Plantation Memories, Labor Identities, and the Celebration of Heritage

The Case of Hawaii's Plantation Village

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ABSTRACT: Plantation museums and memorials play different roles in coming to terms with a past of racialized violence. In this article, I briefly review the academic literature on plantations, refer to the plantation–race nexus, address the critical and acritical uses of plantation memories, discuss modes of musealizing plantations and memorializing labor, and present a community-based museum structure: Hawaii's Plantation Village. This museum project is consistent with a multiethnic narrative of Hawai'i, in that it provides both an overview of the plantation experience and a detailed account of the cultural heritage of each national group recruited for the sugar plantations. By providing a sense of historical belonging, a chronology of arrival, and a materialized representation of a lived experience, this museum plays an active and interactive role in the shaping of a collective memory of the plantation era, selecting the more egalitarian aspects of a parallel coexistence rather than the hierarchies, violence, tensions and land appropriation upon which the plantations rested.

KEYWORDS: Hawai'i, labor, memory, migration, plantations, race, Portuguese

In this article, I discuss the role of plantation museums in confronting, legitimizing, and filtering the racialized violence on which the plantation economy stood. I start with a brief review of the literature on plantation societies, discuss the plantation–race nexus, and highlight the renewed interest in plantations raised by contemporary approaches to the environment, the Anthropocene, cropscapes, and nonhuman agencies. Next, I compare different modes of instrumentalizing and displaying the memory of the plantation, some of which are critical of its violence, and some of which are oblivious to it. Some are focused on technical aspects of sugar production, while others are focused on its labor force. Finally, I present in detail Hawai'i's Plantation Village in Waipahu, O'ahu. This community-based museum is designed in accordance with the prevailing narrative of a multiethnic Hawai'i. While it provides visitors with an overview of the plantation experience in general, not excluding the discipline and violence endured by laborers, its main focus is on the specific cultural heritage of each one of the nationalities that arrived in Hawai'i to work in sugar. I argue that the museum project is consistent with an idealized view of Hawai'i's society as a multiethnic racial paradise. This image emerged in the 1920s and helped expunge

Museum Worlds: Advances in Research 8 (2020): 25–45 © The Author(s)
doi:10.3167/armw.2020.080104

from collective perception the racialized hierarchies that structured the labor force while also erasing from the picture the structural tension between natives and settlers regarding the appropriation of land and subsequent rights, entitlements, and impediments. I further argue that the presentation of a collective heritage composed of multiple distinct identities originating in the plantation era provides a tool that counterweights the unresolved and unsettled tensions of the contemporary post-plantation world.

Plantations and Plantation Studies

The word "plantation" may not be present in everyone's daily vocabulary. Or it may be there, but it likely refers to harvests, whether in a distant land or in a pot of organic tomatoes or other plants on one's balcony. Yet plantation, as we learn from the social sciences and history, is a central concept for the understanding of contemporary society's inequalities, asymmetries, and racialized social exclusion.

Social scientists use the word "plantation" for the capital- and labor-intensive monocultures that emerged at the intersection of empire and capitalism in the modern era. Whether growing sugar in the Caribbean and Brazil, cotton and tobacco in the southern United States, plus coffee, cocoa, copra, rubber, and tea in different parts of the world, plantations were the places where single commodities were produced for world markets that economic historians describe as "hungry," as if they were possessed of a preexisting quality rather than shaped and created by the trade in commodities. Plantations were the places where colonial wealth was amassed, where a number of Europeans prospered, where a much larger number of Africans endured enslavement, and where Indigenous peoples, environments, plants, and animals were pushed away to make room for the single-crop *latifundia*.[1] These were the places where the organization of labor equated to a dehumanization and vilification of human beings so extreme that it generated a cognitive system of hierarchized racial categories. In short, these were the places that produced "race" as we know it.[2]

The cross-disciplinary field of plantation studies examines the social and economic aspects of labor-intensive cash-crops in the Caribbean, Brazil, the United States, Southeast Asia, Mauritius, Fiji, and, under new frameworks, Europe, Africa, and East Asia. It documents a period of human history that combines colonial conquest, capital accumulation, human displacement, and ecological carnage. It also promotes conceptual developments articulating empire, capitalism, enslavement, indenture, the production of race, and the reproduction of class, as well as their connections to gender and other multiple and intersectional social asymmetries.

Anthropologists and historians have contributed to this field with monographs, comparative studies, and theory-making. A first generation of Caribbeanist anthropologists, including Sidney Mintz (1960, 1985) and Eric Wolf (1982), and historians like Eric Williams (1944) and Philip Curtin (1990) inspired brilliant scholarship on pan-Caribbean plantation societies and their racialized aftermath (Dominguez 1986; Giovannetti 2006; Jung 2006; Price 1973; Williams 1989) along with insightful works on Brazilian sugar and coffee estates (Lopes 1978; Schwartz 1985; Stolcke 1986).

The literature on United States plantations and race is still expanding and too broad to review here, yet a mention should be made of the Chicago-school sociologist Edgar Tristan Thompson. Although he remained obscure to the wider scholarly community for decades, Thompson had a clear understanding of the ways in which different plantation societies generated their own racialized systems. As early as 1932, he articulated a visionary formula: "plantation as a race making situation" (Thompson 1975: 115–117, 2010). He also referred to Hawai'i's idiosyncratic

plantation system and its impact on an original racialized classification of laborers. His main subject, however, was the southern United States plantations, the root of the racialized social inequalities of his time and, may I add, of our time.

To summarize the plantation–race nexus, or the process of racialization by plantation labor, the plantation produced "race" as a cognitive tool that organized difference among human groups into hierarchies. It did so in ways so extreme that it placed some groups as subhumans and others above everyone else, naturalizing enslavement while legitimizing the entitlement of others. The pseudosciences of racialism further elaborated on differences in aptitudes between migrant groups, naturalizing their position in the labor hierarchies. In order to emphasize the dynamic nature of the historical race-making process and to keep distance from the knowledge of "races" produced by racialist pseudosciences, I will use the term "racialization."

While the literature on plantation, enslavement, racialism, post-empire diasporas, and reconfigurations of racism mostly refers to the Atlantic world, historians and anthropologists have also explored the Indian Ocean and Pacific areas. Be that through the conventional political economy approach to land–capital–labor and related cultural production, or through novel explorations regarding the making of race, class, gender, emotions, and other expanding topics, historians and anthropologists have analyzed the Indian Ocean plantation societies in Mauritius (Carter 1995; Teelock 1998), Sri Lanka (Jayawardena and Kurian 2015; Kurian 1982), and Sumatra and Java (Stoler 1985, 1995). The specificities of the plantation world in the Pacific and the racialized systems it generated have also been subject to scholarship, which has addressed, for example, the practices of "blackbirding," that is, the capture of South Sea Islanders for plantations in Australia, Fiji, and even Hawai'i (Bennett 1976; Brown 2007; Rosenthal 2018). The massive displacement of indentured South Asians throughout the British Empire, including in Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, Trinidad, British Guiana, and vicinities in the Atlantic and Fiji in the Pacific, has also been explored (Hassankhan et al. 2016; Kale 1998; Kumar 2017; Lal 2019; Lal et al. 1993; Northrup 1995). Hawai'i's specificities, its conversion to a sugar economy while still an Indigenous kingdom later annexed by the United States, and its distinctive multiethnic labor force, composed mostly of East Asians, Europeans, Filipinos, and Puerto Ricans, have also been addressed by a large number of historians of labor (Beechert 1985; Jung 2003, 2010; Lal et al. 1993; Takaki 1983).

Recently, plantations have captivated new audiences beyond the traditional fields of political economy, colonialism, and labor. Science and technology studies and human/nonhuman approaches to the environment have revisited the plantation world with fresh and energetic proposals, such as the anthropological discussion on the Plantationocene (Haraway 2015; Mitman 2019), the history of science and technology approach to cropscapes (Bray et al. 2019), the multidisciplinary takes on plantation afterlives (Thomas 2019), and the plantation as a key to express wider concerns about contemporary devastations (Taussig 2018).

Plantation Memories, Plantation Tourism, Plantation Museums

The potential of the plantation as an organizing concept extends beyond academia into the field of memory and heritage. Grada Kilomba's (2010) art project and book *Plantation Memories* exemplifies the use of the concept as a tool of resistance and critical thought. The artist-author examines the contemporary experience of racism as an enactment of colonial violence and its racialized asymmetries. For her, the plantation synthesizes the embodied memory of violence and becomes a critical concept for fighting back against the daily bigotries of racism.[3]

The plantation can also be instrumentalized in the opposite direction to cater for a market of nostalgia that romanticizes a past era of glamor, pomp, and elegance, and that does not realize

that the privilege of some classes of people rested upon the naturalized servitude of others. A most unabashed example could be found, for a time, at Fazenda Santa Eufrásia, a former coffee plantation in Vassouras, Brazil. It offered visitors a glimpse of an imagined genteel lifestyle in which they were greeted by the lady of the mansion in costume and served refreshments by silent slave impersonators (Olliveira 2016). Santa Eufrásia's operations were criticized by Afro-Brazilian communities and others, and the estate had to reconfigure its tours (*Último Segundo* 2017). In the southern United States, some plantation tourism also glamorizes the big house and the lifestyle that went with it while avoiding any reference to the tremendous asymmetries and racialized violence beneath that grandeur—a fact that literature on museums has critically approached and elaborated upon (Bruner 1993; Carter et al. 2014; Eichstedt and Small 2002; Galles and Perry 2014; Modlin 2008; Skipper and Davidson 2018).

Expressions of plantation heritage throughout the world vary between the two modes referred to above. Museums and memorials dedicated to slavery address the plantation as a key to understanding the historical process of enslavement and the racialization that came with it; the Louisiana's Whitney Plantation, for example, was conceived as a learning center about slavery (Amsden 2015). Or they address it as part of a wider history, as at the International Museum of Slavery in Liverpool (Hourcade 2013) or the Smithsonian's National Museum for African American History and Culture in Washington, DC (Holt 2018). In recent years, scholars and curators have debated the agenda and challenges of interpreting slavery, race, and racism at historic sites and existing museums (see, for example, Araujo 2020; Brooms 2012; Carter et al. 2014; Eichstedt and Small 2002; Galles and Perry 2014; Message 2018; and Skipper and Davidson 2018).

In the Caribbean, some plantation sites allow visitors to get closer to the materialities of enslavement, as at Suriname's Jodensavanne or Martinique's Savane des Esclaves.[4] Near the other extreme, some high-end tourist spots in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, and Pacific Islands name resorts after preexisting plantations but make no or little reference to their actual history; at most, they might show a few pictures themed around the commodity that was formerly produced in these locations.

Most commonly, plantation museums are focused on the technicalities of the production and processing of the plantation's key commodity, whether it be sugar, tea, cocoa, coffee, or cotton. Mauritius offers good examples of this approach with the tea plantation of Bois Chéri (Kantu 2018), the rum distillery of Chamarel (more of a tourist attraction than a celebration of a tradition) and, above all, L'Aventure du Sucre sugar museum, which resulted from the combined efforts of the government, the local sugar businesses, and the scholarly community.

Occasionally, plantations are converted into theme parks, as in the Dole Pineapple Plantation in northern Oʻahu, Hawaiʻi. There, visitors are offered a crash course in plantations, soils, markets, species, labor, migrants, lives, landscapes, and so forth via the loudspeakers of a miniature train carriage during a ride through the fields, which is followed by a visit to a huge pineapple-themed store offering endless opportunities to shop. The experience has been entirely sanitized of the conflicts over the use of Indigenous land and the violent nature of the plantation system—a reality that still impinges in Hawaiʻi's present-day inequalities, as articulated by several scholars (Fujikane 2008; Labrador 2015; Okamura 2008; Trask 1999).

On the island of Kauaʻi, Kilohana Plantation also offers a plantation railway and shopping experience for visitors, including a tour of the former mansion, that is, again, untethered from its labor history. The former McBryde Sugar Plantation, now owned by the Kauai Coffee Company, allows visitors to walk through the fields and learn about the plants and then go to the cafeteria to sample the coffee and buy goods before buying more goods in the plantation shop. It is a visit to plantation life without much of the lives lived in the plantations. An exception, also in Kauaʻi,

is the Grove Farm, which, with its genteel style of musealization, honors the lives, challenges, and achievements of its founders (see Krauss and Alexander 1984). Even so, there is little offered about the lives of plantation workers.

Of more interest for my purposes here are the plantation museums and memorials that showcase the workforce recruited, the lives thereby shaped, and the identities thus created. In this, they intersect with migration and labor museums that memorialize the workforce that came from afar through bondage systems or contracts or on their own initiative, as exemplified by the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration in New York (Pardue 2015) and the Aapravatsi Ghat Museum in Port-Louis, Mauritius, dedicated to the thousands of South Asian families that arrived as indentured laborers to work in the Mauritian sugar plantations (Peerthum and Gopauloo 2017).

Along those lines, there is also a good number of plantation-*cum*-migration museums in Hawaiʻi that depict the multiethnic labor force composed of different groups that once came to the islands to work on the sugar and pineapple fields: Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Puerto Rican, Filipino. Near Kauaʻi's Kōloa Plantation, the first that pioneered the mass production of sugar in the archipelago, there is such a monument to the workforce, depicting a group of figures, each one representing a labor-force group, and all of them together composing Hawaiʻi's society. Nearby, the Kauai Museum in Lihue has a section that combines the materialities of the plantation and a narrative about its diverse workforce that highlights the different national backgrounds involved.

Figure 1. Kōloa Sugar Monument, Kauaʻi, Hawaiʻi, 2018. Photo courtesy of the author.

On the island of Maui, the Alexander and Baldwin Sugar Plantation Museum emphasizes the technicalities of planting, harvesting, and processing cane for sugar production; narrates the business ventures of its founders; and also mentions the variety of the workforce as having shaped the multiethnic face of Hawai'i's society. Also, on Maui, the Kepaniwai Heritage Gardens Park contains "displays that honor the cultures that contributed to modern Maui. There are sections with architecture, gardens, and statues, portraying the Chinese, Japanese, New Englanders, Portuguese, Native Hawaiian, Korean, Puerto Rican and Filipino people."[5]

On the island of Hawai'i, or the Big Island, there can be found smaller, yet prominent counterparts run by volunteers. The most remarkable of them is the Hawaii Plantation Museum in Papaikou, whose founder and main activist, Wayne Subica—who self-identifies as being of Portuguese descent—has gathered a vast collection of plantation memorabilia. With the help of friends and associates, Subica keeps the museum open, runs educational programs, and publishes illustrated books on plantation themes.[6] A few miles north, the Honokaa Plantation Museum has a collection of plantation-related objects, and curator Larry Ignatio provides tours by appointment.

In Waipahu, on the island of O'ahu, Hawaii's Plantation Village stands out as a large, open-air museum. It has a structured and proactive outreach program for the public that it has been running since 1992. It is particularly eloquent, in that it exemplifies, as discussed in the following sections, how communities create heritage places as a way of coming to terms with a past—the plantation era—that shaped their own existence in the present.

Plantation Village: Hawai'i's Sugar and Its Workforce

Hawaii's Plantation Village in Waipahu is a quite unique museum, occupying a vast open-air area next to the grounds of a former plantation and sugar factory. Different from some of its counterparts in the archipelago and elsewhere, the museum's main focus is not the history of sugar per se—and on its production technology, economy, and ecology—but on plantation life as experienced by the different groups who were brought to Hawai'i as sugar laborers, who stayed, and who became part of the islands' social tissue along with the descendants of white missionaries, who eventually became the plantation owners, and along with Indigenous Hawaiians, whose land was gradually taken to make room for the plantation economy. According to the Plantation Village's webpage:

> Hawaii's Plantation Village is an outdoor museum telling the story of life on Hawaii's sugar plantations (c. 1850–1950). The Village includes restored buildings and replicas of plantation structures, including houses of various ethnic groups and community buildings such as the plantation store, infirmary, bathhouse and manager's office. We share the story of Hawaii's many cultures: including Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Okinawan, Portuguese and Puerto Rican.[7]

What makes this project so interesting is the centrality of the home cultures of the laborers and the focus on their actual housing, clothing, body practices, and other materialities and sociabilities. Relying on the contributions of volunteers from these different communities, Plantation Village gives visibility to the groups who entered the plantation as subalterns and made their way up to full citizenship.

Before moving on to describe and analyze the museum in more detail, it is worth noting the particular history that led to Hawai'i's singularity in the plantation–labor–race complex, or what I have been referring to as the plantation–race nexus, or racialization process. Unlike in the

Caribbean, Mauritius, or Fiji, in Hawai'i the sugar economy did not emerge in the context of a European empire, although the archipelago later became (in 1898) a colony—or "annexed territory"—of the United States (Coffman 2016; Silva 2004). Also, unlike in the Caribbean, Hawaiians were familiar with the sugar cane that previously grew there (Kessler 2015; MacLennan 2014). Throughout the nineteenth century, Hawai'i was an independent kingdom ruled by Indigenous monarchs, with a wide network of diplomatic and commercial relationships with other nations, and open to the influence of some missionary settlers (mostly Protestant Christians from the United States, particularly from New England and from Pennsylvania and Kentucky plus some Francophone Catholics). The American missionaries and their descendants, mostly referred to as *haole* (then used to refer to white foreigners), played a crucial role in the development of Hawai'i's sugar economy, partly in alliance with the local aristocracy (*ali'i*). The missionaries' involvement in sugar production influenced the fact that, unlike in the Caribbean, cane was used to produce only sugar, not rum or spirits (Kessler 2015).

In a process that started in the mid-nineteenth century, Hawaiian land, once a place of sandalwood forests and extensive cultivation of the beloved taro that was at the center of Hawaiians' traditional diet and associated rituals of growth and consumption, became a continuous series of sugar plantations. The privatization of land and the establishment of a trade agreement with the United States for the purposes of sugar commercialization were key elements in that transformation (Kessler 2015; MacLennan 2014). The production of sugar required a labor force that was not available in the archipelago, which was in dramatic population decline mostly due to imported diseases. Thus, contract workers were recruited at different moments, from different sites, and under different policies of population and subjacent conceptions of race (Bastos 2018; Miller 2019): from Hawai'i, from the South Pacific Islands, and from China in larger numbers; then from the Portuguese islands of Madeira and the Azores; and later from Japan. After Hawai'i was annexed by the United States, a few restrictions regarding migration from China, and also the terms of contract work, were implemented. Koreans, Spanish, and more Portuguese were contracted; and later, in the largest numbers, so were Puerto Ricans and, above all, Filipinos.

The circumstances of recruitment and singularities of this diverse workforce have been subject to robust scholarship on plantation labor, nation, ethnicity, race, and gender (Beechert 1985; Dusinberre 2019; Kraus-Friedberg 2008; Labrador 2015; Lebra-Chapman 1991; López 2005; Lutz 2009; Merry 2003; Okamura 2014; Poblete 2012; Rohrer 2010; Takaki 1983). Workers from different nationalities were kept in place by a complex hierarchization that involved different salaries and a production of difference that was aligned with nationality and ancestry while evoking race, sometimes in quite explicit ways (Bastos 2018; Merry 2003; Okihiro 1991; Rohrer 2016). The national groups represented in the Plantation Village include Chinese, Japanese, Okinawan, Korean, Filipino, Portuguese, Puerto Rican, Hawaiian and Polynesian. Although there were other groups that also came to the plantations—Germans, Spaniards, Norwegians, Swedes, Russians, Mexicans, and possibly some South Americans—they did not remain there in large enough numbers to be perceived as distinct social and ethnic groups.

Hawaii's Plantation Village provides a materialized venue for revisiting the plantation era and learning about plantation life in general, and about each group's heritage in particular. The Plantation Village open-air museum provides reconstructions of the communal buildings, such as the general store where workers could buy their supplies, the infirmary where they were treated when injured or sick, and the office where they were paid. More importantly, there are separate typical houses and gardens representing each group, plus some cultural icons, such as a Japanese bathhouse, a Portuguese bread oven, and a Chinese temple and forum. Visitors experience a multisensory tour of the Plantation Village while learning from volunteer guides

about Hawai'i's plantation history and the specificities of each group that came to work in the cane fields. As mentioned on the website,

> our local guides take you on a journey back to the early 1900s where you can experience more than 25 authentic plantation homes and structures featuring personal artifacts, clothing, furniture and art placed in their original settings. Unusual plants brought from China, Portugal, Japan, Puerto Rico, Korea, Okinawa, Polynesia and the Philippines by immigrants from their native lands provide delicious fruit samples during the tour.[8]

Figure 2. Hawaii's Plantation Village entrance. Photo courtesy of the author.

Figure 3. Hawaii's Plantation Village alley. Photo courtesy of the author.

The content of each national house is made up of objects and memorabilia given by families belonging to that group, or reconstructions of elements that evoke their cultural distinctiveness, like religious icons, utensils, and kitchen, eating and sleeping settings, among other things. These displays may or may not correspond rigorously to what would be chosen to represent the nation in the countries of origin, but locally they do well as symbols of cultural distinctiveness. Much emphasis is also given to the gardens, trees, and plants associated with each national group. For example, a detailed analysis of the types of rice favored by the Chinese and Japanese communities is also offered in the tour.[9]

Figure 4. Chinese Society House at Hawaii's Plantation Village. Photo courtesy of the author.

Figure 5. Portuguese *Forno* (bread oven) at Hawaii's Plantation Village. Photo courtesy of the author.

Figure 6. Japanese *Tofu-Ya* (tofu factory) at Hawaii's Plantation Village. Photo courtesy of the author.

Figure 7. Puerto-Rican house interior at Hawaii's Plantation Village. Photo courtesy of the author.

Besides receiving occasional visitors and organized school groups, Plantation Village hosts annual events that attract large numbers of people: Chinese New Year celebrations; the Japanese Bon Dance festival; the Haunted Village during Halloween; the Puerto Rican Celebration of the Three Kings in January; the Filipino *Fiesta* in May; and the Portuguese *Festa* in August. Sometimes those festivals merge into multiethnic events. The E Pluribus Unum Multi-Cultural Festival, for example, was sponsored by the Korean American Foundation Hawaii in September 2019, and celebrated Asian and Pacific heritage with a Korean Farmer's Music and Dance, a Chinese Emperor Line Dance, and "performances from Waipahu Intermediate School's Dance Team, Halla Huhm Dance Studio, Marshallese Dancers, Chuukese Dancers, Pohnpeian Dancers, Tamagusuku Ryu Senju Kai Frances Nakachi Ryubu Dojo, and Yin Tsai Song and Dance Group."[10] At a double celebration of the Portuguese and Puerto Ricans in 2017, sellers of *malasadas* and *empanadas* competed for clients, and the music and dance alternated between the traditions of those two groups. Popular stand-up comedian Frank de Lima, ukulele[11] artist Frank Suster, and the Camões Dance Group cheered the crowds with Portuguese-Hawaiian music and dance, alternating with Caribbean music, while food stands, memorabilia sales points, genealogy consultations, and smaller exhibits entertained the visitors throughout the day.

Figure 8. Announcement for the 2018 Portuguese Festival, with the symbols of Hawaii Council of Portuguese Heritage and the Rooster. Photo courtesy of the author.

Figure 9. Frying *Malasadas*. Photo courtesy of the author.

Figure 10. Watching the show. Photo courtesy of the author.

A Note on Hawaiʻi's Portuguese

In 2018, the Portuguese celebrated their *Festa* by themselves, and again counted on Frank de Lima, Frank Suster, the ʻUkulele Guild of Hawaiʻi, the Camões Dance Group, and a large number of stands supported by different associations like the Holy Ghost Society, and others, to entertain the crowds. Dan Nelson, Robert Castro, and other members of the Portuguese Genealogical and Historical Society of Hawaiʻi were busy all day, helping people find their family roots. Josephine Carreira displayed a collection of traditional clothing and sang *chamarrita* and other folk songs. Willetta Centeio kept the children's pavilion active while also dancing. Larry Cravalho raised awareness for a future Portuguese heritage building. Wilma Bodreau and other community members sold delicacies, traditional ceramics, and lace from what used to be the store and office rooms, while many other cultural activists kept the stands busy selling *malasada* donuts, *vinhadalhos* sandwiches, Portuguese sausage hotdogs, *massa* sweetbread, lupini beans, shaved ice, and other delicacies, along with traditional ceramics, clothing, and trinkets, all in a festive mode of celebrating their heritage.

Who are the Portuguese in Hawaiʻi, whose distinctive identity remains to our days? While the history of the hardships of the displacement of the Portuguese from the overpopulated islands of Madeira and the Azores, and their successful settlement and upward mobility in Hawaiʻi and California have been documented (Bastos 2018; Caldeira 2010; Correa and Knowlton 1982; Felix and Senecal 1978; Freitas 1979), they are relatively absent from the analytical literature on Hawaiʻi's ethnicity and racialization processes.

As noted by Sally Engle Merry, they are "white but not *haole*" (Merry 2003: 205). I heard the very same expression from contemporary Hawaiʻi's Portuguese, reflecting a mix of ethnic pride and relief at not being the main target of anticolonial resentment as *haoles* are by default. In the past, the Portuguese were occasionally described as "caucasian but not white" (Lassalle 2016). In fact, although of European descent, they were not lumped into the same category as the European-descent plantation owners; according to James Geschwender and colleagues (1988), this was the result of the fact that the Portuguese entered Hawaiʻi as plantation laborers, not owners, and therefore were distinctively racialized in the hierarchies of the plantation society (Bastos 2018, 2019a, 2019b).

There were broadly two periods of sponsored migration of Portuguese islanders to Hawaiʻi: (1) from 1878 to 1887, under King Kalākaua's sovereignty; and (2) from 1899 to 1913, after Hawaiʻi was annexed by the United States. An estimated sixteen thousand to twenty thousand Portuguese migrants entered Hawaiʻi before their immigration was stopped for good, both due to the high costs of sponsorship and obstacles raised in Portugal. The Portuguese remained a minority within a majorly Asian labor force; the latter more often pushed for changes in the working conditions via strikes and labor movements, which ultimately propelled social change in Hawaiʻi. Retrospectively, the Portuguese report having often been the *luna* ("foremen") in the plantations, which provides a metaphor for their intermediary position in the racialized hierarchies. Indeed, they did enjoy some privileges, including higher wages and contracts, which allowed entire families to migrate, while Asians had less pay and migrated mostly as single men.

Until the census of 1930, the Portuguese were counted as a separate category, just like other racialized groups, whether they worked in plantations or had moved into urban jobs and successful businesses. With the census of 1940, the separate category for the Portuguese was suppressed. Many other things also changed. After World War II, the historical process of Hawaiʻi's whitening, which had started with the taking of Indigenous land for plantations and which peaked in the early decades of annexation to the United States, gave way to new arrangements

in which Asian majorities also shared power with haoles. For the rest of the twentieth century, the Portuguese remained as an ancestry reference shared by many, often in combination with other ancestries—Chinese, Hawaiian, etc. They are a group that cultivates pride in its ancestral culture, which is celebrated in food, dance, religious festivals like the Catholic Holy Ghost, praise for a distant homeland, and involvement in community politics.

The Politics of Representation: A Multiethnic Labor Force and a "Racial Paradise" amid Multiple Tensions

Plantation Village emerged as a community initiative supported by cultural activists and community businessmen who fought to preserve and honor their heritage. The founders included Mits Shito, Major Okada, and Goro Arakawa. The latter, a resident of Waipahu of Okinawan descent, had a most preeminent role. Owner of a store that once served the needs of the plantation workers (including supplying the *palaka* shirts that he turned into a fashion), Arakawa had a solid appreciation of plantation lifestyle and was committed to honoring and showcasing it. His obituary describes him as "a civic leader, historian, promoter and advocate" who "devoted much of his life to ensuring Waipahu will always be remembered as the gritty and humble yet proud plantation town where immigrants from different homelands worked side by side in the cane fields and factories and developed a shared appreciation of each other" (Pang 2019). In addition to this commitment to memorializing Waipahu as a plantation site, Arakawa also had a preference for a musealizing genre inspired by what he had learned while a college student on the east coast of the United States. There, he had "gained an appreciation of the museums that depicted phases of American history," particularly the "outdoor, living museums, which directly inspired the focus on guided tours and interactive presentations featuring music lessons or ethnic dressing for school students" (Pang 2019).

The central project of Plantation Village thus had a double purpose: to bring alive the memory of plantation times and to exhibit the heritage of the different groups that composed its workforce and made Hawai'i's society. This endeavor faces two opposite tensions. On the one hand, it challenges the whitening of Hawai'i's history, which has been powerfully embedded in plantation history. On the other hand, it claims a role in Hawai'i's history for those who came as labor migrants and whose lives became entangled with the occupation of the land by plantations, which created tension with the Indigenous Hawaiians, whose lives were estranged by the occupation.[12] Hawai'i's scholars of different ethnicities have debated the problem in different terms, whether theorizing settler colonialism (Fujikane 2018; Trask 1993), conceptualizing the "local" (see, e.g., King 2014; Miyares 2008; Rosa 2014), or keeping an agenda of Kānaka Maoli authenticity (Osorio 2002; Silva 2004).

Carving out their collective memory amid these tensions, supporters of the Plantation Village celebrate their group identities in the language of a multiethnic society. While that language is consistent with a narrative of Hawai'i as a paradise of racial diversity and harmony, it also tends to suppress the racialized hierarchies upon which the plantation economy stood, and the ways in which plantation owners and foremen played upon their differences (language, religion, habits, material culture, stereotypes, and other putative attributes) as a means of keeping the workers separate by nationalities and under control. Labor historians are keen to maintain that the separation of nation-based groups was a way to divide the labor force and keep it from insurgence (Beechert 1985; Jung 2010; Takaki 1983). The sociologists who first elaborated Hawai'i's society, however, seem to have been influenced by the emergent ideology of a local racial paradise and, in turn, have influenced a collective image shared by many residents. The main protagonists of

that movement are Romanzo Adams (1929, 1937) and Andrew Lind (1928, 1938), both scholars of the Chicago School and pioneers of the Sociology Department at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa. They worked with students and community members to promote social research and address what seemed to be a compressed history of race relations. Between the 1920s and 1950s, they worked extensively on topics of race, hybrid families, interracial friendships, and racial experiences at work (Anderson 2012; Bastos 2019a). They used "ancestry" to overcome the difficulties of using "race" or "ethnicity" to describe the descendants of the labor migrants who we now find reorganizing themselves under the very same definitions at the Plantation Village museum. Although ancestry and heritage help overcome the problems with the terms "race" and "ethnicity," these terms are still a matter of relevant analytic debate (Anderson 2012; Lee and Baldoz 2008; Merry 2003; Miyares 2008; Rohrer 2016).

To conclude, the peoples who once came to Hawaiʻi as contract workers from Japan, China, Portugal, Korea, the Philippines and other places have held on to some of the ethnic markers as part of their group's identification and are using them as an active resource in present-day culturalized politics of identity. Through the language of museums and heritage sites, they display those distinctive features as a way of celebrating both their particular group and their belonging to the wider society, while suppressing from the horizon of memory the experience of hierarchized racialization once central to plantation life. Also suppressed from general view is the central question of how plantations were key in the making of a colonial state that dispossessed Native Hawaiians from their land.

In a critical analysis of efforts to build a Filipino community center in Waipahu, Roderik Labrador argues that the "quest for a fair share," framed as part of the immigrant pursuit of the American dream, has the effect of reinforcing the hierarchies of the settler-colonial state, while the colonization of Native Hawaiians continues (Labrador 2015: 127). He further argues that "Filipino history of labor exploitation and struggles for upward mobility are often framed within a problematic multiculturalist ideology" and "an illusion of racial or multicultural paradise," which is "rooted in U.S. colonialism" (2015: 135). The devastation, land dispossession, and populational collapse caused to Native Hawaiians had as a counterpart the policies of immigrant labor recruitment that brought so many peoples into the archipelago in ways that were everything but egalitarian. But that is a painful history to remember, and one painfully remembered by activists of Hawaiian sovereignty, while it is largely absent in the narrations of multicultural harmony and coexistence.

Hawaii's Plantation Village can thus be read in multiple ways. While engaging with the debates on museum activism and communities (Bienkowski 2014; Janes and Sandell 2019; Schlehe et al. 2010; Schorch 2014), we can read it as a community initiative, upheld by volunteers, which provides material evidence and physical context onto which groups can project their collective identifications in a broader narrative of arrival, struggle, and success. Through the creation of heritage, it helps to shape a memory that selects some elements over others: housing, plants, layout, objects, cultural references to an ancestral motherland, rather than the violent experience of plantation labor and the structural violence of Indigenous land dispossession through the plantation economy. But Hawaii's Plantation Village is not oblivious to that inherent violence; underneath the presented narrative of multicultural coexistence, there is an acknowledgment of the central harshness of the plantation; the dehumanization of labor, represented by the use of badge bango numbers (shaped in different forms for each nationality) instead of names; and the constant struggle, survival, resilience, and progress that has brought contemporary descendants to a point of visiting and celebrating their ancestral labor identities and their role in Hawaiʻi's society, past and present. Whether this acknowledgment is likely to expand to address further complexities and tensions is a challenge facing today's curators.

Ackowledgments

Research for this article was funded by the European Research Council Advanced Grant #695573. I am thankful to the many people who helped me in Hawai'i by sorting through the literature, documents, genealogies, heritage places, museums, history, society, and life in general. The original paper was delivered at the "Voices out of the Dark? Contemporary Museum-Like Practices and Culturalized Politics" session at the 117th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association ("Resistance, Resilience, Adaptation"), San Jose, California, 17 November 2018. I would like to thank Paula Mota Santos for the encouragement, support, and suggestions; the panel members and attendees for their comments; and Nicholas Miller, Marta Macedo, and Deborah Pope for reading preliminary versions of this article. I also want to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions.

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NOTES

1. The fact that *latifundia* is the Latin word for the large estates specializing in large crops (wine, olive oil, wheat) and labored by serfs and slaves in the conquest lands of the Roman empire reveals how this structure is rooted far back in time in the Mediterranean/European societies. Much of the land-tenure pyramidal structure remained after the fall of the Roman empire, revived by religious orders in the European Middle Ages, and reinvented in the conquest territories of European empires in alliance with finance, markets and traffic in enslaved people across the continents.
2. For the plantation–labor–race complex, see the works emerging from The Colour of Labour project at http://colour.ics.ulisboa.pt/publications/.
3. The concept of postmemory for passing an actual experience of collective trauma on to the next generations was theorized by Marianne Hirsch (2008) in reference to the Holocaust. Margarida Calafate Ribeiro and colleagues (2012) use it for the indirect experience of colonial wars and empire. The link between plantation violence and daily racism has a wider resonance, as explored by Grada Kilomba and other artists and authors.
4. Thanks to Harold Sijlbing for the visit to Jodensavanne included in the Suriname Conference on "Slavery, Indentured Labour, Migration, Diaspora and Identity Formation" in June 2018.
5. From https://www.mauihawaii.org/sights/heritage-kepaniwai-gardens/, last visited in September 2020. My thanks to Audrey Rocha Reed for the most instructive visits in Maui, including to the Iao Vaelly and the Kepaniwai park, but above all, to the impressive Portuguese Heritage Center and its collections.
6. My thanks to Wayne Subica and friends for a wonderful visit and for wonderful conversations in October 2018.
7. Hawaii's Plantation Village website: http://www.hawaiiplantationvillage.org/.
8. Hawaii's Plantation Village website: http://www.hawaiiplantationvillage.org/.
9. Visitors learn that the Chinese, who were the first migrant group, preferred rice to *poi,* the taro-based main staple of the traditional Hawaiian diet. As the Hawaiian population decline reduced the consumption and production of taro, some vacant taro terraces were used as rice paddy fields, and rice

become the largest local product after sugar. However, when the Japanese arrived, they preferred the short-grained rice produced in California rather than the local product, which in the end lost out to the mass-produced mainland rice. Thanks to Carol Takahashi for the kind guided visit in August 2017.

10. *Plantation Village News*, Fall 2019.
11. For a complete account of the ukulele's Portuguese origins and its Hawaiian and cosmopolitan developments, see Tranquada and King (2012).
12. See the concerns expressed in a letter appended to Hawaii's Plantation Village Facebook page on 30 December 2019: "It concerns me that this part of Hawaii's history (The Plantation Era) is being both discounted and derided by others who say that 'this Hawaii is not the Hawaii we need to put forth,' and that 'every culture in Hawaii is part of the matrix of what makes Hawaii.'"

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