Alternative Contact: Indigeneity, Globalism, and American Studies. By Paul Lai and Lindsey Claire Smith. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2011. 387 pages. $30 paper.

Scholars outside the field of American Studies might assume that Native American Studies holds a central place in the field. But, actually, this has been far from the truth until quite recently. A publication of the American Studies Association, *Alternative Contact* focuses on the new "indigenous turn" in American Studies by exploring sometimes overlooked connections between Native American and Indigenous Studies and American Studies. Adding to a cadre of texts, including de la Cadena & Starn's *Indigenous Experience Today* (2007) and Philip J. Deloria's *Indians in Unexpected Places* (2004), which aim to broaden our understandings of contemporary indigenous life and politics, editors Paul Lai and Lindsey Claire Smith pay special attention to "alternative contact" between indigenous peoples and non-Europeans (3). This contact includes as its purview interactions between indigenous peoples and various kinds of colonial subjects such as migrants, refugees and other racialized groups in the Pacific Islands, Asia and the Americas. Thus, *Alternative Contact* seeks to decenter "Indigenous contact with Anglo-America" (3) by examining how a global politics of indigeneity intersects with U.S. imperialism in new and innovative ways.

The anthology features a wide variety of disciplines and both indigenous and non-indigenous scholars. Presenting case studies in sites as diverse as Mexico, American Sāmoa, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan and China, the book is divided into three sections: "Spaces of the Pacific," "'Unexpected' Indigenous Modernity," and "Nation and Nation-State." Using settler colonialism as a framework for understanding relations between indigenous peoples/nations and the first world nation-states which surround them, contributors advocate for a more critical Ethnic Studies which specifically examines the intersections of indigeneity, nation, and imperialism. Put another way, *Alternative Contact* is concerned with maintaining a balance between emphasizing the cultural and political distinctiveness of indigenous peoples on the one hand and foregrounding the commonality of their shared struggle vis-à-vis colonialism on the other. For example, using the controversial Arizona laws S.B. 1070 and H.B. 2281 as case studies, Lai and Smith draw attention to the complete absence of indigenous peoples of Mexico/Central America in current discussions of U.S.-Mexico migration, arguing that the notion of a border is "a fiction that divides people with shared histories more than it divides distinct groups of people from each other" (10). They also contrast the invisibility of Mexico's indigenous peoples against the relative visibility of southwestern U.S. tribes, including the Tohono O'odham Nation, in this heated border debate. Further, contributors distinguish nations from nation-states in the indigenous context (Smith), critique the joining of Pacific Islanders with Asian Americans in the term "Asian Pacific Islander" (21) and question to use of indigeneity as a global concept (Somerville and Allen), suggesting that the term "Fourth World" more accurately reflects the political reality of indigenous minority peoples who "have been forced to

compete for *indigenous* status with European settlers and their descendents" (Kauanui in Lai & Smith:17). In this way, authors in this volume broaden our understandings of not only who is indigenous but also how claims to indigeneity are strategically made, under what circumstances and through what means. This includes examinations of indigeneity in "unexpected places" (Deloria 2004), taking into consideration global indigenous-indigenous connections, indigenous-Evangelical intersections, and indigenous peoples who identify as "cowboys" rather than as "Indians."

In "Attacking Trust: Hawai`i as a Crossroads and Kamehameha Schools in the Crosshairs," Judy Rohrer examines the recent trend toward "reductive racialization" (37) of *Kanaka Maoli* (native Hawaiian) identity. She shows how after the civil rights Supreme Court Case *Rice. v. Cayetano* (2000), indigenous Hawaiian language and culture-focused institutions such as Kamehameha Schools have come under attack by *haole* (white) residents of Hawai`i via private lawsuits. These lawsuits accuse Kamehameha Schools of racial discrimination based on their exclusive admission policies aimed at *Kanaka Maoli* students. Insisting on reading *Kanaka Maoli* indigeneity as "race" rather than as ancestry or genealogy, *haole* residents of Hawai'i insist on their children's "right" to enroll in Kamehameha and, in the process, "dehistoricize and distort *Kanaka Maoli* struggles" (32) by diminishing the unique sovereign political status of *Kanaka Maoli* in Hawai`i. Rohrer argues that these legal battles exemplify how cultural appropriation and "playing Indian" (Deloria 1998) are used "to claim Hawaiianness for non-Hawaiians"(41), whereby non-Hawaiians in some cases claim they are "more Hawaiian" (43) than their indigenous Hawaiian counterparts through their ability, as longtime residents of Hawai`i, to express the "true" "spirit of Aloha" (43) and their knowledge of "authentic" Hawaiian cultural practices such as enacting the hula.

In "Maori Cowboys, Maori Indians," Alice Te Punga Somerville addresses the relationship between *Aotearoa* (New Zealand) *Maori* and indigenous communities in North America through an analysis of Western films as depicted in the short stories of *Maori* author Witi Ihimaera. Somerville focuses on one specific example of indigenous-indigenous contact via media and popular culture and suggests that "'Indians' can indeed become cowboys under certain circumstances" (266). In an examination of two young Maori boys' identification with the "cowboy" and *dis*-identification with the "Indians" of cowboy-and-Indian films, Somerville argues that the categories of "Indian" and "cowboy" not mutually exclusive. Furthermore, she argues that given the long history of North American and Maori participation in rodeo and country music, dis-identifying with American Indians in a film should not necessarily be seen as a simple case of internal colonialism and racial self-hatred (277), although it can also be that. Rather, *Maori*-American Indian connections might be read as more localized, nuanced articulations of indigeneity as mediated by the film industry, U.S. military occupation, and U.S. global hegemony in New Zealand. Thus, indigenous-indigenous connections, such as that between *Maoris* and American Indians, represent "a historicized matrix of self-recognition, mutual

recognition, and misrecognition" (258) that ultimately allows readers and viewers a more accurate understanding of indigenous modernity.

Andrea Smith's "Decolonization in Unexpected Places: Native Evangelicalism and the Rearticulation of Mission" examines the unexpected ways in which Evangelical Christianity and methodologies of indigenous decolonization (such as that put forth by Waziwatawin Angela Wilson) sometimes overlap and form surprising alliances. Insisting that Native peoples are not just objects of study but should also be understood as producers, shapers and theorizers of religious discourse, Smith examines the "double anomaly" (173) of being a Native Christian today. She uses a methodology she calls "intellectual ethnography" to question the assumptions that being Christian makes one less Native and that Native Evangelicals cannot have an interest in decolonization. Instead, she shows how both evangelicals and indigenous intellectuals can both have a vested interest in "decolonizing methodologies" in the church as well as the academy. Using extensive material from interviews with Native Evangelicals and from attendees of the 2007 Native American Institute of Indigenous Theological Studies (NAIITS), Smith shows how Native Christians sometimes disarticulate Christianity, the colonial process and missionization from Jesus' message of love, tolerance and self-acceptance. She notes that: "To build the political power necessary to effectively decolonize indigenous nations, and indeed the world, our political imperative is not to foreclose possible alliances with Native peoples who seem to be assimilationist or conservative, but to identify possible nodal points of connection that can lead to global transformation" (181).

The breadth of this book and its interdisciplinary reach is extensive and impressive. In particular, building on Vijay Prashad's *Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (2002), contributors do an excellent job of exploring alternative connections between "different non-European peoples outside the organizing schemas of Western modernity and globalization" (26). As such, this volume's greatest strength is its focus on Asian/Pacific Islander/Native North American points of alternative connection and slippage. Through an exploration of these contact zones, the book convincingly demonstrates not only the centrality of Native American and Indigenous Studies within an American Studies framework but also how indigenous studies can be analytically useful *for* Ethnic and American Studies and vice versa. However, although the book claims to join theoretical with practical and ethical concerns (25), the volume is heavily weighted toward the theoretical, especially literary and film criticism. Overall, this book is a helpful theorization of ways to think about indigeneity in a broader cultural, political and international context, and I highly recommend it.

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Works Cited:
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