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Afterword: A Response Essay

J. Kēhaulani Kauanui

These essays, addressing aspects of biopolitical regulations by Canada, El Salvador, Australia, and the United States, offer much to illuminate different modalities of regulating Indigenous lifeways and Indigenous peoples' resistance to them on myriad grounds. This response essay engages three particular themes that emerge from these articles: (1) structural genocide in settler-colonial states' attempts at deracination; (2) Indigenous peoples' agency with regard to anti-normalization; and (3) decolonial resistance outside of imposed settler-colonial binaries. All three aspects challenge the "logic of elimination of the Native" that, as theorized by Patrick Wolfe, is endemic to settler colonialism. I also respond by offering some thoughts on these same three key nodes in the case of Hawai'i and the United States.

In addressing the Australian context, Sheila Collingwood-Whittick's essay "Settler Colonial Biopolitics and Indigenous Resistance: The Refusal of Australia's First Peoples 'to fade away or assimilate or just die'" offers an account of a long line of massacres, forced removal, internments, and coercive forms of biocultural assimilation, along with a reading of two works by Aboriginal authors that demonstrate (and reflect) the refusal of the logic of elimination by Indigenous people(s). As Collingwood-Whittick delineates, Kim Scott's *Benang* is an autobiographical work bolstered by archival research to make sense of the present as Scott uncovered the welfare records of his own Noongar ancestors and relatives to document diverse forms of violence inflicted on his family and forbears. Her article explores how Scott's novel excavates

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and exposes a range of state biopolitical operations. It also examines how the main character in the book accesses white relatives' records of government policies, as well as oral accounts by Indigenous people who were interned in government reserves in Western Australia in the first half of the twentieth century. Collingwood-Whittick argues that Scott's protagonist is a subject who himself functions as culminating evidence of the politics of the state's cultural and biological absorption policies. The essay also discusses a fictive account of the Mission of St. Dominic by Alexis Wright, a Waanji novelist. *Plains of Promise* reflects the history of an earlier group of internees in what is, in effect, another holding station, albeit a Catholic one. The essay draws attention to examples of biopolitical regulation: we see children severed from their parents and other kin, individuals who resist banished to penal colonies or leprosy stations when deemed "uppity," and abusive punishments that included sexual assault.

As historical context to read these novels, Collingwood-Whittick analyzes discourses and policies of "absorption" that set out to manage the "problem" of a proliferating population of "half castes"—due in large part to the exploits of white men who imposed themselves on Aboriginal women—and, intentionally stripping them of their Indigenous identities, created a racially mixed group in order to assimilate them into white society. This deracination was part of the settler-colonial state officials' assumptions that they could biologically eliminate remaining Indigenous people by using miscegenation as a form of eugenics that would cut people off from their genealogical roots. As Collingwood-Whittick argues, the biopolitical effort to uproot—an attempt to eliminate the Native *as Native*—served the settler-colonial goals of increasing white demographics while eliminating the Indigenous population. We also learn of the widespread abduction by whites of Aboriginal girls who were conscripted into domestic service for white families, homes in which the male proprietors were known to be perpetrators of rape. The pregnancies that often followed amounted to demographic expansion, with settlers attempting to use Indigenous women as though they were surrogates, physical vessels for their own settler offspring, who would be treated differently than their Indigenous mothers. The essay also tackles twenty-first century Australian biopolitics by tracing a history of denial and exclusion that links the earlier forms of settler-colonial violence to those in the present. This biopolitical history reveals a gross continuity, exemplified in today's rates of Aboriginal children being adopted out to white families, still alarmingly high, as well as a governmental campaign seeking to regulate "traditional Aborigines" in the Northern Territory while threatening to remove them from lands the state wants to lease to mining companies.

And yet, indigeneity endures. Both the novels discuss Aboriginal resistance, as does Collingwood-Whittick's article theorizing how it is represented in these works: persistent Indigenous identification, quests to reconnect and collective efforts to support those pursuits, and Indigenous people(s) continuing to assert themselves as both culturally and politically distinct. Moreover, Collingwood-Whittick shows how the novels also represent enduring Indigenous ways of being and seeing: abiding by customary law, insisting on a different temporal order, relying on collective cultural inheritance, and identifying ancestral connections to country that, in turn, bolster family kinship renewal—all part of decolonial resistance.

Jorge E. Cuéllar's "Elimination/Deracination: Colonial Terror, La Matanza, and the 1930 Race Laws in El Salvador" examines the extermination campaign of the Salvadoran government in response to a 1932 Indigenous rebellion. Looking at the government's genocidal pulse to squash the uprising, he theorizes how that event in the early-twentieth century has structured the settler colonialism in El Salvador today, and how the event is regarded in the contemporary period. Cuéllar examines the legacy of the massacre in the form of the biopolitics of elimination and deracination through the lens of "colonial terror." Here we learn how the 1930s Race Laws attempted to disappear Indigenous people(s) as a way to manage the fallout from the insurrection—through heightened hierarchies of color and class that drew on caste schemas of an earlier time.

The article deftly analyzes the settler colonization of indigeneity through intensified cultural production of "the ladino" and "the mestizo" as symbolic heritage in a way that feeds into the project of the nation-state and national identity—all while appropriating the figure of the Indian (and the Afro-descendant people) as folk precursor, thus creating a temporal boundary linked to racial concepts of modernity. Today, the forces of mestizo nationalism and ladino violence continue to render Indigenous groups invisible, often through forms of denial. As argued, 1932 was a pivotal moment for El Salvador and the surrounding region in terms of understanding early-twentieth century settler colonialism and the banishing of Indigenous peoples from the public sphere in the service of modernization, proletarianization, agro-industrialization, and the individual privatization of property. La Matanza is an "event" that contributes to the fortification of settler colonialism's very structure, yet it exemplifies the contradictory realities of the rise of liberal reform forged through violent authoritarianism—with colonial terror as a primary tool of settler colonialism to police the boundaries of that structure. What should not be lost here is that while the insurrection itself was an obvious form of opposition to the state, in the contemporary period Indigenous peoples draw on the legacy of the uprising and testimonies of the massacre to bolster Indigenous mobilization and resurgence as part of ongoing decolonial resistance.

In "The 'Authentic Indian': Sarah Winnemucca's Resistance to Colonial Constructions of Indianness," Sarah Bonnie Humud examines Paiute Indian Sarah Winnemucca's resistance to settler-colonial constructions of Native peoples in the United States during the mid-nineteenth century. Humud argues that although Winnemucca was working within severe structural limits, through her costuming and demeanor she was able to marshal the stereotype of the "authentic Indian princess" to deliver both a political critique and mobilize support for her people, who were suffering from the genocidal violence of militarized removal policies. Humud theorizes the ways in which Winnemucca deployed political and literary forms of resistance that drew upon racist tropes which, recreated in the context of Winnemucca's critical performativity, aimed to challenge the settler state's exercises of biopower that disempower Indigenous people by imposing stereotypes of the "authentic Indian."

Making the most of Winnemucca's public lectures and published autobiography, we learn from Humud how Winnemucca's strategic rhetorical choices negotiated the paradoxes of Native "authenticity" in the service of anti-normalizing settler colonial

biopolitics and racist US nationalist discourse and policy. In this article we also see Winnemucca draw on the rhetoric of sentimentalism in her direct calls for the colonizers to challenge genocidal policies, highlighting her use of affect to mobilize white people to help save the Paiute people. Fighting within the constraints of the settler-colonial structures, Winnemucca necessarily worked outside the binary of “assimilation” or “tradition” that emerged later.

Finally, James Boucher’s essay, “Neoliberal Biopolitics in Michael Noël’s *Nipishish: Market Logic and Indigenous Resistance*,” reveals how Noël’s novel contends with the Quebec provincial government’s attempts to declassify and depoliticize its Indigenous peoples. As one example of a biopolitical strategy, the essay takes up neoliberal market policies of the Canadian state that work in the service of deracination and First Nation peoples’ challenges to them. The novel deals with subjectification and subjugation on multiple fronts, from the police’s murder of the Indigenous protagonist’s father, to the questions the Indian Act creates in regard to his tribal enrollment and citizenship, to a housing program that attempts to dampen social relations and communal practices.

Yet, as Boucher emphasizes, as a cultural production this novel also performs the work of anti-normalization: it exposes the everyday violence of settler land management (allotment and deforestation), educational politics, and the degradation of tribal identity and, by drawing on Indigenous storytelling modalities, also becomes a pedagogical tool for youth readers. For example, Poné, an elder in the Anishnaabe community, responds to the arrogance of an imposing government agent by recounting a traditional tale about an ant that helps a greedy man come down to size. The allegory offers lessons of balance—ecological and spiritual—and scale, as well as respect and reciprocity. In featuring Indigenous storytelling as one intervention, Boucher notes Noël’s literary work moves beyond the binary of the written and the oral—linking it to a common feature in Native American literature that can be read as discursive decolonial resistance. Boucher examines how, moving from law and policy to philosophy, this novel tells stories of Canadian biopolitical policies in conflict with Anishinaabe epistemologies—and also of Indigenous endurance.

All of the articles in this special issue, then, elucidate Indigenous agency in the face of multiple structural constraints, including settler attempts to discursively exterminate the Indigenous, and feature decolonial defiance outside of imposed binaries as well as Indigenous anti-normalization techniques.

These themes regarding settler colonial biopolitics and Indigenous lifeways resonate in the Hawaiian context today in the structural genocide being perpetrated by the US settler state. Contemporary examples of US settler colonial biopolitics in Hawai‘i include the fifty percent blood-quantum law defining who qualifies as “native Hawaiian” for the purposes of leasing land on Hawaiian Home Lands; ongoing attempts by the Hawai‘i state government to sell the stolen Hawaiian Kingdom Crown and Government Lands currently held in a “public trust”; and the state-driven proposal to federally recognize a “Native Hawaiian governing entity” that would have political status comparable to Native American tribal nations.

Regarding this last example—to change federal policy to recognize a Native Hawaiian governing entity through an administrative process distinct from those

available to American Indians—the US Department of the Interior (DOI) held public meetings in the islands via “Advanced Notice of Proposed Rule Making,” and subsequently through its “Notice for Proposed Rulemaking.” However, the DOI’s stance reveals, as David Uahikeaikalei’ōhu Maile argues, that in fact “these are notices of settlement” by the US government.¹ Reconfiguring the biopolitics of settler colonialism in the context of Indigenous critiques of recognition, Maile further suggests “the [Advanced Notice of Proposed Rule Making] and [Notice for Proposed Rulemaking], animated by settler colonialism, attempt to settle Kanaka Maoli claims against the U.S. settler state and, simultaneously, settle Hawai‘i.”² He further argues, “Recognition policies, like those offered to Kānaka, serve as a biopolitical instrument to manage Indigenous life under the logic of elimination.”³ And yet, the overwhelming majority of Kanaka Maoli present at the DOI hearings refused the DOI’s notices of settlement.

But to examine US settler-colonial biopolitical regulation in the Hawaiian case also demands a look at earlier genealogies of (non-settler) colonial biopolitics management imposed by the Hawaiian Kingdom government in its attempts to fend off Western encroachment. Historically, the Kingdom’s quest for international recognition entailed an adaptation to nineteenth-century European conventions of statehood in which “civilized manhood” was crucial to the representation of the nation.⁴ Acceptance by world powers necessitated the presentation of an independent nation that displayed a Christian masculine face, which served as a sign of its modernity.⁵ This shift had profound implications for Hawaiian land tenure, gender, and sexuality. In the period from the 1820s–1840s and through the latter half of the nineteenth century, Kanaka elites who were fighting to protect Hawaiian national sovereignty worked to ensure, with the assistance of missionaries, the well-being and very survival of the social body by reorganizing Indigenous social forms within a protective state—the Hawaiian Kingdom. Indigenous chiefs enacted forms of colonial biopolitics, paradoxically keeping imperialism at bay by introducing Christian edicts that likely matched what European powers would have introduced themselves had any formally colonized Hawai‘i.

In *Paradoxes of Hawaiian Sovereignty: Land, Sex, and the Colonial Politics of State Nationalism* (2018), I demonstrate how, in mobilizing available categories for acknowledging Kanaka distinctiveness, white American notions of property title, state sovereignty, normative gender relations, and normative sexuality become intimately imbricated in aspirations for Hawaiian liberation today. In the contemporary nationalist context, activists positing the Hawaiian Kingdom as simply needing to be restored (through de-occupation), demean Hawaiian indigeneity and deny US settler colonialism. Dominant articulations of kingdom nationalism rely on treating Hawaiian history prior to the US-backed overthrow in 1893 as strictly emerging from that of an independent state, but such articulations ignore the increasing pressure on the Hawaiian government of the late-nineteenth century to remake itself in ways conducive to being acknowledged as civilized within the family of nations. Kingdom nationalists’ rejection of indigeneity in the present—in response to the settler state pushing for federal recognition of a Native Hawaiian governing entity—continues this implicit civilizational imperative and replays the legacy of seeking to disown aspects of

Hawaiian history, culture, and an identity deemed “savage” in order to assert a “properly” heteropatriarchal nation-statehood.

As with the four essays of this special issue, these examples from Hawai‘i demonstrate the widely varied forms that biopolitics can assume in diverse settler-colonial contexts. At the same time, they highlight that settler colonial biopolitics invariably works to normalize the settler nation-state model as the status quo of political and social formation. It is this consistent objective of the settler-colonial project that makes the work of Indigenous anti-normalization so crucially a part of a decolonial resistance and, as these analyses from varied yet comparable sites of ongoing settler occupation tell, an indigeneity that is enduring, dynamic, and beyond the constraints of imposed binaries.

NOTES

1. David Uahikeaikalei‘ohu Maile, “Notices of Settlement: US Federal Recognition and Kanaka Maoli Politics of ‘Aole,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Studies Association, November 17–20, 2016, Denver, Colorado, 3.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 27.
5. Sally Engle Merry, *Colonizing Hawai‘i: The Cultural Power of Law* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 230.