

"Bloodline Is All I Need": Defiant Indigeneity and Hawaiian Hip-Hop [Abstract]

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Hawaiian music and performance has historically played a crucial role in the construction of Kānaka Maoli in the global imagination. Through a close reading of the album, *The "O"* (2006), released by Hawaiian hip-hop artist, Krystilez, I offer a critically informed examination of contemporary Kanaka Maoli cultural production, articulating the intersection of Native identity and performance in modern Hawai'i. This article examines the gendered contradictions and possibilities within Hawaiian hip-hop, which I situate vis-à-vis the spread and appropriation of hip-hop in the postindustrial global economy. Whereas "native" forms of music have played a role in the paradisiacal construction of Hawai'i, Krystilez's woven narratives are multilayered and contradictory; they exhibit defiant forms of indigeneity that speak against US hegemony in Hawai'i, while simultaneously utilizing state logics of racialization to claim legitimacy. These songs draw upon the post-civil rights discourse associated with US hip-hop, but also presents a place-based, anti-citizenship narrative based on indigeneity. I foreground an indigenous feminist critique of colonialism to unpack how Kanaka Maoli self-representation generates cultural resistance that rests its "performance" on gendered and racialized tropes of "Hawaiianness" and "blackness" simultaneously. I also consider the ways in which the lyrics found in Hawaiian hip-hop reconfigure narratives about land, place, and space, with growing implications for Hawaiian diasporic connectivity. Through an analysis of contemporary Hawaiian hip-hop, this paper aims to reconsider and expand popular notions of Hawaiian performance in order to arrive at a more complex rendering of Kanaka Maoli identity.

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