In *Aloha Betrayed*, Noenoe K Silva has developed a fresh new approach to the critique of colonial historiography. Drawing on nineteenth-century Hawaiian-language texts and newspapers as the basis of her analysis provides a timely remedy for a common problem dominating Pacific historiography—the absence of indigenous voices.

The book is divided into five chapters tracing Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) resistance to the colonization process, and particularly the effect of colonization on Hawaiian leadership and politics. The first two chapters provide historical background important to the development of the book’s main themes. These chapters also deal with the Hawaiian-language resources that Silva researched for the book. The analysis investigates the use of all genres of the oral tradition, thus illustrating Silva’s more liberal approach as to what constitutes relevant historical resources. Included in chapter 2 is a table containing the details of Hawaiian newspapers published between 1856 and 1864. Chapter 3 discusses the resistance strategies and tactics used by King Kalākaua, in particular the way Hawaiian genealogies, mele (ie, song, chant, poetry), and performance were used to communicate protest and encourage unification. Chapter 4 looks in some detail at the anti-annexation movement and the 1897 petition, signed by 95 percent of the Native Hawaiian population. Chapter 5 examines the role of women, particularly Queen Liliʻuokalani and Emma ‘A’ima Nāwahī, in the resistance movements. There are two appendixes: One is a text outlining the objectives of *Nupepa Kuoka* (Independent Newspaper), which was published by haole (white people or foreigners) in opposition to *Ka Hoku o Ka Pakipika* (The Star of the Pacific). The second contains a list of songs composed by Queen Liliʻuokalani during her imprisonment. Silva has included photographs of prominent political figures of the period, newspaper articles, and illustrations, all of which add substance to her text.

In her introduction Silva explains the language and translation conventions she has used for the transcription and translation of the Hawaiian-language material. She states that leaving the original text in its older form and not imposing contemporary orthography makes it possible for readers who are literate in Hawaiian to “see the original spellings and perhaps glean alternative and/or additional meanings” (13). Further descriptions of aspects of Hawaiian terminology give readers a reference point for understanding variations, such as the Hawaiian terms for people and the different status titles.

Three main themes are evident throughout the book and somewhat
intertwined. The first challenges the predominant use of English-language print material to explain and verify events in Hawaiian history. Silva states that “there is a history of resistance to U.S. colonialism that has gone unrecorded in mainstream historiography,” which has had “far-reaching consequences” (162–163). She is referring in part to the imposition of English to the detriment of the Hawaiian language. The dominant English language has greatly contributed to contemporary Hawaiians’ loss of knowledge about their history. Silva makes persuasive arguments in favor of the authenticity of the nineteenth-century Hawaiian-language newspapers in providing alternative explanations to an otherwise one-sided perspective on historical events. The newspapers are a useful tool for explaining how the indigenous people—the ones most affected by changes brought about through colonization—actually thought about what was happening around them during times of great change and challenge to their lifeways. Although Hawaiian-language manuscripts have been used in the past, Silva maintains that interpretation of the translations have reconfigured and misrepresented indigenous voices and favored the colonial agenda. Silva’s analysis of the translations of Kamakau’s mo’olelo (history, narrative), _Ke Kumu Aupuni_ (chapter 1), is a compelling example of how English-language writers have manipulated and reordered Hawaiian print material. The effect of this type of reordering has been to create a distortion of history that denies the original indigenous voice and perspective. One example cited by Silva is the English translation by Mary Kawena Pukui, Lahilahi Webb, and others, of Kamakau’s manuscript, _The Ruling Chiefs_, published in 1961 (cited by Silva, 17). The published translation, which purports in part to represent Kamakau’s story of Captain Cook’s arrival in Hawai’i, deletes a large amount of the original manuscript, replacing it with ellipses. In an effort to address the discrepancies, Silva offers an interpretation of Kamakau’s original text that reinserts the indigenous voice and relevance into the events surrounding Cook’s visits to Hawai’i. She discusses the way that Kamakau used traditional storytelling in the form of genealogical history, which contextualized Cook within the larger mo’olelo about the Hawaiian ruler, Kamehameha I (17–18). Seen from this perspective, Kamakau’s mo’olelo does not present Cook as the most important character in the story. His use of the traditional method of genealogical ordering depicts Cook not as the first white person to come to Hawai’i, but merely one in a “substantial genealogy of [white] travelers” (20). Silva states, “It is to this substantial genealogy of travelers that Kamakau adds the story of Captain Cook, purposefully disrupting the story told by haole that Cook appeared magically and suddenly as a unique phenomenon, to the shock and amazement of the Kānaka ‘Ōiwi [native people]” (20). The 1961 reordering of the text removed Kamakau’s careful rendition of Cook’s genealogical connections to the wider Hawaiian society and events; the account of the first arrival of Cook begins with ellipses that “represent 17 pages of contextual material” (17).
This has the effect of removing Kamakau’s references to oral tradition and mele through which the Hawaiian perspective would be more appropriately viewed and understood. These changes resulted in the disappearance of Kamakau’s “valid,” indigenous sources, and his critique of Western historiography was literally “lost in the translation” (21).

Silva noted other omissions in the Ruling Chiefs text that meant that information about the role and status of Hawaiian women was missing, thus creating an inaccurate “picture of gender relations” in traditional Hawaiian society (21). One of the examples she cites is Kamakau’s rendition of the long-distance voyaging undertaken by Hawaiian women, in particular Lu’ukia, and after her, Kaupe’a (19). Because “information presented in the [Kamakau] stories of women taking leadership roles in long voyages disappears” (21), Silva explains, information about women’s roles and status in traditional Hawaiian society is in turn obscured.

The use of print material to convey the colonizing message also brought about changes to the meaning of some Hawaiian-language terms when they were translated into English. Silva provides a convincing argument, using the words “pono” and “ea” as examples (33, 37). Traditionally the term “pono” meant that “the akua (deities), ali’i [genealogically determined class of rulers], kahuna [advisors and experts in various fields], maka’āinana [ordinary people], and ‘āina (land) lived in balance with each other, and that people had enough to eat and were healthy” (16). But Christian missionaries changed the meaning of the word to fit with Christian beliefs and concepts; they translated it as “righteousness,” a term which, Silva suggests, had no prior meaning to Hawaiians (33). She states that whereas “pono” previously had multiple meanings—such as describing ideal behavior of ali’i, and other concepts of balance, completeness, and material well-being—it now “took on the connotation of conforming to Christian morality” (33).

As a further example of how the missionaries’ appropriation of the term “pono” changed the intent and meaning of Hawaiian language, she examines Kamehameha III’s Restoration Day statement of 1843. The original stated, “Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono (roughly, “The sovereignty of the land has been continued because it is pono”) (37). Silva draws attention to the term, “ea,” which means life, or breath, or sovereignty. She maintains that in the original context of Kamehameha III’s statement, the term “ea” was “clearly meant to signify sovereignty” (37). The statement itself was later appropriated as the motto for the State of Hawai’i; the word “ea” is now simply translated as “life,” and “pono” is translated as “righteousness”: “The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness” (37). Silva rightfully concludes that the simplification of the terms has given them different connotations, which lessen the multiplicity of meanings in the Hawaiian language, and ultimately distort the meaning of Kamehameha III’s original statement (37).

Another effective example of language as a tool for resistance surrounds the 1897 anti-annexation petition (chapter 4). The importance
of this document in maintaining unity in resistance during the annexation period has been well covered by Silva. The historical background she provides leading up to the annexation, although overly long, does provide evidence as to the sustained, organized protest by Kānaka Maoli. One of the important points Silva makes about the petition was that it was written in Hawaiian. As such the petition itself is a valuable resource that offers the indigenous perspective on the annexation by the United States and verifies the strength of the Hawaiian resistance. The existence of the petition proves her assertion that historians have ignored alternative voices in Hawaiian history. Silva states that most historiography surrounding the annexation of Hawai‘i has ignored the evidence describing the resistance from Native Hawaiians “because historians do not generally read the archive in Hawaiian” (123). This, along with the imposition of English to the detriment of the Hawaiian language, is one of the reasons why the petition was relatively unknown to contemporary Hawaiians. Silva recalls the response she received from descendants of the signatories, following the petition’s display by the Bishop Museum: “The petition, inscribed with the names of everyone’s kūpuna [grandparents, elders, ancestors], gave people permission from their ancestors to participate in the quest for national sovereignty. More importantly, it affirmed for them that their kūpuna had not stood idly by, apathetically, while their nation was taken from them” (4).

The book’s second theme, closely related to the first, concerns the way that Hawaiian-language material was used in political protests and for cultural retention. Printed material was a useful assimilation tool in the colonization process. As in other Pacific regions, the advent of literacy in Hawai‘i was relatively quick, as popular interest was high. Quoting Walter Mignolo, who wrote about Spanish colonization in the New World (The Darker Side of the Renaissance, 1995), Silva points out that literacy “facilitated the dissemination and reproduction of knowledge and . . . contributed to the colonization of the languages” (32). A haole understanding of concepts in Hawaiian political, social, and economic social structures brought new meanings to concepts that were previously untranslatable into English; the new concepts intruded into the domain of Hawaiian knowledge and beliefs.

In the 1860s, Kānaka Maoli newspapers were published to challenge the missionaries’ attempts at assimilation. Hawaiian-language newspapers such as Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika were successful because they ensured the continuation of Hawaiian tradition-based concepts, knowledge, and oral tradition. The newspapers promoted the unification of Kānaka Maoli by communicating information to them in culturally relevant ways. They functioned as sites for communicating and organizing political protest. They had the added affect of perpetuating Hawaiian culture through their use of mele, mo‘olelo, and other types of Hawaiian oral tradition as tools for protest. For example, Silva speaks about the importance of hula as a medium for protest. While I accept that this was probably the case, Silva
does not make it entirely clear if hula was a suitable medium for protest because of traditional precedent for using it this way, or if protest was a modern, derived use of hula. A brief background into the use of hula in the context of protest would have been useful.

In chapter 2, the reader begins to perceive the power that can be exercised by newspaper factions in shaping the debate surrounding opposing viewpoints. Silva describes the newspapers as the “main battleground for competing discourses” (54), citing as an example the debate between Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika and Ka Hae Hawaii (a missionary newspaper) over sexually explicit language in a mele. She states, “The translation of words alone cannot adequately convey meaning because of the many aspects of the two cultures that are not shared” (67).

In chapter 5, Silva describes the enduring influence of Hawaiian women, in particular Queen Lili‘uokalani and Emma ‘A‘ima Nāwahī, and the major roles they played in the protests and the subsequent language retention. This third theme surrounding the role of women is also woven throughout the preceding chapters and emphasizes the complimentary and enduring role of women in Hawaiian society despite missionary efforts to the contrary. One example discussed by Silva is the missionaries’ use of the newspaper Ka Hae Hawaii to promote the role of “civilized” women: “The woman’s work is to care for the house until it is clean,” and if women kept their houses clean, their husbands would not be tempted by other women (61). The emphasis the missionaries placed on women in homemaker roles subsumed any knowledge of women’s power and authority in tradition-based Hawaiian society. Silva argues that because of this, women had less opportunity to demonstrate opposition by conventional means, and explains that women’s voices were often not apparent in historical discourse. Silva addresses this imbalance in chapter 5 where she focuses on Queen Lili‘uokalani’s role in protesting the US takeover. The queen’s medium of protest was her mele, composed from prison and published through the Hawaiian resistance newspapers. I particularly liked Silva’s description and analysis of the layers of knowledge and interpretation Lili‘uokalani placed in her mele, and the historical material describing the role of the traditional composers, the haku mele. Silva talks about the changes that occurred to the style and function of the mele when new challenges and changes presented themselves. She explains, “Since the advent of the print media starting in 1834, mele also became a genre of resistance to cultural imperialism”; further, “Mele was a primary genre through which women were able to express their political views in the nineteenth century” (184).

The emphasis placed on the role of women in the Hawaiian resistance movement tends to dominate the other themes in the book. This is understandable given that the role of women in Hawaiian society is one of Silva’s research areas and one of her academic strengths. This is not a criticism of Silva’s overall analysis of the resistance movement. By focusing on
Lili'uokalani's part in the movement, Silva is able to advance her argument that women played an active role in the protests against annexation, political subjugation, and culture loss. Her use of the Hawaiian-language materials is providing a valuable new focus on Hawaiian women in history.

In the final two chapters, “The Antiannexation Struggle” and “The Queen of Hawaii Raises Her Solemn Protest,” Silva succeeds in bringing together the analysis from all the earlier chapters. The example of the annexation petition and Lili'uokalani's use of oral tradition to communicate and strengthen the resistance to the US takeover are powerful tools in advocating the legitimacy of Hawaiian print material as valid historical resources.

Overall, Aloha Betrayed provides a convincing and interesting approach to the critique of a historiography that had previously eliminated indigenous voices. Silva raises many important points to do with the strength of the Hawaiian resistance movements during the annexation period. The addition of the word “Betrayed” to the word “Aloha” creates an image that is the antithesis of the tourist-brochure portrayal of Hawai'i. By questioning the portrayal of Kanaka Maoli as passive in the face of annexation, Silva has demonstrated that history is not always what it seems, particularly when the voices of half the participants have been silenced.

The Kanaka Maoli–published newspapers are windows into particular events, times, places, and perspectives, and they provide a topical alternative to current Hawaiian historiography by promoting Kanaka Maoli perspectives in their own language. It is clear from Aloha Betrayed that Kanaka Maoli used print media to communicate protest and unification strategies. Silva has demonstrated that they remain a valuable resource for contemporary Hawaiian communities in communicating a Kanaka Maoli perspective on the resistance to annexation and culture loss. She has redressed the imbalance and provided a vehicle for indigenous Hawaiian voices to once again be heard.

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The last two decades of scholarship on the history of Hawai'i have seen a dramatic transformation in the way it is understood, based in large part on the extraordinary efforts of scholar-activists engaged in rethinking Hawaiian history from a Kanaka Maoli (native) perspective. As this new scholarship has explored critical moments—such as the 1848 Mahele (the division of land among the chiefs and the common people, which led to private landownership); the 1887 Bayonet Constitution (which Americans forced King Kalākaua to sign, at gunpoint); and the 1893 overthrow of the monarchy—the limitations of earlier histories that emphasized the gradual takeover of a willing and compliant native population have become more and more obvious. These more recent histories present a story of political and legal change that shifted power from Kanaka Maoli chiefs to white planters and merchants along with a cultural transformation that denigrated the Hawai-
ian language and forms of artistic expression. This new perspective is based on a careful reexamination of archival materials and documents, particularly Hawaiian-language documents. Many of these sources were ignored in the past. With its substantial and thoughtful reading of the Hawaiian-language archive, *Aloha Betrayed* makes a major contribution to this reexamination of history. It reveals a substantial and sustained resistance to colonization and takeover and shows that the process of Americanization was not gradual and welcomed but violent, coercive, and contested.

Noenoe K Silva, a professor of political science and Hawaiian language at the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa, has contributed significantly to this reanalysis by her extensive reliance on Hawaiian-language sources and by her use of relatively unconventional texts such as petitions, hula chants, state celebrations, and poetry. Hawaiian-language texts, particularly the independent Hawaiian-language newspapers of the second half of the nineteenth century, provide a rich account of Kanaka Maoli resistance to the loss of cultural and political sovereignty during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since Silva is a scholar of Hawaiian language as well as political science, she has relied on her own translations of many documents available only in Hawaiian and reexamined the translations of those widely read in English. Her discovery of petitions of protest to the overthrow in the US National Archives galvanized the contemporary sovereignty movement at the same time as it challenged earlier certainties that the Kānaka Maoli did not object to the loss of their sovereignty. Clues about the scope and extent of resistance had long been available and some scholars had noted the existence of these petitions, but Silva drew attention to them and their significance. In her book, she ties their production with other forms of resistance to present a powerful story of Kanaka Maoli opposition to the loss of sovereignty, particularly during the late nineteenth century as whites seized economic and political control of the islands. Silva’s account reveals many heroic acts of resistance, some of which were inspired by the hope that the United States would overturn the actions of its agents as Britain had fifty years earlier, as well as the deep sadness of Kānaka Maoli at the time of overthrow and annexation.

One of the most significant features of *Aloha Betrayed* is its extensive reliance on Hawaiian-language materials. While other recent histories of Hawai‘i claim to use Hawaiian-language texts, Silva’s book does so to a far greater extent. Not only does she translate and interpret these texts, but she also discusses problems of translation and shows how inaccurate translations and elisions in the past have skewed our understanding of the meaning of these texts. The analysis she produces demonstrates vividly how relying on Hawaiian-language texts fundamentally reshapes our understanding of colonization and Kanaka Maoli reactions to the overthrow.

This book benefits from its reliance on Hawaiian-language texts in two ways. First, Silva goes back to the
classic texts on Hawaiian history widely used in English translation, such as the work of the eminent nineteenth-century Hawaiian historian Samuel Manaiaikalani Kamakau, and reads the Hawaiian version. Her juxtaposition of the original Hawaiian text with the widely read 1961 translation of Kamakau’s *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii* is very revealing. Not only does she find that the English translation selected some sections of the original text and left out others, but she also discovers that the text was reordered from its original presentation as a series of newspaper columns to conform to Western notions of temporal history (17). The English version also was reorganized to reflect prevailing views of Hawaiian history. For example, the arrival of Captain Cook in 1778 is typically presented as the Kānaka Maoli’s first encounter with an unfamiliar cultural world, yet Silva shows how Kamakau’s original text described Cook as one of a series of white foreigners who arrived over the centuries. Somehow this section was not included in the translation (18). Similarly, a statement attributing Cook’s death to his transgressions was moved, shifting Kamakau’s original point—that Cook transgressed the akua (deities) by partaking of food consecrated to them—to the claim that Cook transgressed the Christian god by allowing himself to be deified (23). The Christian missionaries of the nineteenth century considered this act of Cook’s a form of blasphemy.

Thus, both the reordering of the original newspaper columns and the deletions and rearrangement of the text means that the Hawaiian version of Kamakau’s writings differs in significant ways from the English translation. The 1961 edition was shaped by the particular choices made by translators in the 1950s and earlier about what was worth translating and how the story was to be presented. The ellipses and distortions Silva points out in the English translation unsettle the common assumption that the English version is an accurate reflection of the original Hawaiian text. Her analysis underscores the need to reread the sources of Hawaiian history in Hawaiian.

The book also uses a range of Hawaiian-language texts, some of which are not typically used in historical writing. These include newspaper stories, letters, editorials, songs, poems, chants, and ritual performances. Even when these texts appear to have no political content, Silva shows how they contribute to Kānaka Maoli understandings of themselves and their political situation, providing valuable insight into culture, politics, and social organization. Her analysis of hula chants, for example, highlights how people imagined themselves in relationship to the natural world. They offer a taken-for-granted understanding of the relations between the islands and the ways of journeying among them. In her discussion of the ceremonies held by David Kalākaua to celebrate his coronation, widely criticized by whites as extravagant and excessive, Silva shows how the ritual and display conveyed a message about the power of the sovereign and the state of the kingdom. As Silva explores texts and representations beyond those conventionally used by historians, she produces a fuller sense
of this historical period, one that highlights contestation and resistance to the American economic and political hegemony previously ignored. Some texts express hidden double meanings, which articulate resistance in ways that escape the scrutiny of whites. Although Silva is famous for uncovering and recognizing the significance of the petitions protesting the overthrow, her book reveals other dimensions of resistance as well. Just as the petitions were already there but awaited recognition and interpretation, so these other sources of knowledge about Kanaka Maoli resistance were already there but needed to be seen.

What is the relationship between this emerging post-sovereignty-movement scholarship and the older accounts? Is this a newly created history? Critics might claim that the new perspectives are invented, that the facts of gradual takeover and annexation were already clear. But in history, as in social science, facts are never simply lying around waiting to be discovered. Which events among the myriad things that happen are most significant is a matter of judgment; what these events mean is the result of interpretation. Viewing the 1848 Mahele as a crucial turning point in Hawaiian history depends on recognizing the links between the political power of Kanaka Maoli ali‘i (the ruling class, as determined by genealogy) and their care of and control over land and those who farmed it. It becomes important if one seeks to understand how the locus of power shifted from the Kānaka Maoli to the white settlers. Although the specific laws passed during the nineteenth century are not often recognized as critical to the shifts in power and control during the Kingdom era, a closer examination of these laws shows that they opened the door to the plantation system, the importation of labor, and the transformation of the political system such that the position of the ali‘i was undermined.

What constitutes facts depends on where one looks and what one recognizes as a fact. In writing the history of Hawai‘i, Hawaiian-language sources should take a prominent place. Mid-nineteenth century Hawai‘i was a highly literate society with literacy rates far above those of many countries in Europe. Literate Kānaka Maoli began writing their history in the early nineteenth century, and by the 1860s, began to publish their opinions, narratives, songs, and stories in Hawaiian-language newspapers, some under the control of the missions and others not approved by the mission. As Silva tells us, some of these writings caused great consternation among the missionaries. The device of hidden meanings, or kaona, allowed some freedom for contesting dominant white views of society, as did the publication of letters, editorials, columns, chants, and poems in Hawaiian. It is these sources that Silva has mined in order to provide her masterful account of the extent and nature of Kanaka Maoli resistance to colonization.

This is not a case of inventing history, but one of recognizing facts that have been ignored, using these facts to reinterpret events, and emphasizing the critical importance of events that have been viewed as trivial or insignificant. For example, Silva points out
that there has been relatively little discussion of Queen Lili'uokalani's persistent efforts to restore sovereignty to the kingdom, including her visits to Washington. Silva highlights the importance of the songs the queen wrote during her imprisonment in articulating the views of other Kānaka Maoli at the time. Hawaiian-language newspapers published important texts such as the *Kumulipo*, a long poem describing the origin of the Kānaka Maoli, as well as hula chants, disseminating them to literate Kanaka Maoli readers and preserving them. Through her attention to these events and writings, Silva has produced a dramatically transformed vision of Hawaiian history, one deeply grounded in Hawaiian-language texts. This is not a new history; it is a new interpretation of old facts long buried and neglected.

The history of writing histories of Hawai'i demonstrates how they are always made, not discovered. With the recent rethinking of history, to some extent inspired by the political work of the sovereignty movement, a new reading of the past has become far more widely acknowledged. Earlier histories saw the takeover as accepted, if not eagerly, at least willingly. It sometimes portrayed a Native Hawaiian community loyal to its American friends. Contrary evidence was ignored or deemphasized.

This does not mean that we are now at the end of making history, of course. Nor does it mean that there are no facts, or that anything goes. Instead, the recent set of publications that have reexamined Hawaiian history show the power of adopting interpretive lenses that emphasize different events, different facets of these events, or different sources. There will never be a fully accurate or “true” picture of history. Historical accounts will always be contested ground in which current struggles are waged. But to say there are struggles over meaning and interpretation does not mean evidence is irrelevant. Instead, canons of interpretation remain important, and bodies of evidence remain the ground for all debates. The central question raised by Silva’s book is, What constitutes evidence? How are facts found and selected? *Aloha Betrayed* demonstrates the shifts in interpretation that take place when lost or neglected documents, such as the protest petitions or Hawaiian-language newspapers, are found or revisited. It shows the cost of neglecting documents written in a language that scholars do not learn or ignoring information because it is performed rather than written, such as hula chants, coronation ceremonies, or the stories of elders. This book not only expands our understanding of Hawaiian history, but also stretches what we consider as historical facts and how we interpret them. It challenges the translations on which knowledge is founded and encourages us to look again and more deeply.

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This is an important book, powerfully written and carefully argued, which makes a very significant contribution to our knowledge of the colonial history of Hawai'i. It focuses on an area
that has been little discussed in standard histories, at least: the continuity of Native Hawaiian resistance to American colonial encroachment. Several other works have taken the standard history apart (eg, Noel Kent’s *Hawai‘i: Islands Under the Influence* [1983] and Michael Dougherty’s *To Steal a Kingdom* [1992]), but they have focused primarily on the colonial actors themselves, in order to demystify the received history of smooth incorporation of a primitive autocratic kingdom into the expanding democracy of the United States. Much of the literature, including the postcolonial, continues to employ a model of the passive native. This is part of an ideology of pure victimization, which implies that without “good” interventions on the part of radicals, the people are doomed to accept imperial takeovers. In this way the natives are transformed into objects worthy of pity and outside help. It was many years ago that I remember reading an apocryphal remark made by a Hawaiian in response to a rap encouraging Hawaiians to get involved with the student movement. “Hey bruddah,” he said, “you sound like da missionaries” (Francine du Plessix Gray, *Hawaii: The Sugar-Coated Fortress* [1972, 133]). To be sure, most haole (white people, foreigners) who have been involved in the Hawaiian movement know pretty well that this is not the case. But there is a certain mental automatism that inheres in attempting to categorize Hawaiians as a people that ought to become part of a particular progressive political movement. Some are even shocked when being told that Hawaiians have made and intend to make their own decisions even if they don’t adhere to the correct leftist position of the day. The erasure of native intentionality is a hallmark of a certain progressive ideology. This book provides the first major corrective to this issue of historical agency. It demonstrates, in part by means of the discovery of a Hawaiian-language archive, that there was a continuous, conscious resistance to American colonial power.

The first time I became aware of the central issues that are so well clarified in this book was when I was working in Hawai‘i with my wife, Kajsa Ekholm Friedman. In the late 1970s we were told by many anthropologists that there were virtually no Hawaiians left to study, at least not if we were interested in culture. But after meeting activist scholar Marion Kelly and seeing the resistance and destruction of the Sand Island settlement, the violent evacuation of Hawaiian “squatters” to make room for a “cultural park”; after meeting young Hawaiians on Hawai‘i who were native speakers without having learned it all at the university; and after seeing the growth of a movement, with all its internal conflicts, we learned to what degree scholarship, as it is called, can hide more than it reveals. Some years later (in my 1992 article “The Past is Future” [*American Anthropologist* 94: 837–859] and in my 1994 article “Will the Real Hawaiian Please Stand” [*Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land-en-Volkenkunde* 147: 137–167]), I argued for both the historical continuity of Hawaiian culture and for the continuity of resistance as well, but I had very little material to go on. My
argument was that the current expansion (from the mid-1970s) of the Hawaiian movement was not the result of a sudden change among Hawaiians, but of a historical conjunction in which a stagnating tourist industry coupled with a tradition of resistance was able to partially succeed due to the decline of American economic and cultural hegemony in the world. Activities that would have led to political repression some years earlier were suddenly possible, or more possible, not as new activities but as a product of change in the larger context.

Hawaiian opposition to the Americans began very early and related to issues such as the imposition of Christianity, from aristocratic opposition to the missionaries to attempts to prevent the transfer of land to foreigners. It should not be forgotten that a violent conflict emerged as a result of Queen Ka‘ahumanu’s suspension of the kapu order and conversion to Christianity. As Noenoe K Silva is fully aware, it is important to situate this opposition within the context of a rapidly expanding American presence and the emergence of a series of economies—sandalwood, whaling, and sugar—that had major impacts on the Hawaiian social order. This penetration of Hawaiian conditions of existence made much of the resistance useless in practical terms, although it probably served to maintain the strength of Hawaiian identity, which was the victim of powerful onslaught.

The chapters on the use of the printed word make an important contribution to understanding the way in which opposition was expressed, and the battle over newspaper publishing is a clear indicator of the degree to which the white elite was aware of the danger of alternate sources of information about Hawaiian political reality. The high rate of literacy among Hawaiians was largely a product of missionary teaching and the need to translate the Bible into a form that could be used to resocialize the Hawaiians. But the process contained a serious paradox since it provided the possibility for natives to produce their own texts. Almost all of the major newspapers in Hawai‘i from the late 1850s on were controlled by either missionaries or the government (which itself was under the control of missionaries and businessmen), and in all cases related to similar colonial interests. One newspaper, however, *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika* (*The Star of the Pacific*), was openly an organ of political resistance. While *Ka Hoku* did not encourage rebellion, it did contain the core of nationalism, invoking ancient mele (song, chant, poetry), mythology, and traditions as an active attempt to maintain sovereign identity in the face of a massive onslaught from the establishment, including that expressed in their press. The blending of “traditional” Hawaiian expressions with the new realities demonstrated both the subtlety and the strength of this desperate attempt to stave off the penetration and destruction of Hawaiian society.

The discussion of the struggle around annexation is perhaps the most important empirical contribution to our knowledge of Hawaiian history, since it makes use of heretofore ignored or otherwise unknown Hawaiian-language texts. It is also
interesting to note the absence of these texts in more recent scholarship that may have had access to them. Many historians and social scientists have taken for granted that they could work in English when studying Hawai‘i, and this alone has skewed our knowledge of resistance and has so often led to a pacification of Hawaiian subjects. Silva’s rewriting of the end of Hawaiian sovereignty demonstrates that the resistance was massive—tens of thousands of petitioners against the annexation—and culturally specific and elaborate in what it tells about the political culture of Hawaiians at the end of the last century—that it was filled with the mythopoetics of royal legitimacy and what appears to be a compact loyalty to the throne, at least in relation to the specter of foreign rule. It also details the way in which help was never forthcoming from those from whom it was sought. In spite of President Cleveland’s rebuttal of the plantation elite’s desire for immediate annexation, he was unable and unwilling to actually intervene in the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom, which was replaced not by “democracy” but by an oligarchic dictatorial regime that had as its goal the exclusion of Hawaiians from political power and the extinction of their culture by progressive prohibition of its expression.

There remains, however, an aspect of this story that is not dealt with in the book and that needs to be analyzed more fully. The class aspect of nineteenth-century Hawai‘i is clearly of significance. The major actors on the Hawaiian side are aristocrats and even royalty. It is they who struggle to maintain their sovereignty and with good reason. There is a tendency in much writing on such subjects to bundle the colonized in such a way that they are reduced to a single actor, or at least a single dominated position, but this, of course, is not the case. The issue of class alliances was essential for the colonizing population. Such alliances engendered reactions, which were also based in a continuity of representations of chiefly power. In the oral histories that I among others have collected, a common theme is that Hawaiians were originally egalitarian with chiefs who were without real political power and more like parents in a regime in which there were only two gods, Wākea and Papa, the upright and the flat stone. This was overturned by the arrival of the new chiefs from Kahiki (often represented as the great Tahitian migration), who brought the gods of war and introduced human sacrifice. These foreigners were then replaced by British and Americans in their turn. But these latter all represent the foreign, a figure that Marshall Sahlins has called “the stranger king” (“The Stranger-King or Dumézil among the Fijians,” *Journal of Pacific History* **16**:107–132 [1981]). Now I am certainly not arguing that the fact that aristocratic elites led the resistance can be explained away by some class formula, but rather that the situation is complex and that one must attend to the possibilities that this resistance is part of an accommodation as well, in which some parts of the elite did well at the expense of the common people. It is necessary to remember that there are postcolonial regimes in which national elites, who liberate
themselves from colonial rule, have taken over colonial structures in which they have tended to reproduce the basic structures of colonial power. But this has not been the case in Hawai‘i. American rule in Hawai‘i was unlike the common colonial trajectory insofar as it succeeded in the wholesale elimination of the local elite as a governing group, leaving only some wealthy families intermarried with whites, and at the same time the marginalization of the majority of the Hawaiian population. This can be seen in the gradual disempowerment of the Hawaiians from the turn of the last century until the 1930s. In the first years of the twentieth century, Hawaiians had a home-rule party, and via alliances with the dominant Republicans they maintained an important place in the government, with over half of all elected officials as late as 1927. But rules of property radically reduced the voting power of the majority of the poor, so that while at the turn of that century they represented almost 70 percent of the vote, this declined to just over half in 1920 and to 38 percent in 1930. The military buildup and increasing intolerance toward Hawaiians as well as a need to enforce Americanization led to the virtual elimination of the Hawaiian middle class and marginalization of the lower classes. Following this period they survived primarily in enclaves where they could still preserve some kind of autonomy (for excellent documentation of this process, see Davianna McGregor’s 1989 University of Hawai‘i PhD thesis, Kupa‘a i Ka ‘Aina: Persistence on the Land). Colonial Hawai‘i as a regime was one in which the native elite was by and large replaced by a settler elite. However, the mobilization of a large portion of the population against American encroachment in support of their own aristocracy must been seen in light of an internal class conflict that was upstaged by opposition to foreign power. But in this process of transformation there have been plenty of class alliances as well, no matter how shaky, between royalty and the white missionary-planter class. Elites that became incorporated into the colonial and later the postcolonial project were strategic elements in the reproduction of class dominance in the transition from kingdom to territory.

The above remarks are not meant to question the basic arguments put forward by the author of this excellent and original work, which, as stated at the outset of this review, is a major contribution to our understanding of what really happened in the American usurpation of Hawaiian sovereignty, and in the ongoing resistance of the Hawaiian people to this encroachment.

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Response

First of all I must say that I am grateful to the three reviewers for their kindness and am humbled by their praise of my work. I am humbled because I see the work as based on one very simple principle: reading and taking seriously what Kānaka ‘Ōiwi
(Native Hawaiians) wrote in their own language. Acting on this simple principle of respecting our ancestors’ own accounts of their histories and experiences provides that “timely remedy for a common problem dominating Pacific historiography,” as Lyn Carter put it in her review. Here I would like to take the opportunity to reiterate that it is in colonial situations (and I use the term “colonial” very broadly) that it is possible that the history of a place and people can be written for a century or more without serious consideration of the writing of the people whose place it is. That is, doctoral students specializing in French history at the University of Hawai‘i must learn French and go to France and consult primary sources, but similar requirements are still not made for those studying Hawaiian or other Native peoples’ histories.

My hope is that this point might be taken seriously by others besides myself and the handful of other Hawaiian-language scholars. Judging by recent books and manuscripts, it is clear to me that this is not yet the case. Part of the problem is the persistent, preconceived, and essentialist notion that the “authentic” (and I use quotes to signal that this term is problematic) Hawaiian culture—Greg Dening’s “zero point,” ie, the day before Captain Cook arrived—was an oral culture (Dening, “Afterword: On the Befores and Afters of the Encounter,” in Cultural Memory: Reconfiguring History and Identity in the Postcolonial Pacific, edited by Jeannette Marie Mageo, 2001, 207). This idea leads most contemporary scholars to overlook the one hundred fifty years of writing by Hawaiians. In a manuscript I was recently asked to review for publication, the author was even claiming that because Hawaiian was an oral culture, Hawaiians of the late nineteenth century were suspicious of all written documents. I hope that my and other scholars’ work can now put these essentialist ideas to rest so that they are not used to excuse failing to consult the native language archives. Languages are difficult to learn for most of us, but that too is not an acceptable alibi. As Sally Engle Merry affirmed in her review, from now on, “In writing the history of Hawai‘i, Hawaiian-language sources should take a prominent place.”

I would also like to emphasize that such simple acts of respect in the academic realm can be valuable and meaningful to indigenous communities. Although the mainstream press in Honolulu has ignored the book (with the exception of one short and vicious attack in the Honolulu Star-Bulletin), many Hawaiians have bought it and responded well to it, especially in the activist community. In the twentieth century, Hawaiians suffered through education in which their ancestors did not appear in history books, except as having rightfully given way to progress and the superiority of the United States and its dominant culture. The time for the representation of Hawaiians in history and textbooks as “cute, all-abiding, friendly nincompoops . . . [who are] certainly inferior as humans,” as Kanaka novelist John Dominis Holt put it, is surely over, and Hawaiian children should no longer suffer such indignities at school (On Being Hawaiian, 1995 [1964], 9).

Professor Carter and her colleagues
in Māori studies at the University of Auckland have been engaged in similar work based on the Māori-language newspapers (*Rere Atu, Taku Manu*) edited by Jenifer Curnow, Ngapare Hopa, and Jane McRae, 2002. As a result, those archives will become even more accessible to those studying New Zealand history and I hope that they will also be taken very seriously, as the content within them will surely change some accepted notions in Māori history. Professor Carter also noted my attempt to recover women’s history and I would like to add a brief comment here. The idea of powerful women in Hawaiian culture is not particularly new; in fact, powerful women are taken for granted in studies of Hawaiian culture, but it is that separation between studies of culture and history/politics that in part facilitates the disappearance of women in mainstream historiography. “The absence of indigenous voices,” in Carter’s words, and the absence of women in the political histories are the result of the same processes of colonialism. The same discursive moves represent the actions of the elite and colonizing class of men as the only significant and appropriate subjects of history. This serves neatly to justify the continuing occupation of Hawai‘i by the United States: that is, if the Kānaka have never done anything of historical significance, then we don’t deserve self-rule. In the same stroke, the absence of politically powerful women in histories justifies the continuing inequalities in power and material well-being for Kanaka women today. The absence or lack of a precedent subtly implies inability and unworthiness. As we know, however, indigenous peoples have always created their own political systems and histories, as have women in every society. Whether or not those are legible to academics depends on where scholars look and how they frame their narratives. It is easy to see the roles of indigenous peoples, including women, when one is looking to see them. It is just as easy to ignore them. That is a conscious choice.

In a similar way, I appreciate Professor Merry’s insightful reading of the book and especially her highlighting the use of literature and artistic and ritual performance in my attempt to understand Hawaiians of the nineteenth century. My method is not innovative, but rather is an application of theory and method developed and used by Edward Said, Stuart Hall, Anne McClintock, Michael J Shapiro, Vilsoni Hereniko, and Houston Wood, among others. My method is also an extension because I am using these ideas not to deconstruct the discourses of imperialism/colonialism in literature and other media, but to re-view a Native people’s history. Further, although some of the cultural and literary productions may not seem overtly political now, those realms were not separate to nineteenth-century Hawaiians, whose culture and literature were often at stake in the struggle with would-be colonizers. For them, mo‘olelo (story, history, literature, legend), mele (poetry, song), and mo‘okū‘auhau (genealogy) were central to politics. So while it may seem that I have smuggled the cultural and literary into a political history, in another sense, I
have actually followed a path already set by my ancestors. Again, the separation of the study of culture and political history into two distinct academic disciplines itself contributed to our collective lack of knowledge of Native Hawaiians’ roles in history in the first place, since “culture” has been too often depoliticized and dehistoricized. In the twentieth century, and even now, some forms of cultural anthropology and Hawaiian studies claim to be apolitical. Professor Merry’s excellent work in legal and historical anthropology continually challenges those claims.

I would like to address the one substantial critique of the work made by Jonathan Friedman, that is, that the “class aspect of nineteenth-century Hawai‘i” is under-analyzed. He rightly points out the tendency to “bundle the colonized in such a way that they are reduced to a single actor, or at least a single dominated position.” I agree with this critique. The intent of the book and necessity of limiting its scope to maintain a reasonable length meant that certain complexities were not analyzed, the class relationships of the Hawaiian community among them. The story that I try to tell is one of cooperation and solidarity among the Hawaiian elite, professional class (eg, attorneys such as Joseph Nāwahī), and maka‘āinana (common people) for the brief time of the struggle against annexation. Professor Friedman is correct, however, that many Hawaiian elites were sugar planters who associated closely with the “missionary party” in their business and social dealings. There was not a clean divide between Hawaiians, the oppressed, on the one hand, and the haole (European, or European American) elite, the colonizers, on the other. But when the nation itself was in jeopardy, the lāhui (nation/people, consisting mainly of Native Hawaiians but together with non-Hawaiian loyal subjects of the kingdom) banded together to defend it. It is very important now to study how the Native Hawaiian elite was, as Professor Friedman says, eliminated as a governing group in the twentieth century, and how the super wealthy among them have cast their lot with their peers of the United States, leaving the lower classes in poverty and with dismal life statistics. It is equally important to illuminate for our communities the role the US military buildup played and continues to play in “the virtual elimination of the Hawaiian middle class and marginalization of the lower classes.”

I am hopeful that current and future research projects will blur these too clean, black-and-white lines between the colonizer and colonized. I am finding, for example, many complexities as I construct a bio-bibliography of Joseph H Kānepu‘u, the most outspoken of the founders of that first Hawaiian-controlled newspaper. Kānepu‘u defended the publication of the mo‘olelo that were attacked by the Calvinist church and passionately fought for decades to keep Hawaiian-language literature alive in the newspapers, yet sent his daughter to Kawaiaha‘o Seminary to learn English. Our kūpuna (ancestors) and their relationships with each other and with foreigners were no simpler than our own. I am looking
forward to reading more of what Kānepu‘u and other writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries wrote and to analyzing and publicizing their works in more sophisticated ways.

Further, while it is surely important to continue this work and publish it in English, especially for the majority of our communities who cannot read Hawaiian, the really exciting and radical future of Hawaiian scholarship is unfolding before us now, and it is taking place in the ‘ōlelo kumu o ka ‘āina, the native language of the land. A master’s degree program in Hawaiian language began in Fall 2005 at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Within that program, academic writing in Hawaiian will bloom: all classes will take place in Hawaiian and all papers and theses will be produced in Hawaiian. I expect to have graduate students who will map out political theory as it was articulated in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and I expect their papers to be published in Hawaiian for future students to learn from. Moreover, we have doctoral students who are writing their dissertations in Hawaiian in the fields of linguistics and political science. This creates another domain of writing in Hawaiian, which will no doubt serve as a springboard for many others. Just as Kānaka ʻOiwi have, against all predictions, persevered and multiplied, the same is true of our language. We are making it live again.

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In 1991 Lisette Josephides coined the phrase “the New Melanesian Ethnography” (in “Metaphors, Metathemes, and the Construction of Sociality: A Critique of the New Melanesian Ethnography,” Man 26 [1]: 145–161). It caught on quite quickly and came to stand for a particular strain of Melanesian ethnography, associated most closely with the work of Roy Wagner and Marilyn Strathern, that stressed the differences between Melanesian and Western assumptions about the nature of social life and the world more generally. Both Wagner and Strathern are powerful critics of anthropological practice, and in their theoretical work the status of “Melanesia” as a place and of “difference” as a phenomenon is complex and sometimes shifting. But as the New Melanesian Ethnography developed as a way to write specifically ethnographic works, it became identified