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DECONSTRUCTING PARADISE: WE NARRATION AS COLLECTIVE INDIGENOUS VOICE IN "THIS IS PARADISE"

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Abstract
This paper contextualizes how the short story "This is Paradise" by Kristiana Kahakauwila deconstructs the idealized trope of Hawai'i as paradise by presenting a localized narration from the perspective of the indigene working within the tourist industry. The use of first-person plural narration as the focalizer echoes the collective voice of the Hawai'ian indigene in their marginalized status within the tourist industry. An econarratological perspective as stated by Erin James provides the reader with textual cues necessary to construct a mental model of Hawai'i from the insiders' perspective. Kahakauwila's use of an insider's perspective enables the reader to have an understanding of indigenous marginalization in Hawai'i, informed by a local experience of the place. This perspective challenges the common depiction of Hawai'i as seen from the outsider/tourist point of view. The present study concludes how "This is Paradise" underlines a localized portrayal of Hawai'i as the counter-narrative toward the established trope of Hawai'i as paradise through its use of first-person plural and spatialization of Waikiki.

Keywords: econarratology, Hawai'ian-American literature, indigenous resistance, story world, we narration

Introduction

The imagination of Hawai'ian isles often evokes the idealized image of tropical paradise in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. This conception aligns with Caminero-Santangelo's idea of how the driving factor behind contemporary tourism is the depiction of picturesque places and welcoming natives which alludes to the construction and maintenance of a feminized and exotic image. (2011, p. 292) Similarly, Sasaki further articulates how "almost everything in Hawai'i communicates through a system of codes constructed over years of selling Hawai'i as paradise." (623) The current image of Hawai'i as a tourist paradise has been cultivated through years of tourist-oriented discourse. Mak (4) identifies how the advent of mass tourism began in Hawai'i after 1950, in which the advancement in air traffic enables easier travel to this archipelago, although its roots began earlier, since the 1870s when Hawai'i was still an independent and sovereign nation. The dominant number of tourists in the early age was

predominantly American, pioneered by Mark Twain's visit to Hawai'i in 1866 although the number remains limited. The peak year of tourist travel in Hawai'i pre-1950 was 24.390 tourists and a further 41.041 'one-day tourists', mainly from mainland America in 1939 just before the outbreak of the Second World War. (Schmitt, 1977, p. 273) By contrast, there were around 10.424.995 visitors to Hawai'i in the 2019 survey, mainly coming to appreciate Hawai'i's unspoiled natural beauty. (Khan, 2020, p. 1)

The relationship between tourists and their impact on both the natural environment and the indigenous people is problematic within postcolonial discourse. Hall and Tucker elaborate on the contested nature of tourism concerning the issue of identity and representation over nature and implications concerning the tourist experience. They argue how tourism "both reinforces and is embedded in a postcolonial relationship" (2004, p. 20) regarding the tension concerning the preservation of indigenous heritage and its eventual commodification as a marketable aspect driving the tourist industry. Similarly, the commodification of Hawai'ian natives' cultural heritage under the package of 'aloha spirit' is integral in ensuring this archipelago's continuous popularity as a tourist resort. The commodification of cultural traditions such as chants (*mele*) and *hula* dances results in a performance devoid of meaning instead of a celebration of the divine personified within natural aspects. The Hawai'ian archipelago and the *Kanaka Maoli* ethnicity represent the existence of a pleasure-filled exotic paradise in which the local inhabitants are always welcoming toward the visitors. (Linnekin, 1997; Mak, 2018). Within the instrumentalization of an indigenous agency under tourist discourse, the islanders' presence is systematically written out of existence¸ only represented through their role as brand image and symbolic labour. Mandelman underlines how

> "Tourism in Hawai'i has relied upon Native Hawai'ian culture to carve out its unique niche, the tourism's instrumentalization of Native Hawai'ians and their culture, including the core ethical value of aloha (love, empathy, compassion, mercy and respect) demonstrates how tourism appropriates Indigenous culture as a commodity." (2014, p. 174)

Several scholars have analyzed the role of the tourist industry in ensuring America's continuous domination of the Hawai'ian indigene. A Native Hawai'ian nationalist, Haunani-Kay Trask is a staunch opponent of the tourist industry of her homeland and the ensuing commodification of Hawai'i's own cultural identity. The image of a female *hula* dancer alongside the white beaches of the Pacific shore has become an iconic symbol of exoticism and celebration of Polynesian sensuality. Trask argues how the authentic essence of *hula* dance, as a form of worship and respect toward the sanctity of nature has been altered into some sort of cultural prostitution for the White male tourist' own pleasure. She emphasizes how

> "the hula dancers wear clownlike makeup, don costumes from a mix of Polynesian cultures, and behave in a manner that is smutty and salacious rather than powerfully erotic. In the hotel version of the hula, the sacredness of the dance has completely evaporated, while the athleticism and sexual expression have been packaged like ornaments. The purpose

> is entertainment for profit rather than a joyful and truly Hawaiian celebration of human and divine nature**."** (1993, p. 144)

The essence of the 'aloha spirit' as a marketing symbol to attract potential tourists in Hawai'i has been naturalized through various aspects, including education for the younger generation of indigenous Hawai'ians. Kaomea argues how several textbooks such as *Hawai'i: the Aloha State* (1982) or *Hawai'i: the Pacific State* (1997) functions as tourist advertisement through a stereotypical depiction of white beaches, exotic scenery and women dancing the *hula* which entices the younger Hawai'ians to partake within the profitable tourist industry. She concludes how the 'curriculum of aloha' was intended to maintain the continuous influxes of Hawai'ian indigenes working within the tourist industry. It can therefore be concurred, as Trask argues, how tourism "plays an important role in maintaining the ongoing colonialism between the United States and Hawai'i". (23)

Within the limited agency of indigenous Hawai'ians under tourist-oriented discourse and the prevailing popular imagination of Hawai'i as paradise, Hawai'ian literature functions to foreground these concealed issues into wider public consciousness. The literature written by the Hawai'ian natives represents the reality concerning the indigenous struggle under American domination, previously concealed through paradisal imagery. (Indriyanto, 2022a, p. 2) The emergence of an indigenous Hawai'ian agency through literature is a recent phenomenon, mainly driven by the *Hawai'ian Renaissance* in the 1960-70s, parallel with the wider Civil Right movement in the U.S and the ensuing revitalization of Hawai'ian cultural heritage, ancestry and artistic performances. Up until the Renaissance period, Hawai'ian literature is subjected to much scrutiny regarding its authenticity as the majority of literature about Hawai'i was written by foreign visitors instead of local Hawai'ians. Their writings mainly preserve the constructed image of Hawai'i as paradise. As argued by Spencer (2010, p. 23), "the Pacific has often been delegated as mere scenes for the white writers' fantasies". Similarly, Lesuma identifies how literature marketed for young adults in Hawai'i creates an idealized narrative of the island marketed for outside consumption. (2018, p. 28) Hence, it is often problematic to define what exactly constituted Hawai'ian literature, fictional works which accurately represent the ongoing marginalization of the indigenous people under American influence. An attempt to define what constitutes Hawai'ian literature comes from Ho'omanawanui's argumentation which summarizes this example of indigenous fictions as,

> "the writing produced by *Kanaka Maoli* which references Hawai'i or Hawai'ian culture and asserts their identity as indigenous Pacific people seeking self-determination and political independence. Reflecting both values of the ancient past and thoughts of the modern era, Hawaiian literature holds a unique place as an ethnic American literature." (2015, p. 258)

One of the emerging *Kanaka Maoli* writers is Kristiana Kahakauwila, a *hapa* (half-breed) of Hawai'ian, German and Norwegian descent. She has written several short stories contextualizing life in contemporary Hawai'i from an insider perspective, a Native Hawai'ian. Her literature contemplates the challenges of

growing up and living in modern Hawai'i within the ever-expanding scope of tourism, development and globalization. Several of her works have been included in Anthologies chronicling indigenous literature from America and the Pacific such as "Bridge Jumping", published in *Bamboo Ridge: Journal of Hawai'i Literature* (2011) and "Hands", included in *Off the Path: An Anthology of 21st Century American Indian and Indigenous Writers* (2015). Her first book, *This is Paradise: Stories* (2013) is a compilation of several stories representing the diverse perspectives and landscapes of Hawai'i, a melting pot of many distinct cultures. This story provides an avenue to explore contemporary living in Hawai'i's Island chains, Mau'i, O'ahu, Kaua'i and the Big Island of Hawai'i, foregrounding the contested nature between local and tourist, tradition and authenticity. This work was short-listed for the William Saroyan International Prize for Writing and named a 2013 Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers Selection. The polemic concerning tourism and its impact on the native population is explored through the narration of "This is Paradise", a short story from the narratorial perspective of several Native Hawai'ian women working within the tourist industry as housekeeping.

"This is Paradise" underlines the untold side concerning the detrimental impact of tourism on the local Hawai'ians from the insider perspective of Native Hawai'ian women as the focal point. The central point of the story is told through first-person plural "we" narration in which the protagonists, the local working-class women of Waikiki are collectively grouped into "the women of housekeeping." They encounter a young woman, Susan, who stayed in their hotel and later meets her again during their off-hours in a local bar. A tourist from mainland America, Susan is attracted toward the more foreboding side of the city's native and unable to understand the tension between Hawai'ian indigene and the tourists as in her words, "they (the Hawai'ians) already lived in paradise." The next morning, Susan is found dead on a beach and it was the housekeeping women who discovered her body. A funeral service is later held in the afternoon and although the area on the beach was quiet for a brief moment, tourism continues as usual. This perspective challenges the popular imagination of Hawai'i in which the history of mainstream tourism marketing focuses on evoking the image of Hawai'i as paradise. Kahakauwila instead delineates and depicts the lives of Hawai'ian native locals and the often-turbulent relationship with its tourist visitors, the tension rooted within the historical background of racial and class division, and the conflict between traditional Hawai'ian culture and the homogenizing effect of globalization encroaching its shores.

Although not particularly emphasizing the short story "This is Paradise", several prior studies have been conducted regarding the contested nature of tourism and its impact on the indigenous population. Carrigan's (2009) reading on McMillon's *School for Hawai'ian Girls* and Davenport's *Shark Dialogues* illustrates the interpolated aspect between tourism and cultural genealogy. He emphasizes the indigenous Hawai'ians' negotiation of the tourist industry and how "the presence of indigenous culture now exists within the framework of the modern world system both political and economic". (2009, p. 184) His reading argues how the tourist industry is interwoven with ancestral Hawai'ian genealogy and is incorporated within the process of cultural renewal. Differently, Toyosato's (2000) analysis of *Shark Dialogues* emphasizes the impact of tourism through

local Hawai'ian's loss of connection to the land. She dramatizes an excerpt from the novel where the local fishermen give in and sells their ancestral land for the development of a tourist resort. Moreover, the loss of the land also results in the transformation of the natural environment, causing physical uprooting and spiritual pain among the populace. (2000, p. 76) Compared to the prior studies concerning the contested nature of tourism in Hawai'i, the present study focuses more on elaborating how the use of first-person plural narration echoes the collective native Hawai'ian struggle under the tourist industry. It further posits the active role readers play during the process of reading in simulating a fictional representation of a narrative text, a story world based on textual cues provided by the narrators.

Theoretical Framework

This study foregrounds how readers actively participate in imagining and simulating a mental construction of a fictional literary work during the act of reading. The proponent of the cognitive turn in literary studies, such as Erin James argues how "narrative comprehension requires the construction of a mental model of narrative that readers must know and inhabit during the reading process." (5) Reading, as a performative act allows for a mental relocation or transportation of the immediate physical reading proximity of a reader into the fictional space/time coordinate presented within a narrative. As James further asserts, the mental model regarding the contexts of a virtual environment in a narrative, simulated through the active act of reading is essential to acquire narrative comprehension. In her words,

> "importantly for the considerations of narrative environments, the concept of story world 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." (James, 2015, pp. 9–10)

James proposes her model of reading, coined as econarratology which explores the interconnection between storyworld formation in the readers' mind and its potential to allow readers in exploring different ways of contextualizing the environment based on space and time. Narrative, through its world-creating power, provides an important tool for sharing a cross-cultural perspective of environmental imagination and experience. The process of imaginative transportation enables readers to understand different ways of contextualizing the environment based on material realities and shaped by socio-cultural circumstances. James illustrates how

> "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." (2015, pp. 243)

Storyworld emphasizes the active role of readers, through interaction with the contexts and the narrative environments inhabited by characters to simulate a fictional world of narrative during the 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, mainly related to space (spatialization) and what it is like (qualia) to undergo a different experience. Qualia refers to the conscious experience narrated from a subjective perspective, either from a narrator or focalizing character. Furthermore, as explored by Buell, spatial imagination and conscious experience "is not value neutral, but is loaded with the values and agenda of a particular perspective." (2001, p. 85) A story narrated from an indigenous perspective will have a different understanding of a particular place compared to a settler/visitor's point of view. Hence, storyworld formation problematizes how the textual cues given by the narrating character enable the reader to imagine material realities from a subjective consciousness. These diverse voices problematize the polyvocality of narratives in which the voices might remain separate or blended together as heterogenous narration.

Problematizing the issue of narrative voices is the point of view and narratorial stance/position taken by the narrator/focalizer. As argued by Fludernik, "narrative is closely bound with the speech act of narrating and the figure of a narrator." (2009, p. 67) A narration might employ an omniscient perspective in which a narrator has no limitation in narrating a story or a more limited perspective from the point of view of a particular character as the focal point. The use of subjective consciousness provides readers with instruction to model and experience unfamiliar spaces and times as if the readers were physically present in a particular scene. Another type of narratorial voice is the usage of "we" narration, the first-person plural pronoun in which the narrator alludes to a particular group or community. Richardson argues how the "we narration" is most often employed in a text "seeking to emphasize the construction and maintenance of a powerful collective identity."(2010, p. 50) This type of narration underlines the struggle of discriminated/marginalized ethnic groups, in which their collective voices function to challenge the dominant hegemony and authority. Beck further addresses that the use of plural narrative voices emphasizes and frames a communal counter-voice to dominant narratives. (2018, p. 3) Similarly, the narrative voice of "This is Paradise" is narrated from the collective voice of Native Hawai'ian housekeeping, contextualizing the experience of tourism from the discriminated indigeneity and challenging the entrenched imagery of Hawai'i as paradise.

Method

The object of the study is literary analysis in which the data is in the form of quotations, excerpts, sentences, and phrases taken from the short story "This is Paradise". This research is qualitative, which aims to explore and understand individuals or groups which ascribe to a social or human problem. The data is not in the form of statistics, numbers or any other calculational forms. By nature, qualitative research can observe complex details in relation to phenomena which is more difficult to decipher through a qualitative method such as the usage of statistics or numerical calculation. (Creswell, 2009, p. 19). The data are in the form of written words and sentences to better understand the questions of human and social problems. The analysis is conducted by analyzing the quotation from the text within the econarratological perspective as articulated by James. To better

support the argumentation, the present study provides secondary data in the form of academic articles, journals, essays or books in relation to the situation faced by the Hawai'ian indigenous people under white American socio-economic domination.

Findings and Discussions

"This is Paradise" deconstructs the usual tropes of Hawai'i as the site of idealized fantasy of an Edenic paradise by employing a group of Native Hawai'ian housekeeping, grouped into the communal voice of "we" narration as the protagonists. This depiction places the focal point from an insider perspective instead of the outsider, tourist point of view. Lui argues that the author writing about Hawai'i from a visitor's perspective is unable to represent the authentic understanding of Hawai'ian culture, and historical and ethnic heritage. (2006, p. 41) Through the subversion of insider/outsider binarism, as Hawai'i is often narrated from the viewpoint of the visitors, readers are able to imagine a different way of conceptualizing what it is like to live in the Hawai'ian isles from what they might expect to experience. The understanding of indigenous marginalization under settler domination is directly informed by this insider's experience, through textual cues representing both space and time. This insider's perspective catalyzes readers' immersion in a fictional storyworld of Hawai'i, more specifically the area around Waikiki in Honolulu as a prime tourist destination.

Kahakauwila criticizes the ongoing exploitation of her native heritage as a marketing brand for tourism with the so-called 'aloha spirit' or 'aloha culture'. As previously explored, this concept refers to the commodification of Native Hawai'ians' ancestral tradition which is embellished by exotic imagery of Polynesian sensuality and hospitality. In her narration, Kahakauwila underlines how the word *aloha* is reduced in meaning into a simple slogan or jargon to greet tourists. In Hawai'ian culture, *aloha* is a cultural feeling of expressing love which is derived from the familial and genealogical connection between both people and the homeland of Hawai'i. Appropriated in a tourist-oriented industry, the word *aloha* alludes to the hospitality of Hawai'ian natives in which the tourists are warmly received and welcomed as honoured guests. It is narrated in the story that the housekeeping staffs in Waikiki have to always use the word *aloha* during a phone conversation,

> "the hotel is strict about a great number of our activities. They have rules on how to store the carts, what time to punch in, what time to punch out, how to answer the phone (always start with "Aloha"), how to arrange the pillows on the bed, how to report suspicious activity". (Kahakauwila, 2013, p. 3)

In line with what Haunani-Kay Trask refers to as cultural prostitutions of her native culture, "This is Paradise" explores the appropriation of the word *aloha* by the tourist industry not as an expression of love and kinship but into a word devout of meaning or as simple slogan. The spirit of aloha positions the indigenous Hawai'ian as subservient natives pandering toward the tourists' wishes, always with a welcoming smile on their faces. The trope of Hawai'i as paradise is further underlined through the exploitation of Hawai'i's natural landscapes in which the hotels and other facilities are decorated to evoke the idea

of an idyllic paradisal archipelago. The following excerpt, narrated in first-person plural by the housekeeping protagonists contextualizes how Waikiki is constructed in the paradisal imagery and inhabited by exotic islanders,

> "we look into the hotel, and we can almost understand why here, in Waikīkī, the world appears perfect. The hotel lobbies are brimming with flower arrangements and sticky with the scent of ginger and the people are beautiful. Tan and healthy, with muscles carved from *koa* wood and cheeks the color of strawberry guava. These people—our people—look fresh as cut fruit, ready to be caressed, to be admired. These are people to be trusted. This is not New York or Los Angeles. No, Hawai'i is heaven. A dream." (Kahakauwila, 2013, p. 7)

The preceding passage enables the reader to mentally simulate a storyworld of Waikiki from the perspective of a locally oriented insider, participating within the tourist-oriented industry. The use of the first-person plural, as stated by Von Mossner enables the reader to experience *qualia*, simulating a conscious experience from a different perspective from him/herself. (2021, p. 93) Waikiki is spatially reconstructed through visual cues of the housekeepers working in a Waikiki hotel, how it is decorated with flower arrangement while also noting the exoticism of the islanders whose skin is tan and healthy, in contrast with the white Caucasian visitors. Moreover, olfactory cues, dealing with the smell, "scent of ginger" further orients the readers' sensory perception through the scent of exotic spices. This spatial and sensory imagination of Waikiki underlines the construction of a carefully preserved image of Hawai'i as a tropical paradise. The narratorial voices move the reader from an outsider/visitors' perspective by shifting the focus of narration from the observation of spatial imagery that constitutes the setting to the people working in the tourists' industry, the islanders. The use of first-person plural, "we" narration emphasizes the commonality between the narrators and the people they commented on, as seen in "these people, our people", while simultaneously criticising the subservient role the indigene performs within the lucrative tourist industry. These pronouns signify the invocation and reaffirmation in the context of Hawai'ian indigenous collective. Their narration delivers a satirical and scathing critique on how the Hawai'ian indigene is stereotypically viewed only through their physical appearance, compared with exotic tropical floras and hospitality toward the visitors, as seen in how they are "people to be trusted." This depiction echoes Williams and Gonzales' assertion on how "Native Hawai'ians are commodified as the defining images for the tourist industry, symbolically performing labour as welcoming hosts." (2017, p. 690)

"This is Paradise" contextualizes the conflict and tension between Hawai'ian indigene and the White tourist visitors from the perspective of the housekeeper protagonists and their encounter with Susan, a female American visitor. As the story is narrated from a limited perspective in which the women of housekeeping become the central focus, information about Susan's inner psyche is closed from the reader, and they can only infer what the protagonists have to state about Susan. Their first meeting is a chance encounter on the beach where the girl (still not identified as Susan) tries to warn the women of housekeeping that it is dangerous to surf on Waikiki beach, by referring toward the signs which read

'Dangerous undertow'. The women of housekeeping, being natives and accustomed to surfing and paddling just laughed at the visitor's warning. "We ignore it. We are not afraid of the beaches and breaks here in Waikiki. We laugh, "*just like da kine, scared of da' water. Haoles*." (Kahakauwila, 2013, p. 7)

In the prior passage, the use of first-person pronoun establishes the distinction between the natives and the visitor by emphasizing how as islanders, surfing has been an essential part of Hawai'ian tradition. As is addressed by Mitchell, for centuries, the ocean has functioned as a wellspring of cultural practice, values and traditional knowledge in Hawai'i. (1982, p. 65) Furthermore, the inner thoughts of the women of housekeeping are not represented in standard English but are in a form of creolized English is known as Hawai'i Creole English (HCE). The use of HCE in literature, commonly employed by writers of either Hawai'ian or Asian plantation settler descends echoes the history of Hawai'i's colonial past which embraces the culture, identity, and solidarity of Hawai'ian locals. (Indriyanto, 2022b, p. 19) By employing HCE to narrate the women of housekeeping's inner thoughts, Kahakauwila underlines the distinction between the local and the outsider in Hawai'i. This is further explored by how the protagonists remark that the girl is *haole*, a derogative Hawai'ian term referring to the Whites.

As the narrative progresses, Kahakauwila provides more insights into the women of housekeeping's social status as a representation of the indigenous struggle in Hawai'i, which is contrasted with Susan's expectation of Hawai'i as paradise. Although the women of housekeeping had a meagre job within the tourist industry, have to clean the hotel room since six in the morning and have to leave the hotel from the basement, "tucked away from the visitors who wander in and out of the front lobby" (Kahakauwila, 2013, p. 4)they are active and vocal speakers in representing the island community. The narrators acknowledge how,

> "we are considered by our peers to be local women who've done well, left but come back, dedicated their education and mainland skills to put this island right. We speak at civic club gatherings and native rights events. We are becoming pillars of the island community. We are growing into who we've always dreamt of being." (Kahakauwila, 2013, p. 12)

As vocal speakers upholding the rights of the indigenous community, the protagonists criticize the ongoing commercialization of the island of Waikiki. They acclaim that tourism in Hawai'i is catered to the tourists' every wish, luxurious hotels, high-quality shopping districts, retails and convenience store instead of promoting authentic Hawai'ian culture and tradition. This perspective echoes Carrigan's line of argumentation in how mass tourism is positioned as a central component of globalization with its culturally homogenizing effects. (2010, p. 182) What is promoted in Hawai'i's tourist district is the Western culture of consumerism and hedonistic lifestyle, symbolizes by its multinational hotel, restaurants and coffee chains instead of preserving the original infrastructure of Waikiki with its distinctive cultural heritage. The women of housekeeping criticize the homogenization of Waikiki tourist infrastructures in the following quotation,

> "Hawai'i has less tropical flavour than they recall from the morning, less exoticism, less beauty. Waikīkī has become like any other city strip. We'd

> like to tell them that Waikīkī is nothing more than a succession of Hyatts and Courtyard by Marriotts, Cheesecake Factories and Planet Hollywoods, Señor Frogs and dingy Irish pubs with names like Murphy and Callahan." (Kahakauwila, 2013, p. 13)

The narrators scathingly address the loss of exoticism in midday Waikiki as Waikiki has become "like any other city strip". The consumerist culture which catered for tourists' amenities further causes the Hawai'ian locale to stay away from premier tourist resorts with their exorbitant prices. Even the bar in the suburb, "Lava Lounge" in the short story, where the women of housekeeping spent their night partying is populated by tourists, college students, and U.S Army and Navy soldiers off duty from Pearl Harbor. The protagonists remark, "but where else can we go for a strip of bars and clubs? Why do we have to share it with all these tourists, military, college kids," (Kahakauwila, 2013, p. 14) This statement echoes the demographical situation in Honolulu both as a prime tourist destination which is also the front-line of U.S national defence in which the indigenous people are marginalized in their homeland. A study by Ireland (2011) acknowledges that all together, the military-connected population comprises around 15 per cent of Hawai'i's total population. (2011, p. xiii)

This context represented through the indigenous voice of the women housekeeping challenges the stereotype of Hawai'i as paradise, a lingering trope continuously reproduced within the tourist discourse, as seen in the portrayal of Susan. Susan underlines the expectation tourists possess toward Hawai'i, an exotic island chain in the middle of the Pacific Ocean with white sand beaches, picturesque natural landscape, and the welcoming hospitality of the indigene. For Susan, Hawai'i is merely a place to have fun and have an unforgettable experience. In the story, she is prevented from getting close to a man named Brian, whom the housekeeping women recognize as a former convict, but Susan believes that their warning indicates that the local people do not want the tourist to enjoy the pleasure in Hawai'i. Being subjected to the Hawai'i-as-paradise tropes, she is unable to comprehend how the local people who already lived in the supposed paradise does not want the tourist to enjoy the same privileges. This conflict between the insider and the outsider in Hawai'i is aptly summarized through the following excerpt,

> "Everyone talks about aloha here, but it's like Hawaiians are all pissed off. They live in paradise. What is there to be mad about?"
>
> "We look at each other, and we feel the heat rising in our faces. Our families are barely affording a life here, the land is being eaten away by developers, and the old sugar companies still control water rights. Not only does paradise no longer belong to us, but we have to watch foreigners destroy it" (Kahakauwila, 2013, p. 14)

The Hawai'i-as-paradise trope, packaged for tourist marketing prevents the outsider, as seen through Susan's perspective from fully comprehending the racial tension and marginalization faced by the local people. The insider perspective of the women of housekeeping, employing "we" narration to represent the Hawai'ian indigene underlines the marginal status of the local Hawai'ian under the tourist-oriented industry. Kahakauwila represents how the rising price

of commodities, the legacy of colonial control in essential sectors and the continuing development of tourist resorts work to disenfranchise the *Kanaka Maoli* ethnicity. The women narrators somberly address the fact that paradise is no longer in the hand of the Hawai'ians but is it now the property of the Whites, which they kept on exploiting to enrich the capitalist owners. On the other hand, the local people working within the tourist industry are unable to cope with the continuous surge in prices. The rising price of land meant that eventually the Hawai'ians are forced to abandon the area around Waikiki and live somewhere else, as the narrator's remark,

> "They live in an *'ohana* behind his parents' house. With two kids they'll outgrow the tiny cottage in no time, but they'll never be able to afford their own place. We also wonder about Laura's resort design, worried that another development will push housing prices further upward, making it harder still for our people to remain on their land. "And what about water usage?" Esther demands." (Kahakauwila, 2013, p. 15)

The ever-increasing development of Hawai'i leads to continuous demand for new tourist facilities in the form of hotels, resorts, villas and other amenities. To meet the labour demand required, many Native Hawai'ians are drawn into the tourist industry to make a way of life. Their job is synonymous with low wages, which hinder their ability to support a family, especially as land prices keep on rising. While Native Hawai'ians continue to be subjected to minority status, Hawai'i continuously attracts millions of tourists every year, luring them with the Hawai'i as paradise tropes. Darowski acknowledges how "how tourism in Hawai'i displaces local community, both physically and culturally, denies local access to resources, and inequitably distributes benefits to company stakeholders." (2007, p. 34) Tourism privileges high-paying customers, enticed by the exoticism of South Seas paradise while projecting the unequal relation of dominance toward the locale. As is narrated in "This is Paradise", the struggle of indigenous Hawai'ian to maintain an acceptable standard of living is concealed through the veil of island utopia that symbolically erases their presence from the visiting tourist. This short story contextualizes the inability of the visitors to fully comprehend the extent of racial inequality and tension beneath the paradisal imagery and provides its readers with a first-hand perspective to simulate the reality of contemporary living in Hawai'i from the perspective of the indigene. The use of first-person "we" narration problematizes and negates the dominant tourist discourse of Hawai'i by representing a more grounded narration from the insiders' perspective.

Conclusion

Reading "This is Paradise" from an econarratological perspective posits how the use of the first-person plural "we" pronoun catalyzes readers' immersion in the locally oriented representation of Hawai'i. Kahakauwila's use of an insider's perspective of the Hawai'ian indigene conveys the reader to have an understanding of indigenous marginalization in Hawai'i, informed by a local experience of place. First-person plural pronouns collectively embodied the voice of the Hawai'ian indigene as they struggle to assert their existence within the dominant discourse of Hawai'i as paradise. The prevailing stereotypical view,

embodied through Susan's perspective contextualizes Hawai'i as a utopia and negates the presence of indigenous struggle and tension between the locals and the tourist. The tension between these groups contextualizes the problematic issue of tourism in Hawai'i. To conclude, "This is Paradise" underlines a localized portrayal of the Hawai'ian Isle from the insiders' outlook as the counter-narrative toward the established trope of Hawai'i as paradise.

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