

Losing the Aloha

It was January 16, 1893 when it all started. Queen Lili'uokalani was sitting peacefully in her palace when hundreds of U.S. troops came flooding in, unlawfully invading the Hawaiian Kingdom without reason. Queen Lili'uokalani was then held at gunpoint and forced to give up her throne. The Queen, so tired of seeing her people hurt and killed, reluctantly surrendered to the U.S. in hopes to abolish any more blood shed. The next day Hawai'i was officially overthrown by the U.S. government and since then, culture in Hawai'i has never been the same.

Fifty years from now, I see a powerless nation made only for the purposes of tourism. Any remnants of culture and Hawaiian history will be completely forgotten. Tourists will continue to use Hawai'i as their own private paradise and will be completely ignorant to the damage being caused by them. Any sacred land left will be completely owned by foreigners and buried by buildings and redundant cities. No one will remember the beauty of Hawai'i and its culture. I see a completely unfamiliar place, a Hawai'i I could never recognize, and a place I wouldn't want to be. This needs to be stopped now.

People need to learn about the history of Hawai'i, know what is happening to our home. My first solution is to have Hawaiian Studies a priority in all schools. Large or small, public or private, from K-12, students need to learn the history of our people. We live in Hawai'i, we use its resources, live on its land, so I feel it's only right, at bare minimum, to know the stories of this land. To know and understand why Hawai'i is the way it is now and to learn about our ancient ancestors/ali'i. Personally, I was starved of any sort of Hawaiian studies until 7th grade. It was only then that I realized how much Hawai'i lost. Learning the culture of our islands is so important, especially for the younger generations. We need to start educating them early on to

engrave the stories of Hawai'i in their minds. By teaching them and recognizing the problems in Hawai'i we can not only spread knowledge, but inspire change.

One of the major problems contributing to loss of culture in Hawai'i is the amount of tourists visiting day by day. About 249,000 tourists visit Hawai'i on any given day, and there were a total of 10,424,995 tourists in 2019. According to an article by the Sustainable Tourism Study Native Hawaiian Advisory Group, "many Native Hawaiians feel the industry's growth has contributed to a degradation of their cultural values; compromised their cultural integrity in the global marketplace; devalued their wahi-pana (sacred places); and seriously compromised a Native Hawaiian sense of place in places like Waikīkī." Tourists are fed illusions about the Hawaiian islands to make Hawai'i seem like the perfect paradise. This causes stereotypes of Hawai'i to form and leaves impressions that they can just do whatever they please when visiting. They see Hawai'i as plastic leis and coconut bras and it's a complete mockery of the Hawaiian culture. Tourists come to see Hawai'i, so I say that's exactly what we should give them. Give them the real Hawai'i. We can use tourists as an opportunity to spread knowledge about the Hawaiian culture and how to be respectful to the land whenever visiting. Locals tend to have a lot of negativity towards tourists, but most of the time tourists only act out because they are uneducated on the topic of Hawai'i. By properly educating tourists about Hawai'i, we can avoid situations like these all together, and allow culture in Hawai'i to thrive once again.

My last solution is to have more TV shows about Hawaiian culture made. With the new modern world changing and adapting so quickly, technology has become part of our everyday life. Especially with everything going on currently with Covid-19, we have become reliant on technology to go through our everyday life. I think that in order to use this in a positive way, we can make a TV show that is still fun and entertaining, but can also provide education on the

Hawaiian culture. Similar to shows like Dora teaching Spanish and Ni hao kai lan teaching Chinese, this TV show would teach all about the hawaiian culture and is specifically aimed at the younger generation. This is because, as I said earlier, starting them young can help to engrave and imprint the ideas of Hawaiian culture into their minds. This can lead to them wanting to spread the knowledge and can inspire many to help Hawai'i in any ways possible and to make a change.

Clarence T.C. Ching believed in providing education for the ones in need and this is exactly what I'm trying to do! I want to provide education of the culture of Hawai'i to schools all around the island. I want the people to know and understand the problems happening and want to fix them. Hawai'i's culture was taken from us, and with my solutions, I hope to take this culture back, by spreading knowledge everywhere. By acting now and teaching people the culture and history of the Hawaiian islands we can inspire others to make a change. We can spread knowledge, restore the thriving culture we once had so much of, and we can overall become more connected to the 'Āina.

Hawai'i was once filled with so much beauty, so many traditions, practices, and such an amazing thriving culture. But slowly we are losing all of our aloha and it's a serious problem. But it doesn't have to be this way. In this essay I addressed various different ways to bring back our culture. We need to stand up for Hawai'i, for our home, for our family. All it takes is just one person to make a huge difference. It was January 16, 1893 when it all started, but it can end now. What will you do?

Works Cited

Keoni, GE. "11 Stereotypes About Hawaiians You shouldn't believe". *Culture trip*. 3 JULY 2017

<https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/usa/hawaii/articles/11-stereotypes-about-hawaiians-you-shouldnt-believe/>

O'Connor, Christina. "Visitors to Hawaii reached an all-time high in 2019". *Pacific Business news*. 29 JANUARY 2020

<https://www.bizjournals.com/pacific/news/2020/01/29/number-of-hawaii-visitors-increased-to-more-than.html>

Sai, Keanu. "The Illegal Overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom". *NeaToday*. 2 APRIL 2018

<https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/illegal-overthrow-hawaiian-kingdom-government>