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Review Essay
Hawaiian Music and Oceanizing American Studies

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James Revell Carr, *Hawaiian Music in Motion: Mariners, Missionaries, and Minstrels* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2014, $25.00). Pp. 240. ISBN 978 0 2520 8019 7.

Adria L. Imada, *Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the U.S. Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012, $27.95). Pp. 392. ISBN 978 0 8223 5207 5.

John William Troutman, *Kīkā Kila: How the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Changed the Sound of Modern Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016, $37.50). Pp. 392. ISBN 978 1 4696 2792 2.

INTRODUCTION

American studies has been dedicated to understanding cultural forms from its beginnings as a field. Music, as one such form, is especially centered in the field as a lens through which to seek the cultural "essence" of US America – as texts from which to glean insight into negotiations of intellectual thought, social relations, subaltern resistance, or identity formation, or as a form of labor that produces an exchangeable commodity. In particular, the featuring of folk, indigenous, and popular music directly responded to anxieties in the intellectual circles of the postwar era around America's purported lack of serious culture in comparison to Europe. According to John Gilkeson, American studies scholars in the 1950s and 1960s "vulgarized" the culture concept introduced by the Boasian school of anthropology, opening the door to serious consideration of popular culture as equal in value to high culture.[1]

In the 1990s, scholarly understandings of popular music's significance to US American life saw a notable contribution in Eric Lott's *Love and Theft*, which investigated the intersections of race, labor, and the role of blackface minstrelsy in the antebellum United States. Lott pointed to the problematic assumption that the primarily white, working-class blackface minstrel audience was in agreement about race, arguing

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[1] John S. Gilkeson, *Anthropologists and the Rediscovery of America, 1886–1965* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

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that "there were in fact contradictory racial impulses at work, impulses based in the everyday lives and racial negotiations of the minstrel show's working-class partisans."[2] By centering blackface minstrelsy as a syncretic popular culture and musical tradition, Lott illuminated the nuances of the antebellum North's political, social, and cultural life in the nineteenth century. To Lott, blackface was a metaphor, a performance of control, power, fear, and desire through the medium of music and public display. Even decades after its publication, *Love and Theft* has remained valuable not just to the study of blackface minstrelsy but also to the larger study of culture's role in negotiations of racial and ethnic hierarchy, influencing scholars such as W. T. Lhamon Jr. and Nicholas Sammond to seek the legacies of minstrelsy and blackface performance in twentieth-century popular culture.[3]

Lott's influence continues to resound even in the recent transnational turn in American studies, which has seen scholars looking more closely at the presence of the world in the United States and the presence of the United States in the world. In part due to Lott's contribution, American studies scholars have found music and performance especially useful sites of focus for examining issues of resistance, cultural hegemony, and the subaltern in analyses of colonized groups around the world. If the broadest definition of American studies scholarship pivots around encounters between cultures and nations, then music is particularly useful as a way of mapping these meetings.

Part of this transnational turn has been an even more recent interest in studies of imperialism, indigeneity, and culture in the Asia-Pacific. In 2015, *American Quarterly* relocated its editorial headquarters to the University of Hawaii and published a special issue titled *Pacific Currents* that focussed on Native Pacific scholarship. The issue was framed, according to the coeditors, "not in terms of how Native Pacific studies might be hosted within or juxtaposed in a disciplinary sense with American studies but in terms of what their meeting spaces potentially make visible."[4] Greg Dvorak, in the same issue, argues for the "oceanizing" of American studies; a recognition of the ways "Islanders are already Oceanizing America to some extent with their own bodies as agents of global change, not only as subjects who are Americanized by labor and immigration."[5] Among the most influential contributors to the oceanization of American studies are scholars of Hawaii, many of whom have recognized the erasure of Kanaka Maoli (indigenous Hawaiian) resistance to US imperialism in the historiographic record and have revealed a history of resistance, autonomy, and kinship-building by Kanaka Maoli against American imperial violence. Even in studies of a region so geographically distant from antebellum northern US America, Lott's contribution remains resonant. In this essay, I review three recent monographs that have combined

[2] Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, 20th anniversary edn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4.

[3] W. T. Lhamon, *Raising Cain: Blackface Performance from Jim Crow to Hip Hop* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2000); Nicholas Sammond, *Birth of an Industry: Blackface Minstrelsy and the Rise of American Animation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

[4] Paul Lyons and Ty P. Kāwika Tengan, "Introduction: Pacific Currents," *American Quarterly*, 67, 3 (2015), 548, doi:10.1353/aq.2015.0033.

[5] Greg Dvorak, "Oceanizing American Studies," *American Quarterly*, 67, 3 (2015), 614, doi:10.1353/aq.2015.0039.

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the Lottian focus on music and performance as cultural text with the project of oceanizing American studies by highlighting complex histories of cultural exchange between Hawaii and the US.

Ethnomusicologist James Revell Carr's *Hawaiian Music in Motion* deftly navigates the cultural currents between the US and Hawaii through the mapping of musical networks, drawing from both American music and Native Hawaiian scholarship. Emerging from the burgeoning field of historical ethnomusicology, *Hawaiian Music in Motion* is a significant contribution to American studies, providing critical insight into the ways US American and Kanaka Maoli musical traditions came into contact with and informed one another in the nineteenth century. Carr draws from Lott, but shifts his geospatial focus, finding that blackface minstrelsy had a significant impact on Hawaiian musical traditions even when detached from the immediate concerns of the US white working class.

Carr argues that scholars of nineteenth-century Hawaii have undervalued the cultural contributions of merchants, mariners, and sailors. Centering mobility and the exchange of musical performance traditions between Kanaka Maoli and American seamen, Carr argues that both groups adopted elements of the other's cultural forms, creating a cosmopolitan, subaltern social sphere aboard ships and in port cities (8). This cultural exchange helped sailors to develop an understanding of their global citizenship, while Kanaka Maoli cultivated hybrid identities and asserted autonomy through their contact with sailors and other Westerners (9). Following a chronological arc, Carr uses both a theoretical framework and archival evidence to provide examples of Kanaka Maoli use of musical performance to navigate the uncertainty of Western imperial rule. He emphasizes the active participation of Kanaka Maoli in the creation of their own post-contact culture while also acknowledging the top-down flow of power from Western imperialists that inevitably constrained certain types of resistance.

As Carr argues in chapter 1, even in their earliest interactions with *haole* (foreign Westerners), Kanaka Maoli counterexplored the West aboard Euro-American ships and used music and dance "strategically in cultural negotiations" (20). In chapter 2, Carr details the history and form of the "sea chantey," or sailors' work song, a syncretic style that combined features of African American and Celtic music (75). Carr argues that the introduction of "Kanaka" sailors and Kanaka Maoli music to Euro-American ships influenced "many of the musical features that have come to be seen as defining characteristics of chantey singing" (80). Likewise, Kanaka Maoli music adopted Western instrumentation, leading to the creation of such forms as *hula ku'i*, in which Kanaka Maoli songs were accompanied by Western stringed instruments such as banjos and guitars (85).

Chapter 3 argues that cultural exchange took place not only aboard ships, but also in the port city of Honolulu, which housed not only Kanaka Maoli and Euro-American sailors but also African American merchants and business owners (103). Indeed, Carr reveals that nineteenth-century Honolulu was a thriving city in which African Americans, Euro-Americans, and Kanaka Maoli entertained one another and shared cultures, much to the chagrin of American missionaries who sought to eradicate what they saw as debaucherous Kanaka Maoli behavior such as *hula* and *mele* (traditional chant) (110). Culture became a site of contestation between the sailors and missionaries who relied on Kanaka Maoli labor, the former for ship work and the latter for agricultural production (112). Despite the missionaries' opposition, the desire for theatrical entertainment among Hawaiian royalty eventually led to

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the opening of the Royal Hawaiian Theater in 1848 (128). The nineteenth century also saw a heightened hunger for novelty entertainment in the United States. Here Carr draws again from Lott's work, citing the popularity of blackface minstrelsy in the US North as evidence of a "fascination with Otherness" that allowed minstrel audiences to accept Kanaka Maoli performers as part of the same genre (117). With the rise in Kanaka Maoli ship workers aboard US trading and whaling vessels came many Kanaka Maoli living in New England whaling towns. In 1838, Kanaka Maoli whalers performed a public concert in Portland, Maine, which Carr suggests probably involved chant without instrumentation (118). This and other performances in the early nineteenth century allowed Kanaka Maoli to "use their Hawaiian-ness as cultural capital" and helped Americans to develop a set of expectations associated with Pacific Islanders (124).

The Royal Hawaiian Theater, Carr argues in chapter 4, became a site for "episodes of contestation and negotiation for the multiethnic community of Honolulu" (131). The theater shows were attended by all classes and ethnicities and hosted a variety of performance types both serious and novel. However, Carr shows that blackface minstrelsy quickly became the most popular as it "satirized upper-class pretensions … [mocked] lower-class aspirations," and critiqued urban modernism, all of which resonated with Kanaka Maoli residents caught in the rapid rise of Western capitalism and the plantation economy (136–37). In 1862, the first *hula* troupe from Hawaii performed in California (149). The intended audience for this group included Kanaka Maoli migrant laborers and Euro-American men seeking erotic entertainment (151). The leader of the troupe chose to display a contemporary version of hula that combined traditional practices with Western elements, which frustrated Western audiences who expected "soft primitive" eroticism and smut (153–55). Upon returning to Hawaii, the *hula* troupe was renamed the "Hawaiian Minstrels" (155). The group poked fun at rural Kanaka Maoli and Asian immigrant laborers and only sometimes performed in blackface, which, Carr argues in chapter 5, differentiated the Hawaiian Minstrels from Hollywood films in the 1930s and 1940s in that "negative stereotypes were re-appropriated by native Hawaiians in a loving, self-deprecating manner" rather than to ridicule (171). Carr emphasizes the reciprocal cultural relationship between American and Kanaka Maoli performers that resulted in hybridized, syncretic musical forms in both the US and Hawaii. Carr ends his narrative in the late nineteenth century with the founding of the King's Singing Boys and the creation of *hapa haole* (half-foreign) music. *Hapa haole* groups performed syncretic music, in which traditional Hawaiian-language *mele* (chant, traditionally performed with percussion only) was blended with Western-sounding melodies and Western minstrel-band instrumentation (174). The Singing Boys band was formed by King Kalakaua, whose "vision of Hawaiian identity [was] in direct opposition to the ideology of the haole plantation elite" (164). The king loved minstrel performances, but he also embraced Kanaka Maoli music and other practices, promoting performers in support of Hawaiian cultural pride, nationalism, and autonomy in the face of growing Western annexationist sentiment. The *hapa haole* music born from this period reached a peak of popularity in the United States in the 1920s, linking this particular kind of musical sound with Hawaii for decades to come (175).

Carr's narrative shows that musical performance in the nineteenth century constituted a strategy against imperialism for Kanaka Maoli faced with the possibility of losing control of their own lands and culture. However, like Eric Lott before him, Carr complicates the strict binary of dominance and resistance by showing that

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nineteenth-century Kanaka Maoli performers often found autonomy under US American domination *through* their engagement with dominant US American cultural forms. This feature of Carr's argument places him in a larger conversation in American studies that questions simplified notions of resistance among colonized peoples.

American and ethnic studies scholar Adria Imada, like Carr, works to complicate the binary of submission and resistance in the history of Kanaka Maoli cultural production by turning to *hula*, perhaps Hawaii's most recognizable cultural export and a common part of the tourist's experience of the islands. This tourist's *hula* emerged during the same time as the *hapa haole* music described in the last chapter of Carr's book, and has come to be seen by some Kanaka Maoli as acquiescent to Western imperialism, its performers as submissive to white colonizers. Against this view, Adria Imada's *Aloha America* traces the history of *hula* performance circuits in the United States and Hawaii from the late nineteenth century through World War II, arguing for the value of *hula* as a cultural practice through which Kanaka Maoli were both objectified and empowered under American imperialism. Due to the limited archival material available to her, Imada utilizes sources such as interviews, film, and photography to shed light on *hula*'s often misunderstood history (21).

Imada's book begins where Carr's leaves off: in the mid- to late nineteenth century during the reign of King David Kalakaua. The king often entertained foreign guests at the boathouse at Honolulu pier with *hula*, music, food, and drink. These parties were attended by members of many classes and nationalities, creating a unique cosmopolitan space in which Kanaka Maoli and Western music and practices mixed (46). In 1886, Kalakaua formed Hui Lei Mamo, a *hula* troupe that often performed at the boathouse. Although hula dancers had always been both men and women, Hui Lei Mamo dancers were almost exclusively women, who, if they were not upper-class, had to rely on performing for upward mobility. Kalakaua had worked to expand the availability of formal, Western education to *maka'ainana* (common-class) men, but in keeping with Western gender norms, lower-class women were not admitted to schools. Some of the female dancers in Hui Lei Mamo were *maka'ainana*, including Kini Kapahukulaokamamalu (Jennie Wilson), an important figure in nineteenth-century *hula* (53). In a Western world that saw Kanaka Maoli as savages, *hula* became a valuable tool for Hawaiian women to claim and perform respectability (53, 55).

Chapter 2 focusses on the first US and European tour by Hawaiian *hula* performers from 1892 to 1896, during which *haole* overthrew Queen Lili'uokalani and seized control of Hawaii's government. Faced with the loss of their autonomy at home, *hula* performers abroad asserted themselves as "cultural ambassadors for their nation" (65). This first tour included stops in many major cities, especially in the US American Northeast, where *hula* was performed alongside freak shows in dime museums and on the vaudeville stage (60). Imada shows that *hula* performers in the late nineteenth century improvised tactics of subversion such as purposefully posing for photographs in Western dress and pointedly performing songs like "Aloha 'Oe," written by the recently overthrown monarch Queen Lili'uokalani (83, 103).

At World's Fairs in the early twentieth century, Hawaii's *haole*-run Chamber of Commerce attempted to organize exhibits in order to lure white American investors to Hawaiian agricultural production. Chapter 3 details how, in retaliation, Kanaka Maoli opposed to the exploitative *haole* plantation organized alternative exhibitions that used *hula* and music to assert their own autonomy (111). By focussing on displays

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of Hawaii's culture rather than its agriculture, these Kanaka Maoli-organized exhibits appealed directly to World's Fair audiences' fascination with otherness, and thus upstaged *haole*-run exhibitions. The *haole* elite were threatened by these performances. They feared that by their featuring Native culture, Hawaii would be made to seem uncivilized and primitive, scaring away potential American investors. On the contrary, the Kanaka Maoli-organized exhibits created a positive feeling about Hawaii among fair audiences; the result, Imada argues, was an increased interest in Kanaka Maoli culture among US Americans (126).

Chapter 4 moves into the 1930s, when *hula* dancers started headlining performances in New York City, ultimately gaining respect from the same *haole* who had called them savages in the early twentieth century. Troupes like the Aloha Maids toured the continent, coming into contact with more Americans than ever before, acting as ambassadors for Hawaii, and "participating in the colonial sculpting of aloha," or Hawaiian hospitality (155). At the same time, *hula* performers "set out to accomplish their own discrepant agendas" (155–56). Female Kanaka Maoli *hula* dancers in the US and Hawaii performed their difference for white middle-class audiences, creating an imagined intimacy, but they also opened their own tourist establishments, unionized to fight exploitation, and used *hula* to gain fame and fortune in Hollywood and New York, forming communities of Kanaka Maoli around the US.

In chapter 5, Imada returns her focus to Hawaii during World War II with the arrival of American military personnel. The United Service Organization took over control of tourism and entertainment for soldiers, solidifying the "idea of Hawai'i as a site of hospitality" that had emerged earlier in the twentieth century (219). Imada argues that *hula* eased tensions between soldiers and Kanaka Maoli, who had a fraught relationship on the islands, as evidenced by a 1945 race riot that left many dead or wounded (223). Film and photography became instruments of regulation, helping Americans to visualize Hawaii as an integrated and peaceful place for soldiers and Kanaka Maoli alike (231). Imada argues that these productions were successful in that soldiers returned home after World War II with fond memories of *hula* and *luau*, two practices that were frequently represented in Hollywood cinema in the 1950s (241). Despite the seeming exploitation of *hula* dancers, Imada emphasizes that many Kanaka Maoli performers began their careers as USO entertainers and professionalized after the war, indicating that Kanaka Maoli were actively using *hula* for their own purposes (249). Imada ends her narrative in the present day at the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival in Hawaii, named after King Kalakaua, arguing that "hula constitutes an emergent structure of feeling in the islands that merges self-determination politics and pragmatic capitalism," even to this day (258). While some Kanaka Maoli reject anything other than the ancient styles of *hula* as pandering to tourism, others see tourism as essential to the preservation of Kanaka Maoli tradition (266–67). Imada's epilogue shows that *hula* remains contested terrain upon which Kanaka Maoli and *haole* negotiate power.

While Imada does not focus exclusively on music, her book forms a pair with Carr's. Both scholars center cultural performances, and read them as texts from which to draw an understanding of the performers' complex politics. Despite their difference in disciplinary affiliation, Carr and Imada are in conversation about the importance of music as performance and as evidence of cross-cultural encounter and indigenous resistance against US American imperialism.

Like Imada and Carr, historian John Troutman centers cultural encounter, but focusses on a single object to do so: the kīkā kila, or Hawaiian steel guitar.

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Troutman's book explores narratives of modern popular music in Hawaii, the United States, and abroad by following the movement of an instrument that was first created for and by Kanaka Maoli in the late nineteenth century and later came to prominence in the twentieth century through the deliberate actions of Kanaka Maoli musicians. Troutman argues that through kīkā kila, Kanaka Maoli musicians revolutionized "how people throughout the Pacific Rim, North America, and Europe approached their music" (1). It was the work of Kanaka Maoli that likewise made possible the development of such instruments as the Dobro, electric steel guitar, and slide guitar, which revolutionized the sound of blues, country, and rock music in the twentieth century (5).

Troutman begins in his introductory chapter by observing the presence of kīkā kila's sound in the music of Jimmie Rodgers, Bing Crosby, and Bollywood, and even in the theme song heard at the opening of Warner Brothers cartoons (6–7). In chapter 1 Troutman seeks to discover how this sound came to be taken for granted in American music, focussing on the political moment of the forced overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy by *haole* in 1895. Similarly to Imada and Carr, Troutman argues that the first Hawaiian steel guitar musicians used performance to gain "cultural and economic autonomy" in the face of imperial power (64). In chapter 2, Troutman introduces Joseph Kekuku, the Kanaka Maoli musician credited with adapting the Spanish guitar to create the technique that would become kīkā kila in the late nineteenth century. The Hawaiian guitar created by Kekuku was laid across the lap of the player, and the strings were raised to accommodate the metal bar used to slide along the neck, creating the "steel" glissando sound. Kekuku and other musicians during this time took up the steel guitar to avoid working for the provisional *haole* government after the 1893 overthrow.

In chapter 3, Troutman's narrative follows Kekuku and other Kanaka Maoli musicians to the US, where their ethnic novelty propelled them into successful recording and live-performance careers in the 1910s and 1920s. Many steel guitarists also found success teaching and publishing instructional manuals during this time (94). Troutman attributes this popularity of Hawaiian music in the US to a confluence of factors, including globalization, curiosity about the ethnic other, the eroticization of women of color, and the decline of blackface minstrel traditions (95–98). However, Troutman shows not only the Hawaiian steel guitar's presence in the US, but also its global influences. Chapter 4 reveals evidence of the global travel of Kanaka Maoli musicians during the 1920s through 1940s. Through photographs, scrapbooks, letters, and interviews, Troutman shows that Kanaka Maoli musicians acted as "ambassadors, entrepreneurs, and tourists," leaving the sounds and technology of the steel guitar in China, Japan, India, and many African and European countries (106).

Through the 1920s and 1930s, Kanaka Maoli musicians like Eddie Bush and Sol Hoʻopiʻi were well-known throughout the US as stage, radio, and film performers as well as innovators in new guitar technology. In chapter 5, Troutman shows that Hoʻopiʻi was directly responsible for the creation of the first mechanically and electronically amplified steel guitars (135–37). Despite facing racism and having to compete with the growing pseudo-Hawaiian music industry, Troutman argues convincingly, Kanaka Maoli were prominent members of the American entertainment industry in the early twentieth century.

Eventually, the sound of the Hawaiian steel guitar lost its association with Kanaka Maoli themselves as "Americans assimilated and adapted the instrument to redefine

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the sonic contours of their own vernacular traditions" (155). While most scholars fixate on the black–white binary in American popular music from the South, Troutman shows in chapter 6 that the large number of Kanaka Maoli performers who toured in southern states before and during the 1920s directly influenced the adoption of slide or steel guitar by some of the most influential blues and country musicians. By the 1930s, the number of Kanaka Maoli performers of steel guitar in the US had dwindled due to the rising popularity of southern steel guitarists and white performers of Hawaiian music. Troutman argues that although Hawaiian sounds and technologies continued to directly or indirectly influence American popular music through the 1950s and 1960s, Kanaka Maoli musicians are largely unrecognized for their contributions (196).

As Kanaka Maoli performers were fading from the public eye in America, the steel guitar also began to lose popularity on the islands. The 1930s and 1940s provided plenty of work for steel guitarists in Hawaii with the exponential growth of the tourism industry and the famous *Hawai'i Calls* radio show, which featured many Kanaka Maoli musicians and garnered millions of listeners all over the world (205–6). However, as Kanaka Maoli faced "increasing political, social, and economic marginalization" after World War II, music became a site of contestation over representations of Hawaiian-ness, with some disavowing traditional, old-fashioned music, while others criticized the more modern "jazzed-up" Hawaiian music of *Hawai'i Calls* and Don Ho (210, 208–9). In chapter 7, Troutman explains how tension rose to a head during the 1970s Hawaiian Renaissance, a political, cultural, and social movement that involved protests against tourism and American cultural dominance. Many musicians associated with the Renaissance disavowed *hapa haole* (half-foreign) music and the steel guitar due to their associations with the United States and country music (211–13). "The far-reaching global embrace of Hawaiian steel guitar technology," Troutman argues, "ultimately planted the seeds of its undoing at home" (220). Troutman ends *Kīkā Kila* with an epilogue featuring those few musicians in Hawaii who have remained dedicated since the Hawaiian Renaissance to kīkā kila's survival and to preserving its history of indigeneity.

Troutman's contribution to oceanizing American studies through Kanaka Maoli music is particularly notable. Like Imada and Carr, Troutman relays a history in which Kanaka Maoli are not passive recipients of globalization and modernity, but are active participants, negotiating power through cultural production. However, where *Kīkā Kila* truly shines is in oceanizing the genres of music that scholars conceptualize as "American." Troutman complicates the black–white binary of country and blues music by introducing Hawaiian-ness to both genres. He asks an important question alluded to by Carr: what can scholars learn by questioning the rigidity of boundaries around national musical traditions and instead conceiving of all music as the result of cross-cultural encounter?

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Among these recent contributions to the study of Hawaiian music, there are several points of common ground. All the texts are transnational and focus on cultural contact, exchange, and negotiations of power. While Troutman centers a material object, the purpose of tracing a history of the kīkā kila aligns with that of Imada and Carr: to recognize the ways Kanaka Maoli used musical performance to assert autonomy and negotiate their own place in an interconnected world. Each of these

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scholars argues for a closer look at moments of cultural exchange and at how they continue to ripple into today's world. These histories have become hidden over time, overshadowed by contemporary contestations over sovereignty in Hawaii and the normalization in the continental US of the association between Hawaii as a vacation spot far away and entirely separate from US American history and culture. Carr, Imada, and Troutman look to the past with an eye on the present, showing the long history of Kanaka Maoli presence in US Americans' cultural imaginary, and asserting the significance of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Hawaii as a rich site for scholarly inquiry.

The conversation, though, has just begun, and there are more questions that deserve asking. Most notably, what does it *mean* that Hawaiian music was so popular in US America during the twentieth century? All of these recent works of scholarship acknowledge that Hawaiian music and performance were syncretic, varied, and contested terrain; however, none take up the task of fully considering the way that the recording-industry version of Hawaiian music that was so popular may have affected how US America imagined Hawaii. Furthermore, Troutman shows that what began as Hawaiian music eventually became absorbed by non-Kanaka Maoli musicians in the United States. What politics are evoked by an African American steel guitar player in the US South who knowingly appropriated a Hawaiian instrument? While possible answers to these questions are yet to come, it may be useful to turn back to Lott, who looked at blackface minstrelsy and asked about the nature of desire and power in a practice that seemed to be entirely about hate. Similarly, US Americans' love for Hawaiian culture may seem like mere exoticism, an objectification of the submissive Kanaka Maoli body, but is that all? What was it about Hawaii that captured Americans at this specific time in US history? These questions are not easily answered but are nonetheless crucial to understanding how Hawaiian music oceanized the US.

The political significance of Hawaii, especially to the US federal government, has only heightened in the twenty-first century. Hawaii continues to be discursively framed as exotic, foreign, and primitive despite its supposedly equal status to all other states. This has been no more clear than in Attorney General Jeff Sessions's recent response to the blocking of President Trump's Muslim Travel Ban by Judge Derrick Watson of the Hawaiian Supreme Court. "I really am amazed," Sessions said, "that a judge sitting on an island in the Pacific can issue an order that stops the President of the United States from what appears to be clearly his statutory and Constitutional power."[6]

It seems that leaders in Washington take pride in Hawaii as long as it stays politically passive, an idea that Carr, Imada, and Troutman have shown to have existed since at least the nineteenth century. It was the fear of Hawaiian political power that led *haole* to assert control, and it was through cultural production that Kanaka Maoli maintained a sense of community, autonomy, and resistance despite being subjected to theft of land, violence, and domination. It would do the field of American studies well to listen more closely to scholars who have studied these histories and strategies of subversion. As Attorney General Sessions has made abundantly clear,

[6] Andrew Kaczynski, "AG Sessions Says He's 'Amazed' a Judge 'on an Island in the Pacific' Can Block Trump's Immigration Order," *CNN*, 21 April 2017, at www.cnn.com/2017/04/20/politics/kfile-sessions-psychoanalyze.

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this is still a conversation worth having. Each of the texts above has contributed to the questioning of boundaries around nations, musical traditions, and acts of submission or resistance, but there is still work to be done to oceanize American studies, decolonize history, and ultimately reshape the discourses that continue to hide oppression behind fantasy.

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