

Native Men Remade: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Hawai'i

By Ty P. K?wika Tengan

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Many indigenous Hawaiian men have felt profoundly disempowered by the legacies of colonization and by the tourist industry, which, in addition to occupying a great deal of land, promotes a feminized image of Native Hawaiians (evident in the ubiquitous figure of the dancing hula girl). In the 1990s a group of Native men on the island of Maui responded by refashioning and reasserting their masculine identities in a group called the Hale Mua (the “Men’s House”). As a member and an ethnographer, Ty P. K?wika Tengan analyzes how the group’s mostly middle-aged, middle-class, and mixed-race members assert a warrior masculinity through practices including martial arts, woodcarving, and cultural ceremonies. Some of their practices are heavily influenced by or borrowed from other indigenous Polynesian traditions, including those of the M?ori. The men of the Hale Mua enact their refashioned identities as they participate in temple rites, protest marches, public lectures, and cultural fairs.

The sharing of personal stories is an integral part of Hale Mua fellowship, and Tengan’s account is filled with members’ first-person narratives. At the same time, Tengan explains how Hale Mua rituals and practices connect to broader projects of cultural revitalization and Hawaiian nationalism. He brings to light the tensions that mark the group’s efforts to reclaim indigenous masculinity as they arise in debates over nineteenth-century historical source materials and during political and cultural gatherings held in spaces designated as tourist sites. He explores class status anxieties expressed through the sharing of individual life stories, critiques of the Hale Mua registered by Hawaiian women, and challenges the group received in dialogues with other indigenous Polynesians. *Native Men Remade* is the fascinating story of how gender, culture, class, and personality intersect as a group of indigenous Hawaiian men work to overcome the dislocations of colonial history.

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Editorial Review

Review

“*Native Men Remade* is a tour de force. Ty P. K?wika Tengan combines participant observation and archival and oral history in a study of the Hale Mua, a group of Hawaiian men who have revived ancient martial arts, carving skills, and rituals. As both member and ethnographer, Tengan engages passionate debates about the ‘emasculation’ of Hawaiian men by colonialism and tourism, the contested place of men and women in nationalism, and feminist critiques of Hawaiian patriarchy and gender violence. For Hawaiian peoples navigating their future, he suggests there are ‘more islands of hope than of despair.’”—**Margaret Jolly**, Head of the Gender Relations Centre, The Australian National University

“This book concerns a distinctive Hawaiian men’s movement dedicated to decolonizing male consciousness by means of ritualized physical disciplines modeled after historically resonant warrior images. The writing is powerful, and the point of view is a compelling blend of interpretive humility and analytical forthrightness. Offering a wealth of insider testimony drawn from detailed interviews and from his own engaged experience in the Hale Mua, Ty P. K?wika Tengan makes contemporary Hawaiian struggles and sensibilities accessible to non-Hawaiians by contextualizing them historically, culturally, and comparatively. This work will interest scholars of gender, race, and postcolonial cultures, as well as both academic and non-specialist readers interested in the contemporary Pacific.”—**Rena Lederman**, Princeton University

From the Publisher
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From the Back Cover
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