

# A ‘MONTAGE OF MINORITIES’: HAWAI‘I TOURISM AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF RACIAL TOLERANCE, 1959–1978\*

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**ABSTRACT.** *This article studies the Hawai‘i tourism industry’s efforts to market Hawai‘i as a multi-cultural paradise where positive racial experiences could be bought and sold. With jet travel arriving in Hawai‘i the same year as statehood, the tourism industry, aided by the new state government, exploited Hawai‘i’s newfound prominence, luring planeloads of American tourists who thronged its beaches, hotels, and cultural spectacles. Tourism helped turn racial tolerance into a saleable, if intangible, commodity. Marketers invited mainlanders to partake in the islands’ celebrated ‘Aloha Spirit’: an elusive vision of social harmony said to be the defining feature of the Hawai‘i vacation. By attending ethnic festivals, eating exotic food, and interacting with locals, visitors might even bring some Aloha Spirit home with them. Hawai‘i’s society thus became not only a site of consumption, but an object of consumption itself. What such utopian ideas obscured was that the broader construction of Hawai‘i as a multi-cultural paradise was part of state efforts both to transform Hawai‘i’s economy and to promote US influence in the Pacific. While the limited historiography on multi-culturalism situates its emergence in grassroots protest, this article argues for the elite origins of the multi-cultural ideal, which served the interests of both business and US foreign policy.*

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For Americans at the height of the jet age, a Hawai‘i vacation started at 30,000 feet. To conjure an aura of glamour and excitement around travel to Hawai‘i, the major air carriers with routes to Honolulu sought to ensure that a plane trip to the islands would be unlike any other domestic flight. Claiming that,

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'for most people a visit to Hawaii is not just a routine journey but a fulfillment of long-held expectations', United Airlines promised its passengers would 'step into Hawaii' when boarding its Royal Hawaiian jet, where stewardesses in Hawaiian print uniforms would serve a 'full-course gourmet adventure' consisting of Filet Mignon Teriyaki or 'Hawaiian style' lobster.<sup>1</sup> In a similar vein, Hawaiian Airlines entreated its inter-island customers to picture themselves flying in comfort while sipping a Mai Tai served by stewardesses representing 'the many ethnic heritages of Hawaii' and emanating the 'gentle spirit of fellowship and goodwill' said to be the core characteristic of Hawai'i society.<sup>2</sup>

For all its claims that Hawai'i was a dreamland of effortless calm and sociability, the tourism industry's work to maintain such appearances was anything but effortless. Behind the relaxed façade of the Hawai'i holiday was an army of marketers, managers, and service workers labouring to provide tourists with a seamless experience of paradise. Though the tourism industry sought to impart a timeless quality to Hawai'i's paradise image, the ways in which the islands were marketed in the post-statehood era were shaped by larger economic, political, and cultural forces of the era. It was with statehood in 1959 that the mass Hawai'i tourism industry was born – and with it, new ways of selling, travelling, and imagining multi-cultural selfhood.

With jet service in Hawai'i also arriving in 1959, the tourism industry, aided by the state government, worked to exploit the state's newfound prominence, luring planeloads of American visitors who thronged its beaches, hotels, and cultural spectacles. As Hawai'i sought to distinguish itself from other vacationlands, it spun a dual narrative of racial difference and racial mixing to help sell the islands as a unique destination where Americans could purchase a transformative leisure experience. This was part of a larger discourse around Hawai'i's special role as a multi-ethnic offshore state of the US. But it also took on a life and logic of its own as race was deployed in the service of large-scale financial gain.

Hawai'i tourism helped turn racial tolerance into a saleable, if abstract, commodity. To be sure, the tourism industry sought to entice continental Americans with the allure of warm weather and scenic beauty, but it also coaxed them with an invitation to partake in the islands' celebrated 'Aloha Spirit': an elusive vision of social harmony, a 'gentle spirit of fellowship and goodwill' that was supposedly the defining feature of the Hawai'i vacation. By attending ethnic festivals, eating exotic food, and interacting with locals – dubbed 'the Golden People' in tourism literature – visitors might even bring some Aloha Spirit home with them. Hawai'i's multi-ethnic society thus became not only a site of consumption, but an object of consumption itself.

<sup>1</sup> Quotes taken from the president's message, *Mainliner*, 10 (1966), and the United Airlines advertisement in a supplement on Hawai'i in the *New York Times*, 2 Oct. 1966.

<sup>2</sup> *Latitude 20*, 1, 4 (Fall 1973).

The consumption of racialized commodities or cosmopolitan experiences was nothing new.<sup>3</sup> But the commodification of Hawai'i during the mid- to late twentieth century represented something different. This article looks beyond an analysis of the primitivist elements of Hawai'i's tourism culture to explore the ways in which post-statehood Hawai'i was also imagined by marketers as a racially diverse, and modern, tourist paradise.<sup>4</sup> The Hawai'i tourism industry after 1959 was not simply an extension of its colonial antecedent, though the legacies of Hawai'i's colonial past would continue to haunt touristic imagery. Tourism producers in the post-statehood era were selling a packaged experience of both ethnic difference and racial tolerance. Rather than traveling to Hawai'i to psychologically affirm their white supremacy as their colonialist predecessors had done, American tourists to Hawai'i in the post-statehood era were participating in the commodification of an emerging multi-culturalist ideal – one that both validated American liberal beliefs in racial progress while offering a racially exotic spectacle.

The tourism industry's embrace of multi-culturalist ideology was made possible, perhaps necessary, by the same structural processes of globalization and decolonization that turned Hawai'i into both an American state and a site for mass tourism. Scholars have loosely linked the emergence of American multi-culturalism in the late twentieth century with increased globalization and the proliferation of social rights movements, but the historical origins of multi-culturalism have been understudied.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, there has been too little attention to why liberal elites largely rejected the old assimilationist paradigm for negotiating difference and signed onto multi-culturalist ideology in its stead.

Multi-culturalism, unlike its ideological antecedents, pluralism and cosmopolitanism, is not only an idea, but also an institutional practice.<sup>6</sup> Scholars have mostly focused multi-culturalism's association with education, chronicling the efforts of those seeking to diversify humanities curricula in response to

<sup>3</sup> See the literature on Jim Crow-era marketing, such as M. M. Manring, *Slave in a box: the strange career of Aunt Jemima* (Charlottesville, VA, 1998); and Kenneth W. Goings, *Mammy and Uncle Mose: black collectibles and American stereotyping* (Bloomington, IN, 1994). For an examination of American women consuming exotic goods to signal their cosmopolitan sensibilities in the age of high imperialism, see Kristin Hoganson, *Consumers' imperium: the global production of American domesticity, 1865–1920* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Scholarship on Hawai'i tourism tends to focus on the appropriation of Native Hawaiian culture and the primitivist portrayal of Native Hawaiians. See Jane Desmond, *Staging tourism: bodies on display from Waikiki to Sea World* (Chicago, IL, 1999); Elizabeth Buck, *Paradise remade: the politics of culture and history in Hawai'i* (Philadelphia, PA, 1994); Cristina Bacchilega, *Legendary Hawai'i and the politics of place: tradition, translation, and tourism* (Philadelphia, PA, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Much of the literature on multi-culturalism has been written by non-historians. For representative examples, see the essays in David Theo Goldberg, ed., *Multiculturalism: a critical reader* (Malden, MA, 1994); and Charles Taylor et al., *Multiculturalism: the politics of recognition* (Princeton, NJ, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> See David Hollinger for an analysis of the fusion of pluralism and cosmopolitanism, *Postethnic America: beyond multiculturalism* (New York, NY, [1995], 2000).

demands to end white cultural hegemony. This story is often told as a declension narrative, in which the original, radical multi-culturalist ideal was diluted, and contained, often at the expense of promoting diversity at a structural level.<sup>7</sup>

But multi-culturalism, I argue, was not only used as a way for people in power to placate racial and ethnic minorities asserting their right to cultural recognition.<sup>8</sup> It was also a discursive and institutional tool for liberal policy-makers and business leaders, who saw the celebration of social difference as a means both to facilitate American expansionism abroad and to make money at home. This was not simply co-optation. Indeed, liberal corporate multi-culturalism emerged in tandem with, if not before, critical leftist multi-culturalism.<sup>9</sup> To uncover this broader intellectual and institutional history, we must look beyond educational curricula, and we must look to the producers themselves.

The records of the Hawaii Visitors Bureau, an institution heavily subsidized by the new state government, offer a lens onto how state and business interests together created a corporate multi-cultural vision for Hawai'i. Marketers seized on the discourses around Hawai'i statehood, which portrayed multi-racial Hawai'i as a 'bridge to Asia' that would help America win the allegiance of the decolonizing world by demonstrating its commitment to cultural diversity, anti-colonialism, and racial egalitarianism.<sup>10</sup> In the wake of statehood, Hawai'i was designated as a hub for educational exchange and 'mutual understanding': a place where Asians could be trained in American modernization practices and where foreign ways could be demystified for Americans to help them navigate an increasingly integrated world dominated by an expansionist US. The tourism industry suggested to ordinary Americans that they too could take part in international cultural exchange. And they did not have to go to 'the Orient' to see it: Hawai'i could provide them with an entertaining crash course in Asian culture.

At the same time, tourism literature implied that Americans could overcome the domestic racial divisions of the post-civil rights era through the buying and selling of racial tolerance. But the marketing of Hawai'i revealed the contradictory nature of racial discourse during the latter half of the twentieth century. Tourists were invited to be entertained by Hawai'i's Golden People, who were portrayed as both a blended race and a collage of disparate ethnicities. Such rhetoric evoked the tension at the heart of the emerging global discourse of

<sup>7</sup> For a critique of the ways in which multi-cultural education ignores the lack of diversity on college campuses, see Hazel Carby, 'Multicultural wars', *Radical History Review*, 54 (1992), pp. 7–18.

<sup>8</sup> See Charles Taylor, 'The politics of recognition', in Taylor et al., *Multiculturalism*.

<sup>9</sup> For more on corporate multi-culturalism versus critical multi-culturalism, see the Chicago Cultural Studies Group, 'Critical multiculturalism', *Critical Inquiry*, 18 (1992), pp. 530–55.

<sup>10</sup> A number of historians have demonstrated the link between American foreign policy and changing racial norms after the Second World War. See Mary Dudziak, *Cold War civil rights: race and the image of American democracy* (Princeton, NJ, 2000); Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the middlebrow imagination, 1945–1961* (Berkeley, CA, 2003); and Naoko Shibusawa, *America's geisha ally: reimagining the Japanese enemy* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

multi-culturalism – over whether the goal of liberal society was to protect difference or to incorporate difference in service of unity – and scrubbed it of any political salience. Ultimately, this confusion reflected a prioritizing of revenue at the expense of ideological coherence. The tourism industry only asked as much of its consumers as it believed would be profitable. The iconic Hawai'i tourist in the marketing materials of the post-statehood years was a member of Francesco Adinolfi's jet-setting 'cocktail generation': worldly but not radical.<sup>11</sup>

Just as tourists were invited to buy into racial tolerance, the people of Hawai'i were asked to provide that racial tolerance for tourists to consume. As tourism became an ever more significant sector of Hawai'i's economy, the tourism industry increasingly sought to rationalize the Aloha Spirit: its expression now an economic imperative of post-statehood society rather than its foundational ethos. In turning race and racial tolerance into commodities – sold by labourers in an expanding service sector – the Hawai'i tourism industry of the 1960s and 1970s is a prime example of the postmodernist turn in American culture. Postmodern culture has been shaped by a system of late capitalism that celebrates the performance of difference while denying the structures of power undergirding it. In Hawai'i, the politics of difference were glossed over in favour of a simulacrum of racial harmony. While the Aloha Spirit may not have been entirely imagined, its representation in the service of capitalism changed its valence, neutering it of history and complexity.

## I

Before Pearl Harbour, Hawai'i occupied a position of near-reverence in American popular imagination – a dreamland physically unreachable for all but the most fortunate, but one that had been 'elaborated in thousands of public and private fantasies in the new consumer culture of America'.<sup>12</sup> This was an image that originated with the tourism industry, which, beginning before the US annexed the islands in 1898, sought to profit from the metropole's emerging tourist class. It was also an image underwritten by the Hawaiian state, first under the monarchy, which funded steamship lines and the construction of the first Royal Hawaiian Hotel, and later the revolutionary and territorial regimes. After white settlers – known as haoles – succeeded in overthrowing the Hawaiian monarchy and annexing the islands to the US in 1898, the territory's highly organized business interests worked to consolidate the tourism industry, founding the Hawaii Promotion Committee in 1902, a public–private venture that became the Hawaii Visitors Bureau in 1945. Meanwhile, the Matson

<sup>11</sup> Francesco Adinolfi, *Mondo exotica: sounds, visions, obsessions of the cocktail generation* (Durham, NC, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Beth Bailey and David Farber, 'The fighting man as tourist: the politics of tourist culture in Hawaii during World War II', *Pacific Historical Review*, 65 (1996), p. 642.

Navigation Company, the territory's dominant shipping line, began carrying a new kind of cargo – wealthy tourists – on ever more opulent liners. Matson reigned over pre-Second World War tourism in Hawai'i, transporting visitors as well as housing them in grand hotels, including the new Royal Hawaiian, the grand 'Pink Palace' that opened in 1927 and continues to anchor the Waikiki strip.

Tourism bolstered haole power by attracting affluent Americans to the Royal Hawaiian and other luxurious Waikiki resorts 'designed to keep social and racial inferiors at bay'.<sup>13</sup> This social inequality that haoles celebrated was inscribed onto Hawai'i's landscape, as tourism transformed marshy Waikiki from a neighbourhood of local farmers and fishermen into an enclave for elites.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, white supremacy in Hawai'i was reinforced by the primitivist imagery – distilled in the image of a 'lovely languid lady strumming the ukulele on the beach' – that dominated tourism materials in the pre-statehood years.<sup>15</sup> Hawai'i's early tourism industry relied on a set of visual tropes that portrayed the islands as havens of 'soft primitivism', embodied by the friendly and sexually available hula girl.<sup>16</sup> This spectacle of the hula girl – in performances both in Hawai'i and on the mainland – was also part of an anti-Asian discourse that 'erased Asians from the territory' during much of the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup>

But while luaus and hula girls would certainly remain stock components of Hawai'i tourism imagery, during the statehood era such tropes came to co-exist with the equally powerful theme of Hawai'i as an egalitarian multi-racial paradise for a new age – one in which Native Hawaiians often constituted one among several ethnic groups in a 'montage of minorities'. Statehood, and the concurrent development of jet service to Hawai'i, changed the tourism game, both in terms of tourism's revenue-generating potential and the ideological stakes of the visitor industry's portrayal of the new state. The transformation of the Hawai'i tourism industry from an important sector of Hawai'i's economy to *the* driver of economic growth was fundamentally shaped by statehood.

Statehood solidified Hawai'i's image as a multi-racial paradise where difference should be celebrated.<sup>18</sup> The protracted post-war statehood campaign,

<sup>13</sup> Christine Skwiot, *The purposes of paradise: U.S. tourism and empire in Cuba and Hawai'i* (Philadelphia, PA, 2010), p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84–5. See also Gaye Chan and Andrea Feeser, *Waikiki: a history of forgetting & remembering* (Honolulu, HI, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Horace Sutton quoted in 'Hawaii Visitors Bureau report', Sept. 1960, Hawaiian and Pacific Collections, University of Hawai'i (HPC).

<sup>16</sup> Desmond, *Staging tourism*, pp. 11–12.

<sup>17</sup> As Adria Imada demonstrates, up through the Second World War, hula dancers of Asian descent often hid their ethnic identities onstage. See Adria Imada, *Aloha America: hula circuits through the U.S. empire* (Durham, NC, 2012), pp. 185–6.

<sup>18</sup> For more on the statehood debates, see Roger Bell, *Last among equals: Hawaiian statehood and American politics* (Honolulu, HI, 1984); John S. Whitehead, *Completing the Union: Alaska,*

begun in 1946, intersected with a period of intensive debate over race and civil rights in the US, one that saw not only the unravelling of Jim Crow, but also the overturning of racial bars to Asian immigration and naturalization. Along with Hawai'i statehood advocates, the tourism industry was attuned to these changing racial discourses. A 1949 guidebook to Hawai'i, for example, told readers that 'an amazing tolerance exists', with Hawai'i's 'multiracial democracy' one of its main attractions.<sup>19</sup>

Many of these early post-war portrayals of Hawai'i, by the tourism industry and others, underlined the Americanization of Hawai'i's many ethnic groups. By the end of the 1950s, however, Hawai'i boosters placed just as much stress, if not more, on the islands' cultural links to Asia, an increasingly central battleground of the Cold War. John Burns, Hawai'i's congressional delegate – and later governor during Hawai'i's formative post-statehood years – helped sell statehood to Congress in 1957 by arguing that the people of Hawai'i possessed unique cultural knowledge, saying Hawai'i's many ethnic groups 'can be our best mediator' with the peoples of Asia and the Pacific.<sup>20</sup> A few years later, the East–West Center was established at the University of Hawai'i with the stated mission of promoting 'the useful employment of diversities for mutual good'.<sup>21</sup> This emphasis on Hawai'i's racial and ethnic difference from the rest of the US, and on Hawai'i's internal diversity, was central to the dominant narrative that emerged with statehood.

The tourism industry, in turn, worked to alter its vision of Hawai'i-as-paradise to suit this new story. It suggested that to visit Hawai'i was to partake in a nationalist project that advanced both American foreign policy and the negotiation of racial difference at home.<sup>22</sup> American tourism boosters had long linked nationalism and vacationing.<sup>23</sup> During the Cold War, however,

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*Hawai'i, and the battle for statehood* (Albuquerque, NM, 2004); Giles Scott-Smith, 'From symbol of division to Cold War asset: Lyndon Johnson and the achievement of Hawaiian statehood in 1959', *History*, 89 (2004), pp. 256–73; Gretchen Heefner, "'A symbol for a New Frontier": Hawaiian statehood, anti-colonialism, and winning the Cold War', *Pacific Historical Review*, 74 (2005), pp. 545–74; and Ann Ziker, 'Segregationists confront American empire: the conservative white South and the question of Hawaiian statehood, 1947–1959', *Pacific Historical Review*, 76 (2007), pp. 439–66.

<sup>19</sup> Sydney Clark, *All the best in Hawaii* (New York, NY, 1949), pp. 54, 53.

<sup>20</sup> Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Hearings on statehood for Hawaii*, 80 Cong., 1 sess. (1957), p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> 'Report on progress of the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange between East and West', 1 Mar. 1961, US National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary, Subject Files, 1961–2, box 2.

<sup>22</sup> Indeed Americans, as James Sparrow argues, often explicitly saw themselves as part of a national project during the period beginning with the Second World War. See Sparrow, *Warfare state: World War II Americans and the age of big government* (New York, NY, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Tourism boosters after the Civil War claimed that vacationing could be a means of 'consuming the nation' that led to increased national cohesion. Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America first: tourism and national identity, 1880–1940* (Washington, DC, 2001), p. 4. For more on the history of tourism in the US, see John F. Sears, *Sacred places: American tourist attractions in the*



tourism was invested with new meaning as the tourism industry and the US government worked together to spread American ideology and development models abroad.<sup>24</sup> Tourism to Asia, as Christina Klein argues, became a 'form of geopolitical engagement' for ordinary Americans. To that end, the State Department during the height of the Cold War instructed American tourists abroad not to behave arrogantly or violate 'common bonds of decency'.<sup>25</sup> As the US government sought to win friends in the so-called Third World, it asked Americans – passports in hand – to perform their embrace of diversity for a global audience. Post-statehood Hawai'i offered the perfect stage for this performance. As a former colony with a majority Asian population that was now America's newest state, and as a symbol of American egalitarianism that was also a gateway for Americans into the realm of the foreign, Hawai'i met multiple ideological demands at once. In Hawai'i, a space between the domestic and the global, the national and international objectives of tourism cohered.

## II

After 1959, the state became ever more engaged in promoting tourism, helping the Visitors Bureau to become a highly organized marketing machine that would play a central role in the trajectory of the post-statehood economy. At the same time, tourism was instrumental in bringing about the rise of a new promotional state, which viewed attracting investor dollars through the selling of 'Hawaii' as equally important as governance. Indeed, many conservatives in Hawai'i believed promoting tourism was a better use of state funds than social services.<sup>26</sup> With statehood, the Visitors Bureau went from being a basic travel promotion agency focused mostly on short-term goals to the 'marketing arm of tourism for the entire State of Hawaii', with the task of 'making tourism the keystone of the Hawaiian economy'.<sup>27</sup> To that end, its budget tripled between 1958 and 1968 and the proportion of government investment in it rose from a little over half to nearly three-quarters.<sup>28</sup>

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*nineteenth century* (New York, NY, 1998); David Wrobel and Patrick Long, eds., *Seeing and being seen: tourism in the American West* (Lawrence, KS, 2001); Cindy S. Aron, *Working at play: a history of vacations in the United States* (New York, NY, 2001); and Hal Rothman, *Devil's bargains: tourism in the twentieth-century West* (Lawrence, KS, 1998).

<sup>24</sup> See Christopher Endy, *Cold War holidays: American tourism in France* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004). For tourism and modernization, see Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating paradise: U.S. tourism and empire in twentieth-century Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, pp. 106, 110.

<sup>26</sup> Skwiot, *The purposes of paradise*, p. 163.

<sup>27</sup> Hawaii Visitors Bureau (HVB), 'A report on House Concurrent Resolution No. 78 to the budget session of 1966 Third Legislature, State of Hawaii', 1966, HPC.

<sup>28</sup> 'An evaluation of Hawaii Visitors Bureau programs: report to the fourth State Legislature of the State of Hawaii', HVB, 1967, HPC.



Those efforts paid off. After witnessing steady but modest gains in visitor arrivals in the decade and a half after the Second World War, the number of continental American tourists to Hawai'i nearly doubled between 1958 and 1960, leading the Hawai'i state planning office to brag that 'more Americans dream about taking a vacation in Hawaii than any place else in the United States'.<sup>29</sup> Tourism quickly outpaced Hawai'i's other leading industries, notably defence, along with sugar and pineapple production. By 1968, tourism's share of GDP had eclipsed that of military expenditures and by 1977 it was producing more revenues than all federal spending in Hawai'i combined.<sup>30</sup> By 1970, Hawai'i would be host to 1.7 million annual visitors – ten times as many as the year before statehood.<sup>31</sup> That meant that Hawai'i, with a population of less than 800,000 in 1970, had more than twice as many annual visitors as residents. This was a trend that would only intensify; by the end of the twentieth century, annual visitors would outnumber residents by nearly six to one.

Such changes took place as Hawai'i was experiencing unprecedented national attention, with books, films, and print media feeding eager American audiences with stories and images of their nation's newest state that emphasized the islands' mixing of races and cultures. James Michener's wildly popular *Hawaii*, an epic fictional account of 'how disparate peoples... ultimately joined together to build America's strong and vital fiftieth state', was the third bestselling novel of 1959.<sup>32</sup> As the discourses around statehood increasingly focused on Hawai'i's polyglot society, it became difficult for the tourism industry to ignore the emerging narrative possibilities. This was a point driven home by travel writer Horace Sutton, who urged Hawai'i's tourism industry in 1960 to make better use of the islands' multi-ethnic culture. Why, he asked, was Hawai'i 'so proud of your Asian ties socially and politically, and so shy about them touristically?' He went on to question traditional marketing strategies that left visitors ignorant of 'the magnificent lore brought here and still cultivated by the Chinese, the Japanese, the Filipinos and the Koreans' and uninitiated to the exotic foodstuffs – such as fresh ginger, water chestnuts, and watercress – that were prominent in Honolulu grocery stores yet absent from hotel restaurant menus.<sup>33</sup>

Within a few years, the tourism industry was putting Sutton's advice into practice. This was partly driven by perceived market demands. Hawai'i, according to the Visitors Bureau, had much to offer in terms of 'eating, drinking, loafing, relaxing, recreational sporting, and enjoyment of beautiful scenery and equable climate'.<sup>34</sup> But this was not enough. While the islands had made

<sup>29</sup> Hawaii State Planning Office, 'Visitor destination areas in Hawaii: a program for development', 1960, HPC.

<sup>30</sup> Statistics obtained from the State of Hawai'i's Research and Economic Analysis Division.

<sup>31</sup> Statistics from the HVB 1971 annual report, HPC.

<sup>32</sup> Stephen James May, *Michener: a writer's journey* (Norman, OK, 1995), p. 296.

<sup>33</sup> 'Hawaii Visitors Bureau report', Sept. 1960, HPC.

<sup>34</sup> 'Satisfaction-motivation interview research', HVB, 1961, HPC.

great advances in securing a reliable base of visitors from the West Coast, the tourism industry had its eye on all American consumers, and in particular the lucrative East Coast market. As a result, Hawai'i was in competition with other scenic warm-weather destinations, from Florida to the Bahamas, that had geographical proximity on their side and often spent more government funds on tourism promotion.<sup>35</sup>

Lack of adequate funding for tourism promotion was only part of the problem, however. The Visitors Bureau believed that the content of tourism marketing and of touristic experience itself were just as important, if not more so. Noting that the tourism industry oversaw the production of 'a single intangible product – "visitor satisfactions"', the Visitors Bureau warned that Hawai'i must find a way to distinguish the 'intangible' qualities of a Hawai'i vacation if it wanted to draw tourists from other destination areas. Increasingly in the post-statehood years, visitor satisfaction was believed to hinge on providing visitors with positive racial experiences. Against the background of an expanding foreign market for American tourists, the Hawai'i tourism industry saw rivals not only in other tropical vacationlands, but also the whole of Western Europe, which in the post-war years had become the most popular overseas leisure destination for Americans. According to a 1961 survey of American tourists who had chosen to visit places other than Hawai'i, around half had gone to Europe instead. This was, the Visitors Bureau surmised, because Europe had 'intellectual-cultural' appeal – unlike Hawai'i, whose reputation as a 'sensuous paradise' had obscured its more substantive attributes. 'The need for self-improvement, for cultural development, for widening of intellectual horizons, is a strong one, and appears to be the powerful magnet drawing visitors to Europe', the survey concluded. In order for Hawai'i to realize the 'rich potential in this neglected area', it must do a better job of selling the 'unique diversity and intermingling of races and cultures' to potential tourists.<sup>36</sup>

To that end, the tourism industry set out to entice visitors with the promise that a Hawai'i vacation consisted of not only sun, sand, and fruity cocktails, but a life-changing encounter with both the islands' racial difference and their culture of ethnic harmony. Tourists were urged to come to Hawai'i and immerse themselves in the glow of the 'Aloha Spirit', a concept that, in the tourism industry's phrasing, called up a vision of social amity, ethnic spectacle, and general well being all at once. It was a term that had been used by the tourism industry before statehood, but usually as a vague reference to Polynesian hospitality and the friendliness of Hawai'i's 'local color' rather

<sup>35</sup> According to the HVB, while Hawai'i's tourism promotion budget was \$1.6 for 1960–1, Bermuda was close behind at \$1.5 million and Nassau substantially ahead at \$2.3 million. 'Hawaii Visitors Bureau report', Oct. 1960, HPC.

<sup>36</sup> 'Satisfaction-motivation interview research', HVB, 1961, HPC. Christopher Endy confirms the HVB's interpretation of why Americans chose Europe, particularly France, over other destinations. Endy, *Cold War holidays*, pp. 104–5.

than a more layered invocation of the ideal of racial liberal liberalism.<sup>37</sup> In the period after statehood, the Aloha Spirit acquired new meaning as it came to refer to broader social and political discourses that emphasized Hawai'i's unique status as a multi-ethnic American state in the heart of the Pacific.

Reverend Abraham Akaka, arguably the most famous Hawai'i clergyman of his time, offered an extended description of the Aloha Spirit in 1966 that reflected common usage of the term in the post-statehood era. To continental Americans who wondered 'how it is that here people of such divergent cultures can thrive without hostility or prejudice', he explained that this harmony derived from the Aloha Spirit:

Those of us who hold this theory believe God designed these Islands for immigrants. Everyone here, from the members of the oldest Hawaiian families to the visitors disembarking from planes today, are immigrants...While each immigrant group brought something of its native culture to Hawaii, it also adopted a way of life from the Hawaiians. It absorbed what we call the 'Aloha Spirit' – the friendliness, humbleness of the Hawaiians...[I]t does not take the newcomer long to learn that there is a deeper meaning to 'aloha' – kindness and graciousness, love and understanding...Yet the 'Aloha Spirit' is not something we of the Islands wish to retain only for ourselves. We offer it to the world.<sup>38</sup>

Akaka's account of the Aloha Spirit could have comprised a church sermon. Indeed, it likely started out as one. And so it is telling that this particular passage appeared not in a sermon, but inside the pages of United Airlines' magazine. The use of lofty messages in the service of selling Hawai'i was a consistent theme in tourism literature. The Visitors Bureau often sought to portray Hawai'i as 'more than a pretty place' in its effort to reach those sophisticated tourists who might be considering other destinations with more 'intellectual-cultural' cachet.

In doing so, the tourism industry worked to ensure that American tourists to Hawai'i could feel virtuous in their choice of vacation destination – without any exposure to Hawai'i's troubled racial history or American conquest over Native Hawaiians. Touristic references to the Aloha Spirit helped to normalize Hawai'i's relationship to the US by reviving colonialist tropes, in which Native Hawaiians welcomed white American settlers, and coupling them with the post-war narrative of the US as a nation of immigrants.<sup>39</sup> Such evocations of the Aloha Spirit suggested both a sense of Hawai'i's exceptionalism and its representativeness of American pluralism. While tourism literature tended to trace

<sup>37</sup> Use of the term 'local color' in conjunction with 'Aloha Spirit' can be found in 'Essential areas of action for the development of Hawaii's visitor industry', Governor's Advisory Committee on the Tourist Industry, 1956, HPC.

<sup>38</sup> Rev. Abraham Akaka, 'The meaning of aloha', *Mainliner*, 10 (1966), HPC.

<sup>39</sup> A number of scholars have critiqued the commodification of the concept of aloha. See, for example, Lisa Kahaleole Hall, "'Hawaiian at heart" and other fictions', *Contemporary Pacific*, 17 (2005), pp. 404–13; J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, 'Diasporic deracination and "off-island" Hawaiians', *Contemporary Pacific*, 19 (2007), pp. 138–60.

much of Hawai'i's culture to native origins, it simultaneously, and contradictorily, conceived of Hawaiians as a slice in a colourful multi-ethnic pie that also included Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and other Asians in Hawai'i. Even Akaka, though singling out Native Hawaiians as inventors of the Aloha Spirit and the original settlers of the islands, nonetheless situated them as one immigrant group among many. At a time when white Americans were 'discovering' their own family ancestries – a movement endorsed by Congress through the Ethnic Heritage Studies Act of 1972 – Hawai'i offered its own version of this ethnic revival.<sup>40</sup>

In another melding of sales and seriousness, Governor John Burns used an advertorial in the *New York Times* in 1966 to urge American investors to see Hawai'i, with its booming tourism-based economy, as the vanguard of a new Pacific era. Flanked by colour photographs of pristine white-sand beaches, the Waikiki skyline, and lei-wearing children representing a 'happy mixture of races and cultures', Burns's message suggested that Hawai'i offered not just an escape, but solutions to the seemingly insurmountable problems that arose from modern life. While Americans 'are faced with the disruption of Viet Nam, the enigma of Communist China, the uncertainties of Indonesia', and are 'not quite prepared to cope with these new problems', Burns said, 'the people of Hawaii, proud of their role in the American experience and of their cosmopolitan heritage, are oriented in their thinking to meet [these] challenges'.<sup>41</sup> Burns's opening message thereby framed the rest of the thirty-six-page supplement, much of which was devoted to Hawai'i tourism. In doing so, it demonstrated the efforts of the state to yoke the pressing task of global racial progress with capitalist self-promotion.

Most materials produced by the tourism industry were less heavy-handed in their promotion of Hawai'i as a multi-ethnic paradise. The tone of a 1971 Visitors Bureau advertisement to sell Hawai'i as 'more than a pretty place' straddled the line between high-minded and frivolous. Based on research showing that visitors craved 'a sense of involvement', the ad promised tourists that they could acquire both new cultural knowledge and a pleasure-filled holiday if they came to the islands. Visiting Hawai'i was a chance to 'see the Orient. And Micronesia. And Europe.' It was 'almost like taking an international tour on six islands'. But lest potential tourists be intimidated by Hawai'i's foreign atmosphere, the ad reminded them that 'most of the people you'll meet speak your language'. In a place where foreign ways were filtered through an American idiom, one could enjoy adventure without exertion: 'You can order a Portuguese breakfast or an Indonesian banquet without consulting a dictionary...Our mixed-up Hawaiian heritage presents

<sup>40</sup> On white ethnic culture in the late twentieth century, see Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots too: white ethnic revival in post-civil rights America* (Cambridge, MA, 2009); and Hollinger, *Postethnic America*.

<sup>41</sup> Advertising supplement sponsored by the State of Hawai'i, *New York Times*, 2 Oct. 1966.

some odd little surprises. Go to a ball game and you can order a hot dog – or a steaming bowl of fish soup.’ As more Americans were travelling abroad – not just to Europe but to Asia, Latin America, and other regions of the ‘Third World’ – the Visitors Bureau claimed that Hawai‘i might serve as a microcosm of all things foreign. ‘In Hawaii’, the ad said, ‘you’ll find out what it’s like to speak in a different language, worship in a different church, even live in a different colored skin’ – all, presumably, without requiring any foreign-language proficiency or ponderous soul-searching.<sup>42</sup>

As the above ad suggests, the tourism industry often sought to depict Hawai‘i as both a place of distinct ethnicities and of ‘mixed-up’, Americanized culture. At the same time that the Visitors Bureau was sponsoring ethnic pageants, such as the Cherry Blossom Festival and Fiesta Filipina, that delineated cultural identity, it also worked to craft a portrait of Hawai‘i as a society that had transcended old ideas of race and ethnicity. While this contradictory representation of Hawai‘i spoke to the complex reality of negotiating identity in the post-war period, on another level it reflected an attempt to hedge on the question of race. Was the Hawai‘i tourism industry in the business of selling racial difference or racial transcendence? Without any apparent thought given to the difference between the two, it unabashedly worked to sell both.

This strategy was exemplified by a campaign launched by the Visitors Bureau in the late 1960s titled ‘The Golden People of Paradise’ and at the time deemed to be ‘the most ambitious marketing campaign ever devised to promote travel to the 50th State’.<sup>43</sup> Driven by market concerns, it was intended to ‘even out the seasonal peaks and valleys of visitor flow into the State’ and counteract what the Visitors Bureau saw as negative press reports that were too focused on ‘high-rise Waikiki’.<sup>44</sup> Along with a sixteen-page print media insert expected to reach 5.7 million American homes, the campaign included other promotional tie-ins, including partnerships with *Sunset* to sell Hawai‘i foods in major West Coast supermarkets, and with *Vogue*, which would co-ordinate merchandizing of Hawai‘i fashions at department stores in twenty-three metropolitan areas.

The campaign implicitly referred to James Michener’s concept of the ‘Golden Man’, a figure representing the future of Hawai‘i, and of the United States, in *Hawaii*, a novel that encapsulated the optimism of mid-century racial liberalism. Michener, among other ‘middlebrow intellectuals’, liberal activists, and policy-makers, presented Americans with a national narrative of social progress, one in which Jim Crow and laws barring Asians from citizenship were historical aberrations – sins against a foundational national ideology of

<sup>42</sup> ‘A sense of involvement’ quote taken from a 25 Jan. 1971 letter from Thomas Hamilton to John Burns explaining the ‘More than a pretty place’ ad campaign. Letter and advertisement found in box 46 of the records of the office of Governor John Burns, Hawai‘i State Archives (HAS).

<sup>43</sup> *Current marketing report*, HVB, Jan. 1970, HPC.

<sup>44</sup> Letter from the HVB to John Burns, 12 Feb. 1969, records of the office of Governor John Burns, HSA, box 46; *Current marketing report*, HVB, Jan. 1970, HPC.

inclusion and equality.<sup>45</sup> In the years leading up to passage of civil rights acts of the mid-1960s, many middle-class northern whites subscribed to this hopeful image of an America that would solve the problem of race by eliminating legal discrimination and individual prejudice. They also undoubtedly contributed to the astonishing success of *Hawaii*, a mainstay of book clubs that topped out at nearly 1,000 pages. In Hawai'i, Michener suggested, the promise of American democracy was already being fulfilled. Though Hawai'i was not altogether free of racial prejudice, it was a land where people of different races were learning to get along – and where people of Asian descent whose parents had toiled on plantations were moving into the middle class and into positions of political power.

Michener, not coincidentally, was also one of the most prominent boosters of both statehood and Hawai'i tourism, which together he viewed as part of the larger effort to transform the islands into a 'bridge to Asia' that could aid US foreign relations in the Pacific. He published scores of articles in popular magazines like *Life*, *Reader's Digest*, and *Look* extolling the geopolitical, economic, and recreational benefits of strengthening the bond between Hawai'i and the rest of the US. He also exerted his sway in more rarefied quarters. In a speech before the Civil Aeronautics Board shortly after statehood in 1959, Michener spoke on behalf of Hawaiian Airlines and called for the expansion of trans-Pacific aviation routes, which were then dominated by Pan-Am. Hawai'i, Michener insisted, 'can function as the western frontier of the United States, the gateway between the Orient and the mainland'. But tourism must be amplified for this promise to be realized. Speaking as a resident of the islands, Michener insisted that Hawai'i's 'vital role in the Pacific' was possible 'only if aviation increases even faster than our population, faster than our investments, and I would say faster than our development of hotel rooms'.<sup>46</sup>

Michener suggested that Hawai'i, with a burgeoning visitor industry, could produce a nation of cosmopolitans ready to serve US interests. This cosmopolitan ideal was personified by the 'Golden Man', a figure Michener introduced at the end of *Hawaii*. Representing a typical resident of mid-century Hawai'i, the Golden Man was 'influenced by both the west and the east, a man at home in either the business councils of New York or the philosophical retreats of Kyoto, a man wholly modern and American yet in tune with the ancient and

<sup>45</sup> See Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, for her discussion of 'middlebrow intellectuals'. See Dudziak, *Cold War civil rights*, for an analysis of popular portrayals of segregation during the Cold War as aberrant. For more on mid-century racial liberalism, see Gary Gerstle, *American crucible: race and nation in the twentieth century* (Princeton, NJ, 2001); Charlotte Brooks, *Alien neighbors, foreign friends: Asian Americans, housing, and the transformation of urban California* (Chicago, IL, 2009); and Mark Brilliant, *The color of America has changed: how racial diversity shaped civil rights reform in California, 1941–1978* (New York, NY, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Excerpts of testimony presented by author-historian James A. Michener, 28 Oct. 1959, part of a special report to the stockholders and employees of Hawaiian Airlines on the trans-Pacific route case, HPC, 14, 17.

the Oriental'. Michener himself likely got the idea for the Golden Man from journalist Clifford Gessler, who in 1937 called the people of Hawai'i 'the golden race, the new people', and from the work of interwar sociologists – many of them students of the University of Chicago's Robert Park – who argued that race mixing was in fact producing positive biological and social results, with people in Hawai'i forging a new race.<sup>47</sup> Michener played down the racial implications of the Golden Man, insisting the concept was not based on physical colouring due to 'racial intermixtures' in Hawai'i but was instead 'a product of the mind'.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the novel's haole narrator identifies himself as one of the Golden Men.

It was the audience for *Hawaii* – educated, liberal, middle-class whites – whom the Visitors Bureau was targeting when it sought to sell Hawai'i on the basis of its 'intellectual-cultural' appeal. Its Golden People campaign, however, appeared to reject Michener's notion that race could somehow be transcended. Instead, it played up the racial and ethnic differences of – and among – people in Hawai'i. The text of the Golden People campaign was accompanied by photographs of Chinese temples, marching luau dancers, and Japanese women parading in traditional dress, and described Hawai'i as 'a festive land' where one would be immersed in a parade of 'masks, firecrackers and multi-lingual chantings'. Even as the term 'Golden People' signalled racial blending, the substance of the ad – with lines such as 'we have created a montage of minorities, a bounty of cultures' and 'we move daily in an extraordinary spectrum of colors and feelings' – implied that Hawai'i's dynamism lay not only in the elaboration of cultural differences, but in their dramatic juxtaposition.<sup>49</sup>

Notably, the Golden People campaign did not include whites in this montage, suggesting that haole culture was not part of the entertainment Hawai'i had to offer. By turning Hawai'i's ethnic groups into a spectacle for a white audience, the Golden People campaign recalled earlier examples of white consumption of racial difference at places such as world's fairs, black nightclubs, or hula shows, where performers were expected to display their primitivism. But the broader social and cultural context of this consumption of difference had changed during the post-war era. While Michener and other liberal leaders were urging Americans to abandon racial prejudice and embrace Hawai'i as a US state, the Hawai'i visitor industry of the jet age was inviting white tourists to affirm publicly

<sup>47</sup> Clifford Gessler, *Hawaii: isles of enchantment* (New York, NY, 1937), 307; for more on interwar sociologists in Hawai'i, see Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: migration, contact, and exoticism in modern America* (New York, NY, 2001); John P. Rosa, "'The coming of the Neo-Hawaiian American race": nationalism and metaphors of the melting pot in accounts of mixed-race individuals', in Teresa Williams-León and Cynthia L. Nakashima, eds., *The sum of our parts: mixed heritage Asian-Americans* (Philadelphia, PA, 2001); and Christine Leah Manganaro, 'Assimilating Hawai'i: racial science in a colonial "laboratory", 1919–1939' (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 2012).

<sup>48</sup> James Michener, *Hawaii* (New York, NY, 1959), p. 891.

<sup>49</sup> *Current marketing report*, HVB, Jan. 1970, HPC.



their admiration of other cultural traditions in the context of Hawai'i's post-statehood society, where multi-racial co-operation was equated with modernity.

But the Golden People campaign, launched a decade after the publication of *Hawaii*, was also appealing to white racial liberalism at a moment when it was under intense strain. By the late 1960s, as de jure civil rights reform proved insufficient for overturning centuries of oppression, many northern whites had begun to recoil from black activists' attacks on economic inequality and segregation in northern cities.<sup>50</sup> Speaking to this unrest, Governor Burns noted that 'Hawaii has not been racked with the civil disturbances that many of the less fortunate states have been undergoing', attributing this to 'the manner in which the multi-racial people of Hawaii live and work together'.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile, as African Americans continued to demand social justice, Asian Americans were increasingly identified as the nation's 'model minority' in terms that sought to distinguish them from blacks, notably their social conservatism and class mobility. Asian Americans in Hawai'i were often held up as prime examples of the idea that racial minorities could achieve success without political strife.<sup>52</sup> In this context, the safe multi-culturalism presented in the Golden People campaign suggested that Hawai'i might serve as a respite from the racial discord in the rest of the US – and as a way for white tourists to prove their lack of prejudice in the face of increasingly radical critiques of inequality. At the same time, however, the language of multi-culturalism obscured the racial and class privilege that enabled so many American tourists to travel to Hawai'i, where non-white service workers would help to affirm their racial liberalism.

But Hawai'i was not merely a stage for performing racial tolerance. The tourism industry also held out the possibility that visitors might be transformed by their experience of racial otherness in Hawai'i. From its very beginning, as William Leach argues, modern capitalism has sought to both manufacture and harness consumers' impulse for personal expression through novel experiences.<sup>53</sup> But, if modern capitalism calls for acquisitive boundary-crossing, certain boundaries are nonetheless more navigable than others at specific

<sup>50</sup> For northern black activism in the late 1960s, see N. P. Singh, *Black is a country: race and the unfinished struggle for democracy* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2004); Robert Self, *American Babylon: race and the struggle for postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ, 2003); and Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: the forgotten struggle for civil rights in the north* (New York, NY, 2008). For white resistance to overturning de facto segregation, see Thomas Sugrue, *The origins of the urban crisis: race and inequality in postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ, 1996); David Freund, *Colored property: state policy and white racial politics in suburban Detroit* (Chicago, IL, 2007); and Lily Geismer, *Don't blame us: suburban liberals and the transformation of the Democratic party* (Princeton, NJ, 2014).

<sup>51</sup> Letter from John Burns to D. L. Hearn, 8 Sept. 1967, records of the office of Governor John Burns, HSA, box 39.

<sup>52</sup> For the creation of 'model minority' discourse, see Ellen Wu, *The color of success: Asian Americans and the origins of the model minority* (Princeton, NJ, 2014).

<sup>53</sup> William Leach locates the emergence of this strategy in the early twentieth century and argues for its hegemonic impact across time and region in *Land of desire: merchants, power, and the rise of a new American culture* (New York, NY, 1993).

temporal moments and in distinct places. In Hawai'i in the two decades following statehood, the boundaries consumers were entreated to cross were racial. Drawing on 1960s advertising discourses that Thomas Frank identifies as 'hip consumerism', tourism literature suggested that visitors to multi-racial Hawai'i could become more free-spirited, cool, and likeable in their everyday lives.<sup>54</sup>

Not surprisingly, given Hawai'i's reputation as a site of inter-racial sex, tourism boosters often hinted at the possibilities for sexual experimentation. A 1972 article in the Hawaiian Airlines in-flight magazine by resident Hawai'i novelist Scott Stone claimed that the islands represented the vanguard of the sexual revolution. Younger tourists, he wrote, 'have brought their own sense of freedom to the Islands', where they would find that 'there just aren't many uptight Hawaiians'. Male visitors open to new experiences – and men were clearly Stone's intended audience – would find a 'marvelous lack of bigotry' in Hawai'i and might even wind up marrying an islander. Female tourists, too, exhibited 'a new-found freedom' while on a Hawai'i holiday.

They will be using as much Hawaiian slang as they can muster and talking knowledgeably about The Point After and the Kamaaina Bar and the Top of the Ilikai. They will be trying, for the first time, malasadas and saimin and char siu, and they will be digging every moment of it.

Stone even suggested that white women could become less white as they exposed themselves to the dazzling Hawaiian sun: 'in a matter of days they will be suffused with the glow that comes from both a tan and a newfound confidence'.<sup>55</sup>

The tourism industry's coaxing of visitors to free themselves by embracing Hawai'i's racial laxity echoed Norman Mailer's invitation to white society in 'The White Negro' to throw off 'the inefficient and often antiquated nervous circuits of the past' by adopting black culture.<sup>56</sup> But while Mailer located the power of such racial appropriation in its transgressiveness and the appeal of black life in its precarious, 'psychopathic', valence, the Hawai'i tourism industry aimed to point consumers to a middle road of safe experimentation. The racial and ethnic differences continental Americans would experience in Hawai'i were meant to be exciting rather than threatening.

### III

Hawai'i boosters sought to sell the new state to all Americans, even those who might never make it to the islands. American consumer culture in the post-statehood era offered a host of Hawai'i-themed commodities. Perhaps the most

<sup>54</sup> Thomas Frank, *Conquest of cool: business culture, counterculture, and the rise of hip consumerism* (Chicago, IL, 1997).

<sup>55</sup> *Latitude* 20, 1, 1 (Sept. 1972), HPC.

<sup>56</sup> Norman Mailer, 'The White Negro: superficial reflections on the hipster' originally published in *Dissent* (Fall 1957) and reprinted in *Advertisements for myself* (New York, NY, 1959).

popular means of recreating the Aloha Spirit in the continental US was the amateur luau. In the 1960s and 1970s, scores of cookbooks, grocery store promotions, magazine articles, and advertisements urged American cooks to embark on the ‘delicious adventure’ that luaus offered.<sup>57</sup> The amateur luau, like the Hawai‘i vacation it sought to emulate, was marketed as a medium for personal transformation, one that could make its participants more worldly, relaxed, and sophisticated. At the same time, luaus helped to cement the link between the spread of Hawai‘i’s culture and its commodification.

The constellation of sights, sounds, smells, and tastes made these luaus perhaps the most immersive of Hawai‘i-themed consumer experiences outside of a trip to the islands. Like the Hawai‘i vacation, a luau demanded a lot of work to produce the casual mood that was supposedly its hallmark. According to a Dole luau instructional booklet from 1973, to create a ‘relaxed atmosphere’, the event would require: ‘an abundance of food’, along with ‘decorations and costumes in the tropical manner’, the crackle of roasting ‘suckling pig...or more often pork loin’, a table ‘set with a bamboo or tatami mat, and ti leaves, if available’, and ‘green plants or foliage massed at the back of the buffet table’. The menu should begin with a selection of tropical cocktails and pupu appetizers followed by at least one fish and several meat dishes, and should be finished with a dessert buffet. All these elements together would facilitate ‘the bountiful feeling a Luau always gives – filled with laughter, light-heartedness, and plenty for all’.<sup>58</sup>

To aid the sale of the Dole canned pineapples that were a key ingredient in several luau dishes, Dole offered a catalogue of ‘luau kits’, complete with poly leis, plastic hair flowers, tiki gods, and crepe-paper pineapples.<sup>59</sup> As part of the larger luau re-enactment that Dole and others were packaging and selling, the kits represented an attempt to distil Hawai‘i – and all the meanings that the Hawai‘i signifier evoked – into commodities that made tangible the Hawai‘i tourism experience. At the same time, such tangible commodities made Hawai‘i tourism accessible to more Americans. The kinds of character changes that an authentic Hawai‘i holiday was said to incur were now made possible and affordable by way of the commodities necessary for a successful luau.

According to their partisans, luaus and Hawai‘i-inspired food might go beyond inducing a temporary feeling of light-heartedness, and could ‘become a way of life’ that ‘opens the mind, and, more important, the palate to different tastes, cooking techniques, to cultures and the people [of Hawai‘i] themselves’. Cookbook author and Hawai‘i resident Elizabeth Ahn Toupin entreated her audience to embrace the unfamiliar. Hawai‘i-style

<sup>57</sup> Elizabeth Ahn Toupin, *The Hawaii cookbook and backyard luau* (New York, NY, 1967), p. 13.

<sup>58</sup> ‘A Dole Hawaiian luau’, 1973, Dole Collection, University of Hawai‘i, Cabinet 2, Drawer 4.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Dole luau kit’, Dole Collection, University of Hawai‘i, Cabinet 2, Drawer 4.

cooking, she suggested, was more than the sum of its ingredients. Rather, the acts of cooking and eating could tap feelings of empathy and tolerance, catalysing a new worldview. 'This memorable encounter [with the food of Hawai'i] can only enrich one's life', she wrote, 'for preparing and feasting the various cuisines is a way of experiencing life as another lives it'. Taste, she suggested, could even offer a lesson in world history. Cooking in Hawai'i, by 'drawing the best from each [ethnic] group and combining them expertly', was a sensory manifestation of not only Hawai'i's mixed society, but of larger global processes. The food of Hawai'i, she wrote, represented the legacies of modern migration – by cooking and eating it one was calling up 'the history of the culinary arts of the Orient and the Pacific, transported in seed and memory, modified by tropical lands and streamlined by jets, electric kitchens and appliances'.<sup>60</sup>

The notion of Hawai'i's culture as vehicle for personal transformation also suffused the literature of Hawai'i's fashion industry, which was closely linked to tourism. The garment industry described mainlanders' discovery of Hawai'i fashion as a revelation – a rejection of conformity and confinement that inaugurated 'a fashion shot heard round the world'. While men were attracted to the Aloha shirt's 'relaxed casualness, its gay, gaudy personality', women, after arriving in Hawai'i and realizing they could 'zip off their girdles', immediately 'leaped into' muumuus, 'giggled a bit when they made their first self-conscious appearance, and then relaxed as they saw how they melted into the Waikiki scene'. With statehood, the fashion industry began to produce a wider range of merchandise, and by 1966 apparel constituted the islands' third largest export – an expansion that was aided by support from the state for a Hawai'i fashion guild, as well as large-scale tie-in partnerships with magazines, department stores, and malls throughout the US.<sup>61</sup>

The success of Hawai'i fashion was attributed to its emphasis on colour and comfort, which in turn reflected the ethnic diversity and social laxity that were said to characterize Hawai'i's society – qualities that continental Americans were supposedly embracing themselves. 'Our colors, our styles are now emulated all over the world', a 1966 promotion claimed. 'The whole world is moving toward a more casual way of life, and since that is what Hawaii has always stood for, it is moving toward us.' The ethnic backgrounds of people in Hawai'i not only determined the quality of the garments, as most garment workers were of Asian descent and therefore came from 'a strong tradition for patient painstaking work'. Ethnicity also informed the look of Hawai'i's fashion, which was produced out of a 'cosmopolitan pot-pourri' that formed 'the strong, rich broth which nourishes Island styling'.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Toupin, *The Hawaii cookbook*, pp. 13–18.

<sup>61</sup> Advertising supplement sponsored by the State of Hawai'i, *New York Times*, 2 Oct. 1966.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

Hawai'i fashion boosters insisted that the garments of the post-statehood era went beyond the Aloha shirts and muumuus popularized in the 1950s. Island clothing was now the requisite attire for the modern, jet-setting woman: 'lifestyles have changed. Jets take us within hours, to the sun. Times are relaxed. Emily Post is simply a nice old lady, no longer the czarina of behavior.' The stodgy fashion houses of Paris, New York, and Rome asked women to 'be happy in basic black'. By contrast, Hawai'i's apparel appealed to 'youth, truth and the pursuit of happiness' through use of colour. 'With its multihued prints and relaxed styling', the Hawai'i look 'suits a new age. It is contemporary. It is now.'<sup>63</sup>

The Vogue tie-in that accompanied the Golden People campaign offered American women garments that drew on the themes of colour and comfort that Hawai'i's fashion industry claimed as its birthright. Ads appealed to consumers with 'unexpected color combinations. Unexpected color shapes. But with all the *comfort* and coolness you've come to expect from cotton.' They also invited white women to imagine themselves as racialized others. Vogue asserted that the Malia, an ankle-length pink, red, and white shift, 'sees you as a Polynesian princess', while the Baba Kea, an A-line green and blue mini dress, would help women go 'native' with 'an island print that remains true to its primitive originality'. With looks 'designed to assert [their] vivid beauty under the most glaring sun', these were clothes created and marketed with the travelling woman in mind. Or at least the woman who longed to travel. But even as it evoked the freedoms associated with the jet age, the rhetorical emphasis on casualness and comfort could also obscure the more restricting aspects of some modern Hawaiian garments. Whereas muumuus were notable for their lack of structure, Vogue's Kahala pant set was designed 'to emphasize a trim waist, to discipline a curved hip'.<sup>64</sup> Such language suggests that the self-liberation promised by Hawai'i fashion was both limited by long-standing gender norms and informed by market forces that were themselves both liberating and disciplining.

Perhaps the most significant market force shaping that discourse was jet travel. The introduction in the 1950s of commercial jet aircraft made aviation accessible to middle-class Americans. As a symbol of high modernism and American technological prowess, aviation took hold in American popular culture, elaborating and legitimizing American post-war expansionism. And just as aviation was 'a powerful conduit for ideas about the world', it was also a conduit for ideas about the self.<sup>65</sup> The speed and anonymity associated with flying to newly accessible destinations contributed to the creation of a belief in self-reinvention through travel. As Christine Yano demonstrates in her

<sup>63</sup> *Latitude* 20, 4, 5 (Sept./Oct. 1976), HPC.

<sup>64</sup> Advertisements from *Vogue*, 15 Jan. 1970.

<sup>65</sup> Jennifer Van Vleck, 'The "logic of the air": aviation and the globalism of the "American century"', *New Global Studies*, 1 (2007), p. 3.

study of Nisei Pan Am stewardesses who were based, not coincidentally, in Honolulu, flying generated a 'sense of pioneering previously uncharted waters of race, language, and culture'.<sup>66</sup>

But the mobilities associated with flying could also be disconcerting. The ease and passivity with which jet travellers careened through space recalled the hollowness felt by Jackson Lears's bourgeois anti-modernists in the early twentieth century, when it seemed 'a weightless culture of material comfort and spiritual blandness was breeding weightless persons who longed for intense experience'.<sup>67</sup> For Roland Barthes, flying represented the incoherence of modern life, in which freedom and confinement could emerge from the same source. 'The jet-man', he wrote, embodied a paradox in which 'an excess of speed turns into repose'.<sup>68</sup> Airlines sought to disguise the tedium of such an eerily motionless condition by plying their passengers with tropical drinks, carefully apportioned servings of 'Filet Mignon Teriyaki', and in-flight movies, all while suggesting to them the promise of 'intense experience' once the plane landed.

#### IV

But that intense experience – made up of intangibles such as personal encounters and emotions – was informed by the same political economy that gave rise to the tangible commodities of in-flight movies and Hawaiian print pant sets. In Hawai'i, the selling of intense experience was increasingly rationalized as the glow of statehood waned. While airlines became increasingly reliant on their Hawai'i routes – driving a seemingly unstoppable hotel boom – the tourism industry could no longer rely on the euphoria surrounding statehood to draw enough visitors to meet the exponential growth in visitor facilities.<sup>69</sup> But with the explosion in tourism came local resistance to it. To both facilitate and justify the pervasiveness of tourism, the state and the visitor industry worked to ease its integration into everyday life and to school Hawai'i's people on its benefits. According to the Visitors Bureau, one of its key jobs was to spread the 'gospel of aloha' not only among tourists, but, more importantly, among Hawai'i residents who had 'direct contact' with tourists.<sup>70</sup> As a result, activities and practices that had once resided in a cultural sphere mostly independent of tourism were brought under the umbrella of the promotional state.

<sup>66</sup> Christine Yano, *Airborne dreams: 'Nisei' stewardesses and Pan American World Airways* (Durham, NC, 2011), p. 8.

<sup>67</sup> Jackson Lears, *No place of grace: antimodernism and the transformation of American culture, 1880–1920* (New York, NY, 1981), p. 32.

<sup>68</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York, NY, [1957] 1972), p. 71.

<sup>69</sup> For a discussion of the economic logics behind tourism growth, see Noel Kent, *Hawaii: islands under the influence* (New York, NY, 1983).

<sup>70</sup> HVB, memo on internal audit report, 25 June 1962, records of the office of Governor William F. Quinn, HSA, box 6.

A state resolution in 1965 dramatized this cultural restructuring. In directing the Visitors Bureau to ‘to preserve and maintain the “Hawaiian Spirit of Aloha”’, the legislature sought to commodify Hawai‘i’s culture and streamline its production.<sup>71</sup> Increasingly, instead of the visitor industry tapping local culture to promote tourism, it took on the role of shaping local culture for touristic ends. For instance, whereas Hawai‘i’s ethnic festivals previously had been funded by local communities, by 1967 they were subsidized in whole or in part by the Visitors Bureau.<sup>72</sup> Likewise, the Visitors Bureau began working with the Department of Education to develop educational programmes whose goal was to inculcate the Aloha Spirit through the teaching of ‘customs, arts, crafts and cultures of our various ethnic groups which are an inseparable element of visitor satisfaction’. Indeed, by the 1970s, statewide curricula in Hawai‘i often echoed the themes of tourism marketing materials, with textbooks closely resembling guidebooks and lesson plans focused on preparing students to be tourism workers.<sup>73</sup>

These changes were accompanied by a new rhetoric of systematization. Drawing on Peter Drucker’s systems-based management theory, Visitors Bureau executive Mark Egan compared the state of Hawai‘i in 1966 to a corporation, with the visitor industry serving as its fulcrum. This meant that any effort to develop Hawai‘i tourism would necessarily summon the participation of ‘everybody and the total area of Hawaii and all of the other systems and sub-systems as they are inter-related’.<sup>74</sup>

Within a decade of statehood, cracks in the system had begun to emerge. Despite Visitors Bureau efforts to acclimate Hawai‘i residents to tourism’s hegemony, the Aloha Spirit was showing signs of wear. This was of great concern to a statewide committee appointed by the Visitors Bureau, which in a 1969 report worried that ‘an increasing population and number of visitors is eroding the spontaneous expressions of Aloha’. The solution proposed by the report was not to slow tourism growth, but rather to integrate tourism planning ‘in relation to the total environment – both human and physical’, while also fostering acquiescence to its inevitability. This could be achieved in part by making sure ‘our people [are] decently housed, properly educated, meaningfully employed, culturally enriched’ – which tourism growth would help ensure. The committee thus took an expansive view on the role of the tourism in Hawai‘i. The social programme outlined in the report was one for

<sup>71</sup> HVB, ‘An evaluation of Hawaii Visitors Bureau programs: a report to the Fourth State Legislature of the State of Hawaii’, 1967, HPC.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> HVB, ‘A report on House Concurrent Resolution No. 78 to the budget session of 1966 Third Legislature, State of Hawaii’, 1966, HPC. For the parallels between state curricula and tourism literature, see Julie Kaomea, ‘A curriculum of aloha? Colonialism and tourism in Hawai‘i’s elementary textbooks’, *Curriculum Inquiry*, 30 (2000), pp. 319–44.

<sup>74</sup> Mark Egan, ‘Pacific panoply: new dimensions for Hawaii’, remarks before the Rotary Club of Honolulu, 4 Jan. 1966, HPC.



which the visitor industry had 'a desirably selfish, as well as a selfless, stake' in achieving. Moreover, it had a particular responsibility in ensuring the Aloha Spirit's durability, the report continued, as it had helped construct it. 'The widespread use of the word, "Aloha"', it claimed, 'coincided with the building of Hawaii's first hotel.'<sup>75</sup>

For all its high-minded rhetoric about social progress, the report also had a cynical take of the origins of the Aloha Spirit. While it had 'evolved in part in our Island society as a way of getting along as painlessly as possible', it was also, the committee admitted, a contrivance – one "manufactured" to serve commercial ends'. Committee member Thomas Hamilton, former president of the University of Hawai'i, questioned whether expressions of the Aloha Spirit had any correlation to Hawai'i's society at all, suggesting that what was more important was 'the educational force of and the character change which is sometimes induced by role-playing'. According to Hamilton, the Aloha Spirit was, at best, a highly effective artificial social lubricant. 'The "Aloha Spirit" does make the gears of inter-action mesh more smoothly', Hamilton said. 'Thus even if the impetus is artificial, it is more than possible that the individual will become habituated to the Aloha way.'<sup>76</sup> This view was endorsed by the Hawaiian Travel Industry Congress the following year, when delegates agreed that, 'even where [the Aloha Spirit] might be ersatz it is still an important lubricant in a gritty society and one worth preserving.'<sup>77</sup>

Hawai'i's policy-makers thus self-consciously championed the tourism industry's practice of what Dean MacCannell calls 'staged authenticity'.<sup>78</sup> The people of Hawai'i were being asked to sell a market-tested imitation of Hawai'i society – and of themselves. No longer the signal of Hawai'i's exceptionalism that Reverend Akaka extolled, the Aloha Spirit was increasingly seen as a mechanical display of feigned emotion whose origins were less divine than commercial. For the tourism industry, which relied on Hawai'i's cosmopolitan and welcoming image to sell vacations, the task of 'habituating' Hawai'i's people to the Aloha Spirit was thus more necessary, and challenging, than ever. At the same time, however, the demands for a manufactured Aloha Spirit revealed the service relationship at the heart of the multi-cultural fantasy that the tourism industry was advertising.

Resistance to the ubiquity of tourism – and the continued efforts of the visitor industry to pursue its habituating project – were brought to the fore in the state's 1978 tourism development plan. Governor George Ariyoshi's foreword made clear that not everyone in Hawai'i was happy with the economic status quo. In an attempt to assuage opponents of tourism growth and address

<sup>75</sup> HVB, 'A report of the committee on statewide goals for the visitor industry of Hawaii', 1969, HPC.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> HVB, 'Recommended goals for Hawaii's visitor industry as developed by the Travel Industry Congress at Honolulu', 1970, HPC.

<sup>78</sup> Dean MacCannell, *The tourist* (New York, NY, 1976).

some of the problems tourism produced, such as competition for public facilities and environmental degradation, the plan recommended 'policy decisions which regard the interests of Hawaii's residents as the more important'. Again, however, the report did not recommend that the state seek to slow growth or diversify Hawaii's economy, but rather to rationalize tourism through more intensive planning. Pointing to the over-saturation of Waikiki, it advocated more resort development in Hawaii's outer islands. This was necessary 'to maintain Hawaii's competitive advantage over other resort destination areas' and 'provide employment opportunities over the coming decade'.<sup>79</sup> The tourism juggernaut could not be held back.

While claiming to address local concerns about the 'social costs' of tourism and state residents' desire for a better quality of life, the report framed tourism itself as the answer to the problems it had created. To reduce its negative impact, the report argued, tourism must become *more* entrenched, not less, in residents' everyday lives. They needed more specialized job training and education on tourism's benefits so that they would 'become aware of the effects and substantial economic contribution of the industry'. In addition, to maximize tourism's rewards, locals should worry less about themselves and more about the psychic troubles of vacationers. Hawaii's people should be urged 'to develop an understanding of the travel experience so they can have empathy with the strains and tensions of the visitor experiences'.<sup>80</sup>

## V

Critics of tourism argued that it was undermining any potential for true racial equality in Hawaii. 'Today, haves and have-nots are as clearly marked and separated in Hawaii as they ever were under the old plantation system', Gavan Daws, a prominent historian of Hawaii, said in 1977. Tourism was fuelling permanent migration to Hawaii from the continental US and, as a result, 'the new population will resemble to an uncanny but obvious degree the statistical profile as assembled by the Hawaii Visitors Bureau. He and she are white, middleaged, and affluent above the national average, and certainly above the Hawaiian average.' As Hawaii became more white, the workforce serving both tourists and the influx of new residents would remain non-white, 'part of it siphoned off from the labour severed from the declining sugar and pineapple business' and much of the rest made up of Asian immigrants.<sup>81</sup> The liberatory pretence of the globalizing economy, Daws suggested, masked its effectiveness in achieving oppressive ends.

<sup>79</sup> Office of Tourism, Department of Planning and Economic Development, State of Hawaii, 'State tourism study: proposal for a Hawaii tourism functional plan', 1978, HPC.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Gavan Daws, 'Hawaii: the experience of the jet age', talk given at the Townsville College of Advanced Education, 1977, HPC.

Others were similarly disenchanted with the utopian multi-culturalist rhetoric of the tourism industry and state officials. One of the first major challenges to the liberal vision of post-war Hawai'i came from students and faculty demanding the creation of an ethnic studies programme at the University of Hawai'i, which was established in 1970 under the banner of 'Our History, Our Way.' The radical multi-culturalism of ethnic studies offered a counterpoint to the tourism industry's anodyne vision of Hawai'i as racial paradise. It also provides insight into the discontent that lay behind resistance to state efforts to manufacture the Aloha Spirit in the service of capital. Advocates of ethnic studies, in Hawai'i and elsewhere in the US, called into question the self-proclaimed progressivism of many white-dominated institutions, and saw ethnic studies as an alternative to the curricula embedded in a racist system. In defiance of the tourism industry's self-image as a source of cultural pride in Hawai'i, the ethnic studies programme insisted that people in Hawai'i had in fact had been denied access to their cultural heritage, especially histories of struggle. Young people in Hawai'i had 'no sense of identity, of pride in being themselves', according to a programme report. Their 'lack of self-knowledge has bred shame [in some]; in others, a deep-seated sense of frustration and anger'.<sup>82</sup>

Often working in direct co-operation with ethnic studies advocates, Native Hawaiians in the 1970s also challenged the tourism industry's narrative of social harmony, particularly through demands for land rights and opposition to the encroachment of tourism developers. They increasingly tied their activism to a larger cause of Hawaiian sovereignty, which asserted the illegality of the US annexation of the islands in 1898, rendering statehood illegitimate as well. Many of these concerns came to a head at the state's constitutional convention in 1978, where Native Hawaiian activists succeeded in institutionalizing a handful of statewide cultural recognition measures, including a requirement for the study of Hawaiian history and language in public schools; protections for traditional fishing and religious sites; and the creation of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, a semi-autonomous state agency mandated to administer former crown lands held in trust for Native Hawaiians.<sup>83</sup>

Native Hawaiian activists and ethnic studies advocates turned the emerging discourse of multi-culturalism into a site for contestation. Whereas they shared with many liberals the belief that racial and ethnic difference should be celebrated, they parted ways when it came to why. Many Native Hawaiians came to see multi-culturalism itself as problematic – whether liberal or radical –

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Mirian Sharma, 'Ethnic studies and ethnic identity: challenges and issues', *Social Process in Hawai'i*, 39 special issue: *The ethnic studies story: politics and social movements in Hawai'i* (1999), p. 27.

<sup>83</sup> Tom Coffman, *The island edge of America: a political history of Hawai'i* (Honolulu, HI, 2003), pp. 311–12. For more on the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, see Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native daughter* (Honolulu, HI, [1993], 1999); and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian blood: colonialism and the politics of sovereignty and indigeneity* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2008).

because it elided their distinctive status as indigenous people by treating them as one ethnic group among many.<sup>84</sup> For radical ethnic activists, their emphasis on group identification was a means to galvanize people toward the goal of fundamentally altering the political and economic system in which they lived. Difference was at once the basic problem and the solution.

The tourism industry ignored these radical critiques in its efforts to position Hawai'i as a model for other economies embracing service sector labour. As it had done in Hawai'i, the Visitors Bureau, through its Pacific Tourism Marketing and Research Institute, formed in 1967, aimed to promote 'management concepts [and] technological advancement' in world tourism and encourage the 'conversion of attitudes towards employment in the "hospitality" careers' around the world.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, Hawai'i was representative of a changing global economy, one defined by flexible accumulation, interdependency, and a transition to service sector labour. While the continental US traded factories for finance, Hawai'i traded agriculture for tourism.<sup>86</sup> This transition to tourism was also taking place in former resource-based economies in Asia and the Pacific – with the Hawai'i visitor industry's encouragement and financing from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.<sup>87</sup> These shifts could be profoundly destabilizing, economically and culturally, as the case of Hawai'i makes clear. With globalization and flexible accumulation, David Harvey writes, 'the sense that "all that is solid melts into air" has never been more pervasive'. The postmodern market, in its reorientation toward the consumption of experience over goods, has meant that 'tradition is now often preserved by being commodified'.<sup>88</sup>

As the service sector became ever more dominant in Hawai'i and elsewhere, it failed to deliver on its pledge to create prosperity for all. Instead, the old categories of difference continued to shape conditions of inequality. Corporate multi-culturalism, in short, did not produce the egalitarianism it claimed to represent. Still, it is this version of multi-culturalism, in which the value of different ethnicities lies in their commercial appeal, that has arguably proven more powerful than its radical alternative. As in the rest of the US, ethnic studies and group rights movements in Hawai'i have encountered fierce resistance over the last four decades, blamed by their detractors for creating a divisive culture of 'identity politics'. In the fantasy vision sold to tourists, however, Hawai'i remains the 'Aloha State'.

<sup>84</sup> See the critiques collected in Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Okamura, eds., *Asian settler colonialism: from local governance to the habits of everyday life in Hawai'i* (Honolulu, HI, 2008).

<sup>85</sup> HVB, 'Recommended goals for Hawaii's visitor industry as developed by the Travel Industry Congress at Honolulu', 1970, HPC.

<sup>86</sup> Judith Stein, *Pivotal decade: how the United States traded factories for finance in the seventies* (New Haven, CT, 2010).

<sup>87</sup> For more on the transition to tourism-based economies in the decolonizing world, see Stephen Britton, 'The political economy of tourism in the Third World', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 9 (1982), pp. 331–58.

<sup>88</sup> David Harvey, *The condition of postmodernity* (New York, NY, 1992), pp. 285, 303.