

QUEER WAYS OF KNOWING ISLANDS: O.A. BUSHNELL. MOLOKAI¹

There can be no recognition of my life being like another's life except through the specific social norms that allow certain populations to emerge as living beings and others to be considered as non-living, or as only partially living, or as threats to the living. We cannot be dependent on already existing and established norms of recognition if we are to try and expand our understanding not only of who deserves to live, whose lives are worth protecting, but more fundamentally, whose lives count as lives, and whose lives are finally grievable.

— Judith Butler, “Frames of War”

After his 1866 visit to Hawai'i, Mark Twain conceived an idea for a novel. According to literary critic Stephen Sumida, rather than a rollicking satire, it was to be a work of historical fiction contrasting an idyllic view of the islands with “the unvarnished truth” (Twain qtd. in Sumida, “Reevaluating” 589). The protagonist was to have been based on the biracial Hawaiian lawyer William Ragsdale, who had greatly impressed Twain in Honolulu. The fact that several years later, at the peak of his career, Ragsdale contracted leprosy and was exiled to a “leper colony” on the island of Molokai made him particularly interesting to Twain; the idea of a gifted man’s “suffering and presumably death by a loathsome disease in a supposed paradise” had even greater literary potential (Sumida, “Reevaluating” 596). Analyzing Twain’s references to this novel made over the course of some twenty years, Sumida suggests several reasons why the project never materialized. The four months Twain spent in Hawai'i may have left him insecure about his ability to render the context without resorting to clichés. The prospect that readers would find the subject of leprosy repellent may have induced him to suppress it. Twain may also have felt daunted by Hawaiian racial politics which were quite distinct from those of the American South (597-599). Finally, work on the novel may have been impeded by Twain’s ambivalent attitude towards both Hawaiian religious practices and the imposition of Christianity (601-602). Fred W. Lorch and others have suggested that the unwritten novel may have mutated into *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, with Arthurian knights supplanting Hawaiian warriors. If so, then Ragsdale, leprosy, and race dropped out of the picture.

The time when race and leprosy could be inserted back into the picture did

not come until almost a century later. Only then was O.A. Bushnell² able to imagine an American audience receptive to – and possibly even grieving for – someone like Ragsdale and other “unfit” characters on an island falling off the edge of the horizon. Twain may have had trouble producing a satisfactory extended narrative about Hawai‘i because he continued to valorize the romantic notion of an “uncontaminated” Hawaiian culture over the “contaminated” one he had actually observed. Bushnell reversed these values in his 1963 novel *Molokai*. Setting the action in the years 1884-1885, he envisioned a world of collapsing oppositions – modern vs. primitive, Christian vs. pagan, white vs. brown bodies, healthy vs. diseased bodies, normative vs. queer sexuality – a world which Twain had actually witnessed but for which he had clearly been unable to find an appropriate literary form.

For a piece of middlebrow rather than high modernist fiction, *Molokai* has a very unusual structure: the story of about six months in the life of a community of exiles diagnosed with leprosy is told three times over, by three narrators who arrive on the island of Molokai on the same boat. All three narratives are retrospective internal monologues. Though they do not fully overlap, they cover most incidents from at least two perspectives. The first lens is that of Doctor Newman, a European bacteriologist, who intends to find out how leprosy is transmitted. The two other lenses belong to newly-diagnosed patients: Malie, a young native Hawaiian noblewoman, and Caleb, a native Hawaiian lawyer whose green eyes are the legacy of a white ancestor. Much of the time, the three lenses focus on the Hawaiian farmer Keanu, who has chosen to be the subject of Newman’s leprosy experiment rather than be hanged for having committed a crime of passion. The three internal monologues can be read as a record of participant observation in a community whose daily practices have evolved out of reusable scraps of various cultures to accommodate progressive disability and death. By gradually moving the reader from the position of the recalcitrant outsider (Newman) to the position of outsider/insider in the process of acculturation (Malie, Caleb), Bushnell attempted to change our perception of cultural contamination, physical monstrosity, disability, and sexual difference.

Relatively unknown on the mainland, *Molokai* is recognized as a classic text in Hawai‘i. *Molokai* was originally brought out by The World Publishing Company (once North America’s largest Bible publisher), and reprinted twice by the University of Hawai‘i Press (in 1975 and 1998). Several religious systems collide in the text and ethical dilemmas account for much of the tension. Both Malie and Caleb are drawn to Father Damien, though Caleb only embraces Father Damien’s humanistic ethic without committing himself to Catholicism. Appropriately for a novel about human abjection and suffering, *Molokai* closes on Easter Sunday in Father Damien’s church. However, the story’s climax actually takes place a little earlier, on Good Friday, and involves a white

man's conversion from repressive – “civilized” – sexual norms to a traditional Hawaiian understanding of sexuality. If the novel is interested in effecting a conversion in the reader, it is not to Christianity but to a non-normative understanding of sexuality. It thus inscribes itself in a tradition of Western ethnographic writings about the Pacific that propose alternatives to Western social norms.

Underlying *Molokai* is the old liberal idea that discrimination is a matter of ignorance and that it takes place on a person-to-person level; it can therefore be eradicated by helping people to recognize their prejudices. There is no room for considerations of systemic/ institutional inequality or collective action; the very policy of exiling people diagnosed with leprosy is never explicitly questioned. Yet, as this paper attempts to demonstrate, *Molokai* is more than a bizarre, campy, middlebrow historical novel. It is worth reading because it intelligently engages a wide range of problems central to contemporary critical race studies, disability studies, and queer studies. I address these problems below in terms of three “encounters.”

The myth of the “first encounter,” extensively discussed by contemporary historians of anthropology, is grounded in a modern exoticist fascination with discovering ever new societies that have had no previous contacts with western culture. By studying pre-contact “primitive” societies, early anthropologists hoped to reconstruct the roots of their own “civilization.” Travel to remote tropical islands thus functioned as vicarious time travel. Arriving where no white person had presumably set foot before, anthropologists understood their mission as one of “salvage.” Though their very presence compromised the assumed pristine purity of the “primitive” culture, that presence was justified by the mission to produce a textual/material/photographic/phonographic record of the culture before it “vanished” through the inevitable contact with modernity. By the time Bushnell wrote *Molokai*, Hawai'i had become a palimpsest of encounters motivated by exploration, trade, fishing, commercial crop production, colonisation, missionary work, and tourism. I use the trope of “encounters” as a way of drawing attention to three inextricably entwined kinds of difference with which Bushnell confronts the mainland (or mainstream) reader.

FIRST ENCOUNTER: RACIAL AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

While *Molokai* is patterned on conventional realistic fiction, with elements of naturalism and romantic melodrama, it enters into a dialogue with ethnography if only because it is set in “Polynesia,” a region that was heavily textualized by amateur ethnographers since the eighteenth century. More isolated archipelagoes, where intercultural contacts had not been as intense, passed

for primitive island Edens much longer than Hawai'i. But while professional anthropologists sought their "vanishing primitive" in a bygone era, writers of popular ethnography continued to find it in Hawai'i well into the twentieth century. A critical survey of travel narratives and tourist guidebooks from the first half of the twentieth century yields a reservoir of images of the islands as "safely exotic" that could be absorbed by American culture emerging from the Victorian era.

Bushnell, too, had been attracted to the drama of the "first encounter" and in 1956 had proposed his own fictional reconstruction of the events in *The Return of Lono*, narrated by a young English seaman from Captain Cook's ill-fated flagship *Resolution*. Upon the "first encounter," Hawai'i is an appropriately idyllic setting for the young seaman's love affair with a native princess. Though clouds eventually gather and the affair is cut short, the first encounter with innocence and savagery leaves a lasting impression. As a white Hawaiian sensitive to cultural difference and the recent colonial past, Bushnell used the romantic young sailor's perspective to highlight the misinterpretations and imperialist assumptions that led Cook's crew to appropriate the local population's food supply and drain the village well to stock the ship, and finally to desecrate a shrine.

Long after the Pacific had been mapped and colonised, Westerners continued to seek the thrill of the first encounter with innocence and savagery. In his second novel, *Molokai*, Bushnell rendered the disappointment of some of those belated encounters. The German-trained Doctor Newman, who has volunteered for a job in Hawai'i under the impression that he would be living in a primitive Eden, is repelled by the country's hybrid culture marked by a century of international commerce and foreign settlement. An episode of sharing a house with a man he views as a "savage" leaves him bored and frustrated. *Molokai*, however, unlike *The Return of Lono*, goes beyond the theme of white men's encounters with the "other," to imagine what it may have felt like to be "other," living in a bastard culture, and bearing the consequences of colonialism.

Malie, whose narrative follows Newman's, speaks as a native informant and often uses the plural pronoun "we," as in the scene of the departure for Molokai: "In sorrow we touched for the last time our loved ones, received for the last time their kisses, bent our heads for their blessings, placed upon us with their leis" (190). Much of the time she is absorbed by communal events such as porch-sitting, visiting, teaching school, and singing. By contrast, the third narrator, Caleb, speaks as a westernized Hawaiian, whose ironic distancing from the community suggests there can be no homogenous "Hawaiian perspective." Each of the three narrators has privileged access to some spaces

and is excluded from others.

Malie's and Caleb's narratives also include encounters with the supernatural. Caleb has an unnerving face-off with the ghosts of his ancestors, which he cannot explain away using the language of rationality. The ontological status of the supernatural events remains uncertain, yet Bushnell signals that Malie and Caleb share a cultural memory that is unavailable to Newman.

In its treatment of race and culture as fluid and contextual *Molokai* was ahead of its time, for the postcolonial debate about the racial and cultural difference was just beginning. No less importantly, *Molokai* affirms racial hybridity and cultural syncretism – concepts closely related to contamination.

SECOND ENCOUNTER: DISEASE AND DISABILITY

Molokai also affirms illness, and accords it the central role it has played in Hawaiian history. Leprosy (also known as Hansen's disease) was one of many diseases that Hawaiians contracted in encounters with foreigners. Though it affected fewer people than other imported diseases, such as syphilis and tuberculosis, in the 1860s it came to be perceived as a threat to the healthy body of the newly united Hawaiian nation, and, in the 1890s, with the annexation of the islands by the U.S., as a threat to the American nation (Moran 47-73; Moblo 697). Consequently, for over 100 years, from 1865 to 1969, Hawaiians diagnosed with leprosy were exiled by law to the state-operated "leper colony" of Kalaupapa on the island of Molokai. The state picked the island for its relative isolation, which made it useful for the removal and containment of what it did not wish to see. For decades, leprosy patients wrote letters protesting not excessive surveillance but the near-absence of medical care and food supplies. Abandoned on a barren rock, they were expected to fend for themselves. A cure for leprosy was developed by the mid-1940s, but a handful of leprosy patients were still living in the Molokai settlement when Bushnell began his research for *Molokai*.

Bushnell was not the first to write fiction about leprosy in Hawai'i. Since its early days, the *Molokai* settlement had been haunted by literary celebrities and journalists in search of what disability studies scholar Rosemarie Thompson would call "extraordinary bodies." "There was clearly a market for writing about braving the hazards of the leper colony," writes historian Rod Edmond. "Like most modern travel writing, such work offered a frisson of apprehension and risk from the safety of the armchair" (Edmond 221). As Edmond points out, in the eyes of all these writers the Molokai settlement served as a figure of the culturally and racially contaminated Hawai'i, its innocence and primitive glory swept away by modernity and imported disease. The real-life celebrity

visitors to Molokai came, saw, and sailed away, one after another, with a shudder of relief.

Unlike his predecessors, Bushnell did not reduce the “leper colony” to a trope for the vanishing primitive. Neither did he construct the disabled body as the ultimate, monstrous “other” from which one must inevitably turn or sail away. Although Doctor Newman does act out the exoticist script established by the literature of Charles Warren Stoddard, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Jack London, he first experiences the fragility of his own body and complete dependence on others. The two other narrators do initially see Molokai as a macabre place and their exile there as a premature burial, but they come to accept living with disability as an ordinary state, one that does not preclude work, self-fulfillment, love, hate, murder, sex, having children, growing trees from orange pips, making coffins, and making music. Caleb struggles against his own sense of abjection by saying:

The things which broke Hawaiians down were diseases of the flesh, not of their unconquered spirit. Look at them, even here, in this open tomb: living and laughing and loving, as they always do, and caring not a grain of sand about the fate of their souls. The thought of them made me proud to be one of them: they are mine, I said, lifting my head high. (510)

All exiles arriving on the island enter into new relations; forced to share the limited housing, they attempt to build surrogate families. Over time, they are altered by mutual dependency and by the precariousness of life on Molokai. Thus Bushnell’s 1960s revision of “leper colony” literature affirms the life of the disabled rather than mourning the end a noble, primitive race.³

By depicting Hawaiians as physically contaminated, Bushnell both tempted and taunted his readers with the spectacle of “extraordinary bodies.” To counteract readers’ desire to read racial difference and leprosy as radically other, Bushnell developed several effective strategies. First and foremost, two of his three narrators are non-white and have been diagnosed with leprosy. It is through the narrators’ eyes and from within their bodies that readers see both able-bodied and disabled people. Since virtually everyone in the segregated island community is also ill, physical deformity becomes normative and usually passes without comment. By contrast, the white doctor’s healthy body appears abnormal. Given the length of the novel (539 pages), readers also have time to get accustomed to being in the constant presence of disability.

From a present-day disability studies perspective, the novel may be seen as problematic because it does, to some extent, use illness as “a test of moral

character” – a literary strategy Susan Sontag critiqued in *Illness as Metaphor*. Some of Bushnell’s characters do want to see illness as meaningful; others insist on its contingency. As a microbiologist, Bushnell was far from understanding leprosy as a punishment for sexual promiscuity, yet like Novalis and Nietzsche, whom Sontag upbraids (31), he evidently found illness far more interesting than perfect health. He also used health crises fairly predictably, as climactic moments when learning takes place. What can be seen as redeeming about Bushnell’s treatment of illness is that instead of individualizing the sufferer, a problem discussed at length by Sontag, he shows illness and the empathy it evokes as a foundation for community. Parts of *Molokai* can therefore be read as a fictional ethnography of a community organized around disability and death.

THIRD ENCOUNTER: NON-NORMATIVE SEXUALITY

Bushnell’s decision to explore non-normative sexuality in a South Pacific setting, like his engagement with leprosy, meant he had to stake out a position in relation to existing literature on the subject. In Hawai’i, the discourses of leprosy and non-normative sexuality have historically been intertwined because the rapid spread of the disease was attributed to Hawaiians’ licentiousness.⁴ For a long time, leprosy was considered to be an advanced stage of syphilis. Though this medical theory was eventually discredited, the association of all sexual practices other than heterosexual marital relations with illness/pathology persisted and was reified when Western medicine and psychology made a systematic study of sexuality towards the end of the nineteenth century.⁵

Because the Western discourse of non-normative sexuality was limited to “two forms – pornography or studies of psychological or social pathology,” writes literary critic David Bergman, “authors had to move outside Euro-American culture, where they could write about homosexual relations as ‘primitive’ rather than as ‘pathological.’” Many found academic and popular ethnography “a particularly attractive form of writing” since it tended to valorize sexual difference (Bergman n.p.). There was, in fact, a venerable western tradition of writing about hetero- as well as homoerotic encounters between Europeans and Pacific islanders: from eighteenth-century English sailors’ accounts, through the fiction of Herman Melville and Pierre Loti, to the stories of Charles Warren Stoddard.

The community Bushnell imagined in *Molokai* is exemplary of this Western fantasy in terms of the variety of non-normative desires allowed expression (though some of the practices are systematically concealed from the community’s more pious Christians). Few people in the settlement are too young or too old to be sexual. Young adolescents are erotically initiated and make overtures to adults. An older woman named Tutu, whom some dismiss as a doddering

grandmother, talks unashamedly about her own and other people's sexuality, and eventually remarries. There are several references to a woman named Emma, who is "wife to many" and who comforts lonely men without expecting payment, unlike the colony's regular prostitutes. Conversely, there are two stories of polygamy in which men competing for the same woman end up living amicably in threesomes (at least for a time). One of the more intriguing secondary characters is an uninfected man named Momona, who came to the island to take care of his exiled male lover Peter Kaeo and remained there after the lover's death. At the end of the novel, the narrator Caleb becomes the caregiver of the adolescent boy Eleu, whom he has come to love, and whom leprosy has left blind. To use Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick's terms (1-2), a large number of the relations represented in *Molokai* are homosocial if not overtly homoerotic, even if such relations remain unconsummated. Although the only act of lovemaking explicitly described in the text is a heterosexual one (between young adults who eventually marry), for a novel edited by the largest Bible publisher in the U.S., *Molokai* contains a great deal of erotically-charged material.

Yet it is not the occasional peeks at a fictional sexual culture that make *Molokai* interesting as a queer text. Its novelty lies in the narrative structure, which allows Bushnell to align the reader's gaze with the gaze of each of his first-person narrators in turn. In Books I and III we are exposed to male gazes that might be interpreted as queer. Both belong to highly individualistic and self-reflexive men who declare romantic interest in women but are far more emotionally involved with each other and with other men. Wedged between these two narratives is Book II narrated by a heterosexual woman who expresses a strong communal identity. In typographic terms, the woman's narrative keeps the men's narratives apart. In terms of the romantic plotting, Malie marries Doctor Newman's object of desire, Keanu, thus making herself unavailable to Caleb, who has been courting her half-heartedly, leaving him free to pursue other interests. Towards the end of the novel, Newman and Caleb do have intense physical contact, as patient and nurse, a relation whose eroticism they both deny. The gendering of the novel's three-part structure might be usefully interpreted as a pre-identitarian early 1960s variant of Kosofsky-Sedgwick's "erotic triangle" laid out in *Between Men*.

Bushnell's decision to use internal monologue seems significant; readers tend to identify more readily with narrator-protagonists than with the protagonists of third-person narratives. *Molokai*'s readers find themselves gazing at human bodies – brown and white, male and female – through the eyes of three characters whose sexuality is neither made explicit nor overtly thematized. The exercise of alternately identifying with and distancing oneself from the desires of all three narrators (constrained as they are by racism,

sexism, and internalized homophobia), has the potential of unsettling readers' self-positioning in relation to the heterosexual norm. Arguably, *Molokai* raises some of the same questions Diana Fuss would ask in her 1991 introduction to *Inside/Out*:

Questions of epistemology ('how do we know?') enjoy a privileged status in theorizations of gay and lesbian identity. How does one know when one is on the inside and when one is not? How does one know when and if one is out of the closet? How indeed does one know when one is gay? The very insistence of the epistemological frame of reference in theories of homosexuality may suggest that we cannot know – surely or definitively. Sexual identity may be less a function of knowledge than performance. (Fuss 6)

As readers of *Molokai*, we are exposed to queer ways of knowing through characters who do not necessarily recognize them as such – which is precisely why, as critics, we may want to take an interest in the literature of past epochs. Though the title of this paper suggests that “queer ways of knowing” is an identifiable category (presumably different from “straight” or “normative” or “dominant” ways of knowing), *Molokai* itself seems not to know what it knows and does not expect a recognition of its own queerness from us. For the moment we “recognize” Doctor Newman as a “closeted gay male” who initially denies and then acknowledges his desires (which we “disidentify” from or “identify” with) we step out of the novel's epistemological frame of reference and into an essentialist one developed by medical discourse, or an identitarian one shaped by decades of American political activism. What the novel apparently wants is to absorb readers, regardless of their sex and sexuality, into an imaginary way of knowing and experiencing human relations.

The queerness of Caleb's gaze also absorbs readers imperceptibly. He insists that he is familiar with the Honolulu brothels and becomes briefly infatuated with Malie, yet his strongest bonds of love and hate are with men. At the climactic point, when his narrative reaches fever pitch in a dream vision, readers find themselves awkwardly positioned on the ground, looking, through Caleb's eyes, up between the legs of a Hawaiian warrior-god:

Peering from between his legs I had seen manifestations of that other world which once I denied. From his loins, it seems, I was born again into another world, a world unsubstantial and uncertain, as shifting as shadows yet full of awful might. Never would I forget the magnificence of those warriors . . . those flaming incorporeal Gods, and the majesty of their violence.

(424)

What we as readers see from this peculiar position depends entirely on our willingness to perform the imaginative act with Caleb, who moves from naturalistic description in the first part of the passage to the figurative language that is “unsubstantial and uncertain, as shifting as shadows,” leaving space for (but not forcing) an erotic fantasy.

Newman’s narrative ends before Newman admits to himself or to anyone else that turning Keanu into an “experimental animal” and infecting him with a fatal disease had been an act of racial violence and, possibly, of displaced sexual violence. The graphic description of the procedure during which Doctor Newman infects Keanu with leprosy reads like a metaphor for sexual penetration. It is only at the end of Caleb’s Book III that Newman confesses, as best he can, in a language Caleb refuses to endorse: “I have sinned – and I am damned!” (512). It is unclear whether experimenting on Keanu or desiring Keanu is the sin he now regrets. At this point Caleb proceeds to give Newman absolution in the language of comparative ethnography:

My people are more sensible: before the missionaries came, we did not have a word for sin. There are many ways of showing love. The love of a man for a woman is one, the love of them both for the child of their flesh is another. The friendship of a man for his comrade: is it not a great thing in your country, as it is in mine? The love of a man for another man: is this so much different? If this should happen, should love be changed from a virtue to a vice? . . . What is there to be afraid of in love? What are you Christians so afraid of, in this thing called love? (513-514)

Mouthing these clichés about Hawaiian culture to comfort the distraught Newman, Caleb feels like a fraud. Privately, Caleb is unable to embrace the view of Hawai’i as an erotic Eden free of the serpent and the avenging God. One could argue, then, that Bushnell deliberately undercuts the validity of “insider” cultural knowledge, showing such knowledge to be selective and contextual: produced for the benefit of a particular audience at a particular moment. In another context, and for a different purpose, Caleb might tell a story about a sexually repressive – rather than a liberated – Hawai’i. Like his understanding of Hawaiian sexual culture, Caleb’s sense of his own sexuality remains “unsubstantial and uncertain, as shifting as shadows” (424), not because he *will* not “come out” but because he *cannot* know how he will respond to Malie, Newman, or a warrior-god until the moment arises.

GRIEVABLE LIVES

Scholars do not, as a rule, “undertake historical research in the absence of a set of animating concerns in the present,” Ruth Frankenberg remarks in *Displacing Whiteness* (3). We may therefore want to ask: what motivated the epidemiologist Bushnell in the early 1960s to embark on a project requiring arduous archival research on the century-old practice of excluding people with leprosy and the counterpractices developed by the excluded to survive on a barren island? Since the *Molokai* settlement was almost deserted by 1960 and leprosy practically eliminated on U.S. territory, Bushnell could not have in any way hoped to ameliorate the situation of people with leprosy by taking up their cause. What, then, were Bushnell’s “animating concerns? *Molokai* can be read as voice of dissent from the oppressive normalcy of the 1950s. As a microbiologist, Bushnell must have been acutely aware of the fact that while leprosy had been eradicated locally, popular attitudes towards the “unfit” had hardly changed: fear and loathing might erupt again (as, indeed, they did during the AIDS epidemic.) The partly historical and partly imaginary *Molokai* allowed Bushnell to explore what might happen if the disabled and people of color became the majority, while the able-bodied whites the anomalous minority. The expansion of the *Molokai* “leper colony” coincided with the rise of statistics and state policies to separate the “fit” from the “unfit” – eugenicist policies that would eventually culminate in the Holocaust. It would appear, then, that Bushnell embraced the island as a trope of the isolation of the abject, and a place where the virtual absence of the “normal.”

What makes *Molokai* historically significant is that – like Irving Goffman’s *Stigma: Notes on the Management of a Spoiled Identity* published in the same year – it attempts to draw analogies between various types of pathologized or stigmatized identities and to question the norms in relation to which they are defined. It was written just before the eruption of three major emancipatory movements: Civil Rights, Women’s Liberation, and the gay and lesbian movement. In the late 1950s, non-essential identities were already thinkable, while the emerging political movements had not yet begun to mobilize the stigmatized around the idea of stable, essential identities.

Bushnell found the expansive form of the novel ideally suited to conveying the idea of difference as contingent and contextual. His protagonists define others and find themselves defined through a range of more or less visible stigmas, including various shades of brown skin, physical deformities and handicaps, ex-convict status, illegitimacy, homosexuality, prostitution, and old age. Confined to the island of *Molokai*, they begin to rethink who they are in relation to others on whom they depend and who depend on them. This seems to be the kind of work Judith Butler is asking us to do in the epigraph:

“to try and expand our understanding not only of who deserves to live, whose lives are worth protecting, but more fundamentally, whose lives count as lives, and whose lives are finally grievable” (n.p.). Of course there is a fundamental difference between grieving for innocuous fictional others and for real-world others whom Butler actually had in mind – those we fear or feel threatened by, those we watch without flinching as they die in television newsreels. Yet grieving for fictional others does expand our understanding and should not be lightly dismissed

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ A longer version of this article was published in the book *Ways of Knowing Small Places: Intersections of American Literature and Ethnography since the 1960s*. Wrocław: University of Wrocław Press, 2010
- ² O.A. (Ozzie) Bushnell (1913-2002) was a third-generation Hawaiian of Portuguese and Norwegian descent. He attended the University of Hawai'i, and, after serving in the military during WWII, he went on to do graduate work in microbiology at the University of Wisconsin. On returning to Hawaii he was hired by the Territorial Board of Health and later taught at the University of Hawai'i. A prolific writer, Bushnell alternated between historical fiction and epidemiological history of Hawaii.
- ³ More recent literary tributes to the exiles of Molokai are Lois-Ann Yamanaka's novel *Blu's Hanging* (1998) and Alan Brennert's *Moloka'i* (2003).
- ⁴ For a fascinating analysis of the intersection of the discourses of sexuality and leprosy, see Gregory Tomso's article "The Queer History of Leprosy and Same Sex Love." Tomso argues that Stoddard's appropriation of leprosy as an intellectual and aesthetic metaphor both constrained and enabled him to articulate sexual "desires that he otherwise might have concealed of disavowed" (748). In his search for a legitimate language of desire, Stoddard stretched "to the limits a long-standing Catholic tradition of seeing the mark of divine beauty in leprosy's disfigurement of the body" (747).
- ⁵ See Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*.

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