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Noenoe K. Silva's purpose in this provocative new book is to take apart what she calls “[o]ne of the most persistent and pernicious myths of Hawaiian history”: that the “Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) passively accepted the erosion of their culture and the loss of their nation” (p. 1). The myth's origins, she tells us, can be traced back to Captain James Cook's arrival in 1778 and the first Western accounts of contact with the islands. Throughout the nineteenth century, white colonizers produced more, and elaborate, narratives of Hawaiian depravity and their own superiority, justifying their seizure of land, wealth, and power while subjugating the native peoples. In the last century, “mainstream historians” fortified the myth, basing their works almost exclusively on English-language testimonies of the *haole* (white colonizers) while, according to Silva, they studiously avoided the wealth of materials...

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