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Spatializing Narrative: Postcolonial Spaces of Oswald Andrew Bushnell's *Ka'a'awa*

Kristiawan Indriyanto
kristiawanindriyanto@unprimdn.ac.id
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Prima Indonesia, INDONESIA

Abstract

This study explores the representation of space in O.A Bushnell's Ka'a'awa in which the seemingly contradictory spatial scene of the urban, the rural, the picturesque and the macabre delineates the complexity of postcolonial spaces. Ka'a'awa foregrounds the historicity of postcolonial spaces, narrated from Nihoa's first-person account to provide an avenue for readers to mentally mapped the spaces as the narration progresses. This study is the intersection between environmental/eco-criticism and geo-criticism which focuses on the complexities between spatial referents and their real-world referents as is stated by Tally Jr and Prieto, especially the postcolonial contexts of Hawai'i-West interaction during the second half of the 19th century. The finding posits how the readers familiarize themselves with the picturesque landscape of O'ahu through Nihoa's evocative narration and how the spatial scene later resurfaces as space connotes death and diseases due to epidemic which defamiliarizes readers from prior spatiality. The spatial scene narrating scene of disease, despair and death highlights the discursive and material condition of Hawai'i as a postcolonial space. Space in Ka'a'awa alludes both toward the referential condition of 1850's Hawai'i and symbolically represents the decline of the Hawai'ian natives.

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Introduction

Recent development within humanities study in general and literature in particular delineates the increasing awareness toward the importance of spatiality, especially space, place and its representation. Soja (1989) argues for "the reassertion of space in critical social theory" as in previous decades the lingering issues of critical theories lies upon the primacy of time-focused discourse which "occluded, devalued, and de-politicized space"(p. 4). Soja's assertion for the spatial turn in the humanities continues the seminal

argument proposed by Foucault upon how the post-WW II societies have entered "an epoch of space" (1984, p. 1). In the aftermath of the spatial turn, concepts related to space, and spatiality enters the lexicon of humanity studies. As spaces are always open to discussion due to its shifting and permeable nature, the importance of concepts such as hybrid identity, border crossing, re/de-territorialization cannot be understated. Space and place are both active participants of social change, and its representation through cultural objects such as literature highlights the interwoven nature between the real and the imagined world. This is delineated through Prieto's argument on how "literature not only represents the world around us, but participates actively in the production of that world" (2016, p. 22).

Although the spatial turn, as Soja proposed have only emerged in the turn of the millennium, the issue concerning spatiality have always been an integral part in literary analysis. Setting is a key concept in analyzing literature, moreover several genres are definedby spatial/geographical characteristics such as pastoralism, travel narratives, American mid-West literature and urban tales (Tally, 2017). Similarly, Ryan et all argues that the creation of an imaginary world requires three main components, space or setting ; time or events ; and existents, or characters (2017, p. 61). In the era of spatial turn, critics have begun to explore the dynamic interconnection among space, place and its representation through literature from the lens of various theoretical disciplines. Postcolonial scholar, such as Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* contextualizes how imperialism is inherently a geographical violence as virtually every space in the world is subjected into colonial servitude and the necessity of a "geographical inquiry into historical experience of colonialism"(1994, p. 6). Said's line of argumentation underlines how spaces and places are perceived, represented, and ultimately used. The reassertion of space in literary studies emphasizes the intertwined nature of the text and the spaces/places represented in it and bridges the divide between the word and the world, the real and the imagined.

Spatial representation of place remains closely linked with the issue of temporality, especially concerning how either the past or the future is imagined. The current discussion of space and place departs from prior assumption about the passive nature of spatiality compared to the dynamic aspects of temporality by emphasizing the transformation of space and place during a given time period. This reenactment of the representation of place and time provides an avenue to perceive how the space itself is transformed. As literature is one way upon which the readers have made sense of and given forms toward either the fictional storyworld or the referential world outside the text, reading literature can be stated as a form of creating mental images of mapping. R. T. Tally Jr proposes that,

> "*in a manner of speaking, literature also functions as a form of mapping, offering its readers descriptions of places, situating them in a kind of imaginary space, and providing points of reference by which they can orient themselves and understand the world in which they live. Or maybe literature helps readers get a sense of the worlds in which others have lived, currently live, or will live in times to come*" (2013, p. 2).

Fictions enable readers to better understand the world around them by imagining a representation of reality which might differs from readers' own background. Writing itself can be seen as a form of spatialization that depends upon the readers' acceptance of numerous conventions such as literary devices. A spatially oriented literary criticism contextualizes the textual representations concerning space and time and the dialectical nature of the relationships between text and their real-world referent (Prieto, 2016, p. 20).

The dynamic nature of space is emphasized in post-colonial literature in which the environment is transformed and altered due to colonial encounter. A spatial imagination represented through postcolonial literature, in DeLoughrey and Handley's opinion is "made possible by the experience of place" (2011, p. 4). This dynamism foregrounds the landscape, often reduced as mere settings and bystander

to human experience into an active participant in the historical process. Moreover, the spatial turn which emphasizes space criticizes the reductionist binarism of nature/culture in Western paradigm, in which the environment is delegated as automata devoid of meaning. In other words, there is no distinction between the social and the natural world as both are intricately linked with each other which results in the necessity of redefining the meaning of the term 'environment', as Mukherjee posits,

> "*the economic capital is etched onto the very political, cultural, and ecological fabric of our world. Since it has been my contention that it is precisely this network of politics, culture, ecology, physical space and non-human matter that we should understand as 'environment', there is no way for us to understand it without our engagement with the notion of the uneven unfolding of historical capital*"(2010, p. 14).

In postcolonial literature, spaces delineate the continuous history of colonialism and inequality established upon marginalization and domination. Space therefore becomes a site of colonial encounter and contestation between past and present in which ideas and imagined places meant as much as direct conquest and imperial authority. As Soja posits, writing a spatial scene means "struggle over geography, struggles about ideas, images and imagining and also the search for fundamental and egalitarian rights to inhabit space"(2011, p. ix). These imaginary geographies projected through literature textualities alludes towards specific physical locale in the real world transformed in the process of colonialism.

Issues related with the transformation of space due to colonial encounter had been a pivotal theme in Hawai'ian literature, especially concerning the shifting paradigm of how the environment is conceptualized. Hawai'i's writers have created imaginative fictions which is imprinted with the traumatic history of loss and dispossession, in which their familial ties towards the land are subjected toward Western instrumentalization of land as commodities. The local literature of Hawai'i reflects both their ethnic culture and the familial ties toward the physical environment especially the land (*aina*) (Ho'omanawanui, 2008, p. 124). Spatial imagination represented in their literature delineates historicity of Hawai'ian archipelago from the earliest colonial encounter up until the present state of domination and marginalization under American hegemony. This changing political situation correspondents with the physical degradation of Hawai'ian environment, as Kay-Trask summarizes,

> *"in Hawai'i, the uprooting and great dying of my people was quickly followed by massive and irreparable changes on the land. Under American control, Hawai'i has been transformed into a tinsel version of the fragile beauty it once was. Militarism and tourism –twin engines of haole (white) American culture in Hawai'i – have increased their rapacious consumption of our physical and cultural heritage as we enter the twenty-first century*" (1993, p. 60).

Kay-Trask's assertion projects Hawai'i as a postcolonial space defined by experiences of physical loss, exploitation and cultural appropriation. This poetic imagination conjures the memory of distant past while connotes it with the present issue in which the transformation of space is a focal point in the process of reclamation. Space in Hawai'ian literature, therefore functions to uncover the "normalized quiet of unseen power" (Said, 2004, p. 135), revealing the mechanism and effect of imperial authority by analyzing how space is altered and transformed.

Oswald Andrew (O.A) Bushnell's novel, *Ka'a'awa* (1972) reimagines the spatiality of Hawai'i during the 1850s, a turbulent era in Hawai'ian history. Although descended from the White settlers of Hawai'i, Bushnell was noted for his portrayal of the suffering and oppression faced by Native Hawai'ians under American domination and acknowledged as a 'local writer' and an insider, someone who was born and raised in Hawai'i (Sumida, 1991, p. 251). The time frame of the novel was marred

with the outbreak of pestilence amidst the modernizing process in Hawai'i due to American influence, the creation of urban area such as Honolulu, contrasted with the still largely rural area around the island of O'ahu. The impact of whaling, trading and the implementation of a plantation system transformed Honolulu into a global port for ships and peoples from Asia and Continental USA (Wilson, 2000, p. 61).

The present study analyzes how O.A Bushnell's *Ka'a'awa* contextualizes the moment of spatiality by underlying the representation of various spatial place through Nihoa's travel on O'ahu. This narration projects Hawai'i as a postcolonial space through various spatial descriptions conveying the impact of Hawai'i-Western interaction through diseases and death, occurring within the picturesque landscapes of Hawai'i. This juxtaposition between the sublime and the macabre occurs recurringly in the narration, as Nihoa ventures from one spatial scene to another. Narrated through first-person account, readers' at first familiarized themselves and mentally mapped the sublime sight Hawai'i rural areas which later become the scene of mass death during epidemic outbreak. The issue of subverting the familiar into the unfamiliar and relating the textual spaces of *Ka'a'awa* with the referential scene of 1850's O'ahu delineates the complexities of postcolonial space. Moreover as is explored by James, spatial representation is always mediated from a subjective perspective, in which a particular perspective delineates how space is represented and perceived (2015, p. 38).

The issue of spatiality in literature in general and Hawai'ian literature in particular had been explored by several scholars. Regarding spatiality in literature, Vidiyanti et al (2022) argues how several Indonesian poets, such as Chairil Anwar, Rendra and Goenawan Mohammad represents the view of postcolonial Indonesia through the representation of house and body spaces as a postcolonial space which suffers from the traumatic impact of colonialism. Differently, DeLoughrey (2020) delineates how Caribbean literature spatializes the dialectic relationship between ocean and ship, in how the Atlantic is conceptualized as a cultural and material space. The issue of spatiality has also been a central tenet in Hawai'ian literature. Indriyanto (2022) on his analysis of *A Ricepaper Airplane,* a Korean-American literature argues how the spatial imagination narrated by the character Sun Wha illustrates his displacement in Hawai'i and inability to reconcile with this past in Korea. (2022, p. 100) Differently, Carrigan's analysis of two Hawai'ian literature, Davenport's *Shark Dialogues* and McMillen's *School for Hawai'ian Girls* delineates Hawai'i as a postcolonial space by focusing on the issue of how tourism operates and is perceived (2009, p. 182).

Based upon the prior discussion of spatiality, it can be stated that the representation of space is a recurring theme in literary analysis. Contrary with prior discussion of how space is contextualized in Hawai'ian literature, this paper underlines how spatiality of Bushnell's *Ka'a'awa* represents the historicity and complexity of Hawai'i as a postcolonial space. The analysis contemplates the historicity of postcolonial space through its seemingly contradictory portrayal of space between the sublime and the macabre. This emphasis establishes the novelty of this study as prior discussion of spatiality and Hawai'ian literature still not elaborate the representation of postcolonial space due to colonial encounter.

Methodology

The study is a literary analysis with qualitative framework, in which the data is in the form of quotations, sentences, dialogues and monologue from the novel *Ka'a'awa : a novel about Hawai'i in the 1850s* written by O.A Bushnell. The aim of a qualitative study is "to explore and understand individuals/groups ascribe to a social or human problem "(Creswell & Poth, 1998, p. 97). The analysis is conducted through underlying quotations from the text exploring issue of spatiality, narrated from Nihoa's perspective which is then analyzed from an ecocritical paradigm. The focus of the analysis is to delineate how spatial issues is represented and how the textuality of the novel represents the referential condition of Hawai'i during the 1850 in the context of Hawai'i-West

interaction. The primary data is taken from the first-person point of view of the narrator, Hiram Nihoa as he travels and offers his commentary on the spatial status of various place. The data mainly focuses with Nihoa's opinions, dialogues and internal monologues, taken from several chapters of the novel. Secondary data in the form of academic articles, essays, journals or books is provided to better contextualize the historical condition of Hawai'i during the time period depicted in the novel.

To emphasize the spatial representation of space, place, mapping and literature itself, this paper employs ecocriticism. Narratives tend to map and represent social and natural spaces through textuality, while literary criticism tries to analyze these poetic attempts at making sense of the world. The premises of ecocriticism, as stated by Filipova is the inquire of the ideas of how humans interact with the non-human environment and how their ecological imagination manifested in the form of literature. (2021, p. 13). As stated by Prieto, ecocriticism's emphasizes on activist advocation on real world environmental issues have often emphasizes "thematic at the expense of the textual mechanics of representation"(2016, p. 31). Similarly, Susie asserts how ecocriticism traditionally privileges "the representation of nature in a more biocentric terms" (2001, p. 142) which foregrounds natural/biotic aspect instead of urban/built environment. All these remarks highlight the limitation of an ecological analysis which tends to privileges place while neglecting other forms of spatiality in the narrative form. The complexity of the referential relationship between text and the real work, especially concerning spatial representation has not been adequately explored by ecocriticism, on contrary with another critical theory emphasizing space, geocriticism.

Geocriticism, as Tally elaborated, is a critical framework which focuses on the spatial representation within texts while also explores the overlapping aspects of actual, physical geography and the narrators/characters' cognitive mapping in the text itself (2008, p. 4). On their book, *Ecocriticism and Geocriticism: Overlapping Territories in Environmental and Spatial Literary Studies* (2016), Tally Jr and Battista explores the area on intersection and overlapping concerns between ecocriticism and geocriticism. They argue that these two approaches share similar concern upon how spaces and places are perceived and ultimately used, although also differs in several aspects, as noted in the prefix *geo-* and *eco-*. As noted by Tally Jr and Battista, contrary with ecocriticism's strong stance on environmental issue, geocritic had no particular position concerning the use or abuse of space and place (2016, p. 1). Geocritics argue how the omission of spatial categories on minority study had serious political consequences concerning their disenfranchisement. The insights provided by geocritical oriented literary criticism therefore can account for how ecocritics interpret literature's representation of space in which the area of literary mapping, geography and cartography is one of the promising avenues of interdisciplinary.

Literature itself, as stated by Tally Jr is a form of mapping as it offers readers descriptions of places, "situating them in an imaginary space and providing points of reference to orient and understand the world in which they live" (2013, p. 2). At the core of geocriticism is the interconnection between textual and real spaces, on how imaginary spaces allow readers to comprehend the physical/real spaces more comprehensively. Textual representation of space, on how it is narrated in the text, therefore provides an avenue of interpreting the possible meaning from its description. Reading is an active process of mapping the spatial messages transmitted by the writers. (Tally Jr., Robert T.; Battista, 2013, p. 79).

In reading *Ka'a'awa*, this paper highlights how the act of mapping is emphasized through the narration of Hiram Nihoa on his journey around O'ahu island. Nihoa's journey, in first-hand account provides readers with textual cues necessity to reconstruct a spatial imagination of O'ahu in their mind. Tally Jr elaborates how the writers function as a cartographer, mapping the 'real and imagined' spaces, while the readers become a kind of

geographer who actively interpret the textual map provided through narration. Nihoa's first-person account offers a detailed representation of space, which alludes toward the historical reality of Hawai'i in the 1850's with diseases and epidemic in the foreground. As Prieto argues, the intersection between eco/geocriticism contextualizes the "complexity of spatial representations and the dialectical relationship between texts and their real-world referents" (2016, p. 20).

Results and Discussion

The importance of spatiality in *Ka'a'awa* is delineated by the fact that the narration happens due to the necessity of charting and surveying the area around O'ahu island. *Ka'a'awa*, which takes place in the 1850's situates the rapid changes and transformation in both Hawai'ian society and the landscape within the context of Hawai'i-West encounter. The protagonist, Hiram Nihoa is an educated Hawai'ian native (*Kanaka Maoli*) from the lineage of chieftain and successful businessman in less than favorable endeavor who in the past was the guardian (*kahu*) of the crown prince Alex (future Kamehameha IV). The story progresses when Nihoa was ordered by King Kamehameha III on a mission to survey possible dangers toward the Kingdom's security especially the possible arrival of filibuster from California on the coastline. His journey takes him all around the island of O'ahu, where he experienced first-hand the impact of Westernization amidst outbreak of epidemic which despoiled several rural areas. The majority of the narration occurs on the titular village of Ka'a'awa, in which Nihoa recognizes that his child companion, Eahou is actually the last descendant of the High Chief of O'ahu, Kalanikupule. Outbreak of influenza, and later smallpox devastates Ka'a'awa and other areas in O'ahu island. In the end Nihoa and his White (*haole*) counterpart, Saul Bristol rebuilds the village of Ka'a'awa and establishes a training school *Ke Eahou* to educate the younger generation of Hawai'ians.

Narrating the story from the perspective on an experienced native traveler allows Bushnell to present a commentary regarding the plight faced by the Hawai'ian on O'ahu island as Nihoa journeys from one place to another. *Ka'a'awa* can therefore be read as a form of travel narrative, a genre of literature which focuses upon the connection between the traveler and traveled spaces (Pratt, 1992). Hawai'i in the 1850 was still undergoing Westernization and travel outside the boundaries of Honolulu was difficult, having to navigate harsh hilly terrain in the tropical condition with only horse or mule possible avenue of transportation. As Mitchell notes, "the footpaths connecting the villages were narrow trails, following the shore where possible"(1982, p. 167). The Hawai'ians of old were accustomed of traveling via canoe, and trails which later developed into narrow roads and paved with flat stones were only introduced by the arrival of Western missionaries. On O'ahu, the so called "round-the-island-road" extended from Honolulu across the central plateau to Waialua through the Nuuanu *pali* was available on the 1850's, it was the road taken by Nihoa in the novel (Kuykendall, 1953, p. 25). Traveling around the island of O'ahu therefore was an arduous task, in which Nihoa was ordered by the direct order of the Hawai'ian royalty themselves, narrated as follows:

> *"Kahu," Alex turned to me. 'This is what we ask of you: do you ride, as would an ordinary man of the people, through Ko'olaupoko and Ko'olauloa, along the windward coast of O'ahu, from Kane'ohe in the south to Kahuku in the north. As you ride along, look about you, listen to the countryfolk you will meet*"(Bushnell, 1972, p. 42).

Although Nihoa was an experienced traveler, he acknowledges that it has been around ten years since his last journey on O'ahu, visiting his relative at Kahana, the valley on the northern coast where he was born. This circumstance causes him to be unaware about the present situation in O'ahu, resulting in shock and lamentation upon seeing first-hand the desolation brought by the epidemic toward the Native Hawai'ians. By extension, this subjective consciousness in experiencing space is also extended toward the readers, as they consciously chart the unfolding map of Nihoa's journey on their mental images as the narrative progresses.

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Nihoa's voyage orients reader toward various spatial points, moving onward from the urban setting of Honolulu up the eastern, windward coastline until the titular valley of Ka'a'awa. The depiction of Honolulu is quite sparse and derogative compared to the evocative description of the rural areas, alluding toward Nihoa's dissatisfaction of this urban spatial space. The foundation of Honolulu, originally as a trading port and later developed into a center of government as well ensures the transformation of its prior landscape, in which Nihoa, as a middle-aged man remember all too well. He laments the changing of Hawai'ian society, stratified by social classes which excludes certain groups from the urban capital as follows,

> *"dead they are, those chiefs, and dying, everything is changed, is changing still. And on Ka Papakolea's lowest slopes I saw the latest of these signs of change: scattered among the dry rocks and thirsting weeds, like rubbish blown by the wind, were the hovels of those kolea among men—the poor, the sick, the outcasts of Honolulu".* (1972, p. 52).

The dynamic nature of space is emphasized through the contrast between natural environment (slopes) and the built environment (hovels) created to accommodate the living spaces for the Honolulu's lower classes (*kolea*). This stratification is a byproduct of Hawai'i-West interaction, as pre-contact Hawai'ian society basically consists of *ahupua'a*, land division in which land was parceled from the chieftain to the common people which ensures equal access of all resources. Daws identifies that a landmark moment in Honolulu came at the end of 1840's as foreigners were allowed to lease and later to buy land, by 1850's "the outlines of a town committed to western property practices became visible"(1967, p. 80). As the intersection of trade across the Pacific, Honolulu was also filled with dozens of businesses and infrastructures which in Nihoa's mind disrupts the natural beauty of Hawai'ian landscape. Nihoa remarks how,

> "*beyond the far end of Pauoa's narrow mouth my path met the wide muddy thoroughfare which we of Honolulu are pleased to call Nu'uanu Street. At the harbor, where it begins, this street is paved with cobblestones, to help horses and oxen in the moving of freight to and from sailing vessels warped in close to the stinking beach. Fid Street, as sailors call it, although it is paved with cobblestones, is bounded with warehouses, stores, grogshops, and brothels. It is no thing of beauty*" (Bushnell, 1972, p. 54).

The picturesque setting of Hawai'i is further emphasized as Nihoa begins his journey outside Honolulu. Throughout his narration, Nihoa expresses his appreciation toward the natural landscape, while acknowledging the intimate relationship between people and the environment through the naming of various places. As Kimura states, *aloha aina*, love of the land reflects the close bond between place and people in Hawai'ian culture (1983, p. 178). Nihoa addresses vividly the sights of O'ahu and recounts their place names in its entirety by stating,

> *"toward midday Lono and Kane tired of their sport, the clouds disappeared, the sun shone in splendor upon Nu'uanu. On either side, in all the little ravines which score the proud cliffs of Lanihuli on the left, of Konahuanui on the right, waterfalls poured down, hundreds of them, like ribbon of soft white kapa adorning the green pali. But almost above us, on the flank of Lanihuli, the flowing water could not fall; up it went, up into the air, blown by strong winds rushing through the pass of Nu'uanu"* (Bushnell, 1972, p. 75).

This evocative description conveys the readers to simulate this imaginative experience as if they were physically travelling across O'ahu. The passage is full of textual cues articulating movement, "the flowing water" "waterfalls poured down" "blown by the strong winds" which alludes that the mental map navigated by the readers is not a static setting by is dynamic instead, as Nihoa moves from a particular vintage point to another. Through naming of place, Kanaka Maoli acknowledges the living world around them, and cultural practices are interwoven within these place

names (Indriyanto, Darmawan, & Chandra, 2023, p. 257). His spatial imagination further illustrates the interwoven relationship of nature and culture in Hawai'ian society, as people in rural O'ahu lived as their ancestors have done in centuries.

> "*Before us lay the green and lovely land of Kane'ohe, bathed in the golden light of Kane the Sun, Kane-the-Giver-of-Life, going now to his sleep beyond the wall of high mountains. From dwellings among the hills and upon the plain the smoke of cooking-fires ascended into the quiet air, sent forth from the fires that sustain life"* (Bushnell, 1972, p. 108).

Atkins et al, charting the life of pre-contact Hawai'ian society identifies how the Hawai'ians daily '*aina* (meal) usually consist of *poi* (cooked taro corns), banana, sweet potato with fish or meat cooked on a fire (1994, p. 108). This glimpse of past societal living condition persists in rural O'ahu, in which Nihoa's point of view allows readers' access to this spatial memory. Moreover, some royalty such as Princess Ruth Ke'eliolani preserves the traditional way of living altogether as a staunch advocate of Hawai'ian culture. As stated by Bennett, "Ke'elikōlani maintained distinctive Hawaiian beliefs and practices, she preferred to live in a traditional grass house (*hale pili*)"(2017). At Kahalu'u valley, Nihoa witnesses the continuation of pre-contact Hawai'ian society in which Princess Ruth and her retainers are both dressed in traditional attires. The rural landscape in turn becomes a space to preserve traditional heritage that stands in contrast with the urban, Westernized ideal.

> *"Within a few minutes we came to the place where the hilly slopes become more gentle, where long ago the forest was burned away to make some farmer's sweet-potato patch perhaps. In this wide clearing the retainers of Princess Ruth had set up a village of grass huts, canvas tents, low sheds thatched with ki leaves, and other kinds of temporary shelter. Dozens of servants were laboring for their chiefess. All were dressed in the manner of olden ways, the men in ma/o, the women in pa'u"* (Bushnell, 1972, p. 108).

Nihoa's narration starts to have a mournful tone as he begins to travel across various spatial area impacted by epidemic which devastated Hawai'i in the 1850's. His account reveals the juxtaposition between the picturesque Hawai'ian landscape and the despoilation caused by plague outbreak, occurs in the same location, Kane'ohe as stated in the preceding passage:

> *"The countryside through which we rode was a land of desolation. This lovely fertile district, where once so many people lived, was almost emptied now. Where are all the people gone, I wondered, until I remembered the graveyard, crowded to its walls with the dead of Kane'ohe, covered from end to end with strawflowers, those ugly dry blossoms that even as they are opening feel dead to the touch. Many houses were rotting away, others had long since fallen in upon their foundations of rocks and stamped earth. Cooking-fires marking the abodes of the living were few and spaced far apart"* (Bushnell, 1972, p. 111).

This first-person account delineates how Nihoa's account of Kane'ohe valley is linked with his lamentation of the plight of his people. The traumatic event of epidemic is vividly described by the desolateness of this still beautiful valley, devoid of its prior inhabitants. The imagery of a graveyard "crowded to its wall by the dead of Kane'ohe" contextualizes the macabre sight of countless buried bodies. As previously stated by Vidiyanti et al, "the body plays an important role in postcolonial text", (2022, p. 83) in which the buried bodies of Hawai'ian natives delineates the traumatic impact of Westernization. Moreover, where prior spatial scene positions rural area as a space to preserve traditional heritage, this spatiality orients Hawai'i as a postcolonial space, in which the outbreak of disease is directly linked with Hawai'i-West interaction. As exemplified by Inglis, Hawai'ian indigenous people had no immunities towards common diseases in the Western world such as influenza and "the introduction of infectious diseases to the indigenous (and isolated) population of Hawai'i by foreigners resulted in high rates of depopulation"(2013, p. 22). The

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representation of a spatial scene devastated by disease positions Bushnell's narration in the historicity of epidemic which ravaged the Hawai'ian indigene during the 1850's.

The spatial scene narrating scene of disease, despair and death highlight the discursive and material condition of Hawai'i as a postcolonial space. Witnessing an area deeply affected by epidemic is a recurring theme in the novel, as Bushnell situates the readers within a narrative of death, losses and diseases. Moving toward the shore of Kualoa, Nihoa creates another juxtaposition concerning the tropical vista in Hawai'i with the desolateness of plague epidemic,

> *"this shore of Kualoa, with its sandy beaches and shallow reefs and vast open sea beyond, with its splendid prospect of O'ahu's mountains, from Kanehoalani above to the cliffs to Waimanalo thirty miles away, was once the home of many people. But now few of Kualoa's families survive. The spirits of the dead have gone to sleep the long sleep of Niolopua, their houses on this earth have been blown away by the winds. Now it was empty, this land, drained of life as well as hope"* (Bushnell, 1972, pp. 195–196).

This excerpt visualizes a mental imagery of an idyllic tropical paradise, with "sandy beaches, vast open sea beyond and the splendid prospect of O'ahu mountain" before moving toward a more somber imagery of "land drained of life as well as hope." The grimly visage simulates an impression of a panorama of horror, happening within the familiar tropical imagery which the readers had been familiarized with as the narrative progresses. Lamenting the changes brought by Western diseases in his ten-year absences journeying across O'ahu, a despaired Nihoa contemplates the future of his native people. The image of the lifeless branches from dead trees posits a powerful symbolism both for the decline of Hawai'ian indigenous people and the transformation of the physical environment, as narrated below,

> "*grieving at the change which ten years had brought, I rode in dismay through the deepening gloom. Even though I had known in my mind that my people were dying away, I was not prepared for this. Thinned they were, I had thought, stripped like old leaves from the trees by a searing wind. Yet the trees still live, I had thought, and they will bear young leaves again, and fruit. Now I saw how even the trees were dead, that no leaves and no fruit would grow again from those lifeless branches, from this invaded earth*" (Bushnell, 1972, p. 114).

A spatially oriented analysis of literary studies reorients how the desolate spaces represented in the text due to epidemic with the occurrences of real pestilence which ravaged the Kingdom of Hawai'i in the late 1840's until early 1850's. The deadly plagues were mainly measles, dysentery, influenza and whooping cough, in which the Hawai'ians have few natural immunities. Schmitt estimates how these epidemics killed around 10.000, one-tenth of the kingdom's total population while an outbreak of smallpox in the 1853 killed somewhere between 5.000-6.000 people (1970, p. 361). Even though these diseases did not always caused death, the secondary effects of the infections were often fatal (Inglis, 2014, p. 31). The effect of this mass death and depopulation cannot be understated, changing the islands' demographics forever as the Native population declined. Honolulu, being the center of trade and commerce was particularly affected by the smallpox disease, as seen below,

> *"Terrible, terrible. Worse than you can imagine, worse even than the most frightening of dreams. The yellow flag flies still, day and night. The death-carts roll through the streets, picking up the bodies of the dead—and sometimes of the dying as well. Smoke hangs above, as if the city burned. Smoke from wood fires, burning at almost every street corner, to purify the air, to drive the pestilence away. As the whole earth will be on Judgment Day is Honolulu every day. A City of Destruction."* (Bushnell, 1972, p. 411)

Honolulu, left unexplored during majority of the narration which occurs in rural O'ahu is revisited through a vivid textual description evoking terror and destruction. This spatial representation of Honolulu during smallpox diseases evokes an apocalyptic image of the burning city, "A city of Destruction" conveys a macabre space as the people struggles to overcome the epidemic. Space in Nihoa's prior passage therefore connotes toward both the referential space of 1850's Honolulu during an epidemic and symbolically represents an apocalyptic inferno of the Judgment Day. The familiar space is revisited and then defamiliarized, as the mental image of Honolulu, constructed through Nihoa's narration resurfaces as spatial scene connotes death and diseases. The nuance between subverting the familiar into the unfamiliar further delineates the complexity of postcolonial space with its seemingly contradictory representation of space.

To concur, it can be foregrounded how the analysis of space in Bushnell's *Ka'a'awa* explores the complexity of postcolonial spaces. The application of ecocritical approaches changes the paradigm of literary analysis into foregrounding places and spaces as a site of colonial encounter. Furthermore, geocriticism articulates the process of mapping those spaces, which in this novel is narrated from the first-hand account of an indigenous traveler. Nihoa's account offers a commentary toward the historicity of Hawai'i during the turmoil of the 1850's, ravaged by death and diseases. The analysis of postcolonial spaces as a result of colonial encounter enriches the spatiality of literary analysis by foregrounding the impact of colonialism upon the postcolonial landscape,

Conclusion

Bushnell's *Ka'a'awa*, narrated from Nihoa's first-person experience delineates the complexity of postcolonial spaces through the competing spatial forms of the urban, the rural, the picturesque and the macabre. Nihoa's subjective account represents the historicity of O'ahu in the 1850 as a result of Hawai'i-West interaction. The evocative description conveying the picturesque Hawai'ian landscapes is contrasted with the macabre and the horror due to epidemic. Space in Bushnell's *Ka'a'awa* echoes both the referential space of 1850's O'ahu as well as symbolic meaning delineates the decline of Hawai'ian natives as well as evoking apocalyptic imagery of the burning Honolulu. The spatial scene narrating scene of disease, despair and death highlight the discursive and material condition of Hawai'i as a postcolonial space. As a concluding remark and a possible avenue for future researchers on this novel, *Ka'a'awa* is a polyvocal narration which portrays two protagonists, Hiram Nihoa and Saul Bristol. An analysis of how Hawai'i as a postcolonial space is portrayed from Saul Bristol, a Westerner perspective can provide a counter discourse from the indigenous point of view of Hiram Nihoa.

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