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# **TALKING STORIES: AN ANALYSIS OF HAOLEWOOD'S ATTEMPTS TO TELL HAWAI'I'S STORIES THROUGH MOVIE TRAILERS**

by

**Pono R. Sukanuma**

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the requirements for graduation with**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigated how Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i are represented by the media, specifically in movies and their accompanying trailers. Thirty movie trailers from movies released between 1939 and 2016 were analyzed. These movies represented the various movie genres of romantic comedy, thriller, war, animation, drama, historical, and more. The aim of the study was to compile evidence of various themes such as stereotyping, white-washing and language pronunciation within movie trailers in order to validate or extend conceptually the theoretical framework or theory about the lack of accurate representation of Native Hawaiians. This is a feasibility study that could help set up a future study on the subject. There is extensive evidence that Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i are consistently stereotyped in Hollywood films and these stereotypes have damaging effects on others' perceptions of Native Hawaiians. While, white-washing of Native Hawaiians is not as prevalent a phenomenon as expected because whiteness is at the core of Hollywood films. Mispronunciation of Native Hawaiian words and over-use of common words to describe Hawai'i contribute to the negative influences of white-washing and stereotyping on movie consumers' perceptions of Hawai'i and Native Hawaiians.

**Keywords:** Stereotype; White-Washing; Native Hawaiians; Hawai'i, Representation

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### Introduction

For people who are not familiar with the Hawaiian Islands, who have never lived there or visited, the images of pristine beaches and fragrant flower leis, swaying hula dancers and friendly dolphins, pineapple and cans of spam have been propagated by mediated ideologies. These idealized, paradisiacal images of Hawai‘i and the traditional “Hawaiian” lifestyle were cultivated by Western foreigners and reinforced by a variety of media sources over time (Medeiros, 2017, p.2). As media consumers, people’s perceptions are shaped by extensive, cumulative exposure to media messages. This is called cultivation theory. Cultivation theory supposes that people develop beliefs, opinions and expectations of Hawai‘i and Native Hawaiians based on what they see in movies (Klein & Shiffman, 2009, pp. 57-58). One of the most pervasive and effective, but not necessarily positive, forms of outsider media exposure to the Hawaiian Islands is movies.

In the past two decades alone, more than 50 blockbuster Hollywood movies have been based in Hawai‘i, as well as an additional 25 broadcast network and cable television shows (Rampell & Reyes, 2013, Introduction). One would think with so many opportunities to tell accurate stories about Hawai‘i and its native people that Hollywood would do just that. However, more often than not “contemporary Hawaiian and traditional Polynesian cultures are only minimally featured in these movies, since they have become a backdrop for white melodramas” (Konzett, 2017, p. 196). For example, the 2016 movie *Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates* follows the story of a white family’s destination wedding in Hawai‘i, where they sip Mai Tai drinks and swim in front of their luxury hotel. No local or Native Hawaiian characters are seen and Hawai‘i is portrayed as land ripe for a tourist’s taking.

Hollywood movies portray Hawai'i and its people as unworthy of center stage as they are often seen (if at all) lounging in background shots behind white, cultural-appropriating characters and storylines. This paper will use a feasibility test to study 30 movie trailers for themes such as stereotyping, white-washing, and language pronunciation. Literature about racial representation in mass media primarily addressed the representation of African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans and even Native Americans. Native Hawaiians like many other marginalized groups have consistently been white-washed, yet there is little literature on Hawai'i. This project seeks to fill that gap. Since "more people are seeing Hawai'i as either content or backdrop in the movies," this study seeks to analyze the accuracy of Hawaiian representation as portrayed in Haolewood movie trailers<sup>1</sup> (Rampell & Reyes, 2013, Introduction).

### **Literature Review**

#### ***History of Cinema in Hawai'i***

The love affair between cinema and the Hawaiian Islands began in the end of the nineteenth century. Movies were both consumed and produced in Hawai'i during this introductory period. The first movie was shown in Honolulu in 1897 and "took place less than two years after the introduction of the motion picture in America and Europe" (Schmitt, 1967, p. 74). And a year later in 1898, Thomas Edison photographed and copyrighted four short movies about life in Honolulu (Reyes, 1995, p. 15). Moviemaking and viewing continued to develop as time went on and Hawaiian travelogues became feature-length movies. The Aloha Movie Company was created in 1916 with its moralistic creators visualizing Honolulu as "another Haolewood, sinful and depraved" (Schmitt, 1967, p. 76). In 1918, Paramount Pictures released

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<sup>1</sup> Hollywood so often misrepresents Native Hawaiian stories as the backdrop of white melodramas. This paper will use the term "haole," meaning "foreigner" in the Native Hawaiian language, to refer to all movies about Hawai'i from the mainland. Hollywood's images of Hawai'i are truly foreign to the true spirit of the islands. Haolewood is a synonym for Hollywood and all uses of "Hollywood" will be replaced with Haolewood.

*The Hidden Pearls*, which was the first feature-length movie made in Hawai‘i (Reyes, 1995, p. 15). Over the next few decades, movie productions clung to Hawaiian themes and scenes, which featured “synthetic scenery, garbled Hawaiian color, and cliché-filled plots, performed by ‘Polynesians’ from Japan and the Middle West” (Schmitt, 1967, p. 77). Haolewood and its productions continued to flourish in the islands until World War II. Following the end of WWII, *Big Jim McLain* (a movie which will be analyzed in this project) became one of the first modern motion pictures to be filmed in post-war Hawai‘i (Reyes, 1995, p. 70). With the revival of movie production in the post WWII era, Hawai‘i continued to serve as an exotic paradise backdrop and inspired gentrified storylines for the entertainment-hungry American public. Hawai‘i was very present in WWII and many Americans from the continental U.S. were stationed in the islands. Hawai‘i’s integral role in the formative years of Haolewood ensured a long-standing love affair with cinema which began in the early 1900s through WWII statehood and continues on today.

However, this love affair between Haolewood and Hawai‘i was not mutually beneficial. This is not to say that movie production was not economically beneficial for the state of Hawai‘i. In the 2014 fiscal year, movie, TV and video production contributed heavily to the creative sector’s estimated GDP of \$3.3 billion, which accounted for about 4.2 percent of Hawai‘i’s total GDP (Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, 2015, p. 4). Furthermore, Hawai‘i’s tourism industry benefitted economically from “the global exposure these productions have enjoyed” because exposure of the Hawaiian Islands through movies drives tourism (Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, 2015, p. 39). Writers and directors molded Hawai‘i into fulfilling a typical role that played to America’s dreams of paradise. Hawai‘i was an Eden, an escape from all one’s worries, a beautiful place unlike anything one has ever seen before. Haolewood transformed Hawai‘i’s appearance to the outside

world into “a romantic native paradise to serve as the setting for adventures enjoyed by white Americans or Europeans (usually males)” (Reyes, 1995, preface). However, this native paradise didn’t have room to include the “natives” who lived there or the stories that naturally arose from this place. Konzett (2017) wrote:

Hawai’i figures as a wholesome ecosystem that restores broken relationships or induces new romances. Its natural and oceanic habitats remind viewers that a belief in ecological balance and sustainability will correct all problems, even those that the movies steadfastly refuse to address such as race, property, and political representation. The white coded liberal universe that sees Hawai’i as a home away from home appears benevolent but gives little voice to those inhabitants who have been socioeconomically displaced by settler colonialism, tourism, real estate prices, and cost of living (p. 217).

Native Hawaiians were systemically cut out of their own stories from Haolewood’s earliest movies. However, if Native Hawaiian characters happened to make an appearance, they were often negatively stereotyped and served as comic relief.

### ***Stereotyping of Native Hawaiians and Hawai’i***

For the purpose of this study, a stereotype is defined as “a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing” (Oxford Dictionaries). Stereotypes of Native Hawaiians include: territorial bullies, overweight fellows, uneducated imbeciles, seductive hula dancers, drug addicts, and more (Tsai, 2004, p.3). University of Hawai’i English professor Paul Lyons, said of the movie *50 First Dates* (which will be analyzed for this study):

Culture, whenever it is represented, is always caricatured, and there is a kind of nervousness around the subject that I think operates by turning everyone into buffoons, not just the locals. Local characters aren’t given any nuance. They may be given some sympathy, but it is given as parody (Tsai, 2004, p.2).

Furthermore, Haolewood portrays Hawai’i as a place “populated (sparsely) by large, lazy people who sing, dance, play and eat but, oddly, don’t work very much” (Tsai, 2004, p.1). Schmitt stated movies “invariably presented a distorted and hackneyed view of Hawaii, peopling the Territory



with such stereotypes as grass-skirted 'natives' and wealthy pineapple plantation owners (1967, p. 79). These stereotypes reinforce negative messages about Hawai'i and Native Hawaiians.

### ***Systematic Erasure of Native Hawaiians***

As if stereotypes were not damaging enough, Native Hawaiians were often absent in storylines about Hawai'i. Lacina summed it up best when she wrote "Haolewood not only exhibits misrepresentation, but underrepresentation as well" (2016, p. 3). According to Smith, Choueiti and Pieper (2016), fewer than one percent of movie characters in movies released in 2015 were Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders (p.2). However, there were more than 560,000 people who claim Native Hawaiian ancestry on the 2013 U.S. census (Goo, 2015). In total, 26.3 percent of all speaking characters from movies in 2015 were from an underrepresented racial/ethnic group (Smith, Choueiti & Pieper, 2016, p. 2). Haolewood has for years blatantly ignored its responsibility to tell the stories of all of America's people, particularly the minority populations, on the big screen. Since 45% of movie ticket buyers and 38.4% of the U.S. population are composed of individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, movies do not reflect the demography of this country or the movie audience (Smith, Choueiti & Pieper, 2016, p. 16-17). It is important for Haolewood to reflect the demography of the United States because mass entertainment "wields considerable influence over popular culture and public perceptions, especially by those who may not personally know people different from themselves" (2016, p. 652). Developing accurate perceptions of cultures different from one's own is critical to eradicating fears of the believed threat another ethnic or racial group presents. Movies educate and when movies present false stereotypes about ethnic and racial groups who are already marginalized, these groups can suffer further harm and racism. Movie goers deserve fair and accurate portrayals of others in order to develop positive, authentic attitudes and

perceptions of other cultures and ethnic groups (Hack, 2008, p. 15-16). Furthermore, people are desperately looking for media representation because they mentally and emotionally require it (Lacina, 2016, p.2). Various studies like Schmader, Block and Lickel (2015) studied how “stereotypic media portrayals also take a psychological toll on the groups who are portrayed” (p. 55). Stereotypic media portrayals intensify the social alienation and stigmatization of Native Hawaiians, which has been found to affect their health and well-being (Kaholokula et al., 2011, p. 28). Ganje reported “all people deserve to see themselves reflected with honesty and balance by the media organizations that serve their community,” 1996, p. 45). Though Haolewood has been serving in Hawai‘i’s communities for decades, they have been visually serving up stories about the people in Hawai‘i inaccurately.

### ***Native Hawaiian People and Language***

There is a difference between the people who live in Hawai‘i (residents) and the native, indigenous people of the Hawaiian Islands. A Native Hawaiian<sup>2</sup> or *kanaka maoli* is someone whose ancestors were natives of the area which consists of the Hawaiian Islands prior to 1778 (Legal Information Institute, 1987). Any person who lives in Hawai‘i, who is not of Native Hawaiian ancestry, is referred to as a Hawai‘i resident (Writing Better Explained, 2018). According to the Pew Research Center (2015), Native Hawaiians make up six percent of Hawai‘i’s population or 21 percent if part-Hawaiians are included (see figure 1 for a full breakdown of Hawai‘i’s racial diversity). It should be noted Native Hawaiians are often grouped in with other Polynesian groups and commonly referred to as Pacific Islands. For example,

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that throughout this project the word “native” in “Native Hawaiian” is capitalized (NAJA, 2018). This is intentional, to reflect the notion that this project does not take into consideration blood quantum when referring to Native Hawaiians (Schachter & Funk, 2012 p. 414).

*Moana* gives a representative look at Polynesian culture rather than specific groups like Native Hawaiians.

There are three main types of language spoke in the Hawaiian Islands: Hawaiian, Hawai'i Creole (Pidgin), and Hawai'i English. First, Hawaiian language or '*Ōlelo Hawai'i*' is spoken by 8,000 people (Higgins & Furukawa, 2012, p. 181). This number is increasing with efforts to revitalize the Hawaiian language through Hawaiian immersion schools and Hawaiian language classes. Next, the Hawai'i Creole language, which locals refer to as Pidgin, was developed among the racially diverse sugar and pineapple plantation workers of the nineteenth century. These workers from all over the world spoke their home country languages (Japanese, Tagalog, Chinese, Portuguese, etc.) and needed to communicate with another and with local Hawaiians. Pidgin was born from this communication. Pidgin faces stigmatization because it is primarily spoken by working class and non-white individuals. This has resulted in the negative perception that speaking pidgin limits its speaker's socio-economic mobility and arguably intelligence as well (Higgins & Furukawa, 2012, p. 181). Finally, Pidgin influences Hawai'i English, which is distinct from mainland English, and is spoken by the majority of Hawai'i residents. It should be noted the researcher is familiar with all three languages mentioned above. As a Native Hawaiian, I had Hawaiian language classes for seven years, which gave me a solid foundational understanding of the language. I attended the Kamehameha Schools for 13 years, where Hawaiian language, history and culture were an integral and central focus of my education. My family and upbringing in O'ahu, Hawai'i gave me experience in speaking Pidgin and Hawai'i English as well. I am knowledgeable about these three language varieties and their impacts on local Hawai'i residents, Native Hawaiians, and tourists alike.

Higgins and Furukawa (2012) analyzed these language varieties by examining how four Haolewood films about Hawai'i utilize them to style Native Hawaiian characters and how cultural difference between Native Hawaiians and *haoles*<sup>3</sup> (foreigners) are perpetuated by language choice. For example, Higgins and Furukawa (2012) analyzed the language variety of mock language. Mock language is defined as "inherently exaggerated and performative since it does not linguistically qualify as an authentic code, but instead relies on familiar linguistic patterns that non-natives might know, which index stereotypes about specific ethnolinguistic groups," (Higgins & Furukawa, 2012, p. 188). This type of language is racist because it focuses on features that uphold negative stereotypes of the group being mocked (Hill, 1998, p. 681). Mock Hawaiian associates its speaker with negative attributes like a lack of intelligence, vulgarity and laziness (Higgins & Furukawa, 2012, p. 188). An example of a character who speaks with mock language is Ula from *50 First Dates*, which will be examined later. Ula uses commonly heard words like "aloha" and "pineapple" in his speech, which is bolstered by Pidgin pronunciation of these words. The prevalence and utilization of this type of language will be examined in this study.

### ***White-washing of Marginalized Groups***

For the purpose of this study, white-washing is defined as casting a white male or female to play a character who is originally of an ethnic background (Lacina, 2016, p.2). Though the movie industry has come a long way since the blatantly racist movie *Birth of a Nation* in 1915, it is obvious racism still haunts this industry, especially in the form of white-washing (Lacina, 2016, p. 1). The literature on the topic of white-washing discusses other marginalized groups like

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<sup>3</sup> *Haole* is defined as a white person, American, Englishman, Caucasian; American, English; formerly, any foreigner; foreign, or introduced of foreign origin (Ulukau, 2018).

African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinx people, and Native Americans (Tukachinsky, Mastro, & Yarchi, 2015). There is little to no academic literature that discusses the white-washing of Native Hawaiians. This paper seeks to add to that literature by including the Native Hawaiian perspective.

The most recent example of white-washing of a Native Hawaiian was reported for the upcoming movie *Ni'ihau*, which follows the true story of Native Hawaiian WWII hero Bennehakaka Kanahele (Hurley, 2017, p. 1). Kanahele will be played by white actor, Zach McGowan. Anne Keala Kelly, a Native Hawaiian moviemaker, said this in response to *Ni'ihau*'s casting choice, "It is cultural cannibalism, it is like someone eating you while you're alive. They are erasing me, or any Hawaiian, as we are standing here. It is the narrative equivalent of ethnic cleansing. We are being marginalized while we're still here" (Herreria, 2017, p. 3). Though Caucasians or *haoles* only make up 24 percent of Hawai'i's population (Konzett, 2018, p. 210), they are selected to play diverse characters who are more representative of the demography of Hawai'i. White-washing coupled with cultural appropriation rubs salt in a wound for Native Hawaiians, who feel erased by Western influence (Herreria, 2017, p. 3). Some Native Hawaiians are concerned *Ni'ihau* will follow Haolewood's typical pattern of Westernizing Native Hawaiian cultures and stories. Ku'ualoa Ho'omanawanui, a professor of Hawaiian literature at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, said:

This kind of careless, insensitive decision-making — including the casting [decision] — does not consider the real-world impacts on Native Hawaiians, Hawaii residents, and other peoples of color when we are not made visible as real people with a full range of human experiences and emotions. Rather we are characters for white people to try on and mimic in their quest to fulfill their own ignorant, arrogant, incorrect fantasies about Native Hawaiians and other peoples of color (Herreria, 2016, p.6).

Fantasies have sold historically, as analyzed in the early trailers from 1939 to the 1970s, and continue to sell today.

According to Haolewood insiders, white-washing has survived (thrived even) well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century due to the issue of the “bottom line” (Hoag, 2016, p. 653). The bottom line is financial backers need a “bankable” star who can boost box office returns – and most bankable stars are white (Hoag, 2016, p. 653). Lacina (2016) wrote:

Thus, the question must be raised: if whitewashing neither helps nor hinders a movie’s financial success, why not just get rid of it all together? The trend is offensive, racist, harmful, oftentimes historically false, and economically unremarkable. Hopefully, Haolewood will begin realizing this soon, and end its history of whitewashing once and for all (p. 3).

However, diversity does sell because “global box-office returns for films with a 40 to 50 percent minority cast were twice that of movies with a 10 percent or less minority cast,” (Hoag, 2016, p. 653). Since white-washing is so entrenched in the ways of Haolewood’s leaders, financiers and decision makers, change may only come when money speaks to the power of a diverse cast. Take for example *Black Panther*. This movie was produced by a Black director, a Black screenwriter and features a predominately Black cast. The movie surpassed \$659.5 billion at the worldwide box-office, making *Black Panther* the third highest-grossing movie of all time in the United States (Madani, 2018). The world-wide success of *Black Panther* has challenged the myth that movies with predominantly Black casts don’t sell, and it helps unravel “unwritten Haolewood rules” that diversity doesn’t sell (Mackelden, 2018). A study conducted by the Bunche Center reported movies released in 2014 with a 40 to 50 percent minority cast yielded double the global-box office sales than movies with a 10 percent or less minority cast (Hoag, 2016, p. 653).

### ***Why representation of marginalized groups matters***

Diverse representation in Haolewood is critical because a lack of representation sends the message of symbolic annihilation. Symbolic annihilation is defined as “poor media treatment [that] can contribute to social disempowerment and in which symbolic absence in the media can

erase groups and individuals from public consciousness” (Coleman & Yochim, 2008, abstract). Social disempowerment and perceived racism can “get under the skin” of Native Hawaiians and affect their health (Kaholokula et al., 2011, p. 33). For example, Kaholokula et al. (2011) found higher levels of social disempowerment and perceived racism may have an effect on blood pressure and likelihood of obesity of Native Hawaiians (p. 33). Furthermore, a lack of diverse representation may have an effect on children’s understanding of racial equality. Smith, Choueiti & Pieper (2016) state movies, animated or not, that do not display characters of color, miscast characters of color, or reinforce negative stereotypes of minority groups have disastrous effects on all viewers, but especially young children. Movies like these “may be subtly teaching and/or reinforcing that narratives about people of color and females are not valued in the same way that stories about white males are” (Smith, Choueiti & Pieper, 2016, p. 17). However, if kids see more empowering and positive depictions of people of color then Lacina (2016) believes “it will undoubtedly begin to have a powerful affect” (p. 2). This powerful affect is not limited to children though. Empowering depictions of people of color have very strong effects on all ages. The powerful response to the movie *Black Panther* from African Americans who, like other marginalized groups, are underserved by Haolewood and the media and could be the first in a line of movies that tell diverse stories. If future movies follow *Black Panther*’s lead and commit to diverse representation, Haolewood will still make money.

Ideally, Haolewood must quickly recognize and address the gap between who appears on screen and the population of current and future moviegoers in this country (Smith, Choueiti & Pieper, 2016, p. 25). There is a need for more research to be conducted by other Native Hawaiian scholars so those most closely affected by this issue are participating in this research. Vilsoni Hereniko, a Fijian playwright and moviemaker, said:

Pacific Islanders are debunking the stereotypes perpetuated by Haolewood movies. The quantity of works made by Pacific Islanders increases every year, and the quality gets better and better. As more and more Pacific Islanders become writers, directors, and producers of documentaries or feature movies, movie and video from the Pacific are likely to receive more international recognition (p. 3).

This study will serve as a foundational analysis for the current state of Native Hawaiian representation in movies. The main aim of this study is to evaluate the history of representation of Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i in movies and to add to literature about white-washing racial and ethnic minorities in American media. The research questions addressed by this study are:

**Research Question 1:** If stereotypes are apparent, what stereotypes are apparent and how are they used?

**Research Question 2:** If white-washing is apparent, how is it seen? If white-washing is not present, why not? And, if white-washing is not present, is representation still fair or balanced?

**Research Question 3:** How does language used in movies about Hawai'i influence white-washing and stereotyping in these movies?

**Research Question 4:** How are Native Hawaiians treated in movies about Hawai'i?

### **Method**

This project is a feasibility study. A feasibility study explores the “practicability of a research design and [helps] to test whether research questions are appropriate for further testing,” (Jones et al., 2017, p. 140). Though the use of a flexible methodology, this feasibility study seeks to explore content, determine whether the research questions are relevant and answerable, and test categories to discern whether they could be used in a future codebook. This study drew on literature and the reading of materials to see what was missed from these readings and what should be addressed by a future larger study (Jones et al., 2017, p. 140).



The main aim of this study was to provide historical context about movie trailers about Hawai'i, by adding to the "existing theory or prior research [that] exists about a phenomenon that is incomplete or would benefit from further description," (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). In particular, this paper builds on existing research about white-washing in Haolewood cinema by adding the Native Hawaiian perspective. Historical context can refer to the factors (themes) that surround the movie trailer, which might not be mentioned explicitly. This work specifically examines themes of stereotyping, white-washing, and language pronunciation. Furthermore, this background information "can inform one's deeper understanding of the work in question and allow one to analyze, rather than summarize, what one is studying" (Valencia College, 2018). The purpose of the study was to compile evidence of various themes including stereotyping, white-washing and language pronunciation within movie trailers in order to validate or extend conceptually the theoretical framework or theory about the lack of accurate representation of Native Hawaiians. The researcher examined movie trailers rather than full length movies because more Americans are exposed to movie trailers, which are advertising tools. Movie consumers have the free will to select which movies they wish to see, which limits the number of people who see a certain film. Therefore, it is more feasible to study movie trailers than full-length movies because more people have been exposed to movie trailers through advertising and promotions. This feasibility study was conducted to develop a framework for a future qualitative content analysis.

### **Research Materials**

An initial Google search yielded a comprehensive list of more than 40 movies set in Hawai'i. In addition to the Google search, the books *Made in Paradise: Hollywood's Movies of Hawaii and the South Seas* and *The Hawai'i Movie and Television Book* were referenced to

create a more robust list of possible movie options. Movies chosen for analysis had to have an accessible movie trailer online. This eliminated some of the early Haolewood movies for which no movie trailers could be found. Next, the movie trailers were screened to determine whether there was enough content in the trailers to study for representation of Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i. For example, movies which used Hawai'i purely for the settings, such as an undisclosed island backdrop, like *Jurassic Park*, were not included in this study. Movie trailers with substantial content were placed on a list and categorized by their release dates. Thirty movie trailers released between 1939 and 2016 were analyzed in this study (see Appendix A). These movies represented the various movie genres of romantic comedy, thriller, war, animation, drama, historical.

### ***Procedure***

This project sought to discern whether a study on this topic would be feasible. This study does not seek to make any generalizable assumptions about Native Hawaiian representation in movies. The research questions and the existing literature were used to create a codebook, which was used for gathering evidence and analysis. An initial reading of the literature yielded primary questions and categories based on obvious themes (like stereotyping), which emerged in the initial viewing of the movie trailers. Additional research questions and categories were added after multiple readings of the literature and movie trailers. Some research categories were refined or removed all together if determined to not be productive to the study. Once the questions were finalized, a codebook of initial questions and multiple-choice options was designed from key concepts and variables and entered into Qualtrics (see Appendix B for the codebook). The researcher responded to the codebook using the Qualtrics software (see Appendix C for survey questions assorted by key concepts examined).

The researcher did the coding and responded to a complete set of 15 questions per movie trailer. A total of 30 individual surveys were completed to code all 30 movie trailers. The researcher's responses to the movie trailers were analyzed. For example, the number of the movie trailers that featured stereotypes of Native Hawaiians and the types of stereotypes were coded to determine whether those categories would be feasible to analyze in a future study. Furthermore, the responses were broken down by supporting versus non-supporting codes (or whether there was evidence of stereotyping or not). Results that did not fit the pre-determined codes were categorized and explained under the category "other". This will allow the researcher to refine a codebook for a future study. Coding revealed three primary concepts to be examined: stereotyping, white-washing, and language pronunciation.

### **Findings**

Findings from the study were broken down into categories. Categories were based on three emergent themes of stereotyping, white-washing, and language pronunciation.

*Stereotyping:* There is extensive evidence that Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i are consistently stereotyped in Haolewood films and these stereotypes are speculated to have damaging effects on others' perceptions of Native Hawaiians.

*White-washing:* White-washing of Native Hawaiians is not as prevalent a phenomenon as expected because whiteness is at the core of Haolewood films and Native Hawaiians didn't exist in the storylines. Instances of apparent white-washing are offensive; and despite the overall lack of white-washing, representation of Native Hawaiians is not fair or balanced.

*Language Pronunciation:* Mispronunciation of Native Hawaiian words and over-use of common words to describe Hawai‘i contribute to the negative influences of white-washing and stereotyping on movie consumers’ perceptions of Hawai‘i and Native Hawaiians.

***Stereotypes Result in Primed Negative Imaging of Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i***

There is extensive evidence that Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i are consistently stereotyped in Haolewood films and these stereotypes have damaging effects on others’ perceptions of Native Hawaiians. Stereotypes of Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i presented in movies are influenced by the movies’ connection to Hawai‘i. The coder established four different types of connections a movie could have to the Hawaiian Islands (see Figure 2 for movie’s connection to Hawai‘i): paradise/vacation, landscape/nature, war/military, and Hawai‘i as itself. Often, the movie’s connection to Hawai‘i correlated with the coded stereotypes about Hawai‘i. For example, four movie trailers’ connection to Hawai‘i was landscape/nature, which meant the movies focused on natural/environmental features of the place. The four films (*Honolulu, Ride the Wild Surf, The Big Bounce, A Perfect Getaway*) all also portrayed the stereotype of Hawai‘i’s landscape and natural beauty. A movie’s type of connection to Hawai‘i affected how Hawai‘i was stereotyped.

The stereotypes about Hawai‘i as a place were examined (see Figure 3 for types and totals of stereotypes present about Hawai‘i). The stereotype of Hawai‘i’s landscape and natural beauty was the most prevalent stereotype and was seen in 20 of the movie trailers (see Table 2). The four movie trailers mentioned above (coded for the natural/environmental features connection to Hawai‘i) all featured surfing scenes in the trailers. This is not surprising because the surfing genre is focused on the natural beauty of Hawai‘i. Furthermore, most movies set in

Hawai‘i utilize the Hawaiian Islands as the beautiful background. The next most prevalent stereotypes were far behind the landscape/natural beauty category.

The stereotype of war/military was seen in 10 movie trailers and the paradise/vacation stereotype was seen in nine movie trailers. For example, one of the most obvious examples of the war/military stereotype was *Pearl Harbor*. The movie focuses on the events of December 7, 1941 when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. It should be noted no Native Hawaiians or other local Hawai‘i residents were seen, despite the fact that these people were heavily affected by the attack as well. Prior to the American militarization of “Pearl Harbor,” this area was a thriving ecosystem full of fishponds and was actually named *Pu‘uloa* by Native Hawaiians. A classic example of the paradise/vacation stereotype about Hawai‘i is seen in *Gidget Goes Hawaiian*. The movie trailer follows Gidget, a red-haired white girl, as she vacations in Hawai‘i. (Apparently, that means she “goes Hawaiian.”) While in Hawai‘i she makes all the white-washed Hawaiian boys fall in love with her, goes surfing and canoe-paddling, and is often adorned in leis. This paradise/vacation stereotype upholds paradisiacal beliefs that Hawai‘i is a magical, perfect place. These seemingly positive stereotypes (not including the war/military one) about Hawai‘i can have negative effects on people’s perceptions of Hawai‘i.

Hawai‘i’s representation in movies is not solely shaped by Haolewood. Tsai (2004) argued the perceived partnership between Haolewood and the Hawai‘i Visitors Bureau results in movies that romanticize Hawai‘i and bolsters the context for how Hawai‘i is presented to the rest of the world (p. 3). Tsai (2004) said “the Haolewood-Hawai‘i partnership only sells what people are willing to buy,” (p. 3). Tourism has prostituted Hawai‘i and its resources and Haolewood movies have contributed to the popularity of Hawai‘i as a tourist destination. For example, vacation rental companies like Airbnb make “it incredibly easy to get short term profits from the

visitor market at the expense of long term rentals for residents,” (Airbnb Watch Hawai‘i, 2018). Airbnb exacerbates Hawai‘i’s housing crisis by taking homes away from local residents and giving them to foreigners. Tsai’s argument refers back to the mediated priming of Americans to view and desire paradisiacal images of Hawai‘i and Native Hawaiians. Media, like movies, can prime stereotypes and these primed stereotypes do influence how people are later perceived (Roskos-Ewoldson, D. R., Roskos-Ewoldson, B., & Dillman Carpentier, 2002, p. 102). Movie consumers are primed to see Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i in specific ways, often stereotypical ways.

The study found 29 of the 30 movies stereotyped either Native Hawaiians or Hawai‘i or both (see Figure 4 for evidence of stereotyping in movies). It should be noted the sole movie that did not have stereotypes was *The Descendants*. Despite being based in Hawai‘i, there were no Native Hawaiians to be seen or stereotyped. The depiction of Hawai‘i was mediocre at best (as the director tried, but failed to show Hawai‘i through the eyes of local characters), but there were no actual stereotypes about Hawai‘i. The coder recorded evidence of the various stereotypes if they were present (see Figure 5 for types and totals of stereotypes present about Native Hawaiians) and noted the corresponding movies that fell within each coded category (see Table 3 of movie trailers organized by stereotypes present). The breakdown of these stereotypes will be analyzed.

First, it should be noted 11 movie trailers did not present stereotypes of Native Hawaiians. This result was unexpected. However, the absence of stereotyping (11 movies) correlated with the absence of white-washing (12 movie). More than a third of the movies did not have Native Hawaiian characters to stereotype or white-wash because they were completely absent from and systematically erased by the movie trailers. For minority groups like Native

Hawaiians erasure of their race by movies may equate to “the obliteration of an identity and shared way of life” (Nayak, 2006, pp. 422-423). The lack of stereotyping may appear positive on the surface, but in reality, it is because there were no Native Hawaiian characters present at all, which is troublesome.

The two most prevalent stereotypes about Native Hawaiians are hula dancers and surfers (see Figure 5). Hula dancers were a staple of early cinema in the islands. Six of the 11 movies that featured hula dancers were produced before the 1970s. The movies within this 1939 to 1968 timeline featured especially poor depictions of hula dancers. For example, the 1939 movie *Honolulu* showed Eleanor Powell, a white actress, clad in a hula skirt and lei, performing three songs to a medley of traditional Hawaiian music played by Andy Iona’s Islanders (see Figure 6). Powell, combined “tropical movements” with tap dance to create a unique dance blend. She performed these movements in a “so-called native drum dance and hula barefoot” and then she donned her tap shoes for her interpretation of a native dance (Reyes, 1995, p. 54). Movies like *Honolulu* that showed some hula dancing and Hawaiian music “invariably presented a distorted and hackneyed view of Hawaii, peopling the Territory with such stereotypes as grass-skirted ‘natives’ and wealthy pineapple plantation owners,” (Schmitt, 1967, p. 97). Powell’s misrepresentation and appropriation of Native Hawaiian culture is offensive. Hula is a key part of Native Hawaiian culture and served as “the history book, children’s literature, and sacred text of a people with no written language” (Hale, 2016). Hula continues to perpetuate Hawaiian culture and tradition by connecting modern Hawaiians to the practices of their ancestors.

There were eight coded movie trailers with examples of Native Hawaiians being stereotyped as surfers (see Table 3). This number would be much higher if it also included non-Hawaiians who are seen surfing (think of the entire surfing genre of films in Hawai‘i, like *Ride*

*the Wild Surf* and *Blue Crush*). *Soul Surfer* fits this surfing genre and follows the true story of Bethany Hamilton, a white, local girl from Kaua'i, who lost her arm to a shark while surfing. Hamilton was not coded as evidence of the surfer stereotype of Native Hawaiians because she is not Native Hawaiian. Rather, this movie was coded this way because one of Hamilton's main competitors in the movie trailer, Malina Birch, is a Native Hawaiian. Birch is villainized by the movie and is portrayed as a competitive bully in and out of the water to Hamilton. This 2011 movie, which was based on the true story of a white local Hawai'i girl, continued to sympathize white characters and villainize Native Hawaiians.

There are widespread effects of Haolewood's tendency to stereotype Native Hawaiians in its movies. It is no secret that Haolewood has been accused (for years) of providing negative and potentially damaging messages to viewers (Klein & Shiffman, 2009, p. 55). These negative and potentially damaging messages of Native Hawaiians have been present since cinema's earliest beginnings in the Hawaiian Islands and continue to be delivered today. Stereotypes present negative representations of Native Hawaiians that are caricaturistic and lack nuance. It can be argued Haolewood movies that display negative stereotypes about Native Hawaiians are racist. In their study, Klein and Shiffman (2009), define an overt act of racism as "any portrayal of a character belonging to a racial minority group that is based on stereotypes of that character's racial group's behaviors or exaggerations of that character's racial group's physical traits," (p. 62). This portrayal must be disparaging and/or an unflattering one to be deemed as racist. The majority of the stereotypes about Native Hawaiians evidenced in this study can be categorized as overt acts of racism.

Native Hawaiians deserve to see themselves reflected with honesty and balance by movies that tell stories about their community (Ganje, 1996, p. 45). Not all of the stereotypes of



Native Hawaiians are inherently negative (think hula dancer or surfer). Movies that positively represent Native Hawaiians like *Moana* can have “pro-social effects that foster egalitarian beliefs and positive intergroup attitudes,” (Tukachinsky, Mastro, & Yarchi, 2015, p. 9). Perhaps brief exposure to positive and likable Polynesian characters like Moana, can enhance movie consumers’ racial attitudes toward Native Hawaiians. However, media consumers of all ethnic and racial backgrounds “deserve fair and accurate portrayals of others in order to develop positive, authentic attitudes and perceptions of others,” (Hack, 2008, pp. 15-16). Especially since, there is extensive evidence that Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i are consistently stereotyped in Haolewood films and these stereotypes have damaging effects on others’ perceptions of Native Hawaiians.

### ***White-washing and the Systematic Erasure of Native Hawaiians***

There were not as many movies with evidence of white-washing of Native Hawaiians as expected because Native Hawaiians are systematically erased from Haolewood movies. The movies that did white-wash Native Hawaiian characters were offensive; and the representation of Native Hawaiians was poor and unbalanced (see Figure 7 for presence of white-washing in movies). A total of nine movies featured characters, who were originally of an ethnic background, who were played by white actors. Among these films, there were a few prominent examples of white-washing seen in *Ride the Wild Surf*, *Lilo & Stitch*, and *Aloha* (see Table 1).

The 1964 movie *Ride the Wild Surf* featured Lily Kalua, a Native Hawaiian main character, who is played by Susan Hart (see Figure 8). Hart is a white American actress, but Kalua is described in the trailer as “the Hawaiian beauty” and is seen dancing hula in one of the scenes (SurfStyley4, 2010). This is a blatant example of white-washing of a Native Hawaiian character.

One of the most recent examples of white-washing of a Native Hawaiian is seen in the 2015 movie *Aloha*. Criticized for featuring a cast with little to no Asian-Pacific Islanders and for insulting Native Hawaiian culture, director Cameron Crowe received widespread backlash to his movie (Lee, 2015, p. 1). The white-washed cast featured major Haolewood stars such as Rachel McAdams, Bradley Cooper, Alec Baldwin, and Emma Stone. Emma Stone, a white actress, was cast to play Captain Alison Ng, a character of Asian, Caucasian and Hawaiian descent. Though this character was of a mixed background, Stone presents no physical markers of this mixed descent with her blonde hair, blue eyes, and white skin. Konzett (2018) says it's not surprising Stone was effortlessly cast as a part Hawaiian because "no Hawaiian identifiers are necessary in a seemingly white-dominated on-screen Hawai'i" (p. 210). Modern films like *Aloha* that continue to white-wash marginalized groups like Native Hawaiians are hazardous because they skew other people's perceptions of Native Hawaiians. Even animated films from companies like Disney can begin to shape other people's perceptions, especially the perceptions of children.

Animated films like *Lilo & Stitch* proved more difficult to analyze for white-washing because the characters are animated and solely voiced by actors. Therefore, animated movies like *Lilo & Stitch* are less obvious instances of white-washing. Though the film is animated, it can be argued Lilo Pelekai, a Native Hawaiian and hula-dancing little girl, was white-washed because she was voiced by Daveigh Chase, a white American actress (see Figure 9). The white-washing of Lilo's voice is problematic because Chase poorly pronounces Native Hawaiian words like 'ohana. The vowel "a" is pronounced differently in Hawaiian language than in English. In Hawaiian, the "a" sound is elongated (jaw drops, and sound becomes "aw"). Chase mispronounced 'ohana by pronouncing the "a" vowels with English pronunciation (mouth opens wide across like a smile). Chase's Americanized, white-washed pronunciation of Native

Hawaiian words and phrases like *‘ohana*, strip Lilo of her validity as a Native Hawaiian character. In this study, animated characters, who are supposed to be of an ethnic background, who are not voiced by ethnic actors are considered white-washed.

Ethnic characters who are played by actors of another ethnic background were categorized differently from white-washed characters. There were 10 films that featured Native Hawaiian characters who were played by mixed-race actors who were not of Hawaiian descent (see Table 3). Among these films, prominent examples of characters who were kind-of white-washed<sup>4</sup> were seen in *Hawaii* and *Princess Kaiulani*.

The 1966 movie epic *Hawaii* was based on John Michner’s best-selling novel of the same name. In the movie, there are two main Native Hawaiian characters: Alii Nui Malama and her son Prince Keoki. According to Reyes (1995), the filmmakers went directly to the islands to find actors to fill the pivotal role of islanders (p. 110). Apparently, they went to the islands of Tahiti and Fiji to find their Native Hawaiian characters because both of these characters were played by actors of other Polynesian descents. Jocelyn LaGarde, a 300-pound Tahitian actress, played Alii Nui Malama. LaGarde’s portrayal of Malama is also problematic because at one point in the film, she is hoisted “like cattle onto the ship” because she’s obese (Konzett, 2018, p. 203) (see Figure 10). This scene perpetuates the negative stereotype of obese Native Hawaiians. The rest of the movie portrays other “offensive first-contact stereotypes like ethnographic nudity, sexual promiscuity, and incest (Konzett, 2018, p. 203). Prince Keoki contributes to the incest stereotype because in the movie he is supposed to marry his sister, Noelani. Prince Keoki is played by Manu Tupou, a Fijian actor. Malama and Keoki were coded as kind of white-washed; however,

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B for definition of “kind-of white-washed” characters.

their castings are not as problematic as other white-washed characters because at least both of these actors were Polynesian.

It is puzzling that Native Hawaiians were not cast for these main roles, when 150 “mainly” Native Hawaiians were cast as extras for the movie (Reyes, 1995, p. 110). The use of word “mainly” indicates that not all of the extras were Native Hawaiians. LaGarde and Tupou were not well-known or famous prior to the movie, yet they were cast for leading roles. Historically, Haolewood directors argue they don’t cast unknown minority actors who are the correct ethnic background for a role because those actors aren’t bankable. These directors don’t even consider casting a minority non-bankable actor (Hoag, 2016, p. 653). Yet, Haolewood was so enamored with LaGarde that she was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actress (Reyes, 1995, p. 110). Furthermore, she was the only actor from the movie to be nominated for an Oscar. It seems clear. Haolewood directors cast their actors as they please, without regard for cultural authenticity, and their excuses for why they do so mean nothing. Cultural authenticity can be easily added to movies if minority actors play racial and ethnic roles because these actors can “give more nuanced performances drawn from their own experience” (Hoag, 2016, p. 653).

This common practice of casting minority actors of another ethnic background to play Native Hawaiians continues in contemporary cinema today. The makers of the 2009 movie *Princess Kaiulani* cast Q’orianka Kilcher as Native Hawaiian royal Princess Kaiulani. Kilcher is not Native Hawaiian, rather she is of Latin American and European descent. Executive producer for *Princess Ka’iulani*, Jeffrey Au, said he would have loved to have a Hawaiian lead, but Kilcher’s performance was too good (Cooper, 2010). Au argued Kilcher “may not have Hawaiian blood, but she did spend years growing up in Hawai’i, and she does qualify as a local

girl” (Cooper, 2010). Like LaGarde and Tupou, Kilcher physically looks the part with brown skin, brown eyes, and dark hair. However, all of these actors diminish the authenticity of their portrayed characters because they are not authentically and ethnically connected to their roles. Movies coded to have kind of white-washed characters like *Hawaii and Princess Kaiulani* proved difficult to analyze because they represent a gray area, where minority characters were cast to play Native Hawaiians instead of white actors. This gray area might not be immediately apparent from just viewing a trailer, but further investigation into the cast list revealed several movies featured characters who were kind-of white-washed and ethnically ambiguous.

There was one film which the researcher was unsure if white-washing was present because the characters in question were ethnically ambiguous. The researcher coded *The Hawaiians* as “unsure” because the cast featured diverse characters, but it was difficult to decipher whether characters were supposed to be of a certain race and whether the actors cast to play those characters matched that race.

The lack of white-washing is due to Haolewood’s tendency to favor white characters and storylines, which was seen in the movie trailers (12 movies had no white-washed characters) was surprising. White-washing was not present in many films because there were no Native Hawaiian characters to white-wash in the first place. White-washing cannot occur if there are no Native Hawaiian to miscast. Therefore, Native Hawaiians were systematically erased because they were not cast to play parts in their own stories. The symbolic annihilation of Native Hawaiians in these movies renders the native population invisible. Symbolic annihilation is the media’s underrepresentation or near total absence of portraying certain groups like Native Hawaiians (Klein & Shiffman, 2009, p. 56). The entertainment industry and movies symbolically annihilate Native Hawaiians by omitting, trivializing, or condemning this group, which is not socially

valued (Klein & Shiffman, 2009, p. 56). Movies are systematically dispensing imagery and messages associated with Native Hawaiians (like white-washed characters and stereotypes) that send a symbolic and clear message to viewers about the societal value of Native Hawaiians (Klein & Shiffman, 2009, pp. 55-56). According to Haolewood movies, Native Hawaiians have little to no value, while white people have immense value. The Media Action Network for Asian Americans stated:

Caucasians only make up 30 percent of the population (of Hawaii), but from watching this movie, you'd think they made up 99 percent. This comes in a long line of movies — *'The Descendants, 50 First Dates, Blue Crush, Pearl Harbor* — that use Hawaii for its exotic backdrop but goes out of its way to exclude the very people who live there. It is an insult to the diverse culture and fabric of Hawaii (Lee, 2015, pp. 1-2).

Mock (2010) said moves about Hawai'i are Haolewood products "where whiteness is centered, Hawai'i and Hawaiian culture is appropriated, and Native Hawaiians are nowhere to be seen." Disappointingly, white-washing of Native Hawaiians is not as prevalent a phenomenon as expected because whiteness is at the core of Haolewood films. Furthermore, instances of apparent white-washing are offensive; and despite the overall lack of white-washing, representation of Native Hawaiians is not fair or balanced.

### ***Language Pronunciation Contributes to Marginalization***

Poor pronunciation of Hawaiian words and phrases was heard in 19 movie trailers, which is the majority (see Figure 11). Pronunciation was measured by whether the Hawaiian words heard by the researcher sounded Americanized or not. If the pronunciation of a Hawaiian word sounded slightly wrong, it was coded as bad pronunciation. For example, the 1939 movie *Honolulu* featured poor pronunciation of Hawaiian words as well as many common words were heard. Specifically, the phrases "exotic Eden, Polynesian paradise, musical lu-wow (*luau*)," and "Waikiki welcome" were all lines heard or shown on screen (Movieclips Classic Trailers, 2014).

Specifically, the narrator of the *Honolulu* movie trailer pronounced Waikiki so badly it was almost unrecognizable to the researcher (listen to *Honolulu* trailer at [Movieclips Classic Trailers, 2014] at 0:21-0:23). Awful pronunciation like this diminishes the value of Hawai‘i and Hawaiian language.

The other 11 movies didn’t have bad pronunciation because no Hawaiian words were heard in those trailers (see Figure 11). The coding revealed a total of 10 movies did not even feature Hawaiian words, which was unexpected. It would be difficult to avoid using Hawaiian words because nearly all of the places in Hawai‘i have Hawaiian names (think Honolulu or Waikiki). However, it was not surprising that *Moana* was the one movie to have good pronunciation of Hawaiian words and phrases. It can be argued *Moana* isn’t really Hawaiian since the film is a representative blend of Polynesian cultures. However, this blend featured Hawaiian words like *moana* (ocean) and *pua* (flower) and these words were pronounced correctly by the characters. Furthermore, it should be noted Auli‘i Cravalho, the voice of Moana, is of Native Hawaiian ancestry so she is familiar with proper pronunciation. Overall, examining the pronunciation of Hawaiian words proved interesting because the Hawaiian language has become so Americanized to fit the needs of Haolewood and the tourism industry.

The Hawaiian language as used in movie titles and posters was examined. Gasner (2018) satirically said “on the subject of titles, if you are to include the name Hawai‘i, leave out the ‘okina between the i’s,” (p. 157). For example, poor Hawaiian spelling is seen in the movie trailer titles of *Blue Hawaii*, *Hawaii*, *Hard Ticket to Hawaii*, *Molokai: The Story of Father Damien*, and *Princess Kaiulani*. All of these movie trailers removed the ‘okina between the vowels in their titles. For reference, the movie trailer titles are supposed to be spelled this way: *Blue Hawai‘i*, *Hawai‘i*, *Hard Ticket to Hawai‘i*, *Moloka‘i: The Story of Father Damien*, and

*Princess Kaʻiulani*. The prevalence of improper spelling in movie titles and text that appears on-screen during the trailer affects language pronunciation of Native Hawaiian words. English spelling errors in American movies would never be allowed, so Hawaiian spelling errors shouldn't be allowed too.

Higgins and Furukawa (2012) examined how “mock language is used to stylize characters, thereby creating inauthentic personas... that exaggerate cultural and linguistic difference among Local/Hawaiian and mainland haole [white foreigner] characters,” (p. 178). Improper pronunciation of Native Hawaiian language and the utilization of common words are purposeful acts of Haolewood to further separate their narratives from the local, authentic viewpoints of Native Hawaiians. Haolewood directors stylize white characters, whose voices are not reflective of Hawai'i's linguistic landscape, to speak in an over the top manner to achieve larger narrative goals (Higgins & Furukawa, 2012, pp. 178-179). For example, the character Ula from *50 First Dates* speaks an exaggerated form of Hawai'i Creole or Pidgin with made-up Hawaiian words and phrases. Ula is portrayed as a Hawaiian character, though he is white-washed because he is played by Rob Schneider, an actor of Jewish, Filipino and Caucasian descent. This problematic character speaks a faulty mix of Hawai'i Creole, Hawai'i English, and Mock Hawaiian with intermittent, random Hawaiian words and phrases. Here's a transcription<sup>5</sup> of a scene in the *50 First Dates* trailer between Ula and Adam Sandler's character Henry:

Henry: Okay, this is her. Pretend you're attacking me so she pulls over.

Ula: What do you think you doing? Comin ova hea taking our pineapple.

Henry: Help me, please.

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<sup>5</sup> Transcription features Hawai'i Creole or Pidgin spelling of words to emphasize speech differences between Ula and Henry.



Ula: I'm kicking your big ass.

*Lucy begins beating Ula with a baseball bat.*

*Ula cries out in pain.*

Ula: Oh, ow. Ow.

This scene is problematic for Native Hawaiian representation overall. First, the context of the scene must be established. Ula is pretending to beat Henry up so their fight will draw Lucy's (Henry's love interest) attention. Here, Ula is stereotyped as violent and prejudice against white people. Henry is portrayed as the victim in need of help and Ula is villainized. Lucy comes to Henry's aid and aggressively beats Ula with a baseball bat, arguably more intensely than Henry predicted. It can be seen in trying to help his best friend get the girl (at Henry's bidding), Ula was stigmatized as violent, villainized, and suffered a beating at the hands of a white woman, which portrays him as weaker and less than in status based on both gender and race. Language stylization like Ula's use of Mock Hawaiian and Hawai'i Creole English in this scene reproduces stereotypes. Furthermore, language stylization allows for "simplistic, and often racist caricatures of people, rather than complex portrayals of cultural difference," (Higgins & Furukawa, 2012, p. 195). The mispronunciation of Native Hawaiian words and the utilization of Mock Hawaiian bolster the negative influences of white-washing and stereotyping on movie consumers' perceptions of Hawai'i and Native Hawaiians.

The coder studied 13 common words thought to be heard in the movie trailers to examine how these words may be shaping movie consumer's perceptions of Hawai'i and Native Hawaiians (see Figure 12). The coder listened closely to the movie trailers to keep a tally of how many times each of these words were heard. The three most commonly heard words were Hawai'i (13 movie trailers), paradise (11 movie trailers), and beach/ocean/waves (11 movie

trailers. Hawai‘i was the most commonly heard word in the movie trailers and this may be because the films are set in Hawai‘i. The word “Hawai‘i” also appeared in three of the movie trailer titles. Haolewood has primed audiences to link the beautiful islands of Hawai‘i with paradise. While, none of the movie trailer utilized the word “paradise” in their titles, it was commonly heard in 11 of the movie trailers. Since movie consumers are primed to think “beach/ocean/waves” when they think of “paradise” it is no surprise these words were so commonly heard. Closer examination revealed all of these categories (Hawai‘i, paradise, beach/ocean/waves) were heard in three movie trailers: *Blue Hawaii*, *Hawaii* and *Hard Ticket to Hawaii*.

Two words the coder thought would be commonly heard in the movie trailers were not heard at all: savage and shaka/hang loose (see Figure 12). This is surprising because “savage” has historically been used interchangeably with “Native” and “Hawaiian,” which were both heard in four movie trailers. Perhaps these words could have been heard in the full-length movies, though this can’t be known for sure because it wasn’t the purpose of the study to examine this. The terms “shaka/hang loose” are often associated with surfers (seven movie trailers) and other local characters. Though “shaka/hang loose” wasn’t heard, this hand gesture was seen in various movie trailers (see Figure 13).

The coder kept track of other common words that didn’t fit the prescribed categories, which was coded the most. A total of 19 movies featured common words that fell outside of the prescribed categories (see Figure 14 for visualization of other commonly heard words). The other commonly heard words fell within two main themes: place names and Native Hawaiian culture. Place names of different well-known locations in the Hawaiian Islands (especially O‘ahu) were commonly heard. For example, three places were named on O‘ahu alone: Waikiki, Honolulu,

and Pearl Harbor. Next, there were plenty of common words that described aspects or practices of Native Hawaiian culture. For example, an essential characteristic of the character Maui from *Moana* is that he always yells: CHEEHOOOOOO, which is a phrase of encouragement and excitement. Though these common words like Honolulu and Cheehoo were coded, they should not be added into their own category for future research because they were not present a significant number of times.

Mispronunciation of Native Hawaiian words and over-use of common words to describe Hawai'i contribute to the negative influences of white-washing and stereotyping on movie consumers' perceptions of Hawai'i and Native Hawaiians.

### **Conclusion**

Movies about Hawai'i "keep Hawai'i prominent in the minds of potential tourists, [yet they] reiterate misperceptions of Hawai'i and the Pacific that date back to the earliest days of Western contact" and "demonstrate that Haolewood is more than willing to resort to familiar perceptions of the Islands as places of lush natural beauty, populated (sparsely) by large, lazy people who sing, dance, play and eat but, oddly, don't work very much," (Tsai, 2004, p. 1). The themes of stereotyping, white-washing, and language pronunciation were examined. The main research questions explored in this study are a direct response to the current state of Native Hawaiian representation in movies. The main aim of this study is to evaluate the representation of Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i in movies and to add to literature about white-washing racial and ethnic minorities in American media. This study explored the feasibility of a larger study and explored material that could be used in a codebook for a future study.

The first research question sought to gather evidence on whether stereotypes of Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i are apparent in the movie trailers, and if they are, what types of

stereotypes are seen and how are they used. In total, 29 of the 30 movie trailers featured stereotypes. The study found if stereotypes about Native Hawaiians were seen, then it was likely that stereotypes about Hawai'i were seen too. Some of the stereotypes were more offensive than others, but this study raised questions about whether stereotypes had a negative effect on how movie consumers view Native Hawaiians.

The second research question addressed how apparent white-washing is in Haolewood movies about Hawai'i. It also addressed whether the representation of Native Hawaiians was still fair or balanced if white-washing wasn't present. There were instances of white-washing as well as characters who were kind of white-washed. Nine movie trailers had white-washed characters, while there were 10 movies that had Native Hawaiian characters who were played by actors of a different ethnic background (typically mixed race or Latinx actors). There is not as much evidence of white-washing of Native Hawaiians as originally thought. Instead, Native Hawaiians are rendered invisible by Haolewood movies that focus on white characters and storylines. Native Hawaiians are systematically erased. If they happen to be present in supporting or background roles, then they are often negatively stereotyped. The representation of Native Hawaiians was not fair or balanced, despite the lack of the white-washing.

All of the data in the first two questions influenced the findings of the third research question. The third research question analyzed how these previous themes of stereotyping and white-washing influenced language in movies about Hawai'i. Specifically, the pronunciation of Native Hawaiian words and phrases were studied along with the presence of common words used to describe Hawai'i, which are influenced by mediated priming. The study found the majority of the movie trailers featured poor pronunciation of Hawaiian words and phrases. Characters who both stereotyped and white-washed Native Hawaiians often poorly pronounced

Hawaiian words, which contributed to the misrepresentation of Native Hawaiians in these films. In some instances, Mock Hawaiian, a made-up language that atrociously mimics Hawaiian language, was heard. Poor spelling of text in the movie titles and on-screen in the trailers was evident. The mispronunciation and over-use of Hawaiian words and phrases had a hand in the inaccurate representation of Native Hawaiians in movies.

As a Native Hawaiian, the researcher had a strong informed bias that impacted this study. This study did not intend to generalize. Rather this study sought to explore what was in the content for the purpose of determining whether a quantitative content analysis would be feasible and how to make a more productive codebook.

### ***Recommendations***

Future research should attempt to gather quantitative info about the themes outlined in this study: stereotyping and white-washing of Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i, and language pronunciation. Quantitative research will help to support the evidence compiled by this study and will enable the researcher to make pronounced statements.

The current feasibility test itself makes a contribution to the literature. The researcher recommends that if Haolewood wishes to tell stories about Hawai'i and Native Hawaiians, perhaps Haolewood should consult Native Hawaiians, like Leilani Rania Gasner. Gasner wrote a satirical piece examining the "whitewashing and ignorance of traditional Pacific Islanders by dominant white culture" and "the complexity of Hawaiian culture as well as the damage caused by the diminishment of true Hawaiians represented in popular culture" with the hopes of encouraging "thought and conversation regarding the treatment of people of color by dominant cultures in media" (Gasner, 2018, p. 157). Gasner addressed Haolewood's unacceptable proclivity to whitewash and erase Native Hawaiians and appropriate Native Hawaiian culture in

its films. A support group called the Pacific Islanders in Communication are developing a cultural handbook for movie producers (Hurley, 2017, p. 3). Native Hawaiians should strive to contribute to this cultural handbook and volunteer to provide insight to Haolewood producers and directors who wish to tell stories about Hawai'i. Perhaps then, movies will actually positively and accurately represent Native Hawaiians and Hawai'i.

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**Table 1.***Evidence of White-Washing by Movie Trailer*

<b>No White-washing</b>	<b>Kind of White-washing</b>	<b>White-washing</b>
<i>Honolulu</i>	<i>Hawaii</i>	<i>Gidget Goes Hawaiian</i>
<i>Big Jim McLain</i>	<i>Aloha Summer</i>	<i>Blue Hawai'i</i>
<i>Tora! Tora! Tora!</i>	<i>Molokai: The Story of Father Damien</i>	<i>Ride the Wild Surf</i>
<i>Picture Bride</i>	<i>Race the Sun</i>	<i>Kona Coast</i>
<i>Pearl Harbor</i>	<i>Blue Crush</i>	<i>Hard Ticket to Hawaii</i>
<i>The Big Bounce</i>	<i>Lilo &amp; Stitch</i>	<i>Blue Crush</i>
<i>Forgetting Sarah Marshall</i>	<i>Aloha, Scooby Doo!</i>	<i>Lilo and Stitch</i>
<i>A Perfect Getaway</i>	<i>Johnny Kapahala: Back on Board</i>	<i>50 First Dates</i>
<i>The Descendants</i>	<i>Princess Ka'iulani</i>	<i>Aloha</i>
<i>Battleship</i>	<i>Soul Surfer</i>	
<i>Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates</i>		
<i>Moana</i>		

**Table 2.***Evidence of Stereotyping of Hawai'i by Movie Trailer*

<b>Landscape/Natural Beauty</b>	<b>War/Military</b>	<b>Paradise/Vacation</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>No stereotypes about Hawai'i were seen</b>
<i>Honolulu</i>	<i>Big Jim McLain</i>	<i>Honolulu</i>	<i>Hawaii</i>	<i>Race the Sun</i>
<i>Blue Hawai'i</i>	<i>Kona Coast</i>	<i>Blue Hawaii</i>	<i>The Hawaiians</i>	<i>The Descendants</i>
<i>Gidget Goes Hawaiian</i>	<i>Tora! Tora! Tora!</i>	<i>Gidget Goes Hawaiian</i>	<i>Picture Bride</i>	<i>Moana</i>
<i>Ride the Wild Surf</i>	<i>The Hawaiians</i>	<i>Hard Ticket to Hawaii</i>	<i>Molokai: The Story of Father Damien</i>	
<i>Hawaii</i>	<i>Hard Ticket to Hawaii</i>	<i>Aloha Summer</i>	<i>Blue Crush</i>	
<i>Kona Coast</i>	<i>Pearl Harbor</i>	<i>The Big Bounce</i>	<i>Lilo &amp; Stitch</i>	
<i>The Hawaiians</i>	<i>Aloha, Scooby Doo</i>	<i>Forgetting Sarah Marshall</i>	<i>50 First Dates</i>	
<i>Hard Ticket to Hawaii</i>	<i>Princess Kaiulani</i>	<i>The Perfect Getaway</i>		
<i>Aloha Summer</i>	<i>Battleship</i>	<i>Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates</i>		
<i>Picture Bride</i>	<i>Aloha</i>			
<i>Molokai: The Story of Father Damien</i>				
<i>Blue Crush</i>				
<i>The Big Bounce</i>				
<i>Aloha, Scooby Doo</i>				
<i>Johnny Kapahala: Back on Board</i>				
<i>Forgetting Sarah Marshall</i>				
<i>A Perfect Getaway</i>				
<i>Soul Surfer</i>				
<i>Aloha</i>				

<i>Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates</i>				
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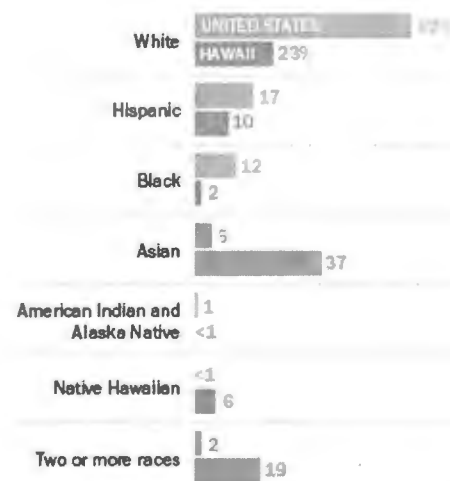
**Table 3.**  
*Evidence of Different of Stereotypes by Movie Trailer*

<b>No stereotypes</b>	<b>Hula Dancer</b>	<b>Surfer</b>	<b>Violent</b>	<b>Dumb/Lazy</b>	<b>Obese</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Drug User</b>
<i>Tora! Tora! Tora!</i>	<i>Honolulu</i>	<i>Big Jim McLain</i>	<i>Hawaii</i>	<i>Hawaii</i>	<i>Hawaii</i>	<i>50 First Dates</i>	<i>Blue Crush</i>
<i>The Hawaiians</i>	<i>Big Jim McLain</i>	<i>Gidget Goes Hawaiian</i>	<i>Kona Coast</i>	<i>Race the Sun</i>	<i>Race the Sun</i>	<i>Molokai: The Story of Father Damien</i>	
<i>Hard Ticket to Hawaii</i>	<i>Blue Hawaii</i>	<i>Ride the Wild Surf</i>	<i>Aloha Summer</i>	<i>Molokai: The Story of Father Damien</i>	<i>The Big Bounce</i>		
<i>Picture Bride</i>	<i>Ride the Wild Surf</i>	<i>Blue Crush</i>	<i>Blue Crush</i>	<i>50 First Dates</i>			
<i>Pearl Harbor</i>	<i>Hawaii</i>	<i>Lilo &amp; Stitch</i>	<i>50 First Dates</i>	<i>Princess Kaiulani</i>			
<i>Aloha, Scooby Doo!</i>	<i>Kona Coast</i>	<i>The Big Bounce</i>	<i>Princess Kaiulani</i>				
<i>A Perfect Getaway</i>	<i>Lilo &amp; Stitch</i>	<i>Johnny Kapahala: Back on Board</i>					
<i>The Descendants</i>	<i>Forgetting Sarah Marshall</i>	<i>Soul Surfer</i>					
<i>Battleship</i>	<i>Princess Kaiulani</i>						
<i>Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates</i>	<i>Aloha</i>						
<i>Moana</i>							

Figure 1. Graphic of Hawai‘i’s racial diversity from the Pew Research Center (Goo, 2015).

### Hawaii’s Racial Diversity

% of the population by race/ethnicity (2013)



Racial categories above include only non-Hispanics, except Native Hawaiian which may include Hispanics; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Census Bureau 2013 ACS 1-year estimates

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Figure 2. Graph of movie’s connection to Hawai‘i.

### Movie's Connection to Hawai'i

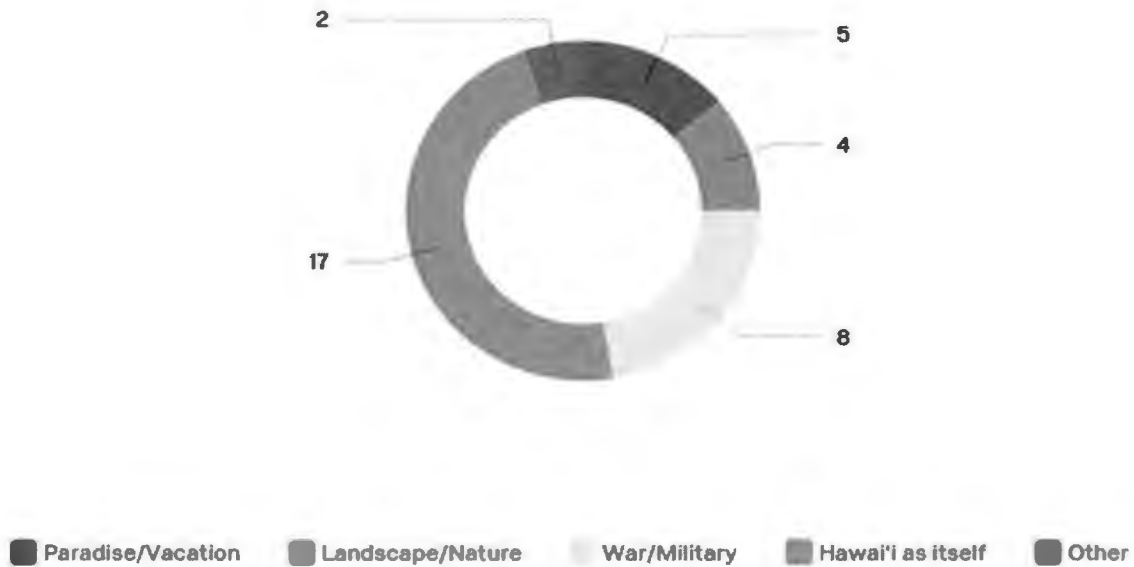


Figure 3. Graph of types and totals of stereotypes presented about Hawai'i.

### Types and Totals of Stereotypes Presented about Hawai'i

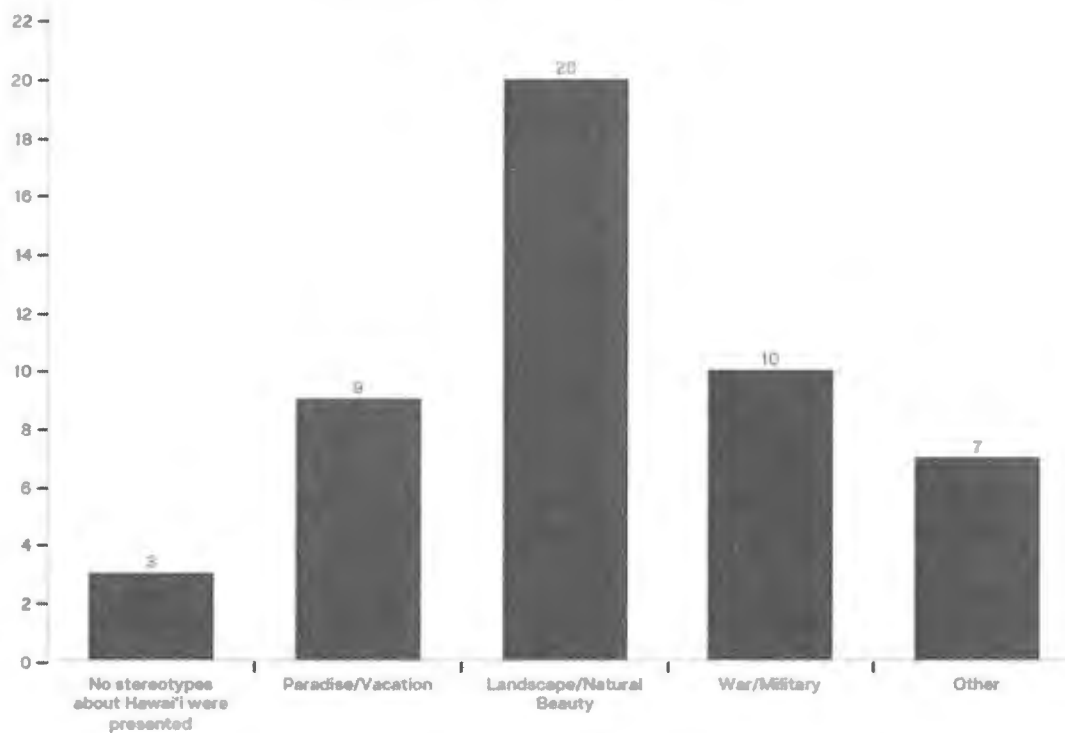
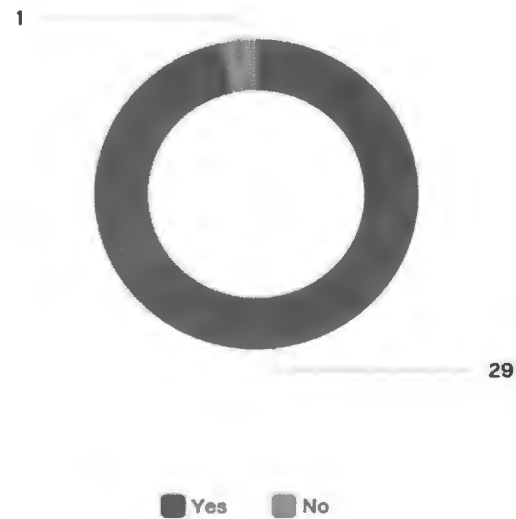


Figure 4. Graph of presence of stereotypes of Native Hawaiians and/or Hawai'i.

Are stereotypes of native Hawaiians and/or Hawai'i present?



Types and Totals of Stereotypes Presented about native Hawaiians

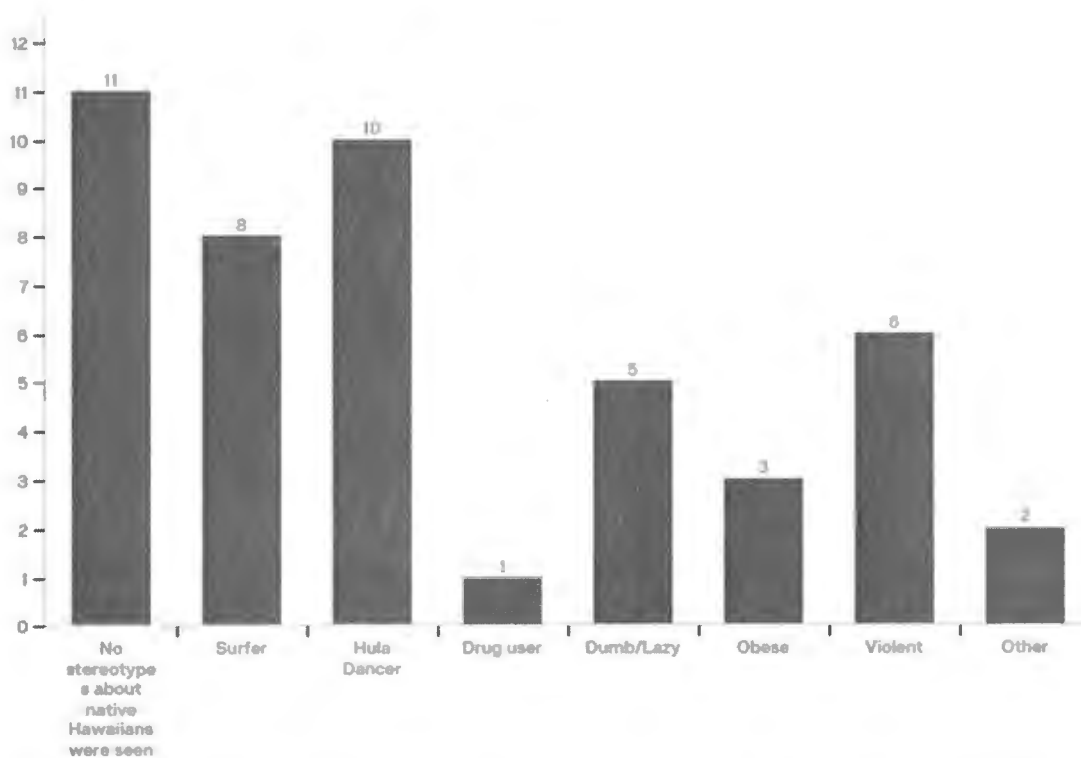


Figure 5. Graph of types and totals of stereotypes presented about Native Hawaiians.

*Figure 6.* Photo of Eleanor Powell a white actress, performing her own interpretation of hula in *Honolulu* (Reyes, 1995, p. 54).



Figure 7. Graph of evidence of white-washing.

Recorded Evidence of White-Washing



Figure 8. Photo of white-washed character, Lily Kalua, who is played by Susan Hart, dancing the hula (*Susan Hart Ride the Wild Surf*, n.d.).





*Figure 9.* Photo of Daveigh Chase, the white voice actor, who voiced Lilo Pelekai in *Lilo and Stitch* (Daveigh Chase, the voice of Lilo in *Lilo & Stitch*, n.d.).



*Figure 10.* Screenshot of scene from *Hawai'i*, where Alii Nui Malama is hoisted onto the ship like cattle (Movieclips Classic Trailers, 2012).



Figure 11. Graph of pronunciation of Hawaiian words and phrases.

Were Hawaiian words pronounced properly?

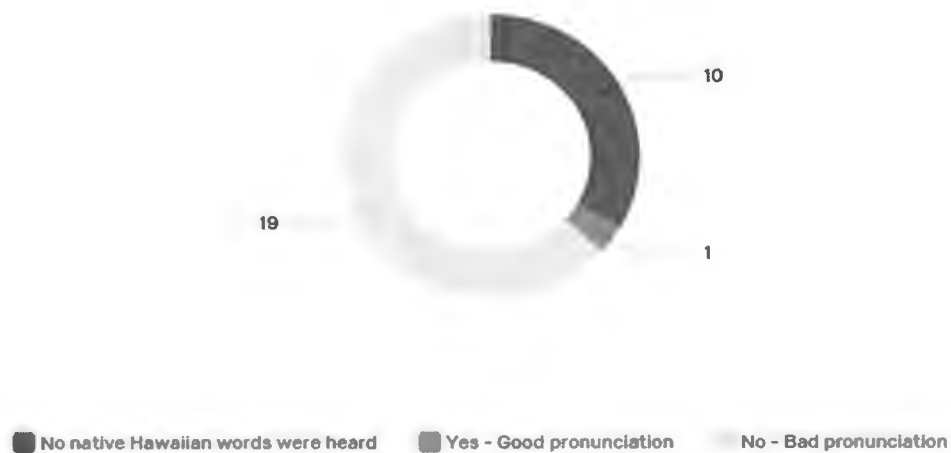
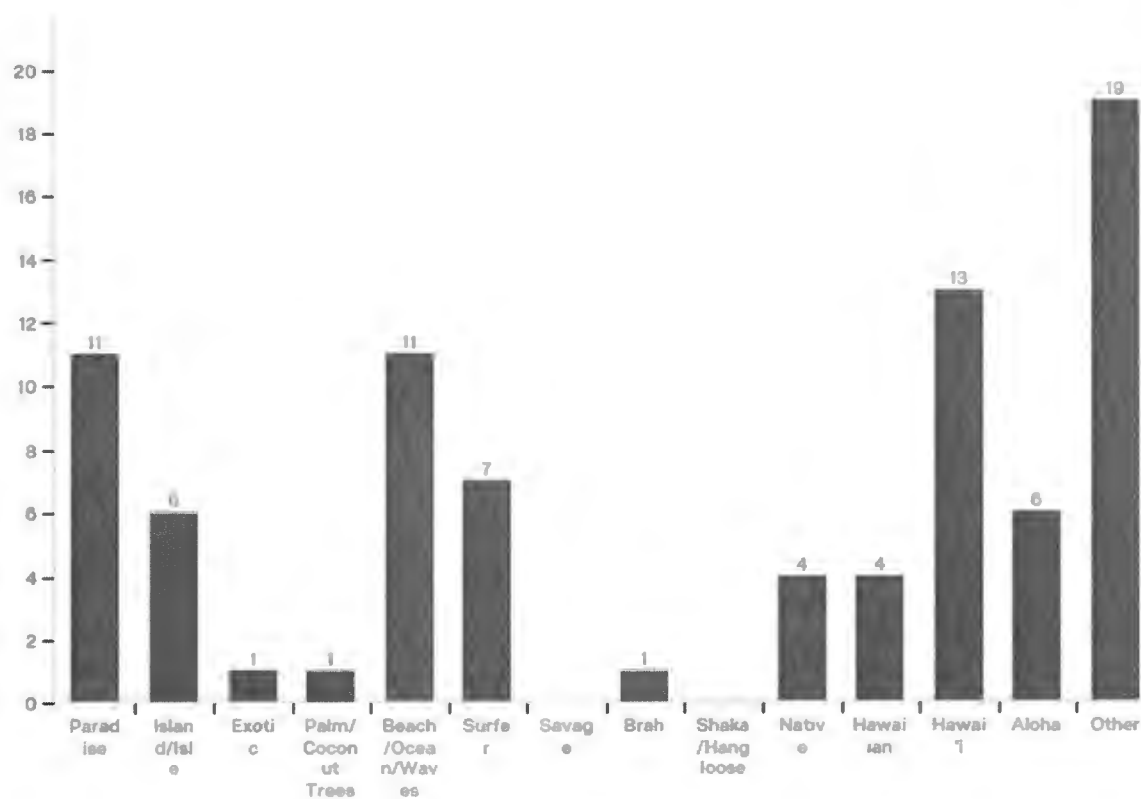


Figure 12. Graph of common words heard in movie trailers

Totals of Common Words Heard in Movie Trailers



*Figure 13.* Screenshot of scene in *Aloha* movie trailer of Bradley Cooper doing the “shaka” hand gesture (reelnewshawaii, 2015).



*Figure 14.* Visualization of other commonly heard words.

waikiki  
honolulu  
tropical  
pearlharbor

## Appendix A

## Movie Trailers

<b>Year</b>	<b>Movie Trailers</b>
1939	<i>Honolulu</i>
1952	<i>Big Jim McLain</i>
1961	<i>Blue Hawai'i</i>
1961	<i>Gidget Goes Hawaiian</i>
1964	<i>Ride the Wild Surf</i>
1966	<i>Hawaii</i>
1968	<i>Kona Coast</i>
1970	<i>Tora! Tora! Tora!</i>
1970	<i>The Hawaiians</i>
1987	<i>Hard Ticket to Hawai'i</i>
1988	<i>Aloha Summer</i>
1994	<i>Picture Bride</i>
1996	<i>Race the Sun</i>
1999	<i>Molokai: The Story of Father Damien</i>
2001	<i>Pearl Harbor</i>
2002	<i>Blue Crush*</i>
2002	<i>Lilo and Stitch*</i>
2004	<i>50 First Dates *</i>
2004	<i>The Big Bounce</i>
2005	<i>Aloha, Scooby Doo!</i>
2007	<i>Johnny Kapahala: Back on Board</i>
2008	<i>Forgetting Sarah Marshall*</i>
2009	<i>Princess Ka'iulani*</i>
2009	<i>A Perfect Getaway</i>
2011	<i>The Descendants*</i>
2011	<i>Soul Surfer*</i>
2012	<i>Battleship*</i>
2015	<i>Aloha</i>
2016	<i>Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates*</i>
2016	<i>Moana*</i>

\*The researcher watched these films in full prior to conducting this study.

## Appendix B

### Codebook Questions

**Q1 – What is the name of the movie trailer you are analyzing? Please include your name in parentheses after the movie title; ex: Moana (Pono).**

**Q2 – Have you watched this movie before? Consider if you watched the entire movie, not just the trailer.**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q3 – What's the movie's connection to Hawai'i? Choose the best answer only, unless you strongly feel that two options are valid.**

- ☐ Paradise/Vacation (A heavenly, idyllic place where people go to get away, relax, and escape one's troubles)
- ☐ Landscape/Nature (Natural/environmental features of the place)
- ☐ War/Military (A place under attack, to be fought over, or defended)
- ☐ Hawai'i as itself (Serves as the background, rather than the main draw of the film )
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q4 – Is there evidence of white-washing? White-washing in the media is defined as when a movie or television show chooses a white male or female to portray a character who is originally of an ethnic background.**

- ☐ Yes (Character who is originally of an ethnic background who is played by a white actor/actress)
- ☐ Kind of (Character who is originally of an ethnic background who is played by an actor of a different ethnic background)
- ☐ No (Character who is originally of an ethnic background who is played by an actor of that ethnic background)
- ☐ I'm not sure (Character who is not easily identified as being of a certain ethnic background)
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q5 – How many main and supporting characters are white-washed?**

- ☐ No main or supporting characters were white-washed
- ☐ One to two characters
- ☐ Three to four characters
- ☐ Five or more characters

**Q6 – Are stereotypes of native Hawaiians and/or Hawai'i present? A stereotype is defined as a widely held, but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular person or thing.**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Q7 – What stereotypes are presented about native Hawaiians? You may select more than one option.**

- ☐ No stereotypes about native Hawaiians were seen
- ☐ Surfer (person who rides the waves)
- ☐ Hula Dancer (person who dances hula, which is a traditional Hawaiian form of dancing, chanting)
- ☐ Drug user (person shown with drugs on screen or displays the after effects of doing drugs)
- ☐ Dumb/Lazy (person who is uneducated, uninterested in work and needs to be saved or fixed)
- ☐ Obese (person who may be considered larger in size than the average person and is used for comic relief)
- ☐ Violent (person who uses physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something)
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q8 – How many stereotypes about native Hawaiians are seen in this movie trailer? Consider how many different types of stereotypes were seen, NOT how many times a certain stereotype was seen.**

- ☐ No stereotypes about native Hawaiians were seen
- ☐ One to two stereotypes
- ☐ Three to four stereotypes
- ☐ Five or more stereotypes

**Q9 – What stereotypes are presented about Hawai'i?**

- ☐ No stereotypes about Hawai'i were presented
- ☐ Paradise/Vacation (A heavenly, idyllic, perfect place where people go to get away, relax, and escape one's troubles)
- ☐ Landscape/Natural Beauty (Film focuses on the natural/environmental "beautiful" features of the place)
- ☐ War/Military (A place under attack, to be fought over, or defended)
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q10 – How many stereotypes about Hawai'i are seen in this movie trailer? Consider how many different stereotypes were seen, NOT how many times a certain stereotype was presented.**

- ☐ No stereotypes about Hawai'i were seen
- ☐ One to two stereotypes
- ☐ Three to four stereotypes
- ☐ Five or more stereotypes

**Q11 – Would you still watch this movie despite the depicted stereotypes about native Hawaiians?**

- ☐ Yes, I would still watch this movie
- ☐ No, I would not watch this movie

**Q12 – Would you still watch this movie despite the depicted stereotypes about Hawai‘i?**

- ☐ Yes, I would still watch this movie
- ☐ No, I would not watch this movie

**Q13 – Are native Hawaiian words pronounced properly? Consider place names as well (ex: Honolulu, Waikiki).**

- ☐ No native Hawaiian words were heard
- ☐ Yes - Good pronunciation
- ☐ No - Bad pronunciation

**Q14 – What common words are heard in the movie trailer?**

- ☐ Paradise
- ☐ Island/Isle
- ☐ Exotic
- ☐ Palm/Coconut Trees
- ☐ Beach/Ocean/Waves
- ☐ Surfer
- ☐ Savage
- ☐ Brah
- ☐ Shaka/Hang loose
- ☐ Native

**Q15 – Please write additional thoughts or comments about the movie's trailer below.**

### Appendix C

#### Codebook Questions Assorted by Key Concepts Examined

Key Concepts	Survey Questions
<b>Stereotyping</b>	<p><b>Q3 – What's the movie's connection to Hawai'i? Choose the best answer only, unless you strongly feel that two options are valid.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Paradise/Vacation (A heavenly, idyllic place where people go to get away, relax, and escape one's troubles)</li> <li>○ Landscape/Nature (Natural/environmental features of the place)</li> <li>○ War/Military (A place under attack, to be fought over, or defended)</li> <li>○ Hawai'i as itself (Serves as the background, rather than the main draw of the film )</li> <li>○ Other</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Q6 – Are stereotypes of native Hawaiians and/or Hawai'i present? A stereotype is defined as a widely held, but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular person or thing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes</li> <li>○ No</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Q7 – What stereotypes are presented about native Hawaiians? You may select more than one option.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No stereotypes about native Hawaiians were seen</li> <li>○ Surfer (person who rides the waves)</li> <li>○ Hula Dancer (person who dances hula, which is a traditional Hawaiian form of dancing, chanting)</li> <li>○ Drug user (person shown with drugs on screen or displays the after effects of doing drugs)</li> <li>○ Dumb/Lazy (person who is uneducated, uninterested in work and needs to be saved or fixed)</li> <li>○ Obese (person who may be considered larger in size than the average person and is used for comic relief)</li> <li>○ Violent (person who uses physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something)</li> <li>○ Other</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Q8 – How many stereotypes about native Hawaiians are seen in this movie trailer? Consider how many different types of stereotypes were seen, NOT how many times a certain stereotype was seen.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No stereotypes about native Hawaiians were seen</li> <li>○ One to two stereotypes</li> <li>○ Three to four stereotypes</li> <li>○ Five or more stereotypes</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Q9 – What stereotypes are presented about Hawai'i?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No stereotypes about Hawai'i were presented</li> <li>○ Paradise/Vacation (A heavenly, idyllic, perfect place where people go to get away, relax, and escape one's troubles)</li> <li>○ Landscape/Natural Beauty (Film focuses on the natural/environmental "beautiful" features of the place)</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ War/Military (A place under attack, to be fought over, or defended)</li> <li>○ Other</li> </ul> <p><b>Q10 – How many stereotypes about Hawai‘i are seen in this movie trailer? Consider how many different stereotypes were seen, NOT how many times a certain stereotype was presented.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No stereotypes about Hawai‘i were seen</li> <li>○ One to two stereotypes</li> <li>○ Three to four stereotypes</li> <li>○ Five or more stereotypes</li> </ul>
<b>White-washing</b>	<p><b>Q4 – Is there evidence of white-washing? White-washing in the media is defined as when a movie or television show chooses a white male or female to portray a character who is originally of an ethnic background.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes (Character who is originally of an ethnic background who is played by a white actor/actress)</li> <li>○ Kind of (Character who is originally of an ethnic background who is played by an actor of a different ethnic background)</li> <li>○ No (Character who is originally of an ethnic background who is played by an actor of that ethnic background)</li> <li>○ I'm not sure (Character who is not easily identified as being of a certain ethnic background)</li> <li>○ Other</li> </ul> <p><b>Q5 – How many main and supporting characters are white-washed?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No main or supporting characters were white-washed</li> <li>○ One to two characters</li> <li>○ Three to four characters</li> <li>○ Five or more characters</li> </ul>
<b>Language Pronunciation</b>	<p><b>Q13 – Are native Hawaiian words pronounced properly? Consider place names as well (ex: Honolulu, Waikiki).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No native Hawaiian words were heard</li> <li>○ Yes - Good pronunciation</li> <li>○ No - Bad pronunciation</li> </ul> <p><b>Q14 – What common words are heard in the movie trailer?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Paradise</li> <li>○ Island/Isle</li> <li>○ Exotic</li> <li>○ Palm/Coconut Trees</li> <li>○ Beach/Ocean/Waves</li> <li>○ Surfer</li> <li>○ Savage</li> <li>○ Brah</li> <li>○ Shaka/Hang loose</li> <li>○ Native</li> <li>○ Hawaiian</li> <li>○ Hawai‘i</li> </ul>

	<input type="radio"/> Aloha <input type="radio"/> Other
<b>Emotional Response*</b>	<b>Q2 – Have you watched this movie before? Consider if you watched the entire movie, not just the trailer.</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Other
	<b>Q11 – Would you still watch this movie despite the depicted stereotypes about native Hawaiians?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes, I would still watch this movie <input type="radio"/> No, I would not watch this movie
	<b>Q12 – Would you still watch this movie despite the depicted stereotypes about Hawai'i?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes, I would still watch this movie <input type="radio"/> No, I would not watch this movie
	<b>Q15 – Please write additional thoughts or comments about the movie's trailer below.</b>

\*This section and its accompanying questions were not analyzed because it was not productive to determining whether this study was feasible.

## **Reflection**

Thank God, this project is all over. My determination to graduate a year early, having crammed the majority my Honors requirements into one year, has been difficult to say the least. There were times when I thought I couldn't finish this project and that it was a waste of my time. I was very wrong. This project and the people it has connected me to has transformed my undergraduate experience and has elevated my research experience at USU. This whole school year was the year of the capstone and it is crazy to see that I spent an entire year doing this year. This project has also impacted my future plans. If you asked me right now if I want to go to grad school the answer is "Hell no." But, that is just me thinking short time. In reality, I will be taking a gap year before I go on to grad school. I am not sure exactly what I will be studying, but I do now that this project impacted my thinking about grad school and made me realize that I can definitely do it and succeed. I am planning on submitting my paper to be published by a local publishing company in Hawai'i, which focuses on Native Hawaiian research. I hope to expand upon this project in a media studies program at graduate school.

I worked tirelessly this year to produce this final product, which I am very proud of. If you asked me to do this project again, I would say no. That is purely because there were many challenges that I faced. These challenges stemmed primarily from my tight deadline of trying to complete this project in one year. I should note I am very grateful to the Honors Program for allowing me to try and complete this because I know it wasn't exactly the traditional way to do things.

As I mentioned above, I faced many challenges with this project. One main challenge was my committee. My committee was made up of Dr. Candi Carter Olson, Dr. Debra Jenson and Dr. Candi Carter Olson. I initially thought this was my dream team, but that wasn't exactly the case. Dr. Carter Olson is a qualitative researcher, while Dr. Jenson and Dr. Bullock are both quantitative researchers. In particular, Dr. Bullock is a staunch post-positivist. These conflicting research styles caused many problems because my methodology and actual application of research was hindered, prolonged and redone so many times. I was incredibly frustrated for most of this process. I think these frustrations could've been avoided had I more clearly established what exactly I hoped to accomplish and do with this

project. I also think had I better understood various types of studies and research, I would have had an easier time as well. I clearly remember a period over spring break, when I wanted to call it quits. I had spent every day of spring break working on my project and trying to reach intercoder reliability with my other coders, only to find that I hadn't reached again for the SECOND time. I was devastated, I did not understand what I could possibly do to come back from this. Thankfully, Dr. Jenson and Dr. Carter Olson talked me through it to be able to find a solution that was acutally better than what we were initially doing. This was all fine and dandy, until Dr. Bullock continually asked me to redefine my project according to my research style. In summary, this experience taught me how to deal with immense frustration, bounce back from failure, and be flexible and amenable to change and criticism.

Though I had major issues with my committee, I also formed very meaningful connects with Dr. Carter Olson and Dr. Jenson in particular. Dr. Carter Olson always pushed me to present my project at every event possible and nominated me to speak at Ignite, which was a fabulous experience. She was like my other committee members who demanded the very best of me and enforced strict expectations. Though it was frustrating at times, it really helped to produce a fabulous product. I also loved working Dr. Jenson because she was such a strong support system for me during this process. She would make sure that I was emotionally and mentally okay and helped me to think through problems to find solutions. I am glad that I did this project so that it could bring me closer to these two fabulous women.

This project definitely deepened my learning with journalism because I intensely studied media and its effects on society, specifically Native Hawaiians. I was able to dive deeper into topics that we discussed in my Gender and the Mass Media class like representation. This whole issue of accurate representation of all people in the media is so intriguing to me and I was so happy that I was able to dive deeper into this topic with my project. I really enjoyed analyzing the representation of Native Hawaiians because I am very passionate about this topic as a Native Hawaiian myself. I expanded my learning beyond journalism with this topic because I dabbled in other areas as well like English, history and sociology. Though these fields not be obviously apparent, they did play a major role in my project.

I most definitely engaged with my community with this project. To date, I have completed five public presentations of my research to audiences of at least ten all the way up to around 100. In April, I engaged with other researchers at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Oklahoma. I learned a ton at this conference from other speakers and made some powerful connections while networking. Here at USU, I connected with other impressive researchers in the Ignite program. During the Spring semester, I practiced with and met other wonderful researchers in preparation for our big presentation at Ignite. So many people came up to me after my talk and I was able to connect with these individuals and teach them something that they might not have known before. I really do think I made an impact having done this project because many people can relate to me and my project. Speaking at Ignite was such a rush, and I am so grateful for the opportunity to do so. In summary, I am so happy that I remained resilient and completed this project because it has opened so many doors and continues to do so.

Word Count: 1,087

## **Biography**

Pono Sukanuma will be graduating magna cum laude from Utah State University in May of 2018. She will graduate with a bachelor's degree in journalism with an emphasis in public relations and corporate communications and a minor in international studies. She has loved every second of being an ambassador for USU, where she focused on out-of-state and diversity recruitment. During her time at Utah State, she has participated in the Polynesian Student Union, Aggies 4 Aggies program, the Public Relations Student Society of America club, and more. Sukanuma relished her time as an Aggie and is thankful for all the memories she has made at the university.

Sukanuma was born and raised on the beautiful island of O'ahu, Hawai'i. She grew up learning how to dance the hula, watching her papa's canoe races and reading hundreds of books with her mom. As an aspiring journalist and creative writer, Sukanuma hopes to reach the world with her words and making a lasting impact on those who read her works.