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The Music of ‘Minorities’ as Lived Experience and Performed Identity: The Philippines’ Sulu, America’s Hawai‘i, and Japan’s Okinawa

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Preamble

On such an occasion as a keynote chapter, protocol dictates the acknowledgement of significant places and people. In part, the three cultures in my title comprise the fulfilment of that protocol. The Philippine topic resonates with my ethnic heritage and reflects my identity as a minority American. The Hawaiian one extends an *aloha* to the land where I have made my home and career. Finally, the Japanese component honours the location of our symposium, and its Okinawan focus references our host, Terada Yoshitaka, and his advocacy of all things Okinawan¹).

1. Introduction

At the outset, I express some reservations about the term ‘minority’, as evidenced by my placing it within quotation marks in the title. However, in its axiomatic sense, I find it useful for the present discussion, but I will critique it before I conclude. I organise my comments into four principal parts. In the first part, I define and explicate the major concepts of lived experience and performed identity, drawing upon data from the three cultures in my title. The second part explores the power and agency embedded in the Tausug epic song, a Hawaiian hula festival, and Okinawan classical music. In the third part, I analyse the types of minority–majority relationships that are encountered in the second part. The fourth and final part compares shared features from the data. I conclude with some thoughts on ethnomusicological attention to minorities.

2. Concepts of Lived Experience and Performed Identity

For the purposes of this chapter, I propose understanding minority music practices in two domains, namely lived experience and performed identity. As a convenience, I provisionally treat them as a contrastive binary, although this is not the only relationship these two entities may have. Further, I privilege music practice rather than sonic product, which I have treated on other occasions (Trimillos 1995; 1998; 2012; 2013; 2016). In this

chapter, I argue that the same music as sound can inhabit the domains of both lived experience and performed identity.

I begin with a basic working definition for the two concepts from which to launch my discussion. In the term ‘lived experience’, drawing upon Peter Wade’s work (2005), I include music practices that are quotidian, central, and basic within an individual’s primary community. I also integrate the corporeal and kinaesthetic features developed by Husserl (1952[1912]) in his 1912 discussions of *Erlebnis*. Finally, I find useful Mark Slobin’s relational categories of the subcultural, intercultural, and supercultural, from his signal study on minority music, *Micromusics of the West* (1993).

2.1 Lived Experience

Musical practices may not always be reflexive or consciously performed; they are simply enacted. They can be informal; for example, in Sulu a Tausug boy is often assigned to watch the rice fields and drive away birds and monkeys. In the 1960s, it was common for such a boy to play the *suling* end-blown flute or the *kubing* jaws harp to pass the time during the day. Today, musicking (Small 1998) while watching the fields is still practised, although it is more often a Tausug youth listening to his iPod instead of making music. Lived experience can be more formal; for instance, Okinawan *eisā* drumming is a highly organised and rehearsed music and dance activity. During the Okinawan Obon commemoration of departed souls (three days beginning on 7/15 of the lunar calendar, which for 2014 was 19–21 August), *eisā* occurs as a sonic, kinetic event in Okinawa as well as among diasporic communities in Osaka (Terada 2011), Hawai‘i (Sutton 1983), and São Paulo (Tamashiro 2008).

Finally, lived experience can be ritualised. At the conclusion of most Hawaiian gatherings, such as hula programmes or Hawaiian civic club meetings, everyone joins in the song ‘Hawai‘i Aloha’ (Beloved Hawai‘i), usually standing in a large circle holding hands. This ritual closing may be programmed, but more often it happens spontaneously. One such ritual event occurred as our jet approached Honolulu Airport: 80 choir members from The Kamehameha School²⁾ spontaneously filled the cabin with ‘Hawai‘i Aloha’, much to the delight of the other passengers; in that case, the ritual was enacted because the choir’s landing in Honolulu marked the end of their tour of Europe. Thus, the lived experience encompasses a range of primary uses, including the quotidian, the formal, and the ritual. As an event, it is potentially spontaneous, almost always naturalised, and usually introspective.

2.2 Performed Identity

I argue that the second domain, performed identity, differs from lived experience principally in the categories of the naturalised and the spontaneous. For me, performed identity is not naturalised; rather, it is self-conscious, deliberate, and frequently requires a rationale. It involves observers, often persons who are considered ‘other’, thus falling into Slobin’s categories of intercultural and supercultural. Additionally, performed identity assumes that the subject is aware of these observers, even though their presence is not always desired. Thus, performed identity is not spontaneous; it is deliberate and

frequently strategised.

The symposium theme of the relationship between minorities and tourism provides many illustrations for performed identity.³⁾ For the Muslim Tausug of the Philippines, the *pangalay* dance, accompanied by the gong chime *kulintang*, is a tourist draw.⁴⁾ Unlike tourist performances in Bali, *pangalay* performances are geographically and culturally removed from any suggestion of a ritual or ceremonial setting.

With increasing frequency, minority cultures are appropriated and exploited by governments as part of political branding. For example, the state of Hawai'i has a governmental structure that is completely American, and its Native Hawaiian minority comprises only 20% of the state's 1.1 million residents. Nevertheless, not only does Hawai'i call itself the 'Aloha State', it uses Hawaiian chants, songs, and dances for official and public ceremonies, such as at the opening of the 2011 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) international meeting in Honolulu⁵⁾ (Gomes 2011; APEC Voices of the Future 2011).

Performed identity is particularly important for diasporic populations; performance is not only presentation, it is also representation for an overseas minority. For example, the Okinawan or Uchinanchu population on mainland Japan is concentrated in Kansai, specifically in the Osaka area, with both pop and *eisā* drumming being central to its performed identity. *Eisā* in Osaka has been powerfully documented in the DVD *Drumming Out a Message...* (Terada 2005), which was screened at the 2008 Prague Symposium. One episode depicts minority power as proactive and confrontational: *eisā* performers from the Banyan Association (Gajimaru-no-kai) hold a public practise session on the grounds of Osaka Castle, in effect occupying a major symbol of hegemonic Yamato Japaneseness. The lived experience of the diasporic Osaka Okinawans also understands a negotiated state of 'at-homeness', a quality developed by Cuba and Hummon (1993) and further refined by Carney (2011), within a Japanese hegemonic *Yamatonchu*.⁶⁾ This quality of 'at-homeness' is critical for diasporic minorities.

3. Minority Power and Agency: The Tausug *Parangsabil*, the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival (Hawai'i), and Okinawan *Koten*

The scholarly characterisation of 'minority' as a social and cultural construct has been frequently negative, with references to loss, suppression, limited agency, and lack of power. In terms of power, research titles, including some in this study group, often reinforce the negative and the problematic [emphasis mine], e.g. 'Who Are the **Real** Bulgarians...' (Rodel 2009), 'The Case for **Transgressive** Musical Orientations...' (Markoff 2006), '...A Short History of Musical **Subordination**' (Jähnichen 2012), and *Voices of the Weak* (Jurková and Ridgood 2009). However, I argue that minorities do exercise power. Johannes Brusila considers such empowerment in his symposium presentation '(Self-)ironic playing with minority identities: Humorous music videos as an empowering tool among minorities in Finland'. I feel that for minorities, the issue is not the loss of power or a limitation of agency; rather, it is the inability to possess the kinds of power and agency that the majority society deems important and relevant. The

following examples problematise power as well as access to and control of it.

3.1 The Tausug of the Philippines and Narrated Empowerment

The Tausug people inhabit the Sulu archipelago and are a part of the Muslim minority collectively referenced by the Spanish loan word ‘Moro’. Although they are of the same Malay racial stock, the largely Christian mainstream Filipino gaze upon the Muslim Filipinos is prejudiced by three hundred years of Spanish colonial baggage and another half century of America’s ‘benevolent rule’. Ironically, Spanish colonials considered all Filipinos to belong to the ‘indio’ minority.

The Tausug ruled the Sulu sultanate and were never wholly subjugated by the Spanish or by the Americans (Gowing and McAmis 1974). They have a reputation for being fierce fighters and were notorious for their violent response to colonial oppression, particularly the ritual murder–suicide called *parangsabil*, which is more widely known in the Malay world as *amok* (Kiefer 1973). In order to execute *amok*, the Muslim vows to kill as many Christians (non-believers) as possible before he himself is killed. Through such extreme measures, the Tausug exploited fear to assert power over the colonists’ intrusion. Although it is no longer commonly practised, the agency and power of *amok* continues in the Tausug consciousness through the epic song genre *parangsabil*.

The classic *parangsabil Abdulla iban Putli’ Isara* [Abdulla and the Esteemed Isara] (Abdul et al. 1973) reflects both agency and empowerment. It is the story of a betrothed couple, Abdulla and Isara, during the Spanish occupation of Jolo Town (1876–1899). When a Spanish lieutenant compromises the young woman Isara’s honour during a chance encounter, blood revenge is visited upon him and the Spanish garrison by the affianced male and (as a gender twist) the aggrieved fiancée. After wreaking havoc on the garrison, both are eventually killed by Spanish soldiers in a double murder–suicide or *juramentado*.

In the sung account, Abdulla is depicted as a skilled fighter and strategist.⁷⁾ He uses a two-phased approach: he first sends in his fiancée to obtain the lieutenant’s trust; then, he gains entrance on the pretext of presenting the Spaniard with a souvenir sword, the *kalis* or *kris*. The ensuing description of Abdulla and Isara hacking the lieutenant and other soldiers to death is very detailed and shows Abdulla to be a skilled swordsman—first slashing across the enemy’s upper body to disable his fighting arm and then disembowelling him. The narrative instructs both through negative example and through commentary. It argues that killing the Spanish lieutenant is justified on three counts: he humiliated a family (stanza #92), he was untrustworthy (#93), and he had taken advantage of a Tausug female (#94). As notable admonition, the narrator further moralises that the Spaniard, as someone with power and authority, should have come to give good counsel, i.e. help the Tausug, rather than dishonour its women (#95).

In hangkan na biyunu’	/ the reason for killing him
Ba in hinang nakalandu’	/ for he abused
Tininti mang hihindu’	/ instead of [giving] good counsel
Amu hinang manglummu’	/ he debased [her] (based upon Abdul et al. 1973: 175)

The episode is an instance of minority agency. Such historical narratives support the trope of Muslim Filipinos as never having been colonised. It has resulted in present-day majority Filipino youth revisiting 'safe' aspects of Muslim culture as inspiration for national identity and decolonisation. The gong chime ensemble *kulintang* is central to these projects. Thus, the aspects of power and agency that are ascribed to its performance retain their salience in the present, in this case for a nation state consciously seeking to integrate minorities into its national project of 'at-homeness'.

3.2 Native Hawaiians and Indigenous Control of a Festival

As a second example, the Native Hawaiian community has a long, tragic history of economic disenfranchisement and marginalisation by white America. Ethnic Hawaiians are largely subaltern in their own land, manifesting abnormally high rates of poverty, health problems, substance abuse, and incarceration (Silva 2004). The abjection of the people stands in stark contrast to the celebratory and often privileged place that is accorded to Hawaiian custom in island public life, such as the use of the Hawaiian chant to open state legislative sessions and even the international APEC meeting that was cited earlier. This disjuncture verifies Davila's (2012: 84) observation that lip service (and in the Hawaiian case, hegemonic performativity) enables the exercise of hegemonic social and political control over a minority. However, as I have already observed, a minority does have power and agency, although it may not be satisfactory, sufficient, or of the specific type needed to decentre a majority hegemon. Unlike the Tausug, the Native Hawaiian minority has negotiated areas of power and agency for themselves. One area concerns the frequently invoked trope that Native Hawai'i is the 'host culture' in the multicultural mix that resides in Hawai'i (State of Hawai'i n.d.). Subsumed in this mix is the Euro-American 'majority' culture, in addition to Asian and Pacific island streams.

One clear case of Native Hawaiian power and agency is the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival,⁸⁾ an annual three-day competition of hula groups (*hālau*) invited from the various Hawaiian islands and from California, where a significant ethnic Hawaiian and Islander⁹⁾ population resides. The festival competition, popularly referred to as 'The Olympics of Hula', attracts a worldwide audience, with visitors coming from Japan, the United States mainland, other Pacific islands, and Europe. Held annually for the last fifty years, its planning, leadership, organising force, and judges are Native Hawaiian. A retinue re-enacting Hawaiian royalty provides opening and closing ceremonies. The royal retinue, selected annually from the Hawaiian community, references the last reigning king, David Kalākaua, who revitalised Hawaiian music and hula after decades of suppression by Christian missionaries and their converts. He was known as the Merrie Monarch, from which the festival's name derives.

Native Hawaiian sensibilities and values clearly guide the event from start to finish. The planning committee decides which groups are invited each year. Master hula elders monitor protocol and (more importantly) determine the competition's scoring criteria. Each group must present the ancient chant and hula (called *kahiko*), reflecting the pre-contact tradition on one night and the modern repertory (called '*auana*') on the following night. '*Auana*' features harmonically-based music and topics that reflect

sentiments and themes informed by Western contact. Judging for the ancient—*kahiko*—performance is strict and conservative, with attention to language pronunciation, the use of established movement motifs or kinemes (Kaeppler 2001), knowledge of the canonical repertory, correct attire, and appropriate accessories, such as flower leis. Recently, the planning committee has allowed new works composed in the ancient style to enter the *kahiko* competition. Unequivocally, ceremonial artistic power lies in the hands of the Native Hawaiian culture-bearing elders, the *kūpuna*.

One notable instance of native authority vis à vis a prevailing mainstream hegemon concerns the broadcast media. A television station won the contract to transmit all three nights of the competition live. It proceeded to dictate time slots for commercials to the committee, during which the station wanted competition activity to stop. To the surprise of the media administration, which usually gets what it wants, the planning committee rejected the station's demands and countered with its own conditions: either the commercials would accommodate festival activities or the festival would move to another network. This is but one instance of the Native Hawaiian leadership holding fast against hegemonic and commercial agendas. The festival has staved off other requests from the majority, e.g. to exempt tour operators from the maximum limit of five tickets per purchase, to transfer the festival to the Honolulu metropole, and to allow Japanese hula groups to compete. All were soundly rejected.

The degree and kinds of indigenous agency that are evident in the festival stand in dramatic contrast to their virtual absence in tourist shows, in which the driving force is a mainstream economic bottom line. The aesthetic criteria devolve from the gaze of a non-Hawaiian other who often inhabits corporate offices that are geographically far removed from the islands. Hula dancers in tourist shows must be 'Polynesian looking', which means long, straight hair, slim bodies, and a light brown complexion. Hence, although many Hawaiians have wavy to kinky hair, substantial bodies, and a dark complexion, these are rarely seen on Waikiki stages. Line dancers may be Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian, but they are just as likely to be Filipino, Puerto Rican, or Portuguese, as long as they satisfy the commodified 'Polynesian look'. The repertory for Waikiki shows is seldom the purview of Native Hawaiian practitioners. Catering to tourists who are unfamiliar with the Hawaiian language, the repertory includes a majority of English language songs, called *hapa-haole*, such as 'Lovely Hula Hands', 'On the Beach at Waikiki', and 'Blue Hawaii' of Elvis Presley fame. *Hapa-haole* songs often sexualise the native female, pandering to a white male fantasy of the dusky native maiden. Although undeniably an object of minority exploitation, the Native Hawaiian dancer in Waikiki is nevertheless complicit in its continuation and therefore has agency despite being faced with both ethical and economic decisions.

In contrast, festival dancers come in many sizes and shades; large and dark women are not the exception, as the 2001 Miss Aloha Hula finalist Snowbird Bento demonstrated. The Hawaiian aesthetic regards the large body as an ideal receptacle for *mana* or spiritual power. It is to be admired and respected. Additionally, festival audiences' expectations differ from Waikiki tourists' fantasies. Festival attendees seek an authentic celebration of Hawaiian culture, rather than the staged authenticity of tourism

that MacCannell (1999) describes. Thus, the festival combines lived experience and performed identity, while the tourist show promulgates a faux performed identity.

3.3 Okinawan Classical Music as a Self-Contained Community

The third example, *koten* or Okinawan classical music,¹⁰ presents the possibility of near-complete autonomy for a minority culture that has already been exoticised through other musical genres. In the last two decades, Okinawan music has been appropriated by the commercial J-pop industry (Roberson 2001), in which mainstream Japanese as well as Okinawan musicians have created fusions of pop and Okinawan sounds. Early fusions in the 1990s included the Japanese bands Shang Shang Typhoon and The Boom as well as the Okinawan bands Rincken Band and Kina Shoukichi & Champloose. Among their appropriations are the pelog-like hemitonic pentatonic 'Ryūkyū' scale, the hallmark whistling (*yubi-bue*), the rhythms of bamboo castanets (*sanba*), and song lyrics in the Okinawan language. For the Japanese mainstream, Okinawa provides an embraceable form of domestic exoticism and an acceptable performed identity, a privilege that is not accorded to other minorities such as the Japan-born Zainichi Koreans and the segregated Burakumin occupational group.

Koten is vocal chamber music accompanied by the *sanshin* lute and identified as Okinawan classical music.¹¹ As a closed musical community, practitioners are organised into major guilds or *ryū*. The oldest is Afuso, but the largest is Nomura with its subgroups. Authority (and therefore power) within the genre is hierarchical. At its apex is the position of *iemoto* or leader. The leader is supported by a number of levels of senior teachers and junior instructors located both in Okinawa and in mainland Japan as well as internationally in Hawai'i, the mainland United States, and South America. The Nomura *ryū* is uniquely transnational in its construction of 'at-homeness': until 2011 its *iemoto*, the late Harry Seisho Nakasone (1912–2011), was resident in Hawai'i—that is, in the diaspora outside the Okinawan homeland. In many ways Okinawan *koten* behaviour parallels hegemonic behaviour, as we shall see presently.

In addition to the Okinawan language, *koten* marks itself as a domestic other through a number of sonic features: the 'Ryūkyū' scale that was previously described, the rhythmic elongation of certain phrases that interrupt an otherwise strictly delineated duple meter, the inclusion of vocables in the fixed text called *hayashi-kutuba*, and the indigenous poetic form of *ryūka*, with its 8-8-8-6 syllable pattern. The retention of these distinctive features are all the more remarkable, given that contemporary Okinawans almost universally speak Japanese as their mother tongue and considering that use of the Okinawan language for communication is in sharp decline.

Koten exhibits many similarities to the hegemonic social dynamic. The guild organisation regulates performance protocols. For example, the piece *Kajiyadefu* opens every formal Okinawan classical music concert and almost every classical dance concert. It also promulgates indigenous theory, including a systematic categorisation of named vocal ornaments, tuning systems, and compositional subgenres (Vancil 1997).

Koten supports a number of domestic industries, some general and others specific to music performance. General industries include the distinctive textiles and forms of

kimono that are used as formal dress for musicians and as costumes for dancers. These belong to a broader Okinawan lived experience. Specific to music, Okinawa maintains its own instrument industry, including the crafting of the small hand-held drum *paranku* for *eisā* and the production of the three-stringed lute *sanshin*. The manufacture of *sanshin* is central to *koten* as well as other vocal genres, including *minyō* folksongs. At present Okinawa is faced with a shortage of traditional materials, which is a worldwide ecological problem affecting many music cultures. For example, snakeskin for the resonator membrane of the *sanshin* is no longer available in Okinawa and must be imported from South-East Asia. Given the shortage of traditional materials, some *sanshin* are now outfitted with resonators made of horsehide and even cardboard. By importing from abroad, resorting to substitute materials, and patronising domestic industries, *koten* practice behaves like a mainstream majority. Such behaviour intensifies its practise as lived experience, which constitutes its primary function.

The extent to which the classical *koten* tradition serves as performed identity in majority Japan is minimal. Certainly, for mainland Japan, performed identity is primarily the purview of Oki-pop, *minyō* folksongs, and the aforementioned *eisā* mass dance and drumming. In the diaspora, *koten* may, on occasion, contribute to a performed identity. Given its slow tempo and melodic intricacy, it receives only token inclusion in public presentations, such as Okinawan festivals in São Paulo and Honolulu. As performed identity outside Japan, *koten* symbolises high culture and the bygone splendour of the Shuri court (1421–1879).

4. A Typology of Minority–Majority Relationships

Here I analyse a minority's relationship with its immediate majority, i.e. Slobin's intercultural category. The case of the Tausug Muslims problematises the appropriation of a minority experience for nation building, in this case using the Filipino Muslim as exemplary of successful resistance to colonial oppression. The Tausug *pangalay* dance and the *kulintangan* gong chime are kinetic and sonic symbols for the imagined loss of a Filipino *Urkultur*. The symbolism adds to a conflicted identity for Filipinos as successfully globalised, cosmopolitan, and transnational—but nevertheless colonised—subjects. For the minority Tausug, *pangalay* and *kulintangan* constitute a performed identity that is packaged for tourism, while for the mainstream Filipino, it represents an appropriated performed identity in the service of nation building and the 'guilty pleasures' of decolonisation.

The Merrie Monarch Hula Festival demonstrates how a minority has taken leadership and ownership of a cultural event that speaks simultaneously to its own community and to external others. Those others include a multicultural island community for which the festival is a source of pride and constructed 'at-homeness'. It also includes a mainstream America for which the festival validates the national trope of cultural diversity. The festival is a dramatic statement of self-determination and resistance through music and dance. For the Hawaiian minority, it functions both as lived experience through the dynamic of the *hālau* or school, and as performed identity, which entails

competing onstage before a multicultural audience in a competition that involves winners, losers, and cash prizes.

Finally, the Okinawan *koten* is an instance of music as lived experience, primarily created, maintained, and consumed exclusively within the minority group. Occupying a veritable transnational Okinawan cultural space, *koten* represents a microcosmic and parallel power structure that engages aspects of the political, the economic, the technological, the historical, and the aesthetic (Smith 1990). Its power and its space are largely circumscribed and autonomous vis à vis the hegemonic Japanese environment that surrounds it. As such, it behaves very much as its own hegemon and is a provocative case of absolute power located within a minority group.

To summarise this section, I suggest a useful typology of minority–majority relationships:

1. For Tausug performance, the relationship is a symbiotic one, in which both the minority and the majority engage in performed identity.
2. For the Hawaiian festival, the relationship consists of negotiated interaction and resistance; it empowers the minority through a combination of lived experience and performed identity.
3. For the Okinawan *koten*, the relationship privileges autonomy and manifests self-empowerment; in this context, the minority functions as its own hegemony, and its activities comprise lived experience.

5. Comparisons and Shared Features

Although I have discussed each case separately and pointed out that each represents a different relationship between a minority and its majority, I am also aware of shared correspondences, which also deserve scholarly attention. At the Prague 2008 meeting, ethnomusicologists Pettan and Manaranjanie (2009) asked (rhetorically), ‘What can we learn from a comparative study?’ In response, I argue that cross-cultural comparisons can foreground shared correspondences or parallels that are sometimes overlooked or are at least not immediately obvious. I find the following five shared correspondences among the three cultures that are mentioned in the title to be immediately apparent and significant:

1. Each is an island culture.
 2. Each is a former sovereign kingdom conquered by (an) invading force(s).
 3. Each valorises a cultural heritage that is distinct from that of its prevailing hegemon.
 4. Each experienced the trauma of the Pacific War and its political–economic–social aftermath.
 5. Each has developed a modernity that is informed by an American subjectivity, with implications for identity and the safeguarding of tradition.
- A sixth relates to my subject position and thus the shaping of this essay:
6. Each has been part of my personal ethnomusicological engagement.

I feel that it is important to locate our scholarship within such a matrix, although thorough consideration of these comparisons points to a future project. I have selected point #2, their history as a conquered but previously sovereign kingdom, to indicate *in brevis* the potential of such comparisons. I then briefly address #6 in order to problematise the complicity of ethnomusicology in the designation and interrogation of minority cultures.

Historically, the Tausug ruled the Sulu sultanate for over three hundred years. This was an empire that included the Southern Philippines and Eastern Borneo; it flourished through trade, warfare, slavery, and piracy (Casiño 2000). Spanish attempts to subjugate the Tausug were largely unsuccessful, and the Americans were able to attain a negotiated but uneasy peace only after the violent, bloody Moro Wars (1903–1912). Although the sultanate is no longer a political power to be reckoned with, its heritage of heroism, grandeur, and fierce political independence continues to be invoked in the present, as the sung epic *Abdulla iban Putli' Isara* illustrates. The epic songs, the *pangalay* dance, and *kulintang* music were part of court entertainment, and today they serve as symbols of a sultanate golden age that invokes nostalgia for Muslim Filipinos, while creating a romanticised exoticism for majority Filipinos, successfully promulgated by the Manila-based national dance company Bayanihan (Santos 2004; Castro 2011).

The Hawaiian kingdom was established by Kamehameha the Great in 1810, and it prospered through shipping and whaling until its overthrow by the U.S. military in 1893. The kingdom enjoyed diplomatic relations with the royal houses of Europe and Asia, including Japan, Siam, and Malaya (Johore). Queen Lili'uokalani was an honoured guest at Queen Victoria's 1887 Golden Jubilee, for whom she composed the Hawaiian-language song known as 'The Queen's Jubilee'. The Kalākaua dynasty produced four composers within the royal family, including King Kalākaua and Queen Lili'uokalani, whose composition 'Aloha 'oe' is known worldwide. Their compositions and those of their contemporaries are designated as monarchy period (1874–1893) music. One feature of this period was compositions in the Viennese waltz style.¹²⁾ This music and the dances associated with it were part of court entertainment and symbolised a golden age of Hawaiian sovereignty. Today, these sounds and sights invoke nostalgia in both Native Hawaiians and Islanders, and evoke a bit of light opera familiarity for foreign listeners, who seem to find them different but pleasant.

The golden age of the Ryūkyū kingdom (1392–1609) was enabled by a wide-ranging maritime trade throughout South-East and East Asia. Although sovereign, the kingdom had a tributary relationship with Ming China until it was invaded and conquered by Satsuma Japan in 1609, after which it had a dual vassal status with China and Japan until the Meiji government abolished the kingdom in 1879. It continued its lucrative maritime trade and even served as a convenient 'backdoor' conduit for foreign trade during the early Tokugawa isolationist period (beginning c. 1633). The *uzagaku* court ensemble music was effectively lost. However, the chamber genre of *koten* recalls this golden age and represents a high culture that putatively reflects past elites' sentiments and creativity, as the lyrics of the well-known *Nufa-bushi* illustrate:

Until the blossoms scatter
Until the leaves turn yellow
May you never change
As we retain our first feelings for one another

(Thompson 2008: 315, fnt 6)

In this brief comparison, each genre gains traction as a touchstone for the glorious past of a once sovereign state flourishing through vigorous maritime industry. Unfortunately, such touchstones can lead to selective amnesia: the historical realities of despotic rulers and the cruel exercise of power that privileged the few and oppressed the many are often overlooked when celebrating heritage.

6. Closing Thoughts on Ethnomusicology and Minority Studies

The protocol of my preamble referenced places and people, a decision attesting to my own subject position regarding identity, homeland, and hospitality. In this final and very brief section, I return to a broader, more critical aspect of subject position: our agency as ethnomusicologists in defining and circumscribing paradigms pertaining to the music of minorities. While I fully support the scholarly and ethical rationales for the undertaking, I am not altogether comfortable with the ways in which we decide who are minorities and who are majorities. Devising such binaries promulgates a politics of difference (Wade 2005), a problematic process fraught with scholarly and ethical implications.

As already observed, we often cite the lack of power as a major criterion for the designation of a minority. However, we have seen that 'minorities' do possess and exercise power, although this power is not always identical to hegemonic power. In almost all cases the appellation 'minority' is defined, applied, or imposed externally; rarely does the disempowered or disenfranchised subject voluntarily declare itself a minority. Within this study group, we have witnessed the empowerment of minorities and the transformation of minority into majority, for example, the worldwide ascendance of dar al-Islam and the formation of Timor-Leste. Globalisation, supercultural agendas, and post-modern tropes of cultural diversity call for a re-thinking of what constitutes a minority and the criteria for its definition. The study group has much important work ahead of it, some of which should be the proactive re-examination of its principal paradigm.

Notes

- 1) The essay is an edited and revised version of the keynote lecture presented at the 8th International Symposium of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) Music and Minorities Study Group held 19–23 July 2014 at the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku), Osaka, Japan.

- 2) A school founded in 1887 by the will of Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop for the education of Native Hawaiians.
- 3) Other symposium themes included Cultural Policy and Minorities, Gender and Sexual Minorities, and New Research.
- 4) The lecture included a slide depicting the *kulintang* instrument and *pangalay* dancers (Pinoy Adventurista 2013).
- 5) From the *Star Advertiser* newspaper account (Gomes 2011): ‘Hawaii’s senior senator said he hoped CEO Summit participants will take away a gift found no where else in the world: the gift of *aloha*. “To all of you: welcome to Hawai‘i. *E komo mai*,” he said. Inouye’s remarks were part of an opening ceremony that began with two performers blowing conch shells and [the] delivery of a long chant and blessing by a Hawaiian spiritual leader, or *kahu*.’
- 6) An Okinawan appellation for mainland (hegemonic) Japanese.
- 7) The lecture included a short sound example of the musical style.
- 8) For a comprehensive study of the festival and its history, see Skillman (2012).
- 9) The term ‘Islander’ is used here to collectively denote residents of Hawai‘i who are not Native Hawaiian. The term ‘Local’ is used more frequently in Hawai‘i for this purpose. I choose not to use it because ‘Local’ sometimes includes Native Hawaiians, especially those outside the metropole of Honolulu.
- 10) Also known as *uta-sanshin* (song and lute music).
- 11) The lecture included a series of sound examples of the musical style.
- 12) The lecture included a short sound example of the musical style.

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