Reviving the Hula: Kalākaua Breaks Cultural Barriers

### Thesis
In 1830, Queen Kaʻahumanu was convinced by western missionaries to forbid public performances of hula which led to barriers that limited the traditional practice. Although hula significantly declined, King Kalākaua renewed cultural practices by promoting public performances again. As a result of Kalākaua's promotion of hula, its significance remains deeply embedded within modern Hawaiian society.

### Tradition of Hula
Hula was an integral part of Hawaiian culture before the arrival of Europeans because it passed down the genealogies of Hawaiians because they did not originally have a written language. It told stories of gods, kings, and how the islands were born.

### Western Influence Establishes Barriers
In 1820, Christian missionaries arrived in the Hawaiian Islands and sought to suppress hula because they believed it was immoral because it promoted old Hawaiian beliefs. When Queen Ka‘ahumanu converted to Christianity, banned hula as a pagan ritual and attempted to extirpate it. “Women were often forced to leave their homes and move to the countryside to escape the missionaries’ attempts to suppress hula.”

### King Kalākaua Fights Stereotypes
In order to combat racial stereotypes, King Kalākaua aimed to establish hula in order to place Hawaiians in a positive light. Although discrimination persisted, hula dancers now could directly represent their craft.

### Loss of Tradition
By 1883, licenses were required for hula performances and were subject to fines. Although hula was practiced in secrecy by some, the suppression diminished practitioners. By 1851, licenses were required for hula performances and were subject to fines. Although hula was practiced in secrecy by some, the suppression diminished practitioners.

### Breaking Barriers to Return to Tradition
King Kalākaua at His Coronation
David Kalākaua became king in 1874 and at his coronation on February 12, 1883, he invited several hula school scholars to perform. Kalākaua's endorsement of hula broke the barrier by reviving traditional practices.

### Hula Lei Mamo Glee Club Perpetuates Hula
King Kalākaua established the formation of the hula troupe Hui Lei Mamo, which travelled and taught to represent Hawaiian culture. At the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, the club helped to showcase hula for visitors to foster Hawaiian cultural traditions.

### Legacy of Tradition
Hula became one of the staples of Hawaiian tourism. In the islands, tourists were drawn to Waikiki for the performances, including the famed Kalākaua Hula Show in 1887.

### Hawaiian Renaissance
In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the renaissance of Hawaiian culture gained momentum. This movement inspired a rethinking of Hawaiian practices including the Hawaiian language, voyaging, and a renewed interest in hula developed.

### Merrie Monarch Festival Established
Although the Merrie Monarch Festival was created as a response to a lagging economy on Hawaii island in 1963, the purpose of the festival altered by the early 1970s.

### Conclusion
Hula was once considered barbaric and immoral, but through the activities by King Kalākaua, this image is changing. Hula practitioners continue to fight stereotypes and promote Hawaiian culture, as hula’s appeal has expanded throughout the world.
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Individual Exhibit
Exhibit Word Count: 500
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For many years, I danced ballet and contemporary. I was very passionate about dance because I was able to dance with my step-sisters and we had an opportunity to become closer. When I moved back to Hawaii, I considered dancing hula but thought I was apprehensive about learning a new dance. When looking over potential NHD topics, I was drawn to hula and wanted to know more. I was especially curious about the time period, when hula was banned. This seemed shocking to me because hula has no controversy today and is widely accepted and celebrated.

While researching, it was difficult to find any documents about the hula ban within that time period, but I eventually found some newspapers from the 1850’s, from Chronicling America, that explain how the unpermitted practitioners were fined and jailed. My most valuable source was from Adrian Imada “Transnational "Hula" as Colonial Culture” because it had lots of information and quotes that supported my thesis and analysis. During this phase of the competition I emailed Natalie A‘i Kamauu, Miss Aloha Hula in 1990, and asked her about the Merrie Monarch. Her perspective showed the significance of hula today and also connected back to Kalakaua.

Exhibits were ideal for the information types I had and it was the most hands on category. I liked the idea of utilizing pictures and supporting evidence because it seemed more creative to me. While making the physical board, I had woven my title board to look like a lauhala mat. I had to make sure that all of my colors had a purpose and were not just there to make it look good, so I used red and yellow because they are the colors of the Hawaiian Monarchy, and the green and brown were used to show conventional hula colors. For the state competition transferring my exhibit into an online version was hard because I never used Google Drawings before, but I think it reflects my original project.

King Kalakaua wanted to bring back the ancient traditions that had been in the islands for ages, but that meant he had to defy Queen Ka‘ahumanu’s law she put in place because she was swayed by the Christian missionaries. His celebrations that involved hula, reintroduced it to the generation that never got to experience it. This shows that the barriers were broken and that Kalakaua’s actions were a success. Due to his work in the revival of hula, George Naope created a week long festival to honor what Kalakaua has done for all of Hawaii with the creation of the Merrie Monarch Festival. I also learned how there are many halau around the world that participate in hula for both pleasure and competition.
Annotated Bibliography

Primary


This is a primary source photograph from the Honolulu Advertiser which shows a Japanese halau dancing. This was used to show that hula is spreading and now being appreciated by other cultures.


I interviewed Natalie Ai Kamauu because she is a versatile Hawaiian artist. She gained recognition by winning the title “Miss Aloha Hula” in 1990’s Merrie Monarch Festival. In more recent years, she has gained recognition as a female vocalist who combines traditional and modern Hawaiian melodies. Her expertise in both hula and music reflects the legacy of David Kalakaua.

"The Coronation Hulas" The Hawaiian Gazette., February 28, Image 2

This newspaper explains that King Kalakaua was working hard to implement hula into his coronation. It shows that he was bringing back the hula in a memorable way so it can be put into society once again. This also shows how Kalakaua broke barriers.


This newspaper image was portraying the modernization of hula with new instruments being used. This shows that hula was adapting to become more relevant in the media.


This pamphlet was used to show one of the first Merrie Monarch Festivals. It was good to see the difference in how it was celebrated then versus now.

Since I interviewed Natalie Ai Kamauu, I utilized a picture of her at the Merrie Monarch Festival in the 1990, where she won the title of “Miss Aloha Hula.” Her family has been practicing hula for generations so she can speak to the importance of Hawaiian cultural traditions.


This political cartoon shows how Hawaiians were negatively represented in the press. This was used to show what was thought of before Kalakaua brought back hula.


This is a negative outlook in newspapers about hula. This shows how the media thought of this tradition before revitalization.


This image shows George Naope, the founder of the Merrie Monarch Festival in 1962. Without him, hula would not have been as celebrated or well known around the world. Naope wanted to celebrate Kalakaua and his contributions to hula.


This is an image of the Hokulea out at sea. This was important to show the resurgence of traditional voyaging. This connects to Hawaiian Renaissance.


This newspaper image shows how hula was viewed outside of Hawaii. These were some of the stereotypes that had to be fought. These negative ideas created the barriers that needed to be broken.

"Hope for Hawaii at World's Fair" Evening bulletin. (Honolulu [Oahu, Hawaii) 1895-1912, March 17, 1904, 3:30 O'CLOCK EDITION, Image 1 [http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82016413/1](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82016413/1)
This newspaper was used to say that the hula exhibit at the Chicago World Fair was successful. The troupe sent by Kalakaua was helped to spread the modern version of the tradition.


This image is used to portray early Kodak Shows. These shows were created to show tourists what hula is.

“Impact of the Ukulele on Hawaiian and American Culture.” Portuguese Historical Museum, 10 Apr. 2019, portuguesemuseum.org/?page_id=1808&category=1&exhibit=&evnt=68.

This is a photograph of King Kalakaua. This was used because he changed how Hawaii was viewed from other states and countries. It is important to show an image of Kalakaua since he’s the focus of my project.


This original brochure shows how difficult it was for those fighting in Kalama Valley. This is important so we could see what happened to those who were evicted. This also connects to the Hawaiian Movement.


This image depicts someone resisting the evictions during the Hawaiian Renaissance. This is important because it lets people today know how significant this issue was to the Hawaiian people.

“Kodak Hula Show.” National Air and Space Museum, 19 Nov. 2019, airandspace.si.edu/multimedia-gallery/7073hjpg.

This photograph was taken at the first hula show. This shows how far things like it have come from in 60 years.

This newspaper image depicts how hula was before the missionaries arrived.
This is important to have so you can compare how hula was before and after westerners arrived.


This shows the missionaries trying to change Hawaiian traditions, which led to the barriers. This shows what was before Kalakaua.


This newspaper shows the rules that hula dancers had to follow in order to be legal. If this was not present it would be harder to understand the severity of this issue.

Pacific Commercial Advertiser May 13, 1858

This quote from a newspaper shows what some believed would happen if hula was legal again. This was used to show how locals and the missionaries viewed hula.


This is the pamphlet of the King’s coronation. This was to show what was on the agenda for the celebration and how he restored hula.

“Police Court Decision.” Pacific Commercial Advertiser, 23 Nov. 1872, p. 3.

This newspaper shows the rules that hula practitioners had to follow in order to not go to jail or be fined. This is a good thing to show how serious compared to other crimes was performing hula during this time period.
Secondary


This article was used to find an image and a quote showing the Hokulea and its challenges. This relates to the Hawaiian Renaissance because voyaging was brought back into Hawaiian culture.


This website was to find information on the Merrie Monarch Festival and Kalakaua. This was good to have to show why this festival was created and how it changed later.


This journal article was to show that Hawaiians were becoming stronger against what white settlers thought. This shows how Hawaiians fought back against ideas that were not right about them.


This article had information about an Elvis song called Blue Hawaii. This would be used to show how hula found its way into the media and music in areas other than Hawaii.


The photograph portrays how Hollywood saw hula. It was used because it shows how hula was seen in movies and what was thought of to people who had never been to Hawaii.

This image depicts the performances at King Kalakaua’s coronation. It is important because it was the first time in around 50 years to have public performances of hula, so it had to have a lasting impression.


This is an image of one of the first Kodak Shows. These were used to help immerse tourists in the islands and so they learn something about the culture.


This image shows what the Merrie Monarch Festival is today. It is important so the evolution of the dance can be seen.


This quote shows the definition of hula. It is important so anyone who does not know what it is can still understand this project.


This quote says that hula was important so it must be honored. The festival is to show that what Kalakaua did was successful.


This article was used to get information on Kodak Shows. It had a few details that were good when fact checking other sources.

This quote explains that most Christian Missionaries wanted hula to disappear. This source also served as a basic information destination.


This source was used as a base to build upon to get more information. It was very helpful to find out the basic information of the topic.


This was used for information on the Merrie Monarch Festival. It was also used to check information from other sites to make sure they were correct.


This was used for the statistics of hula dancers in Japan versus Hawaii. This brought light to the spread of hula.

Hula Dancing." The Hawaiian Islands. Accessed September 26

This source was only used for information, but it was useful for checking if other sources were correct.


This was used to get information on Kodak Shows. Also, this website had a lot of subsections that were related to the topic of my project.


This source was used to find a definition of hula and what it was used for. This is important to have so you can compare hula now versus before missionary days.


This quote was used on other sites as well. It is important because it says that hula is essential to have Hawaiian culture.

This journal article highlights how hula traveled around the world and says how it was modernized. These are important because it shows how it changed due to what Kalakaua did and how hula evolved.


This journal was used for a few quotes on the spreading of hula, which is important to know why hula was appealing to other cultures.


This journal was used to show that Gabby Pahinui’s music would appeal to those who listened to local music. Also it would be intriguing to those who have never listened to that type of music before.


This journal was used for quotes on how missionaries banned hula. This source was good because it explained things that would be useful to know and use for quotes.


This journal was used for quotes on how hula had emerged again and changed into what it is today.


This quote explains that the group that went to the World’s Fair had never performed in front of the Western world. This is important because it shows that Kalakaua took a risk, he did not know how these people would respond to hula.

This article gave more information on the origin of Kodak Shows. This was used for checking other sources and what these shows are.


This journal entry was used for a quote about the Hawaiian Renaissance. It exclaimed the value that music has in protests and social events.


This picture shows what Queen Kaahumanu looked like. This picture is important because she is the one who banned the public performance of hula.


This picture shows that young people were being immersed in the world of hula. Since these people knew hula, they could pass it down to the next generation, which makes it a tradition.


This picture shows the hula exhibit at the World’s Fair. This shows importance by having its own space for its debut in the Western World.


This source was used for information on when missionaries arrived in Hawaii and how they influenced others with their beliefs. This was useful because this eventually led to hula being banned.

This journal shows that this was a large part of Hawaiian culture before the Missionaries got to Hawaii. It was also different in each place in Hawaii.


This photograph shows how hula dancers were seen in movies and in Hollywood. It is important so comparisons could be seen from reality and the assumption.


This shows the efforts made by King Kalakaua that he made to bring back the Hawaiian traditions. It is important because if he did not try to break the law, it is possible that it would not be here today.


This article was used for the quote about the coronation pamphlet. It was important because it gave the date of the ceremony.


This journal used to show the actions that Kalakaua took to rewrite the laws written previously. He set in place the ho'oulu i lahui policy to help protect their heritage.


This image was used to show what instruments were used in the earlier days of hula. This is good to have so you can compare hula then versus now.

This quote was used to explain the importance of Kalama Valley in the Hawaiian Renaissance. Protests to stand up for the land of local people happened more often during and after these times.


This picture of Gabby Pahinui shows him singing which is what he did to become famous. He was monumental during the Hawaiian Renaissance for creating music that could be sold commercially and appeals to the Hawaiian people.


This image was used to show that hula spread to Japan. This is important to have because Japan has more hula dancers than Hawaii.


This image was used to show that young people were learning the old and new ways of hula. It also shows the newly implemented instruments used in hula.


This was used for information on the Merrie Monarch. It compared the first festival from 1963 compared to the modern competitions today.