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## A Marxist Approach to Bostonian Missionaries in Hawaii

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## Abstract

For centuries, the United States has euphemized their imperial endeavours across the North American continent as they have continued to rely on providential rhetoric to justify their means of colonial expansion. This research critiques beliefs of American exceptionalism in an attempt to expose the hidden ills of America's colonial efforts. It looks at the activities of Boston's missionaries in Honolulu, Hawaii, in the nineteenth century and examines the way American identity and understandings of their own exceptionalism manifested on the ground via imperial pursuits. Sponsored by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), Boston's missionaries entered Hawaii in 1819 with the intent to civilize what they perceived as an uncivilized nation. In colonial Hawaii, we will see the extensive blurring of lines between informal and formal empire, which this paper positions as a deliberate transition pivotal for the archipelago's 1898 annexation. These actions will be observed through a Marxists-based approach to examine how the gradual subjugation of Hawaii's Indigenous population occurred through religious and educational institutions. Religion and education will therefore be observed as tools used for grander imperial pursuits in colonial Hawaii. As this paper attempts to deconstruct beliefs associated with American exceptionalism, it will look at its origins—that is, Christian belief structures that informed ideas of America's superiority—and its practical workings on behalf of Bostonian missionaries.

Christian ideologies intrinsic to American identity have long informed not only America's own self-proclaimed superiority but the degradation of the racialized 'Other.' Indeed, Christian belief structures have long led Americans to associate the United States with civilization whereas 'uncivilized' and 'backward' were synonymous with the 'Other.' To understand the creation of such binaries and the extent to which they contributed to the conception of America's own exceptionalism, it is necessary to analyze the racist dogma embedded in Christian texts and its ensuing racialization of visible minorities. Consider, for example, Jordan Winthrop's analysis of religion and its association to racism in the U.S. Winthrop argues that Protestantism implies a sense of tribalism, insofar as it places an emphasis on distinctiveness from others.<sup>1</sup> In fact, a pervasive influence on Western thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was an ancient concept known as the hierarchical "Chain of Being." Amid the Chain of Being, Man was placed in between God and animality. Notably, in the same way man had the "capacity for rising above bestiality," he too could be reduced back to a state of savagery.<sup>2</sup> Ostensibly, civilization was required for Man's refinement. That is, as people came to be more reasonable and civilized, they became increasingly moral. However, the issue with such theory is that what is considered 'civilized' is culturally constructed.

Indeed, the above is important to our understanding of how American's conceived themselves amid the globe. Religiosity and the way it framed these conceptions is likewise relevant to this paper's examination of the way American identity and conceptualizations about their own exceptionalism manifests itself on the ground via imperial pursuits. Despite framing their moral reformism as anti-imperialistic, the calculated actions of Bostonian missionaries in Hawaii, from the 1820s–1850s, prove to be in keeping with those of a formal empire, whereby religious theology acted as a mere façade to practical imperial endeavours. These imperial endeavours were arguably acquired by the tools of religious and educational institutions that multivalently manipulated the Hawaiian environment, creating a self-sustaining lower class for the exploitation of capital. Certainly, the cultural belief of providence as justifying continental acquisition has been part of America's larger imperial narrative since the late eighteenth century. America's exploitation of lands, resources, and peoples to expand their formal empire is therefore a recurring narrative that similarly exists within the realm of Hawaii. This paper will contribute to these international discussions by providing the 'why' and 'how,' questions that take us back to nineteenth century understandings of race, American exceptionalism, and the regeneration of hierarchical structures in the archipelago.

Essential to analyzing the 'how' and 'why' of American expansionism in the space of Hawaii is an understanding of America's providential destiny in its broader historiography. As this introduction will show, religious theology came to frame American identity and understandings about their own exceptionalism and, as a direct result of their systematic indoctrination, Americans came to believe that they had a 'natural' right to expropriate Indigenous lands for permanent possession. Indeed, historians Ian Tyrrell, Stuart Creighton Miller, and Susan K. Harris have since exposed the way Americans evoked 'providence' and 'moral duty' as justifying U.S. expansionism. For instance, look to America's renowned nineteenth century belief—Manifest Destiny—and the extent to which religion supports the spread of capitalism

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<sup>1</sup> Jordan Winthrop, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (London, Oxford University Press, 1977), 207.

<sup>2</sup> Winthrop, *The White Man's Burden*, 218.

across the continent of North America. Nevertheless, the problem with these religious understandings is that it inflates America's sense of innocence in their colonial efforts. This paper, by deconstructing the work of Bostonian missionaries in Hawaii, will contribute to the larger historiography in its subversion of Americans' essential guiltlessness amid their 'anti-imperial' efforts.<sup>3</sup>

Historian Ian Tyrell has analyzed America's 'anti-imperial' efforts using a similar expository approach. He argues that these evangelical missions were but precursors for a formal empire and moral reformers mere "[contributors] to the development of a new form of hegemony."<sup>4</sup> This paper will contribute to these arguments by subverting the high esteem Americans hold themselves to despite their harsh history.<sup>5</sup> For instance, we know the extent to which American exceptionalism has allowed the U.S. to distinguish itself from other nations. However, by maintaining that their missions were anti-imperial—or merely reformist—the U.S. created this ameliorated image of their expansion. That is, America journeyed to the archipelago "to help and develop, not conquer and exploit" like the British did.<sup>6</sup> To subvert this respected version of America's narrative, this paper will show the many ways in which Bostonian missionaries did just that—conquer and exploit, albeit more subtly than their European counterparts via religious teachings.

In order to understand the extent of this subversion, it is necessary to examine a synopsis of the work created by Bostonian missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). Similar to the mission statements across the United States, Bostonian missionaries expounded that it was their universal duty to model liberty in the archipelago.<sup>7</sup> While their moral reformism was advocated as anti-imperial, actions of the missionaries proved otherwise. As this paper will show, an informal empire gradually became a formal empire by way of direct colonial control. This subtle transition was arguably owing to religion and education, which this paper proposes as mere tools for the gradual and rather deceptive overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. That is, the U.S. used the Natives' lack of Western religion, education, and resources to their advantage, providing these rights as a means of both gaining commercial prospects via Hawaii's sugar cane plantations and preparing a "national temper receptive" for acquisition.<sup>8</sup> We can clearly see this with the educational institutions that Bostonian missionaries set up in Hawaii. A large part of the missionaries' activities involved the production of schooling, though these structures essentially organized Hawaii's Indigenous population for their own subjugation. What we see then are these counterproductive educational systems that deliberately relegate its pupils to subordinate positions and, as a result, support schemes of colonialism.

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<sup>3</sup> Ian Tyrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 95.

<sup>4</sup> Tyrell, *Reforming the World*, 236.

<sup>5</sup> Godfrey Hodgson, *The Myth of American Exceptionalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 14.

<sup>6</sup> Stuart Creighton Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines 1899-1903* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 27.

<sup>7</sup> Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, 27.

<sup>8</sup> Kenton Clymer, "Religion and American Imperialism: Methodist Missionaries in the Philippine Islands, 1899-1913," *Pacific Historical Review* (Feb. 1980): 29.

This paper particularly looks at Boston missionaries in Hawaii as a result of their enduring occupation in the archipelago. Since 1789, Boston traders, whalers, and entire trade networks occupied Hawaii decades before the arrival of Bostonian missionaries.<sup>9</sup> The presence of traders was due to Hawaii's sandalwood, geography, and other necessities that made the archipelago a "vital link in the trade route between Boston, the Northwest Coast, and the Canton."<sup>10</sup> Boston's economic history in the archipelago was not just followed by the arrival of Bostonian missionaries but as Samuel Morison argues, "without the trader the missionary would not have come."<sup>11</sup> Through Boston's large presence in Hawaii we see the way colonial missions and programs are shaped by, and respond to, stimuli from abroad. To add to this, the arrival of Bostonian missionaries to an already robust economy presents a pattern much in keeping with what Ian Tyrrell terms as the United States' "external footprint."<sup>12</sup> Tyrrell argues that cultural expansion by way of missionaries delivered conditions in which economic and political expansionism could be considered.<sup>13</sup> Here, the arrival of a moral reform program did not only increase Native markets for American goods in Hawaii but facilitated the gradual transformation of the archipelago that allowed for its 1898 annexation, as this paper shows.<sup>14</sup> Boston was central to that influence and is therefore fundamental to understanding the colonial experience in Hawaii. Similarly, these interactions between traders and missionaries—or economic and religious values—grants us clear insight into the prevalence of cultural imperialism in the region. In other words, these deep Bostonian connections in Hawaii allows us to see the intricate workings of American expansion and the many ways missionaries were not just "mere justification for expansion but intrinsic to that process."<sup>15</sup>

To get to the core of how religion is at play with the activities of Bostonian missionaries, we need to look at religious dogma and how it framed Western thought. Arguably, assumptions about the inferiority of Indigenous races stems from the prevailing ideologies of the Chain of Being and, this notion of understanding "the Other" by way of their differences is in keeping with what Edward Said terms as "Orientalism." Said argues that Europeans attempted to understand non-western cultures through an array of adverse binaries: Christianity and Paganism, progress and stagnation, civilized and uncivilized.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, what defined progress was culturally determined by, in this case, Americans, who believed their own society was optimal and therefore associated the Natives' perceived primitivism as evidence of their inferiority. Surely, it was Christian theology that informed Americans that Indigenous peoples' nomadic lifestyle in the archipelago, rid of any written history and recognized religion, was characteristic of 'savage' behaviour in its being different from America's conceptions of society, therefore producing this racialized, Anglo-Saxon need to civilize.

These Christian ideologies and, as Winthrop argues, the Protestant history of distinguishing themselves from others, has evidently fostered this sense of white superiority to which "other

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<sup>9</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, "Boston Traders in Hawaiian Islands 1789-1823," *The Washington Historical Quarterly* (July 1921): 167.

<sup>10</sup> Morison, "Boston Traders," 170.

<sup>11</sup> Morison, "Boston Traders," 174.

<sup>12</sup> Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Morison, "Boston Traders," 175.

<sup>15</sup> Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, 5.

<sup>16</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1984).

species of men...[were] naturally inferior.”<sup>17</sup> This thought process ensured that customs, social structures, and religious theology that were not in keeping with Americans’ understandings of civilization were mere contributors to the Orient’s moral debasement and political stagnation. Interestingly, religion, within imperial spaces, is in tandem with culture, in the same way the religious goals of American missionaries went hand-in-hand with national purposes. Being a ‘Christian,’ then, was not merely a matter of indoctrination and the acceptance thereof, but rather “a quality inherent in oneself and in one’s society.”<sup>18</sup> Otherwise said, Christianity was interconnected with characteristics of the proper American citizen and a homogenous democratic culture.

This distinction is important to our recognition of religion as a mere tool, if not a cloak for imperial and colonial enterprises. Though on an evangelical mission to civilize those morally degraded, the racialization of the ‘Other’ prevented their ever being civilized or equated to the ‘proper’ white American. This is why we see the subsequent subjugation of Native minorities despite efforts of conversion. In keeping with Tyrrell’s argument, moral refinement was therefore simply a precursor for colonization and later assimilation. The conception of America as the comparable standard nevertheless led to these assumptions of a submissive Native population to that of a supposedly racially and culturally superior American one. Indeed, articulations to emulate this standard across the North American continent were intricately tied to the idea of the U.S. as a Christian nation, hence the religious language embedded in expansionist rhetoric like Manifest Destiny. That is, ‘providence’ was elicited as ordaining the U.S. a destiny to civilize uncivilized nations, a case in point with the Bostonian missionaries in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Observed is the function of religious theology in framing American identity and conceptualizations about their own exceptionalism. In order to deduce that religion and education were used as mere tools for grander imperial endeavours, this paper will be viewing the functioning of these institutions through a Marxist approach. Karl Marx critiqued the hypocritical nature of schooling, arguing that institutions like education are “organized to serve capitalist priorities of profit and labor” and, as such, reproduce social and cultural inequalities.<sup>19</sup> In applying this theory to the work of Bostonian missionaries, we are provided with a lens through which we can observe the multitudinous ways these missionaries were merely regenerating the social, racial, cultural and economic inequalities in the archipelago as a means of serving their expansionist needs.

What is meant by multitudinous is an examination of systematic oppression through religion and education, its racial and gendered reproductions, cultural capitalism, and the effects within. The section on religion and education will analyze the function of these establishments in Honolulu, Hawaii, and the extent to which they were manipulated, albeit in different ways and with varying degrees of efficiency. Both sections will present Marxist attributes, considering that religious teachings, in tandem with education, (re)produced a working class by shaping Indigenous thought on matters of ‘civility.’ Subsequent are the subtopics of race and gender. These sections

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<sup>17</sup> Winthrop, *The White Man’s Burden*, 237.

<sup>18</sup> Winthrop, *The White Man’s Burden*, 45.

<sup>19</sup> Terry Wotherspoon, *The Sociology of Education in Canada: Critical Perspectives* (London: Oxford University Press, 2018), 34.

demonstrate how teachings in both institutions regenerated racial and gendered inequalities by shaping Indigenous thought. The section, ‘cultural capital,’ uses Marxist’s theories of capitalism and its effects on Western culture and thought processes. The last section will consist of the effects of these institutions, particularly upon Indigenous culture and economy. These effects, while evidencing the workings of Marxist’s theory by illustrating a transformed capitalist economy dependent on cheap labour, will also show how the dismal conditions of Hawaiians is connected to colonial outcomes, dismantling the recurrent dichotomy of anti-imperial moral reformism and imperial endeavours.

### **Religion as a Cloak for Imperial Efforts**

Religion occupies multivalent functions when it comes to American missionaries. Primarily, the extension of democracy and westward expansion allowed Americans to view innocently their colonial conquest.<sup>20</sup> Not unlike other continental spaces, however, “providence and moral duty were evoked [to]...balance [the] commercial reasoning” of Republicans.<sup>21</sup> Certainly, discussions of Hawaii’s commercial value were part of global debates taking place in the 1800s. In fact, “Hawaii...[was] pictured as stepping-stone to China,” indicating that the island was viewed as a major asset for greater American expansion.<sup>22</sup>

Religion in the space of Hawaii therefore acted as a mere tool through which Americans would gain these imperial pursuits and cloak any commercial endeavours therein. Consider primarily that protests against Hawaii’s 1898 annexation heavily dealt with concerns of the racialization of its inhabitants. In fact, Senator Knute Nelson supported the annexation of Hawaii on the basis that “ninety-five percent of [its] people are of inferior race.”<sup>23</sup> The solution provided by Massachusetts’s senator afforded that “within fifty years, those islands would have a Northern...population.”<sup>24</sup> Predetermined efforts to occupy Hawaii are similarly observed in first-hand accounts of Bostonian missionaries who intended to “claim the whole heathen world as [their] country men.”<sup>25</sup> Religion therefore seems to be acting as a precursor to colonial occupation.

The concept of using teachings of Protestantism to prepare a national temper is observed in Hawaii as it is in other continental spaces. That is, ABCFM’s Bostonian missionaries entered Hawaii in 1819 upon the missionary ship, *Thaddeus*, to discover a land void of religion; idols were burned, and altars and taboo had been abolished by the land’s previous dictator Kamehameha V.<sup>26</sup> Hawaiian leaders were therefore receptive to the idea of a new religion. In fact, having struggled under their oppressive dictator, Hawaiians were similarly willing to follow the general lead of missionaries who granted them the rights they had lost within the previous dictatorship, hence the populations openness toward evangelical practices.<sup>27</sup> Notably, Marxist’s

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<sup>20</sup> Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, 3.

<sup>21</sup> Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, 125.

<sup>24</sup> Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, 125.

<sup>25</sup> “Life of Dr. L. H. Gulick: Interesting Review of an Active Missionary Worker,” *Library of Congress* (1895): 1.

<sup>26</sup> William Ellis, “Religious Romance of Transformed Hawaii: Three-Quarters of a Century from Gross Barbarism to Citizenship – How Missionaries Made a Nation,” *The Sunday Star* (1906): 8.

<sup>27</sup> “Life of Dr. L. H. Gulick,” 1.

conflict theory is observed here amid the exploitation of resources. Marx argues that “society is composed of an unequal distribution of desired resources that benefit the minority at the expense of the majority,” creating unequal societal relationships.<sup>28</sup> Evident in Hawaii is that the minority, Protestant missionaries are developing religious and educational structures to maintain these resources at the expense of the majority Indigenous population who acquire them. Missionaries had thus granted the Natives the apparent privileges of education, though not unmolested.<sup>29</sup> In other words, whereas education generally serves as a benefit for societies, schooling in Hawaii was intentionally set up to inform Indigenous peoples of their own inferiority and later subjugation.

Religion framed thinkings about America’s own exceptionalism. On the contrary, religion informed Indigenous populations of their own inferiority as they did not see themselves represented amid these Christian, religious frameworks. Indeed, by asserting that Indigenous lands must be civilized, Americans suggested that the Natives were uncivilized and backward. As a result, Indigenous leaders accepted these binaries in their reception of a new religion that had, embedded in them, these racist dichotomies. Consider the way religious precepts were taught in tandem with the principles of civilization.<sup>30</sup> Here, we can observe the entanglement of ‘religion’ and ‘nation,’ seeing that both doctrine and culture blanketed understandings of civility. For example, land ownership was a means through which citizens could achieve salvation by way of moral and civil development. Similarly, virtue was acquired by means of manual labour. In fact, for as well as preaching the Christian gospel, missionaries in Hawaii enforced notions of Protestant work ethic which “extolled work itself as a form of piety.”<sup>31</sup> As a result, missionaries in the late 1800s taught plantation skills on the basis of it being an “inherently Christian act by virtue as it encouraged industry” among Hawaiians.<sup>32</sup> These cross-cultural understandings of religion and civilization, or piety and labour, nevertheless advanced teachings that were preparing the population for its own exploitation, reproducing socioeconomic inequalities.

Through religion, missionaries were nevertheless able to gain political power and control over land. Indeed, the autocratic government of Hawaii meant that missionaries “depended on intercultural relations based on [the] persuasion” of Hawaii’s leadership.<sup>33</sup> In other words, seeing that Hawaiian rulers were in charge of all the land, missionaries, instead of using force, strategically befriended those in power, gradually impelling the chiefs to extend some of this control to the colonists. Notably, “Christianity was essential to that influence.”<sup>34</sup> Maneuvering within strict political lines, the approach that missionaries took toward colonial enterprise through informal empire was thus merely a calculated plan given the power dynamics of the

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<sup>28</sup> United States, Dept. of Education, *Sociological Perspectives* (South Dakota, 2022).

<sup>29</sup> “Life of Dr. L. H. Gulick,” 1.

<sup>30</sup> Linda Menton, “A Christian and ‘Civilized’ Education: The Hawaiian Chiefs’ Children’s School, 1839-50,” *History of Education Quarterly* (Summer 1992): 227.

<sup>31</sup> “History of Labor in Hawaii,” in *University of Hawaii, Center for Labor Education & Research*, Accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.hawaii.edu/uhwo/clear/home/HawaiiLaborHistory.html>.

<sup>32</sup> Lawrence Kessler, “A Plantation upon a Hill: Or Sugar without Rum: Hawai’i’s Missionaries and the Founding of the Sugarcane Plantation System,” *Pacific Historical Review* (May 2015): 158.

<sup>33</sup> David Silverman, “The Church in New England Indian Community Life: A View from the Islands and Cape God,” in *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience*, ed. John W. Tyler (2003): 270, <https://www.colonialociety.org/node/1378>.

<sup>34</sup> Silverman, “The Church in New England,” 271.



island. That is, instead of directly imposing upon Hawaii a formal empire, religion was used as a tool to achieve predetermined colonial pursuits. We can therefore see thoughts about American exceptionalism working on the level of introducing, by way of cultural and moral influence, support for their formal empire as they direct the archipelago toward civic righteousness (i.e., the adoption of U.S. ideologies).

In keeping with this plan of influence, wherein Boston missionaries would integrate themselves within Hawaiian politics to gain legal and land control, Hawaii's laws were changed to emulate those in the U.S. For example, the Hawaiian Constitution imitated America's Bill of Rights.<sup>35</sup> With these prerogatives came concepts of land ownership in cases where chiefs granted missionaries "huge swaths of land."<sup>36</sup> Notably, these mandates evinced "the influence of the religious teachings of missionaries," proving the way religion, as a tool, taught the majority Hawaiians that the adoption of laws belonging to enlightened nations would grant them civilization as it directed them toward modernity.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, these laws were new concepts for Indigenous peoples, and their lack of expertise toward their workings was used to the advantage of the colonizer. For instance, when attempting to renege on their promise of land, chiefs were countered in court and forced to recognize the principles of land ownership.<sup>38</sup> In this way, an informal empire transitioned to that of a formal empire, considering that the direct control of legislation and land, whereby the chief surrendered "part of his regal prerogatives to his subjects," breached boundaries of influence. Religion, in its teachings of civilization, reproduced these power dynamics and cloaked means of imperialism.<sup>39</sup>

### **Education as a Tool for Suppression**

Not unlike religious teachings, institutions of education largely facilitated the gradual repression of Hawaii's Indigenous population. Thus far, we observed the ways in which a democratic government was established through means of religious persuasion. In other words, Hawaii had become a constitutional monarchy.<sup>40</sup> Certainly, a Christian education not only expressed the quintessential goals of conversion but also expressed the need to teach Hawaii's Indigenous population the values, beliefs, and practices of an allegedly superior white American culture that was approaching. As a result, several schools were established at the start of 1824. Chiefs were taught, in a comparative manner, about the government and practices of "enlightened nations" and students at common schools, like Punahou, were taught to demonstrate virtue by completing manual labour and domestic tasks, such as field chores, laundry, and sewing.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, textbooks were moralizing American manuals, and warned against the vices of dancing, and the practice of native women swimming to incoming ships for immoral purposes.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Meller Norman, "Missionaries to Hawaii: Shapers of the Island's Government," *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (December 1958): 792.

<sup>36</sup> Silverman, "The Church in New England," 273.

<sup>37</sup> Norman, "Missionaries to Hawaii," 792.

<sup>38</sup> Silverman, "The Church in New England," 273.

<sup>39</sup> Norman, "Missionaries to Hawaii," 793.

<sup>40</sup> Menton, "A Christian and 'Civilized' Education," 221.

<sup>41</sup> Menton, "A Christian and 'Civilized' Education," 221, 228.

<sup>42</sup> Menton, "A Christian and 'Civilized' Education," 229.

It can be argued, through Tyrrell's analysis, that such education was geared toward gaining support for America's formal empire in the "contracting out of social and cultural services."<sup>43</sup> That is, while the schools of missionaries taught Western cultural practices and values, abolishing, by extension, the practices of Indigenous communities that were undermined in teachings of what constituted 'morality,' support for America's colonial state was being secured. In this way, these educational structures facilitated capitalist development in these imperial efforts and produced systematic social inequalities inherent to capitalist societies.<sup>44</sup> Otherwise said, in teaching manual labour and tasks of domesticity, the bourgeoisie were merely (re)creating a disciplined wage labour force from which they could economically capitalize.

This systematic subjugation is equally observed with the schools for chiefs. Notably, the hierarchical governmental system in Hawaii ensured that chiefly power could only be passed down through family ties.<sup>45</sup> Royal children therefore represented the future leaders of the Hawaiian kingdom, hence their call for a separate school system that would teach them how to function as leaders within a constitutional monarchy. Though advertised as a school for future monarchs, the royal children learned nothing about Western governmental, economic, and legal systems.<sup>46</sup> Instead, students were taught in matters of civility and received religious training. Receiving an inadequate education, the school for royal children merely bred a group of future monarchs that were inexpert on all matters of monarchy, resultantly disabling their ability to function as leaders within an American political system that was imminent in the 1840s.<sup>47</sup>

In robbing the royal children of a proper education for princes, education in Honolulu, Hawaii merely relegated the Indigenous royal family to a subordinate position and disempowered esteemed persons.<sup>48</sup> Education evidently functioned to serve the bourgeois order, "[constraining] human potential that is otherwise necessary for social progress" to create a subordinate minority class that capitalists could control and organize to work for their profit.<sup>49</sup> Such is evident here, seeing that the royal family, inadequately prepared to deal with the complexities of capitalism, land ownership, and external executive demands, were later overthrown in 1893 by those knowledgeable in such matters—the sons of Bostonian missionaries.

In fact, the school system established in Hawaii functioned so that learned Indigenous pupils and chiefs would perpetuate American culture, being sent off to start their own schools.<sup>50</sup> In lieu of pay, they would receive housing, food, and clothing, demonstrating Marx's conflict theory amid an unequal distribution of resources. Here, class inequalities are being reproduced between the colonial minority who have maintained these resources and the majority that lack such necessities. In these power dynamics, the latter works for the former merely to acquire these assets and the former powerholders ensure, in their maintenance, the preservation of these inequalities. Nevertheless, this system, in which Indigenous inhabitants would essentially inadvertently prepare their people for their own subjugation, is one of the many ways in which

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<sup>43</sup> Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, 21.

<sup>44</sup> Wotherspoon, *The Sociology of Education*, 36.

<sup>45</sup> Menton, "A Christian and 'Civilized' Education," 223.

<sup>46</sup> Menton, "A Christian and 'Civilized' Education," 229.

<sup>47</sup> Menton, "A Christian and 'Civilized' Education," 229.

<sup>48</sup> Wotherspoon, *The Sociology of Education*, 37.

<sup>49</sup> Wotherspoon, *The Sociology of Education*, 34.

<sup>50</sup> Menton, "A Christian and 'Civilized' Education," 214.

their suppression was self-sustaining. This paper will indeed observe the effects of this educational subjugation in the latter section that explores how generational poverty was a by-product of this systematic degradation.

### **Education and its Effects on Race**

The lessons being taught within these educational institutions have carelessly regenerated both racial and gendered inequalities, part of which Marx theorized as ‘cultural reproductions.’<sup>51</sup> Notably, the children of Bostonian missionaries were educated alongside Indigenous children, receiving a separate education.<sup>52</sup> Arguably, then, while missionaries in Hawaii used education to reproduce a lower working class, they simultaneously were reproducing that of the bourgeoisie. Fearing their child’s “racial degeneration” living amongst Indigenes, Bostonian missionaries focused on their children’s moral refinement from which their attitudes and behaviour would cultivate. Indeed, as these ideals of Western civilization tended to reinforce white supremacy, the unique educational experiences of the children of missionaries not only produced, in later years, their “justification...for the direct use of power to overthrow the existing Hawaiian political system,” but informed their prejudiced attitudes about race.<sup>53</sup> For instance, these children observed the ways in which their parents would offend Hawaiian social practices, depict them as “savages,” and relegate their tasks to the domestic sphere.<sup>54</sup> Their children’s conceptions of race, then, developed out of the teachings they received regarding the ‘Orient,’ and what their biological differences looked like within a hierarchy.

What was happening in colonial Hawaii was the reproduction of the attitudes and behaviours intrinsic to Westernized culture for the maintenance of these social structures. Ostensibly, the racial ‘Other’ is generationally relegated—through the maintenance of these ideological conditions—to positions subordinate to the white American for economic purposes. Arguably, in the same way the attitudes of Bostonian children toward Natives were shaped by education, thoughts about race through these binaries of ‘civilized’ and ‘uncivilized’ likewise informed Indigenous’ image(s) of themselves. In that regard, this paper disputes assumptions toward the “willingness” of Indigenous peoples in Hawaii to adopt Western practices, systems, and cultures.<sup>55</sup>

To counter such accounts, this paper will reference W.E.B. DuBois’ “double consciousness.” Indeed, DuBois proposes a philosophical examination of historic conditions facing the “Black folk” in America, wherein impacts of those conditions “only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world.”<sup>56</sup> In layman's terms, the racial ‘Other’ has a double consciousness, their natural self and the ‘self’ imposed upon them through the eyes of white America. This philosophy can be applied to colonial spaces regarding the treatment of the oriental ‘Other,’ that is, the adoption of colonial attitudes in the minds of the foreigner. Through this perspective, Indigenous conformity can be viewed as a mere by-product of the education they received on

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<sup>51</sup> Wotherspoon, *The Sociology of Education*,” 38.

<sup>52</sup> Joy Schulz, “Empire of the Young: Missionary Children in Hawai’I and the Birth of U.S. Colonialism in the Pacific, 1820-1898” (PhD Dissertation, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, 2011), 120.

<sup>53</sup> Schulz, “Empire of the Young,” 95 and 110.

<sup>54</sup> Schulz, “Empire of the Young,” 98.

<sup>55</sup> Tyrrell, *Reforming the World*, 76.

<sup>56</sup> John Pittman, “Double Consciousness,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, March 21, 2016.

‘civilization,’ wherein they came to understand that their customs, religion, and appearance fell short of definitions therein. Otherwise said, while missionaries came to civilize the native population, the suggestion adopted was that they were, by extension, uncivilized, at which point they viewed themselves in the eyes of white colonists. Indigenous ‘willingness’ was therefore merely a result of being shaped to adopt attitudes of Western culture, evincing the ways social and cultural reproductions can be variously produced, altered, and adopted.

## Gender

Not unlike other colonial spaces, women missionaries in Hawaii served in predominantly female roles as educators, attempting to assimilate Indigenous women into ideals of modern Christian womanhood. Indeed, these missionaries were expected to serve as role models of their Hawaiian female counterparts, facilitating their means of conduct and propriety. For instance, in lieu of sexuality, which seemed to be “the dominant drive in Hawaiian women’s activities,” laws prohibiting adultery, prostitution, nudity, and polygamy were instituted and Indigenous girls were clothed in a western-style dress.<sup>57</sup>

Indigenous women were equally taught submissiveness, which entailed leading a domestic-oriented lifestyle based on the division of gendered labour.<sup>58</sup> Thus, women missionaries promoted a domesticity that was compatible to imperial culture. That is, the colonial social world depended on the domestic work of Indigenous servants, hence the cultural (re)production of such activities in this colonial space. However, in Hawaii we also see what Jane Hunter explains as the relationship between ideologies of femininity and expansionism. Although Hunter is particularly referring to China in her works, much of what she wrote about the aforementioned cultural constructs are applicable largescale. Consider, for instance, the extent to which “the superiority of... women” lay in “the extreme virtue and selflessness attributed to mothers and wives in the culture” of the 1820s.<sup>59</sup> This rhetoric not only redeemed expansionism, banking on the extent of “woman’s innocence and ignorance of aggressive intent,” but arguably contributed to this regeneration of gender inequalities. While Western understandings of femininity based itself on the tenet of self-sacrifice, the attainment of rights would violate such precepts.<sup>60</sup> In other words, the lack of rights was a part of women’s pious conduct, considering that the ideal of Christian womanhood depended on indirect influence as opposed to direct exercise.

These understandings of gender are transnational and are transported over into foreign spaces like Hawaii. For instance, within Honolulu the institutionalization of Christian laws led to the establishment of coverture laws, whereby women and children were the property of the husband.<sup>61</sup> Here, we can see how teachings of decorum and piety regenerated the social reduction of women within society. Western social practices that stem from conventional understanding of femininity—i.e., the division of labour—equally “affected how these

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<sup>57</sup> Patricia Grimshaw, “New England Missionary Wives, Hawaiian Women, and ‘The Cult of True Womanhood,’” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* (1985): 81.

<sup>58</sup> Grimshaw, “New England Missionary Wives,” 78.

<sup>59</sup> Jane H. Hunter, “Women’s Mission in Historical Perspective: American Identity and Christian Internationalism,” in *Competing Kingdoms: Women, Mission, Nation, and the American Protestant Empire, 1812-1960*, ed. Kathryn Kish, Sklar, (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 22.

<sup>60</sup> Hunter, “Women’s Mission,” 25.

<sup>61</sup> Schulz, “Empire of the Young,” 98.

inequalities can be variously produced.”<sup>62</sup> Otherwise said, gender, as a social construct, is culturally determined, as are its accompanying social practices that produce these inequalities. Understanding and recreating gender politics in Honolulu, Hawaii had therefore as much to do with education, wherein Indigenous women were trained into conformity, as it did unequal social practices intrinsic to Western culture and thought.

### **Capitalist Culture**

The section on gender briefly introduced culture as a social construct that developed in relation to historical and social understandings, and how such capital preserves inequalities by reinforcing symbolic boundaries between dominant and subordinate groups. For instance, one can see how women’s moral identity and conceptualizations of themselves as virtuous reproduced conventional gender inequalities in political status (i.e., lack of rights). In the same way these domestic understandings were transmitted to a colonial space, cultural practices and assumptions of Christianity affected how economic inequalities in Hawaii were reproduced. Notably, missionaries’ understanding of their work as a design of pure moral reformism had promoted temperance, rejecting rum-making operations via sugarcane cultivation as a result.<sup>63</sup> However, a shift from moral reformism to economic endeavours occurred in Boston’s mission. Indeed, the Panic of 1837 brought into the U.S. a depressed economic state and, as a result, the ABCFM recanted their charitable donations to missionary activities. This disconnect between the influences at home and those abroad is a familiar one within the larger imperial narrative. Nevertheless, it is clear that the missionaries shifted their goals as a result of the situation at home, deciding, abruptly, that “sugarcane planting was not as bad as they had previously thought.”<sup>64</sup>

However, this paper takes an alternative perspective, suggesting that their ability to justify this shift was a result of historical cultural understandings of Christianity. Marx refers to this as “capital existing in the form of social, cultural, and symbolic assets.”<sup>65</sup> Here, Christianity and civilization were understood as interrelated attributes of the same culture: industrial capitalism. Attention to economic matters like sugarcane plantations therefore did not stray from the original moral mission. This explains why the missionaries’ religious teachings began incorporating lessons in cultivation, seeing that Hawaiians, in acquiring the skills to “grow marketable foods like sugarcane,” would likewise acquire “the means to purchase... consumer goods” and “meet missionary standards of clothing and furniture.”<sup>66</sup> These social practices contribute to the (re)production of economic inequalities, considering that Hawaiians, in their attainment of civility, were merely being subjugated by colonists who were creating this labour force through conventional understandings of morality.

### **Effects**

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<sup>62</sup> Wotherspoon, *The Sociology of Education*, 38.

<sup>63</sup> Kessler, “A Plantation upon a Hill,” 132.

<sup>64</sup> Kessler, “A Planation upon a Hill,” 148.

<sup>65</sup> Wotherspoon, *The Sociology of Education*, 38.

<sup>66</sup> Kessler, “A Plantation upon a Hill,” 146.

The effects of these religious and educational institutions created a subordinate Indigenous group whose lack of resources and skills beyond those of labour afforded that they fall to, as well as remain in, poverty. The gradual subjugation of Hawaii's Indigenous population seems linear. As missionaries secured positions in politics, they gained direct influence over the formation of the plantation system in Hawaii. This system emulated American ideas of agriculture, trade, and social development, with which Indigenes were poorly equipped. It is important to note, once again, that this rhetoric concerning a commercial agricultural enterprise was justified through Protestant notions of civilization, illustrating the extent to which religion was used as a tool of persuasion. An agricultural enterprise nevertheless demanded labour and, by becoming the chiefs' "trusted confidants," Bostonian missionaries' close political alliances granted them access to lands, from which they could extract labour and natural resources.<sup>67</sup>

Indeed, the extraction of resources at the expense of the chiefs' people and environment to meet European demands is another familiar narrative amid American imperialism. In Hawaii, labour demands meant a partnership between the Hawaiian Crown and planters who "encouraged commoners to grow cane on shares," clearing the land, planting, fertilizing, weeding and harvesting cane for an alien planter.<sup>68</sup> Notably, commoners who worked did so under two labour contracts: apprenticeship and indentured servitude. These contracts bound employers for a number of years under labour regulations. For instance, if the individual refused to work, they were jailed and, if the labourer was indolent, his wages were reduced or wholly withheld.<sup>69</sup> This resulted in the relationship between Hawaiian chiefs and commoners being one of oppressive bondage.

As expansion increased U.S. needs, so did demands for labour. In order to meet labour demands, an 1850 law institutionalized the private ownership or lease of land tracts by foreigners.<sup>70</sup> The law brought in more labour to work toward the agrarian ideal, heralding immigrant waves from China, Japan, and the Philippines.<sup>71</sup> Advertised as a "redistribution of...land," the law appeared compliant with commoners who, like missionaries, desired to break the oppressive hold chiefs had over Hawaiian lands.<sup>72</sup> The commoners were instead cheated and of 4 million acres of land, Indigenes were only left with less than 1 acre per person. By the end of the century, commoners and chiefs alike had sold, lost, or given up their lands to colonists who possessed the best lands.<sup>73</sup>

In the 1880s, members of the Hawaiian monarchy attempted to overthrow the government; however, with the former constitution still in place, a new cabinet established the "Bayonet Constitution" and turned the "king into a figurehead monarch." As a result, "[the] legislature [was] controlled by the largely white propertied class" instead of the majority Hawaiians.<sup>74</sup> Here, we can see the effects of education in raising a Hawaiian class ignorant to the laws and customs of an American-style government. Through education, missionaries reduced the population to a

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<sup>67</sup> Menton, "A Christian and 'Civilized Education,'" 220.

<sup>68</sup> Kessler, "A Plantation upon a Hill," 151; "History of Labor in Hawaii."

<sup>69</sup> "History of Labor in Hawaii."

<sup>70</sup> "History of Labor in Hawaii."

<sup>71</sup> "History of Labor in Hawaii."

<sup>72</sup> "History of Labor in Hawaii."

<sup>73</sup> "History of Labor in Hawaii."

<sup>74</sup> Sonia Juvik, *Atlas of Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 177.

subordinate state and prepared them for their own overthrow. A poem by a Hawaiian labourer captures perfectly the outcomes of such institutions: “I fell in debt to the plantation store, / ...And remained a poor man.”<sup>75</sup> Similarly, in 1934, Indigenous accounts claim that they “have been defrauded of their land,” illustrating both their deception of these cloaked imperial efforts and the severity of the issue as its consequences still appear decades later.<sup>76</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Bostonian missionaries manipulated the Hawaiian environment in multiple ways to achieve what reveals to be a predetermined prospect: colonial commercial expansionism. Through the tools of religion and education, missionaries not only recreated socioeconomic inequalities by way of inadequate teachings but also maintained ideological conditions of Christianity and civilization as a means of reproducing prejudiced conventional understandings of race and gender. We can therefore see Karl Marx’s theories of education on the level of its literal structure (i.e., what was taught), reinforcing the various ways schools regenerate intersectional inequalities by analyzing the dismal outcome brought upon by such institutions, like the gradual transformation to a specialized industrial system.

What occurred in colonial Hawaii with Bostonian missionaries fits among some of the larger deliberations of American imperialism. Within Hawaii, we observed the workings of ‘providence’ as a justification for imperial endeavours. Equally, American exceptionalism is evident in the imposition of American customs and economy within a space ‘inferior’ to the alleged standard. Expansionist effects such as exploitation to meet exterior demands, death due to foreign diseases, and the maintenance of subordinate and dominant dynamics are likewise all a part of this larger colonial narrative. Distinctively observed in this paper were the extents to which these imperial efforts, and consequences therein, were being masked by the teachings of Bostonian missionaries.

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<sup>75</sup> Mary P. Pukui, “Sure Poor Man,” in *The Echo of Our Song: Chants and Poems of the Hawaiians* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1973), 122-24.

<sup>76</sup> Gerald Horne, *Fighting in Paradise: Labor Unions, Racism and Communists in the Making of Modern Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011), 4.

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