

BOOK REVIEWS

A chosen people, a promised land: Mormonism and race in Hawai'i. Aikau, Hokulani K. (2012). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. 264 pp. ISBN 978-0-8166-7462-6.

In this book, Hokulani Aikau loosens a particularly tenacious set of knots involving faith, identity, race and religion amongst Latter Day Saints (LDS) congregations and communities in Lā'ie ahupua'a (land division). These knots influence our understanding of American imperialism in Hawai'i, the potentiality for identity building in Hawaiian self-determination movements, and the connections between the interpolation of Hawaiians and Polynesians (alongside Native Americans) into a uniquely American religion. Many of these issues have long been so entangled as to resist analysis, but here Aikau has opened up a way forward to discuss land, identity, ideologies of faithfulness, and the continued influence of the LDS Church in the shaping of the Lā'ie ahupua'a.

All of these tenacious knots only begin to be unravelled by small tugs and pulls: here a little, there a little, or to use a well-worn Mormon idiom, "line upon line, precept upon precept." Her writing comes in tall hard slices, arguments that stand as tall as the ridges of the Ko'olau mountain ridge, of which Lā'ie ahupua'a is a part. It is an important genealogy of religious and native identity, as well as a starting point for critiquing the continued dominance on the part of the corporate land management arm of the LDS Church, the Hawaii Reserves Inc., which has, since 1993, managed 7,000 acres of the Lā'ie ahupua'a, most of it purchased originally in 1865 by the first LDS missionaries.

Throughout the chapters, we are provided with an essential genealogy for our understanding of the Lā'ie Mormons: from the ideological roots of Mormonism which set up non-white races into socially and politically confined subject positions, while simultaneously elevating to a privileged status the notion of chosenness and lineage (from the House of Israel); to the spatial struggles for the Lā'ie ahupua'a during the missionary era, to the traces of resistance by Hawaiian Mormons to capitalistic development, to the emergence of highly successful organizational practices in the labour missionary programme which saw Polynesians from other islands permanently migrate and live diasporically, as they have always done. Together these would build Lā'ie and eventually lead to the establishment of the Church College of Hawaii (later Brigham Young University of Hawai'i or BYU-H) and the Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC), an incredibly successful cultural theme park featuring staged performances for tourists that opened in 1963.

The mode of research was undertaken by the author as a huaki (journey) in part fuelled by a need to understand and untangle her own Hawaiian and Mormon identities. While hinting at her own autoethnographic narratives, Aikau foregrounds a rich hā (oral) tapestry woven in the 1970s: a collection of oral histories stored in the BYU-H archives. Alongside a retracing of the major historical episodes of the initial LDS

missionary influence in Hawai‘i, the collection of oral histories guides us through the seeming conflicts and contradictions between doctrine and the power of an ideology of faithfulness that constitute the strongholds of identity, for better or for worse.

Constant in this huaki is Aikau’s argument that LDS Church members were both complicit within and resistant to the paradigms legislated by formal and informal social policies and religious revelations by the LDS Church. She explores how these ideologies of faith influence how Hawaiian Saints have negotiated their Hawaiian and religious identities with creative agency and autonomy. In particular, we see how Hawaiians and Polynesians came to embrace the venerated lineage imposed alongside a Mormon ideology of racial inferiority, turning both into opportunities for both economic and spiritual reward. The work here is empathetic while critical at the same time.

The book is organized into five chapters. The first two chapters reveal the shape of the coast, where the author traces the historical advances of the LDS Church in Hawai‘i and other parts of Polynesia, and discusses how Lā‘ie ahupua‘a began to be narrated as the centre of Zion in the Pacific, a gathering place for all Pacific Saints, and how a temple for worship was established which contributed to the increased impetus for other Polynesians to emigrate to Hawai‘i. These chapters cover the transformation of Lā‘ie from largely a communally operated ahupua‘a driven by native ideals, practices and values, to firstly a plantation and later a tourist economy.

The next two chapters tell the stories of firstly the Labor Missionary Program which utilized Native Hawaiian and Polynesian migrant labour to build the infrastructure for the Church College of Hawai‘i (later BYU-H) and the PCC. These chapters narrate how the PCC emerged in a post-state Hawai‘i as a lucrative tourist cultural theme park and how, despite the obvious staged elements, many Native Hawaiians and Polynesians have found great spiritual and economic reward in working at the PCC,

particularly in the early stages of its establishment. The final chapter culminates with a focus on the building and launching of the Iosepa, a traditional sailing vessel which was built by the Mālama ‘Aina and Kai projects housed in the Pacific Studies programme at BYU-H in 2001. This chapter begins to connect how the Pacific Studies project represents the power of schools as sites for political struggle, through which the conflicts of identity can be distilled into discernibly organic and empowering models of agency and spirituality rooted to indigenous values and ideals of land and stewardship.

Through this work, Aikau creates a way forward. The work excavates the knotted roots and routes of a Hawaiian *and* LDS identity and creates the political space of dispersion around which critical dialogue emerges. The work is significant because it directly acknowledges the need to resist and reform negative ideologies of race and lineage. But what makes it really relevant to today’s Hawaiian sovereignty movement is that it makes moves to critically disentangle the conflation of faith, race and land that has gone virtually unchallenged in the Lā‘ie community over the course of 100 years of land control by the LDS Church and its corporate subsidiaries. This book deserves to make its way to classrooms in a number of disciplines, particularly for any course on identity, race and American imperialism in Hawai‘i. It’s also a good text to read for those who want to look at how indigenous communities continue to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct their ethnic and religious identities based on constantly transforming historical realities. Scholars and students in/of Pacific studies, American studies, cultural studies, indigenous politics and religious studies will find a new horizon in sight in this cutting and critical work. The “knots” that it loosens releases much needed energy, which will no doubt be re-woven into surprising and new directions by future activists, students, critics, scholars and indigenous practitioners alike.

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The copyright thing doesn't work here: Adinkra and kente cloth and intellectual property in Ghana. Boateng, Boatema (2011). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. 224 pp. ISBN 978-0-8166-7003-1.

Students, scholars and practitioners seeking to better understand the relationship between intellectual property rights law and collective and individual cultural expressions should read this book. But they should not expect a technical approach or a detailed account of cloth making in Ghana. The richness of *The Copyright Thing Doesn't Work Here* lies in the author's broad questioning, through an examination of the current and past cultural, social and legal status of adinkra and kente cloth, of: 1) the ubiquitous modernity/tradition paradigm applied to non-Western countries, peoples and modes of production and the burden it places on them; 2) state/producer community relations and how these are constructed and defined by modern legal regimes of which intellectual property (IP) is a centre piece; 3) gender dynamics and how these can play out in surprising and unexpected ways; and 4) the impact and dynamics of both cultural and economic globalization and trade.

The author sets out on this journey by establishing the context and her place in it. A Ghanaian scholar, Boateng recounts her own relationship with adinkra and kente, recalling how her grandmother transmitted the precious cloth to her granddaughters, and then how, upon leaving Ghana, Boateng took with her pieces of kente and adinkra, which she had bought at a tourist market, both as an identity marker and to combat homesickness. This personal link to the precious cloth not only provides a window into one individual Ghanaian's relationship with that particular cultural expression (the author's) but also encapsulates the range of

uses, understandings about, and values that are associated with adinkra and kente by Ghanaians inside and outside of Ghana. These are themes which the author picks up on in her discussion about the different types of production of cloth (cultural and commercial) which co-exist and thrive in Ghana, and the attitudes of producing and non-producing segments of the Ghanaian population, as well as the Ghanaian diaspora in the United States and the wider African-American population.

Boateng's own concern with the IP aspects of adinkra and kente came after she read an article about the mass production of the cloth in Asia and the lack of adequate IP protection for what at the time was commonly and patronizingly known as "folklore." One of the problems with IP that Boateng identified then, and which remains today, including in the IP laws adopted by the Ghanaian state to protect adinkra and kente, is its labelling and consequent marginalization of folklore or traditional knowledge in opposition to "scientific" and artistic work produced within the Western categories of "rationality" and "individualism." IP rights continue to privilege individual ownership over custodianship and contribute to decontextualizing production of cultural expressions in most parts of the world by separating them from their real place and time. This disrupts the continuity of art forms by severing the links between contemporary producers and their producing ancestors and traditions. Adinkra and kente production, like ancestral cultural productions elsewhere, have established norms and practices