



# Islands of Empire: Pop Culture and U.S. Power

*Camilla Fojas*

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Camilla Fojas explores a broad range of popular culture media—film, television, journalism, advertisements, travel writing, and literature—with an eye toward how the United States as an empire imagined its own military and economic projects. Impressive in its scope, *Islands of Empire* looks to Cuba, Guam, Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, asking how popular narratives about these island outposts expressed the attitudes of the continent throughout the twentieth century. Through deep textual readings of *Bataan, Victory at Sea, They Were Expendable*, and *Back to Bataan* (Philippines); *No Man Is an Island* and *Max Havoc: Curse of the Dragon* (Guam); *Cuba, Havana*, and *Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights* (Cuba); *Blue Hawaii*, *Gidget Goes Hawaiian*, and *Paradise, Hawaiian Style* (Hawai'i); and *West Side Story*, *Fame*, and *El Cantante* (Puerto Rico), Fojas demonstrates how popular texts are inseparable from U.S. imperialist ideology.

Drawing on an impressive array of archival evidence to provide historical context, *Islands of Empire* reveals the role of popular culture in creating and maintaining U.S. imperialism. Fojas's textual readings deftly move from location to location, exploring each island's relationship to the United States and its complementary role in popular culture. Tracing each outpost's varied and even contradictory political status, Fojas demonstrates that these works of popular culture mirror each location's shifting alignment to the U.S. empire, from coveted object to possession to enemy state.

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