

Contestation and Counter-conduct in the Imperial Pacific

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Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the U.S. Empire. By Adria L. Imada. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012. 392 pp. \$89.95 (cloth). \$24.95 (paper).

Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and Race during the Cold War. By Cindy I-Fen Cheng. New York: New York University Press, 2013. 285 pp. \$65.00 (cloth). \$24.00 (paper).

Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World. By Masuda Hajimu. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015. 400 pp. \$39.95 (cloth).

Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II. By Takashi Fujitani. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. 520 pp. \$85.00 (cloth). \$34.95 (paper).

Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism during the Vietnam Era. By Judy Tzu-Chun Wu. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013. 352 pp. \$89.95 (cloth). \$27.95 (paper).

The hula practitioner Kini Kapahukulaokamāmalu left Hawai‘i in 1892, part of the first state-sponsored hula troupe to tour North America and Europe. The customs agent processing visas in San Francisco marked Kini and her five hula sisters as “immigrants,” to which Kini angrily replied, “I tell him Hawaiians never been immigrants. We have immigrants in Hawai‘i . . . and they have white skin like you” (Imada 55). During their tour, the American-backed overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom made Kini’s troupe an object of interest in America’s new “possessions,” and the troupe’s performances at the 1893 Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition became immensely popular. As Kini came to realize, their performances were also popular because of the expectation of erotic pleasure that fairgoers connected to Hawaiian women

and hula performers. While Kini played on this expectation to attract fairgoers to the performances—promising “naughty doings at the Midway Plaisance” as the barker for the Hawaiian Village exhibit—she also policed the boundaries of imperial desire. Kini and her hula sisters found it impossible to evade all the hands of the white spectators: when one man pinched her, she tried to hit him and warned him sharply, in English, “Don’t touch me” (71).¹

In recent years, numerous scholars have proposed thinking of the Pacific as a space of both movement and exclusion. The shifting borders of nations and needs of capital prompted transpacific streams of labor alongside the development of diasporic family ties and cosmopolitan identities, while imperial nations like the United States and Japan policed the racial limits of citizenship and imposed Cold War boundaries on decolonizing nations like Korea and Vietnam. In describing the imperial history of the Pacific, scholarship emphasizing transnational, diplomatic history has focused on systems of securing power—that is, on exclusion: the structures of feeling, the governmental regimes, the labor streams, the character of racial formation.² Other scholars, drawing from ethnic studies and cultural history, have highlighted the social dimensions of the imperial Pacific, proposing that imperial power has never been fully secure, even while they describe the limited space for movement within its reach.³

Several recent books continue both these lines of inquiry and provoke a discussion of how scholars might further bring studies of imperial power structures together with accounts of empire’s embattled hegemony.⁴ These works delineate the contours of the imperial Pacific by emphasizing the actions, journeys, struggles, and thoughts of activists, artists, athletes, and ordinary people as they traversed this world of twinned movement and exclusion: Adria L. Imada’s *Aloha America*, Takashi Fujitani’s *Race for Empire*, Masuda Hajimu’s *Cold War Crucible*,⁵ Cindy I-Fen Cheng’s *Citizens of Asian America*, and Judy Tzu-Chun Wu’s *Radicals on the Road*. As Imada argues in *Aloha America*, Kini’s refusal to have the racial, gendered, and imperial metaphors of “immigrant,” “hula girl,” and “possession” attached to her person was based on her insistence on the right to broker Hawaiian cultural identity and maintain a sense of personal autonomy as a working artist as she moved between Hawai’i, Europe, and America. Like Kini, the historical actors in each of these texts sought to navigate their own relationship to competing nations, imperial powers, racial and gender taxonomies, and wartime violence, sometimes refusing, exploiting, or eliding imperial logics and sometimes embracing and enabling them—a practice that Fujitani, following Michel Foucault, helpfully terms “counter-conduct.”

Imada's work explores performers and musicians traveling on the "hula circuit" between the 1890s and 1950s, arguing that hula became one route for the formation of US Empire as well as a route for its contestation. In *Race for Empire*, Fujitani interrogates the concurrent emergence of liberal governmentality in imperial Japan and the United States as each sought to make excluded subjects (Koreans in Japan, Japanese Americans in the United States) into liberal, self-reflexive citizens. Showing how the binary ideas of Cold War geopolitics were made into lived reality, Masuda brings together a diverse archive to analyze the beliefs, actions, and choices of ordinary people in Asia, North America, and Europe. Cheng explores Asian Americans' racial formation during the early Cold War through consideration of housing struggles, immigration policy, media celebrities, and anticommunist persecution. Wu's *Radicals on the Road* focuses explicitly on anti-imperial protest, following the journeys and internationalist imaginings of North American antiwar activists in the 1950s–1970s, traveling to and from Vietnam and Laos in a series of solidarity and citizens' diplomacy tours.

Through an emphasis on personal stories and the voices of ordinary people, these books propose new methodological directions for charting the trajectory of US Empire along the terrain of the individual life. Addressing the local, the personal, and the contradictory, the authors show, can reveal all the many failures and fault lines of imperial projects, and all the ways in which discursive fictions and political realities are refused, reviled, laughed at, and strategically and ironically deployed. Though some books succeed in this more than others, together they prompt us to reconsider how we think and write about US Empire and its discontents: how might we balance a description of imperial power with an account of its multiple weaknesses and failures? How might scholars use state and imperial archives to trace a history of contestation and counter-conduct? How might movement and exclusion be part of the same story? From the questions these books raise, we might see histories of counter-conduct and empire as a productive new field of study.

Imada's deeply theorized and eloquently narrated *Aloha America* examines US imperial claims to Hawai'i through the circulation of hula—both Hawaiian hula performers and the cultural imaginary that linked a gendered "hula girl" to Hawai'i itself. Imada traces performers and musicians on these "hula circuits," from the final years of the Hawaiian monarchy and early twentieth-century worlds' fairs and expositions to "Hawaiian showrooms" in the hotels of New York, Ohio, and Los Angeles in the 1950s. Hula performances, she

argues, created an “imagined intimacy” between performers and spectators, Hawai‘i and the United States, that allowed the imperial relationship to be recast as one of welcoming, sexualized natives and welcomed guests (11). The appropriation of aloha—a recognition of Hawaiian vitality and spiritual/emotional practice—as colonial discourse and tourist slogan, through the body of the female hula dancer, erased colonial aggression and rendered it benign, intimate, hospitable.

Imada begins with the revitalization of state-sponsored hula by King David Kalākaua as the pressures of US capital, missionaries, and colonialism increased in the late nineteenth century. As the first troupe traveled to the United States and Europe in 1893, they became a commercial sensation presented as an “authentic novelty” and an introduction to the newly annexed US territory. Despite poor work conditions, the imperial gaze, and a gendered labor structure that put Hawaiian, haole (white foreigner), and American men in charge of their labor, female hula performers pursued personal ambitions and celebrity as well as performances that critiqued and resisted US annexation of the islands and their own commodification. If the American press insisted on seeing the “hula girl” and the grass huts of the “Hawaiian village” as indicative of an imagined intimacy, performers insisted on their own right—not the white planter oligarchy of the islands—to tell about Hawai‘i as more than an industrial opportunity. For example, after the deposing of Hawai‘i’s Queen Lili‘uokalani, hula performers and managers sold portraits of the queen and performed her songs on tour, championing her claim to Hawaiian sovereignty. By the 1930s, hula had reached the status of a valuable cultural and political commodity that was used to groom the islands for statehood and undergird the growing Hawaiian tourist industry. Through the 1940s and into the 1960s, hula maintained its dual usages as a cultural commodity and a route for individual Hawaiian artists’ self-expression. Leveraged by the US military to depict Hawai‘i as a site of “rest and relaxation” for US troops, hula dancers nonetheless maintained some degree of control over how their art was consumed. Through hula and the imperial metaphor of aloha, Imada argues, “the Pacific was made ‘pacific’” (12).

Imada’s book could very well have been a history of dispossession, appropriation, and the US-centered discourse of the “hula girl.” Imada insists, however, that this is also a history of “kaona,” the Hawaiian poetics of veiled language and hidden meanings (18, 21). Drawing heavily from postcolonial theorists like Vicente Rafael and Vicente Diaz (from whom she borrows the terms *discrepant histories* and *countercolonial practice*, respectively) and James

C. Scott's study of practices of resistance among subordinated groups, Imada argues that it is less in the overt, political acts of resistance that we can find opposition to US Empire than in the ways performers bent official transcripts of hula and its meanings to their own purposes. Toward this end, she relies on the traces left in institutional and official archives and her own ethnographic fieldwork with performers and their families to describe these forms of countercolonial practice.

Discussing hula performers' use of the hula circuit to follow individual dreams of travel, economic independence, and romance, Imada shows how hula performers used, winked at, and rejected colonial scripts of hula. For example, as cards and photographs of the "hula girl" became popular after the first troupe's tour, women on the hula circuit circulated their own portraits, dressed in high European and Victorian fashions. Hula performers dancing for military troops in the 1940s allowed themselves to be photographed but took their own photographs of the men, inverting the host-guest, native-tourist gaze expected as part of Hawaiian aloha. Through her emphasis on describing hula performers' countercolonial practice, she describes how these men and women upset imperial ideology, carved out space for themselves, and insisted on the right of native Hawaiians to broker their image and culture on their own terms.

The troops enthusiastically posing for photographs with hula girls in Hawai'i were part of the wave of militarization in the Pacific during the 1930s and 1940s that culminated in World War II. As Fujitani argues in his theoretically rich comparative work, *Race for Empire*, both imperial Japan and the United States developed liberal forms of governmentality in response to the total war exigencies of World War II that relied on pairing national exclusion with inclusion, and connecting racial violence with the promise of liberal citizenship. Because of the war demands of both powers and the necessity of mobilizing all colonized or marginalized subjects, both Japan and the United States shifted rapidly from what Fujitani calls a "vulgar" or exclusionary repressive racism to a "polite," inclusionary, assimilationist racism. That is, rather than exclude and exterminate minority populations—Japanese Americans in the United States and colonized Koreans in imperial Japan—they were welcomed into the (lowest rung) of the nation, most often as potential soldiers.

Employing Foucault's ideas in *Society Must Be Defended*, Fujitani traces the exclusions, military conscription, and representation of Koreans in Japan and Japanese Americans in the United States to argue that this shift constituted a mode of liberal governmentality. Under this emergent regime, the excluded minority was not a passive object to be repressed but citizen-subjects whose

lives needed to be cared for, and whose subjugation to the nation had to be made to appear as a voluntary choice. Drawing on government and military records in both Japan and the United States, Fujitani describes how this form of governmentality was produced through conscription and the management of soldiers, a regime that he argues was both reflected and enabled in popular culture through films like *Go for Broke!*, MGM's 1951 film dramatizing the experience of the all-Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team. In their need for soldiers, and their need to prove themselves as antiracist powers on the global stage, both Japan and the United States offered conscription and soldiering as a choice, not price, of national inclusion. Excluded minorities were given, in other words, the right to die for the nation.

In tracing these two concurrent emergences of liberal governmentality, Fujitani argues that vulgar and polite racism always existed in tandem, and that brutal violence (at Tule Lake internment camp or in the *wianbu* system of Japanese sexual slavery, for example) existed to delineate the outside of liberal inclusion and prosecute those deemed “unfit” for the nation. Fujitani's work helps further historicize the work of theorists like Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, Chandan Reddy, and Étienne Balibar, arguing that liberal inclusion works by preserving the possibility of extreme violence: thus what is presented as a choice takes on, in historical reflection, the form of a threat. Fujitani argues that the internment camps were proposed by US policymakers as liberal spaces of freedom from which disrupted elements were “purified” to more isolated centers, and which offered medical, social, and mundane clubs as a way to show care and regard for Japanese American life.

Japanese Americans in the United States and Koreans in Japan, Fujitani argues cogently, neither fully subscribed to national loyalty nor completely protested it, for these categories of loyal or subversive were created by the nation-state. Rather, Fujitani describes how subjects questioned forms, policies, and loyalty oaths, engaging Foucault's conception of “counter-conduct”: actions that do not stake a conscious claim for political power or authority but that simply refuse to do as instructed.⁶ One way Issei and Nisei were asked to identify as national subjects—one marker of “inclusionary” racism—was the infamous “loyalty oath,” by which internees were asked to forswear allegiance to the Japanese emperor and proclaim allegiance to the United States. At a time when Japanese people were excluded from citizenship, this presented a distressing quandary for Issei parents, who were asked to declare themselves as stateless persons, “loyal” to the United States but disallowed the protections of either Japanese or American citizenship.

In his remarkable fourth chapter, Fujitani transcribes the questions, arguments, pleas, condemnations, and thoughts internees wrote on their loyalty oath forms, exemplifying how scholars might read colonial and state archives “against the grain” (as Ann Laura Stoler proposes) to highlight both the reach of imperial power and what it cannot control.⁷ This “cacophony of counterquestions” (166) forms different discursive patterns that, as Fujitani notes, allow us to see how internees collectively charted their way beyond the loyal/subversive binary and sought to claim the space to speak as free subjects. “I would like to know your definition of a loyal American citizen. Japanese or not.” one internee wrote, while another wanted to know “Is it possible to answer question 27 [concerning loyalty] with a conditional ‘yes’?” Others were angrier: “Will you tell us where is liberty and justice for us to fight for?” (167–68). The inclusion of this chapter, in a book otherwise demonstrating the reach and scope of the liberal state’s coercion, provides a powerful methodological example for how we might describe forms of state power while attending to its failures and fractures.

Race for Empire’s comparative work lies largely in the realm of pointing out the similarities between Japanese and American modes of governmentality, and the book can sometimes read as if it were two separate projects. Nonetheless, in bringing both histories together into a single volume, Fujitani is insisting that scholars think about the Pacific as a site of multiple and competing imperiums, a “project of critical remembering” he has argued for in earlier works in order to emphasize the longer history of empire in the Pacific.⁸ Even more, Fujitani is proposing the issue of Japanese American “loyalty” not as a story about national sympathies and claims to citizenship but as one of subjects created by their negotiation and contestation with competing empires. In so doing, Fujitani is adding to the work of other scholars in Asian American studies who propose an imperial framework for thinking about Asian American racial and subject formation.⁹

The diplomatic and political historian Masuda Hajimu’s *Cold War Crucible* extends Fujitani’s emphasis on the contemporaneity and similarity of governing strategies after 1945. Masuda does not look for the spaces of counter-conduct and countercolonial practice described by Imada and Fujitani; rather, he emphasizes the influence of “millions of people” around the world who made the Cold War into an “imagined reality” through their participation in civil defense campaigns, local political struggles, and individual hopes and fears (2). In this impressively researched and elegantly written comparative work, Masuda describes the emergence of the Korean War—which helped construct

Cold War political practice—not as an accepted political fact but as a process of local translation, as governments, politicians, activists, and ordinary people negotiated the volatile social dynamics of postwar and postcolonial societies. In so doing, Masuda argues for a historical interpretation of the Cold War not as a unified global process but as an overlapping series of events deeply involved with different nations' internal tensions and that relied on the participation, choices, and memories of ordinary people to make it an accepted political reality. In other words, the Cold War “*became* important because millions of people imagined it to be,” and through their participation—in civil defense, in purges and repression campaigns, in fearful hoarding to stave off World War III—the story of the Cold War became a reality through its constant repetition (56).

Between 1945 and 1950, Masuda argues, domestic societies in the United States, China, and Japan turned into battlefields where the Cold War discourse was disputed, debated, and fractured, reflecting not a global reality but local conflicts and memories of World War II. What he describes reads almost like a global game of telephone, full of poor translations and personal, local interpretations. For example, in occupied Japan, the language of communism provided an expression for Japanese leftists' critique of US militarism, while Chinese protests against the presence of the United States in Japan were less about communism than about fears of a reinvigorated Japanese military power. The United States, though, myopically interpreted these events as the spread of communism in Asia and, drawing from a long history of anti-Asian racism, as proof of Soviet influence in Asia.

In the months after the start of the Korean War, Masuda explores how Chinese and US foreign and domestic policies used the wartime atmosphere to develop a way to frame the conflict as a battle between “us” and “them.” Americans, fearful of an imminent World War III, wrote letters urging President Harry Truman to act, and housewives in New York began hoarding food in fear of another global war. In China, Masuda argues, Mao decided to enter the war to consolidate the still-unfinished civil war, a “politics of impression” based on Chinese people's fears of American imperialism and a reinvigorated Japan (chap. 4).

In an extension of Fujitani's identification of concurrent liberal regimes in the 1940s, Masuda argues that it was the “simultaneity” of this process around the globe that helped create Cold War reality; that is, the comparative method is central to his argument. In the book's final section, Masuda proposes that simultaneous domestic purges in China, the United States, the United Kingdom, Taiwan, and the Philippines cemented the Cold War by framing local,

grassroots tensions over new nationhood (Taiwan's White Terror), agrarian reform and social justice (the post-Huk rebellion repression in the Philippines), conservative backlash (McCarthyism in the United States), and routes to modernization (China's 1950–51 Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries) as Cold War struggles. For example, if a local segregationist in Mississippi or a conservative Japanese man did not intend to create the Cold War world, their acceptance of anticommunist rhetoric to restrain women and African Americans functioned to do so regardless.

Cold War Crucible's argument hinges on Masuda's insistence on the importance of local people's actions and, indeed, their agency in "choosing, changing, and maintaining the reality of the world" (287). In this sense, Masuda positions his work against elite-driven and nation-based political histories of the Cold War and extends his political history into the realm of social and cultural history, a welcome approach that de-emphasizes US and Soviet concerns and reconnects the period to longer histories of colonialism and decolonization in East Asia. However, Masuda's argument seems disconnected from recent work in American studies, Asian American studies, and cultural history, which has uncovered the ways that systems of cultural meaning-making and policy in the postwar moment were mutually constitutive and how Cold War frameworks obscured longer colonial histories.¹⁰ Engaging that body of scholarship might have allowed Masuda to explore how discourse and "reality" (often noted in his text with scare quotes) cannot be bifurcated so easily.

Notwithstanding, as Masuda proposes, the Cold War era affords countless examples to think through the messy convergences of state and cultural narratives with individual lives. Cindy I-Fen Cheng's *Citizens of Asian America* uses individual case studies of prominent Asian Americans to analyze Cold War racial formation in the United States. Drawing heavily from Mary Dudziak's *Cold War Civil Rights* (2000), which describes how African American civil rights struggles were used by the federal government to illustrate the progressive inclusivity of American democracy, Cheng argues that attending to Asian America extends our understanding of how race became the "premiere site" to demonstrate the superiority of "the American way of life"—its opportunities for all, and its racial liberalism—to the decolonizing Cold War world (12). As Tim Borstelmann, Penny Von Eschen, and others have looked to US–Africa policy to frame African American and pan-African radicalism in the same period, Cheng's work focuses on Chinese and Korean Americans after the 1949 Chinese Revolution and at the beginning of the Korean War to demonstrate how "U.S. foreign affairs differentially impacted the social standings of Asian Americans in Cold War America" (11).

Cheng's central contention is that the racial formation of Asian Americans as "foreigners-within" extended to the political arena during the Cold War, in which both the extension and repression of Asian American rights were used at different moments to demonstrate the "American way of life." Asian Americans, Cheng demonstrates, were caught in a set of binaries that hinged on their history of precarious claims to citizenship, filtered through the Cold War's anticommunism: loyal/subversive, assimilable/deportable. Through a series of compelling cases—Asian American protests of racial housing covenants in Los Angeles, media coverage of the first Asian American Olympian, surveillance of progressive Korean activism during the Korean War period, and Chinese immigration extortion cases in the mid-1950s—Cheng explores the Cold War inflection of a longer genealogy of Asian exclusion, arguing that Asian American appeals to US civil rights always linked those rights to citizenship and immigration reform. Asian Americans themselves, she finds, also seized on these narratives of the "American way of life," opportunity, and the "assimilable immigrant" to situate their claims for immigration reform or protests of McCarthyist repression, as did Asian American "firsts" like Olympian Sammy Lee and Judge Delbert Wong.

Whereas Fujitani and Imada deconstruct the frames of loyal/subversive, imperial/anti-imperial to interpret the choices of their historical actors, Cheng stresses instead that Asian Americans embraced this dualism and used it toward their own ends. Asian American activists, Cheng notes, were conscious of their racialization through the binaries of assimilation/deportation or loyal/subversive, and many used the script of the assimilated immigrant or the "100% loyal American" to claim their rights. Cheng argues that the pro-American, anticommunist leaders of Asian American organizations like the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) or individuals like Olympian Sammy Lee or even the Korean American labor activist David Hyun all simply used these scripts to demonstrate the "coerced consent of Asian Americans to the American ideal" (130).

What remains unaddressed, however, is the limitations that the loyalty/subversive frame imposed on Asian American politics. If, for example, organizations like the CCBA accepted Cold War terms of debate, did they not also limit the scope of politics and help, in the words of Masuda, make this version of the Cold War real? Like Dudziak's work, *Citizens of Asian America* hopes to highlight the agency of Asian American actors, analyzing "how state-generated narratives on the benefits of the American way of life provided Asian Americans a discourse through which to articulate their own self-conception" (12). Yet, as

Fujitani's work suggests, the making of Asian American liberal citizen-subjects was part of the production of US imperial power, one that was contested not by accepting its discursive framing but by questioning its very terms. *Citizens of Asian America* misses an opportunity to identify practices of counter-conduct that might have sidestepped national narratives, thought in excess of national boundaries, or asked for more than integration into the American liberal state. Certainly Cheng's research hints at this possibility: chapter 4's discussion of the Korean American leftist Diamond Kimm describes his insistence on a Korean American political vision that went beyond Cold War binaries and toward a decolonized Korea. What other cold war might have been made real by continuing to insist on these frames instead?

How to think about the actions of imperial subjects is not just a question of whether scholars accept the analytic terms of the nation-state but also, as I proposed at the outset, a question of how we choose to think about imperial hegemony and contestation. Both *Race for Empire* and *Citizens of Asian America* expose the centrality of the liberal, national narratives to cultural conceptions of Asian America and to US policies on race, integration, immigration, and assimilation. Both texts work admirably to describe how imperial power elides its own violence through offering national, liberal narratives of inclusion, echoing Imada's work. Yet Cheng and Fujitani describe the challenges to that liberal, national project in vastly different ways. Where Fujitani argues that instances of counter-conduct exposed the liberal project as a coercive one, Cheng emphasizes how instances of Asian American protest were used as examples of US democracy in action, reinforcing the power of the "American way of life" narrative. In more theoretical terms, while Fujitani is interested in the "cacophany of counterquestions" that unsettled liberal governmentality, Cheng seeks to prove how "the coherence of metanarratives is forged through the elision of differences and contradictions" (12).

But what if instead of looking for evidence that imperial narratives invariably incorporate dissent, we looked for ways that dissenters and activists worked in long traditions of struggle that went far beyond the confines of the nation, and for counterhegemonic practices that did not accept imperial terms?¹¹ What if, in other words, histories of empire and race moved from emphasizing the all-encompassing nature of hegemonic narratives and recognized the fraught fragility of discursive hegemonic frameworks? Kini's cry of "don't touch me" and the internee's "conditional 'yes'" then begin to matter quite a lot.

For the anti-imperial activists explicitly opposed to Cold War politics in Judy Tzu-Chun Wu's *Radicals on the Road*, turning instances of counter-conduct into

conscious anti-imperial dissent was the stated goal. Wu explores the journeys and “internationalist” (2) imaginings of North American antiwar activists during the Vietnam War who traveled to and from Southeast Asia, helped organize speaking tours and conferences with Vietnamese and Laotian representatives, engaged in citizens’ diplomacy to try and broker peace deals, and used these journeys to develop their own anti-imperialist political identities. Their battle was for hegemony itself: not to question the dominant narratives of US Empire, but to supersede them completely by proposing a new internationalist and anti-imperialist political culture.

Though many of these activists hewed to what Wu calls a “radical orientalist” politics—which romanticized Asian revolutionary figures and simply inverted the colonialist binary as described by Edward Said—Wu argues that their journeys and internationalism “fostered a common political language” and generated a sense of social responsibility and mutuality between Eastern and Western activists (4). In exploring activists’ different gender identities and transnational women’s activism, Wu also contends that gender was a significant force for framing these dialogues.

Wu examines these dynamics through three case studies. First, she explores the life and activism of Robert Browne, an African American man from Chicago who served as an American aid adviser in Cambodia and South Vietnam from 1955 to 1961. Browne, already drawn to global travel because of the alienations and indignities of US racism, found himself being used as a “middleman” between white colleagues and Asian politicians. In his personal life and his later antiwar and Black Power activism, Browne developed a sense of Afro-Asian solidarity, which he often framed as stemming from his care and protection for his Vietnamese wife and their interracial family. Wu’s deft handling of Browne’s story—as exile from American racism, as interracial middleman, and his benevolent paternal posturing toward his Asian family—details both the expansive vision and the gendered limitations of internationalist politics.

The other two case studies—of the 1970 U.S. People’s Anti-Imperialist Delegation, which sent eleven New Left, Black Panther Party, and third world American activists to North Korea and Vietnam, and the 1971 Indochinese Women’s Conferences, which brought together radical North American feminists and Vietnamese and Laotian women activists—serve mostly to showcase the splits, divisions, and blinders of the American radical Left. In these stories, internationalism seems to be a failed project: women delegates remember that Eldridge Cleaver refused to let female delegates speak or make decisions on behalf of the group, and consistently demeaned the Asian American and Jew-

ish delegates with ethnic slurs (166, 173, chap. 6). The volatile factionalism between the North American women at the 1971 conference—over white guilt, anti-imperialist politics, lesbianism—seemed to preclude the conference from working effectively with Asian women delegates (chap. 7). The misogynist, aggressive masculinity of some New Left and Black Panther Party leaders has been well documented, as have the splits and fractious debates over race and sexuality in this era's feminist organizing. Wu emphasizes that within these fraught environments, individual activists did find meaning in connecting with Vietnamese, North Korean, Laotian, Chinese, and Cambodian people and political figures, and that these individual connections helped foster and shape an internationalist anti-imperial politics in the United States.

What remains unclear, however, is how this internationalist ethos was dispersed in the United States and Southeast Asia, and toward what ends. For example, Wu discusses the circulation of images of revolutionary Asian women and men on the covers of American underground press papers, which effectively makes her point about the centrality of Asian revolutionaries to the American radical consciousness. Yet we do not learn how these images were consumed, understood, or read by different parts of the American Left or the broader American public: were they fetishized as symbols of an imagined revolution, seen as emblems of international solidarity, or both at once? Wu's intriguing concept of "radical orientalism" begins to suggest an answer, by proposing these images as part of the practice of creating a counternarrative of international solidarity. Yet, as her own definition makes clear, this was a somewhat vexed project, as radical orientalism often romanticized Asian revolutionaries at the expense of seeing their struggles as fully human, fully complex. *Radicals on the Road* might have further engaged existing scholarship on transnational radical imaginaries—Bill Mullen's conception of "Afro-Orientalism" or Gary Okihiro's "Black Pacific," for example—to better situate the historical context for radical orientalism in the 1970s.¹² Drawing the discussion of radical orientalism carefully throughout all the book's case studies—and tracing a longer genealogy of American radicals' fascination with Asian revolutionaries—would have enhanced her argument.

Wu's deep research and her well-chosen case studies make for compelling reading and offer a promising glimpse into how we might begin to research and conceptualize challenges to US hegemony in the late twentieth century. More, *Radicals on the Road* intriguingly points toward activists' employment of a politics of empathy and solidarity among imperial subjects across the Pacific. As Imada deftly placed her hula performers within the field of US

imperial interests, global circuits, and the gendered cultural imaginaries of US imperialism in the early twentieth century, Wu might be well served by further investigation of the imperial context of the “real human connections” her subjects feel during their journeys. As with Cheng’s work, a larger view of empire would help relate both scholars’ captivating stories to the many currents of power—militarized, Cold War, revolutionary—criss-crossing the Pacific in this moment.

Taken together, these works remind us that individual actions and choices helped shape the contours of the Pacific world as much as imperial state policies; indeed, it was the everyday movements, translations, and critiques of people that imbued imperial projects with meaning, authority, and power. By attending to local stories and individual lives, these works also allow us to witness the multiplicity and scope of refusals to empire that took place, from Los Angeles, Honolulu, Chicago, and Vancouver to Seoul, Tokyo, Hanoi, and Phnom Penh. “Colonialism,” Imada reminds us, “falters when people refuse to see themselves through the eyes of the colonizer” (88). Yet, as these books collectively suggest, it is a difficult methodological project to explain both systems of exclusion and the possibility for movement within these systems. Necessarily, these books ask that we understand both the shape of imperial power and the effects of people’s refusal or acceptance of its terms, and raise questions about the role of contestation in securing imperial hegemony—or whether, in fact, hegemony was secured at all. In productive conversation with one another, these books underscore the claims of earlier work by arguing that the creation of the twentieth-century Pacific world was a messy process of competing colonialisms and a continual struggle over dominant ideologies, fought on the terrain of the individual life. This conception of the imperial Pacific—as raucous and contested, not coherent, and based on both movement and exclusion—opens up a historical vision that emphasizes not just the power of empire but also the potentiality for counter-conduct.

Notes

1. My usage of Hawaiian and Hawai‘i follows Imada’s own practices, in which Hawaiian refers to the indigenous people of Hawai‘i, rather than the general population of a region.
2. See, e.g., Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945–1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

3. See, e.g., Richard S. Kim, *The Quest for Statehood: Korean Immigrant Nationalism and U.S. Sovereignty, 1905–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Gary Y. Okihiro, *Island World: A History of Hawai‘i and the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Noenoe Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).
4. Earlier examples of this approach include Jodi Kim, *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Vicente L. Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).
5. Masuda gives his name in the Asian style, with family name first.
6. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978* (New York: Picador, 2007), 200–202.
7. Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).
8. T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama, eds., *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).
9. Moon-Ho Jung, “Empire,” in *Keywords for Asian American Studies*, ed. Kathy J. Schlund-Vials, Linda Trinh Võ, and K. Scott Wong (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 67–71.
10. See, e.g., Christian G. Appy, ed., *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945–1966* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000); Fujitani, White, and Yoneyama, *Perilous Memories*; Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*; Naoko Shibusawa, *America’s Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).
11. George Lipsitz, “The Struggle for Hegemony,” *Journal of American History* 75.1 (1988): 146–50.
12. Bill V. Mullen, *Afro-Orientalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Gary Okihiro, “Afterword: Toward a Black Pacific,” in *AfroAsian Encounters: Culture, History, Politics*, ed. Heike Raphael-Hernandez and Shannon Steen (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 313–30.