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Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart, *Cooling the tropics: ice, indigeneity, and Hawaiian refreshment*, 2023, Duke University Press

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Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart's book is an intriguing study of the American colonialisation of Hawaii observed through the combined lenses of climate, body, food and gender. By using what she calls a thermal analysis, the author shows how civilisation requires normalising temperatures to what is considered pleasurable for the settlers with the help of, for example, iced refreshments. However, the book is far from being merely a story of colonialisation from the settler perspective; it is also an empathetic study from the viewpoint of the Kanaka (indigenous people of Hawaii), of sensemaking temperature under colonisation and of resistance. The book is guided by love and longing for the place of her ancestors, Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart writes in the introduction, and filled with interest in and respect for indigenous perspectives.

One main argument is that there is nothing normal or neutral about temperature. Under colonialism, the settlers decide the correct, pleasurable or normal temperature. The author shows how, already during the nineteenth century, the theory of acclimatisation was used to rationalise white supremacy in such a way that the climate of Hawaii was considered to produce a people without industry or desire for self-governance or to become civilised and also that plantation labour, the basis for the settler economy in Hawaii, was considered more suitable for non-white than white people. This reasoning led to the obvious conclusion that civilising efforts require climate regulation. Throughout the book, the author shows how the values attributed to heat or cold — pleasure and discomfort — coalesce through social practices that are influenced by race, class and gender. In addition, the interpretation of bodily sensations is cultural. For Hawaiians, traditionally, coolness illustrates happiness or sexual passion, as opposed to western ideas of coolness as disaffectedness and detachment.

With skilful ethnography, the author combines a number of sources in both English and the native Hawaiian language, ranging from business records, cookbooks,

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menus and advertisements to newspaper editorials, periodicals and photographs. The book is divided into five chapters, an introduction, conclusion and an ambitious notes section covering more than one quarter of the book, showing the author's indisputably great knowledge in the field and promoting its readability.

The first chapter opens with traditional Hawaiian myths of cold and snow that were considered divine and feminine. Hawaii does, in fact, possess one of the highest mountains in the world, Maunakea, the "white mountain", which, measured from its foot on the seabed, is even higher than Mount Everest. In cultural memory, the goddess Poli'ahu resides at Maunakea's snowy summit, and the mountain's cold waters are feminised because of their intense and generative power; notions and values of cold were therefore not new to Hawaiians when Westerners arrived. The legend of Maunakea brings the reader to a story of the recent installation of the Canada–France–Hawaii Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) on the top of Maunakea. In the eyes of Westerners, the mountain was not a mythical animate residence of gods but instead a place without humans, spirituality, nation and even atmosphere. The summit was declared too cold for natives, a kind of *terra nullius*, the author writes, and thus considered a perfect empty place for colonial projects and scientific achievements. Soon, the snowy slopes were also explored for skiing, and skiers started populating the mountain to "surf" the snow. The femininity of Maunakea was thus invaded by American masculinity, whether for space discovery, military use or sport.

From the mythological prehistory of cold in Hawaii, in chapter 2, the author goes on to recount the story of early attempts to introduce foreign ice in the 1850s. By then Hawaii, especially the capital Honolulu, was undergoing an economic boom owing to the export of crops such as sugar and pineapple from plantations, as well as the whaling industry. The concentration of foreigners with business interests trying to make a fortune through trade was high. Infrastructure was becoming increasingly American, and wealthy foreigners demanded a western lifestyle as a prerequisite for further progress and civilisation. This required a regulation of the climate to suit western sensibilities. The American global ice trade made this possible as blocks of ice from northern America were shipped to Honolulu, mainly as ballast before the ships turned home filled with pineapple and other delicacies from the islands. The ice was cut into pieces and used as a luxury in drinks. Famous establishments listed impressive repertoires of cocktails with names referring to escapism and leisure. Correlations to whiteness and power were strong.

While ice was necessary for the white settlers, the colonialist notion was that for Kanaka constitutions, the cold simply did not suit them. As a drink's ingredient, ice was especially destructive since alcohol consumption itself was considered dangerous because of the natives' supposed lack of self-control. The consumption of alcohol by native Hawaiians was even criminalised in the 1850s, and a strong temperance movement emerged. Interesting, and one of the many paradoxes of early encounters with manufactured cold in Hawaii, is the Cold Water Army, a religious organisation that promoted piety and virtue through the resolute consumption of, precisely, plain iced water. The author thus cleverly shows how the values and normative sensibilities of cold and ice during this early period were not fixed but instead fluctuating and open to challenge. However, embodiments of cold were thought to

express capacity for civility linked to western capacities and social practices that the Kanakas were excluded from.

This early introduction to commodified ice in Hawaii, however, was short-lived without the infrastructure to keep and transport this fast-melting delicacy. In the 1870s, ice machines appeared, and, as shown in the following chapter, in the 1880s, large ice factories replaced the machines, and ice became a local commodity. The author shows how this was connected to the construction of other technologies such as an urban trolley system, rural railroad systems, telephone networks, artesian wells and water reservoirs, which all came to symbolise modernity. The development of freezing and refrigeration worked its way into Honolulu's city infrastructure for domestic use. But even as ice became available and popular, its pleasures were by no means unanimously accepted. Newspaper articles claimed that Hawaiians disliked ice and made a wry face over iced water; even though these examples reflect a colonial gaze, they also show that human experience does not equal the western sensorium, the author argues.

The book goes on to show the gradual hybridisation of local and western food cultures. Fine dining could mean the co-mingling of traditional Hawaiian foods, chilled French champagne and ice cream desserts. Hawaii was increasingly promoted as a pleasurable and restorative dreamland for western visitors, with ice cream parlours and soda fountains. As settler foods became more and more assimilated to the native kitchen, not least ice cream, the Hawaiian foodscape suffered from another of the scourges of modernity: the progressive era's Pure Food Laws imported from the continental USA after the annexation in 1898 (chapter 4). Local Hawaiian ice creams were, for example, considered to violate US laws against food adulteration because of their low butterfat content. This is an interesting example of what Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart calls microbiopolitical forms of colonial governance. Ice cream was otherwise considered the embodiment of whiteness and civilisation, but only if produced the correct "American" way with a high butterfat content.

Another fascinating example of microbiopolitical governance is the regulation of the traditional staple poi, made from cooking and mashing the roots of the taro plant. This process was far from meeting American standards of hygiene and Pasteurian sensibilities. The tools used were made of stone and wood, and difficult to sterilise, and the food was processed outdoors, naturally fermenting in the microbiological environment. Due to a cholera outbreak in 1910, where the virus was believed to spread through a number of poi shops in Honolulu, the territorial food commissioner ordered the shops to be closed, removing commercial poi from the city almost overnight. Soon the "Poi Bill" was introduced, outlining sanitation requirements in order for businesses to obtain a permit to sell commercial poi. The bill not only reflected racialised ambivalence to native Hawaiian foods but also anti-Chinese sentiments, since many of the poi shops were owned by Chinese immigrants.

At the same time as ice cream with a high butterfat content produced the correct American way was introduced into the school lunch programme and advertisements portrayed American-styled girls (sic) consuming the right kind of ice cream, Hawaiian manufacturers continued to produce ice cream as they always had, using broadly accepted ingredients. This was a subtle form of protest against the territorial

government's prioritising of certain kinds of taste above others and the reproduction of non-Hawaiian ways of living, the author argues. Poi is still at the forefront of activist movements today, such as the "Legalise Pa'i" movement. Supporting Indigenous staple foods such as pa'i is seen as an agricultural mission to support food sovereignty in Hawaii, as well as a form of cultural recuperation.

Chapter 5 brings the Hawaiian foodscape and frozen delights up to date with the story of shave ice, a local iced-based dessert made by shaving blocks of ice and flavouring it with syrup and other sweet ingredients. Nowadays, shave ice and its rainbow of flavours represents a symbol of Hawaii's success as a multicultural US state. Coloured people from Hawaii and Asian countries such as China and Japan are represented by syrup flavours that overlap and blend on the icy top, a metaphorical representation of Hawaii as a melting pot. Shave ice is used to "accessorise" post-racial American nationalism today, the author writes, and offers an alternative narrative of Hawaii's thermal relationship to colonialism in which refreshment is democratic and naturalised. In the aftermath of World War II and the Cold War, and statehood in 1959, a dual vision of Hawaii emerged. While Hawaiians envisioned a modern state and a shift away from the sugar plantation economy, Americans saw a tropical dreamland illustrated by cocktails and Elvis Presley movies. And here, shave ice fitted perfectly. The frozen delicacy travelled beyond working-class neighbourhoods and became emblematic of pre-statehood childhood, imbued with nostalgia for an imagined Hawaii as a friendly racial melting pot, but with a distinct American lifestyle and set of norms and values. The chapter concludes with a reflection on a photograph depicting former US president Barack Obama posing as a "local boy" holding a shave ice in front of his favourite shave ice spot in Hawaii. In one way, this is a perfect depiction of rainbow identity cast in an American light. In another, according to the author, it is a way to reinforce and normalise the US military occupation of Hawaii. Obama's holiday home was in fact next to an American Air Force Base. Hawaiianness becomes depoliticised and settler logics are activated.

The book's conclusion brings the reader back to Maunakea and the protests against the construction of the TNT on its summit. The access road was blocked, and protesters chained themselves to a cattle crate straddling the road. Soon a camp kitchen was established, catering for protesters' needs with the help of donated food, where Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart volunteered for a few days together with family and friends. She describes the work of keeping the donated food fresh without electricity or refrigerators, using only coolers and bags of ice. These coolers must be constantly drained of meltwater and repacked. Gradually complicated refrigeration systems were created drawing the melt to the dish-water station. This experience made the author turn her attention from refrigeration to melt. Melt's refusal to remain fixed fascinates her and hints at a future beyond refrigeration, she claims. Instead of holding on to today's crumbling infrastructure, focusing on the phenomenon of melting might guide us towards a future predicated on change and growth that also maintains and protects natural resources.

Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart's book is in every sense a good read, providing new knowledge and insights. To some extent, the story of how global foods travel, adapt to local cultures, become localised and hybridised to local

conditions, has been told many times in varying theoretical languages. Connections with gender, sexuality, class and bodies are not new, yet this book brings originality and new perspectives to the genre, not only through the combination of these perspectives but also because of the overarching framing in terms of temperatures and sensibilities, in what Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart calls a thermal analysis. Although she has borrowed the term “thermal colonialism” from others, she has expanded on the concept and uses it in a number of ways, for example, in the form of normative thermal relationships, thermal sovereignty, thermal politics and thermal dependence. However, in spite of their presentation in the introduction and the ambitious notes section, these concepts are somewhat superficially described, and their genealogy and the author’s own contribution become unclear. It would have been preferable to see them further elaborated and put to work in the text. Likewise, the concept of melt, which she introduces at the end, could have been further developed to satisfy readers’ curiosity.

I appreciate the author’s aim to provide a somewhat open text, to show fluctuations and uncertainties. The story of cooling Hawaii is not straightforward or linear, and many storylines and aspects cooperate. This ambition is admirable, and she executes it well to tell an uncertain and fluctuating story. The downside is that the tale meanders in many different directions. Although she always returns to cooling and bodies and never completely loses sight of her thermal analysis, it would perhaps have been advantageous to return to her theoretical concepts and deepened the discussion in the conclusion without lapsing into a linear story in the book’s intermediate chapters. As it stands, the reader is left on the hillside of Maunakea without guidance back to the author’s concepts, arguments and conclusions.

Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart’s deep empathy for the Kanaka also needs to be mentioned. She makes no secret of her sympathy for indigenous perspectives in, for example, the protests against the construction of the TNT. However, not many accounts of globalisation are written from an insider perspective. She herself represents Hawaiian multiculturalism and fusion with American lifestyles and values, which gives her special perspectives and insights that, in an interesting way, fuses in- and outsider points of view, making it easy to forgive her partiality.

All in all, *Cooling the Tropics* is well worth reading. It provides new knowledge about Hawaiian culture and history under colonialism, casting shadows on western perspectives of Hawaii as a tropical paradise of *aloha* and hula dancing. With many revealing and fascinating examples, she tells an engaging story of the American colonisation of Hawaii that is open, unfixated and challengeable. And she does this through the lens of cooling, bodily sensibilities and thermal normalisation, which brings fresh new perspectives to research in this genre.