

## Podcast Transcript

### **Part One (History and Introduction of Contact Zones, Effects of Colonialism) Jahna:**

Aloha everybody we are *Nā Leo o ka Lāhui Kanaka*. Abigail, Halley and myself are here to raise awareness about the concept of a “false paradise” and those who fell victim to the history of our oppressors. Together we will learn how contact zones have shaped the identity of our generation and how things like tourism and westernization were crucial in contributing to the exploitation of Hawaiian culture. Contact Zones helped define the encounters between the Native Hawaiians and European Settlers, Missionaries, Sailors, etc. Through this humanities class I was able to make these connections between the historical accounts of these interactions. Halley: “You’ve mentioned something called contact zones. Could you briefly explain what contact zones are for those of us who don’t know?”

Thank you for that reminder Halley. So one of the first lessons we learned in this Humanities class was about Contact Zones. Mary Louise Pratt’s definition in a nutshell is basically telling us that Contact Zones is this space where opposing cultures come into this close proximity in which they are forced to clash together. This sets the foundation for analyzing these initial interactions and only then can we understand how it can affect reality.

For example, the arrival of Captain Cook in 1778 instituted a multitude of problems beginning with the change in our social structure and highly stratified political system. After, missionaries arrived early in the 1800’s. Noel Arista’s wrote this book called, “The Kingdom and the Republic”, she explains the initial altercations between sailors and the natives. During this time there were laws put in place by Queen Ka‘ahumanu who was the reigning regent at time and she regulated sexual relationships and made intercourse out of wedlock illegal. She definitely was this spokesperson for spreading the Christian religion and many ali‘i opposed her rule.

## Following

her death in 1832, nineteen-year old mo'i Keaouili reinstated aspects of Hawaiian culture by taking an 'aikane' and considering a union with a sister.”

This really showed how the ali'i “pushed back” against this religion by reimplementing practices that existed before the missionary rule. These “polygamous” relationships were not viewed back then how they are today. The joining of families from the same bloodlines were done to maintain the mana and prestigious titles as if royalty marrying royalty. But Christian values ridiculed these types of relationships as blasphemous. Which is kind of funny because in the bible many of the men had more than one wife. Which may not have been God’s intended plan but still it happened. This just goes to show no one way is perfect nor right. We shouldn’t bash on someone else's beliefs because they don’t line up with our own. But this was just the start of how Hawaiian traditions began to be overruled by Christian values. During this same time, hula was also banned as it was regarded as “pagan practices” and not revived until the reign of Kalakaua. Hula being a major aspect of Hawaiian culture as it was a way to tell stories to pass down from many generations.

Not only was hula banned but the language as well. Hawaiian Literacy was estimated at 90% in 1841. Hawaiian medium education was banned in 1896 and my grandparents told me how they would get beaten with the ruler for speaking Hawaiian. This was all a part of the transition into the English Language and the “American way of Life.” But today, Hawaiian Language is optionally taught in public school and really one can only learn through immersion type education or on their own. Language is learned growing up in the household. It is hard to learn something when you’re not surrounded by it everyday. Because of what happened in the

past, our grandparents didn't want to teach our parents and so forth, leaving us foreign to our native tongue.

**Halley's Comment:** Growing up, 'Ōlelo Hawai'i was not spoken in my household. My parents never wanted to teach me or wanted me to learn it because they saw it as a dying and almost non-existent language, but still wanted me to learn other aspects of Hawaiian Culture. I grew up dancing Hula but that was about it. My first real exposure to 'Ōlelo Hawai'i was actually with a family friend, she was probably the first person who also started to teach me and when I got to college and started to take classes, it made me wonder what other reasons my parents had for not wanting me to learn 'ōlelo Hawai'i. The further into my education I got, the more I was hoping that when I spoke at home my parents would realize the disservice that they had done to me by not allowing me to learn. In my process of learning 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, it made me realize that it is never too late to start.

**Jahanna:** Loss of the language, loss of culture and loss of our native population. From a 100% native population to less than 50% all within a span of 5 years following the smallpox epidemic. That's crazy ! Nearly half of our people left to carry on our culture, traditions. Our monarchs enforced quarantine procedures and encouraged vaccines to try and counteract the effects of colonialism. But despite the measures taken to try and fix the imbalance, no proclamation, law or regulation could have saved Hawaii from the inevitable fate of becoming a minority in their own land. Outsiders began to overtake the natives and so did their beliefs and principals.

US ideologies pioneered a path for military powers to enter, and foreign powers to assume control over the government and overall the islands. Thus, following the illegal overthrow of

the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1898 with Natives barely making up one third of the population. Nothing stopped the United States from abdicating our Queen and transforming our monarchy into an American ran government and modifying the Native Hawaiian identity as a whole. From an independent nation we became an illegally occupied country to territory and now the 50th State of America. It's sad to say that some Hawaiians are not even taught this until their post-secondary education if they choose and it's the uneducated persons that fail to recognize and acknowledge the truth behind the history.

## **Part 2 (Issues and impacts)**

**Halley:** The western impact on the Native Hawaiian population and other pacific island nations throughout Oceania have a lot to do with military strategy and the commodification of cultures and island homes. Here in Hawai'i both have been part of a long standing tradition of colonization and western influence. Personally I worked in the tourism industry for almost 6 years, I worked in 4 different hotels and also as a lū'au dancer. To be honest, it was an eye opener to see how much Hawai'i was being taken advantage of.

There are times that I find myself questioning what other state has as many military bases like Hawai'i does. If we think about it, there's Schofield and Wheeler in Wahiawā, JBPHH, Marine Corps Base Hawai'i at Kanē'ōhe Bay, multiple training areas within the islands, and housing reservations. Not many other states have at least one base per military branch in one state, which is already cause for some concern. With the amount of military personnel that are on island at any given time are now putting native peoples in competition for natural resources, housing, and land access. This starts to become problematic when places of cultural importance have now been disturbed by the training that is taking place by the military. Like when the US Navy had

used Kaho‘olawe as target practice and eventually breaking the natural aquifer as well as not cleaning up the island like promised and how the island is inhospitable because of the unexploded ordinances. The military lacks the understanding of why the land is so important to the native hawaiians and doesn‘t try to educate themselves or try to come to a compromise when it comes to equal access to our homeland.

One thing that I noticed when working in the tourism industry for that long was the entitlement of tourists, especially the ones coming from the mainland. Their ignorance and lack of respect has impacted Hawai‘i in so many ways. In *From a Native Daughter*, Haunani Kay-Trask states “In Hawai‘i, the destruction of our land and the prostitution of our culture is planned and executed by multinational corporations (both foreign-based and Hawai‘i-based), by huge landowners (such as the missionary descended Castle&Cook of Dole Pineapple fame), and by collaboratioinist state and county governments” (137). This always speaks volumes to me because it shows the era of where the entitlement could have started but also gives such an extreme example of the commodification of Hawai‘i has affected the native peoples. **Abby:** Can you tell us a story from your days working in the tourism industry? **Halley:** Sure. Since there are so many I guess I‘ll tell a short one from working as a dancer. I was performing at the International Marketplace for their sunset show and afterwards was taking pictures with guests who had attended. There was this one couple that was waiting in line and they seemed impatient, so I had thanked them for watching and for waiting. I was waving for the next set of guests to come forward and the lady had said something along the lines of “you should be thanking us for taking the trip to Hawaii, seems like you all need it.” The next morning I was standing at the front desk at work and the couple from the night before had come up and started complaining about the rain. The lady had said “can‘t you do something to stop the rain like a dance or

something I wanted to lay out at the beach”. I was already irked by the lady from the night before and at that point she was blaming me for the rain, it was probably only like 9 in the morning, my shift had just started, and I was ready to go home. I had apologized for the rain and told them I couldn’t control the weather and they’d just have to wait it out. She was going on a rant about how we should compensate them with a free dinner and spa trip for the hassle. Already annoyed I had told them since the weather wasn’t under the hotel's control that there was no need for the compensation, and left the conversation like that.

Jumping back into the content of the podcast, another thing that I had also noticed that comes from the westernization that is very much present in Hawai‘i (much to many’s dismay) is the phrase “Aloha Spirit.” Coined by the Hawaii State Tourism Authority, “The Aloha Spirit” was something that was used to commodify and exploit Hawaiian culture and people. Haunani Kay-Trask explains aloha as “ the social connections between our people [that] through aloha, translated as “love” but carrying with it a profoundly Hawaiian sense that is, [which] again [is] familial and genealogical” (141). The use of our language to sell the “paradise” of Hawai‘i is the long standing issue of westernization and colonization. Language has an uplifting power that Hawaiians believed in tremendously. I ka ‘ōlelo ke ola, i ka ‘ōlelo ka make- in language is life, in language is death. The use of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i in the hands of commodification of Hawaiian culture and traditions doesn’t make sense when less than 40 years ago the ban on ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i being taught and spoken was lifted.

Another way that colonialism and westernization has affected Native Hawaiians is the loss of native place names and are replaced by either someone of importance (during the overthrow) or the describance of the place. One of the largest examples of the renaming is Pearl Harbor, or Pu‘uloa. What was once home to many native hawaiiians who shared mo‘olelo and mele about

the area are now having to explain what was where or what had happened to a once thriving ecosystem. When the US Navy came and wanted to build the shipyard many opposed the idea

because of the cultural significance and also the loss of access to the sheltered harbor.

Another example of the name changing is Dole Street. Renamed after Stanford B. Dole was once known as Kapa‘akea Street. The street runs from Punahou street to Saint Louis Drive, and passes through Mānoa’s campus, many of the Native Hawaiians that study and work at UH Mānoa agree that having and keeping the name Dole for the street is praising the overthrow and “glorifies a legacy of injustice and is a direct insult to Native Hawaiians in pursuit of a college education” (Civilbeat, 2017). The renaming of places that hold generations worth of cultural value, immediately ceased to exist and are now being remembered as places that had a hand in colonialism in Hawai‘i.

And next, Abigail will be talking about an ideal solution to the impacts of colonization and western influence in Hawai‘i.

### **Part 3 (The ideal solution)**

**Abby:** Hello everyone! As Halley had said, in this portion of the podcast, I will be discussing ways in which we can educate others about Hawaii. It is no secret Hawaii is looked at as a place for vacation and paradise. Many haoles, also known as foreigners, are unaware of the culture and laws. As we had discussed earlier, the land and the people hold importance in Hawaii. When visitors/tourists come to Hawaii, they are perceived as ignorant and unwanted due to the lack of education. This is where we need to find a solution. Something I had come up with is enforcing the airlines and hotels to educate their tourists on Hawaii. The airlines and hotels are the first people who have contact and can inform the tourists. They can inform them about not touching

the wildlife, staying 500 feet away from all monk seals and turtles, and to not litter. The land is not just a place in which we live, it is our home and provider. Many locals take pride in their home and want take care of it. Whether it is the animals or the land itself, we take care of it.

When we see tourists littering, touching the animals, and posting videos and images of touching the endangered animals, it hurts.

**Halley:** Can you give us an example of a recent event in which this occurred?

**Abby:** Sure. An example I have would be the incident that happened in early July. A woman named Lakyn went viral on tiktok for posting a video of her touching an endangered Hawaiian Monk Seal in the island of Kauai. The video had received over 37,000 views which caused an uproar amongst the people of Hawaii. Lakyn had immediately faced backlash and received many threats. Here in Hawaii, when such crime is committed, the offender could face up to five years in prison or pay a \$50,000 fine. According to Lakyn and her husband Stephen, they were unaware of the laws and never meant any harm. They were just enjoying their honeymoon and it was their first time seeing a Hawaiian monk seal. Both Stephen and Lankyn were unaware of the protected laws and had not seen any signs posted. Even though they were unaware of their crimes, they had agreed to pay the fines and learn from their mistakes. However, the people of Hawaii felt like it wasn't enough. Situations like this happen all the time and a majority of people tend to get away with it. We are constantly trying to preserve our land and encourage each other to save the animals. When we see people doing the opposite, it is disrespectful. Same goes for respecting our culture. Dancing hula is not about wearing a grass skirt and coconut bra while making waves with your hands. Hula is about telling a story. Another thing that should be taught is how locals communicate. Pidgin is not something anyone can be taught overnight, but at least know the



basics. Inform foreigners that we refer to older men and women as aunties and uncles. To people from the mainland, that may seem weird, but it's deemed respectful here.

**Jahna:** Yes it is funny because my roommate would call her mom by her first name and I thought it was weird but still I called her aunty, and she understood. Everybody is raised differently. I think it is more about communicating and coming to a mutual understanding. But what exactly does this have to do with the airlines and hotels?

**Abby:** Well, I'll tell you. When the airplanes take off, they can inform their passengers during the flight. Whether it is on the intercom, having brochures, and even providing a brief infomercial. Something is better than nothing. Hotels can even provide infomercials and brochures as well. They are constantly promoting tourist attractions all along Waikiki and North Shore, but do not bother to share the culture, laws, and traditions. If they have the funds to promote attractions, they can put money off to the side to inform. Annually, there is a competition held with all media clubs and classes in the high schools that are culturally based. They can use this competition to their advantage. The winner can create an infomercial for the incoming tourists. That way, the tourists can no longer say they didn't know and the war between tourists and locals can stop. Hawaii could slowly be comfortable with the idea of tourists rather than be discouraged by ignorance. We all need to do our part and find ways to make amends. We should share our culture, traditions, and land. However, foreigners need to learn and respect that we have laws for a reason. Us as locals cannot be angry and closed off to the idea of tourists being uneducated. That is why I am proposing for hotels and airlines to take the time to educate the haoles.

Another solution I had come up with is encouraging tourists to participate in cultural day. They should spend their first day visiting some of Hawaii's historic locations to learn some of the

history. Whether it is by going to the Iolani palace, Polynesian Cultural Center, and/or the Bishop museum. This will allow for the tourists to educate themselves on our culture. There is much more to Hawaii than our luaus and beaches. Our people and our land is the foundation. Coming to Hawaii should be treated like going to a foreign country. Educating yourself on the location is very important. People visit historic places in foreign countries all the time. So why don't they do it here? This is where the hotels and tour guides need to step up. Rather than throwing the tourists into the wild, take the time to teach them. Advise them to educate themselves by taking one day out of their trip to visit these places. Encourage them to understand us and why we value our culture and traditions. Not many people are aware of the pain and suffering the people of Hawaii had to endure. It is not something that is taught and is in the history books. If they are educated on our culture and traditions, they will understand why we get angry when they have these so-called "Hawaiian" days and dance their version of Hula. It is not because the Hawaiians are gatekeeping, they just think it's disrespectful and they're making it a joke. 'Ōlelo and hula were banned for many years, now that we can do these things freely, we take pride in it. We do these things with passion and pride. It is not a joke and it is not to look cute. It is to connect to the roots and to be proud to be Hawaiian. That is why we need to make sure the tourists are educated when they get here before they end up saying and doing something disrespectful. We want to alleviate the conflict, not make it worse. We want them to enjoy Hawaii, it's beauty, and the culture. However, we want them to remain respectful as they are doing so. By encouraging tourists to take a day to educate themselves, this will alleviate the issue at hand and we can come together to enjoy Hawaii as one.

**The conclusion:**

**Abby:** Now that we have gone over the westernization of Hawaii and the impact it has had on its people, we want you the viewers to tell us how you feel about this. Have you first handedly experienced any of these events? Or, have you never learned about these events? A lot of the time, these things go under the radar because people are ashamed of what Hawai'i had become. Hawaii is a beautiful place, a paradise if you will. However, it has its pros and cons just like any other place. Of course we could come up with many other solutions and tell you many more stories, but what is that going to do if no one does anything? We need you, the listeners, to join us in the fight. We need to come together to teach others about the truth about Hawaii. Whether it is by posting on your social media, recommending this podcast, or even having an open conversation about what we discussed today.

This is our first podcast in our series. Like many other firsts, it is never the best and could always use some advice. So, please do not be afraid to ask us any questions or leave any comments. We are open to any and all suggestions. Also, if there is something you would like us to discuss next, please let us know. This is a safe space and we want to be the voice of the people. With that being said, thank you for listening. Until next time...

**Abby:** I'm Abby.

**Halley:** I'm Halley

**Jahnna:** And I'm Jahnna.

**Jahnna:** Mahalo nui loa for joining us today. We are *Nā Leo o ka Lāhui Kanaka* signing off. (Oli Mahalo)