FROM CELLOPHANE TO KAPA:
PERSPECTIVES ON HULA IN THE DIASPORA

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For my mom.
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ABSTRACT

Having studied hula in Western Canada and in Hawai‘i, I have observed many differences in the way that hula is perceived in the land where it originated and in the diaspora. For instance, although the grass skirt was not part of the original hula attire used by Hawaiians before Euro-American contact, the grass skirt clad hula dancer is commonly viewed as a major representation of hula outside of Hawai‘i. Through archival research, practice as research studies, fieldwork in the southern region of Western Canada and the American Pacific Northwest, and ultimately through a historical and postmodern framework, different ideas are presented in this thesis on why certain perspectives about hula might exist in the diaspora and about the role costume has played in disseminating this image of the dance. This topic fits into the greater question of stereotypes, globalization in dance, and to a situated perspective of cultural identity.

(150 words)
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Having studied and performed the hula first in the southern region of Western Canada and then in Hawai‘i, I have observed many critical differences in the way that it is perceived in the land where it originated and in the diaspora. For instance, I have observed that the use of the grass and cellophane skirt in hapa haole hula imagery holds quite a bit of significance in non-Hawaiian perspectives on hula outside of Hawai‘i. The term hapa haole can be broken down and translated into ‘hapa’ meaning half or part, and ‘haole’ meaning foreign. As such it is used to indicate that someone or something is ‘half foreign’ with his, her, or its other half being of Hawaiian origin. The term ‘haole’ is also oftentimes understood as alluding specifically to the Caucasian background. During the Territorial Era of Hawai‘i (1898-1959) a style of music incorporating Hawaiian sounds and themes, but mainly sung in English, was developed and popularized. ‘Hapa haole’ is the label given to this style of music, and as such, the dance that is performed to this type of song is called hapa haole hula. As a sub-genre of hula ‘auana’, hapa haole hula movements are performed in a way corresponding to the modern dance style, as opposed to hula kahiko, and hence they include the steps introduced into the hula movement vocabulary during the reign of King David Kalākaua (1874-1891). However, the distinctiveness of hapa haole hula lies in how it reflects the musical style and visual aesthetic of the Territorial Era from which it began, and of which one feature was an increased implementation of the grass skirt and its derivatives such as the cellophane skirt. The grass skirt, however, was not part of the

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1 Hula ‘auana: Modern hula. The term ‘‘auana’ itself means to drift or wander.
2 Hula kahiko: Ancient hula
original hula attire used by Hawaiians before Euro-American contact. Yet, the image of the grass skirt clad hula dancer is commonly viewed as a defining emblem of hula and Hawaiian culture from what I have observed in my initial hula experiences in Western Canada. When I became aware of the non-Hawaiian origins of the grass skirt, I questioned why it is that for many people in this geographic region (and perhaps beyond) it plays such a key role in Hawaiian imagery?

Intrigued and inspired by my experience of coming to know hula as one thing, and imagining it to look a certain way, and subsequently learning that it is vastly different and more complex than I had originally realized, this thesis focuses on perceptions of hula in the southern region of Western Canada and in the American Pacific Northwest. Through archival research, practice as research studies, and fieldwork in Hawaiʻi, Portland, Washington, and British Columbia, Canada, a discussion of the implications of the grass skirt taking the forefront in Hawaiian iconography is the focus of this paper, broaching ideas such as the negation of more traditional forms of hula and the confusion, or perhaps even the conflation of different Pacific island nations. Moreover, in order to understand the complexities of relations and events that led to certain projected perspectives about hula and Hawaiʻi, the crucial developments tied to its Territorial Era will be considered.

This paper is constructed with seven chapters. In chapter one, I give an overview of my personal journey and recount several key events in my dance experience that have led me to the questions that inspire this thesis. Chapter two focuses on the texts I have read that have informed this narrative. I list and briefly describe some of the valuable scholarly works concerned with relevant topics to this thesis that provide a springboard from which I may present my own ideas.
I detail my methodology in chapter three describing the non-archival research elements of my study. I provide the specifics of my fieldwork project conducted in the southern region of Western Canada and the American Pacific Northwest, as well as of my practice as research experiences. A historical approach is taken in chapter four to illustrate the evolution of lower body attire worn by female hula dancers. The purpose of this account is to trace the introduction and development of grass and cellophane skirts into Hawaiian culture. Chapter five discloses the results of my fieldwork, including survey results taken at Polynesian dance events in my area of investigation, observations taken from watching hula in Canada and the Continental United States juxtaposed with my experiences of watching hula in Hawai‘i, and the varying views and backgrounds of a kumu hula3 in Hawai‘i and of hula teachers on the Mainland. Finally, I present my critical analysis in chapter six, using postmodern thinking as a base on which to present my own reflections on dance. I refer to the work of Jean Baudrillard on simulations and simulacra, which in simple terms, are imitations or copies that no longer link back, or have any reference, to the original item they are copying. Moreover, according to Baudrillard’s concept of simulacra, a true simulacrum masks the existence of its original, substituting signs of the real for the real—becoming in itself what is ‘true’—and as such is the initial perceived and sole considered iteration in a process called the ‘precession of simulacra.’ In this chapter, I also present certain key events during the Territorial Era of Hawai‘i that may have contributed to the dissemination

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3 Kumu hula: The term ‘kumu’ means teacher and as such, a kumu hula is a hula teacher. Traditionally in order to receive this designation a dancer will have had to graduate from an ‘ūniki (see description below) ritual.

‘Ūniki: Graduation rites that culminate after extensive training in Hawaiian cultural practices, including but not limited to: the making of hula instruments; closely studying myths, chants, and songs as to understand complex poetry and multiple layers of meaning; and rigorous dance education, should the intent of the ‘ūniki be the role of kumu hula.
of the image of the hapa haole grass clad hula dancer, and inquire whether there exists a situation in which a simulacrum of hula exists within certain populations due to a situated cultural knowledge of Hawai‘i. It is my hope that through the progression of these chapters, I am able to present a range of viewpoints regarding the role of grass and cellophane skirt symbolism in Hawaiian culture. It is not my intention to speak on any perceptions that may be held by people in Hawai‘i or especially the kānaka maoli on what hula should look like according to them. Rather, I humbly enter this dialogue as a dance practitioner from Canada and a hālau student in Hawai‘i. Furthermore, I seek not to make judgments about representations but rather to think through issues of costume in hula that have puzzled me for some time.

Personal Narrative

1991 marked the year I stepped into a dance studio for the first time. My parents had put me in ballet lessons at the recommendation of my podiatrist as a treatment for being born with club feet. For the next eight years, I would spend afternoons and weekends at the Goh Ballet Academy in Vancouver, Canada, loving every aspect of a young dancer’s life, from learning and rehearsing movement and choreography, trying on new ballet shoes as my feet grew, picking out new leotards and other dance-wear, getting fitted for costumes, and so forth. As my last year of elementary school drew to an end, my parents had made a decision that I completely disagreed with: due to their impression that a Filipino girl could not be a successful ballet dancer because of the colour of her skin despite hard work, skill, or talent, my parents decided to end my ballet

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4 Kānaka maoli: native Hawaiian people

5 Hālau: A term used to refer both to the building, or house, where hula is learned, but also to refer to the hula school itself, meaning the collective group of kumu hula and his or her students.
training so that I could focus on my piano lessons which they felt would be more ‘practical.’ This was the first time that I was unknowingly faced with the question of possible discrimination in dance and the issue of ethnicity and appearance and its potential role in the dance world.

Years would go by before I found myself back in a dance studio. By chance, I took a free demonstration class by Paul Tavai-Latta introducing the basics of Polynesian dance. There was something enthralling about the movement vocabulary, the different styles, and the way that he described the history of the dances and the different cultures and time periods involved. In the summer of 2010, almost two decades from when I took my first ballet class, I was again a beginner dance student, albeit in a new style.

Since that time, I fell in love with Polynesian culture and attempted to learn as much about the dances as I could. During this period I studied and performed with Lilia’s Polynesian Dance Company in Victoria, British Columbia, under the direction of Lilia Peterson, as well as with Paul Tavai-Latta’s Dancers & Co. (for one and two years, respectively). Also at this time, my curiosity would take me to the internet in order to watch as many Polynesian dance videos online as possible. I noticed however, on YouTube especially, that there were many videos that received negative comments such as “what you are doing is not hula,” “that is not real hula,” and so forth, in reference to what I now recognize as either poorly executed, or attempted hula—assumedly due to lack of proper training—or Tahitian dancing. As I learned about the differences between various Polynesian dance styles, I was shocked to see how much confusing material existed regarding the display of these dances on the internet.

As I was increasing my knowledge and dance experience in Polynesian styles, I was
concurrently at a point in my life when I needed to decide on a career or academic plan. In
November 2010, I had just obtained a Master of Arts degree in French Literature from the
University of British Columbia, and I was doubting whether I should continue in the field of
language arts at the doctorate level. Upon discovering that the University of Hawai‘i offered a
degree in Dance Ethnology, currently called Culture and Performance Studies, I found a way to
combine my academic research training with my enjoyment of dance all while being surrounded
by Polynesian culture. Subsequent to moving to O‘ahu, I was accepted as part of the Ring of Fire
Island Productions dance group and performed twice nightly multiple times a week at the
Makino Chaya - Makittii restaurant in Waikīkī, and I was also welcomed into nā kumu hula
Vicky Holt Takamine and Jeffrey Takamine’s hālau, Pua Aliʻi ʻIlīma. I am beyond grateful for all
of these experiences as they have not only provided me with immense amounts of personal
fulfillment and enjoyment, but have also been for me spaces of lifelong learning and growth,
introspection, and in some cases, financial opportunity.

Participation in these multiple capacities has also caused me to ponder certain aspects of
dance in relation to culture, which in turn has informed my academic endeavours. In particular,
the intricacies connecting the notions of perception, image, and dance have for some time now
been of interest to me. Working as a Polynesian dancer in Waikīkī, I would question how
important the ideas of appearance, ethnicity, and costume might be to dance. For instance, being
of full Filipino descent, I have often been mistakenly identified as Hawaiian, especially when I
am dressed to perform. The same situation would present itself as a Polynesian dancer in Canada,
where many audience members have assumed that I am Hawaiian, or at the very least that I grew
up on one of the Hawaiian Islands. To many of the non-Hawaiian people for whom I performed, I was a genuine, or ‘real Hawaiian’ hula dancer due to the colour of my skin, the length of my hair, and the costumes that I wore.

As costumes seemed to reinforce the perception of ‘Hawaiianess,’ I also wondered if existing notions of hula were linked to what a hula dancer wore. I was given the impression that especially in Canada and for tourists visiting Waikīkī, the costume that was most closely associated to hula (whether rightfully so or not, as I will later discuss through a series of interviews and surveys) consists of a grass skirt—generally made of raffia, moré/hau, shredded/striped ti leaves and, to some, full ti leaves, or similar looking natural or synthetic material—and flower lei. However, after learning that the grass skirt was not originally part of Hawaiian dance attire, I wondered why in Western Canada it is so closely tied to the image of hula. This paper discusses how varying perspectives surrounding the grass skirt fit into the greater question of stereotypes and the representation of a culture. Analysis of the role of the grass skirt (and it’s adaptations such as the cellophane skirt) in the depiction of hula and Hawaiian culture elucidates issues related to globalization of dance and to a situated perspective of a cultural identity. It explores ideas around why certain perspectives about hula might exist in the diaspora.

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6 Moré: Tahitian word referring to the material used in costuming made of strips of bark from the hibiscus tree.

7 Hau: Hawaiian word referring to the hibiscus tree and also to the costuming material procured from it.

8 Skirts made of ti leaves, or lāʻī, are generally not considered to be ‘grass skirts’ by modern Hawaiians. Rather, the lāʻī skirt is an adaptation of the Gilbert Islands grass skirt that was imported to Hawaiʻi, and this new skirt form created by Hawaiians is rarely seen used in dance styles by other Polynesian peoples. Lāʻī skirts are used in hula in addition to the older—or earlier—used pāʻū skirt, and is utilized in all forms of the dance including hula kahiko and during ‘uniki rituals.

Lāʻī: Hawaiian word for ti leaves (comes from the also used lau kī or lau tī, where ‘lau’ translates to leaf).
In this study, I include an analysis of the findings of the theorist Jean Baudrillard because I also attempt to bridge my background in literary theory to my understanding of dance. In the first semester of my first year as a Master's student while working on my French degree, I was completed daunted by my literary theory course. I felt completely overwhelmed, completely defeated, by the content of this class’s syllabus. I felt that my Bachelor of Arts degree had insufficiently prepared me for this type of thought and this type of learning. I was in a class of brilliant students, at different stages of life, and at different stages of their pursuit of Master’s or Doctorate degrees. I was small, quiet, confused. I was uncertain that I belonged there.

A focus on Jean Baudrillard and his work on postmodernism changed this. I had been grasping a few ideas throughout the semester, absorbing flicks of thought belonging to various theories that we had been discussing. Postmodernism meant nothing to me. Simulacrum was a word that had not belonged to my vocabulary. When the time came to choose or topics for our term papers, an unknown decisiveness took me over. I knew there was no other way: I would study simulacra and Baudrillard's work until I was comfortable with it: until it was no longer some mystery that added cloudiness and confusion to my state of being, but rather my ‘friend.’

In my new degree path in dance, I continue to expand my thinking about Jean Baudrillard in the context of movement. The more I read his work, the more I understand. The more time I spend thinking about it, the more I see its relevance to so many things. Now, I oftentimes see my thoughts in line with Baudrillard--his theories inspiring my own. Am I a postmodernist thinker? Maybe, maybe not. Yet, I cannot deny how strongly his ideas have influenced the way I comprehend certain phenomena, and in particular, the way I perceive society, history, and current
global trends. It is with this gut reaction to having read Baudrillard and juxtaposing his ideas
with my own, that I attempt to connect the postmodern school of thought to my current academic
explorations. This is in part why I attempt to explain the evolution of hula and the perspectives
that exist about it in the diaspora through the lens of my reflections on simulacrum.

I am a firm believer that in order to do any type of research, it is important to take into
consideration discussions that are already in progress about your chosen topic. Especially with a
topic such as hula, which I personally hold close to my heart, it was crucial to undertake various
modes of learning in order to create a firm foundational understanding on which to base my own
reflections. As a result, mediums such as historical and current written work, print media, live
performance, and observational and reflective research have all played a role in my
understanding of the dialogues that exist concerning hula today. By incorporating a range of
methods of knowing, I hope to be able to present certain concepts on the history and current role
of the grass skirt in the perspectives of non-Hawaiians living in Mainland North America with a
voice that demonstrates both cultural understanding and respect.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE, MEDIA, AND DANCE REVIEW

Beginning with literary historical and archival research, I scour the wealth of information available on the hula written by Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians alike. I key in on topics that I feel are best suited for my inquiry on grass and cellophane skirts and their role in the perspectives that exist on hula in the diaspora. The main areas of interest are on the history of Hawai‘i and hula, the globalization of dance, dance costuming, and iconography in print media and film.

Through my research I have identified Hawaii’s Territorial Era (1898-1959) as particularly relevant to my study. Thus, material discussing this timeframe is especially considered. During this period, American efforts were in progress with the aim of bringing Hawai‘i to statehood. Other crucial, and often simultaneous, developments that would influence global awareness of the Hawaiian Islands and its people were: the rise of tourism and marketing of the Hawai‘i, for instance Matson’s purchase of passenger steamships and the opening of Waikīkī’s first hotel in 1901; the development of photography and postcards which would play a crucial role in the tourist propaganda of Hawai‘i and help shape a foreign perception of the Hawaiian people through visual representation; the advancement of radio technology, which would impact the creation and popularization of the hapa haole style; and the golden age of Hollywood—which is generally identified as the 1920s to early 1960s—another new form of media technology that would join and disseminate images, and eventually, sounds of island imagery. The concurrency of key events in this series of developments no doubt points to a complexity of occurrences that have led to the creation of perspectives on hula such as the grass
or cellophane skirt clad hula dancer being an authentic or sole representation of indigenous Hawaiian dance. There are many sources that analyze specific tools used to approach the topic of the cultural representation of Hawai‘i as a result of colonisation and other circumstances occurring in concert with each other. My approach will be similar in that I will focus on one piece of imagery (the grass skirt, including its variations and derivatives) and use it as a jumping off point from which to evaluate greater issues. For instance, Christin J. Mamiya contemplates how Hawai‘i is portrayed in postcards in the article “Greetings from Paradise: The Representation of Hawaiian Culture in Postcards.” She discusses “both the imagery and function of postcards” as well as how commodification may occur on “entire cultures” and not just physical locations (Mamiya 86). She also focuses on tourism and how this capitalistic effort must establish a culture as “the Other” through ways of exoticism (Mamiya 87), and provides examples of this through postcards that provide misleading images of objectified women in minimal clothing and in seductive poses. (Mamiya 92-93). Her insights on the implications of “[w]hen control over the mechanisms that determine the representation and understanding of a culture (ancient or contemporary) is maintained by an outside group” (Mamiya 87) run throughout the article.

Similarly, Janet L. Borgerson and Jonathan E. Schroeder discuss topics relating to the representation of Hawai‘i, however using liner notes and records (“Packaging Paradise: Consuming Hawaiian Music” and “The Ethics of Representation—Packaging Paradise: Consuming the 50th State”). Stressing the importance of music as a marketing strategy, Schroeder and Borgerson also focus on “the representation of Hawai‘i as feminine, exotic and
primitive” (Borgerson and Schroeder, "Consuming the 50th State" 46) as a result of colonial discourses. Quite importantly, they also discuss how representation creates knowledge (Borgerson and Schroeder, "Consuming the 50th State" 48), which may be a key element for understanding why the grass and cellophane skirts are so important to perspectives of hula in the diaspora.

Kaori O’Conner describes the grass shack as “one of the most recognizable icons in the word” albeit “an example of inauthentic ‘tourist kitsch’” in the article “Kitsch, Tourist Art and the Little Grass Shack in Hawai‘i” (O’Connor 252). However, this is not to be interpreted in a negative light as the author ultimately explains that the grass shack may hold a different significance to varying societal groups at particular times. O’Connor elucidates the evolution of this form of Hawaiian dwelling place highlighting the changes in form and meaning that it takes on due to the evolving societal landscape of Hawai‘i. This is thus another example of focusing on a singular piece of iconography to discuss topics such as colonialism, globalization, and cultural representation.

Finally, in “The Army Learns to Luau: Imperial Hospitality and Military Photography in Hawai‘i,” Adria L. Imada examines the image of the lū‘au⁹ and its importance in touristic culture. She particularly focuses on its development within a “‘mili-touristic’ economy” (Imada, “Army” 330), but as in the previously mentioned source, Imada touches on a “commodified element of Hawaiian life” (Imada, “Army” 331). My thesis is similar in approach to these articles in that it focuses on a specific piece of imagery: the grass skirt, and how it was used in colonialist and touristic projects to promote a certain image of Hawai‘i.

⁹ Lū‘au: Hawaiian feast or party
For a broad overview of the impact of colonialism and tourism on Hawai‘i, I turn to sources such as Paradise Remade: The Politics of Culture and History in Hawai‘i by Elizabeth Buck. In this book, the changes that occurred as a result of the arrival of ‘Western Culture’ to Hawai‘i are discussed. This includes transformations in social structure, economy, and traditions such as chant and hula. Through her examples, Buck exhibits clearly how the Hawaiian way of life was affected by Euro-American contact.

In a similar fashion, but specifically focusing on hula, articles by Adrienne L. Kaeppler such as “Acculturation in Hawaiian Dance” and “Recycling Tradition: A Hawaiian Case Study” and Adria L. Imada’s “Translational Hula as Colonial Culture,” have discussed the effects of Euro-American arrival to Hawai‘i on hula. In “Acculturation in Hawaiian Dance”, Kaeppler reviews how hula has been affected by ‘Western influence.’ She describes several important elements of the traditional dance and changes that occurred following King David Kalākaua’s revival of the hula after it had been banned. Kaeppler cites such things as the loss of “religious restrictions” as well as changes in costuming and music (41). Keeping in mind the evolution of many different aspects of hula, and using as an example a mele inoa\textsuperscript{10}, or a chant in honour of Queen Emma, Kaeppler describes the development of an acculturated hula style that differs greatly from the hula of the past. In her other article “Recycling Tradition: A Hawaiian Case Study,” Kaeppler reflects on “dance as a historical discourse about change, focusing on changes or transformations that might be called recycling, and especially recycling traditional dance into modernity in the global world.” (293). She details the stages of recycling that occurred to “a

\footnote{Mele inoa: Name chant. The term ‘mele’ translates to song, chant, or poem, ‘inoa’ means name. Therefore a mele inoa is a chant or song written to honour a person of importance, such as ancient chiefs, or in modern days, royalty.}
[Hawaiian] ritual movement tradition” to become the “elevated hula genre” that is now seen in hula festivals (300). Furthermore, Kaeppler links this discussion of the presently seen hula in festivals and competition to the idea of ethnic identity. On her part, Adria L. Imada discusses hula as a part of colonial culture. She particularly traces Kini Kapahu’s (also known as Jennie Wilson) travels, performing hula both in Hawai‘i and on the Mainland in the late 19th century. Discussing topics such as colonialism, gendered and sexualized performance, and racialised entertainment, Imada provides this thesis with a very valuable study on how hula, as a construct of a colonial situation, came to be known on the Mainland.

More general sources on the history of the hula are The Hula: A Revised Edition by Jerry Hopkins and Rebecca Kamili‘ia Erikson and edited by Amy Stillman, Hula: Historical Perspectives by Dorothy B. Barrère, Mary Kawena Pukui and Marion Kelly, and Unwritten Literature of Hawai‘i: The Sacred Songs of the Hula by Nathaniel Bright Emerson. These sources are especially useful for compiling information about the societal role of hula and how it appeared at the time of, and supposedly prior to, Euro-American contact. This is needed in order to contrast the new styles of hula that have arisen and that are recognized in the diaspora. In The Hula: A Revised Edition, Hopkins and Erikson provide a comprehensive chronology of hula’s evolution. Authored by Hopkins, who is not a Native Hawaiian, this book is not intended to be “a traditional, heavy footed work of scholarship” (xi). However, because The Hula: A Revised Edition presents its material in such a way that it is easily read and understood by a general public, it is not only of use because it presents a valuable ‘outsider’ perspective of the story of hula, but it is helpful to this study because of its clarity, conciseness, and detailed historical
account that allows the creation of an effective base from which to build greater understanding of more complex sources. *Hula: Historical Perspectives* and especially the articles by Mary Kawena Pukui that appear within this publication are most valuable to this thesis as they contribute a Hawaiian historical perspective and consideration of the hula. Through the selection of what is discussed, as well as the way in which it is written, the text reads as an intimate awareness of the hula and presents the reader with indications of the fundamental elements and ideologies behind the dance. Nathaniel Bright Emerson’s observations in *Unwritten Literature of Hawaii: The Sacred Songs of the Hula* introduces yet another perspective on the history of hula: Emerson was born in Hawai‘i to American missionaries. Published in 1909, his text reflects the voice of a non-Hawaiian historian during the Territorial Era of Hawai‘i. It is an account of the situated knowledge about hula that was revealed to him and that he was able to document. Because my thesis focuses on the perspectives of hula that exist outside of Hawai‘i, I feel that all these texts are important to consider due to the range in their approach to the presentation of the historical aspects of hula.

I have identified two sources that are more specific references to the attire worn by hula dancers historically. *Hawaiian Hula and Body Ornamentation 1778 to 1858* is developed from Caroline Katherine Klarr’s Master’s thesis in which she elaborates on the elements of attire and body decoration of both male and female hula dancers. She discusses the aesthetics of pre-contact hula by evaluating historical documents of the dance. She also explicates the significance of different aspects of body ornamentation to the hula dancer and by extension, to the historical Hawaiian society at large. Christopher B. Balme, too, discusses the costuming of the historic
hula dancer (“Dressing the Hula. Iconography, Performance and Cultural Identity Formation in Late Nineteenth Century Hawai‘i”). However, his article presents a discussion of the hula dancer’s attire in the context of a colonialist effort. He analyses photographs from the mid-1880s to the early 1900s and comments on the effects of the outside world on Hawaiian culture and cultural identity. Balme speaks to a multiplicity of images and functions of hula, and the “complex dynamic of cultural borrowings and redefinitions” that surround the evolution of the dance (253). Both his and Klarr’s historical references and discussion will help me situate the grass and cellophane skirt in both a chronologic context and will help assist in uncovering the functionality and significance of these pieces of costuming.

As I have yet to come across any sources that specifically analyze the grass and cellophane skirt, I have found and will consider studies that examine the overall image of the iconic ‘hula girl.’ In particular, I reference three doctoral dissertations on this hula dancer image: “Kiʻi Pāpālua: Imagery and Colonialism in Hawaiʻi” by Lia O’Neill Moanikeʻala Ah-Lan Keawe, “Images of the hula dancer and ‘hula girl’: 1778-1960” by Aeko Sereno and “Hula ʻŌlapa and the ‘hula girl’: Contemporary Hula Choreographies of the Concert Stage” by Angeline Shaka. All three texts make mention of colonial situations that create a specific image of Hawaiian dancers. They speak of stereotypes and misrepresentation, of patriarchy and primitivism, but also of a growing awareness of the history of the hula girl and the progress that this awareness brings. Angeline Shaka’s work distinguishes itself from the other two particularly due to an interpretation of the stereotypical hula girl alongside the presentation of contemporary hula concerts of selected kumu hula whose “choreographies construct a range of bodily
enactments that respond to the iconic ‘hula girl’ and her colonial history” (xiii). Through these concerts, Shaka demonstrates how the image of the hula girl is presently being deconstructed. Her analysis of these developments as well as her reference to select hālau on the Mainland may be helpful to my study: I may be able to draw important information about the existing symbolism and importance of the hula girl in Mainland perspectives as well as current trends in the transnational nature of dance. In summation, by studying the creation of the hula girl image and the reason for which it was used in print media, film, and other modes of visual representations as described in these dissertations, I extrapolate similar conclusions about the grass and cellophane skirts.

As mentioned above, one of the connotations made to the image of the hula girl was that of Hawaiian primitivism. Jane C. Desmond has made considerable contributions to written scholarship regarding the portrayal of the people of Hawai‘i as ‘native,’ read as primitive—although this was far from the truth—as a result of capitalistic and touristic efforts. Later in my thesis, I hypothesize why the grass and cellophane skirts were selected to be the costuming of choice of the projected fantasy hula girl. I suggest that perhaps the look of the grass skirt, due to the material it was made of suggests a primitivism of sort, which worked to the advantage of the dominant structures who were promoting their devised representation of Hawaiian life. The two articles by Desmond that I will make reference to are “Invoking ‘the Native’ Body Politics in Contemporary Hawaiian Tourist Shows” and “Picturing Hawai‘i: the ‘Ideal’ Native and the Origins of Tourism, 1880-1915.”
As part of the critical analysis of this thesis, my work takes on an interdisciplinary approach of bridging a critical theory focus to dance studies. I explore whether a simulacrum exists in specific perspectives on hula in the southern region of Western Canada and in the American Pacific Northwest. In particular, I cite the work of Jean Baudrillard. In his book *Simulacra and Simulation*, he presents both general ideas as well as specific examples on what he considers to be a simulacrum (in its various stages). Baudrillard posits many technological and societal advancements and specific phenomena as the reasons for which simulacra come to be. It is by applying these phenomena to the history of Hawai‘i and to the evolution of hula that my investigation will take effect.

Finally, in terms of participant observation and practice as research, my dance sources include specific cultural events. As part of my fieldwork I attended 3 Days of Aloha in the Pacific Northwest (“3 Days” henceforth), which took place in Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington. At this hula festival, I was able to take hula dance and lei making workshops during which I made observations about the way Hawaiian traditions are taught on the Mainland. During 3 Days I also attended the hapa haole hula competition and hō‘ike¹¹ the following day, which allowed me to develop my research by surveying audience members about their familiarity with Hawaiian culture and the grass skirt. I also attended two Polynesian dance shows in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada that were part of the Kitsilano Showboat free concert series. Similarly, at these shows I surveyed audience members as well as conducted observational research. These events are essential to my thesis as the fieldwork results drawn from them will provide insights into current perspectives on hula in the diaspora. My dance

¹¹ Hō‘ike: Roughly translates to ‘demonstration’ or ‘exhibition.’
training in Canada and in Hawai‘i will also provide valuable observational and reflective research material. In Canada I studied with Lilia Peterson (Lilia’s Polynesian Dance Company) in Victoria, British Columbia, and with Paul Tavai-Latta (Paul Latta Dancers & Co.) in Vancouver, British Columbia. I took hula classes in the university setting at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa for several semesters from kumu hula Vicky Holt Takamine and for one semester from kumu hula Snowbird Bento. I am also currently a student of nā kumu hula Vicky Holt Takamine and Jeffrey Takamine as part of their hālau Pua Ali‘i ‘Ililma. Furthermore, my experience as a Polynesian performer in Waikīkī with Ring of Fire Island Productions (who performed\textsuperscript{12} at Makino Chaya’s Makittii Restaurant) also add depth to my reflections, and will help explain my positionality and interest in studying the grass skirt’s role in the consideration of Hawaiian culture. The importance of conducting research via methods other than archival written work is advocated by Lynette Hunter (see “Theory/Practice as Research: Explorations, Questions and Suggestions” and “Situated Knowledge”). She puts forth that “engagement” and “knowledge deriving from practice” (“Situated Knowledge” 151) is of great value and can greatly expand and strengthen the scope of what has been considered to be traditional academic, written scholarship. I thus hope to present in my thesis meaningful insights that I have discerned through my own experiences that will complement the vast body of work already carried out on related topics.

\textsuperscript{12} At the time of writing, Ring of Fire Island Productions no longer performs at the Makittii Restaurant, but rather presently at Makino’s Crab House.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to approach this thesis can be divided into archival and historical literary research, fieldwork, and practice as research. The main sources of literary research have already been detailed in the literature review, as have been the dance events where my fieldwork took place, and the situations of which my practice as research was comprised. This chapter will elaborate on the details of my fieldwork as well as my process of documentation in my practice as research.

Fieldwork

The fieldwork conducted for this thesis took place mainly in Oregon and Washington, USA and British Columbia, Canada. In the two states, I attended the 3 Days of Aloha in the Pacific Northwest festival. Ke Kukui Foundation, an organization based in Vancouver, Washington, whose mission is to preserve and share Hawaiian and Polynesian arts and culture, presents this event annually. Held on July 23, 24, and 25 in 2014, the festival included Hawaiian arts and crafts workshops, a hapa haole hula competition, a 5k fun run, a hōʻike during which the participants of the workshops presented what they had learned during the previous days’ classes, and a Hawaiian festival at which Hawaiian wares and food were made available for sale. My immersion experience at 3 Days was three-fold: first, participant-observation in two hula workshops and one lei making workshop; second, taking field notes at the hapa haole hula competition, and third, collecting surveys during the hōʻike and Hawaiian festival.
By enrolling and participating in workshops at this festival, I was able to put myself in a special situation of learning hula by kumu who had flown in from Hawai‘i, namely Robert Cazimero and Manu Boyd\textsuperscript{13}, and who were teaching to students of whom the majority reside on the Mainland. By comparing and contrasting this experience with my hula training with Lilia Peterson and Paul Tavai-Latta in Canada as well as my hālau training on O‘ahu I hoped to gain deeper insights into why certain perspectives on hula exist in the diaspora through reflection on the different ways that Hawaiian culture is presented and taught outside of Hawai‘i.

The 3 Days of Aloha Hapa Haole Hula Competition took place on July 24, 2014. As an audience member, I kept a journal and took field notes particularly paying attention to the type of costuming and musical selections made. I also had the opportunity to talk with one of the competition’s judges, kumu hula Vicky Holt Takamine, to find out what she looks for when adjudicating a hapa haole hula competition as well as some other questions that are pertinent to this thesis. The questions asked are found in an appendix following the main text of this thesis.

Finally, during the hōʻike and Hawaiian festival on July 25, 2014, I surveyed the crowd regarding their perceptions on hula. In gratitude for their participation, I offered agreeing audience members a small chocolate. I expected the crowd of this event to vary in their familiarity with Hawaiian culture, where some of the population either used to live in Hawai‘i, are of Hawaiian descent but have never lived in Hawai‘i, or may have no other connection to the Islands other than a curiosity or appreciation of the traditions and art forms. I conducted a six-question interview trying to identify what initially comes to mind to these participants when thinking of hula. Plus, in order to better analyze these first impressions of hula, I also asked

\textsuperscript{13} Please see Appendix F for kumu hula biographies.
about their familiarity with hula and whether they have ever lived in Hawai‘i or studied this dance form. Questions to this survey may also be found amongst the thesis’ appendices.

The same survey was also implemented at two Polynesian dance shows that I attended in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. These shows were part of the Kitsilano Showboat free concert series. On July 18, 2014 I watched Na Keiki Polynesia - Spirit of the South Seas, under the direction of Marji Wallace. The second group performance I attended was by Susan’s Paradise of Polynesia - Na Leo Kani ‘O Hawaii, who performed on July 14, 2014. I also took field notes at these performances, noting costuming, music selection, and other general observations. I was able to conduct an email interview with Susan Madec, instructor and director of Susan’s Paradise of Polynesia, in order to acquire more understanding of what goes into preparing a hula show for an audience outside of Hawai‘i. Finally, Josie de Baat and Paul Tavai-Latta, directors of each their own Polynesian dance groups in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, Canada, were gracious enough to participate in interviews (by email and in person, respectively) in order to supplement this thesis’ research endeavours.

Practice as Research

Guided by Lynette Hunter’s work on situated knowledge and practice as research, it was essential that I acknowledge and include my own observations and understandings derived from my movement practices and immersion in different cultural and contextual situations. In “Situated Knowledge,” Hunter lists examples of “newly valued areas of knowledge” that are derived “from practice” such as intuition (151) and storytelling (152), and claims that “situated
knowledge systems are not closed” and are in general “intended to respond in sophisticated ways to quite different contexts.” (151). I thus hope that by including my own practice as research understandings in this thesis work, I am able to substantiate with highly relevant insights, any conclusions drawn from historical and archival studies.

My practice as research has taken the form of documentation of my reflections from my experiences as a student of hula both in Canada and in Hawai‘i, as well as a performer in a Polynesian dance show in Waikīkī. I have been studying hula as part of the hālau, Pua Ali‘i ‘Ilima, under the direction of nā kumu hula Vicky Holt Takamine and Jeffrey Takamine. I have also taken hula in the university class setting at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa: I took several semesters of hula from kumu hula Vicky Holt Takamine, as well as studied hula within the context of the Hawaiian Ensemble class for one semester from kumu hula Snowbird Bento. This class was taught in conjunction with Hawaiian musician Aaron Salā. Both classes are offered by the University’s Music Department. I studied and performed Polynesian dance in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada as part of Lilia’s Polynesian Dance Company under the direction of Lilia Peterson, and then in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada as part of Paul Latta Dancers & Co., under the direction of Paul Tavai-Latta. Ring of Fire Island Productions, who staged two nightly Polynesian dance show at Makino Chaya’s Makittii Restaurant in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, and with whom I performed multiple times a week for over a year, has also provided me a wonderful employment and research opportunity. By taking classes in these different settings, and with performance experience both in Western Canada as well as the tourist-dense neighbourhood of Waikīkī, I compare and contrast how my experience of how hula
and Hawaiian culture is taught, as well as how it is received by various types of audiences I encountered, in the land where it originated and in the diaspora. I kept a journal with my observations, reflections, feelings and ‘e ho mai’ moments.

I have implemented all of these approaches to explore why certain strong perceptions on hula exist in the Pacific Northwest of America and in the southern region of Western Canada, and why from what I have observed there, hula may be considered to be as a singular epitomized representation far removed from its original function and first documented appearance. By focusing literary and archival research, field notes, interviews, surveys, and practice and research on how the Territorial Era of Hawai‘i, hapa haole hula, and the grass and cellophane skirt play a key role in the existing perceptions of hula in this specific geographic region, the following chapters touch on important issues such as conventionalized considerations of culture and dance, misleading stereotypes, and confusion regarding different Polynesian dance styles.

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14 E ho mai: “grant me/us…” or “bestow to me…” Its significance is derived from a well known chant written by Edith Kanaka‘ole. The “e ho mai” chant may be considered an appeal to the universe for understanding and enlightenment. Thus, I roughly translate “e ho mai” moments to instances of enlightenment or inspiration.
A basic Google image search of the term ‘hula skirt’ yields a plethora of garments made of fringed raffia type material in a wide variety of colours. Growing up in Canada, I had initially assumed that this is what the traditional costume worn on the lower body of hula dancers consisted of. It was not until my first hula class that I became familiar with the word pā‘ū\textsuperscript{15}. This skirt made of kapa (bark cloth) is in what the earliest documentations of the dance depict female hula dancers, and thus it is considered to be original hula attire in pre-contact Hawai‘i. The kapa was made from the inner bark of either the wauke\textsuperscript{16} or māmaki\textsuperscript{17} tree, and they were decorated with geometric patterns made with watermarks and dyes (Keawe 21-22). Hawaiian Hula and Body Ornamentation 1778 to 1858 is a study by Caroline Katherine Klarr in which she “describes the activities and aesthetics of the hula before Hawaiian society was irrevocably changed by the impact with the outside world.” (Lee ix). According to Klarr, documentation of the pāʻū can be found in the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century reports of Samwell, King, Vancouver, and Bell (44). Klarr writes “The traditional pāʻū was a rectangular shaped cloth of varying widths and lengths, worn by wrapping the upper border around the waist and tucking the end corner in to the waist fold.” (45). Other sources, such as Barrère, Pukui and Kelly, specify that length of the pāʻū would fall from the waist to slightly past the knee (72). Furthermore, an additional layer of cloth,\textfootnote{\textsuperscript{15} Pāʻū: Skirt used for hula dancing. Originally made of kapa (see definition below) and considered to be the attire worn by hula dancers prior to Euro-American contact.} Kapa: Cloth type material made by beating the bark of the mulberry or pipturus tree.\textfootnote{\textsuperscript{16} Wauke: Mulberry tree} Māmaki: Pipturus tree\textfootnote{\textsuperscript{17} Māmaki: Pipturus tree}
or “secondary pāʻū,” may have also been worn (Klarr 45). It is commonly believed that approximately ten yards of kapa would be used to form a pāʻū skirt. Moreover, cordage, or kaula\textsuperscript{18}, would be used to secure the garment around the female’s waist. It is also around this rope that the upper border of the kapa would be folded over and gathered. Nowadays, pāʻū are available in a variety of patterns and colours made with about five yards of fabric or even synthetic materials. Contemporary pāʻū may also have a simple (one) or multiple kaula made of waistband elastic, each layer in its own individual casing. Due to the volume of kapa or fabric gathered around the dancer’s waist, the pāʻū creates a silhouette in which the hip area is somewhat exaggerated. Moreover, because of the large amount of kapa or fabric used, the pāʻū visibly reacts to the hip movements of the dancer.

Klarr’s work is of great value in its detailed explication of the significance and symbolization of the pāʻū in traditional Hawaiian culture. She explains in the study’s introduction that one of her main goals is to “create a greater understanding of the traditional hula by reconstructing the visual images of the historic hula dancer and evaluating these images in their cultural context.” (1). In light of my study on the grass skirt and on perspectives of the hula outside of Hawai‘i, understanding the importance of the pāʻū is vital to identifying any underlying issues of maintaining a singular epitomical consideration of the hula centring around the grass-skirt clad hula girl. As such, it is important to acknowledge the sacredness that was attributed to the pāʻū in its earliest uses (Emerson, Pukui, Zuttermeister and Barrère cited by Klarr 45-46). The pāʻū was not simply a meaningless piece of the hula dancer’s costume. Rather,

\textsuperscript{18} Kaula: Generally translates as rope, but in regard to a pāʻū skirt it refers to the waistband which was originally made of natural fibres forming cordage, but nowadays is also made of elastic.
it “was the single most important piece of costume.” (Emerson cited by Klarr 45). The pāʻū was significant in many ways. First, it was a representation and signifier of a woman’s reproductive purpose. When worn by the hula dancer, her hips and buttocks would be emphasized, giving the desired look of a full lower body which was the ideal at the time due to “large hips and buttocks [being] identified with childbearing and is a universal stylistic feature of fertility figures.” (Klarr 45). Furthermore, Klarr puts forward that the hula dancer represents “fertility enhancement” and “the pāʻū symbolizes the entire cycle of a woman’s life, her responsibility to perpetuate life here on Earth, and her anticipated role as transmitter of divine mana and divine guardian.” (ibid).

Because the hula as a dance itself was considered sacred, the attire was important because according to the Hawaiians it was able to “invoke the blessing of the gods” and the “clothes absorbed the mana of their wearer” (Klarr 47).

The pāʻū has also been considered to have mythological significance. According to Klarr’s research, it is tied to “protection, sorcery, and healing.” (Klarr 46). The Hawaiian goddess Hiʻiaka supposedly wore the pāʻū and it had magical powers that protected and aided her in getting rid of evil moʻo (ibid.).

The practical function of the pāʻū was to preserve the modesty of the dancer. According to Mary Kawena Pukui, traditionally, hula girls learned that it was immodest to dance with the thighs exposed (Barrère, Pukui and Kelly 72). Furthermore, she writes that “[e]ven down to the days of our last rulers hula dancers wore knee-length skirts.” (ibid.).

As a garment of such religious and practical importance, everything from the creation of

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19 Mana: Power, usually divine or sacred

20 Moʻo: Lizard or lizards
a pāʻū, to the manner in which it was put on by a dancer, as well as its destruction was treated with the utmost sacredness and respect. Klarr says that every hula performance would necessitate that a new pāʻū be made for it (45). Furthermore, “[e]verything was done in an orderly manner in the old hula schools. The [pāʻū] skirt was girded on only when the kumu chanted the mele of the pāʻū, never before or after.” (Barrère, Pukui and Kelly 72). Klarr cites Vancouver in saying that there was “a special room” where “the proper rituals associated with adorning of the hula costume would have taken place.” (Klarr 15). Kamehameha was also known to be a “profound critic” when it came to the wearing of a pāʻū, and therefore the embellishment of the pāʻū was done with special care (ibid.).

However, by the time of King David Kalākaua’s reign in the late 19th century, not only had the political landscape of Hawaiʻi changed with the presence of foreigners on the Islands, but so had hula, and with it, hula costuming. Led by Kalākaua’s innovation and creativity, the Hawaiian people adapted their traditions to suit the changing times. It was during this period that hula kuʻi was invented (some say by King Kalākaua himself), kuʻi meaning “‘to join, stitch, sew” and hula kuʻi is literally a ‘joined hula’ of indigenous and Western performance vocabularies.” (Pukui and Elbert cited by Imada 44). In addition, hula kuʻi was accompanied by songs in the Hawaiian language to both Western and Hawaiian instruments and featured “polka or waltz tempos and couplet verses.” (Imada, “Aloha America” 44). As a mark of their modernity

21 Mele: Song or chant

22 Hawaiian king who conquered the various Hawaiian islands, established the Kingdom of Hawaiʻi, and as such was the first ruler of the united islands.

23 Hula kuʻi: Style of hula believed to have been created by King David Kalākaua, or at least was introduced during his reign, and most likely for his coronation in 1883. As ‘kuʻi’ means ‘to join,’ the hula kuʻi style unites indigenous forms of hula with Western musical and dance movement influences.
and their ability to adapt, hula dancers opted for more Western-looking attire rather than the traditional pāʻū. On this subject Adria L. Imada writes:

Rather than wearing costuming associated with indigenous performance genres, including items such as the pāʻū kapa, the girls performed in tailored attire that similarly reflected a hybrid European-Hawaiian sensibility: white, floor-length holoku and shoes.

Hula kuʻi serves as an apt metaphor for the imaginative responses to change by Hawaiian performers. They were not passive recipients of Western ideas and products, but were flexible innovators who appropriated what they desired from the outside and blended it with the familiar to arrive at something novel and unexpected. In the face of vast cultural and political dislocation, they were actively shaping a Native Hawaiian modernity that would help them adapt to and survive formal colonization in the next decade. A mark of their modernity was an ability to reinvent themselves, to peruse everything available to them and adopt what was most useful. (45-46)

A truly transitional period in the timeline of the hula, it was also in the same years of Kalākaua’s reign that the grass skirt begins to appear in photographs. At first they appear as a “skirt made of strips of fiber or leaves” worn as a top layer of above the pāʻū. However, eventually the cloth skirts are abandoned, leaving only the grass-looking portion. (Stillman, Sacred Hula 17). “The newer hula kuʻi and hula ʻōlapa introduced notable changes in costumes which are documented in photos dating from the 1880s,” writes Amy Stillman. “In other photos, dancers in costumes that include the stripped fiber skirt are posed with musicians holding only

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24 Holoku: A loose or fitted long dress with a train.

25 Hula ʻōlapa: A style of hula classified as ancient hula (hula kahiko), but dates to the same time as hula kuʻi. It is performed to ipu heke (see description below), just like hula ʻālaʻapapa (see description below). However the two styles of hula classification are not interchangeable, as hula ʻālaʻapapa dates significantly further back than hula ʻōlapa, they have stylistic differences in their chant construction, differ in levels of sacredness, and each have their own repertoires. The term ʻhula ʻōlapa’ can also mean ‘hula dancer.’

Ipu heke: Double-gourd drum

Hula ʻālaʻapapa: Form of ancient hula dating back to the Kamehameha dynasty performed to ipu heke. For a detailed explanation of this style of hula as well as the differences between the forms of ancient hula which all now fall under the term hula kahiko, see Sacred Hula: The Historical Hula ʻĀlaʻapapa by Amy Kuʻuleialoha Stillman.
the ipu\textsuperscript{26}, confirming that this newer costume was used for hula ‘ōlapa as well as hula kuʻi.” (Stillman, \textit{Sacred Hula} 17-19). Stillman thus alludes to the appearance of the grass skirt during a time of evolving hula: still connected to the past and to its indigenous forms, though also permitting certain variations and novel attributes due to foreign influences.

As I have mentioned previously in this study, the grass skirt was not an original piece of hula attire. Grass skirts that are so often identified with Hawaiʻi were introduced during King David Kalākaua’s reign (1874-1891) (Balme 247 and Imada, \textit{Aloha America} 83). While some scholars disagree on the original provenance of the grass skirt, it is most commonly accepted that the grass skirt was brought to Hawaiʻi and implemented into hula dancing by King Kalākaua himself. After traveling around the world, Kalākaua brought a grass skirt from the Gilbert Islands to add variation to hula presentation costuming (Takamine, Personal Interview). Other sources put forth that the grass skirt may have been brought to Hawaiʻi by immigrants from island groups in Melanesia (such as the Gilbert or Solomon Islands), or by visiting Tahitian dance troupes (Imada, \textit{Aloha America}; 83; McAvoy; Balme 247).

Due to further innovation and necessity, the grass skirt too underwent its own changes. Primarily, Hawaiians experimented with various local materials in attempt to replicate the grass skirt. This would lead to the use of lāʻī, and the creation of the Hawaiian ti leaf skirt. This adaptation of the Gilbert Island’s grass skirt was intended to an additional garment in which to perform hula, and not a replacement for the pāʻū. However, when “[i]n the mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century, Hawaii’s economy underwent a fundamental change from one based upon agriculture to one relying on tourism” (Brown, \textit{Hawaii Recalls}, 85), hula dancers became the embodiment of

\textsuperscript{26} Ipu: Gourd used as a drum in hula
Hawai‘i and Hawaiian culture in tours and at performances on the Mainland and in Europe. Imada states that it was during these foreign tours that the invention of dried hula skirts came into being since fresh ti leaves were unobtainable outside of Hawai‘i (Aloha America 83). Subsequently, the dancers would make their skirts from “string dipped in green dye” (ibid.). Other materials used extemporarily to fashion grass looking skirts when the necessary Hawaiian plants were unavailable to the dancers included paper, oil cloth, and cellophane (Imada, Aloha America 179). In Hawaii Recalls DeSoto Brown specifies a timeline for the emergence of the cellophane skirt and writes that by the 1920s, the grass skirt appears cut “to a fashionable knee-length,” and a decade thereafter, “might be made of deeply-colored cellophane for a splash of swankiness, joining her already synthetic paper (and later […] plastic) lei” (57). Imada further illustrates the developments of hula attire by recounting the words of Betty Puanani Makia, a professional hula dancer of the early 1900s and Ray Kinney, a notable Hawaiian entertainer of the same era, in her book Aloha America: Hula Circuits Through the U.S. Empire:

Dancing for American audiences necessitated other alterations in costuming and theatricality. […] Betty Makia explained, “We did authentic hula, but our skirts were Americanized… In the beginning we wore ti leaf, but it was so expensive. Our [oilcloth] plastic skirts were so heavy, it hangs like leather. But it was nice.” Ray Kinney further insisted his dancers adhere to a meticulous dress code that emphasized femininity and glamour. They had to be well groomed and grow their hair long enough to curl. On stage, they were required to wear mascara and stage makeup. (179)

Thus, while the grass skirt was introduced during King Kalākaua’s reign, it was then reworked by the Hawaiian people into the lāʻī skirt which is recognized now as distinctly Hawaiian. However, the concept of the grass skirt eventually came to be used as a marketing tool by those who could benefit from the capitalist and colonialist cultures existing in Hawai‘i during
the Territorial Era. As such, while the idea of the Hawaiian hula dancers as “beautiful half-clad women in grass skirts” was “first cultivated by nineteenth century photographers and later popularized by Hollywood’s motion pictures.” (Klarr 1), it is evident that during this span of time, an evolution of the grass skirt itself occurred result of necessity and of the hula dancers’ ability to adapt to changing situations and needs. Nowadays, grass skirts may be seen in lāʻī form, but also made of raffia (died in various colours), paper, string, artificial silk leaves, cellophane, and a variety of other plant-based and synthetic material. It is interesting to note that images of hula dancers in grass skirts are often mistakenly identified Tahitian ʻōʻtea28 dancers, although these skirts are also falsely termed. “The ʻō‘tea costume includes a morê made from the fine inner bark of the pūrau29 tree (Hibiscus tiliaceous). Most people know the morê as the ‘grass skirt,’ though it is not made of grass and therefore, an erroneous designation.” (Traxler 55).

Ultimately, synthetic made skirts do not seem to be widely accepted by strict hula practitioners. This is seen in their being banned at many hula competitions in Hawai‘i where tradition—whether the dances themselves are either indigenous (kahiko) or modern (ʻauana) in style—is rigidly sought. “Cellophane skirts and other so-called artificial costuming are explicitly prohibited at most hula competitions30; they are generally eschewed by contemporary hula performers, except in performances meant to self-consciously evoke ‘nostalgia’ of the early

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27 As previously mentioned, contemporary Hawaiians generally do not consider the lāʻī skirt as a ‘grass skirt’ while other populations may not make a distinction here.

28 ʻŌte‘a: Tahitian drum dance

29 Pūrau tree: Tahitian word for hibiscus tree (from which morē is made).

30 While cellophane is not permitted at the Merrie Monarch Competition, it is allowed at the King Kamehameha Day Competition. Skirts made of hau and fresh lāʻī are welcome at most competitions.
twentieth century.” writes Imada (Aloha America 263-264). For instance, at the 3 Days of Aloha Hapa Haole Competition, cellophane skirts were most welcome as the competition itself was a celebration of the music and dancing of the Territorial Era. However, Imada continues by also presenting a voice in favour of these skirts: “Aiming to support tourist-oriented hula as an important Hawaiian innovation, Takamine asserts the hapa-haole cellophane skirts as her heritage as much as the ancient pahu31: ‘Aunty Maiki32 danced in a cellophane skirt, I danced in a cellophane skirt, my mother danced in a cellophane skirt, and we all did hapa haole music.’ Dancers from the height of the midcentury hapa haole hula era also express their affection for acculturated skirts. […]” (ibid.).

Contrarily, from what I have seen in Canada, synthetic materials and artificial tropical flora are widely used in competition, such as silk ti leaves and fake flower headpieces, assumedly due to their not being available locally. The following chapter on my fieldwork results will present more of my observations from viewing and considering hula outside of Hawai‘i.

31 Pahu: Drum. In hula, a pahu generally refers to a sacred shark skin drum.

32 Kumu hula Maiki Aiu Lake was a prominent figure who greatly influenced the Hawaiian renaissance of the late twentieth century. She was the kumu hula of many notable figures in hula such as Vicky Holt Takamine, Robert Cazimero, Leina'ala Kalama Heine, and Māpuana de Silva. For a detailed biography by Puakea Nogelmeier, please see http://www.hawaii.edu/biograph/pdf/maikiguide.pdf.
CHAPTER 5
FIELDWORK RESULTS

Conducting the surveys described in the methodology chapter has provided some valuable insight on some of the ideas held about Hawai‘i in the southern region of Western Canada and in the American Pacific Northwest. The surveys were taken at Polynesian dance-based events with the hope of receiving feedback from a crowd with varied levels of familiarity with Hawai‘i and Hawaiian culture, yet who share a specific experience of viewing Polynesian traditions in a designated geographic location. This proved to be a successful endeavour as the results showed that among the 50 participants there were attendees who belonged to every category of the demographic questioning: those present included some who had and had not visited Hawai‘i; who had and had not lived there, and who had and had not studied hula. Upon gathering information of the participating audience members of the Kitsilano Showboat Polynesian shows and the hō‘ike and Hawaiian Festival of 3 Days, I found that the most common combination of attributes were people who had visited Hawai‘i, though had never lived there, and had not studied hula. This demographic represents 38 percent of the participating survey takers. Specifically, when participating audience member information is broken down, the results of the findings were that 74 percent had visited Hawai‘i, 76 percent had never lived there, and 68 percent had never studied hula. Contrarily, of the 24 percent of survey takers who had studied hula (8 percent did not provide an answer to this question), the length of time and seriousness of study varied from one year to “off and on for 25 years.” Initially, I was surprised at the number of participants who had lived in Hawaiʻi (at 24 percent, this is nearly one quarter
of the survey-takers) and by those who had studied the hula (again at 24 percent). However, upon reflection, I suppose a fair number of people within this demographic was to be anticipated, as those with strong ties to Hawai‘i and hula would have been expected to be drawn out to these types of Polynesian cultural events.

When asked an open-ended question about what imagery comes to mind when thinking of hula costuming and attire, the most recurrent answer was the grass skirt or ti leaf skirt. This answer came up amongst 52 percent of participants. Other frequently mentioned items were flowers (40 percent), and more specifically, lei (30 percent). When questioned what kind of music or accompaniment comes to mind when one thinks of hula, the ukulele was the most repeated answer amongst participants (50 percent). The table on the following page illustrates the complete list of answers and the frequency of their appearance amongst participants.

The dominating mention of grass skirts, ukulele, and lei across the survey results is in line with the characteristics of what many scholars have defined as the “iconic hula girl” that seems to be especially prolific in promotional uses and other representations of Hawai‘i in the diaspora. “My visual understanding of a trope is similar to what I imagine a bank of images to be, a repository of images.” writes Lia O’Neill Moani‘ekalua Ah-Lan Keawe in her dissertation “Ki‘i Pāpālua: Imagery and Colonialism in Hawai‘i.”

Specifically for Hawai‘i that repository is filled with a plethora of images that include magnificent golden sunsets; breath-taking images of the Pacific Ocean detailed in multilayered hues of blue and green; pristine, white sandy beaches; endless coconut trees swaying in the balmy breeze, an of course the hula girl with her long, dark hair, dressed in her coconut bra, grass skirt and wearing lei. Rhetorical tropes are repeating images and the imagery—paradise—is synonymous with Hawai‘i the world over. (Keawe 3-4).
Figure 4.1 – Fieldwork Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costuming that comes to mind</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grass Skirt (including Ti Leaf Skirt)</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers (including Flowers in Hair, Pua in Hair, Flower Shirts and Flowered Dresses)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lei</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colours (including Bright Colours, Colourful Tops, Colourful Skirts, Colourful Sarongs, and Happy Colours)</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skirt (including Hula Skirt, Loose Fitting Skirt, and Long Skirt)</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pāʻū</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coconuts (including Coconut Bras)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu'umu'u</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tropical Print (including Hawaiian Print and Hawaiian Pattern)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bikini Tops</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty (including Beautiful Hair and Beautiful Materials)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright Colours</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Hair</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytelling</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music that comes to mind</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ukulele</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drums (including Drum Beats)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ipu (including Ipu Heke)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian (including Hawaiian Music)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slack key (including Slack Key Guitar)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel Guitar</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing (including Individual Person Singing, Singing Voices and People Singing)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tropical (including Tropical Music)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guitar (including Guitar Electric)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island (including Island Music)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic (including Acoustic Island Music)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamboo Sticks</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanting</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elvis Presley</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hālau</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similarly, Jane C. Desmond reveals that “[t]he image that is most associated with Hawai‘i is of a beautiful woman clad in a hula skirt. She offers a lei, plays the ukulele or dances the hula.” (Hawaiian Visitors Bureau cited by Desmond, “Invoking ‘The Native’” 87)

Throughout my studies—both through academic research as well as movement classes and performances with studios and hālau—I’ve learned that this distinct image of the hula girl is most often associated with the hapa haole style of Hawaiian dance, a “simple [style] of hula” (Buck 5) that emerged alongside an evolution in Hawaiian music. At the onset of the 20th century, the hapa haole musical genre saw the creation of songs written in English with Hawaiian themes and stylized Hawaiian sounds. Sometimes these songs were sprinkled with a few Hawaiian words while other times they included sounds and contrived words that lyricists assumed to be Hawaiian-esque. Hapa haole songs were being composed not just by musicians in Hawai‘i but also by songwriters in the Continental United States, many of whom had never been to the Islands. This expansion in Hawaiian music occurred in the course of the historical timeframe referred to as the Territorial Era of Hawai‘i (1898-1959) during which there were many political changes occurring as an effort put forth to bring Hawai‘i to statehood. “The distinctive iconography of the ‘hula girl’ […] would emerge in the 1910s” confirms Desmond (‘Picturing Hawai‘i” 462), and at this time, interconnected developments not only in music and entertainment, but also in capitalism, tourism, and globalization would help spread this fantasized image of a female hula dancer across the ocean towards a larger audience. I will discuss later in this study some of the deeper reasons for which such a specific image of the female Hawaiian dancer may have become a major representation of Hawai‘i and Hawaiian
culture. However, for the purposes of the report of my fieldwork results, it is important to note that the distinctive marks of this hula girl description are still prevalent in the minds of the participating survey takers of the Kitsilano Showboat shows and of the 3 Days festival. Moreover, it is of interest to this thesis that of these three most often mentioned characteristics, the grass skirt was the most reocurring answer.

The final question of the survey concerns the audience member’s familiarity with the origin of the grass skirt. From this question I found that the larger portion of the survey participants (58 percent) was not aware that the grass skirt was not originally from Hawai‘i. While this result number does not present a terribly large majority, it does indicate that in more than half of the sample surveyed there exists an inattention to the details surrounding icons associated with Hawaiian culture. However, while this unawareness to understanding the nitty-gritty of certain images may be innocent enough, it may become problematic in certain instances. For instance, a lack of knowledge regarding the origins of certain imagery may, in some cases, lead to a conflation of different island cultures. As an illustration, due to the presence of much Tahitian dancing in lū‘au entertainment and other tourist-intended shows in Hawai‘i, the two types of dance and costuming are often confused. In her dissertation, Aeko Serano dates the commencement of a “pan-Polynesian style” taken on by the image of the hula girl to after the Second World War (211). At this point, for non-Hawaiians audiences, “the differences among the dances of the Pacific islands became blurred, the words of the songs meaningless, and performance the focal point of interest.” (Kaeppler cited by Serano 211). Furthermore, uniquely recognizing a singular frame of reference of a people may inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes.
and a dominant viewpoint established by a group outside of that particular culture. The different island nations in the South Pacific all have their own histories and have at differing times been visited and inhabited by a colonialist entities. Due to the Islands themselves having their unique traditions, as well as the colonizing groups coming from different areas of the world, it would not do justice to assume that South Polynesians belong to a singular nation and share the same values and ways of life.

As a result of conducting this survey, I demonstrate that my initial viewpoints on hula and my experience in learning about it while in Canada were not isolated ones. I must admit that growing up in Vancouver, Canada, I was at first only familiar with a singular epitomized version of the hula. Due to this situated perspective, I did not consider hula to be much more complex than the curling fingers and bending wrist and elbow movements done to popular Don Ho and Elvis Presley songs. However, once I started taking classes in Polynesian dance, all this changed and I started learning about the different styles that exist within the hula (as well as the many other dances of Polynesia). Had I not enrolled in these classes, I would have never been exposed to this knowledge. I therefore posit that without the intentional pursuing of deeper knowledge on Hawaiian and other Polynesian culture, or a hereditary tie to these areas and peoples, much of the population in the southern region of Western Canada and in the Pacific Northwest of America would maintain only a vague understanding of the varied cultural richness and distinctions in the South Pacific. Furthermore, this knowledge of Polynesian culture would strictly be limited to the images with which they have been presented, which in many cases focuses largely on the hapa

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haole grass or cellophane clad hula girl.

In their video documentary, *American Aloha: Hula Beyond Hawai‘i*, Lisette Marie Flanary and Evann Siebens allude to this same sentiment that what most mainland Americans know about the hula revolves around the stereotype of undulating hand movements, swaying hips, and grass skirts. The documentary shows San-Francisco-based kumu hula Patrick Makuakane stating: “[…] Hapa haole starlets dancing in grass skirts who knew nothing of what they were dancing. And what’s so unfortunate about this is this is what most people think hula is.” (Flanary and Siebens). Flanary and Siebens however also put forth that with the influx in migration of Hawaiians to other states, hula culture is now being perpetuated past the Hawaiian shores, and with it, a deeper understanding and a broader knowledge of Hawaiian dance has begun to emerge (ibid.). However through my recently conducted fieldwork, it is apparent that the grass skirt and hapa haole hula girl continue to have a lasting association with Hawaiian culture, at least in the specific geographic area studied. This thesis thus attempts to bring to light ideas surrounding this ever-present consideration of hula, possible reasons of why it continues to exist, and various opinions of its effect on perspectives of Hawaiian culture in the diaspora.

**Viewing Hula on the Mainland**

Susan’s Paradise of Polynesia - Na Leo Kani ‘O Hawai‘i:

On July 14, 2014, I attended a performance by Susan’s Paradise of Polynesia - Na Leo Kani ‘O Hawaii at the Kitsilano Showboat in Vancouver, Canada. Founded in 1935 by Bert Emery, the Kitsilano Showboat is “a major Vancouver attraction providing a spectacular outdoor
stage for performers from around the world for summer evenings of free entertainment, relaxation, enjoyment and fun.” (“Kitsilano Showboat” website). The dancers of Susan’s Paradise of Polynesia were mostly women who ranged in age from young child to adult. She had one young boy in her group as well. The performance consisted of one dozen numbers followed by an audience participation segment in which Susan Madec, the director of the company, quickly taught a few basic hula steps, and then encouraged those in attendance to follow and dance along with her and her dancers who were on stage behind her.

The twelve songs that the group danced to were:

1. “I Love Hawai‘i”
2. “Blue Hawai‘i”
3. “Pearly Shells”
5. “E Naughty Naughty Mai Nei”
6. “Out on the Beach at Waikīkī”
7. Tahitian ori³⁴
8. “Aloha Week Hula”
9. “Pineapple Princess”
10. “The Prayer” (Hawaiian Version by Hoʻokena)
11. “Aloha, E Komo Mai” (from Lilo & Stitch: The Series)
12. “Aloha ‘Oe”


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³⁴ Ori: The Tahitian word for dance.
³⁵ Ami: Hula movement characterized by a circling of the hips.
E Komo Mai,” had longer Hawaiian phrases in them, however both songs were mostly in English. “The Prayer” was originally sung by Celine Dion and Andrea Bocelli, and had paired English and Italian lyrics. “Aloha, E Komo Mai,” not only features a few expressions in Hawaiian, but also includes gibberish perhaps referencing the way Stitch, an alien who originally appears in the Disney animated movie *Lilo and Stitch* (2002), speaks: “Now you can see, tookie ba waba / Nothing but these clear blue skies.” This leads me to wonder, however, if an audience member did not recognize that this song was from a Disney television series, and if they had no knowledge of the Hawaiian language, would they have assumed that the alien babble was in fact, words in Hawaiian? It must also be noted that the concert was publicized as a Polynesian dance show with no additional contextual information. However, from the song selection, it seemed almost an entirely hula-based show, with only one dance representing another Polynesian nation.

The costumes utilized by Susan’s Paradise of Polynesia consisted of the following:

- A blue holomuʻu with white and green floral pattern worn by the wahine. Kaikamāhine wore matching knee-length alohawear dresses. Both wore lei (around their neck) and lei poʻo of artificial white flowers.
- The keiki later returned to perform “Pearly Shells” (four girls and one boy). Two girls

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36 Holomuʻu: A long fitted dress without a train, that is a cross between a holokū and a muʻumuʻu (see definition below).

Muʻumuʻu: A loose dress “which formerly was not yoked and has no train […]” (“wehewehe.org” online Hawaiian-English dictionary).

37 Wahine: Woman or women

38 Kaikamāhine: Girls (plural)

39 Lei poʻo: A flower garland encircling the poʻo, or head.

40 Keiki: Children
wore red and white holomuʻu, while the other two wore dresses with a pattern of varied blues and greens. The keiki kāne41 wore a matching blue and green aloha shirt. All the girls seemed to be wearing lei made of yellow shells around their necks, and a large hibiscus in their hair.

- The next dancer appeared in an artificial ti leaf skirt (the leaves appeared to be made of cut fabric), with a pink floral tube top and matching bloomers. She wore two lei around her neck, one pink and one yellow, as well as a pink lei worn as a headband on her head.

- Following this solo, was a number performed by a wahine wearing a navy blue and red muʻumuʻu. She also wore a pāpale42 and placed two flowers behind her ears. A red carnation lei finished this costume.

- Another kaikamahine43 came out dancing in an artificial ti leaf skirt with pink floral tube dress, and pink and yellow lei.

- For the Tahitian ori, the dancer wore a blue pareo44 with white tiare45 and green leaves. Her halter-top was made of the same material, and she wore a headpiece made of artificial ti leaves and white flowers. A choker length shell necklace was worn on her neck.

- “Aloha Week Hula” was performed by the wahine in red tank tops and green pāʻū with

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41 Keiki kāne: Young boy

42 Pāpale: Hat

43 Kaikamahine: Girl (singular)

44 Pareo: Also spelt ‘pāreu’ is the Tahitian word for sarong, or long piece of cloth (roughly two yards long) used to make a wrap-around skirt or dress.

45 Tiare: A flower known in English as the Tahitian gardenia (gardenia taitensis). Not to be confused with the Tahitian word for the more commonly known gardenia, ‘taina.’
plumeria lei.

- A long white flowing dress maybe of a chiffon type material was used for “the Prayer.” This was worn with a white and crimson lei, perhaps made of orchids, and an elaborate matching headpiece.

- Various aloha wear outfits were worn by the four kaikāmahine who danced to “Aloha, E Komo Mai.” Their outfits were coordinated and made cohesive by the flower accessories they wore: they all wore one pink lei, one white one, and pink flowers in their hair.

My initial impression of the concert was of surprise due to there not being more of the Hawaiian language or other styles of hula included when no indication was made that the show would represent only certain aspects of the dance. I felt that there were some movements utilized that were not exactly true to hula, in my own studies and experience, such as the shimmying of the bust region, as done in the “Rock-A-Hula” number, and a movement that I loosely describe as an ‘Egyptian walk’ as done in “Pineapple Princess.” I was also eager to hear the director’s reasoning for including songs such as “the Prayer,” which as mentioned before is not Hawaiian, as well as the Lilo & Stitch number. I wondered if this selection was due to popular appeal and assumed greater enjoyment by the audience in attendance. The costuming, I felt was well suited to the largely hapa haole style of song performed, although it brought to mind the difference of regularly used fresh flowers in Hawai‘i versus the artificial reproductions in Canada. This contrast made me reflect on issues such as the accessibility to natural materials that are greatly used in Hawai‘i such as the ti leaf and the fresh tropical flowers such as the hibiscus and plumeria. I imagine this to be one of the challenges of hālau who perform outside of Hawai‘i, as
in order to create an ‘authentic’ look, they must resort to artificial costume elements such as fake lei. Overall, however, the audience seemed to enjoy the show, and especially the segment at the end when they were encouraged to dance to the song “I Love Hawai‘i.”

Na Keiki Polynesia-Spirit of the South Seas:

Under the direction of Marji Wallace, Na Keiki Polynesia - Spirit of the South Seas, who also go by the name Hula Hālau Na Keiki ‘O Ohana Lokahi, performed at the Kitsilano Showboat on July 8, 2014. Their performance featured ten wahine dancers who also ranged in age from young children to adults. They performed sixteen dances in all:

1. “Pate Pate”
2. “Welina Mai”
3. “Little Grass Shack”
4. “Hawaiian War Chant”
5. “Eia Ka Makana”
6. “Ke Ao Nani”
7. “Green Rose Hula”
8. “Hula Pokey”
9. “Maunaleo”
10. Unfamiliar Māori Song
11. “Pua ʻIliiahi”
12. “One Paddle, Two Paddle”
13. “E Hoʻi I Ka Pili”
15. Tahitian ʻŌteʻa
16. “Aloha ʻOe”

As announced, Spirit of the South Seas performed to songs hailing from different Polynesian islands and representing different styles. “Pate Pate” is a song by Te Vaka, “a group of musicians and dancers from Tokelau, Tuvalu, Samoa, Cook Islands and New Zealand brought together under the inspired leadership of Opetaia Foaʻi” (“Te Vaka” website). “Tahiti Tahiti” and the
ʻōteʻa represented dances from Tahiti. There was one poi ball number, which is of Māori origin. Finally, the remaining songs: “Welina Mai,” “Little Grass Shack,” “Hawaiian War Chant,” “Eia Ka Makana,” “Ke Ao Nani,” “Green Rose Hula,” “Hula Pokey,” “Maunaleo,” “Pua ‘Ili‘i,” “One Paddle, Two Paddle,” “E Ho‘i I Ka Pili,” and “Aloha ‘Oe” are from the Hawaiian culture. Of these songs, further categories may be distinguished: “Welina Mai,” “Little Grass Shack,” “Hula Pokey,” and “One Paddle, Two Paddle” may be considered hapa haole. “Eia Ka Makana” and “Ke Ao Nani” are of the hula kahiko style, and “Green Rose Hula,” “Maunaleo,” “Pua ‘Ili‘i,” “E Ho‘i Ka Pili” are considered hula ‘auana. “Hawaiian War Chant”47 may also be further classified as hula paʻahana48 or hula ‘uliʻuli49 as it was performed with rattle gourd instruments.

The Spirit of the South Seas’ costumes also aimed to reflect the diversity of Polynesia. Specifically they wore the following:

- The first costume, which was used to dance to “Pate Pate,” was made of solid red material. Three women had their midriff exposed while one did not. Their skirts were ankle length and had two slits, one on each side. They wore hip hei of green leaves around their hips and three girls wore headpieces made with red and green flowers. One

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46 Poi balls: Implements used by Māori performers in which one weight, or ball, is attached to a length cord (long or short). The dancer then, grasping the free end of the cord, swings the ball (or multiple poi balls) in a rhythmic way. A performance with poi balls may be accompanied by singing, dancing, haka, and/or other traditional Māori practices.

47 The Hawaiian War Chant is a song that was originally a love ballad written by Prince Leleiōhoku and entitled “Kāua I Ka Huahua‘i.” In the 1940s, the song was popularized by Spike Jones who sped up the tempo and sang the lyrics in “a guttural tone” and this version was given its English name (“huapala.org” website).

48 Hula paʻahana: Instrument hula, that is to say, hula performed with instruments.

49 Hula ʻuliʻuli: Hula performed with rattles gourd dance instruments.

50 Hip hei: A ‘hei’ is the Tahitian equivalent of ‘lei.’ As such, a hip hei is a Tahitian band worn around a dancer’s hips. While they may be constructed of a variety of materials, many hip hei feature leaves, moré, raffia, and/or feathers.
woman did not. Finally, they wore multiple long stands of white dove shell lei and a kukui nut lei around their neck.

- Five dancers came on stage to join the existing for to perform “Welina Mai.” Two wahine wore yellow floral printed pāʻū with solid yellow sleeveless hula tops. These tops were constructed with a yard or less of fabric with its seams sewed together as to wrap around the torso. The top hem of the fabric was then folded down and stitched as to encase an elastic which holds the upper border of the garment up above the breast. They both wore white coloured lei around their necks. Another wahine wore a red pāʻū with a fern design, and a solid red sleeveless hula top. She wore this with artificial maile lei around her neck, her poʻo, and as kūpeʻe both around her ankles and wrists. The remaining two dancers to come up on stage were kaikamāhine, wearing solid yellow sleeveless hula tops. One of the girls wore a pāʻū while the other had a skirt that was so close fitting, it technically would not be called a pāʻū. Rather, it had a silhouette more closely resembling that of a pencil skirt. However, as it was seemingly constructed of the same solid yellow material as one other kaikamahine’s attire, and due to the other sets of coordinating costumes on stage, I believe that the intention of this skirt was also meant to be a pāʻū despite not having the same fullness that the typical pāʻū silhouette would exhibit since it was constructed with significantly less fabric than the skirt of her fellow dancer. It would have been interesting to discover the reason for this costume choice, as perhaps its final construction and appearance resulted from a shortage of material or other unusual circumstance. Both kaikamāhine wore artificial purple flower lei.

51 Kūpeʻe: Bracelet or bracelets
• “Little Grass Shack” was performed by three kaikamāhine wearing the aforementioned solid yellow pāʻū costuming. This costume was worn by the young girls for their other Hawaiian dances in the performance, and thus also for the songs “Ke Ao Nani,” “Hula Pokey,” “One Paddle, Two Paddle,” and “Aloha ‘Oe.”

• The “Hawaiian War Chant” dance was performed by three wahine all wearing the red pāʻū combination as described previously. This dance was also performed with red and yellow ʻulīʻulī. “Eia Ka Makana” was also done in this costume, however by five wahine, and without ʻulīʻulī.

• A solo wahine performed “Green Rose Hula” in a printed green pāʻū and a matching solid green sleeveless hula top. She wore an artificial plumeria lei around her neck.

• Five wahine wore long blue holomuʻu with floral print to dance “Maunaleo.” While four of them were bare footed, one dancer wore ballet slippers.

• A traditional Māori piupiu52 skirt was worn during the Māori poi ball number.

• A solo wahine wore a knee-length dress with an asymmetrical hemline to perform “Pua ʻIliahi.” She also wore a plumeria lei.

• “E Hoʻi I Ka Pili” brought three wahine dancing in solid coloured sateen looking costuming reminiscent of a hapa haole style that features bare midriffs and an asymmetrical hemline featuring fringe down one side’s length of the skirt. Some may consider this costume to be a two-piece sarong ensemble. In addition to their matching tube tops, the women also wore armbands in the same colour as their tops and skirts, and coordinating lei and lei poʻo.

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52 Piupiu: A skirt worn by the Māori made of reeds or strands of New Zealand flax.
• For “Tahiti Tahiti,” Marji Wallace danced with her three keiki. While she wore a tan
coloured full-length moré skirt (it may have also been made of raffia or other similar
material) decorated with shells around the band and red ‘i‘i, the two of the young girls
wore black tank tops and light pink Pareo. The third girl was in the yellow pāʻū ensemble
from the hula numbers as well as flip-flops (also referred to as rubber sandals or slippers),
while the other three dancers were barefoot. Ms. Wallace also wore an elaborate and large
Tahitian headpiece and long white dove shell lei. She wore this costume with a black
cropped tube top.

• The Tahitian ʻōteʻa featured the wahine wearing the same Tahitian grass skirt costume as
displayed by Ms. Wallace in the previous dance.

While I appreciate the attempt to demonstrate the different costumes of the Polynesian
nations, I feel as though it is confusing to interchange the costumes without clear relationship or
indication to the style of dance. For example, Tahitian costumes were worn during Hawaiian
songs, and vice versa. Also, there was no mention that the poi ball routine and piupiu costuming
were from the Māori culture. I highly doubt that every person in the audience was familiar with
that fact. There were also slight inaccuracies in costuming, such as the wearing of ballet shoes,
flip-flops, and the attempted pāʻū skirt. Again, I would have appreciated the opportunity for Ms.
Wallace to explain these choices, however, I received no response when I contacted her for an
interview. From what I have observed watching hula in Hawai‘i, and also have learned in my
different experiences studying hula, there are very rare select instances of hula ‘auana when

53 ‘i‘i: Tassels usually made of moré used in Tahitian dancing and costuming, for instance larger ones may be held in
one’s hands while dancing, or smaller ones used as embellishment on hip hei or Tahitian dance headpieces.
shoes may be considered acceptable. However, ballet slippers and flip-flops are never appropriate footwear for hula. I must also admit that the dancers’ technique was also at times slightly underwhelming, even for an amateur show, calling into question Ms. Wallace’s dance background and qualifications for teaching hula. I recognize that hula technique and costuming in the diaspora may never be quite at the same level as hula dancers in Hawai’i, however, the quality of the performance and inauthenticities demonstrated were so far removed from what would be considered acceptable in hula. If a group claims to preserve and perpetuate a certain culture in the diaspora, particularly if it is not their own, by displaying many inaccuracies in the depiction of the culture’s traditions and forms, the group is doing a disservice to the culture they are claiming to represent and share. Despite Ms. Wallace’s groups’ intention to be Polynesian cultural practitioners, I feel that due to the lack of context given, their program would have been confusing to those who know nothing about the South Pacific. Therefore, rather than being a potential educational experience in addition entertaining show, the overall performance was rather an offence to the Hawaiian, Tahitian, and Māori communities. I do not wish to discourage others in the pursuit of learning cultural dances. However, the study of traditions such as these needs to be done in a conscientious way in order to as authentically as possible present the learned practices in public and to maintain the integrity of the cultures.

It is in cases such as these, where demonstrations of cultural art forms are replete of inaccuracies and inauthenticities that some of the negative impacts of globalization are made apparent. Similar to the many YouTube videos that are readily available on the internet and that claim to show traditions such as the hula, but actually fail to do so, false representations that may
turn into lasting stereotypes are often propagated to the detriment of their original cultures. However, with careful attention to the directives of cultural authorities, and through proper education and faithful execution of instructed movements and other aspects of performance, globalization in dance need not always be bad thing. One of the dangers that seems to result from cultural dances being learned and performed outside of their geographic location of origin is that liberties are sometimes taken without the consent of the appropriate authorities. Many people see traditions from other cultures that they wish to recreate, and should they be in an area where that culture does not have a large presence, without proper training there is a high probability that personalized understandings and attributes—which could vary from a small lapses to a huge offences—may be apparent in attempted cultural displays. It is my impression that due to the continual rising of transnational migration and the increasing speed and technologies used for the transmittal of information, globalization in dance at this point in time for many cultures is inevitable. However, for it not to become a place of promotion of false stereotypes and misinformation, prudence needs to be taken, and an emphasis on proper cultural education is of utmost importance particularly by those who wish to perform these cultural dances for others in public settings.

3 Days of Aloha Hapa Haole Hula Competition

On July 25, 2014 the 3 Days of Aloha Hapa Haole Hula Competition took place at five in the evening at Esther Short Park in Vancouver, Washington. As with the Kitsilano Showboat performances, the outdoor event was open and free to the public. Harry B. Soria Jr. of
“Territorial Airwaves,” a weekly radio program focusing on vintage Hawaiian music, was the master of ceremonies, and the competition judges were nā kumu hula Vicky Holt Takamine, Robert Uluwehi Cazimero, Manu Boyd, and Leialoha Amina. These four kumu hula are considered with great esteem in the world of hula dance. They all share notable credits and are prominent figures in each their own right such as being competition judges in prestigious hula competitions, winning multiple awards either recognizing their own work and leadership in Hawaiian arts and culture as well as guiding their individual hālau to competition victories.

Provided in an appendix at the end to this thesis text are the biographies of these four kumu as they are presented on the 2016 3 Days of Aloha in the Pacific Northwest website.

At the 3 Days of Aloha Hapa Haole Hula Competition, solo participants competed in one of four categories: Miss Hapa Haole (for women aged 14 to 25), Mr. Hapa Haole (men 14-25), Ms. Sophisticated Hula (women 26 and over), Comic/Kolohe\(^{54}\) hula (26 and over); and groups competed according to their age division: Kane\(^{55}\) (men 14 and over), Kupuna\(^{56}\) (50 and over), Wahine (women 14 and over), Keiki (13 and under), Combined Group (14 and over). A complete list of the competitors, which hālau they belong to, and their kumu may be found in the appendix. As this was specifically a hapa haole hula event, I was expecting to see the grass, ti leaf, or cellophane skirt used in abundance. There were six instances of the grass skirt or its derivatives during the competition:

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\(^{54}\) Kolohe: Rascal or naughty

\(^{55}\) Kane: Man or men

\(^{56}\) Kupuna: Grandparent or an elderly person, or persons, belonging to that generation.
• The wahine group of Hula Hālau Maʻe Maʻe Kapua O Kahala wore cellophane skirts in a variety of colours, plastic lei, and flowers in their hair.

• The keiki group of ʻAʻa I Ka Hula Kanikapila wore silver cellophane skirts with cropped tops. They wore large flowers in their hair, and kūpeʻe on one ankle and one wrist.

• Patricia Djak, a wahine soloist competing for Miss Sophisticated Hula, wore a blue cellophane skirt, with a blue floral tube top, a bright pink feather boa, and a cluster of multicoloured flowers in her hair.

• The three kaikāmahine of Hālau Nā Wai Ola’s keiki group wore what appeared to be fresh ti leaf skirts, with red sleeveless hula tops, and fresh plumeria lei around their neck and head. Their male counterparts wore black slacks with yellow sashes, red short sleeve blouses, and fresh plumeria lei.

• Uncle Kaua Wong, who competed in the Comic/Kolohe Hula, division wore a fresh ti leaf skirt, white slacks, a blue aloha shirt, and multiple plumeria lei around his neck.

• The wahine group from Aulani Hula Hālau performed in bright green cellophane skirts and green bra tops, exposing the midriff. Large crimson flowers completely encircling their hips were worn at the top of the cellophane skirt, and the same flowers were used in their hair, which was expertly coiffed in a vintage rolled up-do, very appropriately executed as per the era of the dance. They also wore coordinating lei around their neck of crimson flowers.

Two of the numbers, presented by Kaleinani o ke Kukui of Vancouver, Washington while the tabulations and final judging were taking place, were also danced in cellophane skirts.
• The first group, comprised of seven teenaged girls, wore sparkly cellophane skirts in a multitude of colours. They wore matching bra tops, and had large flowers placed over the left hip and behind the right ear.

• A keiki group also wore multicoloured cellophane skirts. However, instead of bra tops they wore white sleeveless hula tops. They also had flowers in their hair.

Other costumes that were used by the participants were printed pāʻū and sleeveless hula top combinations; holokū; muʻumuʻu; holomuʻu; knee-length wrap around sleeveless dresses that fit close to the body; strapless knee length a-line dresses with petticoats worn underneath; and a crop top and wrap around skirt with asymmetrical trim decorated with ruffles around the arm holes and along the hem of the skirt, similar to the two-piece sarong style dresses mentioned earlier in this chapter. The longer dresses were generally worn by the kupuna groups while the wahine and kaikamahine generally had their lower legs exposed.

As per the competition rules, all songs were in English but referring back to Hawaiian themes. Furthermore, the mele were to be from the years 1900 to 1959, “when classic Hapa Haole music was at it’s prime.” (“3 Days” website). I felt that while this competition was a celebration of only one style of the hula, it’s outdoor location, and free access to the public, in addition to the English mele was most effectively and strategically chosen in order to share Hawaiian culture with the community at large. As Harry B. Soria Jr. was there to explain the context within which each song was written, even passers by would be able to watch the dancing with an informed mindset. For instance, Soria Jr. was able to indicate whether a particular song was written specifically for a movie, or whether or not the composer was native Hawaiian and if
he or she lived in Hawai‘i or on the Mainland. The presence of Hawaiian food and craft vendors also added to the overall feeling of Hawai‘i outside of Hawai‘i, ultimately lending to an entertaining and educational evening for those in attendance.

Kumu Hula and Polynesian Dance Instructor Interviews

On July 28th, 2014, I had the opportunity to interview Paul Tavai-Latta, director of Paul Latta Dancers & Co., and my former Polynesian dance teacher. His insight, as well as the information passed on to me via email interview by Josie de Baat, director of Hālau Kia‘i O Ka Hula, and Susan Madec of Susan’s Paradise of Polynesia - Na Leo Kani ‘O Hawai‘i have been extremely beneficial in my understanding of Polynesian dance groups in Western Canada. Furthermore, an interview conducted with kumu hula Vicky Holt Takamine, who also acted as competition judge for the 3 Days of Aloha Hapa Haole Hula Competition, in contrast, has provided some valuable perspectives from a Hawaiian kumu hula’s point of view.

I had the opportunity to watch Madec’s group perform as part of the Kitsilano Showboat free shows. When asked about her history with this concert series, she expressed that she performed there as a child with two of her teachers. “It is a beautiful backdrop when the weather is nice so it’s as close to a Hawaiian environment as we can get here [in Vancouver, Canada].” As noted above, Madec’s group chose to perform mainly hapa haole numbers at their 2014 Kitsilano Showboat performance. When asked how she chose the mele for this show, she expresses: “Each year we work on new dances as well as keeping up some other dances for two years. Each group does two or three group performances as well as soloists who have an
appropriate number to suit show. I usually just try to provide a good variety to showcase the
different styles etc. that suits the length of the show the organizer wants.” (Madec, Personal
Interview). In terms of costuming, Madec expresses that choices are based on her “knowledge of
what colour (what island [the] song is about if named in mele) they should we wearing and what
adornments suit the song they are doing. Ex. Flower names in song etc.” She also stresses the
difficulty of being able to actualize exactly the visualizations she has due to the various ages,
colouring and sizes necessary within her group. Madec usually designs the costumes herself,
although accepts input from her students, especially those with solos. Materials used are often
“purchased from online Hawaiian clothing websites,” and “flea markets when in the islands or
local Hawaiian vendors.” Furthermore, she notes that some dresses are made by her students or
by her mother. In addition to the annual Kitsilano Showboat performance, Madec’s group
performs “[a]pproximately 10 times per year as [a] full group at public events and 10 times in
smaller settings with myself [Madec] and 1-3 dancers in smaller functions we are hired for
(birthday parties, anniversaries, Hawaiian themed parties etc.)” Specific locations are the Relay
for Life (a cancer benefitting event), Blueberry Festivals, Filipino Festivals, the Pacific National
Exhibition, Surrey Fusion Festival, and across the border in Ferndale, Washington at the Bridge
of Aloha event. Madec writes that she likes to demonstrate as much of a variety as possible in
order to show different styles and eras, and as such, her group performs hula kahiko, ‘auana,
hapa haole, and pa’ahana: with ‘ūli‘ūli, pū‘ili57, ‘ili‘ili58, ipu and kā‘laau59 sticks, as well as

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57 Pū‘ili: Hula instruments made of split bamboo and struck to make a rattling sound.
58 ‘Ili‘ili: Stones. Used percussively as hula instrument by holding and hitting two stones in one hand and clicking
them against each other.
59 Kā‘laau: Sticks used as hula dancing instruments.
Tahitian and Māori dances. However, Madec states that she “mainly focus[es] on Hawaiian.” She is of the impression that most of the audiences her groups perform for “are not very familiar with Hawaiian dance or culture,” although there may be some who have visited Hawaiʻi but have limited knowledge (ibid.).

Josie de Baat’s group competed in the 3 Days of Aloha Hapa Haole Hula Competition in Vancouver, Washington, on July 25, 2014. While she had groups competing in three categories (Wahine Group, Ms. Sophisticated Hula, and Ms. Hapa Haole), of particular importance is that her wahine group won first place. De Baat’s group, much like Madec’s performs annually at the Kitsilano Showboat every summer, where she feels it is a good place for families to bring their children and to learn a little about Hawaiʻi. Unable to determine an exact number of times her group has been performing there, she asserts that it’s “definitely many years.” (de Baat, Personal Interview). Her choice of numbers for this type of show is based on what she deems suitable for the audience, and especially for families. Similarly, her choice in costuming is also dependant on what is appropriate to the song, or what it requires. She explains that she usually designs and creates costumes, with input from her main dancers, and they are generally obtained by ordering them from Hawaiʻi. Outside of the Kitsilano Showboat concert series, de Baat writes that her group performs many times a year. “I don’t keep track of our performances but we perform many times through the year and once a year we have a big recital at the Surrey Arts Centre called ‘Aloha Polynesia’ of which all proceeds go to charity: ALS Society, Doctors Without Borders, Union Gospel and Operation Smile.” (ibid.). She specifies that her group performs anywhere they’re asked except for pubs and nightclubs. The styles they generally perform include hula
kahiko, ʻauana, hapa haole, and instrument hula (ʻūliʻūli, pūʻili, ʻiliʻili, and kāʻlaau). To her knowledge, the audiences she performs for may have some people who know about the Hawaiian culture, however there are some who know nothing at all and she hopes that they learn something from watching her group dance (ibid.).

The education and hula training of all three Canadian teachers were similar in that they claim to have had multiple instructors inform their Polynesian dancing, while kumu hula Vicky Holt Takamine’s has predominantly studied with one teacher. While Josie de Baat humbly puts forth that she has no formal education in dancing, constant travel to Hawaiʻi, attendance at multiple hula workshops, and private lessons with multiple kumu have prepared her for becoming a Polynesian dance teacher (ibid.). Susan Madec, conversely, started dancing hula at the age of 10. However, she also lists having studied with numerous kumu hula. Some of the teachers that Madec has had the ability to study from include Leialoha Amina, Uncle George Naope, Willie Pulama, Māpuana De Silva, Kuʻulei Gumapac, Ray Fonseca, Sonny Ching, Mahealani Uchiyama, Chinky Mahoe, Tuti Kanahele, Kealoha Kalama, Buddy Carson, Coline Aiu, Auntie Manu Lono, and Blaine Kamalani Kia. Madec also studied as a student of Josie de Baat for approximately 13 years (Madec, Personal Interview). Paul Tavai-Latta also lists a number of teachers who helped inform his dancing, based not only in hula, but also in other Polynesian dance styles. Some of these teachers were Uncle George Naʻope, Uncle Joseph Kahaulelio, Kalani Poʻomaihealani, Aunty Vicky [Holt Takamine]’s haumāna60 such as Kuʻulei Hazelwood, Uncle Chinky Mahoe, Coco Temaeva, Turepu Turepu from Rarotonga, and Kapiolani Butterworth. However, Latta also acknowledges the role that nature and life

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60 Haumāna: Student or students
experience had to play in his dance training. He credits the elements of the Earth, the senses, feelings such as pain, excitement and nervousness, trial and error, failures and successes, and so forth, to have all influenced his dance formation. Therefore, in addition to the valuable lessons he has gained by learning from kumu hula and other dancers, Latta adds that “life has been, my own life has been my teacher.” (Latta, Personal Interview). The depth at which each of these hula teachers has studied with the people they’ve listed is not confirmed, however I believe that, in general, the instruction is limited to a number of workshops or private lessons, as mentioned by de Baat, where one or two hula numbers would have been taught. This is vastly different from most Hawaiian hālau experiences where a student is claimed by their kumu hula and is accountable to them in all of their hula and Hawaiian culture activities. Thus, a kumu hula decides when or if a student is ready to ‘ūniki, and should that student become a kumu hula themself, they still respond to the guidance and tutelage of their kumu hula and the lineage from which their hula traditions come. In many cases, a kumu hula also becomes a mentor and guide in the other aspects of the student’s life as well. It is unknown, or rather the hula teachers in Canada did not mention in their interviews if there was a specific person who gave them a blessing to become hula teachers themselves61, who informed the creation and naming of their hula group, and to whom they still have ties and a direct connection when faced with questions about hula.

Takamine, as opposed to the three previous teachers, attributes her hula education predominantly to one person: kumu hula Maiki Aiu Lake (Takamine, Personal Interview).

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61 Although not specifically mentioned in the interview granted for this thesis, as a former student of Paul Tavai-Latta, I have been told that the group’s Hawaiian name is derived from the Hawaiian name given to Paul by kumu hula George Na‘ope.
However, her academic and professional experiences have also qualified her to be kumu hula and competition judge. In addition to being a regular judge at the 3 Days of Aloha Hapa Haole Competition, Takamine has also been a member of the prestigious Merrie Monarch Hula Competition judging panel. In addition to having ʻūniki from Maiki Aiu Lake in 1975 and starting her own hālau in 1977, Takamine has also graduated from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa with a Bachelor’s degree in Dance Ethnology from the Music Department and a Master’s degree in Dance Ethnology from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Department of Theatre and Dance. Moreover, starting in her teenage years, she would dance professionally in different settings with different musicians and kumu, which according to her, helped her to learn different styles of dance. She says: “So as a dancer that comes out of Aunty Maiki, you have her tradition. But when you go into a Polynesian show or a Hawaiian show, such as with Danny Kaleikini […] with Iva Kinimaka, with Zulu, with Melveen Leed, you have different choreographers… And Bill Kaiwa.” she adds. “Then you learn to dance other people’s styles of hula and choreography. So I think all of that experience gives me a good foundation.” (ibid.). Takamine states that while the cultural foundation is the most important, the educational side (such as her university background) is a “bonus” for having the technical and practical educational skills for teaching (ibid.).

When asked about whether or not they felt that mainland North Americans placed a lot of emphasis on the connection of the grass skirt with Hawai‘i, Josie de Baat expresses that while she feels that people on the Mainland, especially tourists, equate the grass skirt with Hawai‘i, to her personally, this connection is not that important. She claims not to use variations of the grass
skirt, and prefers rather just the ti leaf skirt, which she considers “real Hawaiian.” Furthermore, in terms of performances, she only uses the grass skirt in the “odd number to please the audience and when the song is from the Hollywood era.” Finally, she believes that when watching hula, local/Hawaiian audiences expect that the dancers perform from the heart and understand the meaning of the mele. Similarly, she writes that if a Mainland audience has knowledge of the language, they would expect the same things from a hula performance. If not, however “they want to be entertained.” (de Baat, Personal Interview).

On her part, Susan Madec also acknowledges that the grass skirt plays a significant role in Mainland perspectives on hula and Hawai‘i. In fact, she says “I think that [the grass skirt] is the first thing they would think about.” (Madec, Personal Interview). She expresses that she personally finds this connection “annoying,” as she doesn’t like that mainland audiences “think the hula is just about a cute girl in a skimpy outfit on a beach.” Madec also expresses that it would be acceptable however, if people were aware that the grass skirt was part of a period for the dance rather than “all it is.” She does however, use [artificial] ti leaf, raffia, and cellophane skirts in her shows as long as the song is from the specific era. She says “my younger dancers use grass skirts for hapa haole era songs and ti-leaf skirts for implement or some upbeat tempo songs.” (ibid.). She feels that Mainland audiences expect a hula performance to be “entertaining, cute, sexy, pretty.” Contrariwise, a local/Hawaiian audience would expect “their culture to be portrayed respectfully and authentically no matter what era we are dancing about.” (ibid.).

As for Paul Tavai-Latta, he feels that the grass skirt’s role in the representation of the Hawaiian culture is “an artificial one.” Instead, for Latta, the imagery of the grass skirt evokes
thoughts of Tahiti and Rarotonga. He says that “The full length grass skirt [made of \textit{more\textsuperscript{\textregistered}}] worn on the hip that the body uses to move in rhythm and beat is definitely a Tahitian and Cook Island memory. Even in a hula, and in Tonga, Samoa, other cultures that do wear a ‘skirt’ will wear it on the waist and [as] more of a decoration, a prop, or garment, but not really as a ‘tool’ for dancing.” (Latta, Personal Interview). Further explaining the artificiality of the grass skirt in Hawaiian culture, Latta expresses that the following:

I think that the world will always put their hands to a kāholo\textsuperscript{62} right position, flop them around, say the words ‘hula hula hula hula’ and wiggle their ōkole\textsuperscript{63} as if they are wearing a grass skirt. And the funny thing is, is none of those things are Hawaiian at all! Maybe the hands, kāholo to the right, to some degree, obviously. And the word hula spelt always “h-o-o-l-a-h” and wiggling the hips frantically. But, you go into a Hawaiian store, you buy a hula doll and it’s going to have a grass skirt on the hip with the machine or batteries shaking the hip. It’s the farthest thing from traditional Hawaiian culture or dance but that’s what people want to see. No different than if you ask them “What’s your favourite Hawaiian hula ‘auana?” They’ll say Elvis Presley […] (ibid.).

Latta, like de Baat and Madec, expresses that when dressing his students in a grass skirt, he requires that they know the history behind the style and mele. “I demand that my students know exactly what they’re wearing,” begins Latta, “why they’re wearing it, for the song that they’re wearing it, for the era that they are representing, and also having to keep costs, and parameters in mind. It’s hard to have lau tī skirts in Surrey [Canada]. But, we’ll wear artificial lau tī skirt to represent the authentic. […]” Finally, in terms of audience expectations, Latta is an optimist in saying that he feels “one can have the best of both worlds” as long as there is an awareness of what is being presented on the part of the performers as well as the audience:

\textsuperscript{62} Kāholo: Hula movement considered a ‘vamp’ step consisting of four steps to either the left or right side.

\textsuperscript{63} Ōkole: Buttocks
I think that kumu and haumāna and audiences can have a little bit of everything. There is nothing wrong with variety, there is nothing wrong with multicultural, there is nothing wrong with mixing and blending, borrowing and sharing, [...] I think where [...] the anthropological problem comes in, is when the student, including the audience, doesn’t know where one thing stops and one thing starts, be it a cellophane hula skirt, be it fluorescent pūʻili of the 60s, be it [...] multicoloured, artificial coloured feathers of an ‘uliʻuli, be it [...] hapa haole songs that were written on the Mainland but made popular in Hawaiʻi, be it a coconut bra that is only a Tahitian garment. So, teachers and students need to know what is indigenous and what is borrowed. And then go for it! Go for it! [...] I think you can have a little bit of everything so long as you know where it comes from. I think when a person is served dinner I think they have a right to know if it was homemade or if it was a Swanson microwave dinner. I just think knowledge of where it came from is going to propel the youth into the future with the knowledge, the true authentic knowledge of the past. (ibid.).

In a similar reaction to the grass skirt, kumu hula Vicky Holt Takamine expresses that to her, the grass skirt evokes images of dance in the Pacific, because “every probably Polynesian island group has some skirt that they use for [dancing].” Furthermore, she feels that Mainland North Americans placing so much of a connection between Hawaiʻi and the grass skirt is “probably correct because that’s the image that [the marketing and tourism industries of Hawaiʻi] have projected. It’s part of the Hawaiʻi Visitors Bureau promotion to show an image of a grass or lāʻi skirt and of hula, and it is part of our tradition. I don’t have a problem with that.” (Takamine, Personal Interview). Takamine expresses that she loved to dance in cellophane skirts as a hula student, as her kumu Aunty Maiki “always made us feel like this was the right thing to do. It was the period time, we did a lot of hapa haole songs in cellophane.” Takamine feels that when worn and performed properly, “a cellophane skirt is an attractive and very sensual costume to wear.” Nowadays, she loves having her own students perform in cellophane, especially her keiki for whom are made skirts of a polyester string in different colours. Takamine exclaims how fun and cute the skirts are. In terms of audience expectations, she feels that audiences in Hawaiʻi have...
more knowledge in what good hula is “because they’re exposed to it all the time,” they generally are “looking for good technique and good choreography and precision.” On the other hand, Mainland audiences, who don’t know much between the difference between good hula and improper dancing of hula, will find any performance fun. “I don’t think they know the difference between the selection of songs and performances and what’s appropriate for that.” (ibid.).

Moreover, she feels that due to the misleading information that has been promoted to the Mainland audiences, they seem to find that anything that looks like hula in a Tahitian skirt is acceptable. In addition to promotional and educational materials saying “This is a hula!” and illustrating a Tahitian dancer, Takamine cites the idea of Polynesian lū‘au shows may add to some of the confusion regarding the different dances that exist within the South Pacific. And while some of the lū‘au shows do announce the difference cultures from which the dances originate, perhaps some of this information is lost due to audience neglect. She expresses that often the various dances are all taken as hula, but educating the audiences of how vast and diverse Polynesia is is key (ibid.).

In the following Critical Analysis portion of this study, this discussion on the range of opinions regarding the grass and cellophane skirt will be further brought to light. I will examine why such a range of attitudes towards it exists, and why this piece of costuming is crucial to understand when exploring how hula is viewed outside of Hawaiʻi.
What is real?
What is legitimate?
What is believable?
What is acceptable?

What is deceit?

I have often reflected on the word ‘real’ and what it means. The Oxford English Dictionary offers numerous definitions such as “Actually existing as a thing or occurring in fact; not imagined or supposed”; “(Of a substance or thing) not imitation or artificial; genuine”; “Complete; utter (used for emphasis) [such as in] ‘the tour turned out to be a real disaster’” and so forth (“oxforddictionaries.com”). However none of these definitions seem to be of much help if I were to ask myself: “Am I a real hula dancer?” Discovering the conditions to substantiate a positive answer to this question lie far beyond any dictionary definition. Varying factors also complicate the question. For instance, does the answer change when I perform in Canada versus when I dance in Hawai‘i? What does each audience need to see for them to consider me a real hula dancer? As in the case of traditional Hawaiian graduation rituals (ʻūniki), must somebody confer upon me the status of hula dancer? And perhaps more importantly, what do I need to feel within myself for this statement to be true?

While reflecting on this idea of what is ‘real,’ in the greater sense of the word, I cannot help but think back to my training in critical studies in French literature. In particular, I am reminded of my readings on postmodernism, and the way postmodernists approached this concept. In this chapter, I will bridge different modes of thinking by connecting relevant ideas.
that I have contemplated in my literary theory studies with my practice as research in hula. In particular, my work in this chapter will reference the philosophical and social theories of Jean Baudrillard. Although originally from France, Baudrillard’s work reflects his considerations of society and culture on a global level. His publications have touched on “fundamental changes in politics, culture, and human beings; and the impact of new media, information, and cybernetic technologies in the creation of a qualitatively different social order […]” (Kellner) among many things. Due to the evolving political climate, the developing technologies during Hawaii’s Territorial Era, and the impact they may have had on the Hawaiian culture, referencing Baudrillard’s work seems to me an effectual way to present some of my ideas on hula. I have chosen this thinker, not only because of his appropriate ideas on social and cultural change, but because I am situating my research and studies transnationally: since my thesis focuses on the perspectives of non-Hawaiians on hula, in order to understand how certain globalized attitudes were conceived, non-Hawaiian thought, in this case, could be of value. I hope to bring to light some new ideas to consider on the image of the hapa haole hula girl in a grass skirt by juxtaposing some of postmodernist major lines of thought, and especially to those of Jean Baudrillard, to research already completed by both Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians alike. Charmaine I. Kaimikaua has also found value by considering multiple schemata in the study of cultural issues. She writes, “To understand the politics of culture is to locate frameworks calling into question dominant, critical ideologies that do not participate in addressing ambivalence and differences of culture.” (Kaimikaua 24). She too, addresses postmodernism in addition to deconstructionism and postcolonialism in her dissertation entitled “The Politics of Cultural
Preservation: Communicating Identity, Resistance, and Empowerment for Hawaiians in a Southern California Hula Hālau.” However, for the scope of this thesis, I will limit the analysis of the image of the grass clad hula dancer to chosen notions that exist within postmodern theory.

Selected Concepts in Postmodernism

According to Linda Hucheon, “‘postmodernism’, [is] the word now used to describe a certain kind of art and theory born in and flourishing after the infamous counter-cultural 1960s” (Hucheon 122). Moreover, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy gives credit to Jean-François Lyotard and his 1979 publication The Postmodern Condition as the initial usage of the word ‘postmodernism’ in philosophical work (Aylesworth). While situating postmodernism’s first appearance in history may be relatively straightforward, clearly defining the term is more challenging. While varying opinions as to whether the ‘postmodern’ refers to a moment, condition, style, or historical period (Hucheon 120), there are certain distinct elements that are commonly recognized across the many branches of postmodern thought.

The rejection of metanarratives is one of the key elements of postmodernism. Hucheon cites Lyotard in saying:

There are countless ‘little narratives’ (petites histoires), […] that jockey for position, begging for our attention and allegiance. There is no single Truth; there are, instead, multiple truths, thus causing what he called a crisis of legitimization. What the postmodern did was deprive the modern of its idea of a single anchoring center (it was thus ‘de-centered’) and any certainty (as rationally established). This was the effect of what Lyotard calls the postmodern ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’ (Lyotard 1984: xxiv). (Hucheon 124)
Thus, rather than one definitive truth, or accepted story or explanation, multiple voices are at play that must be considered. Moreover, in keeping with this skepticism of metanarratives, postmodernists hold the view that even culture is made of “perpetually competing stories, whose effectiveness depends not so much on an appeal to an independent standard of judgment, as upon their appeal to the communities in which they circulate […]” (Butler 29). As such, postmodernists speak out against any “‘dominant ideologies’ that help maintain the status quo.” (ibid.). What this idea refers to is the questioning of who has created the most widely accepted perspectives, and maybe even stereotypes, surrounding a culture and for what purpose? It is a critique of the defining of subordinate groups by factions in power, and their ensuring that those who aren’t remain marginalized. As kumu hula Vicky Holt Takamine has suggested in the interview she kindly granted with me, she feels that due to the Hawai‘i Visitors Bureau’s use of the grass skirt and hula dancing in their promotional materials, that the prevalent imagery of this hapa haole hula girl outside of Hawai‘i makes sense. It is with a questioning postmodernist attitude that I will later in this chapter examine whether this is an example of a group in power who introduced the Hawaiian culture to the populations of Western Canada and the American Pacific Northwest, why they had chosen this image, and whether in these areas, dominant ideologies were created to characterize the Hawaiian people and their way of life. This may help create an understanding of possible implications of the image of the grass and cellophane skirt clad hula dancer still currently playing a major role in perspectives in the Hawaiian diaspora.

Another key concept tied to the postmodern condition is the distrust of images. As a visual means to disseminate dominant ideologies, the questioning of images and photography are
in keeping with the “skeptical attitude” that is central to postmodern thought (Butler 13). With the invention of photography in particular, and later the development of motion pictures and the increasingly rapid technologies used to transfer these images transnationally, groups in power with various motives had a very effectual means of creating, manipulating, and sharing their views. Christopher Butler writes, “And yet in our new ‘information society’, paradoxically enough, most information is apparently to be distrusted, as being more of a contribution to the manipulative image-making of those in power than to the advancement of knowledge.” (3).

Thus, while image sharing through evolving media technologies give the impression of a greater awareness of current global actualities, postmodern thinkers insist on questioning motivations behind any representations. Jean Baudrillard, whose publications reflect his thoughts on society in both Europe and America, posits that “[o]ur culture […] has been inundated by trashy, kitsch, mass-market products, which contribute to our society of simulation and consumerism […]” (Baudrillard cited by Felluga). Should this be so, it is important to consider images and their function within a culture of commercialization and the attempt to appeal to the popular tastes of a specific regions. Recalling the nostalgic images of Hawai‘i from the early 1900s, DeSoto Brown describes the iconic hula girl in the following way:

The embodiment of Hawai‘i has forever been, and probably forever will be, a beautiful woman clad in native dress. She turns up in all sorts of places for all sorts of reasons. She offers a lei or plays the ukulele or dances the hula or pulls in a fishing net; she pours beer or ginger ale or pineapple juice and hopes you’ll try some: she sweeps with a new broom to add a touch of glamour to the otherwise prosaic world of housekeeping […]. She is charming and alluring and always hospitable, especially to any Caucasian man.

This could be said to be the story behind the Hawaiian female who seems to have graced the presence of every aspect of Hawaiian commercial art. She is, in fact, a more exotic version of the ideal woman envisioned in American popular culture for decades. (Brown 57)
With specific attributes and accessories, this distinct and often employed visualization of a Hawaiian female, functioning within a culture of consumerism, and developed to appeal to a targeted society’s popular culture, is the perfect subject for our postmodern analysis.

Other images used within the sphere of what is considered kitsch have been the focus of other articles. One example is Kaori O’Conner’s treatment of the grass shack. She questions the function of this piece of Hawaiian imagery providing the following ideas: “[…] What is [the grass shack]? An example of inauthentic ‘tourist kitsch,’ part of a legitimate popular art tradition, or a significant object of material culture that cannot be understood outside its ethnohistorical context?” (O’Connor 252). Throughout the article, she discusses the repercussions of pieces of Hawaiian iconography being viewed as kitsch. For instance, O’Connor cites Lisa Kahaleole Hall’s opinion that “by making Hawai‘ian-ness [sic] seem ridiculous, kitsch functions to undermine sovereignty struggles in a very fundamental way.” (O’Connor 255). Furthermore,

A culture without dignity cannot be conceived of as having sovereign rights, and the repeated marketing of kitsch Hawai‘ian-ness leads to non-Hawai‘ians’ misunderstanding and degradation of Hawai‘ian culture and history. Bombarded with such kitsch, along with images of leisure and paradise, non-Hawai‘ians fail to take Hawai‘ian sovereignty seriously and Hawai‘ian activism remains invisible to the mainstream. (ibid.).

Hall is also cited by Yamashiro who writes about the consequences of “the (over) marketing of Hawai‘i as kitsch.” (17). However, Yamashiro also weighs the negative consequences with the positive aspects of this type of tourist art. Yamashiro identifies that there exists within the Hawaiian community, people who contend that these popularized ‘Hawaiiana’ images and developments in Hawaiian music that led to the hapa haole era are something to be proud of. She identifies kumu hula Vicky Holt Takamine who through her annual Hapa Haole Hula, Music, and
Film Festival held in Honolulu, Hawai‘i speaks to the survivalist function of the hapa haole era.

“According to Takamine, ‘[T]he hapa haole period served a real purpose…. It kept the Hawaiian culture alive’” writes Yamashiro, reproducing a quote that was originally published by Drury 2003 (Yamashiro 17).

The hula girl is further appropriate for a postmodern evaluation as the image fits within the general explanation that is attributed to postmodern art and images. In particular, postmodern art is said to often demonstrate qualities such as repetition and lack of originality. Butler continues to write that “[m]uch postmodernist visual art is an apparently easily repeatable, deliberately depthless art of the surface […]. For many, postmodernist work can only be hybrid, stylistically mixed, and indebted by resemblance to its predecessors.” (Butler 87). From the early staged photographs of hula dancers during the Territorial Era to the illustrations so commonly currently seen in popular culture and advertising, it is important to question whether the Hawaiian way of life, through the plethoric use of this image, has been reconstructed or even appropriated to serve a specific purpose. “If our Hawaiian lady wasn’t dancing the hula,” writes DeSoto Brown, “and at least she ought to have been clutching an ukulele to show her musical tastes.” (60). He continues to list the often repeated hula girl attributes: “In fact, the ukulele was almost a required accessory to go with the grass skirt and lei, and many a pretty gal put on all three and was thus transformed into a ‘real Hawaiian’. It was through representations like these that the popular idea of the standardized hula girls was established all over the world.” (ibid.). Again we see that the grass skirt is an essential element that works in conjunction with other identifiers of the often-utilized image of the hula dancer. Moreover it again it is these three
precise accessories of the hula girl that saw most repeatedly mentioned in the surveys taken for the fieldwork of this thesis project. Who chose this representation of the female Hawaiian, and do these images accurately reflect the Hawaiian people and their rich culture and traditions? With no other context or information about Hawai‘i, it would seem that those who have not yet visited the Islands might only have a certain situated knowledge, a metanarrative so to speak, lacking a full picture or other ‘truths’ about Hawai‘i. A 1912 article in Paradise of the Pacific read:

The reputation of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians has suffered a good deal from the hula. It has caused the islands to be pictured the world over as a land of women wearing waistbands of straw and men wearing less, and, far worse, it constantly brings tourists here, as it has for, lo, these many years, looking for performances such as Hawaiians never dreamed of giving until the haole demand for them brought the inevitable supply. How many travellers are there abroad on the face of the earth with unrepeatable stories of the things they have seen which they think is the ‘Hawaiian Hula’ when what they really saw was not a Hawaiian hula at all, but a vile show gotten up to give them what they wanted? […] (Hopkins and Erikson 60-61)

While there were shows by respected kumu hula and their students that were viewed by tourists, from this passage it would seem that there may have also existed people who adapted the dance (or perhaps they weren’t even hula dancers to begin with) who sought to respond to tourist demand and appeal to audience expectations, which in turn may have been conditioned by advertisements about Hawai‘i in the diaspora. This passage, though severely one sided, demonstrates that in the early 20th century there already existed a range of perspectives on how hula was perceived, particularly between the people living in Hawai‘i and those in the diaspora. There was a shift in how hula was considered, and the photography and illustrations created and shared outside of Hawai‘i mirrored this change. As will be discussed later, the very function of hula experienced a transformation from ritual to secularized performance art, and the evolution
and proliferation of the image of the female hula dancer seems to have also reflected this switch.

Christopher Butler writes: “[…] showing photography to be always a representation, always-already-seen. Their images are purloined, confiscated, appropriated, stolen. In their work, the original cannot be located, it is always deferred; even the self which might have generated an original is shown to be itself a copy.” (Douglas Crimp cited by Butler 87). It would seem that this was the case with the image of the grass clad hula girl used in tourism and Hawaiian propaganda. Through her creation, the image of the indigenous hula dancer was reworked, and for some, particularly in the diaspora, eventually lost. In the book Hawai‘i Recalls: Selling Romance to America: Nostalgic Images of the Hawaiian Islands: 1910-1950, DeSoto Brown qualifies the nostalgic images used to represent Hawai‘i during these years by saying:

This book is all about fantasy. It’s a depiction of Hawai‘i that was developed over a period of about 40 years by people who were promoting the islands. During this time – from about 1910 up through the 1950s – an imaginary version of Hawai‘i was fabricated by the businesses that really needed to make the rest of the country and the world aware of the islands: the steamship companies and airlines, the tour guide and car rental firms, and even the pineapple growers and alohawear manufacturers. (Brown 8)

Using words such as ‘imaginary’ and ‘fabricated’ suggest that a constructed Hawai‘i was being projected to potential tourists. According to Brown, the aforementioned business owners had much to gain by popularizing Hawai‘i as a tourist destination, and thus, they shaped a specific image according to their needs. And while through retrospect and since the cultural renaissance of the Hawaiian culture that began in the 1970s, the survivalist and positive promotional nature of these images for the Hawaiian people may be apparent, it is important to acknowledge and analyze the fact that the constructs devised around the Hawaiian Islands continue to strongly
endure in Canadian and Mainland American attitudes to this day, as evidenced by the surveys taken at recent Polynesian dance events.

Thus, taking into consideration postmodern theory and the distrustful approach to images, it is important to explore dominant attitudes, stereotypical judgments, and situated knowledge that may have trickled down over the years. Of the development of postmodern thinking, Butler writes: “The primacy of Western culture (and any privileged ordering by reference to it) also had to be doubted. The aim often enough was morally admirable: to look to the margin, to the repressed, to be excluded, and to argue for a subversion or reversal of dominant values.” (105).

In the same vein, one must start to question history and the images that initially seemed to truly describe the past to see if the Hawaiian people were marginalized and prevented from creating their own global identity. We thus return to our question of what is ‘real?’ Moreover, in the case of people living in the Hawaiian diaspora, what of that which they know about hula and the grass skirt is real? Christopher Butler refers to Frederic Jameson who “points to a defining sense of the postmodern as ‘the disappearance of a sense of history’ in the culture, a pervasive depthlessness, a ‘perpetual present’ in which the memory of tradition is gone.” (Butler 110) It is for this reason that it is worth revisiting what is known about Hawaiian history, especially what is known about it on the Mainland, through a postmodern lens.

Baudrillard, Simulations, and Simulacra

For some time now, I have wondered if it is possible that a simulacrum (as conceived by Baudrillard) of hula has somehow been created in the diaspora. There are five main phenomena
summarized by Dino Felluga, including Language and Ideology, Media Culture, Exchange-Value, Urbanization, and Multinational Capitalism that Baudrillard uses to explain the “loss of distinction between ‘reality’ and the simulacrum” (Felluga). Is it possible that perhaps the grass and cellophane skirt hold such significance in the perspectives of hula in the diaspora because a simulacrum of hula has been created with the development and promotion of the hapa haole style outside of Hawai‘i? “Baudrillard is not merely suggesting that postmodern culture is artificial, because the concept of artificiality still requires some sense of reality against which to recognize the artifice. His point, rather, is that we have lost all ability to make sense of the distinction between nature and artifice.” (ibid.). In keeping with this thought, I will now explore whether in the southern region of Western Canada and in the American Pacific Northwest, hapa haole hula exists as a simulacrum since it is in reference to this specific style that is considered ‘real’ hula, but more importantly the ‘only’ hula to many, and the realities and multi-faceted nature of hula as it is known in Hawai‘i, and by Hawaiians living elsewhere, are not taken into consideration. Thus, what follows in this chapter will demonstrate how through retrospect, Baudrillard’s five phenomena are useful in considering key events happening in the Territorial Era of Hawai‘i.

According to “French sociologist Jean Baudrillard[, p]ostmodernity brought with it a crisis in how we represent and understand the world around us.” (Hucheon 124) “His idea is that with postmodernity, signs have been relieved of their function of referring to the world, and ‘this brings about the expansion of the power of capital into the realm of the sign, of culture and representation, along with the collapse of modernism’s prized space of autonomy’.” (Butler 111) In other words, signs no longer link back to their original, nor need to hold truth in their meaning
or representation. Contrarily, signs may be misconstrued in such a way that they are a tool used
for capitalistic gain. Again returning to this idea of distrustful images, for Baudrillard and “[f]or
many postmodernists, we live in a society of the image, primarily concerned with the production
and consumption of mere ‘simulacra’. Information, by now, is just something that we
buy.” (Butler 112). Thus, according to Baudrillard, “we have lost contact with the ‘real’ in
various ways.” (Baudrillard cited by Felluga). Due to capitalistic efforts that play to human
desires, the world is full of signs largely transmitted through ever increasing media technology.
However, these signs are “mere simulacra, which replace real things and their actual
relationships […] in a process which Baudrillard calls ‘hyperrealization.’” (Butler 114). Butler
continues: “So we never really get what we want anyway. But we might on the contrary say that
we do indeed get what we pay for however it is advertised […]” (Butler 114).

Keeping in mind the overuse in the Hawaiian diaspora of the hapa haole hula girl, I must
again question her place in history, and how closely she resembled the actual hula dancers of the
eras that preceded her creation. If her design was purely intended for advertising, how closely
was she modelled after the truth, and how much of her was fabricated and then shared with the
rest of the world? In Baudrillard’s concept of the hyperreal, that which is constructed (due to
signs) is taken to be considered more real than what is veritably real. Could this be the case with
the consideration of hula in Western Canada and the American Pacific Northwest for those who
associate the grass skirt and little else with hula dancers? When the idea that the grass clad hula
dancer is the ‘authentic’ hula and especially the only familiar version of the dance, may this be
considered ‘the precession of simulacra’ for those to whom this version of the hula dancer initially comes to mind?

It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory--precession of simulacra--that engenders the territory, and if one must return to the fable, today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map. (Baudrillard 1)

In this often-cited passage, Baudrillard explains that it is the simulation that remains while the original is forgotten, or not even considered. It is the simulacrum that continues to exist and is recognized through the ages.

Baudrillard also writes that the hyperreal does not even need to make sense. It occurs without any necessary relation to the original. It exists to serve a purpose, and it is considered as truth without any link to the archetype it once stemmed from. “It no longer needs to be rational, because it no longer measures itself against either an ideal or negative instance. […] [I]t is no longer really the real, because no imaginary envelops it anymore.” (Baudrillard 2). “[…] It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real […]” (ibid.). Therefore, while most postmodernist speak of the distrust of images, Baudrillard is more nihilistic and speaks of “the murderous power of images, murderers of the real, murderers of their own model” (Baudrillard 5). Has the image of the grass clad hapa haole hula girl as she appears in tourism advertisements eradicated the perceived existence of other, more indigenous, or original forms of hula for the people who live in the Hawaiian diaspora? Is the standardized hula girl, in the minds of those living in the Hawaiian diaspora “[m]ore real than the real” as Baudrillard would say (Baudrillard 81)? Does her prevalence in the minds of certain populations make her the ‘authentic’
representation of hula dancing over hula dancers in other costuming? What would be the result if a person in the Hawaiian diaspora were to be asked about the pā’ū clad hula dancer? Would they have any inkling of what that was? Or has the grass skirt replaced this article of clothing as the ‘real’ and only important hula attire for certain people in the southern region of Western Canada, the Pacific Northwest, and perhaps beyond? I do believe that the grass and cellophane skirts represents a very positive period in the Hawaiian history (although this is a debatable opinion for many) so much so that I have felt the need to study the era in depth. However, the concern of this thesis lies in the existence of unchanging views of Hawaiian culture in the diaspora that demonstrate the many pervasive implications of globalization and cultural stereotypes.

**Multinational Capitalism**

When discussing a nation or a peoples’ identity, it is important to explore who chose the symbols that would represent them. Furthermore, do these symbols vary across different groups of people? For instance, what symbols would the kānaka maoli use to represent Hawai‘i, compared to Hawai‘i locals (residents of the state who are not of Hawaiian descent), Mainland North Americans, or even people of other continents? Baudrillard posits, “it is capital that now defines our identities.” (Baudrillard cited by Felluga). Due to the growing influence of a capitalist culture, the power to characterize national identities lies with those who have the most financial sway and motivation. This is how the phenomenon of multinational capitalism creates a separation between the real and the simulated, and as such that which is known about a people may not always authentically reflect their cultural truths.
In their article “The Ethics of Representation—Packaging Paradise: Consuming the 50th State,” Janet L. Borgerson and Jonathan E. Schroeder evaluate long-playing records as an important mass media form that reveals how the image of Hawai‘i was created and shared. They cite Richard Lippke’s resolution that “we ought to be concerned about the enormous power that corporations have to impose beliefs, values, and attitudes congenial to their economic interests on individuals.” (Borgerson and Schroeder, “Consuming the 50th State” 475-476). Furthermore, specifically in regard to “Hawai‘i, as a concept”, they claim that it “has no status beyond the representation constructed by the dominant culture.” (Borgerson and Schroeder, “Consuming the 50th State” 478). Music was used as a means of sharing Hawaiian culture to those beyond the Islands’ shores, “the music and its associated cultural forms have become the natural sign of Hawaiian culture-more so than abstract words, which, we learn, Hawaiians did not write down.” (ibid).

Music was an important marketing strategy in the campaign to assimilate Hawai‘i into the United States, incorporating a cultural tradition of the exotic ‘Other’ into Western culture through an icon of modern recording technology—the hi-fi stereo record. […] The marketing of Hawaiian popular music—through radio shows and record albums—aided the transformation of Hawai‘i from primitive paradise into the 50th State. Borgerson and Schroeder, “Consuming Hawaiian Music” 46).

Thus, according to Borgerson and Schroeder, as evidenced by records, record album art, and liner notes, Hawai‘i for consumers only exists as a construct resulting from a colonial gaze that was imposed and distributed transnationally.

During the Territorial Era of Hawai‘i, several business groups such as transportation companies, travel agencies, and clothing manufacturers, put their efforts in making Hawai‘i known outside of the Islands as a tourist paradise. While it was the native Hawaiians who
originally implemented the grass skirt and its variations into their dance attire during the reign of King David Kalākaua, the skirt’s image was modified and sexualized by settler businessmen who could profit by utilizing their rendition of the skirt in visitor propaganda. The control of the Hawaiian image by foreigners is deeply based in the evolution of the political climate of the Islands. According to Kaori O’Connor, “[b]y the 1850s, the missionaries’ political power was in eclipse. Hawai‘i now had a substantial foreign community grown wealthy on trade, whaling, and the new plantation enterprises, who were bitterly opposed to the missionaries. Intermarriage between Hawaiians and foreigners had become common among all classes of island society.” (262). Moreover, “[m]embers of the merchant group, known locally as the ‘royalist party,’ formed a court around a Hawaiian monarchy intent on regaining cultural and political authority. […] Island society during the later Hawaiian monarchy, particularly under King Kalākaua (reigned 1874–1891), was known internationally for its elegance and sophistication.” (ibid.). However, certain crucial events would shift political power in Hawai‘i away from the Hawaiian monarchy and the Hawaiian people. In 1875, a Reciprocity Treaty was passed between Hawai‘i and the United States that boosted the sugar industry and the trade of other goods. However, most of the profits went to American businessmen rather than the kānaka maoli, and this boom in the trade industry also pushed them off their land due to the expansion of the sugar fields (“Pa‘a Ke Aupuni”). Sugar businessmen and other foreigners in Hawai‘i created the Reform Party, a political group. Many of the members of this group were the children of Protestant missionaries who arrived from the United States in the 1820s. They forced King Kalākaua to sign a new constitution known as the Bayonet Constitution. This document marked
a significant change in the political power of Hawai‘i, as it led to members of the Reform Party holding seats in King Kalākaua’s cabinet, as well as giving them veto power over the king. Moreover, it gave American and European foreign residents the ability to vote in Hawaiian Kingdom elections. However, when the sugar boom ended due to political developments in the United States’ markets, the sugar businessmen started to plan the annexation of Hawai‘i to the United States. (ibid). By 1893, a group of these businessmen, with no legal purview, declared themselves a provisional government and falsely claimed that the Hawaiian government had ended. This resulted in the installation of Sanford B. Dole as their president, and declared themselves to be the rulers of what they called the Republic of Hawai‘i. “The Republic of Hawai‘i did not emerge by the will of Hawaii’s people. It was the creation of a handful of powerful businessmen who had no regard for the Hawaiian kingdom and its people.” (ibid.). July 6, 1898 marks the date that Hawai‘i was announced to be annexed by the United States despite there being no sound legal jurisdiction to have allowed this. This was the beginning of the Territorial Era of Hawai‘i, which subsequently lead to further efforts of bringing Hawai‘i to American statehood.

With the Islands’ economy becoming less dependent on trade relations, Hawaii’s settler businessmen—whose major sources of income were from the sugar and pineapple industries—soon sought new methods to make financial profits. (O’Connor 262). In the following passage, O’Conner elucidates the process taken in establishing an image that would spark Hawaii’s tourism industry:

The organized promotion of Hawai‘i as a tourist destination began in 1903. At first, the islands were presented as a typically American resort using images like that of
Moonlight, Hawai‘i and You (in Brown 1982) […], which failed to excite substantial tourist interest. Next, Hawaii’s natural beauties were promoted, using images of colorful sunsets and tropical fish, with similar disappointing results. In February 1924, National Geographic magazine devoted an entire issue to Hawai‘i. Headlined “America’s Strongest Outpost of Defense—the Volcanic and Floral Wonderland of the World” its illustrations focused on the island landscape while the text rehearsed the official representation of Hawai‘i as a modern American community, describing Honolulu as having miles of suburban concrete roads, daily quotations of the New York stock market, large department stores with the latest New York, London, and Paris fashions, and a fine country club with golf courses. The magazine carried a picture of what it called “an old-time Hawaiian grass house” but noted with satisfaction that “the only grass house to be found in the Islands today is carefully preserved in the Bishop Museum and the only hula-hula girls to be seen are those in burlesque shows” (Grosvenor 1924: 120). Even National Geographic was unable to make a thoroughly American Hawai‘i appealing to visitors. Eventually, the fledgling Hawaiian tourist industry had to accept that what the tourist public wanted was the very thing that missionary culture and residual island Puritanism had tried so hard to eradicate—the little brown gal in her little grass shack. (O’Connor 262-263).

Thus, Hawai‘i seems to have failed as a tourist destination when presented as a modern American community. Rather, it was found that the most effective image that could be used in selling the idea of Hawai‘i was that of an idyllic haven recalling an era prior to foreign contact.

Other important factors in the development of Hawaii’s tourist industry were the building of hotels, and the arrival of tourist-carrying cruise ships to the Islands. “Air travel between Hawai‘i and the mainland had to wait until 1935 and the thrilling arrival of Pan American Airways’ China Clipper.” (Brown 90). Nevertheless, “[t]he first of what was to become an urban nightmare of high-rise hotels—the five story Moana—was built in 1901 in the Waikīkī area, which was, at that time, primarily a marshy farmland where rice was grown. (Lewis 124). Matson’s Navigation Company originally sailed to Hawai‘i in the late 1800s carrying freight. However, as interest in tourism to the Hawaiian Islands increased, the company acquired passenger ships in answer to this demand. In 1908, Matson obtained their second vessel to be
known as the Lurline—which could accommodate 51 passengers—and in 1910, they gained the
S.S. Wilhelmina, which held accommodations for 146 passengers (“Matson”). The Matson
Navigation Company was also contributory to the image making of the Hawaiian Islands as they
hired famous artists to create advertisements and other tourist artwork in order to promote their
services. The Matson website states “an ambitious and enduring advertising campaign that
involved the creative efforts of famous photographers such as Edward Steichen and Anton Bruel”
was created, and “Matson commissioned artists to design memorable keepsake menus for the
voyages […]” (ibid.).

Thus, from the onset of the touristic efforts spotlighting the Hawaiian Islands, it was not
the kānaka maoli who were choosing the images to present. Moreover, the profits from tourism
to Hawai‘i largely did not, and still do not, go to native Hawaiians. Rather, they benefitted other
countries. “The majority of money that a tourist spends to vacation here doesn’t remain within
our economy” writes Keawe, a native Hawaiian scholar. “Instead it is ‘repatriated back to the
home countries. In Hawai‘i, these ‘home’ countries are Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Canada,
Australia and the United States.” (Keawe 65). In consideration of multinational capitalism, the
many countries profiting through tourism in Hawai‘i benefit from the ongoing use of
promotional images created by non-Hawaiian businessmen.

Christin J. Mamiya asserts that due to the increased visibility of Hawaiian imagery to
different cultural groups, the tourist industry actually provides an educational advantage.
However, she is quick to point out and explain the many adverse effects that a people can suffer
when it is a foreign entity that determines the representation their culture:
When control over the mechanisms that determine the representation and understanding of a culture (ancient or contemporary) is maintained by an outside group, as is usually the case in ethnic tourism, the native population is denied the opportunity to construct a cultural identity that strengthens their self image and sovereignty. (87-88)

Similarly, postmodernists tend to agree that “imposing political grand narratives are at best mystificatory attempts to keep some social groups in power and others out of it.” (Butler 16). In other words, linked to the idea of the denouncement of metanarratives is the opposition of dominant discourse in function against the marginalized. Thus lies the importance of reevaluating some images and perspectives with a postmodern lens. It is beneficial to look beyond the metanarratives created by dominant groups, and seek additional truths, especially the self-truths of those who had been subordinated. This is a postmodern movement that began in the 1960s and continues in the works of postmodern thinkers today. It suggests the uncovering of non-Euro-American perspectives and the questioning of narratives established during colonial situations, such as the one that existed in Hawai‘i:

The calling of attention to little narratives could be seen, in part, as the result of a series of appositional movements, primarily in Europe and North America, which arose during the 1960s and 1970s. [...] In other parts of the world, decolonization brought with it a generalized awareness not only of challenges to imperial metanarratives but also of the limitations of a purely Euro-American focus. Out of all this came what African American theorist Cornel West aptly called ‘the new cultural politics of difference’ (West 1990). Those who had been ignored by the grand narratives now demanded to be heard. Herein lay the roots of the postmodern focus on those who have been excluded, those variously referred to in the theory as the marginal, the ex-centric, the different or the other. (Hucheon 124)

Specifically speaking of Hawai‘i, Lia O’Neill Moani‘ke‘ala Ah-Lan Keawe echoes similar sentiments of imperialists and colonialists establishing and promoting their own image of subordinated groups. “The politics of storytelling is about power. It is also about identity, and
looking critically at how those in power have crafted a lens—a metaphor that might be thought of as the dominant ideology, dominant narrative, canonical knowledge, etc.—to view the world.” (Keawe 18-19). Keawe continues by saying that “imperialism and colonialism brought complete disorder to colonized people [the “Other”], disconnecting them from their histories, their landscapes, their languages, their social relations and their own ways of thinking, feeling and interacting with the world.” (ibid.).

Baudrillard, too, has spoken specifically against the potential bias of history saying that it “is a strong myth”(47). Furthermore, history is perhaps “the last great myth. It is a myth that at once subtended the possibility of an ‘objective’ enchainment of events and causes and the possibility of a narrative enchainment of discourse” (ibid.). In essence, history is an invention created by humans, and humans have their own motivations for telling a story in a certain way.

“[H]istory and fiction are equally ‘discourses’, that is, ways of speaking about (and thus seeing) the world that are constructed by human beings; both are systems of meaning by which we make sense of the past – and the present. The meaning of history is not therefore in the events but in the narrative (or, quite simply, the story) that makes those past events into present historical ‘facts’. (Hucheon 127)

It is thus here that in keeping with postmodern thought, that I suggest the necessity of accepting multiple truths about Hawaiian culture when considering hula in the Hawaiian diaspora. Especially if non-Hawaiians created the image of the grass clad hula girl during the Territorial Era, this means that kānaka maoli were denied the ability to share their own truths throughout the diaspora. “The language game of the discourse expresses and enacts the authority of those who are empowered to use it within a social group […]. It can also be used to subordinate or exclude or marginalize those who are outside it […].” (Butler 45). Thus, as we have begun to see, after
the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, foreign businessmen living on the Islands sought ways to increase their profits. As they recognized the lucrative gain in creating a booming tourist industry, they also determined what images to spread about Hawai‘i as to maximize visitors, while, at the same time, deny the kānaka maoli a chance to continue to establish for themselves the reputation of a flourishing, civilized, and advanced people, as they had been doing, especially during the reign of King Kalākaua. The following section will attempt to investigate why the image a primitive Hawai‘i was more effective in touristic efforts rather than that of a modern community.

Exchange-Value

Melanie Chan notes that in his book The Consumer Society, Baudrillard explains that commodities are acquired by people who use them to define their status and to distinguish themselves from others. He adds that distinctions in social standing through consumer goods stem from human desires which are insatiable (Chan). This idea relates back to Lacan who stated that “the human psyche is in fact caught in a play between desires and an ‘impossible real’ that ensures our desires are never fulfilled completely and that thus allows them to persist.” (cited by Felluga 81). Therefore, while human wants can never be fully satisfied, it is within the scope of the imaginary that desires can be appeased. As we have already seen, it was powerful business entities that controlled what image of Hawai‘i was shared in the diaspora in order to make a profit from the tourist industry. It is now important to consider the specific aspects island imagery that were chosen to be advertised in order for them to make the most financial gain.
Dino Felluga cites Baudrillard who writes that “[a] culture of consumption has so much taken over our ways of thinking that all reality is filtered through the logic of exchange value and advertising. […]” (Baudrillard cited by Felluga). In essence, exchange-value is when everything is seen for how much it is worth, and it would seem that in deciding how to advertise the Hawaiian Islands, the businessmen considered Hawai‘i for its maximum exchange-value.

[...] Once money became a “universal equivalent,” against which everything in our lives is measured, things lost their material reality (real-world uses, the sweat and tears of the laborer). We began even to think of our own lives in terms of money rather than in terms of the real things we hold in our hands: how much is my time worth? How does my conspicuous consumption define me as a person? According to Baudrillard, in the postmodern age, we have lost all sense of use-value: “It is all capital.” (Felluga)

It would seem that through colonialist efforts an exchange-value was attributed to the Hawaiian Islands and more specifically, the Hawaiian culture, and the Hawaiian hula dancer.

I have often found that when I performed hula in Canada, that in virtually every show, there was some form of grass or cellophane skirt. Similarly, in her interview, Josie de Baat has expressed that while she personally does not find the connection between the grass skirt and Hawai‘i too important, she will implement it in her shows the odd time to “please the audience” provided that this costuming suits the song it is performed to (de Baat, Personal Interview). This idea of conforming to the desires of the Canadian audiences is why I presume my dance teachers made sure to include a grass skirt number in all of their shows. In this sense, it sometimes felt like perhaps the audience would not get their money’s worth unless they saw a ‘real’ hula dance in a grass skirt. As such, even presently, it is seen how costuming has played an important part of the commodification of the hula dancer, and by extension the Hawaiian culture. In her doctoral dissertation, Lia O’Neill Moaniike‘ala Ah-Lan Keawe explains that “[f]or non-indigenous
cultures, hula is understood as a commodity, an identity that can be purchased, or worn like an accessory to an outfit. It is a fad that is hip, cool and fresh like the flavor of the month that rotates with time.” (34). Moreover, it isn’t solely the Hawaiian culture that has been commodified, but also the Hawaiian body itself. “A significant but understudied cultural performance imported from a besieged nation to imperial sites, hula became a novel part of urban and regional entertainments in the US and Europe which rendered Hawaiian bodies into hypervisible commodities.” writes Adria L. Imada of the early transnational hula tours. (“Transnational Hula” 152).

In her article “Transnational Hula as Colonial Culture,” Imada chronicles the experiences of the early performers who danced hula on the Mainland. In doing so, she argues that “even prior to formal colonialisation in 1989, […] that hula operated as a form of colonial culture which brought Hawai‘i and Hawaiians into national and global consciousness.” (151-152). Imada chronicles what may be considered as the prostitution of the image of the hula girl, as the demand for more sexualized dances was sought on the Mainland during the early hula tours. She recounts the journey of Kini (Jennie) Kapahu Wilson and her performance companions in their roles as esteemed hula dancers for King Kalākaua to cultural ambassadors demonstrating hula on the Mainland for the first time.

The commodification of the hula and of hula dancers began when an American tourist in Honolulu named Harry W. Foster convinced Kini and other members of her hālau to tour the United States and to perform hula (Imada, “Transnational Hula” 159). By taking on the role as the group’s promoter, Foster had established for himself a way to make a profit off the exchange-
value of the Hawaiian traditional dance. Kini, accompanied by three other hālau members and
two men who would serve as chanters and drummers, left Honolulu in April of 1892, and while
an American newspaper had “reported that Kalākaua had hand picked dancers to represent
Hawai‘i at the Chicago World’s Fair, this troupe was a private venture that had no relationship
with the Hawaiian monarchy or the provisional government that had overthrown the kingdom in
1893” (Imada, “Transnational Hula” 160).

Despite Kini and her fellow dancers being dedicated and reverent hula haumāna who
followed the strict kapu64 required of hālau students, their experiences on the Mainland required
them to make certain decisions that would change the outward appearance of hula. During pre-
contact Hawai‘i, hula was highly esteemed and was the subject of royal patronage. Young men
and women would be chosen as hula students, and they would study as part of a hālau where
they “lived under dietary and sexual restrictions, where they were taught to chant genealogies,
sing ritual songs, make their own costumes and learn the dances.” (Pollenz 225). The sacred and
strict hula training underwent by the earliest hula students is also described by Angeline Shaka in
her dissertation. She discusses how the po‘e hula65 were “a professional class devoted to the hula
goddess Laka.” (Shaka 9). Furthermore, all throughout a hula dancer’s training “she was
considered taboo” until her graduation, or ‘ūniki, and due to this “sacred status” was restricted to
interaction with only other po‘e hula (Shaka 10). Speaking of modern day hula students, Shaka
mentions that although the training is no longer as ritualized as during the time of the po‘e hula,
a great importance is still given to the ‘ūniki ritual, and with it comes “an awareness of the

64 Kapu: Taboo, prohibition; Sacredness (“wehewehe.org” online Hawaiian-English dictionary).
65 Po‘e hula: Translates to ‘hula people’ and is how hula dancers were known in ancient times.
sacred responsibility of carrying on a hula lineage tradition that the hula ʻōlapa agrees to as part of her graduation.” (ibid.). Kini and the three other dancers who first travelled to America and performed hula at the Chicago World’s Fair (also known as the World’s Columbian Exposition) were all part Hui Lei Mamo, a “glee club” created by King David Kalākaua in 1886 that performed acculturated hula and choral music (Imada, “Transnational Hula” 155-156). This form of hula is known as hula kuʻi and, according to Kini, was invented by King Kalākaua himself. This style combined traditional hula movements to Western musical and performative influences.

After Kalākaua’s death, Kini and two other Hui Lei Mamo members (Pauahi Piano and Annie Grube) and a woman named Nakai, began their training in sacred hula under the tutelage of kumu hula Namakeʻelua, who had been in Honolulu after being summoned by King Kalākaua for his 50th birthday jubilee in 1886 (Imada, “Transnational Hula” 157). Imada describes their sacred training in the following manner:

Their intensive training commenced in 1892, with the young women taking residence in the teacher’s home. […] Kini described the repertoire she learned as ‘very religious’. Hula practice was a part of a sacred realm and governed by strict rules, because hula performances manifested the gods’ and aliʻi’s mana (sacred power) and rank. They probably learned hula and chants in honour of the gods and chiefs, as well as mele maʻi. On the day of the ‘ūniki (ritual graduation), graduates of other hula schools came to watch the four women dance. Only after undergoing ‘ūniki were they released from sacredness and became noa (free). The following day, they celebrated their release with a feast and public performance for friends and family. (Imada, “Transnational Hula” 158).

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66 Namakeʻelua was a kumu hula who was often considered to “‘the chief royal hula-master” during [King Kalākaua’s birthday jubilee.” (Imada, Aloha America 40).

67 Aliʻi: Royalty such as chiefs

68 Mele maʻi: The term ‘maʻi’ usually refers to the genitals and as such, ‘mele maʻi’ are chants composed to honour a person’s, usually a chief’s, sexual organs (for example, speaking of their genitals’ prowess, as procreation was valued in ancient Hawaiian culture).

69 Noa: Released from taboo restrictions
Thus Kini Kapanu and her hula counterparts were all knowledgeable of the ancient forms of hula, as well as the newer developing form, hula kuʻi. Furthermore, despite the dancers’ sacred and rigorous training, they recognized that performing for a new audience meant that they would have to adapt the way they showcased hula, all while maintaining the dance’s integrity. For instance, performances on the Mainland and in Europe at these fair type exhibitions were limited to brief shows of ten minutes while hula in Hawaiʻi could last multiple days and had no time constraints (Imada, “Transnational Hula” 162). Furthermore, styles like the hula ‘ālaʻapapa, were too sacred and hence never performed on the street. Although the hula “was advertised as a ‘naughty dance’ and located within the disreputable Midway, the troupe nevertheless abided by protocol and danced within an enclosed interior space.” (ibid.). Furthermore, once on the Mainland, there was demand for the girls to dance nude, as this was what was expected from “authentic ‘primitive’ women” (Imada, "Transnational Hula" 163):

Female performers faced a particular dilemma; entrusted with specialized cultural training, they were also more susceptible to sexualised demands. They struggled to assert autonomy over their bodies, as some promoters insisted the dancers reveal more of their bodies on stage. Euro-American audiences wanted them to perform nude, as they expected from authentic ‘primitive’ women. A friend of Kini’s described the American expectation for them to be ‘naked, take everything off’. However, Kini fought US promoters to dance fully clothed, as Hawaiian women had from at least the mid-19th century. Dancers did not dance with their breasts bared; they wore a hybrid costume of a cotton blouse, cotton underskirt or pantaloons, and dried ti-leaf skirts, as shown in a photograph of Pauahi and Kini taken in a Chicago photography studio around 1893. (ibid.).

However, regardless of the girls’ refusal to dance naked, and their dedication to accurately performing the hula kuʻi style, as they had learned while dancing in King Kalākaua’s Hui Lei Mamo, and the other hula styles they had studied in hālau, the promotion of hula dancing during
these tours on the Mainland still revolved around a ‘primitive’ and ‘savage’ dance. Imada cites a Chicago observer’s description of the hula: “The hula hula dance [sic] in its native place is a wild barbaric affair, a whirl of lithe bodies and agile brown limbs, a flashing of flowery wreaths and black, savage eyes. The dancers... writhe and twist till they nearly faint from exhaustion.” Imada, “Transnational Hula” 168). According to Imada, during this time of Mainland touring, “hula became a proxy for sexual exploration; that is, for White spectators to experience sexualised contact, however imaginary, with new Native others. […]” (ibid.).

An interesting aspect to note is that the implementation of grass and cellophane skirts also communicates concepts of situated cultural options regarding female body type ideals. As was described in chapter four, part of the significance of the traditional pāʻū skirt worn by pre-contact Hawaiians was to emphasize the size of a female’s reproductive body parts as to invoke enhanced fertility through larger hips and buttocks. Moreover, the solid fabric was also intended to protect the modesty of its wearer. However, the grass and cellophane skirts, in contrast, expose this region of a dancer’s body. Its construction also calls attention to a more slender Euro-American female body type ideal. Was the use of the grass skirt and its variations a choice that was favoured by American promoters since the exchange-value of hula dancers would be increased through sexualization and the adopting of the visual aesthetics of a targeted Mainland audience?

Alluding to the commodification and prostitution of the female Hawaiian dancing body reminds me of a negative instance when I was performing in Victoria, Canada. As my dance teacher and I were preparing for a private show at a patron’s house, I recall hearing audience
members shout: “Bring on the strippers!” I remember feeling annoyed and slightly disgusted. I acknowledge that what is known about Polynesian dancing in Western Canada may seem more sexual than other forms of dance, perhaps due to the greater amount of exposed skin in much of the costuming, especially with the use of coconut bras. Still, referring to us as strippers seemed unnecessary. I truly hope that after having watched the show, they became more informed about this type of cultural dancing.

It should be noted however, that hula shows on the Mainland, from the time of Kini Kapahu to present day, are also an opportunity for kānaka maoli to share their culture as accurately as possible and to gain worldwide recognition. According to Tilley (as cited by O’Connor), for the hula performers of the late 1920s, rather than viewing their performing on the Mainland as “prostitution of traditional culture, […] [dancers] saw it as an arena within which to negotiate and transform culture, […] and at the same time maintain the visibility of elements of traditional Hawaiian culture at a time when they were in eclipse.” (266). Thus, it is due to the strength of all these performers in withstanding the pressures of a Mainland audience to modify traditions in licentious ways that Hawaiians had an opportunity to introduce their values and art forms abroad.

Kini and her fellow dancers continued to perform and tour the Mainland until the Territorial Era of Hawai‘i. According to Imada, “because this troupe toured during a critical period when Hawai‘i’s political status and proposed annexation by the US was a topic of national and international debate, they were one of the first hula groups to receive sustained attention on a trans-local scale.” (Imada, “Transnational Hula” 150). Moreover, “owing to the rise of mass
entertainment and media, their live performances and appearances were mediated by regional and national newspapers, reviews, guidebooks and advertisements.” (ibid). As such, the sexualized attitude towards the hula, as envisioned by American promoters and presenters, persisted and was amplified due to developing media technologies. Yet, despite efforts to make Hawaiians seem unsophisticated, the truth is that they were quite advanced as a people. They were not primitive although often depicted as so in images outside of Hawai‘i. However, I posit that the implementation of the grass skirt was in order to further this supposition, as the appearance of natural fibres would seem less civilized than Western fabrics or the kapa pā‘ū that the Hawaiians had been using. DeSoto Brown speaks to the false sense of primitivism that the tourist industry promoted:

“Look where you will, you won’t find Hawaiian girls bare to the waist or even merely draped in wreaths of flowers-unless you hire some to go out and pose for such pictures”, said one travel writer in 1937. But in spite of such voices of reason, it was probably something of a shock for some people to arrive in Hawai‘i and find an American community complete with cars and telephones and plumbing, when they expected to see grass skirts and grass shacks. Expected these things, of course, because of the advertising they had seen that featured a “Hawaiian” way of life that never really existed. (Brown 47)

Reference to a lingering concept of something that never existed brings me to Baudrillard’s work on simulacra. According to his philosophy, in postmodern society, what seems like reality is contrariwise, baseless: “Everywhere we live in a universe strangely similar to the original—things are doubled by their own scenario. But this doubling does not signify, as it did traditionally, the imminence of their death—they are already purged of their death, and better than when they were alive; more cheerful, more authentic, in the light of their model, like the faces in funeral homes.” (11). This appears to be what was happening with the portrayal of Hawaiians.
Due to the efforts of non-native powers, the kānaka maoli identity and sovereignty was stripped from them in an endeavour to ban their traditions, religion, language, and altogether way of life.

And yet, when these same powers sought to commodify Hawai‘i for their own financial gain, cheerful, playful Hawaiians were depicted using lively images, flowers, and dancing girls. As stated by Keawe,

> It is the deliberate imaging of hula through which the world makes its connection to Hawai‘i. Countless stories have been told about hula to re-create an idealizing trope of Hawai‘i and the Hawaiian hula girl that resides in an Edenic paradise, a playground in an exotic spatial imaginary of the Pacific. Much of what became known to the world about hula and the hula girl was established through storytelling and image making by non-Kānaka Maoli in power. Later these stories and images became "factual events" and were published as "history." (Keawe 33-34)

**Urbanization**

According to postmodern thought, as cities grow and multiply, populations lose touch with the natural. As a result, they begin to long for it, and look for places with signs that nature is readily available, whether these signs represent the reality of not. Felluga writes:

> As we continue to develop available geographical locations, we lose touch with any sense of the natural world. Even natural spaces are now understood as “protected,” which is to say that they are defined in contradistinction to an urban “reality,” often with signs to point out just how “real” they are. Increasingly, we expect the sign (behold nature!) to precede access to nature. (Felluga)

It would seem that when on the Continental United Stated cities began expanding, Americans began to live in developing “boring suburban housing tracts.” As a result, these Mainland residents sought “the exotic.” (Borgerson and Schroeder, “Consuming the 50th State” 483-484).

Taking this idea even further, Christin J. Mamiya posits that while people go on vacation to get away from their mundane lives, the ultimate outcome of tourism is the differentiating of one’s
own culture to the culture visited. Ultimately it is the distinction of ‘the Other:’

It is a generally accepted premise that the basic motivation for vacation travel is to escape from the normal routine, and often to discover something exciting and new. Tourist attractions and locales that cater to tourists must therefore provide experiences that exploit the differences between the visited culture and tourist’s own cultures. Thus, given that “‘the basic commodity of tourism is exoticism,” (van den Berghe and Keyes 1985, 345), the real function of tourism, (and its attendant advertising) is to separate—to establish the depicted culture as the Other. (Mamiya 86-87)

Thus, the primitive and untouched appearance of Hawai‘i and its people was essential to the efforts of the business entities who would benefit from the Islands’ tourism industry. “Emergent cultural tourism provided the wealthy vacationer with a dose of anthropological contact with selected ‘primitives’—just enough to reinvigorate through exposure to the ‘authentic’ and ‘natural’ those visitors worn to ennui from the deadening pressures of modern, urban life.” (Desmond, “Picturing Hawai‘i” 464). Desmond also puts forth that “T.J. Jackson Lears calls this longing for an antidote to modernity ‘anti-modernism,’ a pervasive desire for ‘authentic’ experience.” (ibid.). This idea echoes very closely the approach to urbanization as a phenomenon leading to simulation.

However, as we have seen before, Hawaiians were far from an unsophisticated people. In fact, even before the influence of foreign visitors, native Hawaiians had developed successful societal structures and advanced knowledge of natural sciences, although this was largely unacknowledged by the colonialists. For instance, Keawe writes:

In traditional times, Kānaka Maoli were considered expert horticulturalists because they excelled in food production. During this time there was no concept of a capitalist economy, so there was no need to produce food in mass. This allowed Kānaka Maoli a profusion of leisure time to engage and excel in other activities like kapa making, hula,
surfing and mea noʻeau\textsuperscript{70}. However the missionaries failed completely to reflect on this situation from this perspective and interpreted the lack of Kānaka action, to be lazy, idol, irresponsible, lacking in judgment, reckless, and uncivilized. (55)

Furthermore, especially by the time of King Kalākaua, Native Hawaiians were being acknowledged internationally as a sophisticated and highly educated people. “[…] the Native Hawaiian population (especially the elite class) was, in some ways, almost too ‘modern’ to sustain this dichotomy. They were highly literate and often part Caucasian, and more were Christian. Thus, decontemporizing became, for Euramericans, a necessary way of ‘nativizing’ the Native Hawaiian population.” (Desmond, “Picturing Hawai‘i” 466). Finally, at the onset of the growing tourism industry of Hawai‘i, it was recognized that the perpetuation of the primitive Hawaiian myth would yield the most profit.

Again, I put forth that the grass skirt was part of the construct of the image of ‘primitive Hawaiians,’ as natural materials would be considered less advanced than the kapa or fabrics that the Hawaiians had already been wearing. However, as the ‘primitive, native Hawaiian’ never truly existed in the sense suggested by the groups who controlled the tourist industry, the grass skirt is a sign that references a Hawaiian attribute that never existed. Thus, for those who are not familiar with the history of Hawai‘i and the complex political climate of the Islands, reality and simulation are blurred.

\textsuperscript{70} Mea noʻeau: Arts and crafts requiring specific skill
Language and Ideology

Many scholars seem to agree that as soon as Europeans arrived to the Hawaiian Islands, changes to the hula were immediately noticeable. One of the most significant changes was the shift of the hula’s function from sacred ritual to audience-based performance art. This transformation then in turn seems to have caused a loss in the cultural profundity that was originally associated with the dance form. In pre-contact Hawai‘i, the hula was treated as a serious art form with strict rules dictating its performance. For instance, in his book, The Art of the Hula, Allen Seiden states that all aspects of the dance were critiqued and that any mistake made by the dancers or chanters would signify that the kumu hula and hālau have insulted the honoured guests, as well as have lost the favour of the gods (Seiden 17). Furthermore, many kapu were implemented in order to dictate the conduct of the dancers, as this was to “maintain the spiritual integrity of the dancers and the dance.” (Seiden 45). The creation and teaching of chants to which hula was performed were treated with the utmost importance and reverence. As they were used for special events (usually to honour those of high rank), the chants were “carefully memorized[,] passed from generation to generation”, full of richness and multiple levels of meaning (some of which were “too sacred to speak”) and created with specifically chosen words in order to gain the attention of the gods (Seiden 17; Buck 109). Yet, as previously explained, this depth to the hula seems to have begun to diminish as soon as foreigners appeared on the Islands. Seiden notes that when the naturalist Adelbert von Chamisso visited Hawai‘i in 1816 and 1817, he indicated that he was disappointed that the cultural integrity of the hula had
already begun to change. (14-15). Thus, not too long after the arrival of the Europeans had the hula started to lose some of its fundamental characteristics.

The missionaries further acted as a catalyst to these changes, especially as they pushed for a ban on hula which they deemed an immoral dance. They succeeded when the prohibition of public hula performances was declared in 1830 by Queen Regent Kaʻahumanu, who had converted to Christianity, and later again during the reign of King Kamehameha IV when licensing and fees were required of groups wanting to dance publicly. (Seiden 50-51). Scholars seem to suggest that the missionaries’ main motivation for doing so was that in trying to promote Christianity amongst the Hawaiians, they felt it necessary to suppress any aspects of the Hawaiian culture that did not fit within their strict religious beliefs. To them, the hula was “lewd and unbecoming.” (Seiden 48). Essentially, this suppression of the Hawaiian dancing was crucial to the missionaries as it “meant effectively the removal of a cornerstone of Hawaiian religious culture” (Balme 237). While hula still survived through private and underground schools, the original depth and richness of the hula suffered. For two generations, hula was banned and the effect was a loss of the “creative use of Hawaiian [language,]” the “subtle, layered meanings of Hawaiian poetry,” and the “practices of chant composition and performance.” (Buck 110).

Increased disease amongst the Hawaiians during this time also resulted in the decrease of those who were well informed in the old practices of hula rituals (Seiden 51; Buck 173-174). Therefore, by the time the hula was publicly revived by King David Kalākaua in 1883 for the celebration of his coronation, although it was meant to re-establish old forms of Hawaiian culture, the hula had by this time developed new meanings. Hula was restored in a “substantially
altered cultural and political context” (Balme 237) and was now a form of “socio-political entertainment” rather than “socio-political ritual.” (Kaeppler, “Recycling Tradition” 300-301).

From this time onwards, hula was increasingly different from its originally documented form. It became a form of entertainment, and eventually tourist spectacle, which to some scholars represents a “den[ial of] its historical importance” and a lack of “cultural context.” (Mamiya 94-95; Seiden 55). Starting with the time of King Kalākaua and the resurgence of hula, new musical instruments and types of movement were introduced to the dance. In the nineteenth century, with the addition of ballroom dance steps and of instruments such as the ukulele and the steel-guitar, a new type of “Hawaiian music” emerged. In actuality, little of it was indigenously Hawaiian, and rather it was a combination of Hawaiian and Western music ideas (Kaeppler cited by Balme 247; Buck 113). Soon, songs would be written about Hawai‘i in the English language intended for Hollywood film and Broadway’s musicals. For instance, *Bird of Paradise*, a show that opened on Broadway in 1912, included “traditional Hawaiian songs (‘Waialae,’ ‘Kuu Home,’ and ‘Mauna Kea’)” but it also featured many songs about Hawai‘i in English (“My Honolulu Tom Boy,” and “My Honolulu Hula Girl.”) (Hopkins and Erikson 64)

“These songs are known as hapa haole songs, hapa meaning part or half and haole, foreign or Caucasian.” (Takamine, “Layered Stories” 31). Furthermore, “[d]uring the first half of the 20th century musicians and hula dancers began to travel to the Continental US to perform at world fairs and hotels where, from 1920 to 1959, hapa haole hula became very popular both [in Hawai‘i] and abroad.” (ibid.). However, many composers would create what they believed to be
Hawaiian music, despite never having been to Hawai‘i and not knowing much about the island culture except for their own situated knowledge based on what had previously been advertised.

Of this Seiden says:

Composers and lyricists, most without the slightest understanding of hula’s cultural context or significance, were soon producing hundreds of songs with ersatz hula settings that would themselves become classics later in the century. Themes ranged from romantic to exotic, innocent to suggestive, taking their cue from the popular culture of the times. In the decades that followed, hundreds of musical hulas were published with an entirely new style and repertoire, adding to what the hula was about. (96).

It would be these songs in English, about Hawai‘i, that when danced to would be considered hapa haole hula. In being “more Hollywood than Hawai‘i,” (Seiden 84), this new form of hula music and art was lacking in cultural context. In some cases, these hapa haole songs would include a few Hawaiian words, or words that merely sounded Hawaiian such as in “The Honolulu Hula Boola Boo” (O’Connor 252). These songs featuring invented Hawaiian words were written by mainland American composers, such as the songwriters of Tin Pan Alley. Their creation of tunes such as “Oh, How She Could Yacki Hacki Wicki Wacki Woo (That’s Love in Honolulu)” often bolstered racist attitudes and the sexualization of Hawaiian women (Lewis 126).

Therefore, returning to the idea of simulacra, the main ideologies behind ancient hula seem to have been masked my new ones, when by the twentieth century, hula songs were created in a new language, English. An apparent shift from sacral towards banality appears as a consequence to this switch in language. Lacking in seriousness and rich meaning, many of the hapa haole hulas created during the Territorial Era seemed to fail to incorporate the cultural framework that is integral to traditional hula. Part of the transition in the functions of hula is due
to the importance of mele in the original form of the dance. Kumu hula Vicky Holt Takamine explains the importance of words and mele to traditional hula:

Because the Hawaiians of former times did not have a written language, the stories, genealogies, and historical accounts of their people were perpetuated through oral traditions. One of these oral traditions was mele, sung or chanted poetry, which became the basis of hula. Mele is such an important component of the dance of the Hawaiian people that without it there is no hula. The stories and chants provide each generation of hula practitioners with knowledge of the past and with rich material that inspires the creation of new and original choreography. (Takamine, “Layered Stories” 28).

Furthermore, an important part of mele is the kaona:

Because of the importance of text, hula has been instrumental in preserving and perpetuating Native Hawaiian language, art, and cultural practices. Hula is the visual expression of the poetry, telling, through movement, the stories of the people’s love for their gods, people, and lands. Hawaiians were skillful poets, weaving several layers of meanings into the texts they created. Hula choreographers could choose to depict any of these layers of meaning and often chose to represent the kaona, the meaning that was only alluded to. (Takamine, “Layered Stories” 28).

Thus, as the language of the songs changed to English, and especially with the creation and use of meaningless Hawaiian sounding words, the hula lost a very important deeper capacity. In a similar fashion, the evolution of a hula dancer’s lower body attire echoes this change in ideology and function. While the pāʻū holds very sacred functions, as described previously, the cellophane skirt was characterized by it’s eye catching nature and allusion to frivolity. Thus, the hula dancer’s garments too passed from sacred to secular.

It is also important to note that there were Hawaiian composers who created hapa haole music during this era. For instance, Albert “Sonny” Cunha, was a prominent name in the hapa haole genre and is often referred to as the “father or hapa haole music.” (Hopkins and Erikson

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71 Kaona: Hidden meaning. At times in Hawaiian poetry and song, double or multiple layers of meaning could exist which would not be explicit or obvious.
Thus, while for some composers who created hapa haole songs purely to monetize off of the Hawaiian music craze of the time, by writing about things they knew little about, an abuse of power and a commodification of culture may be recognized. However, for a generation of kānaka maoli who had never learned their own language due to the missionary presence and influence on the Islands, hapa haole music represents a bridge which, rather than pushing away Hawaiian values, gave these native peoples a medium to express their current way of life and to boost the visibility of their heritage. (For additional information on music during the Territorial Era of Hawai‘i, and on specifics about composers and their songs, Harry B. Soria Jr., the host of the radio show “Territorial Airwaves” provides a wealth of information. His website may be found at: http://territorialairwaves.com/).

Further evidence of the shift in major ideologies connected to more ancient forms of hula may be seen in the way that students came to study the dance. While some kumu hula still personally invite or handpick their hula haumāna, in recent times, students interested in learning the dance have been known to approach kumu hula to ask permission to join their hālau. Moreover, by allowing students from various immigrant cultures to come to class willingly, rather than the kumu selecting his or her students, the traditional passing down of Hawaiian values and traditions is considered by some to be put into question. On this subject, Kaimikaua writes:

The 1940s and 1950s witnessed another major change in the hula community, in terms of how students came to the hula. Traditionally or in ancient times, hula students were handpicked by the kumu hula and trained for many years in the ideology of the hula. With modern hula, the challenge was to address how students who were coming from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds could maintain the spirit of Hawaiian traditionalism. In other words, did incoming students have the ability to ingest the
philosophy and culture of the ancient ways of hula dance and associated Hawaiian values?[…]

Hawaiians were cognizant that opening the borders to outsiders also caused a shift in Hawaiian values concerning the hula. First of all, hula and hula knowledge was not previously shared but were kept sacred and secretive, as the hula was generally passed down in certain Hawaiian families. Secondly, many of the older kumu hula understood that change was imminent for the hula but were highly critical of the new expressive form allowed in the newly developed hula ‘auana as well as of the innovative interpretations of the hula by their kumu hula. As a result, elderly Hawaiian kumu hula were unwilling to carry on hula or Hawaiian traditions or simply did not find anyone they considered worthy to receive their Hawaiian practice lore. Therefore, many cultural traditions of the hula were no longer practiced and eventually ceased to exist in Hawaiian culture (Chang, interview, 2004). (Kaimikaua 172-173)

It may thus be argued that opening hula’s doors to non-Hawaiians was necessary for the tradition to survive, as through intermarriage and the decimation of the Hawaiian people due to foreign-brought diseases, the number of purely native students to whom the discipline could be passed down had been dwindling. Nevertheless, these changes brought about profound modifications to the values associated with the dance.

During the Territorial Era, both the language and ideology of hula were altered, and the hapa haole hula girl in the grass skirt was used to represent a carefree dancing female. Thus, in these ways we can see how the change in language can lead to a distancing from cultural substance. Also, as mentioned previously in my fieldwork results chapter, one of the aspects of Susan’s Paradise of Polynesia show that I had wondered about concerned the lack of Hawaiian language in the chosen mele. Would contextualized and properly explained hula dances performed to music in the Hawaiian language have provided a more comprehensive approach to the multiple forms of hula, especially if the group aims to both entertain and inform Mainland audiences about the culture? Or does education not matter to a consumer audience who just
wants to be transported to the Hawai‘i they’ve seen in promotional material? According to Felluga, “Baudrillard illustrates how in such subtle ways language keeps us from accessing ‘reality.’” In simpler terms, “Because we are so reliant on language to structure our perceptions, any representation of reality is always already ideological, always already constructed by simulacra.” (Felluga). As follows, with the shift in language through hapa haole music, and with the grass and cellophane clad hula dancer exemplifying the hapa haole era in many mindsets of the Hawaiian diaspora, this representation of the hula dancer may be considered a simulacrum in the way that it is a re-created image hiding deeper truths, eliminating previously existing ideologies and complex structures. It exists as a metanarrative amongst some populations, namely consumers of the Hawaiian culture residing in the diaspora, and its singular consideration of hula masks the profundity of the dance and of Hawaiian traditions at large. Yet, the image of the grass clad hapa haole hula dancer does not represent an inauthentic Hawaiian culture. Rather it is an accepted ‘hula truth’ in itself, though detached from the original from which it came. It has its place in the history of Hawai‘i. However, when regarded as the sole authentic version of the dance, it conceals the earlier traditional forms comprised of more profound ideologies. In this case, the simulation (the hapa haole hula dancer) precedes the original (in some sense, the pā‘ū wearing hula dancer) in the minds of many in the diaspora, and as such it demonstrates the precession of simulacra. Finally, the grass and cellophane skirt are essential signs pointing to that simulation.

However, it is again important to emphasize that the hapa haole genre is not a completely negative aspect of Hawaiian culture. In actuality, it was believed necessary for hula to continue,
due to its role in creating a greater awareness of the Hawaiian Islands on a global scale. Pollenz writes: “Perhaps the reason for its survival lies in the pleasing effect of the dance itself, and in the fact that it could reach a foreign spectator. […] If hula had remained as an essentially religious rite, it probably would have gone the way of the chieftain, the priest and the tabu. By shifting its emphasis from the ceremonial to the theatrical, the dance has managed to flourish.” (Pollenz 231). Moreover, adaptations to the hula by kānaka maoli was a mark of their understanding of the changing cultural landscape, and a means of allowing the hula to remain alive. Native Hawaiians also wrote hapa haole music, not just removed foreign musicians, and intrinsically were active participants in the evolution of their cultural art forms. As Borgerson and Schroeder write:

Through the recording industry's appropriation of Hawaiian music, the native music became less vital and important. Native Hawaiians did, of course, appear on Hawaii Calls, and they were active agents in the transformation of music from a cultural ritual into a commodity. However, the structures of the recording and tourism industries, with their emphasis on private gain, channeled much of the productive work into a homogenization and commercialization of Hawaiian music and culture. (Borgerson and Schroeder, "Consuming the 50th State" 488).

The next segment of this chapter will focus on the role emerging technologies, such as radio, in the advancement of the image of the hapa haole hula dancer and the utilization of the grass skirt.

**Media Culture**

The media play an important role in simulacra. Baudrillard states that “[t]he media carry meaning and countermeaning, they manipulate in all directions at once, [and] nothing can control this process.” (84). Media technologies such as the internet, printed publications, film, and
television all function to influence and control the ways in which humans interpret the world as well as their own lives. (Felluga 74). In keeping, the proliferation of media surrounding hula and Hawai‘i seems to have created a singular representation, or singular reality, surrounding the dance. According to Jane C. Desmond,

For most mainlander visitors at the turn of the century, what little they knew about Hawaiians would have come through visual and verbal representations (including tourist advertisements), as few Native Hawaiians had visited the United States. Most mainlanders encountered Hawaiian “natives” through stereoscope pictures, postcards, photographs, and even pornography. As an examination of these representations reveals, they constructed an image of Native Hawaiians as primitives living in the past. (Desmond, “Picturing Hawai‘i 465).

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, the portrayal of Hawaiians as primitive beings was considered to yield the greatest exchange-value, as the attempt to promote Hawai‘i as a modern American society failed to generate great success in the tourism industry.

Starting in 1910s, “color postcards became a state-of-the-art-souvenir.” (Seiden 86). Hula dancers and musicians would often be the focus of these postcards (ibid.), yet as time progressed, it would seem that their portrayal would continue to drift from the image of what comprised a traditional hula dancer. One of the chosen constructs of the photographed and advertised hula dancer is the raffia looking skirt (which, as we have seen, were not indigenously Hawaiian but rather thought to have been brought in from the Gilbert Islands). Further shifts brought the use of cellophane skirts (which Hollywood would start to display in the 1950s) (Seiden 87), and the baring of thighs (which reflected the styles of the Roaring Twenties) (Seiden 46). In summary, the images that came out of Hawai‘i, created by outsiders, demonstrated a highly objectified and sexualized portrayal of the female hula dancer (which would later become the often repeated
image for hapa haole hula dancers) rather than demonstrating the seriousness of the ritualistic traditional hula.

As has been mentioned, found in postmodernist thinking is the distrust of images. Jane C. Desmond references the editor’s opening statements of a 1899 photo-illustrated book entitled Our Islands and Their People, As Seen with Camera and Pencil: “The exquisite photographs of actual scenes [allow] no room for the inaccuracies of chance of the uncertain fancies of the artist’s imagination. The camera cannot be otherwise than candid and truthful.” (Desmond, “Picturing Hawai’i 479-480). With this quote, Desmond alludes to the false objectivity of photographs. One example of this manipulation of representations through photography is a comparison done by Kia O’Neill Moanikeʻala Ah-Lan Keawe in her doctoral dissertation. She analyses two sets of photographs of native Hawaiian hula dancers. In one set, the women are fully dressed and covered while in the other, the women have their breasts exposed and are wearing grass skirts. She writes that:

This examination focuses on the photographs of Kānaka Maoli women who have been shown with bare waiū72 (breast), wearing dried grass skirts, and adorned with lei and flowers. These photographs have assisted in the construction of reified history that has consistently portrayed Kānaka Maoli women as Hawaiian hula girls -- half-clothed, primitive maidens that reside in the erotic spatial imaginary of paradise. As promiscuous or sexually free, it is in these photographs that the bodies of Kānaka Maoli women emerge as a site of contestation. The hula girl is constructed as the metaphoric other who can be overtaken, consumed and transformed via the experience of visual pleasure. They transcend a destructive hegemonic dynamic that quietly conceals powerful messages of the national project to dominate and subjugate; one that re-ensacts and re-vitalizes the imperialist and colonizing historical narrative of power through configurations of desire and fantasies of seduction. (Keawe 98-99)

Furthermore, Keawe also finds it rather perplexing that the photographed women’s breasts were

72 Waiū: Breasts or sometimes milk
exposed, when the women at that time (late 1800s to early 1900s) did not dress in that manner (ibid.).

Desmond situates the golden age for postcards as between 1898 to 1918, which is also in line with the rise of the Hawaiian tourism industry. Furthermore, “[p]icture postcards helped circulate those images of the ideal native while promoting tourism.” (Desmond, “Picturing Hawai‘i” 469). Hawaiian women were found to be increasingly sexualized, and even the type of women portrayed was modified in order to appear more appealing to target audiences. Keawe points out that in many historical pictures, native Hawaiian women are depicted with tan, brown skin and a robust body type. Yet, in advertisements portraying Hawaiian women, “long, slender and white skinned” bodies more representative of the “idealized European bodies” are featured. (Keawe 48). Keawe further writes that “[w]hat is dangerous about this re-placement of a European body is it becomes the standard for the image of the Hawaiian hula girl. The danger that lies in the transformation of the body type derives from the construction of the image itself.” More implications arise in using overly meagre women to represent the hula dancer, as according to Hawaiian values, this body type is associated with sickness. “The construction of this body type does not fit into our paradigm of reality.” writes Keawe, “Instead, a full-figured body was a sign of good health and viewed as maika‘i73 (good, fine, well, good-looking, beautiful, goodness and handsome).” (Keawe 111).

Reinforcing the invention of the sexualized hula dancer, the grass skirt is chosen to be used in photographic strategies in addition to the questionable display of Hawaiian women with bare breast. “The ever so light parting of the ti leaf skirt, which offers a glimpse of the hula girl’s

73 Maika‘i: Good
thigh, operates in the same previous manner suggesting a message of being licentious —and ripe for the taking.” (Keawe 104-105). Another issue of presenting extremely sexualized Hawaiian women in visual mediums such as photographs is that it ignores the significant role she plays in Hawaiian society:

By placing the women in seductive, inviting poses, they are presented as passive, available objects, thereby implying not only that these women lived an uninhibited, hedonistic lifestyle but also that their lives were carefree and leisurely. To the contrary, women played an integral role in ensuring the economic and social viability of the Hawaiian culture. Women were responsible for maintaining the cohesiveness of the family unit through daily tasks, and because rank and privilege were inherited, these activities were crucial to social stability. Among other things, women prepared all the food and produced bark cloth, a time consuming and laborious task. (Mamiya 93)

Thus, by depicting Hawaiian women and thin, sexualized beings, demonstrated through a shift of body type presented and through the rendering of bare breasts and thighs visible through grass skirts, a false representation of Hawaiian women was circulated.

Again, it was not the native Hawaiians who would choose how they would appear to the world, but rather the groups in political and financial power on the Islands. “Post-contact Kānaka Maoli did not have the power to create or control the images that re-presented the realities of our lives. Those who came to colonize Hawai‘i became the image makers of our people distorting the realities of our identity.” writes Lia O’Neill Moanike‘ala Ah-Lan Keawe (51-52). This biased representation of Hawai‘i may also be due to the lack of native Hawaiian photographers. Desmond claims that “[b]y 1890 some sixty photographers were working in the islands, with at least twenty based in Honolulu. While the earliest photographers had been mainly Caucasian, by the end of the century many were of Chinese and Japanese ancestry. Few, though, were Native Hawaiian.” (Desmond, “Picturing Hawai‘i” 473).
The misleading representations of Hawaiian life were further disseminated through the increased use of postcards. Jane C. Desmond cites Susan Stuart in noting their authenticating power. “Generally only available on-site, they guarantee that the sender is really there, seeing the sights represented. They thus verify the acts of travel and of witnessing and then, in turn, position the recipient as witness to the sender’s experience.” (“Picturing Hawai`i” 470).

Correspondingly, Christin J. Mamiya dedicates a whole article to discussing the intricacies of tourism and visual representation which give the postcard a capacity to form considerable representations. She puts forth that as tourism is largely dependent on advertising, postcards are an effective means of accomplishing that role due to their very pubic nature (the lack of envelope) (86). Yet, postcards highlight the “problematic interaction between visual representation […], tourism (and the process of commodification that it entails), and cultural identity.” (ibid.).

Hula dancers soon became a favourite image to display on postcards, becoming a symbol of Hawaiian culture. However, it was the reconstructed image of the hula girl that continued to appear. “‘Hula girl’ images on postcards and in photographs during this period ran the gamut from beautiful to alluring to sexual to pornographic.” Desmond writes, “But they all rendered a gendered and sexualized image of the ‘native.’ Posed against either a natural backdrop or an indeterminate background, bodies are de-contextualized, and subjects are decontemporized. The Polynesian-looking hula girl emerges during this period as the dominant signifier of Hawai`i—a feminized site of nature and romance. (Desmond, “Picturing Hawai`i” 477). There were a few instances when pāʻū donning hula dancers are shown in photographs, and generally they were
respected dancers of King Kalākaua’s court. However, their status as legitimate and esteemed dancers is not mentioned, and rarely did they appear in postcards that circulated globally. To illustrate this, Desmond writes:

Ukeke’s troupe appeared during King Kalākaua’s 1883 coronation ceremonies, and photographers also caught dancers at Kalākaua’s November 1886 jubilee […] , thus documenting hula’s return to favor despite missionary efforts to ban or regulate it. To my knowledge these photos, which provide a glimpse into pre-twentieth-century hula practices as a counterdiscourse to that of the nascent tourist industry, never turned up on postcards, however. (“Picturing Hawai‘i” 475)

Thus, ultimately most photographs and postcards favoured images that promoted a colonialist situation, denying the technologically advanced and prosperous way of life that was enjoyed by the Hawaiian people.

Another type of technology that was being developed concurrent to the Territorial Era of Hawai‘i was radio. By being able to transmit the sounds of distant lands over the airwaves, a new type of enjoyment was brought into the homes of “ordinary people of the 1920s and 30s” (Brown 131). “Radio’s strong point has always been that it demands the use of the listener’s imagination to picture what it is talking about, and this works very much in favour of Hawai‘i as the announcer told of being right on the beach at Waikīkī with the warm waves lapping the sand almost at the base of the stage itself, blue skies above, and the trade winds in the palm trees overhead.” (ibid.). The sounds of Hawai‘i were being shared transnationally through radio, and the songs being played were of the hapa haole style. According to Brown, “[t]he most influential and longest-lived Hawaiian radio program was ‘Hawai‘i Calls’, run by the tireless Webley Edwards. It was broadcast from the islands from 1935 to 1975 and was heard over hundreds of stations at the height of its success.” (Brown 131). There were other shows such as “Across the
Sea to NBC” that served similar purposes, and all of these radio programs “not only reflected the emerging cultural image of Hawai‘i, it helped to further reinforce and commodify it.” (Lewis 123). Again, a constructed image of Hawai‘i, fed through the audiences’ imagination by the public broadcast of hapa haole music, was being used by settler businessmen to make a profit of the Islands.

The production of movies, too, would propagate the image of hula as a sexualized, fun and flirty ethnic dance. Many films, such as Song of the Islands, featured Hollywood-leading ladies performing a dance reminiscent of hula, but lacking in true cultural foundation. Take for example an extract from the aforementioned movie: the performance of the song Down on Ami Ami Oni Oni Aisle. While mainly in English, the song does feature Hawaiian words, and mentions aspects of Hawaiian life; however its superficiality makes it far removed from the ritual hulas with depth in meaning. In terms of costume, Betty Grable wears a long tight skirt with layered fringe resembling a longer version of a 1920’s flapper dress. Behind her, the members of the dance troupe wear shimmery silver-white cellophane skirts. One move that stands out due to its frequency are the extended arm movements with flapping wrists and curling fingers that are stereotypical of hula. Later in the dance, Betty Grable performs with ‘ūli‘ūli. However, while she utilizes these traditional hula implements, the dance also incorporates steps from the movement vocabularies of tap dancing and other styles typically seen in dance theatre. Therefore, while much of America may have considered this to be a close example of hula, it is actually quite removed from the original dance form. Other films that featured an extreme version of the hula
girl are Bird of Paradise (1932), Waikīkī Wedding (1937), South Pacific (1958), and for forth.

According to Shaka:

In Hollywood movies meanwhile (1915-1950s), the “hula girl,” typically a Caucasian actress or, on the rare occasion a non-Caucasian was cast, a Mexican actress, was depicted as an unacceptable, immoral woman. The “hula girl” managed to encompass erotic portrayals oscillating between being dangerously alluring and enchantingly refreshing - delightful to look at, remarkable to hold onto for a little while, but ultimately unsuitable for “real life” - for the Euro-American men who had encounters with her. (Shaka 20)

Filmmakers had chosen to share a particular, constructed image of the Hawaiian woman that was popular at the time. However, this image was, according to many scholars, quite demeaning.

Hula, as we see again, passes into the realm of kitsch, and by the 1920s the glimmering cellophane variation of the grass skirt had become popularized as part of an iconic ‘hula girl look’. “Hollywood films had introduced the world to the hula art form and made the hula a cultural icon of shimmering grass skirts and coconut bras. However, the hula depicted in these films had no cultural form or basis: the Hollywood version of the hula was the typical shaking and swaying of the hips, arms, and hands moving left and right not explaining a cultural story.” (Kaimikaua 171).

Thus, through increased media culture and the developing technology of motion pictures, Hawai‘i was again being considered for its exchange-value, and promoted in a way that was not only financially beneficial for those in the tourist industry, but also for many Mainland movie makers. While it is perhaps due to limitations in the transportation of cinematographic equipment and thus filming on location in Hawai‘i may not have been possible, many of the films created
about Hawaiʻi were not even shot on the Islands but rather on Hollywood sound stages (Brown 121). Nevertheless, the profits made from such movies seldom went to the kānaka maoli.

Thus, the constructed island imagery of Hawaiʻi was being promoted through film:

“These images were also reinforced by the Hawaiian film musicals that Hollywood found to be wildly popular during this time. Musicals were perfect for island treatment since they relied on song, dance, and romance and, in so doing, continued to support and reinforce the fictitious Hawaiʻi of the American imagination.” (Lewis 126). And according to DeSoto Brown, it is to Hollywood’s treatment of Hawaiʻi that the creation of “the public’s most vivid and widespread impression of the islands” can be attributed (Brown 121).

In regard to film, Baudrillard is of the opinion that “cinema itself contributed to the disappearance of history, and to the advent of the archive.” (Baudrillard 48). Due to its ability to appear objective in nature, when the audience is completely uninformed about a certain topic, film may be misleading and provide a sense of truth in what is not there. Baudrillard’s opinion that cinema is capable of masking the truth is highly relevant to our study. Similar sentiments can be found in Keawe’s dissertation when she cites Renato Resaldo in showing how film may have a destructive, or at the very least confusing impact, allowing colonialist culture to continually marginalize the Hawaiian people:

Renato Resaldo explains, “Imperialist nostalgia uses a pose of innocent yearning both to capture people's imaginations and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination.” Hollywood re-casts these images as narrative, as fantasies of power and desire, of seduction about the ‘Other’ inviting the viewer to forget, that is, to engage in the willful forgetfulness of the forced colonization of Hawaiʻi. These films contribute toward blurring reality so that we forget about the unjustifiable taking of the land, resources and Hawaiʻi’s people. (Keawe 42)
It seems that the mediums of photography, radio, and film have fostered amongst many Americans a misleading idea of what the hula and Hawaiian culture truly is. This is in line with the concept of media culture as a phenomenon that blurs the distinction between reality and simulation. Again, we are faced with a necessary distrust for history, and the search for multiple versions of the past. Felluga writes that the media functions in “the process of forgetting history” as the images and information disseminated through technologies such as internet, television, and movies actually distance the public from the truth while giving the impression of reproducing it faithfully (Felluga). “More real than real, that is how the real is abolished.” (ibid.). In Simulacra and Simulation, Baudrillard asserts that “[t]he media and the official news service are only there to maintain the illusion of an actuality, of the reality of the stakes, of the objectivity of facts” (38). Hence, the media distorts reality, but due to its very nature, it may be taken as an accurate and authentic communicator of information. Furthermore, during the Territorial Era, the media informed mainland Americans on characteristics of hula, although they might not necessarily have represented the reality in Hawai‘i. Visual cues, such as lei, specific looking skirts, swaying hips, and waving arms may then be considered signs that together create a false reality of the dance, failing to be a true likeness of early traditional hula.

As media culture continues to increasingly influence societies, according to Baudrillard, “[w]e live in a world where there is more and more information, and less and less meaning.” (Baudrillard 79). Furthermore, while we believe that we are gaining information, this is actually the contrary of what is happening: “It is the alpha and omega of our modernity, without which the credibility of our social organization would collapse. Well, the fact is that it is
collapsing, and for this very reason: because where we think that information produces meaning, the opposite occurs.” (Baudrillard 80). Additionally, with all the information that has been sent about the Hawaiian Islands to the diaspora, any allusions to the richness of the culture may have been lost. In some final words by Baudrillard:

Today what we are experiencing is the absorption of all virtual modes of expression into that of advertising. All original cultural forms, all determined languages are absorbed in advertising because it has no depth, it is instantaneous and instantaneously forgotten. […] This unarticulated, instantaneous form, without a past, without a future, without the possibility of metamorphosis, has power over all the others. (Baudrillard 87)

Conclusion: the Impossibility of Universal Truth

As is seen above, when juxtaposing the history of the implementation of the grass clad hula dancer (and the campaigns which used it to share a specific image of Hawai‘i in the diaspora) with postmodern thought, the five phenomena used by Baudrillard to explain the blurring of reality and simulacra are identifiable. Through multinational capitalism, a Hawaiian cultural identity was created and promoted by non-Hawaiians with capitalist motives during a time when the economy of Hawai‘i required a shift from trade to tourism. This lead to the discovery of the representation that would provide the greatest exchange-value, and due to urbanization, this was found to be that of the primitive and sexualized hula dancer wearing a grass skirt. Furthermore, with the creation of hapa haole music, the language of the mele was predominantly changed to English, marking a period of eclipsed traditional Hawaiian values, changing hula ideologies and functions, and further supporting the perception of Hawai‘i as an untouched touristic paradise where ‘simple natives’ lived. Finally, developing technologies in
media culture such as photographs and postcards, radio, and film would help transmit this image at a faster, and perhaps seemingly more convincing rate. Ultimately, the image of the hula girl would become symbolic of Hawai‘i, embodying a culture and way of life that did not reflect the exhaustive realities of the the kānaka maoli living on the Islands. Introduced by powerful settler businessmen, the grass clad hula dancer would come to mask the complexities and history of a progressive Hawaiian people and their rich values and traditions. Rather, for many people in the diaspora, Hawaiians and Hawaiian culture would simply appear as something depthless, frivolous, and sexy. It is when this consideration of Hawai‘i is taken as the initial and sole perspective of Island life that a simulacrum exists. As a true simulacrum, in the mind of the tourist or consumer of the projected image of Hawai‘i, or of the uninformed non-Hawaiian in the diaspora, the representation is no longer discernible from the truth from which it stems. “Within the tourists’ lens they, the performers, are the real thing, they are the culture.” writes Keawe, “What makes this complicated in the market is the economic element of capitalism, which is a by-product and partner of colonialism. It becomes an endless cycle in terms of sustaining and perpetuation a colonial narrative.” (59).

In response, I return to the postmodern consideration of multiple truths. Especially for those of whom hula exists as one single epitomized version characterized by the hapa haole era, or by any dance in a grass skirt (whether it be Tahitian, Cook Island, or other Polynesian culture), it is essential for those people to be exposed to and educated about the history of Hawai‘i and about the other forms of hula. Christopher Butler describes the implications of insufficient awareness of the past and the danger of historians who are partial to a colonial gaze: “If direct
access to the past is denied, all we can have are competing stories [...]” (35). Moreover, “for many postmodernists, the narrative structures favoured by historians will carry unavoidable and possibly objectionable philosophical or ideological implications [...]” (ibid.)

Similarly, but speaking of Hawai‘i, O’Connor states that “[i]n island historiography, there is not one objective past but many versions of it (Merry cited by O’Conner 268). However, caution must be taken as not every account may reveal a truthful chronology of historical events. “Postmodern relativism needn’t mean that anything goes, or that faction and fiction are the same as history. What it does mean is that we should be more sceptically aware, more relativist about, more attentive to, the theoretical assumptions which support the narratives produced by all historians, whether they see themselves as empiricists or deconstructors or as postmodern ‘new historicists.’” (Butler 35)

Perhaps it is rather the role of non-Hawaiians living in the diaspora to be open to modify their perceptions and to hearing the stories of multiple voices, most importantly the narratives being told by kānaka maoli. After all, according to Keawe, as Hawaiians come from an oral culture, it is natural that they should tell their story, and in fact have been wanting to do so. She cites Smith in saying that:

Therefore in order to recover from our experiences of colonization Kānaka Maoli, want to tell our own stories, write our own versions, in our own ways, for our own purposes. It is not simply about giving an oral account or a genealogical naming of the land and the events which raged over it, but a very powerful need to give testimony to and restore a spirit, to bring back into existence a world fragmented and dying. The sense of history conveyed by these approaches is not the same thing as the discipline of history, and so our accounts collide, crash into each other. (24)
Furthermore, on the subject of Hawaii’s oral culture history, she explains that storytelling is “a means of survival” and how for the Hawaiian people the haʻiʻmoʻolelo is considered to have significant power and kuleana (Keawe 28).

It is also important to note that many narratives also exist within the native Hawaiian community. For instance, as we have previously discussed, there are those who are vehemently against the development of the hapa haole genre, while others view hapa haole as a means of survival of the Hawaiian culture. “The problem is that in Hawaiʻi there are many native identities—more than one ‘we’—some of whom see themselves authentically represented by images and objects that others consider kitsch, and who realize themselves through tourist art in different ways—as seen in the case of the grass house.” (O’Connor 256). Similarly, DeSoto Brown puts forth that the tourism industry, though responsible for creating a fantasized image of Hawai‘i and its people, also had its benefits. “Yet, ironically, the tourism that, on one hand, has served to undermine true Hawaiian traditions has also assisted in preserving them as part of Hawaii’s distinctiveness. By wanting to see the hula performed or to go surfing, tourists have awakened Hawaiians to the need to preserve these remnants of their culture before they are lost forever.” (Brown 47)

Thus, perhaps the key is a tolerance for the multiple truths that exist, and a patience and tolerance for the kānaka maoli to create an identity (or multiple identities) themselves, only to be shared in the diaspora, despite globalization, when they are ready and willing to do so. In fact, they have already been redefining Hawaiian identities for themselves since the 1970s with a new

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74 Haʻiʻmoʻolelo: Storyteller
75 Kuleana: Responsibility or right
cultural renaissance. Therefore, perhaps the most important take away from bridging postmodern thought to ideas surrounding hula is the encouragement of tolerance within the Hawaiian diaspora: a tolerance in recognizing Hawaiian identities created by the kānaka maoli themselves; a tolerance in understanding that there exists multiple truths regarding hula; and a tolerance in accepting that an intimate comprehension of those truths may not ever be accessible to non-Hawaiians.
As we have seen, although the grass and cellophane skirt play a significant role in hula imagery in the American Pacific Northwest and in the southern region of Western Canada, it was not part of the female dancer’s costuming prior to Euro-American contact. Rather, the grass skirt was first introduced to hula dancing by King Kalākaua after travelling to other islands in the South Pacific. Mirroring the evolution of the dance itself, hula attire too underwent a change. Appearing in photographs, primarily used as visitor propaganda during the time when Hawaii’s economy was changing primarily to tourism, the image of the grass clad hula dancer would be available for the consumption of those outside of Hawai‘i. Travelling hula groups would also perform on the Mainland and in Europe in modified versions of the grass skirt due to the different resources available to them. Finally, sparkling cellophane skirts were seen worn by Hollywood actresses in movies pertaining to the Hawaiian Islands. Concurrent to these events was a changing political climate in Hawai‘i as the United States tried to bring the Islands to statehood. Also occurring was a growth in media technology, which would transmit the sounds and images of Hawai‘i past its shores. Due to the interconnectedness of all these occurrences during the Territorial Era of Hawai‘i, and due to the proliferate use of the imagery of the grass or cellophane skirt clad hula dancer, it seems that lasting perspectives have been established about Hawaiian culture in the diaspora. The grass clad hula dancer was part of a concept of Hawai‘i as an untouched paradise with beautiful, native women perpetually in a state of leisure. As Borgerson and Schroeder have written:
“Packaged Hawai‘i” appears in a certain form for consumption as a product. Marketing in this sense is like propaganda produced to influence the way the people, the consumers, see the product “Hawai‘i,” marketed as an island paradise, tourist destination and honeymoon resort. “Hawai‘i” exists in the minds of many primarily through this marketed image. (“Consuming the 50th State” 477).

It is maybe for these consumers of a specifically marketed Hawai‘i that a simulacrum exists. There seems to be a blurring in the perceptions of what is truth and fiction in terms of hula for many people outside of Hawai‘i. For those who solely consider the hapa haole style of dance featuring a grass or cellophane clad dancer as the singular epitomized version of the dance, the reality of the richness of Hawaiian culture is ignored. Furthermore, considering the phenomena that Baudrillard says produce simulations and simulacra, the analysis of the implementation of the grass skirt brings to light the key events that have led to the blurring between truth and reality.

Congruent with the phenomena of multinational capitalism, exchange-value, urbanization, language and ideology, and media culture, it is evident that the image of hula that was spread outside of the Islands was an artificial construct far removed from its original appearance. A simulacrum has been created within a non-Hawaiian audience believing that what they saw was authentic, and the only existing type of hula, when instead they were witnessing specifically chosen marketing symbols that had been largely generated by a culture of colonialism and capitalism, and also by Hawaiians open to adapting in order to ensure the survival of their traditions.

Ultimately, this analysis of the grass and cellophane skirts need not be a cynical one. As mentioned previously, the lasting effect of implementing the grass skirt into Hawaiian imagery
that exists in the diaspora may be considered in a positive light. It is an important part of Hawaiian history and culture. For instance, the Islands have become known internationally as a world-class vacation spot partially due to the use of grass skirts in promotional images. Furthermore, the adaptation of the Hawaiian people in the creation of the hapa haole style of hula is a mark of their ingenuity and modernity in changing times. Although the decimation of the Hawaiian language was a great loss for a generation of native Hawaiians, these kānaka maoli were able to perpetuate their feelings and views of their islands through the English hapa haole songs.

In “Dance Ethnography: Tracing the Weave of Dance in the Fabric of Culture,” Joan D. Frosch suggests that one of the “objectives [that] a contextualized approach to the study of dance [would be to] examine the dynamics of dance within the tensions of continuity and change.” (250-251). It would seem that a continuing analysis of the ways in which hula has changed, and continues to change, is still very much necessary outside of Hawai‘i. Moreover, inspired by postmodern philosophy, for those of whom a singular version of hula is considered, this metanarrative of the hapa haole grass clad hula dancer needs to be reviewed. Instead, the existence of multiple truths need to be recognized, and in particular, a greater awareness of the voices of the native Hawaiians needs to be present in the diaspora. “Today both cultural and political aspects of the movement remain vitally active. Kānaka Maoli continue to assert their kuleana, their right and responsibility, to self determination and importantly, to disrupt dominant relations of power through a variety of organized responses […]” (Shaka 14-15). In her paper, Shaka presents contemporary kumu hula who seek to change the way hula is viewed outside of
Hawai‘i, deviating from the marketed image of the hula girl who was the representation of “colonial fantasy.” (Shaka 2). It is through continued efforts such as this that a more holistic view of Hawaiian culture and hula will be available to audiences in the American Pacific Northwest, in the southern region of Western Canada, and beyond. However, and perhaps just as importantly, there needs to exist a receptiveness in the diaspora into widening perspectives. My hope in this thesis is to generate further discussions in this field, and humbly present an open-ended work aimed to spark questions instead of providing answers. As I continue to learn more about hula and about the Hawaiian culture, I hope to witness a rising of native Hawaiian voices, determining for themselves the image of hula, as well as a greater receptiveness from hula audiences in the diaspora to listening to these multiple voices.
APPENDIX A
IN-PERSON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR KUMU HULA VICKY HOLT TAKAMINE

1. To your knowledge, when was the first time the grass skirt was used in hula?
2. Who brought it to Hawai‘i (from where?) and for what purpose?
3. What changes/evolution have you noticed happen to the image and function of the grass skirt?
4. For you, personally, what imagery does the grass skirt evoke?
5. What role do you feel it plays in the representation of Hawaiian culture and hula?
6. How do you feel about mainland North Americans placing so much of a connection between Hawai‘i and the grass skirt?
7. How do you feel about the grass skirt taking such a huge spot in the representation of hula/Hawaiian culture?
8. Is there another/are there other symbols that you feel would be better suited in terms of hula and Hawaiian iconography?
9. What came to mind when you first watched Hollywood actresses performing in grass/cellophane skirts?
10. How do you feel about it now?
11. As a student of hula, when, or in what context, did you use pā`ū skirts and when did you use grass skirts?
12. How did you feel about performing in grass/cellophane/raffia skirts then?
13. As a kumu hula/hula teacher yourself now, how do you feel about performing/having your students perform in grass/cellophane/raffia skirts.
14. Tell me about your education, musical training, and preparation for becoming a kumu hula/festival judge/hula teacher?
15. Who were your teachers?
16. How did you learn?
17. What types of music did you dance to?
18. What did you wear while performing?
19. Where and when did you perform? (countries/cities/dates)
20. Tell me about the characteristics of this dance form—the aesthetics of it from your perspective.... (hapa haole focus)
21. Why is this dance “special” What makes it different from other types of dance?
22. What do you think are the primary characteristics of a hula dance performance?
23. What do you feel the local/Hawaiian audience expects from a hula performance?
24. What do you feel the Mainland (Western Canadian/Pacific Northwest) audience expects from a hula performance?
25. What do you look for in a contestant’s costume at a hapa haole competition/in a hapa haole show/number/piece?
26. What do you look for in a contestant’s movement in a hapa haole competition/in a hapa haole show/number/piece?
27. Are there certain dancers who should not wear either skirt?
28. When is it/when isn’t it appropriate to wear a grass or cellophane skirt?
APPENDIX B
IN-PERSON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PAUL TAVALI LATTA

Same as Appendix A, excluding questions 25 and 26
APPENDIX C
EMAIL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR JOSIE DE BATT AND SUSAN MADEC

1. How often does your group perform?
2. Where does your group perform? (Broad or specific locations)
3. To your knowledge, what kind of audiences do you perform for? (Ex: How familiar are your audiences with Hawaiian culture?)
4. What kind of mele/songs do your group generally perform?
5. What styles of hula does your group perform? (kahiko, ‘auana, hapa haole, other Polynesian dance forms, etc…)
6. What type of costuming does your group generally perform in?
7. What types of materials do you use in your costumes?
8. How do you obtain materials for your costumes?
9. Who designs and creates your costumes?
10. How do you choose what mele to present at yearly Kitsilano Show Boat shows?
11. How do you choose what costumes to put your dancers in for Kitsilano Show Boat shows?
12. Please tell me about your history with Kitsilano Showboat (if applicable). How long have you been performing there?
13. Please tell me about performing at Kitsilano Showboat (if applicable). Why you choose to perform here, what you enjoy about performing here, anything particular or significant that occurs at Kitsilano Showboat…
14. To your knowledge, how familiar is the Kitsilano Showboat audience with Hawaiian culture?
15. Please tell me about your education, musical training, and preparation for becoming a Polynesian dance teacher?
16. Who were your teachers?
17. How did you learn? (ex: Did you have to travel occasionally? How often would you train/attend lessons? Did you study in Hawai‘i?)
18. What types of music did you dance to?
19. What did you wear while performing?
20. Where and when did you perform? (countries/cities/dates)
21. Tell me about the characteristics of hula, in general (the aesthetics of it from your perspective).
22. Tell me about the characteristics of hapa haole hula from your perspective.
23. Why is hula or hapa haole hula “special?” What makes it different from other types of dance?
24. What do you think are the primary characteristics of a hula dance performance?
25. What do you feel the local/Hawaiian audience expects from a hula performance?
26. What do you feel the Mainland (Western Canadian/Pacific Northwest) audience expects from a hula performance?
27. Tell me about how you feel about hapa haole music...
28. For you, personally, what imagery does the grass skirt evoke?
29. What role do you feel it plays in the representation of Hawaiian culture and hula?
30. Do you feel that mainland North Americans place a lot of emphasis between the connection of the grass skirt to Hawai‘i?
31. If so, how do you feel about mainland North Americans placing so much of a connection between Hawai‘i and the grass skirt?
32. How do you feel about the grass skirt taking such a huge spot in the representation of hula/Hawaiian culture?
33. As a student of hula, when, or in what context, did you use pāʻū skirts and when did you use grass skirts?
34. How did you feel about performing in grass/cellophane/raffia skirts then (as a hula student)?
35. As a hula teacher yourself now, how do you feel about performing/having your students perform in grass/cellophane/raffia skirts?

Hapa Haole Specific:

36. When preparing your students for the performance of a hapa haole number or competition piece, what goes into mind in the selection of his/her costume?
37. What kind of movement(s) do you teach your students for the performance of a hapa haole dance? How is it different from other styles of hula?
APPENDIX D
AUDIENCE SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Please describe what costuming comes to mind when you think of a hula dancer.
2. Please describe what kind of music or accompaniment comes to mind when you think of hula.
3. Have you ever studied hula, if so, how seriously and for how many years?
4. Have you ever been to Hawai‘i? Yes/No
5. Have you ever lived in Hawai‘i? Yes/No
6. Were you aware that the grass skirt did not originate in Hawai‘i? Yes/No
APPENDIX E
3 DAYS OF ALOHA HAPA HAOLE HULA COMPETITION PARTICIPANTS

Miss Hapa Haole:

1. Kimberlee Sabate
   Hālau Nā Wai Ola (Kumu: Kauʻi Kahuku)
   Mele: Waikīkī

1. Sharissa Makalani Hamson
   Owyhee Hula Studio (Kumu: Alva Cheech Easterling)
   Mele: South Sea Sadie

2. Kathleen Uy
   Hālau Kiaʻi O Ka Hula (Kumu: Josie de Baat)
   Mele: On the Beach At Waikīkī/Waikīkī Chickadee

3. Paola Villa
   Hula Hālau Maʻe Maʻe Kapua O Kahala (Kumu: Paul Tavai-Lata)
   Mele: Lovely Hula Girl

Mr. Hapa Haole:

1. Anson Kahaku
   Hālau Nā Wai Ola (Kumu: Kauʻi Kahuku)
   Mele: Hukilau/I Got Hooked At a Hukilau Medley

Miss Sophisticated Hula:

1. Grace Browne
   Hālau Kiaʻi o ka Hula (Kumu: Josie de Baat)
   Mele: Sweet Leilani

2. Allison Paul
   Hula Hālau Maʻe Maʻe Kapua o Kahala (Kumu: Paul Tavai-Latta)
   Mele: Beyond the Reef

3. Patricia Djak
   Hula Hālau Maʻe Maʻe Kapua o Kahala (Kumu: Paul Tavai-Latta)
   Mele: A Little Hula Heaven
4. Kehuanana Pickford
   Hula Hālau ‘O Lono (Kumu: Manuiki Lono)
   Mele: Twilight In Hawai‘i

Kolohe Hula:

1. Uncle Kaua Wong
   Hālau Nā Wai Ola (Kumu: Kauʻi Kahaku)
   Mele: Hula Lolo

Keiki group:

1. Hula Hālau O Leihuluionalani (Kumu: Leila Fernandez)
   Mele: Honolulu I am Coming Back Again/Show Me How to Do the Hula Medley

2. ‘A‘a I Ka Hula Kanikapila (Kumu: Kaimana LoBlue)
   Mele: Keep Your Eyes on the Hands

3. Hālau Nā Wai Ola (Kumu: Kauʻi Kahaku)
   Mele: Aloha Week Hula

Combined group:

1. Hālau Nā Wai Ola (Kumu: Kauʻi Kahaku)
   Mele: Little Brown Gal/My Little Grass Shack

Wahine group:

1. Hula Hālau Maʻe Maʻe Kapua O Kahala (Kumu: Paul Tavai-Latta)
   Kaʻi: Sing Me a Song Of The Island
   Mele: Sophisticated Hula

2. Hālau Nā Wai Ola (Kumu: Kauʻi Kahaku)
   Mele: Do the Hula/Leimomi

3. Hālau Kiaʻi O Ka Hula (Kumu: Josie de Baat)
   Mele: Hawaiian Hospitality

4. Aulani Hula Hālau (Kumu: Sharon Smith)
   Mele: Get Hep to Swing
Kupuna group:

1. Hālau Hula ‘O Lono (Kumu: Manuiki Lono)
   Mele: Blue Hawaiian Moonlight

2. Hālau Ha Ka ‘Uhane O Ka Pakipika (Kumu: Paddy Ka ‘Uhane)
   Ka‘i: Hukilau
   Mele: E Naughty Mai

3. Hālau Nā Wai Ola (Kumu Hula: Kau‘i)
   Mele: Hawai‘i Calls/Straight From Hawai‘i To You
APPENDIX F
3 DAYS OF ALOHA HAPA HAOLE HULA COMPETITION JUDGE BIOGRAPHIES

As presented in the 2016 3 Days of Aloha in the Pacific Northwest website (http://hawaiianfestivalpnw.com/kumu-bios):

VICTORIA HOLT TAKAMINE, KUMU HULA

Aunty Vicky is the founder and kumu hula of Pua Ali‘i ‘Ilima, founded in 1977. She is a lecturer at the University of Hawai‘i and Leeward Community College. She has served as a judge at Merrie Monarch for many years including 2015.

Aunty Vicky co-founded and serves as president of ‘Ilio’ulaokalani, a coalition of traditional practitioners committed to protecting their Hawaiian customs and traditions. She is also co-founder and president of KAHEA: The Hawaiian Environmental Alliance, a coalition of Hawaiian and Environmental organizations committed to protecting the natural and cultural environment of Hawai‘i. Vicky is co-founder and Executive Director of PA‘I foundation on O‘ahu which sponsors the annual Hapa Haole Hula Festival on O‘ahu and Las Vegas and founder and show producer of MAMO: Maoli Arts Month's annual Wearable Arts Show.

ROBERT CAZIMERO, KUMU HULA

In the 1970’s, Robert Cazimero was instrumental in the resurgence of Hawaiian music and culture. That resurgence began a career that almost thirty years later is stronger than ever. Musician, composer, kumu hula...his work in all of these areas is well-known throughout the world. Robert is a Grammy-nominated, Hōkū award winning musician and composer with sibling Roland as the Brothers Cazimero. He is the kumu hula of Nā Kamalei, a hālau he founded over 30 years ago. Hālau Nā Kamalei won the overall trophy at the 2015 Merrie Monarch Festival. You can learn more about Robert and his teaching style from the film NA KAMALEI: The Men of Hula which tells the story of Hawaiian pride and examines male roles in Hawaiian culture, both past and present.

LEIALOHA LIM AMINA, KUMU HULA

Leialoha Amina is the kumu hula of Nā Lei O Kaholokū along with her sister Nani Lim Yap. Their parents were instrumental in nurturing their children with Hawaiian music and hula that

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76 MAMo is now called Maoli Arts Movement.
would eventually lead their family to form the renowned Nā Hōkū Hanohano Award winning traditional Hawaiian musical group, The Lim Family of Kohala.

Since starting the hālau in Wai‘anae, O‘ahu in 1979 it has since moved to the Big Island of Hawai‘i where she has been a participating judge of the Merrie Monarch Hula Competition as well as competitor. In 2004, Nā Lei O Kaholoku was awarded the top honor of Overall Merrie Monarch winner. Leialoha is an avid researcher of Hawaiian history and culture. Through one of her mentors Pilahi Paki, she was given and teaches and lives the philosophy of Aloha shared with her. It is the philosophy of Nā Lei O Kaholoku.

CHARLES MANU‘AIKOHANA "Manu" BOYD, KUMU HULA

Manu Boyd is a ‘ūniki graduate of Robert Cazimero’s Hālau Nā Kamalei and is the kumu hula of Hālau o ke ‘A‘ali‘i Kū Makani whose wahine won fifth place in kahiko and ‘auana at the 2005 Merrie Monarch Festival. Manu served as the public information director for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and was a commissioner for the State Foundation on Culture and Arts. Currently he is the Cultural Director for the Royal Hawaiian Center in Waikiki. Manu is the leader, composer, vocal arranger and ‘ukulele player of Ho‘okena, a Grammy and multi-Nā Hōkū Hanohano Award winner. He is a prolific poet and songwriter.
APPENDIX G
GLOSSARY OF HAWAIIAN AND OTHER FOREIGN TERMS

Aliʻi: Royalty such as chiefs

Ami: Hula movement characterized by a circling of the hips.

E ho mai: “grant me/us…” or “bestow to me/us…”

Haʻimeoʻolelo: Storyteller

Hālau: A term used to refer both to the building, or house, where hula is learned, but also to refer to the hula school itself, meaning the collective group of kumu hula and his or her students.

Hau: Hawaiian word referring to the hibiscus tree and also to the costuming material procured from it.

Haumāna: Student or students

Hip hei: A ‘hei’ is the Tahitian equivalent of ‘lei.’ As such, a hip hei is a decorated Tahitian band worn around a dancer’s hips.

Hōʻike: Demonstration or exhibition.

Holokū: A loose or fitted long dress with a train.

Holomuʻu: A long fitted dress without a train, that is a cross between a holokū and a muʻumuʻu.

Hula ʻōlapa: A specific ancient style of hula, but can also mean ‘hula dancer.’

Hula ʻālaʻapapa: Form of ancient hula dating back to the Kamehameha dynasty performed to ipu heke.

Hula ʻauana: Modern hula

Hula ʻuliʻuli: Hula performed with rattles gourd dance instruments.

Hula kahiko: Ancient hula

Hula kuʻi: Style of hula believed to have been created by King David Kalākaua, or at least was introduced during his reign, and most likely for his coronation in 1883. As ‘kuʻi’ means ‘to join,’
the hula kuʻi style unites indigenous forms of hula with Western musical and dance movement influences.

**Hula paʻahana:** Instrument hula, that is to say, hula performed with instruments.

ʻIʻi: Tassels, usually made of moré, used in Tahitian dancing and costuming.

ʻIliʻili: Stones, used percussively as hula instruments

Ipu: Gourd used as a drum in hula

Ipu heke: Double-gourd drum

Kāholo: Hula movement considered a ‘vamp’ step consisting of four steps to either the left or right side.

Kaikamahine: Girl (singular)

Kaikamāhine: Girls (plural)

Kāʻlaau: Sticks used as hula instruments

Kānaka maoli: Native Hawaiian people

Kane: Man or men

Kaona: Hidden meaning

Kapa: Cloth type material made by beating the bark of the mulberry or pipturus tree.

Kapu: Taboo, prohibition, or sacredness

Kaula: Rope but in regard to a pāʻū skirt refers to the waistband which was originally made of natural fibres forming cordage, but nowadays also made of elastic.

Keiki kāne: Young boy

Keiki: Children

Kolohe: Rascal or naughty

Kuleana: Responsibility or right
Kumu hula: Hula teacher

Kūpeʻe: Bracelet or bracelets

Kupuna: Grandparent or an elderly person, or persons, belonging to that generation.

Lāʻī: Hawaiian word for ti leaves

Lau kī or lau ti: ti leaves (long form from which the word lāʻi is derived)

Lei poʻo: A flower garland encircling the poʻo, or head.

Lūʻau: Hawaiian feast or party

Maikaʻi: Good

Māmaki: Pipturus tree

Mana: Power, usually divine or sacred

Mea noʻeau: Arts and crafts requiring specific skill

Mele: Song or chant

Mele inoa: Name chant

Mele maʻi: Genital chant

Moʻo: Lizard or lizards

Moré: Tahitian word referring to the material used in costuming made of strips of bark from the hibiscus tree.

Muʻumuʻu: A loose dress with no train.

Noa: Released from taboo restrictions

ʻŌkole: Buttocks

Ori: The Tahitian word for dance

ʻŌteʻa: Tahitian drum dance
Pā’ū: Skirt worn for hula dancing

Pahu: Drum, in hula, generally refers to a sacred shark skin drum.

Pāpale: Hat

Pareo: Also spelt ‘pāreu,’ the Tahitian word for sarong, or long piece of cloth (roughly two yards long) used to make a wrap-around skirt or dress.

Pīuīu: A skirt worn by the Māori made of reeds or strands of New Zealand flax.

Poʻe hula: Hula people

Poi balls: Implements used by Māori performers in which a weight, or ball, is attached to a length of cord (long or short).

Pū‘ili: Hula instruments made of split bamboo.

Pūrau: Tahitian word for hibiscus tree (from which moré is made).

Tiare: A flower known in English as the Tahitian gardenia (gardenia taitensis). Not to be confused with the Tahitian word for the more commonly known gardenia, taina.

Wahine: Woman or women

Waiu: Breasts or sometimes milk

Wauke: Mulberry tree

ʻŪniki: Graduation rites
APPENDIX H
TIMELINE OF RELEVANT EVENTS

Kalākaua’s Reign (1874-1891)
6 Hawaiian performers (including Kini Kapahū) travel to Continental North America and Europe in hula’s 1st extensive tour (1892-1896)

Territory of Hawai‘i (1898-1959)
Golden Era of Postcards* (1898-1918)

Golden Age of Hollywood (1920s-1960s)
“Hawai‘i Calls” Radio Program (1935-1975)

Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance (begins in the 1970s)

American Congregationalist Missionaries arrive from New England (1820)
Queen Ka‘ahumanu bans the hula (1830)

First photograph of hula dancers (1858)
Reciprocity Treaty (1875)
King Kalākaua goes on a world tour and brings back a grass skirt from the Gilbert Islands (1881)

King Kalākaua’s Coronation (1883)
King Kalākaua’s Birthday Jubilee (1886)
Hui Lei Mamo is created (1886)

Overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy (1893)
Creation of the Provisional Government of Hawai‘i (1893)

The Moana Hotel, first hotel in Waikiki opens (1901)
Matson acquires the 2nd Lurline, which could transport 51 passengers between the Continental United States and Hawai‘i (1908)

First public radio broadcast (1910)
First feature films shot in Hawai‘i (1913)

a) Pā‘ū: kapa (used in pre-contact Hawai‘i).
b) Pā‘ū: Western fabrics (first appearance unknown, but after foreigner arrival in Hawai‘i).

c) Grass skirt (originally from the Gilbert Islands—material not confirmed but most likely made of coconut leaves. Inspires recreations in a variety of materials, especially once hula dancers travel to the Continental United States, Canada, and Europe. Some of these materials include hau, raffia, dyed string, paper, oil cloth).

d) Ti leaf skirt (first appearance unknown, created by Hawaiians as an adaptation to the Gilbert Islands Grass skirt, used in addition to the pā‘ū).

e) Cellophane Skirt (first appearance unknown, but estimated to be around the 1930s).

*as put forth by Jane C. Desmond
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