

# Challenging Colonial Construction of Diseased Bodies: Polyvocal Narrative Voices in Bushnell's *Moloka'i*

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**Abstract** This study examines the representation of disease in the form of leprosy through a reading of O.A Bushnell's *Moloka'i* to address damage, trauma, inequality in a postcolonial Hawai'i landscape. Bushnell's novel criticizes the stereotypical view of Hawai'i as paradisaical archipelago through a narration grounded within the socio-historical circumstances of leprosy outbreak and the ensuing discrimination and segregation towards its sufferers. *Moloka'i* problematizes colonizer/colonized dichotomy by placing the disabled lepers' body in the entangled aspect of colonial hegemony and indigenous resistance within the interconnected nature of disease, disability and colonialism. This paper underlines how an econarratological perspective deconstructs readers' own presupposition concerning Hawai'i through the construction of virtual storyworld narrated from contrasting settlers/natives binarism in a polyvocal narration. An econarratological perspective actively invites reader to retrospectively shift their outlook from the dominant discourse rooted within colonial authority toward the emergence of indigenous voices, previously submerged in the narrative of diseases and disability. The use of first-person narrative personas problematizes the subjective consciousness in imagining material realities on how similar spatial scene is reimagined and then contrasted from a settler/native perspective. To concurs, Bushnell's *Moloka'i* challenges the colonial construction of the

indigene's diseased body as non-human Others through the emergence of polyvocal native voices established upon indigenous cosmology.

**Keywords** disability in literature; econarratology; Hawai'ian-American literature; hegemonic centrism; storyworld

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## Introduction

The typical image of Hawai'i evokes the commoditized touristic scene of an idyllic tropical paradise populated with submissive natives. As stated through Aikau and Gonzales' assertion on how "many people first encounter Hawai'i through their imagination" (1), this idealized image is constructed through the visual package of picturesque landscape among with the exoticism of the Hawai'ian indigene. These paradisaical myths and Orientalist discourse conjures the popular imagination of tropical Pacific islands, in which Hawai'i is not an exception. Sasaki (623) identifies on how Hawai'i is often conceptualized as a welcoming, safe, and attractive place for pleasure seekers. This extension of Orientalist outlook construes Hawai'i as a projection space for erotic tourist desires, discursively displaces its native populations while simultaneously appropriates their traditions and their exotic bodies for a tourist-oriented industry. Until the contemporary period, many tourists' advertisements and poster images romanticizes the scenery of Hawai'i with esteemed hospitality of local islanders, coined as the '*Aloha spirit*' (Kaomea 320) Within this phenomenon, Native Hawai'ian's presence is symbolically erased and written out from the imagined paradise. This Hawai'i-as-paradise-trope conjures the image of an idealized timeless utopia which negates the existence of racialized conflict as an exemplary "multicultural, multiethnic society" (Labrador 292).

The historicity of Hawai'ian archipelago and the Native Hawai'ians is intertwined with the legacy of Western colonialism and domination. This formerly sovereign nation was annexed by the United States in 1898 following a coup by sugar

planters which overthrow the Hawai'ian native dynasty and was later declared as the 50<sup>th</sup> state of the U.S in 1959. In the present day, the Native Hawai'ians, or designated as Pacific Islanders by the United States are still subjected to marginalization by the dominant Whites through their lower educational achievement and highest poverty rates in their own islands (Godinet et al.) Several scholars have argued that the relationship between the Hawai'ian indigenous people and American settlers can be seen from a colonizer-colonized dichotomy. Firth (262) contextualizes that the term 'Native' itself is a construction by Western powers which generalize the non-West as the Other, which lacked essential Western virtues such as rationality, application, and foresight. Similarly, Maile (66) proposes her idea of settler colonialism as a dynamic system of power which aims to dispossess, subjugate, and marginalize Indigenous peoples and agency. Under American-enforced Western belief, traditional Hawai'ian epistemology based on love and respect toward nature was denigrated as an example of paganism and anathema for Christian teaching. Not only physically dominated, the Native Hawai'ians are also mentally and ideologically colonized through their alienation of the ancestral tradition due to the implementation of Western paradigm. The present state of Native Hawai'ians is aptly summarized through Hawai'ian nationalist, Haunani-Kay-Trask,

Hawai'ians became a conquered people, their land and culture subordinated to another nation. Made to feel and survive as inferiors when their sovereignty as a nation was forcibly ended by American military power, we Hawai'ians were rendered politically and economically powerless by the turn of the century. Today, our people continue to suffer the effects of American colonialism even after the alleged democratization of statehood. (24).

Within Western discourse of colonialism which negates the existence of Native Hawai'ians' and appropriated their cultural heritage, Hawai'ian-American literature provides an avenue for marginalized writer to voice and articulate their agency. Hawai'ian literature, or Hawai'ian-American literature as it is positioned within the wider field of Ethnic American literature can be defined based on two aspects, either geographical aspect (literature written by writers residing in Hawai'i) or thematic aspect (focusing on Hawai'i as its subject matter) (Luangphinit 220). Contemporary Hawai'ian-American literature addresses and explores the struggle for history, identity, and representation within dominant American hegemonic discourse which limits the articulation of authentic Hawai'ian voices. Up until the 1950's the majority of literature concerning Hawai'i remains exclusively written by the outsiders,

visitors, tourists, in which the majority were White Americans or *haole* in Hawai'ian terminology. Their literature mainly abides with the stereotypical imagination of Hawai'i as paradise and not addressing the issue faced by the indigenous people especially the legacy of colonialism. Spencer (23) identifies how writing about the Pacific has often delegated this space as mere settings for white writer's fantasies of timeless utopia and idealized paradise where the real struggle for indigenous survival occurs in the background. On the contrary, Hawai'ian-American literature advocates the indigenous struggle of reclaiming their ancestral heritage based upon attachment toward their environment and criticism toward Western imperialism. Broadly speaking, a general characteristic of Hawai'ian-American literature can be defined as follows,

Hawai'ian literature continues to reflect ancient themes expressing *aloha 'aina* -love and patriotism to a beloved land base, celebration of traditional cultural belief both ancient and modern and resistance to American colonialism, as Hawai'ians continue to asserts themselves as indigenous Pacific people seeking self-determination and political independence. (Ho'omanawanui 231)

A recurring theme in Native Hawai'ian literature which vividly foregrounds the traumatic impact of Western colonialism is the representation of leprosy outbreak, occurred from the late 19<sup>th</sup> into the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The origin of this disease was believed to be brought by Chinese laborers, immigrated to Hawai'i as sugar planters, hence leprosy in Hawai'i was also known as *Mai Pake* (Chinese sickness). This disease rapidly spread outside the sugar plantations from the Hawai'ian main island of O'ahu into other island chains. Responding toward this epidemic, the Legislative Assembly of the Hawaiian Island passed "An Act to Prevent the Spread of Leprosy," signed by the then king, Kamehameha V in 1866. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as health and disease became a major concern in Hawai'i, many Westerners, such as Rev. S.E Bishop blamed the outbreak of leprosy due to traditional Hawai'ian lifestyle, accusing the Hawai'ians for unchastity, drunkenness, sorcery and idolatry (Herman 26). This Orientalist bias and racially based discourse that primarily targeting the Native Hawai'ians as the Other towards the healthy American settlers culminated in the establishment of lepers' sanatorium in Kalawao on the Moloka'i island. For over 100 years, from 1865 until it was finally ended in 1969, Native Hawai'ians diagnosed with leprosy were exiled by law into this state-regulated leper colony.

The discourse surrounding leprosy and exile to Molokai, "a land set apart, a na-

tural prison, or the grave where one is buried alive” (Inglis, “Molokai Can Be Anywhere ” 615), considers its patients as legally dead, they had lost all rights to society and forbidden to return. Mandatory segregation policy displaced Native Hawai’ians who had to forcibly abandon their homes, families, and their ancestral land (*aina*). Disruption caused through the policy of exiling lepers ruptures the Indigenous community and kinship based upon shared familial ties and connection toward the land. Discursive imagination of American empire building founded upon belief of racial supremacy and the construction of healthy bodies further rationalizes this policy of segregation. Russel (58) contextualizes how the Native Hawai’ians suffering from leprosy were dehumanized as “leprosy persons at large,” as their mere presence are considered as a threat for racial purity. Furthermore, Day explores the management of disease in Hawai’i within the framework of U.S colonial interest as an attempt to create the idealized image of a ‘leper’ that could be controlled and contained. She explores how,

given the majority of exiled leprosy patients were classified as Hawai’ians or ‘part-Hawai’ians’, the Western (considered synonymous with the Board of Health’s) tendency was to equivocate *Kanaka Maoli* with diseased and to narrate the projected demise of the Indigenous population as related to American economic and political interest in annexation....Leprosy became an imperial danger through the entangled nature of colonial activity, western theories of contagion, and microbial science with Christian morality. (113).

The discourse surrounding leprosy and its historicity in Hawai’ian is aptly contextualized through the novel *Moloka’i* (1963) by Oswald Andrew (O.A) Bushnell<sup>1</sup>. *Moloka’i* is a story of a community of exiled lepers in Kalawao, Moloka’i, narrated in the form of polyvocal narration from three characters/narrators with their own distinctive voices and perspectives. All three narratives retrospectively retold several events from different angles although they do not fully overlap, as some in-

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1 O.A Bushnell (1913-2002) was a third-generation Hawai’ian of Italian-Portuguese and Norwegian descents. Although descended from the White settlers of Hawai’i, Bushnell, through his literary publications of several novels such as *the Return of Lono* (1956), *Moloka’i* (1963) and *Ka’a’awa* (1972) was noted for his portrayal of the suffering and oppression faced by Native Hawai’ians under American domination. Born in Kaka’ako district of O’ahu, Bushnell was celebrated as a local writer, one who was born and raised in Hawai’i. Sumida, on his Anthology, *And the View from the Shore : Literary Traditions of Hawai’i* (Sumida) notes Bushnell’s cultural significance in swelling the several currents of Hawaii’s literary traditions towards the growth and recognition of the Local literature in the 1970s and 1980s (251).

cidents were only experienced by certain protagonists. The first narratorial voice is told from the perspective of Doctor Newman, a European bacteriologist who seeks to conduct an experiment concerning the transmission of leprosy from diseased patients into healthy individuals. The other two voices problematize the complexities of Native Hawai'ian identity with the influence of Western paradigm and thought, Malie, a young Hawai'ian noblewoman raised in American seminary and Caleb, a *Hapa-Haole* (half-breed) lawyer whose leprosy put an end of his ambition. These narratorial voices are intricately interwoven, supplementing and challenging each other's stories. The polyvocality within these voices occurs amidst the historical background of colonialism, traumatic dispossession, disability and diseases for the rapidly declining Hawai'ian natives (Barker and Murray 69).

This study examines the representation of disease and disability in the form of leprosy as an allegory concerning colonialism and its impact, conceptualizes stories which resonate outward from the characters' disabled body as a form to address damage, trauma, inequality, power and its abuses in a postcolonial landscape. Moreover, *Moloka'i* incorporates multivocal and multipersona narrative, enabling for the emergence of polyvocality through contradictory and opposing paradigms, ideologies and social outlooks. *Moloka'i* functions as a critique toward relations of domination and subordination, as the narratorial perspective shifts from the position of the privileged outsider into the indigenous perspective from leper sufferers within the confined space of Kalawao leper colony. All these narrative devices problematize the necessity of creating a mental model of narrative in the readers' mind to immerse themselves into virtual storyworld during reading process. Reader's active participation is necessary in understanding *Moloka'i*, deconstructing their own presupposition about Hawai'i as paradise through reading of a narration grounded within the postcolonial framework of disability, trauma, exclusion and stigmatization.

Erin James elaborates her idea of a cognitive turn in literature studies, in which narrative comprehension requires the construction of a mental model of narrative that readers must inhabit during the reading process (8). Reading, as a performative act enables the relocation or virtual transportation of readers from the here and now of their immediate reading proximity into alternative space-time coordinate detailed in fictional narrative. This view, addressed by storyworld proponents such as James argues that the construction of a storyworld, readers' mental model of the contexts and environment of a narrative which is simulated through the performative act of reading. James addresses how

importantly for the considerations of narrative environments, the concept of storyworld calls attention to the worldmaking power of narrative, or its potential to immerse/transport readers into a virtual environment that different from the physical environment in which they read. (9–10).

Econarratology, the model of reading proposed by James focuses on the connection between storyworld construction in the readers' mind and its potential to foster a sense of environmental imagination based on perception of both space and time. This spatial turn of narrative analysis explores how space, which connotes abstraction is transformed into place, a concept loaded with values and meaning. Similarly, the values of affective places introduce a cultural dimension to the discussion of spatialization in narrative study. She asserts that

econarratology studies the *storyworld* that readers immerse themselves in when they read narratives, the relationship between these worlds and the physical/actual world, and the potential of reading process to raise awareness of different environmental imagination and environmental experience. (243)

Storyworld emphasizes readers' active participation and interaction towards the contexts and environments of a narrative's characters through the simulation of readers into the fictional world of narrative during reading process. The process of constructing a virtual storyworld is facilitated through several narrative devices in the form of textual cues. These textual cues appear in a variety of forms, including words associated with spatialization to aid mental simulation of narrative worlds and sensory appeals (*qualia*), which describe a conscious experience narrated from a subjective consciousness and narrative voice of a narrator/ focalizing character. Furthermore, Buell argues that "spatial imagination is not value-neutral", but inevitably expresses the values and agenda of those in charge of them (85). Through textual cues that enables the construction of a fictional storyworld, storyworld formation problematizes subjective consciousness mediated through textual cues provided from a character/focalizer in imagining material realities. These diverse voices problematize the polyvocality of narratives in which the voices might remain separate or blended together as heterogenous narration.

### **Reimagining Hawai'i from Insider/Outsider Spatial Perspectives**

Reading on Bushnell's *Moloka'i* from an econarratological perspective implores readers to reconceptualize their presupposition about Hawai'i as a paradisaal Pacific

Island and instead simulating a narrative of disability and diseases grounded within the changing socio-political dynamic of Hawai'i under Western domination. The use of polyvocality, multiple narration and shifting perspective enables Bushnell to accommodate contrasting viewpoint from settler/natives binarism. Moreover, the story is narrated in a first-person perspective in which the narrators were also an active participant in the story, or a homodiegetic narration in Genette's concept of narrative voice (Genette 92–94). First-person narrative enables reader to experience and simulate the events unfolding in the story mediated from the conscious experience of the narrators. As stated by Von Mossner, first-person account tends to give readers a good deal of insight into the felt properties of a character's mental state, on how they feel about people, things, events, and other entities they encountered during the story (93). The differing and contrasting perspectives from various narrators further illustrates the polyvocality in how a similar spatial scene allows for differing reinterpretation in accordance with the paradigm, ideology and perspective held by each narrator.

Bushnell employs various textual cues related with space, or spatialization to position the readers within the historicity of Hawai'i amidst the outbreak of leprous disease as a counter discourse to the popular imagination of this archipelago as paradise. These textual cues provide the avenue to explore how readers process and engage with a narrative environment narrated from the subjective consciousness of an experiencing agent. Although the evocative and descriptive portrayal of a narrative environment enables readers to imagine a spatial setting, it is the perspective of a character/narrator that imbues the fictional environment with meaning in accordance with their racial background, ideological outlook and social status. The first prominent point of view in *Moloka'i* is narrated from the Eurocentric outlook of Dr. Newman, a bacteriologist who treated his time in Hawai'i as a grand scientific endeavor to discover the cause of leprosy. This trope aligns with what Pratt identifies as imperial-eye/I, "first-person narrative persona that passively looks upon and possesses imperial landscapes" (201). Newman's travelogue positions Honolulu as a barbaric city who had only adapted Western custom and architectures, a city totally alien for himself, accustomed to European grandeur. This is exemplified in the preceding passage,

With a sudden longing for Berlin welling up within me, I looked beyond the blur of my uniform to the dirty alien world beyond the carriage. We were driven along King Street, the shabby main road of Honolulu. On our left the naked statue of Kamehameha, the barbarian first king of Hawai'i, leaned upon



its spear like a beggar to the spendthrift successor who lived in the new palace across the street. What a crazy thing it was, to be set down in that miserable dirty town. (Bushnell 6-7)

This mental projection of Honolulu from the outsider perspective sets the narrator apart from the strangeness of the uncivilized realm, represented by his position inside the carriage, detached from the “dirty alien world beyond.” Bushnell’s usage of multiple protagonists enables for a different interpretation of a similar spatial scene, narrated from a contrasting perspective. The main plaza of Honolulu, denounced by Newman as a mockery of civilization is retold from Caleb Forrest’s somber narration, just before his eventual exile to Moloka’i as a leper. This shift in spatialization moves readers from a discourse elevated above the text’s world, associated with imperial power into one embedded with local imagination of Hawai’i, narrated from an indigenous narratorial voice afflicted with disease and disability. The contrast on how a similar spatial scene is narrated from both inside/outside narratorial perspective provides a telling metaphor about the traumatic impact of leprosy for the Hawai’ian natives, as seen here:

Only the Great Kamehameha stood watch, his right hand uplifted in the ancient greeting, the long spear held in his left hand, ready to ward off the spears of the enemies of his people.

“Where is the might of your spear?” I cried, thinking about how wasted was the nation, of how fast it was dwindling away under the attack of invisible enemies his spear could not parry. (Bushnell 402)

Much of the spatialization of Hawai’i focused on the three protagonists’ time on the Moloka’i island with its subsequent reconstruction of how the disabled body is perceived. The image of lepers is reinterpreted, not as the image of monstrous other from which one must inevitably turn away but is humanized, in which two of the main protagonists are lepers. The literary trope of polyvocality enables this reinterpretation, as the previously dominant imperial outlook of Newman is challenged from the emerging voices of Malie and Caleb as indigenous people suffering from leprosy. The settlers/natives binarism is underlined through their differing conception of this penal colony itself through its spatial description. Newman contextualizes this penal colony as a symbolism for the inevitable decline of Hawai’ian race, as exiled to Moloka’i meant certain death:

The sea lay flat and sparkling on three sides of us; and on the fourth the tremendous palisade of cliffs raised its barrier for thousands of feet, stretching its grim height along the coast of Molokai for as far as the eye could see, the kanakas' thoughts were as transient as their sojourn in their dirty, barren, disease-blighted islands in the middle of that vicious sea. There, in the shadows toward which they were being borne, they would spend the few months of the few years which were left for them. And then, when the time came, they would die. (Bushnell 52-3)

From the prior passage, the island of Moloka'i is conveyed in unflattering and morbid terms, as a 'grim, dirty, barren, and disease-blighted island'. This vivid description echoes how in Westerners' conception, this penal colony is made to appear as monstrous as the horrors residing within its boundaries, dehumanized as inhuman Other. As stated by Inglis, "the West transformed the normal colonized Hawai'ians into dehumanized lepers doubly colonizing them" (*Ma'i Lepera : A History of Leprosy* 75). This act of Othering dehumanizes the lepers and submerges their native agency under the colonial authority which enforce segregation, as seen from Newman's recount of Moloka'i island.

Malie's perspective contextualizes the settler/native binarism in conceptualizing disease and disability through the contrasting spatial scene concerning the arrival in Moloka'i. Different with how Western conception of leprosy focuses on the physical disfigurement of sick individual and the necessity of exile in fear of contamination, the Hawai'ians primarily concern with how leprosy severs an individual's familial ties toward both family and land. Ruddle (25) argues that the conception of Hawai'ian personal identity positions oneself within their genealogy (history), *ohana* (family) and its' *aina* (local/geographical home), exiled to Moloka'i means severing all these familial and genealogical ties altogether. Yet different with Newman's impersonal narration which considers the demise of the Hawai'ian race as an inevitability, Malie's voice offers the possibility of re forging familial ties. These familial ties are no longer limited from genealogical or territorial place of birth, but upon shared circumstances as exiled indigenous lepers. Malie, whose narration often employs plural pronoun 'we' narration to represent the communal voice of Native Hawai'ians highlights how the leper's community in Moloka'i remain symbolically connected as one extended family based on indigenous kinship.

I was awake when the hush of the engine told me we were come to the bay of Kalawao. When I looked out of my window it seemed that the torches

of Waikiki had journeyed to Molokai to greet me. They were there, in the distance, glowing warm and cheerful. They were a promise that I should find my people upon the land of Molokai, as I had found them upon the land of Oahu. (Bushnell 193)

The leper colony of Moloka'i contextualizes the interconnected nature of disease, disability and colonialism in which the image of the monstrous Other is both evoked and subverted from settler/native binarism. It is through the narrators' eyes and from within their bodies that readers perceive both able and disabled bodies, separated across racial label. Since virtually everyone in this penal colony suffers from leprosy, physical deformity becomes normative and usually passes without comment, except from the outsider narratorial voice of Newman. His colonial gaze constructs the image of a monstrous Other in which Moloka'i is considered as a macabre place populated by sub humans suffering from heathenish disease. As proposed by Plumwood, the construction of non-human as Others is conceived in the reductionist terms established by mind/body binarism evoking the image of the bestial and savage non-Western people (53). The indigenous agency is submerged under the trope of disabled bodies that aligns with the discourse of the monstrous Other, as seen through Newman's narration of his arrival in Kalawao settlement :

We emerged from the head of the trail to a scene of unmitigated horrors.

The lepers were waiting to greet us.

In the vast carnival of hideousness, the people of Kalawao were gathered by the hundreds upon the plain lying between the brink of the peninsula and the village. Here, too, many appeared at first glance to be quite healthy, but among them were others who were monstrously disfigured in feature and in limb. Hideous with their smiles and laughter, looking like masks of death brought living out of a witch's sabbath, they came toward us, a legion of ghouls, rank upon rank of them closing in. (Bushnell 75)

Western colonial discourse constructs an idealized image of lepers which dehumanized them and stratifies the indigenous position within the racial hierarchies. Newman's inner thought further establishes this outlook, "them-this was how I thought of the lepers, as creatures not quite human" (Bushnell 121) This dichotomy between Westerners as human and the indigenous lepers as non-human construes ethical justification as confined to the human and rationalizes the instrumentation of the indigenous lepers as means to advance the rational human

interest and knowledge.

Bushnell problematizes the complexities of Hawai'ian perception in comprehending leprosy and its impact through the contrasting perspective of Malie and Caleb. Caleb, a *hapa-haole* who was educated in Western thinking aligns toward colonial understanding of leper as monstrous and inhuman Other, as seen in his inner monologue. An excerpt in the novel highlights Caleb's narration upon entering the House of the Sick, the primary leper treatment in Kalawao, and his utter bedazzlement of seeing the monstrosity inside,

Never had I seen such delights to the eye, such variations upon the human theme, as were assembled here in a witches' Sabbath of perversions of the limpid eye, the shapely nose the shell-like ear, the kissable lips. I could touch them, as I passed among them, one by one, and the feel of them made my own rotting flesh creep with horror. (Bushnell 433)

Caleb's narration constructs the image of the lepers as monstrous Others, aligning himself with the colonial discourse, while ironically admitting himself as one of the non-humans he invoked. This view, echoing the Western perception of lepers is challenged through Malie's narration which contextualizes the impact of leprosy toward indigenous Hawai'ians. Malie often employs possessive pronoun to underline her status as a Native Hawai'ian and expressing her communalities based on indigenous kinship upon fellow leper sufferers. Her narration positions the gathering of disabled bodies in the entrance to Kalawao as a metaphor to address the traumatic experience of colonial encounter between Hawai'i and the Western powers. This is seen in the following excerpt,

So many of my people, to be the victims of the foreigners' disease. Never until then had I known how terrible is this affliction upon the people. But now, in the presence of the dwellers of Kalawao, I saw the price we were made to pay for our entering into the world of nations. My body was as a pebble upon the shore of Kalawao, compared with the number of bodies gathered there upon the plain. I was but one among many, and in the instant of seeing the many, I was made one with them. (Bushnell 200)

The various textual cues depicting spaces from the diverse perspective of its narrators illustrates the polyvocality of *Moloka'i* in which the first-person narrative personae problematizes the subjective consciousness in imagining material realities.

Spatialization of Hawai'i, primarily focuses on the leper colony in Moloka'i correspondents with the traumatic historicity of leprosy, in which the notion of disease and disability is both evoked and subverted from the settler/native binarism. Subsequent section offers more insights concerning the polyvocality of narrative voices in *Moloka'i* in how the emerging voices of the indigene subverts colonial discourse legitimized upon Western demarcation of mind/body binarism. The emerging indigene's voice and their affirmation of a non-dualistic relationship of human and the more-than human world challenges Western hegemonic centrism based on the control of the non-human lepers.

### **Reinterpreting Mind/Body Binarism to Challenge Hegemonic Centrism**

Bushnell's *Moloka'i* problematizes colonizer/colonized dichotomy by placing the disabled lepers' body in the entangled aspect of colonial hegemony and indigenous resistance. Filtered through the colonial paradigm of Newman's, the Hawai'ian indigene are subjected toward double exploitations of their parallel status as lepers and non-human animals, driven primarily of instinct and passion. This "animality of the indigene," as Deyo (95) proposes compels Newman to construct a discursive animalization of Hawai'ian indigene, which in the story manifested through his experimentation of Keanu as human-guinea pigs. Contrasting this colonial discourse is the emerging agency of Malie and Caleb, symbolized by their rediscovery and reclamation of ancestral Hawai'ian traditions, genealogy and cultural heritage.

Huggan and Tiffin contextualizes the theory of hegemonic centrism, rooted within the Western discourse of superiority based upon self-privileging view of underlying racism, sexism, and colonialism. They emphasize how this concept is often employed to rationalize the exploitation of animal (and animalized human) 'others' in the name of a human and reason-centered culture (5). Within this colonial discourse, the indigenous body is often instrumentalized as non-human animals, or romanticized within the trope of 'noble savage' and excluded from the discourse of the human. The indigenous body is conceived in the reductionist terms established by mind/body binarism as 'mere' bodies or automata without rationality and thus functions as the instrument of human needs and projects. This mind/body dichotomy functions as an essential part in colonial apparatuses of domination, as proposed by Deyo,

colonial discourse derogates the body as wild and savage, the very locus of the beast within that threatens to disorder the rational soul, not to mention the social norms that guarantee the production, maintenance, and reproduction of

colonial power. (94)

Newman's perspective evokes the instrumentalized image of the Hawai'ians as Others to advance Western knowledge as apparatus of control through the necessity of finding a human-guinea pig to discover the cure of leprosy. Colonial instrumentalization of the indigene's body is underlined through Newman's inner monologue,

I racked my brain to find a way by which I could gain my experimental animal. Day and night I worried over it, until there was no other thought in my mind. A man, a woman, a child-it made no difference. I must have one human animal, to begin with. After that, the others would come easier: a dozen, a hundred, before my grand design would be accomplished. (Bushnell 37)

Related with Deyo's "animality of the indigene," the derogation of the body of the indigene on a parallel status with animal reinscribes the authority of colonial discourse. While gazing at Keanu, Newman emphasizes the physical qualities of the indigene through his well build physique and handsome face, while simultaneously dismisses Keanu as "not even a man" but a savage or even "a superlatively handsome animal."

Gasps of admirations, little exclamations of pleasure, came from the throng at sight of his superb body, little hisses of fright from the few who remembered his crime. I was quite able now to see not even a man. A savage, perhaps, with some claim to handsomeness. Or, better still, a superlatively handsome animal-exactly the animal I needed. (Bushnell 47-8)

The policy of banishing lepers deemed unclean to Kalawao delineates how the colonial apparatus of control is internalized by the Hawai'ian indigene themselves. An exiled leper is symbolically castrated from Hawai'ian conception of extended family (*ohana*), erased from familial genealogy and banished from their land (*aina*). Inglis (15) remarks how, "such a person is then cut off from the rest of Creation, with no link to the land and no link to the gods; without one's *ohana* and *'aina*, one was without one's self." Similarly, Kay-Trask establishes the importance of genealogy in Hawai'ian society as being Hawai'ians is determined through their connection to their ancestral land and familial genealogies (v). Unable to participate within a communal indigenous identity due to leprosy, Hawai'ian lepers in Kalawao

are forced to partake upon the colonial discourse that designated themselves as non-human Others based on mind/body binarism. This paradigm is contextualized within Caleb and Malie's inner turmoil of their status as exiled lepers amidst the possibility of eventual reconnection with their ancestral tradition and heritage.

The awakening of the indigene's agency to contrast the mind/body binarism is established through the realization of the more-than-human world and the realm of the supernatural. Bushnell's polyvocal narration positions Malie and Caleb's narrative to include the encounters with the supernatural, a shared cultural memory of Polynesians' spirituality which is closed from Newman, the foreigner's perspective. The event described is their encounter with the ghost of their ancestors, the 'Night Marchers' and their respective visits to a Hawai'ian spiritual leader (*kahuna*) to rediscover their cultural heritage and ancestral ties. Different with Western demarcation of the supernatural and the natural, the Hawaiians believes that spiritual encounters are natural, normal and expected as deceased ancestors remains as spirits (*aumakua*) in the natural world (Barrow 59–60). Caleb, a man deeply mistrustful of the irrational, based on his Western education that denounced all form of superstition as a result of the primitive mind recounts his experience as follows:

Ghost, Night Marchers, Gods: they did not exist, according to my belief. But now I myself had seen them, had heard them. I have been close enough to one of them to see the dust upon his feet, the texture of the hair upon his legs. Peering from between the legs I had seen the manifestation of that other world which once I denied. I was born again into another world, a world insubstantial and uncertain, as shifting as shadows, yet full of awful might. Never could I forget that it was I, the unbeliever, the man of reason, who was left behind, when they went on. (Bushnell 423)

Caleb's monologue reinterprets the mind/body binarism which constructs colonial authority by emphasizing indigenous cosmology which blurs the boundaries between the human and the 'more-than-human' world as a criticism toward Western rationality. Caleb's inner monologue explores his turmoil of accepting the existence of "that other world which once I denied," until his awakening and acceptance of his heritage. Viewed from an eco-narratological perspective, his inner thought actively encourages readers to shift their outlook from the hegemony of colonial discourse into a site-specific, localized paradigm of Hawai'ian indigeneity. This particular event shapes Caleb's worldview upon the holistic relationship of Hawai'ian cosmology, although exiled and banished from genealogical ties, a Native Hawai'ian re-

mains symbolically linked with one another and their deceased ancestors. As argued by Beckwith, “the Hawai’ian conception of the world is derived from the *Kumolipo*, the great cosmologic genealogy and as such, all parts of the Hawaiian world are one indivisible lineage” (34). This nondualistic recognition construes the nonhuman entities as fellow beings, whether at a sensory or a spiritual level or both. Native Hawai’ians, similar with other indigenous people in the world recognizes the interconnection of all entities in a holistic relationship, which Machiorlatti describes as follows,

for Native peoples, ecology is the cosmology of interrelatedness. This interdependent orientation includes all things within the ecosphere (planet), as well as above and outside of it (sun, moon, stars, planets, spirits, and ancestors). Within the material realm there are humans and nonhumans such as plants, minerals, and animals—what we call ‘nature’. (65)

This reinterpretation of mind/body binarism through affirmation of indigenous cosmology further develops as the narrative progresses. Caleb and Malie’s encounter with a *kahuna* reaffirms their indigeneity based on genealogical lines, previously thought to be severed through their forced exile to Moloka’i. Their shifting outlook challenges Newman’s colonial discourse which instrumentalized lepers as non-human due to their monstrous appearance, as seen in his inner thought, “Them-this was how I thought of the lepers, as creatures not quite human. Not worthy of dignity, of names of their own, and identities which marked them as persons” (Bushnell 121).

The colonial discourse which attributes the racialized label of lepers to enforce their authority is challenged through the emergence of the indigene’s own agency, no longer displaced from their ancestral tradition and heritage. Malie’s inner struggle illustrates this phenomenon, a Hawaiian noblewoman educated in Western seminary manages to reorient herself within Hawai’ian traditions inherited across generations. Her shifting perspective is evoked through evocative textual cues, ranging from sensory, smells and visual in which the readers’ active participation is essential in simulating the indigene’s recollection of their cultural heritage

Deep in my joy I plunged, exulting in my discovery of the ancient gods: like birds swooping in the air, like butterfly fish dancing in the sea, like leaves trembling upon the boughs of the *koa* tree, was I in the delight of my awakening. Soaring, trembling, glowing with bliss was I, as the weight of my



despair fell away from me, as the heavy hand of Iehovah was lifted from my head. (Bushnell 293)

Echoing Malie's awakening and reorientation with the Hawai'ian traditions, Caleb's perspective establishes himself as a Hawai'ian, no longer constrained by the racialized label of 'lepers' constructed by the Western authority. His encounter with the more-than-human world in the form of Night Marchers almost cost him his life, and he is only saved through the intercessions of his ancestors' *aumakua*.<sup>1</sup> Being a half-breed (*hapa-haole*), Caleb is positioned within the boundaries of Hawai'ian and Western world, rejecting his colonial designation as a leper and embracing his Hawai'ian identity. This is symbolized through the act of learning his ancestors' family name, an essential part in establishing one's genealogy and ancestry in Hawai'ian society. Clark argues how "the perpetuation of family names (*inoa kupuna*) and the use of sacred names is related with the *mo'olelo*, or story that goes with it" (ix). The following dialogue highlights how a familial name which previously 'mean nothing to himself' is embodied with meaning and significance into an *inoa kupuna* which affirms Caleb's genealogical position as Hawai'ian indigene,

"The names I heard him say: they mean nothing to me"

"And what are these names?"

"Son of Kailiki is he, son to Puou, son to fifty generations of priests who have served the gods"

"*Ae*. And across five generations have you forgotten him who came to your aid. It is the way with the young, that they forget so easily the past. And the dead."

Calming my fear of the unknown was the memory of my *aumakua*'s body standing guard over me, of the compassion in his face, as he looked down upon me, lying at his feet. (Bushnell 436-37)

To rephrase, Bushnell's *Moloka'i* challenges the colonial construction of the indigene's body as non-human Others through the emergence of polyvocal native voices establishes upon indigenous cosmology. Caleb and Malie's affirmation

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1 'Aumakua is Hawai'ians personal or family gods that originated as deified ancestors. They may take on physical forms such as spirit vehicles. An 'aumakua (plural, 'aumakua) may manifested in several forms, either animals (shark, owl, bird, octopus), selected plants or even rocks. The word 'aumakua was formed from "Au" meaning a period of time, current of time, era or eon, and "makua" meaning parent, generation, or ancestor. Hence, 'aumakua can be understood as ancestral spirit deified as gods over a period of time. (Barrow 49-50)

and reorientation of their ancestral heritage and genealogy rejects the very logic upon which coloniality subsists, the reductionist terms established upon mind/body binarism. No longer abiding toward the colonial designation of themselves as lepers, Hawai'ian indigene manages to reorient themselves within a cosmological relationship with the universe. An econarratological perspective actively invites reader to retrospectively shift their outlook from the dominant discourse rooted within colonial authority toward the emergence of indigenous voices, previously submerged in the narrative of diseases and disability. Different with the prior discussion of spatialization in which Caleb and Malie's discourse contradicts one another, their polyvocal voices merge together in a heterogenous indigenous voice to criticize the hegemonic centrism of Western authority. Caleb highlights how the Hawai'ian indigene overcomes the racialized label of lepers as a colonial construction and manages to challenge colonial authority by rejecting the mind/body dichotomy as seen in the preceding monologue, "the things which broke Hawaiians down were diseases of the flesh, not of their unconquered spirit. Look at them, even here, in this open tomb: living and laughing and loving, as they always do, and caring not a grain of sand about the fate of their souls. The thought of them made me proud to be one of them: they are mine, I said, lifting my head high" (Bushnell 510).

### **Conclusion**

An econarratological reading of Bushnell's *Moloka'i* challenges the predominant stereotype of Hawai'i as paradise through the immersion of readers inside a narrative of disability and diseases within the colonial context of Hawai'i-Western encounter. The simulation of a virtual storyworld is mainly facilitated through spatialization and polyvocality which foregrounds the emergence of the indigene's own voice and agency to challenge colonial discourse founded upon mind/body binarism. The first-person narrative persona problematizes the subjective consciousness in imagining material realities, in which a similar spatial scene is reimagined and then contrasted from a settler/native perspective. The emerging indigene voices echoes their reorientation within their cultural heritage and ancestry to challenge the hegemonic centrism of colonial discourse that designates the Hawai'ian lepers as non-human Other. The indigenous body is reconstructed, no longer abiding toward the racialized label of 'lepers', but instead as the confirmation of a nondualistic relationship of the human and the more-than human world.

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