

# HI'ILEI HOBART

## Local Color: Hawaiian Shave Ice, Aesthetics, and State Multiculturalism

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2019

4:00 P.M.

LITERATURE BUILDING ROOM 155 (de CERTEAU)



Nothing says Hawai‘i like Shave Ice,” the Los Angeles Times declared in a 2014 travel article. The recent popularization of Hawai‘i-associated foods dovetails with renewed interest in the Pacific across multiple cultural registers. Focusing on shave ice as part of this phenomenon, this presentation reconstructs the history of Hawaiian shave ice by taking settler colonial and Indigenous politics into account. Given the complex social context of migration, diaspora, and Asian settler colonialism in forming Hawai‘i’s ‘local’ identity, shave ice presents a useful illustration of how state multiculturalism operates in everyday, gustatory life. Much like the way that Hawai‘i’s “melting pot” became an aspiration – albeit a complicated one – for the future of American society, shave ice coheres nationalist renditions of U.S. “Hawaiian” subjectivity through food: for all of its specificity to Hawai‘i’s pre-Statehood past, it has been deployed to produce unexpectedly American narratives.

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