

T-SHIRTS THAT TELL TALES:
REMEMBRANCE AND RESISTANCE IN T-SHIRT DESIGNS IN HAWAI'I

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Abstract

The imagery on T-shirts produced in Hawai'i for the resident population are carefully thought out reflections of and responses to local concerns. They express the wearer's self-image and group identity, as well as his/her social values and allegiance. The article examines the T-shirt images designed for two specific groups: locals (or non-Caucasian, lifelong residents of the islands) and Native Hawaiians. Given the relentless pace of globalization in the 1990s, island residents felt their way of life was threatened and responded by remembering the past and/or wearing T-shirts that alluded to another way of life. Whether the images recall the communal society of plantation life or the political and spiritual aspects of Hawaiian identity, the widely-worn shirts described in the article provide insight into island society during a time of intense change.

Key words: Hawai'i, T-shirts, sugar plantations, Hawaiian sovereignty

January 17, 1993 marked the centennial anniversary of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy by the resident American business community and U.S. military forces. Thousands of *kanaka maoli* (indigenous Hawaiians) and others streamed through the gates of 'Iolani Palace, site of the overthrow, for a day of speeches, chanting, and remembrance. As I watched the crowd assemble at dawn for its orderly march to the palace from the harbor, I was struck by the T-shirts that many had chosen to wear to express their political sentiments, their island of origin, and their cultural identity. Some day, I thought, those shirts may become family heirlooms as significant in their own way as the personal effects of Queen Lili'uokalani then on display in Honolulu's Bishop Museum.

The shirt designs fascinated me and eventually I decided to document cultural identity in Hawai‘i at that critical juncture in its political history, as visibly expressed on the T-shirts designed, produced, sold, and worn by residents. Specifically, I wanted to know who produced the shirts, what imagery they used and why, and who among the populace literally bought into the symbolism by purchasing and wearing these badges of social identity. In classroom exercises at Leeward Community College, my students consistently stated that wearing a T-shirt designed for residents presumed entitlement on the part of the wearer. To wear a shirt with the imagery of a group not your own was to invite a challenge -- visually with a dirty look (or “stink eye” in local parlance), verbally, or perhaps even physically. (It should be noted that most T-shirt designers did not conceive of their work in those terms and expressed surprise upon learning of it.) As the quintessential garment of everyday life in Hawai‘i and the mainstay of many island wardrobes, T-shirts proved to be an accurate index of one’s social values and personal identity. In short, I found that while a T-shirt design is not quite a matter of wearing one’s heart on one’s sleeve, it is certainly an extension of one’s self-image as well as a means of displaying one’s values and allegiance.

In this article I focus on two of the groups for whom T-shirt designs have deep meaning: “locals” or non-Caucasian, lifelong residents of the islands and (Native) Hawaiians, the indigenous population. In both communities there is an attempt to retain communal values and to hold fast to cultural heritage in the face of globalization and the millions of tourists who arrive annually to vacation in the state. Hence, I found the twin themes of remembrance and resistance on many of the shirts worn by these groups and in speaking to the designers who created the imagery. My research took three forms: 1) interviews with wholesalers, retailers, and over three dozen T-shirt designers, many of whom sold their products themselves at craft fairs; 2) participant observation of what was sold where and to whom, as well as what was worn where and by whom; and 3) exercises with students and feedback from residents to verify findings. In addition, each interviewee quoted in the text was sent the relevant pages for review.

Finally, the swiftness with which globalization arrived in Hawai‘i during the decade of the 1990s must be mentioned to provide context for the messages found on the T-shirts. Of

course mass tourism had been in existence since shortly after statehood was achieved in 1959, but it had been confined to areas that were seldom visited by residents unless they worked in the tourist industry (e.g., Waikīkī, the *U.S.S. Arizona* Memorial in Pearl Harbor, etc.). However, when mainland and foreign retailers built their big box stores in neighborhoods throughout the islands in the 1990s and offered lower prices, local merchants were confronted with a scale and type of competition hitherto unknown in the islands. Many locally owned enterprises closed, taking jobs and family businesses (sometimes generations old) along with them (Kelly 2001). But it was not just mom-and-pop stores that disappeared. Multinational corporations closed sugar plantations and the pineapple cannery, finding it cheaper to operate outside the U.S. Island entertainment largely vanished from Waikīkī hotels as the Japanese tourists who dominated the market patronized shows that could be enjoyed without understanding songs sung in English.

The environment changed as well as the economy. Outside Waikīkī, highways were constructed through pristine valleys. Open land was given over to retail or housing developments, resorts, golf courses, etc. On a walking tour I attended, the guide referred to the view over his shoulder only to turn around and do a double-take: the scene he had expected to see was blocked by a tower that had not been there the last time he had given the tour. People spoke of pulling over in their cars, overcome by tears, when they came upon once familiar landscapes developed beyond recognition. Photo exhibitions documented the destruction of the land's beauty. Not surprisingly, such events and the emotions they triggered found expression on the shirts designed for residents. To sum up, I quote designer Chris Fayé who told me on a 1998 trip to Kaua'i, "T-shirts are a basic form of communication. That is why they are so important in Hawai'i...One of the reasons for the success of a T-shirt is the story behind it." What follows is a selection of those stories.

Plantation Life Remembered

One of the dominant referents in island society is the plantation lifestyle experienced by those who came to Hawai'i to work (or who grew up) on the sugar and pineapple plantations. The plantations were the mainstay of the Hawaiian economy until the advent of mass tourism. In

1930, thirty percent of island jobs were sugar-related. By 1996, the figure was less than .05 percent. More than ten sugar plantations shut down in the 1990s, leaving only two in operation at the end of 2000 (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, November 1, 1991, supplement p. 3; *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, September 25, 2000, p. C-1). Their demise and the loss of community they engendered form the basis for much of the nostalgia expressed in the islands today -- at least among that portion of the population that identifies itself as "local."

What was life like on the plantations? It varied with management, but in general it was harsh -- especially prior to 1900 -- and rigidly hierarchical. Plantation managers lived in large homes on the tops of hills, *lunas* or supervisors lived below them, and workers were housed on the flat lands in frame cottages or dormitory barracks if they were single males. The most recent group to arrive got the smallest houses, lived nearest the sewerage ditches, and received the lowest wages. Contact between ethnic groups was deliberately minimal so labor would not unite to oppose management. Communication was in one's native tongue, with pidgin used for necessities like work orders and buying goods. Wages were often offset by purchases made at the plantation store. Workers were identified by bangos or metal disks with numbers stamped on them, rather than by name.

By the 1920s, the communities of workers had become more settled with the addition of wives and children, teachers and clergy. Women worked with their husbands in the fields, in addition to performing domestic chores and taking in laundry, etc. to earn extra money. Babies were kept next to the fields under tent-umbrellas, but vulnerable to red ants. In the 1930s, in addition to housing (with outdoor plumbing), water, fuel, and medical care, plantations provided land for houses of worship and language schools, a community hall, and recreation such as movies. Public school was available through the eighth grade. If one wished to continue on to high school and had the means to do so, one had to board with clergy or relatives in town. Holidays were celebrated with ethnic foods and games. Drinking and gambling were rife, and sports like boxing were seen as the only means of leaving the plantation, other than education. (For a fuller description, see Hazama and Komeiji 1987.)

Given all the hardships, why do many today speak so fondly of plantation life? First, those who do so are not the ones who lived through the worst of it. (Many of the most difficult tasks were later mechanized and unionization improved living conditions.) Secondly, there is enormous respect for one's ancestors for what they endured for the sake of their families. Thirdly, having left their relatives behind, the immigrant workers had only each other to rely on. The community they subsequently formed functioned like an extended family. Fourthly, one's world consisted of the camp -- perhaps harsh, but knowable and, therefore, secure. Given the plantations' physical isolation, there was nowhere to go and nothing with which to compare plantation life. Honolulu was usually no more than the port of entry and a trip to the mainland was said to be "like a trip to the moon." In sum, plantation life was a secure, if circumscribed, world. If one did not have much in the way of material wealth, neither did anyone else in one's social circle. Above all, there was a strong sense of family and communal identity, based on face-to-face relationships and reciprocity.

In an article on the preservation of plantation buildings, journalist Sharla Manley (1998) points out that only two generations ago laborers were fighting for better treatment. Today their children and grandchildren are the ones giving tours of plantations and striving to save their physical remains. Manley attributes their efforts to three factors: plantations have come to symbolize Hawai'i's cultural blending, they reflect the extent to which the American Dream worked for those who trace their roots back to immigrant labor, and they represent a backlash against the urbanization of Hawai'i and its subsequent social disintegration. When interviewed just prior to their plantation's closing in 1997, workers expressed less concern about finding a new job or going on welfare than at the prospect of losing their tight-knit community and the sense of place and identity that the plantation afforded them.

A striking example of this sense of community appeared in a press account of a reunion of workers from the Waimānalo Sugar Company which had been dismantled fifty years previously (*The Honolulu Advertiser*, August 21, 1998, p. B-3). The organizer of the reunion said her mother had expressed a desire to see her old friends again, so she set up the first reunion in 1994 and 125 people attended. More than double that number showed up at the second

reunion, held two years later. When Waialua Sugar closed on O‘ahu’s North Shore in 1995, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* (March 14, 1995, p. H-3) interviewed one of the plantation families. George Franks had joined the company in 1933 at age fifteen. He had already been retired fifteen years by 1995, but stated, “I still have my heart in Waialua Sugar.” He and his family had purchased plantation housing in order to stay in the area. His youngest daughter said the family chose to live there because “we want the same qualities that the plantation environment provided: safety, quiet, with a sense of family, a sense of community.”

Portraying Plantation Values

Designer Delro Rosco was born in 1963 in the plantation community of Ewa on the island of O‘ahu. His grandfather had come to Hawai‘i to work at Ewa in 1924, when Delro’s father was two years old. Delro’s mother was born on a sugar plantation on Kaua‘i. Typical of the second generation of many plantation families, Delro’s father was employed by the state. Delro attended college in Los Angeles and worked in California for several years before returning to the islands in 1991. In addition to his work as a food and product illustrator, he decided to do some textile designing and tried his hand at T-shirts.

He had been away from Hawai‘i long enough to have to consider carefully how to reconnect with the island market. “The only thing I could relate to, because I grew up there, was a plantation.” After recalling family stories and looking at the artifacts at Hawai‘i’s Plantation Village (a reconstruction of a sugar plantation village), Delro became nostalgic and wanted the history passed on. The need to do so was highlighted by the fact that the Ewa sugar mill had been torn down and sold for parts, and the cane fields developed. Delro’s first design of two workers bundling cane with the Ewa mill in the background won national recognition (Figure 1). “I had seen it every day. It is very personal to me...I did it as homage to my grandfather.” So personal is the design that Delro has refused to sell it to others for commercial distribution. What inspires his designs?

Hearing stories, memories, looking at old photos or artifacts. Mostly stories though. Because the great thing about the designs is that it makes

people talk. We hear so many stories about the good old days, the pride and sadness in people's faces. That was the goal of designing T-shirts: to make people talk and pass the story on to the next generation.

[Who buys the shirts?] People who either grew up on or who had ties with plantations. They might not necessarily have grown up there, but their grandparents did so they would buy it for them. Or people who like cultural things and have an interest. I knew going into it that it would be a limited market. People who grew up where I did would buy. People from Kaua'i, the Big Island, all have the same experience.

Indeed, so widespread is the experience that when Delro was asked to do a shirt commemorating the Waipahu mill's closure in 1995, the initial run of 1000 had to be increased to 5500 to fill the orders. His shirts are even seen on the continent, particularly in Las Vegas where many islanders had moved in search of better jobs. "A lot of them were raised on plantations."

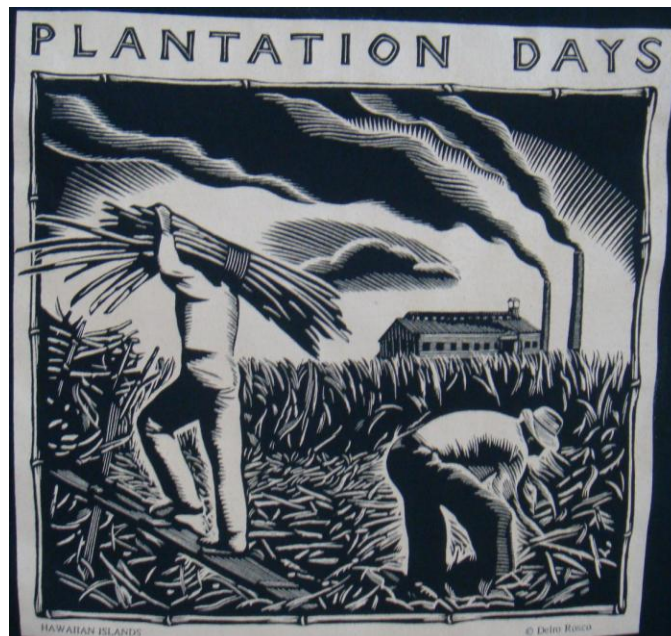


Figure 1: Plantation Days by Delro Rosco

When asked to identify competitors, Delro answered in a manner that proved characteristic of locals who sell their own shirts (as opposed to the corporate designers who were interviewed). While certainly aware of others who produced designs with similar themes, he is not overly concerned about competition and does not focus on it. Instead, he says, “My job is to get a message out and get people to talk and remember...I do what I know.” His ultimate goal is clearly not huge sales or profits, but expanding awareness of Hawai‘i’s plantation heritage. Indeed, his shirt design for the Waipahu mill closure was done without charge because his mother had grown up there and he had heard a lot about the mill. Its closing was considered “pretty monumental, so I thought I better do it.”

Similar in sentiment but with 25 years of experience and many more designs to his credit is Grant Kagimoto. Grant was raised on the Big Island of Hawai‘i until, at age six, his family moved to Okinawa and lived on a military base there for the next twelve years. Grant’s degree in fine arts is from the University of Hawai‘i. One of his instructors said something that has always stayed with him: the test of time is the true test of design. Does the design hold up ten years later? “That drives me along. I try to do things that I care about, that are important to me, that have long-term value. I always say, ‘Is this something I can put my name on and be happy with down the road?’ That is critical to me.” When he started his company, Cane Haul Road, only the resort market existed.

There was no recognition of the fact that there was a unique, multicultural lifestyle here. That is what we focused on by accident, not by plan or by being brilliant. It turned out to be the right time for what we wanted to do. I tell people if I had started the business five years earlier or later, I don’t know if it would have succeeded.

When we started off in the mid-seventies, we were in our twenties. That was a really wonderful time to be a young person in Hawai‘i. A lot was going on, especially in the arts: English-language *kabuki*, hula was undergoing a major renaissance, local comedians and musicians [were getting started]. People were receptive to the message we were trying to put out through our designs.

[The resort trade already had T-shirts so] I thought there was no room in the market. We had started doing canvas bags but lost our seamstress when her husband relocated the family to the mainland...so we started doing shirts. After six months, we started selling them. We had a design philosophy that we were pushing the state image and we were sort of off to the races at that point...Our niche tends to be sugar plantation ethnic groups.



Figure 2: Home Sweet Hawai'i by Grant Kagimoto

Grant's design "Home Sweet Hawai'i" (Figure 2) is a classic and what he would choose as his epitaph. A plantation-style frame house is shown as if it were a photograph mounted in an album. The title appears below along with "country stays, simpler ways, plantation days." While the idea and original drawing were his, Grant felt it looked mechanical so he asked an artist to redo it and give it life.

I told him to make it look like your uncle will walk out the front door any minute...That will be one of the classics of my life. It is everything that I care about. A store clerk told me a woman got teary-eyed [looking at it]. That is the ultimate response I would like for my work. It brings back memories to total strangers and you can share that experience with them. That drawing will live on in various forms for years and years...It really does stand for a lot of what I care about.

Grant is also known for his humorous designs. His work is full of puns and the characteristic language of plantation life: pidgin. One popular shirt is “Da Kine Slippahs” (Figure 3), illustrated with nine different kinds of Japanese *zori* which islanders refer to as slippers (to use standard English). Instead of the usual rounded rubber sole, the front of gecko slippers are shaped like the lizard’s toes. Surfer slippers resemble surfboards right down to the fin under the sole. Gangster slippers have the usual V-shaped strap that fits between the toes, but they are attached to concrete blocks. The *lolo* (crazy) slipper is a double-length sole with a V strap on either end, facing opposite directions.



Figure 3: Da Kine Slippahs by Grant Kagimoto

I love puns and I revel in pidgin...I use it in my work on shirts but not exclusively. I don't want people thinking all we are doing is an in-joke. We are not trying to be a club for Hawai'i people. We prefer to be a unique part of America, and it [pidgin] adds color and richness to life.

Given his longevity in the field, what changes has he seen in the market over the last twenty-five years?

When we started...few department stores carried T-shirts. Now they are pervasive. They were a fad. Now I can't imagine them not being part of the American lifestyle...[As people age,] they may not wear shirts that make political statements, but they are still willing to make lifestyle statements. I deal with things that speak of the past but which are current. They are living traditions like saimin or shave ice. I don't consider sugar plantations dead because we are here. I carry the legacy with me.

[For those who buy Cane Haul Road shirts,] there is a high recognition factor. I am spot-lighting something that they may not have thought about, but they respond, 'Oh, yeah.' They are not interested in learning anything new. They prefer to be amused. I am not teaching a history lesson. If they don't recognize something familiar, they won't stop and buy. They don't want to have to read a long hang tag to understand the design.

[In contrast,] the tourist market is very much a superficial market. I don't mean that in a negative way. That market tends to portray the more easily accessible imagery of Hawai'i: its natural landmarks and recognizable flora and fauna. There is nothing wrong with that, but it is a separate market. If locals think you produce for the tourist market, they won't buy it or they will buy it to send as a gift. Tourists won't buy my stuff. It is too narrowly focused.

As far as competitors, Grant, like Delro, can name other designers who appeal to the same limited market, but “I don’t consider them competitors in a negative sense because it is the customer who decides...What we do [in terms of our designs] is unique so, in a sense, no one is our competitor.” When asked if he ever did designs with political themes, Grant replied,

I have strong opinions but I try not to reflect those too much in my work. I believe I am putting out a political message, but it is subtle. We live on an island. We should like and appreciate each other for what we have in common and how we are different. If we can’t learn to live together in Hawai‘i, then the rest of the world is in real trouble. Interracial marriage here is so matter-of-fact it is almost odd to mention it...You won’t find such easy mixing and acceptance in the rest of America. It is a fact of life here and we better appreciate it, relish and celebrate it.

To summarize the significance of these designs for locals: they are produced by the children and grandchildren of plantation workers for those with similar backgrounds, but not exclusively so for that would contradict the sense of inclusion being expressed. For non-indigenous, originally working-class island families, the plantation heritage is the dominant motif. It represents a cherished lifestyle, characterized by unpretentious, multicultural, and reciprocal social interaction. As such, competition for sales in this genre remains both low-key and limited, while the primary emphasis is placed on portraying communal bonds in an immediately recognizable and emotionally compelling fashion. As Grant Kagimoto has recognized, the mere expression of these values and images is not without its political aspect, given the pervasive impersonal, global influences with which they contend. The fact that local imagery is expressed in humorous, graceful, and nostalgic terms only makes its influence all the more subtle and the loss of such communal identity all the more poignant.

A third design studio represents a younger generation but one that is just as local in its perspective, designs, and humor. The Ito brothers and their company Poi Pounder Hawai‘i use cartoon characters consisting of poi dog, gecko, and ‘opihi figures to get their message across. Designer Brian Ito said he gets his ideas by “looking at my friends.” When I asked him to define

“poi dog,” he replied they had researched the term and found it was first used by foreigners to describe the dogs kept by Hawaiians which were fed poi. After the island dogs had interbred with foreign breeds, “poi dog” came to mean a mixed dog, and later the concept was extended to people of mixed heritage. The poi dog character was created by the Ito brothers in 1987, the same year they opened their business. Ito described him as “a real happy-go-lucky, local kind of image. Even though he is a dog, he has a local look...He is a fun character, and it is hard not to like a fun person.”

Ito said he tries to put a little aloha spirit in his drawings and he succeeds. It is hard not to smile in recognition of island culture when viewing the chunky dog (standing on two legs) dressed in shorts with a taro-leaf pattern and a baseball cap worn backwards (sometimes replaced by a kerchief with the same taro-leaf pattern as the shorts). In the series “Aloha is...” poi dog and his much smaller buddy, the gecko (an anonymous lizard also attired in shorts and cap), experience “sharing the joy of fishing,” “sharing your shave ice [snow cones],” “taking only what you need [fishing],” “taking turns at the waves [surfing],” and “hibachi with your friends [grilling at a beach-front park].” So typical are the scenes of life in Hawai‘i that to look at them is to instantly visualize a specific time, place, and event.

Even more local is the ‘opihi character. ‘Opihi is an edible single-shell mollusk that sticks to rocks along the shore so tightly that it has to be pried off with a crowbar or the claw of a hammer. Not infrequently, one reads of individuals being swept off rocks by the surf while gathering ‘opihi -- sometimes fatally so. The ‘opihi designs play on the clinging quality of the animal which, as drawn, somewhat resembles a mushroom with eyes, mouth, and arms under its shell “hat.” Like poi dog, he is engaged in various local activities (Figure 4). Sumo ‘Opihi “takes a licking but keeps on sticking” to his sumo ring on an ocean rock. Karaoke ‘Opihi sings into a microphone with the caption “we suck...so what!” Labeled “lucky sucka,” ‘Opihi in Las Vegas is pictured at a slot machine releasing coins. Barbell ‘Opihi is a “tough sucker” and Couch ‘Opihi, in front of his television set with a can in one hand and the remote control in the other, is “stuck to da couch.” In short, the situations, the use of pidgin, and the very choice of

character all speak to residents and may well leave tourists who see the shirts on sale at the Ala Moana Shopping Center wondering what ‘opihi is.



Figure 4: Opihi Bike Team by Poi Pounder Hawaii

Like Grant Kagimoto, Wayne Nishimoto sometimes hires others to execute his vision. Like Delro Rosco, his focus is on the past and he consults historical photographs to insure the accuracy of his images. Like all the designers, Wayne appeals to an audience that can immediately relate to his designs and the sentiment they represent. He has always been a collector and sees himself as “very sentimental.” His design ideas are based on childhood memories, but he relies for details on a large photo collection culled from newspapers and magazine articles, as well as photos he has taken himself. The photos are either of places that do not exist any more or that are mom-and-pop businesses that have served their neighborhoods for decades: stores, restaurants, drive-ins, movie theaters. Only six of his thirty designs portray businesses that are still open. The procedure Wayne uses is as follows: he selects a subject, finds a photograph of it, has an artist render it and/or modify it to his specifications, then takes it to specialists who produce the duplicating materials and silk screen the shirts. “I try to create the exact scene that I remember.” Like the other designers, Wayne also gets feedback from the

public. “People become very critical. They all have their little stories about how they remember it.”

Again like the other designers, Wayne is not overly concerned with competition, nor is money his primary motivation. “To do what I am doing, you have to have a passion for it. If you want to do it for the money, you’ll need to go out and get a part-time job [to supplement your income].” He, too, sees his product as so unique that it has no direct competition. On the other hand, “I don’t want to be arrogant and say I have no competitors. If a person has \$100 to spend on shirts and the guy next to me makes the sale, I have to say, ‘Congratulations. You have done your homework.’” Like several designers in this study, he singled out someone (in his case, Grant Kagimoto) who could be considered a competitor in order to cite him for being helpful when he (Wayne) started up his business. A sense of camaraderie rather than competition prevails among many designers who work craft fairs. This is undoubtedly facilitated by the fact that part-time designers like Wayne are not interested in expanding their businesses to the point that production becomes a chore. As Wayne states, “I don’t want to grow the business. I feel I have been really, really lucky. I can go at my own pace.”

Predictably, the market for Wayne’s shirts consists of baby boomers who buy for their parents or older residents who purchase the shirts for themselves. “What they like about the shirts is the same thing [I do], the reason that I am doing this: the memories that we have.” Why would commercial buildings, many long gone, evoke such strong feelings and fond memories? The following quote from a book devoted to the Honolulu Stadium -- the subject of Wayne’s best-selling T-shirt (Figure 5) -- provides an answer with this description:

It was only two acres of turf surrounded by 26,000 seats -- but that was only for starters. More than just a sports facility, Honolulu Stadium was a place in time, the symbol of a golden age. As the city grew from sleepy backwater to booming metropolis, its stadium grew with it.

When Honolulu Stadium was built, Hawai‘i was one big plantation town. Sugar was king, pineapple was prince, and the plantation oligarchy still drove the

economy. For generations, immigrants had arrived from around the Pacific Rim to work the fields and man the mills. Separated by neighborhood and social status, these diverse groups found common ground at the Stadium, where ethnic rivalries could be played out in healthy -- and sometimes not so healthy -- fashion...The story of the Stadium is the story of 20th Century Honolulu; they were that closely intertwined (Suehiro, 1995, pp. 15-16).

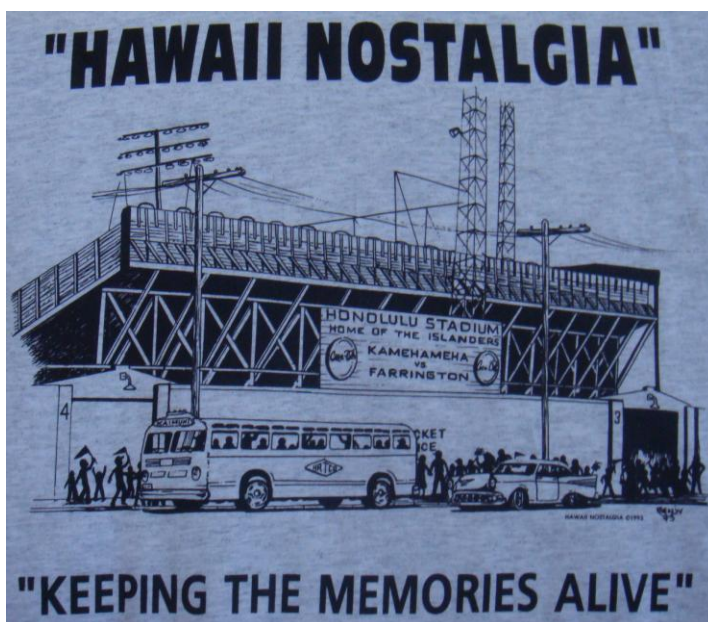


Figure 5: Honolulu Stadium by Wayne Nishimoto

When it opened in 1926, the structure was the first large sports stadium in the islands, open to the air and with seating close enough to the field that spectators were within easy earshot of the players. It was home to the Hawai'i League, whose baseball teams represented different ethnic groups: the Chinese Tigers, Portuguese Braves, *haole* Wanderers, and Japanese Asahi (later Athletics). Part-Hawaiians and others formed the All Hawaiian team. In addition, the Navy fielded a military team. The stadium also hosted football games, boxing matches, and stock car racing, as well as concerts. When it closed in 1975, "for the Stadium -- for an entire community -- it was a bittersweet evening indeed. When it was over, the crowd stood and remembered and sang along, as [the organist] played one more number: 'Aloha Oe'" (Suehiro,

1995, p. 153). For Wayne, going to the Stadium was “a big event. Friends took us because the event would not be over until 10 p.m. and my father was asleep by 8:30.”

The images described above and the emotions they embody are not just islanders' memories of the past but memories in the making of a society that is disappearing before one's eyes. Either way, the distinctive island lifestyle is highly prized by local residents and, when threatened, triggers resentment. Thus, one should not conclude that this fondness for things past and/or local culture is limited to the elderly or the parochial. The pace of change in Hawai'i has picked up so markedly that local newspaper columns are less nostalgic than alarmist in tone. The appeal is not just to common memories but to unified action to save what is left. One such columnist bemoaned the loss of a favorite local haunt and referred to the “new literature of loss,” which lamented the homogenization of Hawai'i, the diminished sense of place and community, and the emotional impact of [vanished] physical surroundings. The columnist asked, “How much longer can our fragile tissue [i.e., the social fabric] in Hawai'i hold out?” (*The Honolulu Advertiser*, November 11, 1999, p. A-18)

A more complete picture of change is presented in a study by University of Hawai'i Professor Jon K. Matsuoka (1998). It explores the implications of Hawai'i's brain drain and concludes that, important as the economic consequences of the departure of locals might be, the more significant impact may be social and political in nature. In brief, the report states that locals who leave the islands for schooling and/or jobs elsewhere are being replaced numerically by Filipino immigrants who take low-wage service jobs and by Caucasians who are recruited nationally for management positions. The latter bring with them and, above all, retain cultural patterns that, until recently, have been much more characteristic of society on the continent than of Hawai'i. A loss of diversity and cultural homogenization are likely to result.

Some outcomes are already evident: excessive population growth and suburbanization, and an increasing disparity between socioeconomic and ethnic groups. Current employment practice “reinforces social cleavages between locals and newcomers, perpetuates resentment, and continues the process of sociocultural change in Hawai'i” (p. 35). Locals find it hard to

contextualize people from the continent. Consequently, they spend time assessing newcomers in an effort to determine if they are socially conscientious. “Since aggressiveness and individualism are antithetic to local norms,” continental newcomers can wind up ostracized as locals become more wary and less receptive to outsiders. “What many refer to as the erosion of the aloha spirit may be a local response to the exploitation of their kindness and generosity by strangers and/or newcomers...[However], in local communities it still abounds because of a mutual understanding of its very nature” (p. 36).

The study continues by observing that an even more problematic situation exists in the relationship that is developing between Native Hawaiians and recent arrivals. History shows that prolonged cultural exposure does not necessarily result in assimilation, but in victimization.

Those who refuse to abide by the new cultural and economic standards grow increasingly marginalized over time...Native Hawaiians have been victimized by this social process and suffer the most severe social consequences.

The direction of population growth in Hawai‘i will likely spawn social conflicts between Native Hawaiians and Caucasians...Racial conflicts are likely to intensify as Caucasian or foreign-owned enterprises supported by constitutional rights collide with a movement to secure indigenous rights and restore a sovereign Hawaiian nation (p. 36).

We turn next to a consideration of how that clash of values, beliefs, and practices is being graphically expressed in the Native Hawaiian community.

Land, Laws, and Political Resistance

There are innumerable examples of clashes between Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians – most specifically, with the state and federal governments. Perhaps the most dramatic and easily understood in legal terms has been the struggle for control of the island of Kaho‘olawe, located off the larger island of Maui. Kaho‘olawe was occupied by *kanaka maoli* (Native Hawaiians) by

1250. In the mid-nineteenth century, the island was leased for ranching. Thus began the environmental ruin of the land as feral animals denuded the landscape of vegetation.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the U.S. Navy took full control of Kaho‘olawe for training. In 1953, President Eisenhower signed an executive order giving the Navy jurisdiction of the island provided that it be returned to the state (at an unspecified date) in a condition fit for habitation. Over the years, both state and national representatives of Hawai‘i asked the military to return the island, but they were largely ignored. Kaho‘olawe’s 28,600 acres were the target for hundreds of tons of bombs, shells, and projectiles. Its soil became filled with sharp-edged metal fragments, flammable flares, mortar rounds, and 3000-pound bombs (*The Honolulu Advertiser*, April 12, 1996, p. A-7).

In 1975, three Hawaiian organizations united to form what became the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana or PKO. (“‘Ohana” means family in Hawaiian.) On January 4, 1976, nine Hawaiians landed on Kaho‘olawe to assert their right to access. They were rounded up by the military, although two of them managed to remain on the island for two days. The group “reinvaded” about a week later. Thereafter, PKO members carried out non-violent civil disobedience to raise public awareness of what the land meant to Hawaiians (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, April 3, 1993, p. B-1). One of the chief concepts associated with PKO was “*aloha ‘āina*” -- a term used by those who supported the monarchy during the 1893 overthrow. It means that “you take care of the land because it takes care of you” (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, October 30, 1990, p. B-1).

The ‘Ohana was perceived as “a ragtag bunch of radicals...who had the wild idea that the distressed island could become a centerpiece of Hawaiian culture” (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, April 2, 1993, p. B-1), but they were persistent and realized some success. In addition to the occupations and consciousness-raising, they also initiated lawsuits (raising money through the sale of T-shirts). When six PKO members were convicted of trespassing, the judge observed that the “desecration of the island by the bombing that goes on is deplorable.” The Navy began to allow limited access. Stunned to learn an island in the middle of the state was subject to

bombing and eager to raise the electoral prospects of the Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate, President George Bush unilaterally ended the bombing on October 22, 1990 while visiting the islands. Shortly thereafter, Congress created the Kaho‘olawe Island Conveyance Commission to recommend the terms and conditions for returning the island to the state.

In October of 1992, the Commission unanimously recommended that the island be returned to the state and that all military use be terminated, while making the Department of Defense responsible for the clean up. Further, Kaho‘olawe was found to be *wahi pana* (a sacred place) and *pu‘uhonua* (a sanctuary); and it was recommended that the state should “guarantee in perpetuity that the uses of the land and its surrounding waters shall be exclusively for study and education” (*The Honolulu Advertiser*, October 8, 1992, p. A-2). In 1993, the U.S. defense appropriations bill included \$400 million for the restoration of Kaho‘olawe over a ten-year period. Soon after the bill was signed by President Clinton, the seven members of the newly-constituted Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission were announced -- among them, PKO members. On May 7, 1994, the Navy formally signed over Kaho‘olawe to the state of Hawai‘i and a new era had begun.

On its visits to the island, the PKO organized work parties. As a result, 6500 acres were cleared of surface ordnance, feral goats were eradicated, soil conservation and re-vegetation programs were implemented, shrines and temples were rededicated, hiking trails were cleared, and a permanent base camp and three temporary camps were established. Citing these activities in an article written shortly before the return of the island, Commissioner and founding PKO member Emmett Aluli continued,

At the foundation of our work is the Hawaiian way of *aloha ‘āina*: love, respect, caring for and responsibility for our land...Today is a real new age for Hawaiians. Young and even old want to go back to their roots. Kaho‘olawe has been central to cultivating this kind of awareness. Just being on Kaho‘olawe is actually a religious ceremony for a lot of people who have joined us on our accesses to the island. The island is a *pu‘uhonua* or sacred sanctuary for spiritual cleansing...The entire island of Kaho‘olawe

is sacred, as a *kino lau* (body form) of Kanaloa, the Hawaiian god of the ocean and navigation....

Now, Kaho‘olawe has set a precedent for all of the Hawaiian national lands controlled by the U.S. federal and state governments that eventually will come under the jurisdiction of a re-established Hawaiian nation...In our work to heal the island, we work to heal the soul of our Hawaiian people. Each time we pick up a stone to restore a cultural site on the island, we pick up ourselves as Hawaiians (*The Honolulu Advertiser*, March 15, 1994, supplement p. 59).

The misuse of Hawaiian land was hardly limited to Kaho‘olawe. In 1921, the U.S. Congress established Hawaiian Homes, a trust consisting of roughly 200,000 acres of the worst land in the territory, to be reserved for those with fifty percent or more Hawaiian blood. The legislation did not include money for developing an infrastructure on the premise that the Hawaiian homesteaders were supposed to become self-sufficient. To quote H. K. Bruss Keppeler (1991, p. 199), “egregious breaches of fiduciary duty were committed.” Almost 30,000 acres were transferred to government agencies by executive order. In addition, vast acreage was leased to sugar and ranching interests for a pittance. Administration of the program reverted to Hawai‘i upon statehood in 1959, but that brought no relief. Under the Hawai‘i Admission Act, only the U.S. could bring suit in federal court for breaches of the homestead trust, so no lawsuit could be filed to remedy the situation.

Misuse of land did not stop with Hawai‘i Home Lands, however. A second trust consisted of ceded lands; that is, the 1.4 million acres ceded to the U.S. by the Republic of Hawai‘i and ceded back to the island government upon statehood. The state has used the land for such things as harbors, airports, hospitals, low-income housing, the campus of the University of Hawai‘i, and the astronomical observatories atop Mauna Kea. The income from this land was to be used for five purposes, including “the betterment of the conditions of Native Hawaiians.” However, not a penny of the income reached Hawaiians until 1980 with the establishment of the

(state) Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Moreover, the ceded lands trust had been set up without recognizing Hawaiians as a political entity in the way Native American tribes are. The omission would prove critical in future law suits.

As Keppeler concludes, the assets of the two land trusts -- either the land itself or rent from its usage -- should have made Hawaiians among the wealthiest people in the U.S. Instead, they are among the sickest, the poorest, and the least educated. Specifically, they have the lowest life expectancy of any ethnic group in the islands and the highest incidence of heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, obesity, smoking and alcohol abuse. Hawaiians are the largest ethnic group on public assistance and below the poverty line. Although they compose twenty percent of the general populace, they make up thirty-eight percent of the prison population. More than a third of all child abuse and neglect cases involve Hawaiian children. With each generation, the gap widens between Hawaiians and the rest of the population (*The Honolulu Advertiser*, August 6, 1998, pp. A-1, A-2).

Given the issues outlined above which deal only with land ownership and usage controversies, it is hardly surprising that the messages found on Native Hawaiian T-shirts are more politically-charged than those of other groups. While a tourist may purchase a shirt with a plant design solely on the basis of its appearance, a Hawaiian wearing the same T may be making a statement on an endangered species, land use, or native gathering rights. In general, Hawaiian designs are more likely to be created with a cultural message in mind rather than as a reflection of nostalgia, an expression of humor, or a marketable product. That is not to say these aspects are never present but, again, given the gravity of issues confronting Hawaiians and their style of communication, T-shirt designs have become an apt means of conveying political sentiment. As one designer told me, "You don't really have to say anything. The T-shirt can speak for you. You are not really voicing an opinion, but you are -- in a subtle, visual sense."

Without wishing to overstate the case, there is also a uniquely Hawaiian aspect to the shirts that has to do with *mana*, the spiritual energy or power that permeates people, places, and things. The feather capes of the *ali'i* (nobility) contained *mana* and so do today's T-shirts, odd

as that may seem to non-islanders. The designers who mentioned *mana* in passing did not feel the need to expound on the subject in the course of the interview: we had come together for a different purpose. However, it can be said that in a culture where intent counts for a lot and verbalized blessings and curses still carry weight, the kind of public statements that T-shirts make can have a significance for Hawaiians that may well be lost on others. To sum up: Hawaiian T-shirts are unique for their spiritual aspect and political overtones. Even designs that are not explicitly political in content can be seen as challenging the status quo by virtue of their display of alternative values and allegiance. As is true of Hawaiian poetry and song, Hawaiian T-shirts carry multiple meanings, not all of them meant for public consumption.

Portraying Hawaiian Values

Wainwright Pi'ena designed his first T in the mid-1970s when a friend asked him to do a shirt for a party. He had drawn as a child and studied graphic design at the University of Hawai'i. His company, Kāpala 'Ahu (Printed Garment), includes a design studio, production space, and shop; it often is present at craft fairs as well. Wain was involved with the *Hōkūle'a*, one of the great success stories of modern Hawaiian history. It is also a rare instance of Hawaiian penetration of the outside world on its own terms and in a traditional format. Built as the state's bicentennial project, the *Hōkūle'a* is a fiberglass, double-hull, performance-accurate Polynesian voyaging canoe. It sailed from Hawai'i to Tahiti and back, using only traditional methods; that is, the stars and currents.

Since traditional navigation had completely died out in Polynesia, Micronesian Mau Piailug of Satawal was recruited for the job of navigator even though he had never traveled the route in question. The 1976 voyage was a scientific success in demonstrating that ancient Polynesians were totally capable of sailing the Pacific. The insulting theory that Hawaiians had originated as castaways who literally blew in from South America by chance was laid to rest. (See Finney 1979 for an insider's description of the voyage, its origins, and outcomes.)

Even greater than the scientific achievement, however, was the *Hōkūle‘a*’s impact on Hawaiians: it contributed to the rebirth of the culture and rekindled pride. One young man who participated in the maiden voyage did not want the experience to end with the completed experiment. Studying both traditional navigation methods and Western astronomy, Nainoa Thompson went on to become a master navigator himself on at least six subsequent voyages. More importantly, Nainoa stimulated such interest in the tradition that a new generation of voyagers has been created: 2000 people have since sailed on the *Hōkūle‘a*. Other Polynesian nations watched their citizens flock to the harbor to welcome Hawai‘i’s canoes (17,000 Tahitians turned out to greet the *Hōkūle‘a* in 1976), and decided to implement their own canoe programs. Hawai‘i has thus gone from lacking all knowledge of traditional ocean travel to being *the* training center for Polynesian voyaging.

Wain designed the shirt for *Hōkūle‘a*’s twenty-fifth anniversary voyage to Rapa Nui (Easter Island). Nainoa Thompson summed up twenty-five years of voyaging history by saying, “In 1976 it was just about trying to see if we could make it. Now it is about our young people and it is about education” (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, March 13, 2000, p. A-3). Such thinking is reflected in Wain’s *Hōkūle‘a* shirt design (Figure 6). The front of the shirt has “*Hōkūle‘a*” written across a canoe drawn in the style of ancient Hawaiian petroglyphs. The back of the shirt has the more complex design. At the top is written “*Mālama Hawai‘i*” (Care for Hawai‘i); at the bottom is twenty-five years, written in Hawaiian.

In the design’s center is the same petroglyph-style canoe surrounded by a spiral of people, also portrayed in petroglyph style. The figures hold various objects in their hands, representing the scores of individuals whose crafts and skills make the canoe seaworthy and the project feasible. They also symbolize the community and the fact that the educational process exists beyond those who sail the canoe. Against this series of figures is a blue triangle, positioned so that the triangle’s base cuts diagonally across the canoe and the spiral of people. My assumption that it represented the ocean was only partially correct: it stands for the Polynesian triangle. (The base points of the triangle are formed geographically by Aotearoa (New Zealand) and Rapa Nui (Easter Island) with Hawai‘i at the apex.) In the upper-right corner

above the blue “sea” is a small circle with points radiating outward. It looks like a cross between the rays of the sun and a compass. Actually, it is both a heavenly body and the *Hōkūle‘a*’s “compass,” for it represents the star for which the canoe was named and by which it is steered home. (*Hōkūle‘a* is Hawaiian for Arcturus, the bright star that, according to Hawaiian tradition, was used by returning navigators as a homing beacon.)

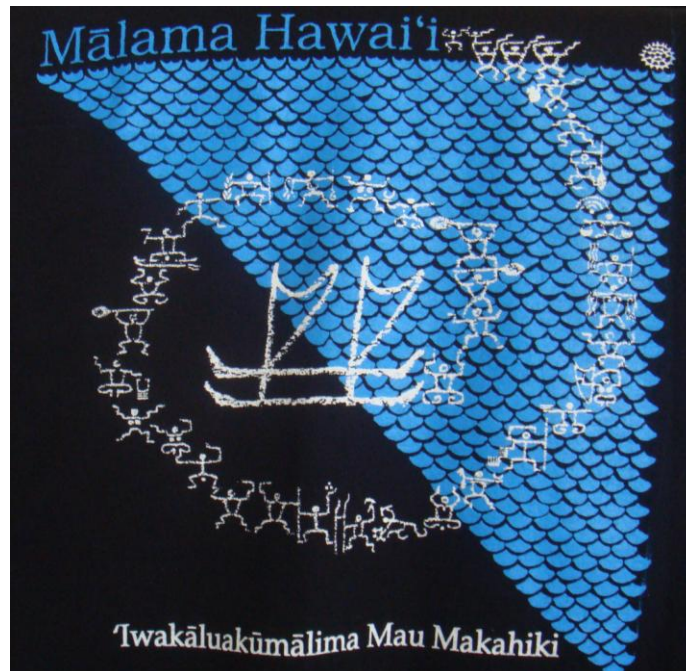


Figure 6: Hokule'a Anniversary Shirt by Wainwright Pi'ena

A second shirt by Wain is more explicitly political, having been done for the centennial of the overthrow of the monarchy (Figure 7). It was worn by many during that period. The shirt front says “*kanaka maoli*” and has four petroglyph figures near it. On the back is the Hawaiian flag. (The flag of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i was retained as the state flag.) However, it is not printed in the normal colors of red, white, and blue. Rather, it is in white, brown, and black with streaks in the ink as if the flag were old and tattered. In the upper-right corner of the flag is a petroglyph figure; in the lower left is “*Ea*” (sovereignty). The Hawaiian island chain is superimposed across the flag in black. On the many occasions I had seen the shirt worn, I recognized the familiar map image of the islands and left it at that. However, when Wain held it

up and I saw it at eye-level, the design startled me: the black islands suddenly resembled bullet holes in the flag. I asked Wain if that was what he had intended. In true Hawaiian fashion, he replied, “If that’s what you think they are.” It is a painful image and one that hints at the grief that is sometimes publicly expressed as anger, but most often is suffered in silence.



Figure 7: Ea by Wainwright Pi'ena

Who buys his shirts? “You don’t have to be Hawaiian. The gamut goes from people who can hardly afford it (they pay in quarters so I give a discount) to shoe executives. They are people who have an appreciation for things Hawaiian. From the young to very old people.” When I asked Wain about competitors, he replied, “I don’t see anybody as a competitor. I think there are enough shops out there for everyone.” What about the success of his business? “There is a right time and a right place to do everything. You have to be *pono* [balanced, in harmony, moral, just]. Once you have that, it moves and it goes. If you are not *pono*, no matter what you do, it won’t go.” Growth is not a motivating factor. In fact, it can be regarded as problematic.

The more you are out there, the more people see you, the more they are going to get weird on you. That’s why I like to be low-key...When you do it for money, it goes up and down. People who have that kind of attitude,

their lives are not stable. All they worship is money. In the long run, you pay for it.

Loui Cabebe's career is like that of no other interviewee. He began designing in the early 1980s with \$50 and the decision to start his own business. He showed a silk screener his designs of Kaua'i scenery and they sold immediately. Admiring the very popular muscle men T-shirts of the day, Loui wanted to do the same. However, his family thought otherwise: they wanted him to produce something more traditional and educational. His auntie told him, "You do it traditional for one year and you tell me what you feel." She had taught Hawaiian language and helped Loui with his shirt translations -- literally and figuratively. That is, she made sure his Hawaiian language was correct but she also helped him translate his dreams into designs, then an artist friend would help him execute the artwork. Fifteen years later, Loui still used those designs. "I now have a spiritual connection to my culture."

His company, Warrior Designs, features designs portraying the everyday life of warriors (not portrayed as muscle men). The shirts were once mass-produced but several years prior to the interview, his workshop was broken into and 100 dozen shirts were stolen. They were reportedly seen for sale at a craft fair in California, but were quickly sold out and never seen again. Customers urged him to stay in business but he felt it had grown "too big, too fast" for him. Now he prints enough shirts to get by on and also works on computers. The business went from "all-out sell to low-key production. I like it like this." The fact that his shirts are now less available only makes them the more desirable. Loui thought residents wore his shirts because "they are easy for them to wear. It is a statement for them to wear it. It shows their Hawaianness...It is cultural. It has *mana*. They can feel the *mana* that comes off of it. All the designs are blessed."

The warrior Ts are the color of Hawai'i's volcanic red soil -- literally, since they are dyed with it. Loui offered to show me how it was done, so we met on the beach at dawn the next day. After Loui chanted for our endeavor to be successful, we dipped a blank shirt in a bucket of soupy soil (dug from a specific area) and then in a tidepool. Later that day, after the shirt had

dried, he printed it with his Kilohoku design (The Stargazer). “Kilohoku” appears at the top of the design’s square block (on the back of the shirt) with the translation beneath it in smaller letters (Figure 8). On the left is a Hawaiian warrior wearing a *malo* (loincloth), facing forward, and seated in a small sailing canoe. One has a three-quarter view of him and the canoe is only hinted at by the sail behind him. To the right is a large wave with another canoe in the distance. The warrior is looking upward, where a crescent moon and a star appear in the sky. The design is the only one of the warrior series that Loui gives/sells to females. The rest are strictly for male use. He says he is asked constantly when he will produce shirts featuring *wahine* (female) warriors. He replies that he does not know: he designs what his dreams dictate.



Figure 8: Kilohoku by Loui Cabebe

Craig Neff produced T-shirts in high school, attended the University of Hawai‘i (as one of three Hawaiian students in the Art Department) and, several years thereafter, established his company, Hawaiian Force. “When I looked at the fine art market, it was high prices with a gallery taking half, so I put my ideas on T-shirts since they sell. From there it took off to all kinds of different things.” An activist from youth, Craig is a long-time member of the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana and was one of the seven persons appointed to the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission in 1993 (as described above).

A high school student at the time of the Hawaiian Renaissance and the *Hōkūle‘a*'s maiden voyage, Craig produced shirts that were “kind of radical.” Meant only for his own use, one shirt was printed with “Give Hawai‘i Back to the Hawaiians.” Another had “Hawaiian Blood” written in red, dripping letters against a black background. A third bore the message “Radical Hawaiian Tarorist: Without One’s Roots, One Becomes Ruthless!” (Figure 9). Craig recalled, “People were offended by the shirts, but a lot of Hawaiians wanted them...I wasn’t making them to sell but to express something that I felt wasn’t out there.” Nevertheless, so many people asked where he got his shirts and wanted to buy them that he began to sell his Ts at craft fairs. And now?

There are many more people doing it, copying it -- which is good. If you have a good product, they will go for it. I have seen a lot of people come and go -- and some stay. [There is] a wider market because people are becoming more knowledgeable on the subject. More people understand more, accept Hawaiians more, and want to express that more. More people participate -- even non-Hawaiians participate. These things have really grown. The mainland market -- there is a big hunger for things Hawaiian among Hawaiians on the mainland. They are rediscovering their culture too.

Because his shirts are sold mostly at craft fairs and in a very few stores (including his own in Hilo), they are not all that readily available. But “that is part of the appeal.” When Kmart made an offer to carry his line, Craig “refused to do it because that would label you. Local small businesses are struggling. [The large retailers] buy you out and lessen the quality. We would make a lot more money, but it would not fit in with what we are about or what we want to see as Hawaiians.” (See Kelly 2002 for the relationship between retail venues and the perceived authenticity of T-shirt messages.)

The ideas for his designs come from “being a Hawaiian person, the culture – getting inspiration and strength from my ancestors and family.” While the designs have to do with Hawaiian or local culture, “it isn’t one thing.” Consulting people and resource books, Craig researches the images as much as possible to make sure they are culturally correct.



Figure 9: Radical Hawaiian Terrorist by Craig Neff

Most of [the shirts] have messages. They are educational. People enjoy the design and the message. One shirt has different phases of the moon and deities. Another has different fish hooks and their purpose. It brings history alive on a contemporary shirt. People especially go for the oceanic stuff.

Most of the designs are one color, simple, strong. We go from radical to the simple *keiki* [children] thing.

Who buys the shirts? “Mostly locals -- not just Hawaiians. A good split between Hawaiians and locals. A lot of locals buy, especially the dresses.” The dresses are actually elongated T-shirts printed with the same design as the Ts. They are particularly popular among teachers on the neighbor islands. They are also worn by sovereignty activists, who thus visibly support other Hawaiians while signaling their separation from Western fashion. So loyal are his

customers that they notify Craig when they see others imitating his work. Who are his (legitimate) competitors? The answer went beyond the usual “I don’t see others as competitors.”

Wainwright Pi‘ena does dresses similar to Craig’s and they started doing them at the same time for the same market. So “Wain would be the closest in theory.” But they “are pretty good friends and do cultural things together, like paddling [canoes].” A fashion show was being planned as a Hawaiian language benefit; Craig, Wain, and several others were going to participate. Craig said, “I suggested we do something together, something fun. Everyone agreed. We would do something to show we support each other and not ‘I’m better than the other guys.’” Craig made it clear that he did not use his political position to benefit his business or his business to push his personal political agenda. “I support all issues. I try not to discourage others or get slotted into one area...I don’t want to be riding on PKO for my business, but I will share my views.”

To summarize, much of the imagery found on T-shirts produced by Hawaiians for their community (and others) has multi-layered meaning and is created with the intention of strengthening Hawaiians socially, culturally, politically, and spiritually. While the imagery reflects the past, it also envisions a future for Hawaiians radically different from that currently experienced. Based on dreams, the knowledge of community elders, and scientific data, the shirt designs express an alternative to American mainstream culture in a conscious, purposeful manner. The designs speak volumes in different registers to different audiences.

Conclusion

In this article, I have attempted to convey the deeper meaning behind the imagery that appears on T-shirts in Hawai‘i, in terms of its cultural, political, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Unlike the T-shirt images produced by corporate designers that are marketed to tourists and surfers (Kelly 2003), the shirts meant for locals and Hawaiians carry messages that recall childhood memories and strengthen social bonds. In some instances, the images are provocative; in others, esoteric. But in virtually all instances, they are heartfelt – literally embodying the

personal and communal sentiments that distinguish Hawaiian society as it confronts rapid globalization.

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- Brian Ito of Poi Pounder Hawai‘i, February 27, 1996
- Grant Kagimoto of Cane Haul Road, March 19, 1996
- Wainwright Pi‘ena of Kāpala ‘Ahu, April 9, 1996 and July 6, 2000
- Delro Rosco, December 9, 1997

Loui Cabebe of Warrior Designs, March 24, 1998

Chris Fayé, March 25, 1998

Craig Neff of Hawaiian Force, April 9, 1998

Wayne Nishimoto of Hawaii Nostalgia, July 2, 1998

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