'aloha spirit,' being laid-back, or having respect for others" (*Ethnicity* 119). One student, for example, said:

> Being local everyone has a common ground to stand on and we all respect each other and the place that we come from regardless of cultural/ethnic background. There are still many variations between ethnicities and the types of lifestyles and occupations, but if you're "local" there's still a common set of values and

[36] According to Okamura, "the great majority of [students surveyed] had lived all or most of their lives in Hawai'i (94 percent) and was born in the islands (82 percent)" (*Ethnicity* 119). He adds, "the sample is not representative of UH Manoa students or of eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old residents of Hawai'i, but the responses do provide insights into contemporary views of local identity and culture" (Okamura, *Ethnicity* 119).

> respect for each other and the Islands. It may be a naïve perspective, but the "Aloha Spirit" promotes that idea. (qtd. in Okamura, *Ethnicity* 119-20)

As Okamura says, "This response [...] is very consistent with the 'tradition of tolerance and peaceful coexistence' dimension of the Hawai'i multicultural model" (*Ethnicity* 120). In other words, constructions of "Local" identity fit well with multicultural views in Hawai'i. Parallels to multicultural ideals on the continent are evident as well, for example, in the idea of respect for individuals from different backgrounds. While there is of course nothing wrong with this kind of respect, "Local" identity is most often constructed in this sunny kind of way, its more challenging political dimensions elided.

Club members further emphasize the alignment of the "Local" with continental multicultural ideals by emphasizing non-threatening and consumable aspects of "Local" culture like food and Pidgin. As stated in Chapter 1, the term "Local" gained popularity in the 1960s and 1970s in demonstrations to prevent evictions of "Local" residents by outside developers (Fujikane, "Reimagining" 45). Okamura says "Local" identity also "has come to represent an assertion of resistance against the increasing cultural and economic globalization of Hawai'i" (*Ethnicity* 118). Thus, there is a sense in which "Local" identity opposes dominant powers. Club members, however, keep the focus on food, Pidgin, and other entertaining and presumably apolitical topics.

On club websites, for example, the word "Local" is overwhelmingly applied to food. Of 35 uses of the term on the nine websites, 11 (31%) refer to food. The Wellesley site, for example, provides a list for visitors to Hawai'i of "some places that Hawaii Club members enjoy eating at that offer some of the local cuisines that reflect a uniqueness of Hawaii and a fushion [sic] of other cultures" ("Club Info"). Within these

discussions of "Local" food, Spam luncheon meat in particular is frequently mentioned. The Northwestern University site, for example, mentions Spam in relating its purpose, highlighting the significance of this food for their club; the site reads, "Most club members are from Hawaii and collectively serve as a surrogate 'ohana' for whoever needs a spam musubi fix or extra li hing and kakimochi" (*Hawaii Club*). Spam is mentioned as a component of one of the foods most characteristic of Hawai'i, which club members may miss and the club promises to provide as a form of support.

Spam is featured as key in club events too. One "shout-out" on the UCI page says, "Yee: Thanks for donating your place to Spam making" ("NOOK Newsletter," 20 February). The Wellesley College club also highlights the centrality of food for their club, explaining, "During these [club] meetings, club members discuss and plan events, socialize, unwind, and eat onolicious (a.k.a. 'yummy' or 'delicious') snacks from home" ("Club Meetings"). The significance of Spam to clubs' and members' identities can also be seen in a music video shared on the UCI site in which several members perform to a song by the hip hop group the Black Eyed Peas ("NOOK Eyed Spam"). In this video, the group names itself "The Nook Eyed Spam," obviously patterned after the name Black Eyed Peas, but using Spam instead of peas as a food that marks their identity.[37] These examples highlight the many ways club members mark themselves with Spam.

Emphasizing food enables the club to account for members' difference in "safe" ways; that is, in ways that do not appear to pose a threat to multicultural ideals. They

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[37] "NOOK" is the club's acronym for itself and stands for Na 'Opio o Ka 'Aina. "The Nook Eyed Spam" doesn't make much grammatical sense, but it does serve well as an example of the centrality of Spam to club identity.

are able to do this because food is generally seen as apolitical. This common perception is the impetus behind Anita Mannur's article, "Model Minorities Can Cook: Fusion Cuisine in Asian America," in which one of her goals is to "debunk the myth that fusion culinary discourse can be separated from the political terrain on which consumers of fusion cuisine are located" (74-75). That is, fusion cuisine is seen as apolitical, and Mannur's article focuses on examining this assumption. Perceptions of food as apolitical can also be seen in the acceptance of diverse cuisines by individuals of many political persuasions. Diverse foods are accepted because they are non-threatening. As Mannur explains, through fusion cuisine—and I would argue in eating the foods of other cultures more generally—"It becomes possible to sample a taste of the 'other' without really having to confront" the Other (87). We can easily incorporate other cuisines into our lives simply by dropping by a restaurant; this is seen as just food, not political.

In contrast to food, language can be more highly politicized. Geneva Smitherman, for example, describes the English Only Movement as "a backlash against People of Color masquerading as linguistic patriotism" (*Talkin that Talk* 292). That is, the English Only Movement uses an argument about language to disguise an argument that is really about race. While language can be highly politicized, however, Pidgin is used on club websites in non-threatening ways. Namely, it is translated, making Pidgin accessible and, as a result, more palatable to continental audiences. Regarding the function of translation, Young describes it as "an act of colonial violence," insinuating that it harms the colonized in order to benefit the colonizer (*Minor Re/Visions* 88). Translation caters to outsiders, providing the sense that a text is only valuable if it is in

the colonizer's language. Translation provides access, in the case of the use of Pidgin on Hawai'i clubs, for continental audiences. Through translation, then, club members cater to continental audiences' desire to have their unfamiliarity or discomfort with Pidgin eased. Through translation, Pidgin becomes something continental audiences can participate in, consuming it as they might consume Hawai'i itself while on vacation.

The translation of Pidgin for continental consumption is reflected in participants' concern with making their clubs' websites generally and Pidgin specifically accessible for this audience. Of two website excerpts using Pidgin that I shared with club members, Cara says she would not use the first one as it "would drive non-HI kids [students who are not from Hawai'i] away from the club" and "gives the club an exclusive feel...as if you need to know another language to be accepted." That is, while the title of this excerpt, "Hooked on Eh-Brah Phonics," labels it as a Pidgin lesson, the text seems to function more as humor for individuals familiar with the language. In contrast, Cara speaks favorably about the second excerpt, saying it "does a good job of reaching out to both HI and non-HI students by including words that only HI kids would appreciate and by acknowledging that it's ok to not know what's going on [with these Pidgin and Hawaiian words], too!" The second excerpt reads:

> Most club members are from Hawaii and collectively serve as a surrogate "ohana" for whoever needs a spam musubi fix or extra li hing and kakimochi. Completely confused after reading that last sentence? Don't worry, we're more than happy to share all we know about Hawaiian culture. If you ever wanted to learn the hula or get a taste of some ono grindz, you've come to the right place! (*Hawaii Club*)

This excerpt appeals to Cara, apparently, because it explicitly addresses readers who may be "confused" by the use of Pidgin and Hawaiian and offers to educate them.

It is especially interesting that Cara expresses this concern with alienating readers who are not from Hawai'i as she indicates that the target audience for the club's website is members, who, except in the UCI club, are primarily from the islands. Cara says University of Washington students who are not from Hawai'i are not likely to be interested in the club's website because "the news we post isn't very hawaii-specific. it's more hawaii-kids specific." That is, the information shared is not about Hawai'i, but about students from Hawai'i. Yet she still prefers that Pidgin be used on the website in such a way that continental audiences can understand it and feel welcomed. I read this as supporting a view that Pidgin should be used such that it can be easily consumed by continental audiences and will thus not be perceived as a threat of any kind.

Other participants as well evidence a desire to use Pidgin in ways that are comprehensible to continental audiences. Jason, for example, says he would provide "maybe a little preface about pidgin and its background [alongside any use of Pidgin on the club website]. or else it'd be pretty incomprehensible to people not from hawaii." Dan similarly expresses a concern with continental comprehension, explaining, "I've seen pidgin websites before, and i definitely can't picture it without speaking it to myself; [it's] hard to imagine what someone who's never been exposed to it [the language] would think."

In addition to representing themselves through markers of "Local" culture like Spam and Pidgin, constructing themselves as "Hawaiian" (e.g. through the use of Hawaiian language or by not clearly delineating between "Local" and Hawaiian) also

depicts club members as in line with multicultural ideals. This is because dominant depictions of Hawai'i present its difference primarily as entertainment, which causes it to be "appreciated" for the enjoyment it offers continental audiences. Thus, Hawai'i's difference can be easily consumed in a way that supports multicultural ideals—it brings an entertaining dissimilarity, one that can be observed for a night or a week, but does not challenge audiences to consider another set of values that might actually affect their day-to-day lives. Dominant constructions of Hawai'i as entertainment then make not only "Local" culture, but "Hawaiian" culture as well, a useful marker for club members to account for their difference in a "friendly" way.

The Function of Privilege in the Representation of Devalued Cultures

While marking themselves as "Local" and "Hawaiian" has affordances for club members, the desirability of these identity markers, which are, in some sense, devalued, depends on club members' privileges. In their embrace of Spam in particular, club members can be seen taking pride in and marking their identity with a devalued food, as on the continent the luncheon meat is denigrated in its association with the working class. Club members acknowledge—even emphasize—this devaluation, both in interviews and on websites. Patrick, for example, a member of the Northwestern University Hawai'i club, says, "not a lot of people eat it [Spam] in illinois at least. It supposedly [is] white trashy." Just as Spam was consumed in the continental United States by "new immigrants and the poorer urban workers" based on its price and convenience (Lewis 85), in Hawai'i too, Spam was originally eaten as a cheap source of

protein.[38] Lewis, in "From Minnesota Fat to Seoul Food: Spam in America and the Pacific Rim," says the luncheon meat is perceived as "thrifty" in Hawai'i (91).

Club websites report on these derogatory views of Spam. In a report on a UCI event called "Island Rhythms," for example, where members perform with the campus taiko (Japanese drumming) group, one of the members writes, "We also sold spam musubis...aka ate them all after the show," implying that among event attendees, it was only club members who were interested in this food ("Na 'Opio o Ka 'Aina," 7 March). In the list "You Know You're Hawaiian if..." (reproduced in Appendix C) on the Northwestern University site, the third item listed is, "You would serve Spam as a meat for dinner," acknowledging outsiders' negative perceptions of Spam ("Fun").[39]

Pidgin too is often viewed negatively—both by speakers and non-speakers. Tonouchi, for example, in "Da State of Pidgin Address," published in *College English* in 2004, describes the way his student "wuz equating talking Pidgin to smoking cigarettes cuz he gotta 'cut back.' If he talk too much Pidgin, den he going get Pidgin cancer and he going DIE" (77). Kanae similarly describes perceptions of Standard English as necessary for making money. In her words:

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[38] Lewis focuses on drawing contrasts between perceptions and consumption of Spam in the U.S. and in the Pacific and Asia, for example, arguing that Spam made in-roads in the Pacific because pork consumption was already high. He claims that Spam is viewed ambivalently in the U.S. but only positively in Hawai'i. I take issue with this and find his description of ambivalent views of Spam in the U.S. similar to those in Hawai'i. In both places it is seen as a cheap food, but it carries other, more positive, connotations as well—for example, of pride in "Local" and/or "American" culture and history.

[39] The title of this list reflects the conflation of "Local" and Hawaiian that Young critiques. Few items on the list refer to indigenous Hawaiian identity; instead it reflects many ethnic cultures perceived as "Local." In addition, the list seems to be similar to the one Okamura describes that was published in a local newspaper as "You know you're Local if..." (115). It is unclear if the club changed "Local" to "Hawaiian" or if that revision to the list's title had already been made.

> This stigma [surrounding Pidgin] has made it necessary for Pidgin speakers to learn how to code shift from HCE [Hawai'i Creole English] into Standard English for more formal situations (i.e. job interviews, board rooms, research papers). This learned "necessity" rapidly perpetuates the assumed superiority of Standard English over Hawai'i Creole English, which in turn reinforces the assumption that speakers of Pidgin are intellectually and socially inferior to speakers of Standard English, or [...] unsophisticated, illiterate, and unemployed. (Kanae)

Thus, Pidgin is devalued, as many non-standard varieties of English (with African American Language the most discussed in the field of composition and rhetoric) are—seen as having limited use or even as a marker of poor intelligence.[40]

Like many other "non-standard" languages, Pidgin is also associated with the working class, in part based on its development among plantation laborers in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Kanae). Speaking of current contexts, Tonouchi says, "Get da myth dat only people who went public school talk Pidgin. Brah, even I wuz amaze how many private school submissions came in. Lotta da private school peoples wuz EXTRA proud I think so cuz dey wrote little notes like 'Punahou [School] get Pidgin too!'" (*Da Kine* iv-v). In other words, the myth that Pidgin is the language of less privileged individuals (those who cannot afford private school tuition) is widespread. Even Tonouchi, who studies, writes in, and teaches about Pidgin, was surprised at the extent of its use among students and alumni of private schools. And those "private school peoples" felt the need to speak out against this myth in their dictionary submissions. In

[40] See Tonouchi's "Da State of Pidgin Address" for more about the devaluation of Pidgin.

addition, a poem Tonouchi co-wrote with his students at Kapi'olani Community College in Honolulu also points toward connections between Pidgin and social class. According to the poem, among other restrictions, students have been told that Pidgin speakers cannot be teachers, doctors, lawyers, government employees, or businessmen; "eat at fine dining restaurants"; "go opera or someplace elegant"; or "look high-class" (Tonouchi, "Da State" 78). In this section I consider several interpretations of club members' use of Spam and Pidgin, two devalued aspects of "Local" culture, to mark their identities.

Reclaiming Devalued Practices

Scholarship in composition and rhetoric considers the embrace of devalued languages, if not objects. Smitherman, for example, describes the value of bringing Other languages into the classroom, saying:

> In recent years, I have endeavored to use various speaking styles in the classroom as a teacher and find it disconcerts those who feel that the use of a particular patois excludes them as listeners, even if there is translation into the usual, acceptable mode of speech. Learning to listen to different voices, hearing different speech challenges the notion that we must all assimilate. (qtd. in Okawa 127)

Smitherman sees merit in challenging students with languages they are unused to and have often been taught to devalue. We might view exposure to other kinds of "difference" similarly. Gail Okawa, who is from Hawai'i, speaks specifically to the way she came to value Pidgin, describing how, after having "little appreciation" for the language while growing up in Hawai'i, she was able to "recover[...] 'Pidgin' as not

only my regional dialect but also a language of solidarity, of local identification and pride" (109, 120-21). She also notes "the courageous publication by various Island writers of literature in Pidgin," indicating that it was difficult for these writers to embrace this devalued language (Okawa 121).

To a degree, I would like to read club members' representation of Hawai'i and the "Local" as a similar reflection of newfound pride in their home. As Chris, a member of the University of Washington Hawai'i club, says, "it [his college experience] made me appreciate [the] hawai'i lifestyle. i enjoy the mainland, but i appreciate all that i was allowed to experience growing up in hawai'i. i'm not sure exactly what [about it was so special], but i am just glad to have been brought up the way i was—in the community i was brought up in i guess." He says he "most likely" would be a different person had he been raised instead in Seattle, where he attends school.

Club members' new appreciation for Hawai'i might also be viewed positively—as reclamation, as indicated in Okawa's quote—in light of common perceptions of Hawai'i as marginal or inferior, views that are reflected in participant interviews. Participants discuss their sense of Hawai'i's inferiority in education in particular, describing the value placed on continental schooling. All said that if they applied to post-secondary institutions in Hawai'i, it was only, as Chris put it, as "a last resort." He says, "people [counselors, teachers, coaches] explained that in order to expand your thinking you should study on the mainland because there's things that you will learn there that you can't experience in HI [Hawai'i]." When asked what kinds of "things" they referred to, he says, "i guess [things in] business and life—interactions with people who have different experiences from you as well as learning more i guess." Jason, a

member of the Northwestern Hawai'i club, shared the similar view that "hawaii is a good place to grow up in and come back to every once in awhile." In this sense, he characterizes Hawai'i as sort of a womb or nursery, as a nurturing place to spend one's childhood, but that must ultimately be left behind. This is similar to philosopher Yi-Fu Tuan's description of home. Tuan draws a parallel between one's home and one's mother, saying, "A man leaves his home or hometown to explore the world; a toddler leaves his mother's side to explore the world" (29). Thus, Tuan constructs this desire to leave home as part of the "natural" experience of maturation. I maintain, however, that this sentiment toward home is not universal. Rather, the specific valuation of our "home" in the national or global hierarchy also inflects our impulses to leave and "explore." I expect that many who grow up in small towns too, also told that their homes are unimportant in the larger scheme of things, express a similar desire to "explore."

Other participants also indicate their beliefs (whether current or past) that the continent is more (academically) rigorous than Hawai'i. Lauren, for example, expresses concerns that she might not be able to compete—or in her words, "play ball"—on the continent. Dan says that in coming to college, "I expected to study far more than I actually did, and to have much less free time than I did." While he too eventually found that he could "play ball," he reveals early concerns that he had had about the amount of study that would be required. Amy, another member of the Northwestern University Hawai'i club, also says she expected college to include "lots of work" and Jason says he chose to attend the school he did because he wanted an academic "challenge." While these are reasonable expectations for college—particularly the competitive schools

participants attend—and it is likely that concerns about the difficulty of college work occur nationwide, and perhaps especially for students coming from small towns or other regions that are assumed to be inferior, I am attentive to this discussion based on my own experiences as well as familiar narratives of inferiority in Hawai'i. Hawai'i newspapers, for example, often run stories with headlines highlighting lags in test scores in relation to other states. Tonouchi, for example, describes an article in a Hawai'i daily newspaper that reports, "Hawaii's eighth-graders scored below the national average in several areas" (Kua, qtd. in Tonouchi, "Da State" 81). Thus, I read participants' expectations of academic rigor as reflections of their sense of Hawai'i's inadequacy.

This sense of Hawai'i's inferiority exists not only in Hawai'i, but on the continent as well. As Cara says, "i've heard a lot of comments from non-HI [Hawai'i] people about what it means to go to UH [the University of Hawai'i], how everyone (non-HI [not from Hawai'i]) who goes to UH does so to slack off...something along the lines of 'nothing to do but go to the beach.'" This is reminiscent of Michael Lujan Bevacqua's description, in "Decolonization and Diaspora: The Resistance and Insistence of Decolonization Amongst Chamorros in California," of perceptions of the island of Guam as "cultural," "social," "diverse, exotic and beautiful," yet devoid of the real business of politics and history. Hawai'i is seen similarly. My colleague Jennifer Lee Sano, for example, describes the way a commercial airline pilot, on a flight from Honolulu to Chicago, quips, "Welcome back to reality," in contrast to allusions to "paradise" narrated by pilots on flights to Hawai'i. That is, the continent is seen as

reality, the place of business, politics, history, and education, while Hawai'i is only an entertaining vacation destination.

Okamura's description of the stereotype of "Locals" also points to some of these negative perceptions, for example, as overweight and provincial (*Ethnicity* 115). He also describes Ohnuma's characterization of "localism [as] a liability because 'by definition [it] stands opposed to upward mobility. Its badges and codes of belonging, such as speaking pidgin, tend to preclude fluency in the wider world,' and thus presumably disadvantage local people" (Okamura, *Ethnicity* 121). While Okamura takes issue with Ohnuma's characterization, her description reflects negative perceptions of "Local" identity that are not uncommon. Okamura also describes Local identity as "privileged, although not necessarily empowered, over nonlocal categories, including Haoles [whites], African Americans, Asian and Pacific Islander immigrants, tourists, the military, and foreign investors" (*Ethnicity* 122). In this sense, I believe he is saying that while Local identity is privileged in some ways, this does not necessarily translate to, for example, socioeconomic and political power. That is, while "Local" is a desirable identity, it may also be seen as inferior in some ways.

The use of the term "provincial" in the previous paragraph gestures toward others who are seen as inferior due to their hailing from supposedly insignificant small towns. Based on club members' Asian phenotype, however, they will often be asked to account for their difference, bringing their marginal roots to the fore; while young adults from small towns across the U.S. may also feel their hometowns are inferior, they may less frequently be asked to account for themselves in ways that make these stories public. To be sure, this invisibility may raise its own challenges. While these small

towns, however, like Hawai'i, might similarly not be seen as the "real" place of business or politics in contrast to New York City or Washington, D.C., they are seen as "real" to a degree—in some sense, more "real," depending on which politician you listen to. These are imagined as places where real people make real livings, though perhaps considered inferior to the big city; Hawai'i, in contrast, is imagined not as a place to make a living, but as a vacation destination. While in Hawai'i, as in these small towns we have our parents and others as models for how a "real" life might be made there, this goes against all continental constructions of Hawai'i. While these small towns may be constructed as inferior places to make a living, Hawai'i is not constructed at all as a place to make a living. This is perhaps a small difference, but one that may yet have an effect, further encouraging perceptions of Hawai'i's inferiority in this arena, though of course it is considered superior in terms of features like climate and natural beauty.

Against this backdrop of the denigration of Hawai'i and life in Hawai'i, to some degree, club members' embrace of devalued aspects of "Local" culture like Spam and Pidgin should be celebrated as a reclamation and new appreciation of the uniqueness of their home. It is a great thing to be proud of where you are from and to acknowledge what a place has provided you. Yet club members' embrace of devalued aspects of "Local" and Hawaiian culture might also be viewed as dependent on their privilege.

How Privilege May Enable this Reclamation

Club members' status as students at primarily prestigious postsecondary institutions on the continent, for example, may encourage them to represent themselves with Spam and additional otherwise devalued markers of Hawai'i and "Local" culture. Based on their

status, in some senses, club members have less reason to be concerned that they will be seen as inferior or provincial for eating Spam. That is, because their matriculation into these schools is seen as a sign of success, they can embrace devalued food without worrying that others will denigrate them for it. Pierre Bourdieu, for example, tells a story about a politician from Paris who greets his audience in a lesser-valued language when visiting a French province. While speakers of the provincial language are generally seen as inferior to those from the capital, Bourdieu says that in the politician's case, no one doubts his ability to speak French and thus no one doubts his intelligence or abilities (482). Club members' references to Spam and use of Pidgin can be viewed similarly—based on other markers of their status, they are able to mark their identities with these without being looked down upon as others with these same practices might be.

While not only based on privilege, club members' distance from the "white trashy" association that Patrick says Spam has also supports their self-representation with the luncheon meat. While "white trash" is no doubt a derogatory label, inflected with club members' Asian appearance and stereotypes of Asians, this slur seems to function similarly to stereotypes of Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. That is, alongside stereotypes of Asians, it provides club members more space than either stereotype alone. Like Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, "white trash" are also oppressed by stereotypes quite different than those applied to Asians. Where poor whites are constructed as uneducated or alternately celebrated as "populist[s]" (Beech 175, 182), "model minority" stereotypes construct Asians as overly studious and as bad for the "ordinary" folks that populism supports. Where poor whites are seen as "outdated" and

"behind technologically" (Beech 175, 182), Asians are constructed as technologically savvy and even futuristic. Nakamura, for example, says Asians are "characterized 'naturally' as always-already digital" (*Cybertypes* 23) and the "Orient [used] as a signifier of the future" in *Blade Runner* and other "cyberpunk narrative" (*Digitizing Race* 121). Where the masculinity of poor white males is often celebrated in country songs (Beech 178), Asian males are often feminized (Nakamura 190, Lowe 11-12). In contrast to these same country songs' celebration of poor whites' as "American individual[s]" (Beech 178), Asians are often seen as a foreign mass. Zhou and Lee, for example, say Asians in the U.S. are often constructed as "'foreign' and non-American" (1, 10). Nakamura similarly describes the way Asian technology workers in Silicon Valley "are figured as permanent outcasts and outsiders" (*Cybertypes* 24). She further explains that Asians are not constructed as individuals. Speaking of the same technology workers, she says, they "are constructed as anonymous workers, an undifferentiated pool of skilled (and grateful) labor," and "a horde devoid of individuality, a faceless mob" (Nakamura, *Cybertypes* 23). Spam itself is also seen as "all American." Lewis describes the way "most Americans had come to connect Spam symbolically to an earlier time of innocent-but-hokey pride and patriotism" (87). While he says this became "something to be collectively embarrassed about," all-American Spam is quite useful for Asians who are commonly perceived as foreigners. Marking themselves with Spam may also inflect perceptions of Hawai'i: the islands are seen as exotic but perhaps the mundanity of Spam brings it down to earth.

Jennifer Beech in "Redneck and Hillbilly Discourse in the Writing Classroom" describes her students' reluctance to identify as "white trash," saying, "given

mainstream constructions of poor whites as deviants, this is understandable" (178). While my participant, Patrick, did not exactly identify as "white trash" or evidence pride in this connection, his use of the phrase does imply at the very least delight in it, as there are other ways he could have conveyed the same message. For Beech's students, their proximity to "white trash" identities seems to make them uncomfortable with it as she says, "at least five students indicated that they chose the course [titled *White Trash: Race and Class in America*] because they came from a 'redneck town' or they graduated from what their rivals had dubbed a 'redneck high'" (Beech 177). That is, these students might have previously been called "white trash" by others. In contrast to Beech's students, that Patrick chose to associate Spam with "white trash" shows how his distance from this label enables him to use it.

As my colleague Stacey Pigg points out, for club members, pride in Spam is like the trucker hat trend, popularized by celebrities like actor Ashton Kutcher. Trucker hats must be worn ironically to be fashionable; if an actual trucker wears one, he does not gain the social cachet that a young celebrity does. Of course this works in other ways as well. The keffiyeh sold at the trendy boutique Urban Outfitters are only fashionable when worn by young adults who do not appear to be Muslim. Maira describes the way this works similarly with another fashion trend, saying, "in the United States henna marks non-South Asians as trendy while until very recently mehndi worn by South Asian women simply marked them as traditional, or at best exotic, and certainly always other" (234). In some sense, then, it is simply about "distance" from the culture associated with the trend. Yet it is also about privilege. Young adults of higher socioeconomic status in the "west" are the ones seen as trendsetters—not truck drivers,

Palestinians, South Asians, or poor whites. Thus, the desirability of marking their identities through Spam is not only about race but also reflects club members' socioeconomic status.

Club members' use of Pidgin can also be understood as a reflection of their privilege—in particular in terms of socioeconomic class and prestigious educations. On club websites, club members make clear their skill in standardized English, despite their use of Pidgin. They do this by incorporating Pidgin in sentences otherwise in (occasionally quite formal) standardized English. A sentence on the Wellesley site, for example, reads, "Despite our diverse backgrounds, we still share common interests of shopping for warm clothes during the fall, eating spam musubi at meetings, and 'talking story' with one another" ("Club Information"). A sentence in a newsletter posted on the UCI site reads, "Regardless of what ethnicity these local dishes came from, they are all supah ono (delicious) and you should definitely try some in Hawaii if you ever get the chance" ("NOOK Newsletter," 20 February). While club members use Pidgin then, within the same sentences, they also demonstrate their skill in standardized English. Similar to the way Bourdieu's politician ingratiates himself with provincial villagers, club members also benefit from using the devalued language—in their case to mark their uniqueness, without jeopardizing their social status.

Conclusion

As discussed in Chapter 2, examining club members' position at the intersection of multiple identities enables considerations of how these inflect their self-representation. In this chapter, we see this specifically with reference to devalued practices. That is, while self-representation through aspects of "Local" culture like Pidgin and Spam might

be viewed as reclamation of devalued practices, the desirability of these for club members might be considered a reflection of the ways they are privileged. Thus, while the embrace of devalued practices may be viewed positively, we might consider other readings as well.

That continental Asian Americans are also drawn to "Local" and "Hawaiian" culture, for example, points toward the use of these not only to reflect club members' newfound pride in their home and felt distance from Asian America, but also a desired distance from Asia/Asian America. Again, in representing themselves through "Local" and "Hawaiian" culture, those of Asian ancestry—whether from Hawai'i or the continent—are responding to dominant constructions of Asians, which Mao and Young identify as a common concern in Asian American rhetorical practices (2). Yet again the use of "Local" and "Hawaiian" culture in responding to these dominant constructions may have consequences that are not entirely innocent.

In marking themselves with Pidgin and Spam, club members can be said to boost their own status while reinforcing the hierarchy that degrades these two items. Returning to Bourdieu, the use of a devalued language by speakers of a more privileged language, as in his story of the Parisian politician or in the case of club members, he says, "enables the speaker to combine the profits linked to the undiminished hierarchy with those derived from the distinctly symbolic negation of the hierarchy—not the least of which is the strengthening of the hierarchy implied by the recognition accorded to the way of using the hierarchical relation" (481-82). That is, the politician maintains his status as a speaker of Parisian French yet gains bonus points, if you will, for using the devalued language. He is praised for speaking the provincial language, although a

province resident would not be. In addition, the recognition he receives for using the devalued language reinforces the hierarchy that devalues it.

Similarly, club members do not risk their status as speakers (or writers) of standardized English, yet gain bonus points for using Pidgin. It is considered admirable when they use Pidgin because they are skilled in standardized English, though the use of Pidgin is not seen as respectable in those who only speak this language. The cachet of Pidgin for club members comes from their relatively privileged status. And this prestige is also produced by the recognition of Pidgin's low status, thus reinforcing its hierarchical position and that of other speakers of Pidgin—those in Hawai'i, those of lower socioeconomic status, those with less prestigious educations.

Club members' use of Pidgin may differ from the Parisian politician's use of the provincial language, however, in that, while the provincial language is clearly perceived as outside the politician's experience, continental audiences may see Pidgin as club members' language—perhaps their native tongue, transcended to attain academic success. This view is encouraged by club members' Othered appearance and continental audiences' lack of knowledge of Hawai'i. If continental audiences do perceive Pidgin as club members' native language rather than one they deigned to use, this might encourage continental audiences to see club members as foreign, which would make even more crucial club members' display of "Americanness" through demonstrated skill in standardized English, as is evident throughout the websites. If Pidgin is perceived as club members' native language, however, continental audiences might also be encouraged to view members as "model minorities," as fulfilling the immigrant success

narrative through talent and hard work. One way club members might disrupt this is through the use of Hip Hop Nation Language as will be seen in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

"No Matter What, Black People are Americans": Hip Hop Nation Language and "American" and Person of Color Identities

In this chapter, I turn to the use of Hip Hop Nation Language (HHNL) on one club website. While this language is primarily used on only one of the websites examined in this study, in connection with the references to Asian/Asian American and Hawaiian and "Local" culture, an analysis of the use of HHNL enables further understanding of the cultural resources at club members' disposal and the value of each for constructing their identities. As in the discussion of Pidgin in Chapter 3, HHNL enables club members to separate themselves from other Asians. As non-standard Englishes in particular, both enable club members to separate themselves from stereotypes of the "model minority." While Pidgin may still mark club members as foreign, however, in part based on its unfamiliarity to continental audiences, HHNL has the potential to mark club members as people of color and as "Americans." That is, as HHNL is primarily associated with African Americans, it potentially constructs club members as forming a cross-race coalition, united with African Americans in acknowledgment of common experiences of racism. Yet as HHNL has been co-opted by the mainstream media, it is also seen as simply "American" culture—a language that marks current youth trends in the U.S. I argue that the playful use of mainstreamed forms of HHNL on the University of California, Irvine (UCI) club website, while drawing on dominant constructions of African Americans, more strongly depicts members as "American" than as people of color specifically. The way HHNL is used on the UCI website serves to mark club

members with a "safe" version of hip hop, in which connotations of race-based affiliation, which are perceived as threatening multicultural ideals, have been diluted.[41]

My use and understanding of the term HHNL comes from sociolinguist H. Samy Alim. According to Alim:

> HHNL is rooted in African American Language (AAL) and communicative practices (Spady 1991, Smitherman 1997, Yasin 1999). Linguistically, it is "the newest chapter in the African American book of folklore" (Rickford and Rickford 2000). It is a vehicle driven by the culture creators of hip hop, themselves organic members of the broader African American community. Thus HHNL both reflects and expands the African American Oral Tradition. (393)

Of primary significance for my argument is that HHNL has clear ties to African American culture. It was formed and continues to develop in African America and is part of African American "folklore" and AAL. While Alim also says, "HHNL is widely spoken across the country, and used/borrowed and adapted/transformed by various ethnic groups inside and outside of the United States," it is significant that he says these groups "borrow" HHNL—presumably from African Americans (394).[42]

In addition, regardless of the current demographics and other possible roots of hip hop,[43] it is popularly understood as African American and thus carries these connotations of race and culture that can be used to mark oneself in certain ways. As

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[41] While there are also Asian and Asian American hip hop and hip hoppers, these have little influence on the primary connotations of the music and culture. In fact, Asian American hip hoppers are sometimes seen as inauthentic; that is, as trying to be Black, which is definitely not an association that club members want.

[42] Some scholars who discuss hip hop as part of global youth culture (i.e. as not only African American) are Jill McKay Chrobak, Tricia Rose, and Deborah Wong.

[43] See, for example, Wang.

Asian American rhetoric scholar Haivan Hoang says, words have "memorial traces that index past uses and varied signification" (72). HHNL as a language can also be said to have these memorial traces that signify Blackness no matter who is using it. Thus, while the language used on Hawai'i club websites is more accurately described as HHNL than AAL, it similarly enables club members to mark themselves with connotations of African Americans and African American culture to some degree.

While HHNL is strongly related to AAL more broadly, I use the term HHNL in this chapter because the language used on Hawai'i club websites is clearly influenced by hip hop music and culture rather than by African American culture more broadly. Many features of AAL, for example, the use of "'Be' and 'Bees' to indicate continuous action or infrequently recurring activity," as in the example, "Every time we see him, he be dress like that" are not found on Hawai'i club websites (Smitherman, "From Dead Presidents" 13). Hawai'i club websites only use some features of AAL: those which have been featured in recent hip hop songs. These include dropping "'r' sound[s] at the end of a word or after a vowel" and eliminating "is" and "are" from sentences (Smitherman, "From Dead Presidents" 12-13) as in "what up playa?" a phrase used on a newsletter posted on the UCI Hawai'i club website ("Na 'Opio," 25 October). AAL is comprised of many features of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, but the ones used on club websites are primarily those that have been popularized through hip hop.

In this chapter I begin by discussing the use of HHNL on the UCI website, speculating on the reasons it appears only on this club's website and providing details about the circumstances of its use. Next I discuss several functions of the use of HHNL on this website, detailing how it (1) constructs club members as "Americans" by

opposing dominant constructions of Asians as perpetual foreigners; (2) lends masculinity, opposing representations of Asian American males as effeminate; and (3) enables club members to perform the bond of their friendships. Regarding a fourth possible function of the use of HHNL, that of building cross-race coalitions, I argue that this function is not realized on the UCI website. Ultimately then, the use of HHNL on the UCI website enables club members to draw on dominant constructions of African Americans, but in such a way that club members are marked as "Americans" more than as people of color. In this way, club members are able to maintain the more valuable "American" identity and avoid the risks of people of color identity, which, as it claims an experience of racism, can be perceived as threatening dominant "Local" values and multicultural ideals on the continent, thus jeopardizing club members' claims to "Local" and "American" identities.

The Use of HHNL as a Reflection of the UCI Context and Website Composition

Among the nine club websites I studied, HHNL is primarily used only on the UCI Hawai'i club website. While other clubs mainly use English, Hawaiian, and Pidgin—and these languages dominate the UCI club's page as well, HHNL is used much more frequently on the UCI club's website than other languages like Japanese, Spanish, and Samoan, which are used at most a few times.

Of 76 d-units on the UCI club's website in which HHNL is used, all but one is in the club newsletters (which were posted as PDFs on the website), most frequently in a feature called "shout-outs," but also in paragraphs introducing club members, photo

captions, and articles about past or upcoming events.[44] One shout-out, for example, reads "Gee: what up playa? We are unstoppable at Madden!" ("Na 'Opio," 25 October) evidencing the elimination of "is" and the dropping of the postvocalic "r" (Smitherman, "From Dead Presidents" 12-13). Another reads, "Keoki: imma get you sucka! Don't stand around soft ground!" ("Na 'Opio," 25 October) again evidencing the dropping of the postvocalic "r." The use of HHNL on the UCI page relative to the websites of the other Hawai'i clubs may be a result of (1) the geographic context of the UCI club, (2) the vast amount of web content this club has created, (3) the amount of content representing individual members rather than the club as a whole, (4) the amount of content targeted toward an audience of club members (rather than toward outsiders), and/or (5) the greater amount of informal and playful content on this website.

As previously mentioned, the UCI club is the only one included in this study that makes extensive use HHNL. HHNL is also used once on the website of one other club, that of Menlo College, which is located near San Francisco. As two of three clubs included in this study that are located in California, it seems geography may inflect the use of HHNL. (The one other California club included in this study is Stanford University, also located near San Francisco, which has quite limited content posted online. Other clubs are located in Washington state, Oregon, the Midwest, and the East coast.) According to Ted Chung, described by Deborah Wong in *Speak It Louder: Asian Americans Making Music* as "a first-year undergrad at the University of Pennsylvania in 1995-96 and a Korean American DJ and MC [who] grew up in Los Angeles," hip hop is

[44] The only use of HHNL that did not occur in the newsletters appeared on a banner made by members in support of the club's volleyball team, which was visible in a photo of club activities shared in the lu'au program, another document posted as a PDF on the club's website.

much more racially diverse in California than on the East coast (Wong 181-82, 185). Having attended hip hop shows put on by the same group (The Pharcyde) in California and at the University of Pennsylvania, he says that in California, one-third of the audience is white, one-third Asian, and one-third Black, while at Penn the audience is all Black (Wong 185). Ultimately, Chung says, hip hop is "strongly identified with Blackness" on the East coast, while this is not the case in California (cited in Wong 186). The use of HHNL on the UCI website then might be understood as a reflection of the club's location in California, where hip hop is less strongly associated with Blackness than it is in other parts of the U.S. Perhaps this increases the value of HHNL for club members in the California context, as it still enables them to mark themselves with connotations of African America, but in an environment in which hip hop is to a greater degree seen as the culture of American youth rather than of African Americans in particular.

The use of HHNL on the UCI club website may also reflect simply the amount of content they have posted. I counted the UCI website as having a total of 794 d-units; in contrast, the site with the next largest number of d-units had only 86. In addition, the UCI club was the only one that posted biannual newsletters on their website. Each of the four newsletters posted is approximately 8 letter-sized pages long and includes several articles about Hawai'i, past or upcoming events, and/or individual club members in addition to what club members term "shout-outs."

One reason for the use of HHNL on the UCI club website may be that to a much greater degree than on any other, this website provides opportunities for members to represent themselves individually, rather than the club as a whole. As previously

mentioned, HHNL is largely used in shout-outs, short notes club members write to each other, somewhat in the format of messages signed in yearbooks, as they sometimes express gratitude, reach out in a friendly manner, or reference inside jokes. Shout-outs represent individual members, in contrast to the primary website text, which represents the club as a whole, for example, in detailing the club's mission or activities. It is clear, for example, that shout-outs are authored by different members rather than by one person charged with composing the newsletter. That is, while some web content, like the text on the "About Us" page, may be created by a single webmaster charged with representing the club as a whole, shout-outs are authored by individuals who have no charge of collective representation. Some shout-outs, for example, are signed by a member named Kristin, while others are signed by someone named Francie ("NOOK Newsletter," 20 February). Because they represent individual members, perhaps the use of HHNL in shout-outs reflects that, in contrast with standardized English, Hawaiian or Pidgin, HHNL is considered less appropriate for representing the club as a whole. The club overall is defined by Hawai'i and its languages of Hawaiian and Pidgin, while HHNL is more appropriate for some club members than others. (And standardized English is the "default."[45]) The UCI Hawai'i club website is the only one on which shout-outs appear and the only one on which individual members have a voice in this way. On other Hawai'i club websites, for example, it is rare for authors of any text to be identified, indicating that the passage represents the club as a whole. When authors are

[45] English is most club members' primary language. Of eight participants who were asked what languages they speak, four did not even mention English, only discussing those languages they had studied in school. It seems English was assumed, as all participants are fluent in English, based on their admission to competitive post-secondary institutions, and interviews were carried out in English. In addition, one participant says that the only language he speaks is English and only two report speaking another language (Korean and Cantonese) at home, indicating that these may be their first languages or ones they know as well as English.

identified, such as in a letter posted on the Northwestern University site signed by the club's co-presidents, their leadership position indicates that they speak for the club more broadly ("Donations"). Thus, perhaps HHNL appears on the UCI club website because of the opportunity for individual members to represent themselves, rather than the club as a whole, through shout-outs and introductory paragraphs. The term "shout-out" itself also has been popularized through hip hop so perhaps this too encourages the use of HHNL in this genre.

HHNL may also be used primarily on the UCI site because the language is considered more appropriate for an audience of club members rather than outsiders and the former is more frequently addressed on the UCI site than on other club websites. This can be seen, for example, in the use of HHNL in UCI newsletters, which, in contrast to other parts of the website, are more explicitly addressed to members. In contrast, the "Booking Info" page on the UCI site, for example, seems targeted at outsiders. This page, which invites readers to submit requests for club members to dance at their event, is in standardized English and has images of female dancers in the background; that is, it targets continental audiences through language and by engaging with continental perceptions of hula dancers as symbolic of Hawai'i.[46] Articles in the newsletters, in contrast, are clearly targeted at club members. They address club members, for example, in statements like, "If you guys are new to the club I really suggest going to the after events and on the excursions we have (camping,

[46] Images on other pages similarly portray stereotypic views of Hawai'i, but if we assume they are targeted primarily at club members, these images, for example, scenic shots of sunsets and mountains, can be understood as showing some of the things club members miss about home. Several participants, for example, said they missed the beach and scenery.

ski/snowboarding, Vegas). It's the best way to get to know your fellow NOOKers [Na 'Opio o Ka 'Aina club members]" ("NOOK Newsletter," 17 October 2007) and:

> I hope everyone enjoyed spending some time with our NOOK 'ohana. Didn't go on Ski Trip and now you feel left out? Or just had soooo much fun that you're already having trip withdrawals? FEAR NOT!! Vegas Trip is gonna be just as crazy and thrice as awesome! Mark your calendars NOW for May 18-20th. And even if you're not 21 yet, no worries, cuz you know we're gonna have some fun of our own... :) ("Na 'Opio," 7 March)

While these messages do not use HHNL, their appearance in two different club newsletters shows that these publications are addressed to club members, advising them to participate in activities in order to get to know other members and get in on the fun. In addition, while these parts of the UCI website are not restricted from audiences—that is, they are all available online, the newsletters are somewhat hidden in that they are not on the main page. Thus, HHNL may also be used in the newsletters because it is seen as appropriate for communicating to members, while standardized English, Hawaiian, and Pidgin are the languages they want to use to represent the club "officially" to outsiders. HHNL is perceived as valuable for representing club members in an "unofficial" capacity—marking their personal entertainment interests, for example.

HHNL may also be used only on the UCI site because it is used in less formal and more playful elements, which do not have equivalents on other club websites. HHNL is used alongside other aspects of continental popular culture in the newsletters and videos shared on the UCI website. These are places where the personalities and playfulness of club members come through with references to inside jokes, various

elements of popular culture, and sexual innuendo. Two music videos created by club members, for example, are to the Black Eyed Peas' song "My Humps" and a song from the 2007 fairy-tale movie *Enchanted*. Titles of some of the club's YouTube videos make use of sexual innuendo, such as in the titles, "butt to breasts," "My plug for your socket," "Girl on girl," and "Snatch!" ("Media"). None of the other club websites in this study posted newsletters or videos. In addition, there is a notable difference between this content and the more informational, more formal content. Besides the newsletters and videos, most content on the UCI club's website is fairly straightforward and informational and does not use HHNL. The main page, for example, describes the purpose of the club, while the "Member Info" page asks members to fill out a form with the kinds of activities they would like the club to host (*Na 'Opio*, "Na 'Opio o Ka 'Aina – Hawai'i Club Member Information"). On the UCI site, then, HHNL is limited to less formal parts of the website; as these elements do not have equivalents on other club websites, this may explain why HHNL is not used on those websites.

These features of HHNL use may help explain why it appears primarily on the UCI page rather than on other club websites: because of the California context, the vast amount of web content the UCI club has created, the amount of content representing individual members and addressed at fellow members, and the amount of informal and playful content.[47] In the remainder of this chapter, I consider several functions of the use of HHNL on the UCI website.

The Functions of HHNL

[47] The use of HHNL on the UCI club's website also aligns with Alim's description of HHNL as occurring primarily in "hip hop centered cultural activities, but also during other playful, creative, artistic, and intimate settings" (396).

As mentioned above, UCI club members use HHNL primarily when addressing other club members, yet these texts are also made available on a website on which other texts are addressed to a broader (and at least partially continental) audience. Thus, the use of HHNL also functions to represent club members in certain ways to this continental audience. I argue that the use of HHNL on the UCI website functions to counter stereotypes of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners and Asian American males as effeminate and to mark bonds between members. In using HHNL, a language associated with African American culture, club members are able to mark themselves through dominant perceptions of African Americans—that is, as definitively "American" and as masculine. As a non-standard language, HHNL also enables club members to mark their bonds. Standardized English, after all, is the language we generally use with strangers, particularly in a college environment; non-standard languages, in contrast, mark a kind of familiarity. While the use of Hawaiian and Pidgin as Other languages can also mark bonds between club members, HHNL—because of its familiarity to continental audiences—enables club members to do this in a way that is more comprehensible to this audience, using specific vocabulary, for example that points to those bonds.

Marking "Americanness," Opposing Constructions of Asians as Foreigners

Using HHNL is a way for club members to mark themselves as "Americans." Club members are, for the most part, U.S. citizens, but given stereotypes of Asians as perpetual foreigners, they may not always be seen as such. As Asian American studies scholar David Palumbo-Liu says, in the 1996 U.S. presidential campaign, "successful, well-to-do Asian Americans found themselves 'foreignized' and investigated for contributing to the Democratic National Committee. Was this 'American' money, or

'Asian' money?" (5). Thomas Nakayama further explains in "'Model Minority' and the Media: Discourse on Asian America," "The distinction between 'Asian' and 'Asian American' is quietly ignored. Not only are Asian Americans who have lived in this country for generations treated, discursively, as identical to Asians who have never left Asia, they are often distinguished from 'Americans'" (68, qtd. in Palumbo-Liu 212).

Participants, though admittedly none of them belong to the UCI club, do evidence concerns and/or challenges with being seen as "American," indicating that this is a concern on the continent. Dan's representation of a typical initial interaction with those on the continent, for example, points toward perceptions that his heritage in Asia is more significant than the fact that he has lived his entire life in the U.S. As he tells it, his conversation partners are not typically satisfied when Dan says he is from Hawai'i and ask, "where are you really from?" the question that many Asian Americans repeatedly face. Michelle also hints that it is better to be perceived as "American" as she says that Asians who "don't look FOB [fresh off the boat, a derogatory term for recent immigrants]" have an easier time getting along in South Bend, Indiana, where she attends school. UCI club members, similar to Dan and Michelle, may also face similar challenges and prefer to be seen as "American" and use HHNL in order to address this.

In addition, as U.S. citizens who, for the most part, have lived their entire lives in the U.S., perhaps club members simply want to reflect the prominence of "Americanness" in their lives. As Dan says, "Other than [the club's annual] luau and some spam nights, most of the things we do [as a club] are predominantly east-coast[:] shopping trips, snowboarding, dinners." Club members are U.S. citizens and do share

many pastimes for example with their continental peers; using features of HHNL that are perceived as "American" enables them to highlight this.

Using HHNL on their website enables UCI club members to construct themselves as "American" because while Asian Americans are constructed as perpetual foreigners, African Americans, despite economic and social dispossession, are seen as definitively American—to the point that many of their creations (jazz, rock and roll, and the Civil Rights movement, for starters) have been co-opted as "American" culture and history. One participant, Patrick, acknowledges perceptions of African Americans as Americans and describes other Asians' and Asian Americans' understanding of this as well. In describing his interactions with others of Asian heritage on the continent, Patrick says, "it [...] seems like [...] if you're not part of their [other Asians'] ethnicity group and they can't readily identify you with another asian ethnicity then you're american. so no matter what white and black people are americans." That is, those of Asian heritage that he interacts with on the continent seem to assume that Blacks and whites are Americans, but do not make the same assumption with those of Asian phenotype.

While perceptions of African Americans as Americans are based in part on the problematic co-optation of African American culture and labor,[48] they also demonstrate the degree to which African Americans are incorporated as Americans and African American culture seen as American culture. Sociolinguist Cecelia Cutler, for example,

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[48] See Andrea Smith for a discussion of the construction of African Americans as slaveable property, an argument I considered in my characterization here of the appropriation of African American culture as also an appropriation of African American labor. That is, just as the wealth created by African American slaves was co-opted, the culture created by African Americans has been co-opted.

describes the way HHNL and other aspects of hip hop culture are used by her white, upper class participant, but not as "an attempt to construct a black identity. Instead, it laid claim to participation in hip-hop as the dominant consumption-based youth culture" (434-35). Angela Reyes similarly says, in "Appropriation of African American Slang by Asian American Youth," "instead of passing as fluent AAVE [African American Vernacular English[49]] speakers or trying to 'act black', many Asian Americans use AAVE features to lay claim to participation in an urban youth style" (511). Hip hop is in many ways seen more as "urban youth culture" than as Black culture. Some scholars have argued that hip hop also has Asian American and Latino roots (Wang); others describe it as strongly resulting from Black experience (Alim). Either way, perceptions of hip hop as "youth culture" strengthen its value for club members who aim to represent their engagement with American pop culture. That is, while white appropriation of HHNL and other aspects of African American culture may be problematic, it has functioned to make these in some respects "mainstream." And for the purpose of Asian Americans, who are often constructed as perpetual foreigners, this mainstreaming encourages their use of HHNL as well.

This is not without problems, however, as, in using HHNL to mark themselves as "Americans," club members support the construction of hip hop as "American" culture, neglecting the formation of HHNL as a response to "sociopolitical circumstances," for example, of "excessive police presence and brutality" in Black neighborhoods (Alim 394). While hip hop culture may not be 100% African American,

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[49] As Smitherman says, "Terms for this language [spoken by African Americans] vary—Black Talk, African American Vernacular English, Black or African American Language, Black English, Black Dialect, Ghetto Speech, Street Talk, Ebonics, and others" ("From Dead Presidents" 1)

there is no doubt that Blacks have made vast contributions to hip hop. And in a context in which African American culture is continuously stolen and marked "American," this attempted erasure cannot be overlooked. That is, while HHNL is a valuable tool for marking club members as "American," this is somewhat problematic, as its value depends on mainstream appropriation of HHNL.

Representing Masculinity, Opposing Constructions of Asian Males as Effeminate

Using HHNL also provides a way for male club members to oppose stereotypes that construct them as feminine. As discussed in Chapter 3, Asian and Asian American men are often depicted in the media as effeminate, homosexual, or asexual (Nakamura, *Digitizing Race* 185, 190; Zhou and Lee 10; Lowe 11-12). Chun specifically says that her Korean American participant, Jin, draws on "the stereotypical image of the 'hip, male, adolescent, street, or gang-related' African American (Morgan 1994:135)" in order "to subvert stereotypes of Asians as passive conformists" (Chun 58). The value not only of HHNL but of hip hop culture more broadly for male club members can also be seen in their adoption of "its sartorial style" (Wong 181). Cutler, for example, describes the way her upper class, white participant Mike's "baggy jeans, a reverse baseball cap, [and] designer sneakers" marked his identification with hip hop culture (429). In photographs of club members on the UCI club website (especially in club newsletters) some males can similarly be seen wearing the reverse baseball cap Cutler describes, along with a t-shirt printed with graffiti-style writing ("Na 'Opio," 25 October). It is only the male club members, however, whose attire points toward the influence of hip hop, gesturing toward the value of this style particularly for Asian men.

HHNL is also often used on the club website when talking about stereotypically masculine activities like video games, sports, and strip clubs. One shout-out, for example, reads, "Jon: thanks for always coming out! Now that you are 18 we will hit up the you know what! Haha" ("Na 'Opio," 25 October). Given that Jon's turning 18 is mentioned and that the author does not want to say where they will go, it seems likely that he is referring to an adult entertainment establishment, a context generally seen as aimed toward serving men. Another shout-out reads, "Gee: what up playa? We are unstoppable at Madden!" referring to a popular football video game, with both football and gaming seen as male domains ("Na 'Opio," 25 October). Similar to the use of constructions of African Americans as "Americans" to defy stereotypes of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners, this stereotype of African Americans that Chun describes can oppose stereotypes of Asian American males as effeminate.

The use of HHNL to mark male club members' masculinity also reflects the mainstreaming of hip hop culture. In photos on the UCI site, for example, almost all males wear relatively baggy jeans similar to what Cutler describes, yet I did not consider these as explicitly marking affiliations with hip hop culture because this has become the style of young men in the U.S. It is hard to delineate between "hip hop" baggy jeans and "mainstreamed" baggy jeans. The backward baseball cap seems to more definitively mark hip hop affiliation, although this might also be argued otherwise. I read the baseball cap in this way primarily because the individual wearing the graffiti-style t-shirt (a much more explicit marker of hip hop culture) also wears a backward baseball cap. While hip hop style and language are strongly associated with African American culture, they have also become part of mainstream U.S. culture more

generally. As a result, HHNL functions to mark masculinity because of its roots in African American culture,[50] but white usage inflects perceptions of the language in ways that also benefits club members.

While hypermasculinity may appeal to Asian American males because of the way they are, in contrast, emasculated, hypermasculinity comes with its own problems. African American writer Brent Staples, for example, describes a young woman's suspicion of him, seeing him as "a mugger, a rapist, or worse" while he is just out for a walk in Chicago (19). And as Staples says, "being perceived as dangerous is a hazard in itself. I only needed to turn a corner into a dicey situation, or crowd some frightened, armed person in a foyer somewhere, or make an errant move after being pulled over by a policeman. Where fear and weapons meet—and they often do in urban America—there is always the possibility of death" (19-20). While HHNL is in some sense perceived as linked to this view of Black males that Staples describes, white appropriation of HHNL makes the language more acceptable, less threatening, sanitized. It becomes just another trend on MTV. Club members' use of HHNL draws on both African American and white use of the language. Club members are able to mark themselves as masculine but without the negative consequences that this has for African American males. This is, in some sense, inflected by club members' physical appearances—that is, it is because they are not Black that they can use HHNL without fully taking on connotations attached to African Americans. Yet those connotations are also filtered through white appropriation of HHNL, which furthers the acceptability of the language.

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[50] African Americans are often represented as hyper-masculine, for example, as physically strong and skilled at sports.

Representing a Bond

The use of HHNL on the UCI website also represents a connection between members. Geneva Smitherman, for example, describes the way the usage of "[t]erms symbolizing bonding with other Blacks" like "BLOOD, HOMES, MEMBER" increased as African American populations became more dispersed ("From Dead Presidents" 26). Similar terms are also used on the UCI website in the shout-out "Gee-What up *homie*..." ("Na 'Opio," 25 October, emphasis mine) and in an introductory paragraph that reads in part "for the *peeps* who have yet to know me, some of the things that I like to do for fun include being a car enthusiast, hanging out with friends, and just simply kicking back without having to worry about the stresses in our everyday lives" ("Na 'Opio," 25 October, emphasis mine). As they did for dispersed African American populations, perhaps these terms similarly function for club members to mark their common bond (being from Hawai'i) while on the continent, to emphasize their connection and support for each other in this new place in order to deal with their homesickness.

The use of HHNL in representing these bonds depicts these connections as "American" in contrast to the single-race or ethnicity cliques that participants disparage. These single-race/ethnicity cliques are in some sense seen as "Asian," as participants most often commented on cliques made up of those of Asian heritage. Patrick, for example, says, "all the asiany people I've met in illinois form groups around a single ethnicity." Other participants too commented on the segregation between individuals of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, specifically those of Asian heritage, at their schools. Yet the same critique might be leveled at Hawai'i clubs. While club rosters to some extent reflect diverse membership in terms of ethnicity and race, they are still

heavily Asian American. All but one participant, for example, said their club was "mostly asian." Perhaps the similarity between Hawai'i clubs and these so-called "Asian cliques" encourages club members to use HHNL in order to differentiate themselves. While one participant, Cara, for example, was among those who described herself as different from those who socialize only with others of Asian ancestry, she had a hard time defining the difference between continental Asian/Asian American "cliques" and social groups formed by those from Hawai'i. She said, "maybe it's just more noticeable when they [continental Asians/Asian Americans] do congregate. maybe i'm just biased, but it seems like you can always locate groups of mainland-asians on campus. hawaii-asians get together, but it's usually after school/weekends, etc." This difference seems miniscule, pointing to the need to differentiate themselves from so-called Asian "cliques" in other ways, for example, through the use of HHNL. While markers of Hawaiian and "Local" culture also function to separate club members from continental Asian Americans, "Local" references in particular, because of continental audiences' unfamiliarity with them can easily be misunderstood. In addition, because it sometimes comes as a surprise to continental audiences that Hawai'i is part of the U.S., marking oneself with Hawai'i might still cause others to see one as "foreign." HHNL in contrast is understood by continental audiences as clearly "American."

As with the other functions of HHNL, white appropriation has also inflected the meaning of bonding terms. While Smitherman characterizes "homes," a likely precursor to "homie," as "symbolizing bonding with other Blacks," "homie" and "peeps" no longer carry this connotation of racial solidarity. That is, their appropriation in the mainstream have taken them out of their socio-political context and made them generic

terms for friends. This too benefits club members as it enables them to mark their bonds without connoting the single-race/ethnicity groups that participants decry. As discussed in Chapter 2, participants' opposition to these groups can in some sense be read as resistance to what they perceive as a "political" grouping. Lauren, as previously mentioned, reads what she describes as race-based groups as formed out of their members' sense of struggle, which she cannot relate to based on her upbringing as an individual of Japanese and Chinese ancestry in Hawai'i. It seems likely that other club members as well are not interested in race-based solidarity. This is not what they want from terms like "homie" and "peeps." Thus, the use of these terms on the UCI website depends on their mainstream appropriation, in which connotations of racial solidarity are reduced.

Building Cross-Race Coalitions?

It is important to note that the use of HHNL on the UCI website, especially in light of mainstream appropriation, does not necessarily point toward affiliations with African Americans. Scholars have considered the way appropriation of AAL might function to build bridges between white and Black communities. David Claerbaut, for example, in *Black Jargon in White America*, published in 1972, notes that the use of AAL by white entertainers often "represents a naïve attempt to identify with black people and form some sort of meaningful bond" (qtd. in Smitherman, "From Dead Presidents" 28). Claerbaut ultimately concludes however, as does Smitherman, that this is theft. I would argue that the same is true for club members. While Chun and Reyes see Asian American uses of AAL and HHNL as functioning, in some senses, quite differently than white appropriation, I am disinclined to make this argument regarding club members

because, for the most part, there seems to be a distance between them and African Americans that exists both in Hawai'i and on the continent. By "distance," I mean both minimal interaction with and perceived difference. It seems that in order to align oneself with African Americans, one would first need a certain extent of interaction or felt connection with members of the group. This is not reflected in club members' use of HHNL or their descriptions of their experiences either in Hawai'i or on the continent.

Lack of engagement with African Americans. Club members' use of HHNL reflects engagement with mainstream media more than with African American culture. Club members use vocabulary, for example, from popular hip hop songs; that is, those that are accessible via mainstream channels like MTV. In a report in a newsletter on a nightclub event, for example, phrases from these songs are woven in. The article reads, in part:

> After working out some issues wit the Candyman, everyone got their freak on. Once the playahs started buying the shawtys dranks, we were really crankin that. [...] The [club's executive] board girls dropped it like it was hot, shook it like a salt shaker, and moved their body like a cyclone all night. As for all our members who came out... What u know about them?! Big things were definitely poppin' on this evening, so next time NOOK [Na 'Opio o Ka 'Aina, the UCI Hawai'i club] throws a party, you know what it is. ("NOOK Newsletter," 20 February 2008)

This passage uses phrases popularized by Missy Elliot's "Get Ur Freak On," Soulja Boy's "Crank Dat," Snoop Dogg's "Drop it Like it's Hot," the Ying Yang Twins' "Salt Shaker," Baby Bash's "Cyclone," and T.I's "You Know What It Is," to name a few.

Other HHNL phrases that club members use are also ones that have entered the mainstream; the phrase "thug life" ("NOOK Newsletter," 17 October 2007) was popularized by Tupac Shakur, "step up" ("Na 'Opio," 7 March) was the name of a 2006 movie, and the insertion of Zs into words like "Triiiizzzle" and "Heazzy" ("NOOK Newsletter," 20 February 2008) was popularized by Snoop Dogg. In addition, a 2003 *Wall Street Journal* article discusses the replacement of "s" with "z" in the names of children's toys like the Bratz dolls, snack products like Carefree Coolerz gum, and music albums targeted at children like *Kidz Bop 2* (Tkacik). The news article references as a possible mainstream origin the movie *Boyz in the Hood.* Other terms, like "the bomb," "gurl," "24/7," "my bad," and "represent," are so common in hip hop and Hollywood movies that it is difficult to identify exactly how they were first popularized. Thus, while some Asian Americans' use of African American slang may reflect social class and proximity to African Americans (e.g. Jin's use of the term "whitey" in Chun's article and Reyes' participants' use of African American slang), club members' use of HHNL seems to reflect only their engagement with mainstream media. Reyes also specifically notes that the AAVE slang her research focuses on includes terms still perceived as having strong connections to African Americans, insinuating that she may have come to different conclusions if she had studied terms that have become more mainstreamed.

Participants also make clear that they did not grow up around many African Americans. Regarding a statement about Hawai'i's ethnic and racial diversity, for example, Amy says, "i dont think we're that diverse [in Hawai'i], actually, all we have are white people and asians, we don't have that many hispanics, african americans, or

europeans." Chris describes the community he grew up in as, "mixed? not a lot of white people though. or blacks. Mostly japanese/chinese/filipino." He also says of the population of the Hawai'i club he belongs to, "i think a lot of them are japanese. almost all are asian, and we have like 5 white people. no blacks. and a handful of Hawaiians." This is likely the case for other club members as well, as the African American population in Hawai'i is very small, comprising only 2.8% of the population in 2000 (Okamura, *Ethnicity* 29). Many participants similarly describe their school communities as not including many African Americans. Amy says the population at her school includes "more black people than at home [in Hawai'i] but not a large number." Lauren similarly says, "penn is really diverse. Lots of international students, all 50 states represented. Big Jewish community. Many minorities, but definitely less latino and black students. Lots of asians. Lots of Indians. Lots of white kids."

Differing experiences of social class and struggle. It seems club members may also perceive themselves as different from African Americans based on different experiences of struggle. Scholars who discuss Asian American affiliations with African Americans, for example, often point to similarities in terms of hardships of social class or racism. Reyes, for example, describes the way her participant Sokla characterizes some Asian Americans as having more affinities with African Americans than others, based on these factors (519). She says, "Sokla (Cambodian American male) metapragmatically constructed an explicit alliance between African Americans and Asian Americans, but [...] the alliance only worked with a certain kind of Asian: the Other Asian," by which he meant, not East Asians, but "post-1975 Southeast Asian refugees (like himself)," who he saw as "in a similar position as African Americans

because they both struggled socio-economically and 'against white power'" (Reyes 518-19). Reyes describes the way Sokla uses the AAVE phrase "na mean" in speaking about "deviant behaviors" like stealing, laziness, violence, and dealing drugs, and expresses her concern that his joining of these perpetuates stereotypes of African Americans as associated with these activities. She reports, however, "Sokla told me that he wanted to connect his life as a South-east Asian refugee to that of many African Americans in order to educate wider audiences about the struggles of growing up as a young person of color in a poor urban area" (Reyes 520). That is, Sokla saw parallels between his experiences and that of African Americans and used AAVE to mark these similarities.

In contrast to Sokla, Lauren says, "i can't identify as well with asian americans who identify in some way with racial struggle." This seems to exclude her—and other club members who have not felt "like true minorities"—from the kinds of affiliation Reyes describes Sokla as experiencing. In addition, as Sokla characterizes the struggles that he (and other Southeast Asians) shares with African Americans as defined by socioeconomics and "white power," it seems club members would be limited in their affiliations with African Americans and hip hop culture in this way as well. Alim also describes links between HHNL and class struggle, describing the language as influenced by its formation in "depressed and oppressed Black neighborhoods" and citing KRS-One's definition of "street language" as including "the correct pronunciation of one's native and national language as it pertains to life in the inner-city" (404, 396). Thus, Alim similarly characterizes HHNL as the province of the working class.

Club members' inability to relate to African Americans in the way that Sokla does can be seen in their having grown up as part of an Asian American majority, but also in their social class status. That is, club members are often from middle to upper class backgrounds. Of nine participants, five describe themselves as middle class, three as upper middle, and one as upper. On the lower end is one who says her parents' combined annual income is $60,000. On the higher end, one participant says his parents have a "low six digit income" and another says his parents are a physician and medical technologist. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 1, all but one participant is a graduate of a private high school. In addition, one of my participants, Patrick, says his club (if not others) primarily attracts graduates of private high schools. He says, "there are a bunch of others [from Hawai'i who attend the same post-secondary institution] but they refuse to associate with the hawaii club cause it's run by private school kids."

While none of my participants is a member of the UCI club, they likely have similar socioeconomic class backgrounds. Okamura says that it is those of relative privilege who are most likely to attend college on the continent in the first place. He explains:

> Due to the considerable financial cost, Hawai'i students who attend college in the continental United States tend to be from the more socioeconomically advantaged ethnic groups, that is, Chinese Americans, Whites, and Japanese Americans. [...For example,] 87 percent of the 1998 graduates of Punahou School (one of the top private high schools) left Hawai'i to attend college (Leong 1999: A8). (Okamura, *Ethnicity* 39)

In addition, UCI club members who reference their high school alma maters in introductions made available on the club website indicate that they are alumni of the private institutions 'Iolani School, Punahou School, and Sacred Hearts Academy ("NOOK Newsletter," 17 October 2007). Other club members say they are from the middle-class neighborhoods Mililani and Kaneohe ("NOOK Newsletter," 17 October 2007). In addition, UCI is a competitive school, part of the University of California system for which "students have to rank in the top 12.5% of California high school graduates to be eligible" (Chea). While this criteria applies only to students from California, admission is clearly strict. In addition, controversies over the UC admission policy over the past 30 years, the most recent policy (which will take effect in 2012) critiqued for decreasing Asian American students (Chea), indicate that admission to the UC system is highly desirable.

Off-kilter uses of HHNL. In addition, the way club members use HHNL, as detailed throughout this chapter, also discourages seeing their efforts as aimed toward cross-race coalitions with African Americans. It is in fact the entrenchment of hip hop culture as "urban youth culture" that enables HHNL to mark the club as it does—marking them as "Americans," as just masculine enough, and as bonded, but not over race. That is, while HHNL carries connotations of African American culture, it is sanitized in its appropriation into mainstream U.S. culture, made palatable and safe. This enables club members to use HHNL to mark themselves with the "trace" of Blackness without marking themselves with derogatory views of African Americans, for example, as physically threatening or overly political. As with their use of Pidgin, the language is used as "spice." Their use of the language is a little off-kilter, as will be

seen below—reflecting not full entrenchment in the culture, not a perfect reproduction, but engagement with hip hop culture as commodity, only for what it affords them.

Club members' distance from hip hop culture can be read in their use of HHNL in ways that are a little off-kilter, even mocking. It often seems members are making fun of HHNL, displaying their knowledge of it, yet simultaneously disparaging it through their imperfect reproductions. One shout-out, for example, reads, "nicole- we drop grapes like gangstahhhsss!!!" It is not clear exactly what the author's intended meaning is here, but "grapes" seems to be inserted into a line from a rap song. The humor is similar, in some sense, to comedian Stephen Colbert's rapping about the health food store Trader Joe's (*Colbert Report*). In some sense, these references (to Trader Joe's or grapes) make both Colbert's and this club member's uses of HHNL inauthentic—and, as a result, self-deprecatory, marking the speaker as uninformed of appropriate language practices. That is, one should not rap about grapes or Trader Joe's.

Yet since we are talking about HHNL, there is also a sense in which one's lack of skill may be read positively. This is because HHNL speakers are often viewed disparagingly, as uneducated and immoral, for instance. By portraying themselves as unskilled in proper use of HHNL then, club members in some sense construct themselves positively in contrast. Other uses of HHNL that might similarly be read as mocking the language include "sumida- randall is great. lets skate. my rhymes are sick" and "Shout-outs Galore Fool!" Both include slightly off-kilter uses of HHNL, the former self-deprecatory, similar to the "grapes" example, and the latter drawing on a term popularized by Mr. T in the 1980s television program *The A-Team* and currently embraced as retro, giving it a tongue-in-cheek appeal. By using HHNL in an ironic or

joking manner, club members highlight their knowledge of HHNL but also a certain distance from it. This functions to mark their "Americanness" as it shows their familiarity with U.S. popular culture but also the sense that they approach HHNL as outsiders, perhaps as their white peers do.

This playfulness might also be read, however, as acknowledgment of one's lack of "authenticity." That is, perhaps, in using HHNL in their own way rather than trying to mimic it, club members are acknowledging their distance from African Americans. Smitherman describes the way AAL terms are retired within the African American community once they are picked up by the mainstream ("From Dead Presidents" 27). The vast majority of the HHNL terms used on the UCI website have entered the mainstream lexicon and perhaps club members are aware of this. Unlike Mike in Cutler's study, a young white male who lived in "one of the wealthiest" neighborhoods in New York City, "attended an exclusive private high school," did not have many African American friends (428), and "didn't show that he understood or respected any declaration of limits or conditions to his participation" (436), perhaps club members do understand these "limits." The tongue-in-cheek use of HHNL on the UCI club website may evidence this. As one of my participants, Michelle, says of her use of Pidgin, "i felt like a fraud if i tried to speak it b/c [because] i was [East] asian too and not like hawaiian, samoan, filipino, etc.[51] i felt like people would see me as a wannabe. i didn't want to embarrass myself." It seems there is a sense in which a perfect reproduction (or

[51] A colleague familiar with Hawai'i commented on the strangeness of this statement, which insinuates that Pidgin is the province of Hawaiians, Samoans, and Filipinos. I read Michelle's statement as categorizing Pidgin as the language of the working class as Okamura describes these groups as having "subordinate socioeconomic status" (*Ethnicity* 53). In addition, Okamura also discusses the way "Local" Pidgin speakers are characterized as working class in one Hawai'i newspaper's construction of Local identity, based on readers' responses, in the 1990s (*Ethnicity* 115).

attempt at such) can be branded as appropriation in a way that these "inauthentic" appropriations cannot. "Inauthentic" use evidences both one's familiarity with HHNL as well as one's distance from it, perhaps in a manner appropriate to club members who have had little sense of struggle based on their class status and majority status in Hawai'i and who have not interacted with many African Americans either in Hawai'i or on the continent. Thus, while the off-kilter uses of HHNL may reflect club members' desire to distance themselves from other HHNL speakers, they may also reflect an understanding of an already existing distance.

Overall, however, based on the features of HHNL used, participants' descriptions of racial demographics in their hometowns and at school, club members' experiences in Hawai'i as part of an Asian American majority, and club members' class statuses, it seems unlikely that club members aim to align themselves with African Americans in the ways that Reyes and Chun describe their participants doing. Some participants, however, do give some indication that the move to the continent may change their relationship with African Americans. That is, in the shift to the continent, they do interact with African Americans more frequently and are coming to an understanding of their connections, which might lead to employing HHNL from a different position. That is, while club members may not have previously felt affiliations with African Americans, their experiences on the continent may encourage them to understand these connections, pushing them to construct themselves through person of color identities in order to mark an acknowledgement of racism. In this circumstance, HHNL might be used to mark that connection.

In Chapter 2, I made the case that one participant, Lauren, was interested in forming coalitions with other communities of color. I cannot rule out the possibility that club members' use of HHNL is aimed at that same end. Chun and Reyes, for example, speak to commonalities between African American and Asian American experience and the way HHNL and AAL are used to mark these similarities. Reyes reads Chun's participant Jin, in using the term "*whitey*, to criticize European American domination," as "creat[ing] an alliance between Asian Americans and African Americans based on shared discrimination as people of color" (Reyes 518, emphasis in original). Thus, we might understand the use of HHNL on the UCI website as similarly aimed at "creat[ing] an alliance." In addition, while some participants specifically noted that there were not many African American students at their colleges, Michelle describes the demographics of her school community as significantly different than in Hawai'i in terms of African American population. She says, the "majority of the student body is caucasian for sure. the next most populous group i would say are african-americans. that was the main culture shock i experienced coming to notre dame and visiting chicago. i had never seen so many african-americans – they're even less common than caucasians in hawaii i think."[52] While Michelle does not say anything more about interacting with African Americans, her notation of the demographic difference indicates that she sees African Americans differently than she did in Hawai'i. My research did not investigate how that

[52] African Americans actually make up far less of the population in Hawai'i than whites do. According to Okamura, in the 2000 U.S. Census, 39.3% of Hawaii's population said they were White (either alone or in combination with other ethnic/racial group) (24). In contrast, African Americans made up only 2.8% of Hawaii's population (Okamura 29). It is interesting that Michelle sees their numbers as similar. Okamura similarly says that it would come as a "surprise" to many Hawai'i residents that whites make up the largest ethnic group in Hawai'i (24).

perception manifests for her, yet there is potential here for a shift in perception of African Americans and African American culture.

Conclusion

While HHNL is primarily used only on the UCI website, it provides an interesting case for considering how Asian American rhetoric can draw on other rhetorical traditions, using these to oppose dominant constructions of Asian Americans and depict themselves in a way of their own choosing. In this chapter I have considered several ways the use of HHNL on the UCI club website might be understood—as attempts to defy stereotypes of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners and Asian American males as effeminate, emphasize members' connections with each other, and build cross-race coalitions.

In addition, club members' appropriation of HHNL provides a way to understand their shift to the continent as one not only of change but also of continuity. As consumers of U.S. media, club members' exposure to HHNL, at least in terms of the vocabulary used on the UCI website, does not necessarily change in the shift to the continent. Club members' prior engagement with U.S. popular culture can be seen as a privilege they have that other Asian students (particularly more recent immigrants) do not. This engagement enables club members to mark themselves as "American," thus separating themselves from other Asians and from Asian stereotypes.

The appropriation of HHNL on the UCI website, however, also highlights potential problems with the Asian American rhetoric narrative of "expand[ing] the boundaries of what are defined as American cultural texts" and making our "claim on America through [...] rhetorical acts" (Mao and Young 8-9, 11). In the Hawai'i context,

Haunani-Kay Trask questions constructions of Asian Americans as "immigrants," a term which brings with it the notion of struggle ("Settlers" 2). She urges readers to see Asian Americans in the Hawai'i context as quite privileged and as using their privileges to oppress indigenous Hawaiians. That is, while "Local" Japanese in Hawai'i have "come to dominate," it is at the expense of indigenous Hawaiian interests (Trask, "Settlers" 3). In the continental context we might consider not only how the immigrant narrative erases indigenous people but also how the rhetorical practices of Asian Americans may be built on the backs of others. While it is important to attend to Asian American efforts to make a space for ourselves, we must also consider the ways others are used in this construction. As discussed in this chapter, the use of HHNL, with its connections to African American culture, might be understood as a valuable resource at club members' disposal for defying insidious stereotypes of Asian Americans. Simultaneously, however, we must also consider the effect of club members' use of HHNL on African Americans, who are inevitably referenced in the use of this language. Is club members' use of HHNL theft, as Smitherman says of AAVE "crossover" more generally? Is it an attempt to build cross-race coalitions? Is it both? My data alone cannot answer these questions but provide several angles from which to consider the use of HHNL by Asian Americans from Hawai'i.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

As stated in Chapter 1, Mao and Young encourage investigation of the "entanglements" and "appropriations"—that is, the intersections with and borrowings from other cultures—that are necessarily part of Asian American rhetoric. Throughout this dissertation I have examined the entanglements of one group comprised largely of Asian Americans, Hawai'i club members, with HHNL, dominant representations of "Hawaiians," and constructions of multiculturalism both on the continent and in Hawai'i. In Chapters 2 through 4, I detailed club members' negotiation of different identity markers in their effort to portray themselves positively both to Hawai'i and continental audiences. Ultimately this negotiation reflects club members' need to account for their "difference" but also the myriad cultural resources that they are privileged to have at their disposal in constructing their identities. Yet club members' location at the intersection of these identities also means that they must use these cultural resources carefully so as not to jeopardize their claims to those identity markers most valuable to them. As a result, club members are careful to construct themselves as ideal multicultural subjects, embodying highly valued "difference" and "diversity" but in "safe" ways that do not threaten the status quo—or their membership in the most highly valued "American" and "Local" communities.

Throughout this dissertation I have aimed to answer the following questions:

- Given that the Hawai'i context is likely to construct an Asian American identity that does not fit the parameters often assumed in Asian American rhetoric, what can the rhetorical practices of Asian Americans from Hawai'i contribute to scholarship in Asian American rhetoric?

- How do privileges of belonging to (1) an Asian American majority and/or (2) a politically and socioeconomically dominant ethnic group influence identity constructions of Asian Americans from Hawai'i?
- How does the challenge of adjusting to the minority status of Asian Americans on the continent influence the identity constructions of Asian Americans from Hawai'i?
- How do Asian Americans from Hawai'i use cultural resources gained through (1) generational status (i.e. engagement with U.S. pop culture and English language ability) and (2) upbringing in Hawai'i to represent themselves?

My goal in posing these questions was to address gaps in current Asian American rhetoric scholarship in relation to privilege and dominant constructions, citizenship or belonging in multiple communities, and the reclamation of devalued practices. Mao and Young, as I have said, despite emphasizing the situatedness of Asian American rhetoric, ultimately construct it as a minority discourse, focusing on the use of this rhetoric to oppose dominant constructions, for example. This interpretation of Asian American rhetoric emphasizes the challenges Asian Americans face at the expense of the privileges we enjoy—and should be held responsible for—in certain contexts.

In terms of citizenship, Young and also Mao and Young focus on Asian Americans' construction of themselves as belonging in the U.S. While understandable given dominant perceptions of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners, considering how Asian Americans mark their belonging in multiple communities provides greater insight into the particular value of various identities. That is, what causes one identity to

be valued over another? A focus on U.S. citizenship emphasizes the challenges Asian Americans face and our minority status; considering negotiation of multiple identities or belongings reveals the aspects of "American" identity that are considered valuable, drawing into question the purpose of marking oneself as "American."

In a discussion relevant to the reclamation of devalued practices, while advocating attention to asymmetries of power in hybrid constructions, Mao focuses particularly on the power of European American traditions in contrast to Chinese/Chinese American ones, discussing, for example, "culture[s] that ha[ve] suffered the slings and arrows of colonialism and other forms of humiliation" and the power of "the dominant culture" to "vacillate between exoticizing and excoriating the other" (Mao 58). Mao also notes that Chinese American rhetoric is often in English, which "helps European American rhetoric stay as the unmarked or 'exnominated' norm," while "Chinese rhetorical tradition may continue to be seen as marked, and on the outside looking in" (148-49). The dominance—or at least centrality—of European American tradition relative Chinese/Chinese American is clear. What Mao neglects to consider, however, is how Chinese/Chinese American use of devalued practices can also reflect an assertion of their own power or privilege, perhaps Chinese American privileges over Chinese (or vice versa) or privileges of social class or education.

In this dissertation I have aimed to address these gaps by focusing on a context in which the Hawai'i environment, in which Asian American privilege and belonging in multiple communities must be attended to, meets the continental one in which current constructions of Asian American rhetoric are primarily set. In focusing on Hawai'i club members, we can examine the different ways they are privileged—for example, as U.S.

citizens who are familiar with U.S. popular culture; as late-generation, native speakers of English; as members of an Asian American majority in Hawai'i; as often members of politically and socioeconomically dominant ethnic groups in Hawai'i; and as middle- to upper-class students at prestigious postsecondary institutions. We can see how these various privileges play out on club websites, enabling them to draw on devalued practices, for example, because their English ability, social class status, and prestigious educations encourage audiences to see them as "American" (i.e. as equals); enabling them to represent their "difference" in ways palatable, desirable, and comprehensible to continental audiences; enabling them to choose among a variety of cultural resources to represent themselves; enabling them to speak for those "back home." In attending to these privileges in addition to club members' challenges as members of a numerical minority on the continent, facing this context for the first time, and adjusting to college on top of that, we can see that club members not only respond to dominant constructions of Asians, but, in drawing on the various resources at their disposal in this effort, reinscribe "Local" narratives that benefit them as "Local" Asians in the Hawai'i context and draw on devalued languages like Pidgin and HHNL in ways that benefit them while simultaneously reinscribing the devaluation of these languages. Based on their understanding of the connotations of "race" in dominant narratives in the U.S., club members are also able to construct Hawai'i clubs as "culture"- or "geography"-based, rather than "race"-based, thus using their engagement with U.S. culture to separate themselves from Asians, Asian Americans, and other people of color on the continent.

In this chapter, I consider the implications of this dissertation in light of my key themes and the attendant implications for Asian American rhetoric and composition pedagogy. I turn now to three key themes, examining the relationship of each of these with club members' self-representation.

The Impact of Adjustment on Self-Representation

Participant and website data show the challenge of adjusting to the continent. Based on the comments multiple participants made about single-race/ethnicity "cliques," part of this adjustment to the continent has to do with the change in racial and ethnic context. As previously discussed, club members feel Asian stereotypes for the first time—being seen through stereotypes of Asians in regions where Asian ethnic groups do not make up a numerical majority and are not politically and socioeconomically dominant. In addition, club members come into contact with continental Asian Americans who are likely to be more recent immigrants, which means that dealing with constructions of Asians as foreigners becomes an even bigger issue for club members.

In addition, while all college students must adjust to new environments—and club members may have it easier in some sense, given their academic preparation—they do face transitional issues in adjusting both to college and to the continent. Regardless of how well prepared one is academically, there is some adjustment to college life—learning how adult students are expected to behave and how to negotiate the relative freedom, for example. And while many first year college students face geographical transitions, even if only attending college in the next town over, it is undeniable that the transition from Hawai'i to the continent can be a big one, not only in terms of racial and ethnic context, but in terms of physical distance and climate as well.

As all of these are new challenges for club members, part of their adjustment to the continent, perhaps their current methods for addressing them are temporary, cobbled together for immediate use but to eventually be revised as club members have the time to think through their place on the continent—even as they decide whether they will ultimately make their lives on the continent or return to Hawai'i. That is, while I have raised some critiques of club members' use of various racialized cultures, perhaps their strategies are temporary and will change with time. Contributors to Louie and Omatsu's book, for example, describe how they came to see connections between their experiences as Asian Americans and the experiences of African Americans and others. While Matsuda and Prashad indicate that many Asian Americans do not see these connections, as young adults, there is much time for club members' views to change.

Belonging and Self-Representation

The necessary adjustment to the continent creates for club members a need to mark their belonging in various communities. Having relocated to the continent, they may be anxious about losing their place in Hawai'i. Adjusting to their position as members of a minority on the continent—and a visible one at that, club members feel the need to mark their belonging as "Americans." Markers of "Local," "Hawaiian," Asian American, and person of color identities provide further resources for accounting for their difference on the continent; despite the risks of claiming some of these then, they have the potential to provide club members with a sense of belonging.

In attending to club members' sense of belonging in various communities, however, considering their privilege is key. That is, club members are privileged in that they have access to the cultural resources needed in order to claim belonging in various

communities. Thus, their identity claims must be understood in terms of both their challenges—as young adults visibly marked Other in their new environment, and privileges—as individuals with a variety of cultural resources at their disposal. To explain, club members' appearance as Asian requires that they mark their belonging as "Americans"—this identity is not assumed. They must also mark their belonging as "Local" if they prefer this identity to Asian or Asian American. Ultimately, club members' visible difference requires them to account for this and mark their belonging. Yet the role of their privilege in marking themselves in various ways cannot be ignored.

The Impact of Privilege on Self-Representation

Club members' ability to draw on a variety of resources, yet need to do so carefully results, in part, from their privilege—as primarily of Japanese and Chinese ancestry in Hawai'i and in other ways as well. Club members are primarily native-English speaking U.S. citizens who have been engaged with U.S. culture, including popular music and multicultural values. This enables them to use popular music and other trends to mark their "Americanness" and also to more successfully represent themselves to a continental audience through an understanding of U.S. frameworks. Their socioeconomic privilege enables them to attend school on the continent and along with their ethnic privilege provides support for academic success throughout their schooling. This is in contrast, for example, to the "Local" Filipino student Halagao mentions who "was told by a ['Local'] Japanese teacher that 'she was not college material'" (45).

Club members' location on the continent also provides them access to and/or greater understanding of people of color and Asian American identities, which are uncommon in Hawai'i. Though club members may choose not to draw on these identity

markers, their experiences on the continent—and particularly in educational institutions—still make these available as resources. Attending school on the continent also presents club members with an (continental) audience to which they can represent themselves as "Hawaiian" and to which they can represent Hawai'i as multicultural utopia with even less challenge than they would face in Hawai'i. To this continental audience who knows very little about Hawai'i, except perhaps for already seeing it as a paradise, club members can construct Hawai'i as a racial paradise as well.

Yet club members risk losing their "Local" identity also because of their privilege. Their "Local" identity becomes a greater issue because they are attending school on the continent. In addition, being on the continent encourages, perhaps even requires, club members to engage with people of color and Asian American identities. Yet embracing these risks their "Local" and "American" identities. These privileges—engagement with U.S. popular culture, attending school on the continent, exposure to new identity categories—bring choices, which are no doubt valuable, but they also mean that decisions must be made, and made carefully.

Perhaps most importantly, "Local" is the safest identity marker for club members—the only one that cannot be over-claimed. It is possible to be seen as "too Local," perhaps as too provincial or unable to achieve "success" outside Hawai'i. Okamura, as previously mentioned, describes the way the "Local" is caricatured as a "stereotypical overweight, non-White male who eats plate lunches, wears a T-shirt, speaks pidgin English, has a carefree attitude toward life, and knows much local trivia about Hawai'i but perhaps not much about the rest of the world" (*Ethnicity* 115). While these characteristics are not necessarily derogatory, the use of Pidgin and lack of

knowledge of the world outside Hawai'i suggest that "Locals" are unable to do well away from the islands. Because club members are currently on the continent attending school, however, in a Hawai'i context, they are seen as somewhat "American" no matter how "Local" they act or portray themselves as being. Thus, while it is possible for someone to be seen as "too Local," this is not a risk for club members specifically. In addition, club members do not need to worry about being seen as "too Local" by a continental audience because club members themselves define "Local" to this audience. The value of "Local" identity to club members is clearly evident in the overwhelming invocations of this identity on club websites.

Some might argue that "Local" is simply who club members are. Yet club members clearly have a new appreciation for Hawai'i—one only gained on the continent. To some degree, it is to be expected that one becomes appreciative of a place after leaving. Yet this is a reflection of privilege. This is not to say that club members' appreciation is not real, but their location on the continent and largely prestigious postsecondary educations change the stakes. Claiming "Local" identity means much differently on the continent than it does in Hawai'i. This is in part based on audience—"Local" means different things to Hawai'i and continental audiences. It is also based on distance—"Local" is more unique farther from Hawai'i. Yet it is also based on the perception of the continent and education there as superior—claiming a provincial "Local" identity while attending school on the continent carries little risk, as with the Parisian politician's use of the lesser-valued language. The provincial "Local" identity is in fact more highly valued on the continent as it brings "a bit of the Other," giving club members a special place in the multicultural economy of the university (hooks 22).

In this sense, embracing "Local" and "Hawaiian" culture on the continent is not so much reclaiming as cashing in.

In contrast to my argument that club members' privilege requires them to be careful, privilege and dominance generally tend to mean that one need not be careful; one who is physically strong, for example, is often less vulnerable in a physically dangerous situation. This kind of effect of privilege can perhaps be seen in club members' representation of Hawai'i and "Local" culture to a continental audience who rarely has the resources to challenge their construction. That is, club members have the privilege to represent Hawai'i and the "Local" in any way of their choosing. Club members' privilege and dominance, however, encourage them to be careful in other ways. Taking into account their existence at the intersection of various identities and identity communities, they have much to lose. They are privileged in that they have access to these various identities and identity communities, but if they want to hold on to all of these, they must tread carefully. I imagine a reigning champ, for example, who has more to lose and thus approaches a fight conservatively, in contrast to the underdog who, with nothing to lose and everything to gain, is willing to try anything. In addition, privilege and dominance can mean that one need not take risks. Victor Villanueva, for example, describes the way a group of middle-class students, "even when faced with a text about racial difference, limit their discussion to things like word choice and mechanics rather than discuss the issues raised in the paper" (cited in Tasaka 159). That is, they have the tools to avoid risky discussion. In addition, they presumably felt little need to discuss the issues in the paper. They felt there was no reason for them to get into those challenging issues.

Mike Rose in *Lives on the Boundary* similarly shows how a certain degree of privilege can encourage the allegiance of students of color to multicultural ideals. He describes students of color "who grew up with the protections of middle-class life" and "had passed through a variety of social and religious clubs and organizations in which they saw people of their race exercise power. They felt at the center of things themselves, optimistic, forward-looking, the force of their own personal history leading them to expect an uncomplicated blending into campus life" (Rose 178). These students, Rose says, "felt strange about being marked as different" (178). Based on an anecdote he shares, even students who have experienced racism firsthand sometimes feel that "Some things were better left unsaid. Decent people [...] just don't say them. There is a life to lead, and it will be a good life. Put the stuff your grandmother lived and your father saw behind you. It belongs in the past. It need not be dredged up if we're to move on" (Rose 179). While Rose, in some sense, attributes students' desire to avoid these issues to the pain of revisiting them, he also draws a connection between this desire to turn away from concerns with racial struggles and a relatively privileged class status.

Similarly addressing student resistance to certain topics, Villanueva discusses the risk of the "overtly political" (53). He finds that a group of primarily African American students from low-income backgrounds resists a "Freire-like pedagogy" because they "could reason that no matter how slight their chances of getting into college or the middle-class, they did have chances, maybe better than most" (Villanueva 53). While their teacher aimed to make them into "conscious intellectuals" through educating them about African and African American history and raising their class

consciousness (Villanueva 55), these students continued to buy into the "bootstrap mentality," feeling they had a better chance of succeeding by playing the game rather than through more radical means. Villanueva further explains, "the word 'revolution' [...] conjures up frightening pictures: not acts of criticism, but acts of violence, undertaken when there is nothing left to lose. Yet there are things left to lose here. There might still be pie" (61). If these students, described by Villanueva as "locked out of the public schools, mainly by the court system," felt "revolution" was too big a risk, imagine how big this risk must seem to other students, who do not have "first-hand knowledge of the ways the political system can work against certain groups" (53), who in fact have greatly benefited from existing political systems, who will almost certainly have pie as long as they continue on their current path.

Students' relative desire to take risks can also be seen in some of my colleagues' preference for teaching developmental versus mainstream writing courses. While the lore is that teachers prefer teaching the most "advanced" students, as this enables more work with "ideas," I have heard some of my colleagues express preferences for teaching developmental rather than mainstream first-year writing courses, lamenting that students in the mainstream courses have already learned how to play the game, while students in the developmental course are more enjoyable to work with as they are willing to experiment and take risks.

Reflecting on my own experiences with various writing tasks also helps me to think about how the lack of resources can be freeing. When faced with a new writing task, for example, one for which I am at a complete loss as to the best approach, I need to take a risk. I need to just get something on the paper, take a long shot, and see what

happens. The only other alternative is not to take on the task, which, while an option, is not usually very successful. From the perspective of a writing teacher, I am definitely not advocating posing students with assignments designed merely to jar them into risky writing. Neither am I saying that this lack of resources is to be envied for the risk-taking it enables. This classroom example, however, provides another case that shows how the availability of options can discourage risk-taking.

I'm quite nervous about this argument. I definitely don't want to get all "poor little rich girl" here. From the perspective of a teacher, however, I want to be able to address the needs of all students and understanding where different students are coming from is part of this. In considering how we represent ourselves, for example, through language and visuals, for those students who would benefit from it, I want to encourage the reclamation of devalued cultures and language practices, but I also want students to consider the workings of power and privilege behind this reclamation, behind the languages and visual practices we use to represent ourselves. For some students, this may be a more important project. To explain, the goal in encouraging reclamation of devalued practices is to challenge hegemonic values that hold one language practice above another. Yet for relatively privileged students to use lesser-valued languages, as Bourdieu explains, reinforces the hierarchy that places one language over another. The reclamation of devalued languages then is not an undeniable good. Rather, we should help students understand how different languages and practices are valued and how our positionality influences our use of these languages and practices so that they can decide their own best practices based on this information.

Implications for Asian American Rhetoric

At the intersection of these privileges, belonging, adjustment, the construction of identity, and concerns with risk are implications for Asian American rhetoric, specifically in relation to the issues of citizenship, hybridity, dominant constructions, and context.

Citizenship/Belonging in Multiple Communities

Claiming "Americanness" in a continental context enables club members to mark their equality (to their continental peers), a move that Young highlights, and a key one given dominant constructions of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners. In a Hawai'i context, however, claiming "Americanness" functions to mark club members as superior—as better educated and more worldly and sophisticated than their peers in Hawai'i. Asian American and person of color identities, in contrast, are less desirable as they call attention to racial inequalities that are unimportant to club members—based on their experiences and privileges in Hawai'i. These identities are further unsavory in contrast with "American" identity, as they threaten multicultural ideals on the continent and in Hawai'i, thus jeopardizing the "Local" narrative that maintains club members' privilege in the islands and the national multicultural narrative that pays lip service to their equality and thus promises success on the continent.

Viewed alongside claims to Asian American, "Local," and person of color identities, the value of "American" identity for club members is brought into question—as it appears to stand only for traditional models of "success" and is difficult to reconcile with identities that call attention to racial inequalities. When we focus on Asian American claims to U.S. citizenship, we focus on claims to equality. Alongside

claims of belonging in other communities, however, we see that while assertions of U.S. citizenship may aim for equality, they also exclude and separate one from others—those who are not legal citizens or are more recent immigrants. The claim to "Americanness" also looks, from this angle, like one that functions to provide for oneself, to preserve one's own privileges, with little concern for others. Thus, this dissertation shows the value of considering claims to "Americanness" alongside other identity markers in order to gain greater insight into what in particular is valued about "American" citizenship. In this way, we attend to not only claims to equality, which emphasize the challenges Asian Americans face, but also claims to superiority, which ask us to take responsibility for how we exclude others as well.

Hybridity and Power

Both Mao and Mao and Young say that Asian American rhetoric incorporates multiple influences. In both *Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie* and *Representations*, Mao and Mao and Young advise attending to the power dynamics within these relationships. Mao, for example, discussing performances by both European and Chinese Americans at an annual Chinese New Year celebration he attends in Cincinnati, asks, "what are some of those specific conditions or power relations that have motivated these performances and that have shaped, if not forced, other encounters and their hybrid consequences?" (27). In his concern with power dynamics in these performances, what initially seemed most important to attend to in my view were the cross-cultural situations. That is, the European American youth doing Chinese martial arts and the Chinese American girls doing tap and jazz rather than the Chinese students doing Chinese folk dances (Mao 26-27). What is the appeal, for example, of Chinese martial

arts for European American youth? In calling attention to the power asymmetries in hybrid situations, Mao asks us to consider how the role of Chinese culture within the U.S. influences European American participation in this activity.

Examinations of club members' references to Asian/Asian American, "Local," Hawaiian, and hip hop languages and cultures, however, point toward the value of considering not only cross-cultural participation, but engagement with even those cultures that seem to "belong" to club members as asymmetries of power are at work here as well. Those unfamiliar with Hawai'i, as I have said, might assume that Hawaiian culture was the province of club members. The same assumption might be made of Asian/Asian American culture. As I entered this study, my goal, in looking at references to Asian/Asian American culture was to investigate why club members did not mark themselves with this culture, assuming, to some degree, that they should. In some sense, we might assume that hip hop culture "belongs" to club members, as youth in the U.S., too. Yet this study uncovered distance between club members and continental Asian Americans and curious dynamics between club members and all of these cultures and languages. There is value in considering not only what looks like appropriation and entanglement, as complicated relationships can be uncovered even in seemingly "appropriate" representations. That is, just as continental audiences might assume Hawaiian culture is the province of club members, as researchers we might focus only on obvious intercultural interactions, ignoring subtler power asymmetries, for example, within Asian American communities. Returning to Mao's examples from the Chinese New Year performances in Cincinnati, we should also consider the asymmetries of power that influence some Chinese Americans to perform Chinese folk

dances. While the focus on hybridity encourages us to attend to those situations in which two traditions come together, and Mao points to the power asymmetries within hybridity, we should also attend to subtler hybridities in which power asymmetries are also at play.

Privilege and Devalued Practices

Mao sees the claiming of identities, including those that are devalued, as opposed to globalizing efforts that seem to push toward homogeneity (2). These efforts, he says, such as language recovery projects and the "reclaim[ing of] what has been hidden from or denied them—be it ethnic and linguistic identity, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation," "serve to challenge this new world order that seems either to reinforce the existing relations of power or to promote different hierarchies or control structures that are no less in favor of the dominant, the powerful" (Mao 2). Yet my analysis of club websites shows how what looks like reclamation of devalued identities can also "reinforce the existing relations of power." That is, club members' matriculation into continental postsecondary institutions enables them to represent themselves as "Local" through such devalued markers as Pidgin and Spam because their "success" on the continent ensures that they will still be seen as "American."

Given the dependence of club members' reclamation of Hawai'i and the "Local" on their privilege, I take a less sanguine view than Mao and other scholars of the embrace of devalued identities and practices. Scholars like Gail Okawa remind me of the value of club members' use of languages other than English. They remind me that pride in Pidgin is (or was, or can be) somewhat revolutionary. Okawa, for example, describes how, after having "little appreciation" for the language while growing up in

Hawai'i, she was able to "recover[...] 'Pidgin' as not only my regional dialect but also a language of solidarity, of local identification and pride" (109, 120-21). She describes "the courageous publication by various Island writers of literature in Pidgin" (Okawa 121). I need to remember that many still feel ashamed of speaking languages like Pidgin or AAL and that there is meaning in reclaiming these devalued languages. Given this, I consider how Okawa might read the use of Pidgin, HHNL, and Hawaiian on club websites. While I believe a purely positive reading would be inaccurate, she reminds me that there are some who benefit from seeing these languages positively. Yet there are other sides to these attitudes and histories of pride and reclamation as well. We must also consider the privileges and power dynamics that support these kinds of reclamations for some but not others.

The closing sentences of Okawa's piece, for example, shows both how the difference of language can be valued merely as spice and at a deeper level as well. She says:

> Rather than shrinking at the sounds of Pidgin English now, I long for the marketplace in Honolulu's Chinatown or Cleveland's West Side Market or Seattle's International District, where speakers of many languages and dialects willingly and necessarily negotiate their lives—across cultures and tongues. If only our classrooms could be as robust and healthy and natural. (Okawa 128)

Given the rest of her text, I understand where she is coming from, yet there is also the valuation of consumable difference to contend with. Chinatowns are tourist destinations across the U.S. where one can go shopping and grab a bite to eat, exotic and entertaining locales, sights to see. It is difficult to determine the "right" and "wrong"

approaches to Chinatowns and perhaps drawing lines is not so productive, yet interrogating one's own motivations and the possibilities of motivations for, in this example, contacting and consuming, and, more broadly, representing oneself with, the Other—even when that Other is in some ways part of yourself—is a worthy task, both in the writing classroom and more broadly.

Furthermore, in the case of Hawai'i club members, their location outside Hawai'i affords them the privilege of being able to speak for the islands, reinforcing dominant constructions of "Local" culture and identity within the islands that benefit members of Asian heritage. This in turn supports continental audiences' existing view of Hawai'i as only a tourist destination as club members emphasize those entertaining and consumable aspects of Hawai'i. Hawai'i makes club members "special," "exotic," and "different," but their time on the continent plays a strong role in making them "American," leading them to traditionally-defined success. This encourages continental audiences to see club members as the exception rather than the rule, those "Locals" who are also "American" and might be seen as equals, in contrast to those in Hawai'i who are only "special," "exotic," and "different," but not equal "Americans." Thus, in scholarship in Asian American rhetoric as well as language diversity, we ought not to automatically celebrate the reclamation of devalued languages and practices, but also to consider, in Mao's words, the "asymmetries of power" that may enable this reclamation (57).

Attention to Context

In addition, while scholarship in Asian American rhetoric emphasizes the significance of context, my study provides greater understanding as to how particular contexts

influence Asian American rhetorical practices. That is, how the Hawai'i context—in which (1) individuals of Asian ancestry make up the largest segment of the population, (2) individuals of Chinese and Japanese ancestry hold socioeconomic and political power, and (3) "Local" identity is most valued—influences club members' identity construction, in part, discouraging their use of Asian American and person of color identity markers. In light of this, my project builds on Mao and Young's emphasis on context and provides one example of the affordances of examining Asian American rhetoric in specific situations.

Hawai'i club websites also show how the continental college context impacts club members' ability to draw on resources gained in Hawai'i—specifically Hawaiian and "Local" languages and cultures. That is, it is because club members are on the continent that they are able to be the authorities on Hawai'i. Their relocation also changes their perception of Hawai'i, providing many participants a renewed appreciation for the islands. As a result, club websites tell us about the influence of changes in context too. Thus, this project also points to the importance of examining shifts in context, as Mao and Young say, of "tak[ing] into account [...] where we are and where we have been" (15).

Implications for Pedagogy

Within these contexts, which we might term "home" and "school" as they relate to Hawai'i club members, there is also value to considerations of home perceptions of the school context and school perceptions of the home context. That is, significant forces in representations of identity on club websites include continental perceptions of Hawai'i and Hawai'i perceptions of the continent. While these views are in some sense already

included if we focus our attention on home and school contexts, Hawai'i club websites show the significance specifically of these to clubs' and club members' identity constructions within those contexts. This points to ways we might encourage students of all backgrounds to consider how they construct their identities in relation to home and school contexts. Asking students to consider, for example, how their attendance at a specific institution is perceived in their home context—whether family, neighborhood, or state, seems valuable for helping students reflect on the shift from home to school and to be more conscious of how this influences their identity constructions. For Hawai'i club members, for example, perceptions of Hawai'i's inferiority and the continent's superiority are likely to be uncovered so that they can then consciously grapple with this. In what ways is the continent superior or inferior? How does attending school on the continent change who they are and how they want to represent themselves?

We often think about learning from past experiences; in the context of the classroom, for example, we consider how to help students bring their prior knowledge to bear on the current learning situation. The representations of identity on Hawai'i club websites however, show how the continental college context (and perhaps other college contexts as well) can also provide students with opportunities to exploit their prior knowledge, though it can of course provide other kinds of opportunities as well. Students may, for example, have the chance to be the sole spokesperson for their community, which can provide a valuable sense of authority; considering who in a community is usually most mobile, however, that is, able to leave the community and attend college, as teachers, we might also consider other complexities within students'

relationships to (what we perceive as) their home communities. In a classroom context, this might mean encouraging students to think about varied influences on their representation of their home community and who in their community might represent it differently. Ultimately, in order to best support both our students and their communities, while we, on one hand, encourage them to draw on diverse language and cultural resources, on the other, we must also consider the privileges that enable them to "reclaim" these and other devalued images or practices. That is, how might students' location in school contexts inflect their reclamation of various identities? Furthermore, how will this reclamation impact their identity in and relationship with both their home and school communities?

Ultimately I want students to look at the meeting of cultures and consider the powers at play. This might encourage them to take pride in their culture or it might urge them to see value in others' cultures or to think more carefully about what is "theirs." Drawing inspiration from Okawa, who asks students to research their family language history in order to examine the connection between language and social conditions, I might ask students to reflect on how they learned a language. This could be any language—perhaps English, whether that is their first language or not; a language like Spanish, French, Japanese, or Hawaiian studied in school; Pidgin; HHNL; or AAL. Part of the project would ask students to consider whether they use this language and their reasons for using it (or not). My goal would be for students to reflect on the language(s) they choose (or choose not) to use alongside the way they learned it and to consider connections between the two. What is the value of this language in their life? What is the value of this language in different contexts? How did they learn to value (or

devalue) this language? Students would then be asked to share their stories with each other so that they could gain a sense of how their stories fit with those of their peers.

Most interesting, for example, might be different students' stories of learning the same language in different contexts—learning English as a first or second language, for example. I imagine that a project like this would be especially productive in Hawai'i or other contexts where students bring a wide variety of language backgrounds with them. In contrast to Okawa's project, which might be more valuable in contexts where a more extended history would provide greater access to diverse language stories, my proposed project encourages greater focus on students' own responsibilities and choices.

Okawa's assignment is specifically designed for the Youngstown, Ohio context in which she teaches. In Youngstown, she says, one of the key issues is the virtual segregation between African American and white students (Okawa 114). University students are primarily European American and many of them, after "attend[ing] all-white suburban high schools, [...] encounter blacks for the first time in the classroom and on campus" (Linkon and Mullen, quoted in Okawa 114). African American Language seems to be the primary devalued language in this context—or at least the one Okawa is most concerned with as she mentions one student who refers to feeling ashamed of speaking AAL. Given her pedagogical context, Okawa's assignment seems particularly geared toward turning white students' attention to their family's past, in order to see that their families had their own languages, which may have been devalued as AAL is. At the end of the term, Okawa says, students describe themselves as having formerly been too "judgmental [...] toward others who don't speak as they do" (111). I like Okawa's assignment, in which students are asked to research their families'

language histories. I can see it being valuable in a Hawai'i context too, as many of us forget our own families' histories and struggles. Yet I don't know that we have to go into the past to see the interplay of language and power in students' lives. Within even the lifetime of an 18-year-old, they have learned—or had an opportunity to learn, or had long-term contact with—at least two or three languages.

The distance of history is sometimes valuable. Students may, for example, have an easier time reporting on what their parents, grandparents, or other ancestors did than their own actions. One of my concerns with the historical focus of Okawa's assignment, however—and this is especially relevant to the Hawai'i context—is with the danger of nostalgia. As Trask says, too much of "Local" history uses plantation hardship to justify Asian American political dominance ("Settlers" 4). Okamura similarly describes a book that celebrates Japanese American history in Hawai'i, highlighting plantation roots and "downplaying their middle-class status" (*Ethnicity* 134). The Japanese Cultural Center in Hawai'i, he says, similarly privileges "Local" over Japanese identity in order to direct attention away from Japanese privilege (Okamura, *Ethnicity* 134). Okawa's assignment likewise calls attention to the past struggles of students' families. While she intends this to encourage empathy for language diversity, Trask and Okamura show how this sort of reflection on past struggles can be—and in Hawai'i is—used to justify current ethnic hierarchies. As Matsuda says, despite past struggles, "Now other groups are at the bottom, and we [Japanese in Hawai'i] sometimes think we are better than they" (186-87). My concern is that students will see the loss of a heritage language as a necessary step for assimilation or "success"—one that other ethnic groups should hurry and get on with. In Hawai'i in particular, I think, this narrative is too familiar to

students. In reflecting on the languages they have been exposed to within their lives, my goal is for students to see these languages as all somewhat current—rather than as something from the past that had to be let go in order for their families to have come to where they are today. In addition, as stories of their own lives, their relationships to these languages are more easily seen as still negotiable. These languages are not only part of an old story. They are not only part of my ancestors' immigration story, but they are part of my story.

In a subsequent assignment, I would ask students to analyze a text that used at least two languages, considering the function of the different languages, and developing an argument on when the author uses each. Students would be encouraged to look to social networking profiles as accessible texts of a manageable length that represent a variety of views of "regular folks." In order to support students' analysis of the use of different languages, some background on language policies and relationships between languages will be provided. In a Hawai'i context, information on Pidgin, for example, on its formation, devaluation, and reclamation, might be most useful. Students will need to understand, to some degree, both languages used in their selected text so a social networking profile that uses Pidgin and English might be a good choice for many students. Thus, class readings that provide background on Pidgin will support many students' work directly and provide a framework for students considering bilingual texts in other languages as well.

Students might then be asked to research the relationship between languages in a specific context. Enough background will have been provided on Pidgin so that students might further investigate the relationships between Pidgin, standardized English,

Hawaiian, or other languages, during a specific time period. Students might alternately choose to look at English education in the Philippines, Japanese language education in Hawai'i, an aspect of African American Language, or a pidgin or creole in another part of the world. Students would be encouraged to start from their previous assignments in order to develop a focused research question on a topic that builds on these earlier projects.

Even as the term has gone out of style, Hawai'i—and the U.S.—is often described as a melting pot, but I want students to think about how all these peoples and cultures come/came together. Looking at the language(s) they use and the ways they visually represent themselves is one way to do this. We often aim to represent who we are through symbols—through objects listed in social networking profiles, through the clothing we wear, through the favorite bands and television programs we profess. I want students to think about how this might not be completely innocent—that we might not be completely free to consume other cultures. As Fujikane has said, "There are political responsibilities to claiming any identity" (qtd. in Young 93). I want students to think about these responsibilities, whether they are related to the "Local" identity Fujikane specifically speaks on or another identity entirely.

Directions for Future Research

In considering references to racialized cultures on club websites, as Mao and Young encourage, I have begun examining the entanglements and appropriations of Asian American rhetoric. I have also turned my attention to one context, addressing Mao and Young's emphasis on the situatedness of Asian American rhetoric and highlighting the specific effect of the Hawai'i and Hawai'i club context for the rhetorical practices of

one group of Asian Americans. This project points toward the value of further exploring various contexts and entanglements. Some parts of California, for example, like Hawai'i, have large Asian American populations. How do these contexts similarly or differently inflect Asian American rhetorical practices?

In addition, given some of the problematic ways club members' privileges play out in this study, how do we learn to use our privileges positively? In Louie and Omatsu's account of the Asian American movement, I was surprised to learn of the middle class backgrounds of some of the key players (58, 88, 241). And a few, like Gordon Lee, are even from Hawai'i. Given these similarities between members of the Asian American movement and Hawai'i clubs, how did they come to devote their college years to such different organizations? There are obviously many other factors and perhaps a comparison between these two groups makes little sense. Lauren, however, as previously mentioned, evidences a coming to see Asian American, Latino, and African American interests as intertwined, which many contributors in Louie and Omatsu say was key to their involvement in the Asian American movement. Why does Lauren come to see this connection while other participants appear not to?

This project also raises questions about the influence of the Hawai'i context for the rhetorical practices of members of other ethnic groups. Michelle, for example, who is of Korean ancestry, has a perspective of Hawai'i's ethnic and racial context different than the other participants, who are of Chinese and Japanese ancestry. She feels that in South Bend, Indiana she is less seen through negative stereotypes than she is in Hawai'i. Her experience of Hawai'i likely reflects perceptions of Koreans in Hawai'i as immigrants. Okamura, for example, describes the desire of some Korean Americans in

Hawai'i "to dissociate themselves from the degrading representations of Korean immigrants" (*Ethnicity* 110). Though as previously mentioned I question Michelle's assertion that she is not seen through stereotypes in South Bend, her experience in Hawai'i provides her a perception of the continent different than other participants. This leads me to wonder about members of other Asian ethnicities, for example, Filipinos, who are subject to quite derogatory stereotypes in Hawai'i. Like Michelle, I suspect that they too might prefer the continental context and thus evidence a different relationship to "Local"/"Hawaiian" identity markers. That is, they may find less value in the "Local" narrative of multiculturalism and claim more strongly an "American," Asian American, or person of color identity.

And while this may not be within the purview of Asian American rhetoric, I am curious as well about Native Hawaiian and Caucasian members of Hawai'i clubs. How do the clubs function for members of these groups? What kind of transition do they face in relocating to the continent? The Menlo College club, for example, which has a much higher percentage of Native Hawaiian officers in contrast to other Hawai'i clubs, makes little reference to "Local" culture on its website. Though perhaps not surprising given Trask's description of claims to the "Local" as aimed at usurping Native claims, this indicates another matrix of identity construction.

Considering the value of "Local" and "Hawaiian" culture for distancing club members from dominant constructions of Asian Americans has also led me to ponder the similar value these cultures hold for continental Asian Americans—despite their lack of lived engagement or geographical connection with these cultures. I touched on this in Chapter 3, but there are additional indications of the value of "Local" and

"Hawaiian" culture for continental Asian Americans, for example, in the adoption of the Hawaiian word "hapa." One way to explore this might be through the UCI club or a similar club in which many members—often of Asian or mixed ancestry, are from the continent. What is the function of Hawai'i and Hawai'i clubs for these members? Several continental UCI club members also say they were drawn to the club through their interest in hula, developed through participation in halau in California. These halau might also present a context for considering the appeal of Hawai'i for Asian Americans or mixed race individuals.

In terms of Asian American rhetoric and Asian American studies more broadly I see this kind of project as valuable in conversation with those that focus on Asian American claims to U.S. citizenship. I have demonstrated some of the value of "Local" and "Hawaiian" identity markers for club members relative their claims to "Americanness." Further investigations into the appeal of "Local" and "Hawai'i" identity markers for variously positioned individuals could provide further insight into claims to U.S. citizenship by comparison.

This project has also raised my curiosity regarding relationships between students from Hawai'i who are either continental- or Hawai'i-educated. Hawai'i club websites clearly evidence a negotiation of identity relative Hawai'i and the continent. In some sense, club members can be said to construct themselves as superior to Hawai'i or at least to base their self-representations on perceptions of them as superior. The value of "Local" and Hawaiian culture for club members is likely based on homesickness and a renewed appreciation for "home," but also, as I have said, on their continental educations, which construct them as more "American" than those "back home." This

leads me to wonder about the impact on club members' future relationships with Hawai'i and their peers "back home." On a related note, how do club members negotiate the Hawai'i and continental contexts and the different ways these influence their identity constructions when traveling back and forth during their schooling or at different stages in their lives?

Conclusion

Club members have a variety of resources for constructing their identities, yet they must draw on these carefully, in limited ways, for example, in order to avoid jeopardizing their claim to those identity markers that are most valuable to them. In other words, the club websites and participants show a careful negotiation of identity resources. Paradoxically, it is the various ways club members are privileged that contribute to this challenge.

Hawai'i club websites help us understand how a specific context—Hawai'i—inflects Asian American rhetorical practices. In many ways, the case of Hawai'i clubs supports the primary concerns of Asian American rhetoric as outlined by Mao and Young, such as the concern with citizenship or belonging and the necessary hybridity. Yet given the numerical and socioeconomic demographics of its population of Asian ancestry, Hawai'i provides a context for considering Asian American rhetoric when not a minority discourse. Club members' rhetorical practices can be constructed as part of minority discourse in the continental context to which they have migrated and to some degree have been aware of throughout their lives. Yet the role of individuals of Asian ancestry, particularly those of Chinese and Japanese heritage, in the Hawai'i context provide ways to consider what Asian American rhetoric might be when not a minority

discourse. Focusing on "citizenship," for example, and Asian American rhetoric as a means for claiming a space in the "American narrative," while valuable for considering responses to dominant constructions of Asian Americans, only tells part of the story. Attending to club members' uses of HHNL, Pidgin, Hawaiian, and representations of "Local"/"Hawaiian" culture are crucial for understanding Asian American relationships with those associated with these languages and cultures. Because of the numbers of those of Asian ancestry in Hawai'i along with the dominance of those of Chinese and Japanese ancestry, club members have trouble relating to experiences of racism. This leads them to represent race and ethnicity primarily as entertainment. While one might argue that this is a result of the brand of "Local" multiculturalism in Hawai'i, rather than the Asian majority, I would argue that the Asian majority feeds the discourse of multiculturalism in Hawai'i. That is, the existence of a non-white majority and the socioeconomic and political power of some members of this group supports claims of ethnic equality and the belief that anyone can make it.

My study of Hawai'i clubs also offers a methodological approach to Asian American rhetoric, displaying the value of investigating the available resources of Asian American rhetors and their reasons for drawing from one resource or another. This seems especially appropriate to the attention to entanglements and appropriations that Mao and Young encourage. In addition, this approach need not be used only for Asian American rhetors as we would be hard-pressed to find someone who does not draw from multiple resources in composing a text.

My hope is that this study contributes to the growth of Asian American rhetoric in order to account for and further expand our understanding of the various complexities

of Asian American and other identities. As a relatively small, young field, Asian American rhetoric scholarship will surely expand in many directions. One of the issues that I hope is accounted for is privilege; while the Hawai'i context provides a case in which this privilege cannot be ignored, I want us to attend to other kinds of privileges in other contexts as well. These may be in terms of education and class or they may be more about our interactions with other communities (of color), in which we are both able to build on dominant constructions of the other for our own benefit. I want us to attend to those factors that enable—even encourage—us to use others, even if they are able to use us as well. In this way—that is, if we can account for both privileges and challenges, we can support responsible decisions about the reclamation and appropriation of devalued practices.

APPENDIX A

Background Information on Post-Secondary Institutions Included in this Study

	Location	**Population**	**% white**	**% Asian**	**Sources**
University of California, Irvine	Irvine, CA	24362	28	44	"Glimpse"
Menlo College	Atherton, CA	750	42	7[53]	"About Menlo College," "Demographics"
Northwestern University	Evanston, IL	8262	68	21	"Fast"
University of Notre Dame	South Bend, IN	11733	53	NR[54]	"Profile"
University of Oregon	Eugene, OR	20376	73	6	"About the UO"
University of Pennsylvania	Philadelphia, PA	24107	42	NR	"Facts"
Stanford University	Stanford, CA	14700	46	23	*Stanford*
University of Washington	Seattle, WA	42113	70[55]	22	"University"
Wellesley College	Wellesley, MA	2300	46	25	"Quick Facts," "Wellesley Viewbooks"

Table 1: Background information on post-secondary institutions included in this study

[53] Menlo also reports that 4% of its student body is Pacific Islanders. (Most institutions do not disaggregate this data.)

[54] Not reported.

[55] This number includes Caucasians, international students, and Other.

APPENDIX B: Solicitation Email

Dear Hawai'i club member,
I am currently working toward my PhD in Rhetoric & Writing at Michigan State University and my dissertation focuses on Hawai'i clubs. My interest in Hawai'i clubs stems from my background as I am originally from Hawai'i (Mililani High School 1997) and have spent several years living on the continent.

I am contacting you because I am interested in interviewing club members about their experiences both in Hawai'i and on the continent. Participants in this research may benefit from the chance to reflect on their experiences. The results from this project may also help those at universities and others better understand the various influences on Asian American identity and self-representation, perhaps helping them to better serve future students. If you choose to participate, we will schedule a 1-hour interview to be conducted via online chat (e.g. AOL Instant Messenger).

Please contact me by email if you are interested in participating or have any questions. In addition, I would appreciate it if you could either (1) forward this message to members of your Hawai'i club or (2) provide me with a list of members' email addresses so that I might contact them myself.

Sincerely,
Robyn Tasaka

APPENDIX C

"You Know You're Hawaiian If..." Feature Reproduced from Northwestern University Hawai'i Club Website

:: YOU KNOW YOU'RE HAWAIIAN IF... ::

1. The possibility of a longshoreman strike makes you panic.
2. You don't understand why anyone would buy less than a 20 lb. bag of rice.
3. You would serve Spam as a meat for dinner.
4. You can taste the difference between teriyaki and kal-bi.
5. You know what a plumeria is.
6. You don't wear your shoes in the house.
7. You know why there are alphabets on trees or any posts on graduation day.
8. You know what and when "Lei Day" is.
9. You know what a "stink eye" is and how to give it.
10. You know what nationality girl (more than one) would put tape on her eyelids and why.
11. You can correctly pronounce Kalanianaole, Kalakaua, Aiea, Likelike, karaoke, and Pipeline.
12. You know the items in the Big Breakfast at McDonald's.
13. You know what one "huli huli chicken" is.
14. You can name 3 varieties of mangos.
15. You have (or know someone who has) at least one family member whose name is "junior boy" or "tita".
16. The words, "da kine," are a normal part of your conversation.
17. You know the difference between being "hapa" and being "hapai."
18. You give directions using mauka and makai.
19. You know what "Hawaii Pono'i" is (and you know the words).
20. You know what it takes to get into Kamehameha School.
21. Someone says da word "U KU" and your head starts itching!
22. You raise your chin fo say "wassup" instead of nodding.
23. When making "Shaka", the back of your hand is facing out.
24. You say, "Nori" not seaweed paper.
25. You say "Brah," not "Bro."
26. You despise the movie "North Shore."
27. Your jokes are 'bout Portugese people, not Polish people.
28. You laugh at couples wearing cheesy matching Aloha attire.
29. You get one pair "rubbah slippahs" (not flip flops).
30. You e-mail people in pidgin.
31. You know what (and where) "Morgan's Corner" is (and it still scares you!)
32. 70 degrees is "freezing!"
32. You use "tako" instead of worms or fluorescent pink fish eggs for bait.
32. You got lickins' with "da rubbah slippah" when you was small kidtime.
33. You can walk through Waianae and no get mobbed.
34. You know that "Kukui nut" is not one mental person.

35. You give Kahi Mohala's numba out to one guy/girl you no like.
36. You call it "saimin" not "Top Ramen" (Sapporo Ichiban mo bettah.
37. The surf report is on your speed dial and you always get one tide calendar on your wall.
38. Your local kids wear slippas and shorts in November in Chicago (inside da house, of course).
39. "Dressing up" means shorts and one Aloha shirt.
40. You call it "shave ice", not snow cone or shaved ice.
41. Rainbow Drive-Inn is a special date.
42. You go Kam, not Aloha, swap meet.
43. You know pineapples no grow in trees.
44. You know what Li Hing Mui is and you put it on everything (or put RED Li Hing Mui in da TEQUILA!!! YAAAAAHOOO!!).
45. You ask for shoyu and not soy sauce.
46. You call public transportation "Uncle Frank's limosine" or "da BUS" (and that's the official name too!)
47. You need one relative to get one state job.
48. Da Governor is your cousin (or your mother's brother's father's sister's uncle's son).
49. You know what da H3 is, but you scared drive on it cause stay haunted.
50. You search your car for pork before you go over da Pali.
51. You go to Neiman Marcus "jus fo look." (AKA - Needless Markups)
52. You can name da cast of Hawaii 5-O.
53. Da mainland people no can understand when you talk.
54. You ask for "fruit punch" at McDonald's in da mainland. (wat? nomo!).
55. You eat spam musubi on a regular basis.
56. You wear slippahs almost everywhere.
57. You can be wearing boros and nobody tinks nothin'.
58. You like ume, daikon, and kim chee betta than pickles.
59. When you gotta go bathroom, you say "I going shi shi."
60. When you try explain the location of something to your friend, you use landmarks instead of street names.
61. You go Kam Bowl to eat "OX TAIL SOUP"
62. You tink BAYWATCH HAWAII is stupid, cause they dunno how fo ack!
63. You know da difference between sushi and sashimi.
64. You know your hemajang pickup truck going pass da safety inspection cause you know da auntie of da cousin of da uncle of the uddah cousin of da uncle who's your "auntie" (he one mahu) and deyget one bruddah-in-law who work fo da service station.
65. You get one "beach car."
66. You go tell all da "locals" you fo saw dis site!

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