In January 1893, a cabal of mostly white, U.S.-born oligarchs overthrew the constitutional government of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. In subsequent years, Native Hawaiian writers offered accounts of their struggle against this oligarchy in both English- and Hawaiian-language literature. In this public talk, Gordon Fraser will consider how various writers responded to the sudden, political tumult by imagining new and ancient nationalisms and by circulating literary accounts of resistance. This talk will suggest that political violence in the Hawaiian Islands is best understood in literary terms. Hawaiian nationalism took multiple forms, and these nationalisms—imagined through literary acts—had real-world implications.

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