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"'POP' GOES HAWAII: THE 20TH CENTURY  
ORIGINS OF TOURISM IN HAWAII & THE  
IMPACT OF U.S. POP CULTURE ON WOMEN  
IN THE ISLANDS OF ALOHA"



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**Title:**

**“Pop” Goes Hawaii: The 20th Century Origins of Tourism in Hawai’i & the Impact of U.S. Pop Culture on Women in the Islands of Aloha”**

**Synopsis:**

Far off the western coast of the U.S. lie the breath-taking, mythical, magical islands of Hawaii—the country’s premier paradise playground and the ultimate alluring island fantasy for tourists worldwide, like a tropical Disneyland. In this idyllic tropical paradise, Native Hawaiian women serve as cultural hostesses, whose bodies, dress, ‘suggestive’ dances, smiles and costumes are commoditized embodiments of an allegedly primitive, pre-commercial society. In short, Hawaiian women’s femininity has been exploited by the equally powerful forces of colonialism, imperialism and tourism.

Despite its centuries-long status as an independent nation of islands in the South Pacific, Hawaii became the fiftieth U.S. state in 1959—after its 1898 annexation in the country’s turn-of-the-century imperialistic drive. During the twentieth century, tourism became the main, driving economic force in Hawaii; in tourism brochures, even pineapples were a promotional ‘agent’ of tourism. Once World War II exposed the beauty and magic of the islands to the U.S., American pop culture co-opted this fantastical image for its own use in movies and television shows. World War II, then, was an important historical turning point, transforming the public representation of Hawaii in the American imagination. Specifically, my research in the Hawaiian/Pacific Collections at the Univ. of Hawaii at Manoa found depictions of “exotic” Native Hawaiian hula dancers, in leis and hula skirts, touring nightclubs in the U.S. to promote tourism to Hawaii before and after World War II. These hula shows, sketched by American artist John Melville Kelly, created an “imagined intimacy” between Hawaii and the U.S., allowing Americans to possess their island colony physically and figuratively. As Hawaiian women danced the hula, they feminized and eroticized Hawai’i, implying that like a woman, the islands willingly submitted to American tourist and military ambitions.

However, Native Hawaiians and later the U.S. government—upon Hawaii forcibly becoming a U.S. territory—co-constructed this tourist culture that they (Native Hawaiians) grew to resent. Since this paper explores the origins of Hawaii's tourist culture in the first half of the twentieth century, namely from 1890 to 1950, Hawaiians' persistent agency in that culture—whether via resistance, collusion or accommodation to Americanization—surfaced repeatedly over time. Thus, a decades-long conflict developed between cultural imperialism and Hawaiian agency in the tourist culture. This paper's sweeping, half-century long chronological time span, then, explores the evolution of Hawaii from a distant, foreign, independent nation to a feminized, mythological American state that also “happened” to be a tropical paradise; this significant shift dramatically changed the gender, economic and environmental dynamics of Hawaii, creating new tensions between Hawaiian women and men, as well as between mainland Americans and Native Hawaiians about the impact of tourism on their way of life.

## **“Pop” Goes Hawaii: The 20th Century Origins of Tourism in Hawai’i & the Impact of U.S. Pop Culture on Women in the Islands of Aloha”**

Far off the western coast of the United States lie the breath-taking, mythical, magical islands of Hawaii—the country’s premier paradise playground and the ultimate alluring island fantasy for tourists worldwide.<sup>1</sup> Despite its centuries-long status as a sovereign nation of islands in the South Pacific, Hawaii soon became the fiftieth U.S. state in 1959—following its 1898 annexation during the country’s turn-of-the-century imperialistic drive.<sup>2</sup> Over the course of the twentieth century, then, tourism became the main, driving economic force in Hawaii; in tourism brochures, even pineapples became a promotional ‘agent’ of the tourist economy. Yet, it is essential to realize that Native Hawaiians and later the United States government—upon Hawaii forcibly becoming a

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<sup>1</sup> “Tourism may be conceived as a theoretical practice, an attempt to understand the world which begins with the imaginary construction of reality through the organization and interpretation of texts, both organic, non-promotional sources such as movies, books and friends’ accounts, and induced texts, such as promotional imagery as well as cultural performance, and proceeds with the testing of this image construct by empirical observation through travel,” C. Gunn, *Vacationscape* (Univ. of Texas Press: Austin, TX, 1972), as cited in J.D. Goss, “Placing the Market & Marketing the Place.” *Environment & Planning D, Society & Space*. 11:6 (1993). 663-688; For more information on the Hawaii Promotion Committee, later known as the Hawaii Tourist Bureau, and now known as the Hawaii Vacation Bureau, see J.D. Goss, “Placing the Market & Marketing the Place.” *Environment & Planning D, Society & Space*. 11: 6, (1993). 663-688.

<sup>2</sup> In the tradition of Jackson Turner’s Frontier Thesis and Manifest Destiny, Walter LaFeber explains the new nature of United States’ 1890s expansion as a culmination of earlier patterns; the nation’s expansionist goals shifted from gaining colonial territories for settlement, such as the American West, to gaining points around the globe that could serve as trading or military outposts, such as Hawaii or the Philippines. Although the United States government would later apologize in 1993 to Hawaiians for the decision to annex the islands, the national obsession with imperialism predominated in the late nineteenth century. For more information on American colonialism and imperialism, see Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire, An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*. (Cornell Univ. Press, 1998).

U.S. territory—co-constructed this tourist culture that they (native Hawaiians) would later grow to resent.<sup>3</sup> Since this paper will explore the evolution of Hawaii’s tourist culture over thirty years of the twentieth century, namely from the 1940s to the 1970s, Hawaiians’ persistent agency in that culture—whether assuming the guise of resistance, collusion or accommodation to Americanization—surfaced repeatedly over time. Thus, a century-long tension between cultural imperialism and Hawaiian agency in their tourist culture became evident in this study. Furthermore, this paper’s sweeping, thirty-year chronological time span illuminated the transformation of Hawaii’s image as a distant, foreign independent nation to a feminized, mythological American paradise.

In fact, Native Hawaiians played an active role in inscribing their islands as inherently “unique and magical” in the American tourist imagination.<sup>4</sup> Founded in 1903 by the Honolulu Chamber of Commerce, The Hawaiian Promotion Committee, later

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<sup>3</sup> “Culture generally refers to patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that give such activities significance and importance. It can be understood as systems of symbols and meanings that even their creators contest, that lack fixed boundaries, that are constantly in flux, and that interact and compete with one another,” Raymond Williams. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture & Society*. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983). 87-93; Cultural tourism, also referred to as cultural objectification, refers to a process whereby a person sees culture as a “thing” outside of himself or herself, seeing culture as an object to be used and displayed, even preserved. Hawaii’s tourist industry objectified Hawaiian culture by removing cultural practices from their community context and creating a market value for them through performance for tourists. Tourism, then, becomes a type of special performance. Adria Imada, “Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits Through the American Empire.” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (March 2004). 117-149; Yet, even as early as 1934, native Hawaiians saw tourism as having a dual meaning, of both making money and preserving their culture: “It is through these tourist activities (luaus and dancing) that the village is financed, and...has become best known to the public, but its main purpose...is not merely to be an entertainment and performing center, but to preserve the Hawaiian lore that is fast vanishing,” “Hula of Old Hawaii Being Revived Here.” *Honolulu Advertiser*, Feb. 23, 1934; “The term “Hawaiian” means any descendant of the aboriginal peoples inhabiting the Hawaiian islands which exercised sovereignty and subsisted in the Hawaiian islands in 1778, and which people thereafter have continued to reside in Hawaii. The term “Native Hawaiian” means any descendant of not less than one half part of the races inhabiting the Hawaiian islands previous to 1778,” “The Lum Court & Native Hawaiian Rights.” *Univ. of Hawaii Law Journal*, Vol. 377.

<sup>4</sup> Soile Veijola & Eeva Jokinen. “The Body in Tourism.” *Theory, Culture & Society*. (Sage: London, Thousand Oaks and New Dehli, 1999). 125-151.

known as the Hawaii Tourist Bureau, long pre-dated the “close contact” and “direct involvement” of mainland Americans in promoting tourism to Hawaii that would later follow in the 1930s and 1940s; however, a newly minted business-government “alliance,” pursued by Hawaii’s business elite, promoted travel to the islands, and was partially funded by the new U.S. territorial government.<sup>5</sup> Late nineteenth and early twentieth century tourist literature in Hawaii emphasized the island’s image as one of “natural beauty and magic.”<sup>6</sup>

Prior to World War II, it is evident from airline posters, travel advertisements and tourist guidebooks that this picturesque paradise had been the haven of the well-to-do and elite of American society who could afford to charter private flights or cruises to the islands; this was pleasing to many Hawaiians, as it garnered tourist dollars without overexposing the islands or its native Hawaiian culture and traditions to throngs of

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<sup>5</sup> In the early 1900s, Hawaiian elite and businessmen helped build and fund the tourist infrastructure in Hawaii, such as The Royal Hawaiian Hotel in Waikiki, which cost \$4 million, as well as the establishment of the Matson Navigation Company’s steamship line, which initiated the first tourist cruises to Hawaii. These Hawaiian business leaders also aggressively pursued affluent travelers, who frequented the Mediterranean and Europe. It is important to note that American businessman had encouraged the annexation in 1898 and designating Hawaii a territory in 1900. For more information on the creation of tourist infrastructure, hotels and steamships in Hawaii, see David Farber & Beth Bailey. “The Fighting Man as Tourist: The Politics of Tourist Culture in Hawaii During World War II.” *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 56. No. 4, Nov. 1996. 641-660.

<sup>6</sup> John LaFarge. *Reminiscences of the South Seas* (Garden City: Doubleday: Page & Company, 1916) 69, as cited in Diana L. Ahmad, “Different Islands, Different Experiences: American Travel Accounts of Samoa & Hawaii, 1890-1910.” *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, Vol. 41, 2007, 97-118. For more information on Hawaiian tourist literature and promotional advertising, see J.D. Goss, “Placing the Market & Marketing the Place.” *Environment & Planning D, Society & Space*. Vol. 11, No. 6, 1993. 663-688.

tourists.<sup>7</sup> However, following World War II's exposure of the beauty and magic of the islands to American GI's as well as to a large-scale, world-wide tourist market, Native Hawaiians began to lose control of the very tourist image of Hawaii as the "magical island fantasy" they themselves created; they would not fully reclaim their Hawaiian identity and culture until the Hawaiian Renaissance in the 1970s.<sup>8</sup>

After World War II, then, U.S. popular culture soon widely co-opted and commodified this image for its own use in movies, novels, television, travel guidebooks, and the hospitality industry; "acting" or "dressing" "authentically" Hawaiian, doing the hula or wearing a grass skirt, soon became "hip" and "trendy" in American culture, embodying the ultimate island fantasy on the mainland United States.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, World War II became the first in a series of important historical turning points, from the 1940s to the 1970s. Between the 1940s and the 1970s, the process of statehood, Cold War Orientalism, the Cuban Revolution, movies and television shows such as *Blue Hawaii* and *Hawaii 5-0*, the opening of Hawaiian rooms at hotels nationwide (namely the Hotel Lexington in New York City), the appearance of Hawaiian 'tents' at the nation's world

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<sup>7</sup> "The tourist Hawaii of the 1920s and 1930s was a world of luxury; the tourists almost without exception were people with wealth and time, celebrities such as Shirley Temple, George Burns, Spencer Tracy and Clark Gable. It took five days to reach Hawaii from the West Coast by ocean liner. In 1936, Pan Am began offering commercial flights (though they weren't jet flights, so they were very long and very expensive) from San Francisco to Honolulu. These flights last between eight and twenty hours and cost \$278 one way, a figure roughly equivalent to one-way passage on a ship..." Beth Bailey & David Farber, "The Fighting Man as Tourist: The Politics of Tourist Culture in Hawaii During World War II." *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 56. No. 4, Nov. 1996. 641-660.

<sup>8</sup> John Dominis Holt. *On Being Hawaiian*. (Honolulu: Booklines Hawaii Ltd., Feb. 1995); Elinor Langer. "Famous Are The Flowers: Hawaiian Resistance Then & Now." *Special Issue, The Nation*. April, 28, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> "Placing the Market & Marketing the Place." *Environment & Planning D, Society & Space*. Vol. 11, No. 6, 1993. 663-688; Jane Desmond. *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World*. (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2001).

fairs and the advent of 1960s mainstream commercial jet flights to the islands all contributed to making Hawaii ‘the’ premier paradise for U.S. tourists, as well as tourists worldwide.

This phenomenon of Hawaii as the ultimate “magical, mystical, fantastical” island paradise would symbiotically change the public representation of Hawaii in American culture; this established a dichotomy between the popular, romantic representation of Hawaii versus the reality of how Hawaiians perceived themselves, lived their daily lives and reacted to the harsh economic realities of their (tourist) economy. For instance, every Hawaiian woman does not sport a grass skirt and perform the hula.<sup>10</sup> Yet, as illustrated by the following description of the hula tours of the 1930s and 1940s, which will be discussed later in this paper, many Americans came to believe that the Hawaiian women on the tour “stood in” for and represented all of Hawaii and Hawaiian culture: “Hawaiian girls are famous for their clear, brown skins, their flashing smiles, their beautiful, dark

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<sup>10</sup> Over the twentieth century, the cost of living for Native Hawaiians has consistently increased proportionate to the increase in tourism, the top industry in Hawaii, especially as frequent tourists have recently come to make their home in Hawaii. The cost of living in Hawaii, already expensive due to the need for food, clothing, gas and other supplies to be flown or shipped there on a daily basis, has more than tripled in the last thirty years, not including inflation. This has forced many native Hawaiians to take multiple jobs to survive, and has forced many others into homelessness. “Tourism Slowdown Felt Across Hawaii.” *Honolulu Advertiser*. January 27, 2008; The Native Hawaiian population was decimated by Western-induced syphilis, smallpox, cholera and measles. While figures vary, the Hawaiian population is estimated to have fallen from as much as 800,000 to 40,000, after a century of European encounters, which began in 1778. See David Stannard, *Before the Horror, The Population of Hawaii on the Eve of Western Contact*. (Honolulu: Social Science Research Institute, Univ. of Hawaii, 1989), as cited in Adria Imada, “Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits Through the American Empire.” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (March 2004).

hair and their full, yet graceful figures.”<sup>11</sup> As such, the United States, and to some extent, through the process of cultural objectification, the Hawaiians themselves, romanticized and commodified the Hawaiian people and their islands as a product to be consumed, rather than as a people with a specific history of imperial dominance and controlled incorporation into the United States.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the subsequent increase in tourism and tourist revenue for the Hawaiian islands, then, I will argue that the tourist culture—which the native Hawaiians were at least partly responsible for creating and reinforcing—damaged Hawaiian culture in real, and mostly negative ways. Tourism in Hawaii has resulted in a higher cost of living, as transplanted tourists have slowly, but steadily, permanently moved to the islands, forcing Hawaiians to hold down several jobs to meet these costs, as well as to fight off alarmingly high rates of homelessness per capita, considering the relatively small size of

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<sup>11</sup> “Island Girls Win Chance for Fame in New York,” *Honolulu Advertiser*, Mar. 21, 1940, as cited in Adria Imada, “Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits Through the American Empire.” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (March 2004). 111-149; “Hula in pre-contact Hawaii was a religious practice performed at temples, and specialized troupes of dancers also provided entertainment for chiefs and important visitors. Through chanted poetry and bodily movements, hula performers celebrated the births and achievements of chiefs, recorded the genealogies of high chiefs and relayed Hawaiian epics. Hula was also embedded in a culture of sexual arousal; some songs specifically honored chiefly genitalia, encouraging procreation and the continuation of a chiefly line. Even while entertaining people, hula practice was part of a sacred realm and governed by strict rules, because hula performances manifested the chiefs’ *mana* (sacred power) and rank. Dancers trained under strict rules and the protection of the goddess Laka.” Amy Ku’uleialoha Stillman. *Sacred Hula: The Historical Hula, ‘Ala’apapa*. (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1998). 23, as cited in “Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits Through the American Empire.” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (March 2004). 111-149.

<sup>12</sup> For more on the Hawaii Tourist Bureau, see J.D. Goss, “Placing the Market & Marketing the Place.” *Environment & Planning D, Society & Space*. Vol. 11, No. 6, 1993; For more information on American imperialism and colonialism, see Walter Lafeber, *The New Empire, An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*. (Cornell Univ. Press, 1998).

the islands<sup>13</sup> Thus, tourism has become a bitter, double-edged pill, somewhat of their own creation, which Native Hawaiians had to swallow to make a living. Ironically, native Hawaiians, who nowadays sport “We Don’t Care How You Do It On The Mainland” bumper stickers, must ‘sell’ their beloved culture and spirit of “Aloha” in order to remain on the islands.<sup>14</sup> While Native Hawaiians grew to resent the commodified tourist culture—which has pumped millions into its economy but has hurt the quality of life for individual Hawaiians—it indelibly shifted labor patterns toward the tourist and services industries, and transformed cultural traditions, social, class and gender relations on the islands.<sup>15</sup>

Specifically, tourism greatly impacted images and roles of native Hawaiian men and women. Initially, Hawaiians largely attracted tourists to the islands with images of surfboarders and pineapples. However, as the islands became more Americanized after World War II—ultimately more “conquered” by the imperialist United States—Native Hawaiian women soon dominated the tourist and travel literature, as well as the tourist industry itself; the image of Hawaii became more feminine, sensuous, and supposedly

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<sup>13</sup> Pat Bigold. “Hawaii’s Homeless Law Fuels Tension: State to Debut at Third Meanest” in *The Boston Globe*, Aug. 30, 2004. A 2003 state survey indicated that there are more than 6,000 homeless people on any given day in Hawaii, but as many as 14,595 experience homelessness during the course of a year. Darlene Hein, a homeless advocate who works at Waikiki Health Center, said there’s an inevitable tension between homelessness and tourism. “Obviously, if visitors go to the beach and see homeless people, it just doesn’t suggest the image of Hawaii and aloha,” Hein said. With the population of Hawaii at 1.3 million, according to the 2006 U.S. census, this number per capita is very high relative to the small size of the islands.

<sup>14</sup> J.D. Goss, “Placing the Market & Marketing the Place.” *Environment & Planning D, Society & Space*. Vol. 11, No. 6, 1993. 663-688; Noenoe K. Silva. *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*. (Duke Univ. Press, Aug. 2004). 25-27.

<sup>15</sup> Soile Veijola & Eeva Jokinen. “The Body in Tourism.” *Theory, Culture & Society*. (Sage: London, Thousand Oaks and New Dehli, 1999). 125-151; J.D. Goss, “Placing the Market & Marketing the Place.” *Environment & Planning D, Society & Space*. Vol. 11, No. 6, 1993. 663-688.

more uncomplicated. Therefore, many Hawaiian women perceived working in tourism as a means of empowerment and toward an independent income, thereby “emasculating” Hawaiian men and weakening their economic status in the eyes of Hawaiian women; gender relations gradually eroded as the image of Hawaii becomes more feminized during the twentieth century.<sup>16</sup> Due to the economic impact on Hawaiian women and the respective cultural portrait of these women as authentically “native,” then, their work in the tourism must be viewed through the multiple lenses of class, gender and race.<sup>17</sup>

As “beautiful hostesses” then, many of whom participated in the famous U.S. Hula tours which will be detailed later in this paper, Native Hawaiian women were hired to embody cultural meanings of their allegedly “primitive, pre-commercial” society, meant to be consumed as part and parcel of the tourist experience.<sup>18</sup> In fact, to some tourists, Native Hawaiian women’s bodies themselves become the tourist attraction, commodified symbols of a culture that is lost to them amidst the “glitzy, seductive” lure of Hawaii to residents of the mainland United States. Although World War II and native Hawaiian women figure centrally as both willing and passive actors in this negative cultural transformation, they worked in tandem with the American pop culture objects,

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<sup>16</sup> Specifically, the women on the hula tour in the mainland United States saw the tour as an opportunity to access the education and job opportunities not available in Hawaii. While they not only performed in Hawaiian Rooms in hotels across the country, they also performed on Broadway as well and enjoyed sightseeing in New York and other cities. Yet, they faced and encountered the “lived racial realities” of being a minority in the United States, such as poverty, discrimination and Americans’ inherent distrust of all races who resembled or were part Asian during World War II, due to the conflict with Japan after Pearl Harbor. For more information on the Native Hawaiian women’s experiences in America on the hula tour, see Adria Imada, “Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits Through the American Empire.” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (March 2004). 111-149.

<sup>17</sup> Jane Desmond. *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World*. (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2001). 1-10.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

such as movies, novels, travel books and posters, that depicted Hawaii as a seductive, pleasurable, safe, island paradise in the American imagination.<sup>19</sup>

By the 1970s, then, due to what some Americans referred to as “benign” cultural imperialism, Hawaii evolved into an ideal “paradise playground,” in the “backyard” of the mainland United States—not unlike Disneyworld.<sup>20</sup> Yet, it was at this exact historical moment that Hawaiian culture experienced a renaissance among native Hawaiians, who began performing the hula and conducting luaus for their own enjoyment—away from the gawking eyes of tourists; a possible causal relationship between the 1970s tourist boom and this cultural rebirth in Hawaii will also be examined. Again, a stark contrast emerged between the popularized image of Hawaii in American culture and efforts by island residents to reclaim their culture on their own terms; perception versus reality of life in the Hawaiian islands proved quite different from one another. Furthermore, the relationship between this renaissance in Hawaii and the respective ethnic pride movement on the mainland United States is also a crucial subject for analysis.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, the above-detailed research deviates from past scholarship that focuses on the political impact of U.S. imperialism on Hawaii, such as that of Walter LeFeber and Tom Coffman, in that it seeks to define the history of U.S. tourism and imperialism in Hawaii as highly gendered and flawed—complete with all of its advantages and

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 7; Adria Imada, “Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits Through the American Empire.” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (March 2004). 111-149.

<sup>20</sup> Jane Desmond. *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World*. (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2001). 1-10; For more on American imperialism, see Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire, An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*. (Cornell Univ. Press, 1998).

<sup>21</sup> For more information on the 1970s ethnicity movement in the United States and its relationship to the 1970s Hawaiian Renaissance, see Jonathan Hill, *History, Power & Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992*. (Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 1996).

disadvantages. Furthermore, this paper will not depict Hawaiians as hapless victims of imperialism. Rather, it will explore the agency of Hawaiians in creating this tourist culture, as well as its subsequent, though unintended, cultural impact on native Hawaiians (specifically native Hawaiian women). Additionally, conceptualizing native Hawaiian women as laborers in the tourist industry will further enhance and expand the respective fields of gender and labor history. Similar to the revisionist histories of persecuted African slaves and Native Americans, then, this work will inject more native Hawaiian voices and agency into the historical narrative of tourism's cultural impact. In addition, this paper will also explore the unique dynamic of tourism in Hawaii, as both a culture and a phenomenon that insinuates itself into every aspect of daily life in Hawaii—for better or for worse.<sup>22</sup>

***1890-1940: Hawaiians Work Their Magic & Flex Their Muscles***

Hawaii is that far-off home of profound repose, and soft indolence, and dreamy Solitude, where life is one long, slumberous Sabbath, the climate one long delicious summer day, and the good that die experience no change, for they fall asleep in one heaven and wake up in another.<sup>23</sup>

Even before the Hawaii Promotion Committee, now known as the Hawaii Tourist Bureau, was founded in 1903, famed novelist and travel writer Mark Twain imagined

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<sup>22</sup> For more information on American imperialism in Hawaii and Hawaii's political history, see Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire, An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*. (Cornell Univ. Press, 1998) & Tom Coffman, *The Island Edge of America: A Political History of Hawaii*. (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1993).

<sup>23</sup> Mark Twain. *Roughing It*. (New York: Harper Brothers, 1899), as cited in J.D. Goss, "Placing the Market & Marketing the Place." *Environment & Planning D, Society & Space*. Vol. 11, No. 6, 1993. 663-688.

Hawaii as if it were an “earthly tropical paradise, literally a Garden of Eden.”<sup>24</sup> According to John D. Spreckels, owner of the Oceanic Steamship Company in 1895, which sailed between California and Hawaii, once Twain wrote about Hawaii, tourism to the islands increased.<sup>25</sup> When the Hawaii Chamber of Commerce and Merchants Association established the tourist bureau, this marked the beginning of a systematic promotion of Hawaii as a tourist destination. Thus, it is important to note the native Hawaiians’ agency in initiating the creation of a tourist culture in Hawaii; however, this widespread promotion of Hawaii as a tourist destination coincided chronologically with the islands becoming U.S. territory.<sup>26</sup>

Similar to Mark Twain’s writings, one-third of the bureau’s tourist texts, as well as its visuals and illustrations, celebrated the “extraordinary bounty” of the islands; green, verdant, lush, rich and fertile are frequently used adjectives, as are the visually pleasing nouns, “beaches, palms, waterfalls, tropical gardens and exotic flowers.”<sup>27</sup> So “lush and bountiful” was the island of Kau’ai that a tourist could “plant a broomstick here and

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<sup>24</sup> J.D. Goss, “Placing the Market & Marketing the Place.” *Environment & Planning D, Society & Space*. Vol. 11, No. 6, 1993. 663-688; For more information on Hawaii becoming a U.S. territory, see Walter LeFeber *The New Empire, An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*. (Cornell Univ. Press, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> John D. Spreckels. “Hawaii for Tourists.” *Overland Monthly*, 25 (1895): 660-662; In fact, steamship travel remained the primary mode of travel to Hawaii until the 1960s, when jet travel opened up travel to Hawaii worldwide. For more information on the first jet flights to Hawaii in the late 1960s and early 1970s, see Mansel G. Blackford. *Fragile Paradise: The Impact of Tourism on Hawaii*. (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2001). However, steamship travel remained the primary mode of travel to Hawaii until the 1960s, when jet travel opened up travel to Hawaii worldwide.

<sup>26</sup> J.D. Goss, “Placing the Market & Marketing the Place.” *Environment & Planning D, Society & Space*. Vol. 11, No. 6, 1993. 663; Jane Desmond. “Picturing Hawaii: The “Ideal” Native & The Origins of Tourism, 1880-1915. *Positions*. Vol. 7, No. 2, Fall 1999. 459-501.

<sup>27</sup> Lynn Ann Davis. “1900 Hawaii Tourist Brochure.” “Photographically Illustrated Books About Hawaii, 1854-1945.” *The Hawaiian Journal of History*. Vol. 35, 2001. 101-140.

make it blossom.”<sup>28</sup> Not only did the early tourist literature describe the natural beauty and lushness of the islands in great detail, but it also touts the “strange contagious feeling” that “springs from the beauty around us” and “just comes naturally, even to a tourist visiting for the first time;” Native Hawaiians later coined this “magical feeling” as the “spirit of Aloha.”<sup>29</sup> In keeping with this marketed image of Hawaii as a tourist destination brimming with beauty, early travelers’ diaries from the 1890s described the Hawaiian landscape as “very picturesque” and as a “glimpse into fairyland.”<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, in promoting their beautiful islands as a “unique, mystical” place, native Hawaiians hoped to engender a culture of exclusivity about their island paradise, which persisted until World War II exposed Hawaii to a mass, worldwide tourist audience; native Hawaiians much preferred profiting from a smaller, wealthier tourist than from the “Disney-like” mass-marketed image of paradise that emerged in the decades following World War II.<sup>31</sup> Despite the widespread promotion of Hawaii as a tourist destination by native Hawaiians themselves, some ambivalence about “selling Hawaii” through performance of the hula and the spirit of aloha was evident, even in the

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 101-140.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 101-140; “Aloha is a term used throughout the Hawaiian islands with a number of meanings—from hello and goodbye to I love you and welcome. According to ancient traditions, its many meanings and traditions run deeper within Hawaiian spiritual beliefs and attitudes toward life, and can also be interpreted as an expression of welcoming, warmth, love and about the common bonds between all people, Native Hawaiian and otherwise.” Renata Provenzano. *A Little Book of Aloha: Hawaiian Proverbs & Inspirational Wisdom*. (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 2001).

<sup>30</sup> John LaFarge. *Reminiscences of the South Seas* (Garden City: Doubleday: Page & Company, 1916) 69, as cited in Diana L. Ahmad, “Different Islands, Different Experiences: American Travel Accounts of Samoa & Hawaii, 1890-1910.” *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, Vol. 41, 2007, 97-118.

<sup>31</sup> Beth Bailey & David Farber, “The Fighting Man as Tourist: The Politics of Tourist Culture in Hawaii During World War II.” *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 56. No. 4, Nov. 1996. 641-660.

early 1900s. In 1913, Bernice Pillani Irwin, a Native Hawaiian woman, wrote a newspaper column in pidgin English, about what she saw as the hypocrisy of performing the Hula for the first time in public for tourists—especially since 1860s Hawaiian penal codes once banned distributing photos of the “scantily dressed hula girl,” let alone the performance of the Hula itself:

I don't understand these things. Before we dancing the hula becos we liking to do that things and they tell us the devil catch us. Now they telling us to dance the Hula for the malihini (newcomers) who pay money to looking, and its all rite, and the devil wont catching us.<sup>32</sup>

Interestingly enough, some early tourists to the island actually described two Hawaii's. In her 1913 memoir *Seven Weeks in Hawaii*, Minnie Leola Crawford described the “old Hawaii” of the “native islanders” and the “new Hawaii,” which belonged to the tourists, “catering to their every need and preconception.”<sup>33</sup>

Throughout the twentieth century, this dichotomy—between the public representation of Hawaii in American pop culture as an idyllic paradise for tourists and the real, everyday lives of native Hawaiians as transformed by tourism—surfaced again and again. For instance, the early prevalence of idealistic, romantic representations of Hawaii in U.S. pop culture is evident in such phenomenon as the 1938 Hawaiian Room in New York City's Hotel Lexington. As the first, most renowned major showroom for live

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<sup>32</sup> Lynn Ann Davis. “1900 Hawaii Tourist Brochure.” “Photographically Illustrated Books About Hawaii, 1854-1945.” *The Hawaiian Journal of History*. Vol. 35, 2001. 101-140.

<sup>33</sup> Minnie Leola Crawford. *Seven Weeks in Hawaii*. (Chicago, 1913). 25, 36-40, as cited in Diana L. Ahmad, “Different Islands, Different Experiences: American Travel Accounts of Samoa & Hawaii, 1890-1910.” *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, Vol. 41, 2007, 97-118. For more information and a list of early Hawaii travel books, see Lynn Ann Davis. “1900 Hawaii Tourist Brochure.” “Photographically Illustrated Books About Hawaii, 1854-1945.” *The Hawaiian Journal of History*. Vol. 35, 2001. 101-140.

Hawaiian entertainment in the United States, the successful Hawaiian Room at the Hotel Lexington operated until 1966, and was the longest-lasting U.S. commercial venture for Hawaiian entertainment.<sup>34</sup> The hotel promised to “transport” patrons to the “dreamy romantic beaches” of Waikiki, and the menu includes such “sweet treats” as Okolehau Punch, Honolulu Collins, poi and coconut milk:

The Hawaiian Room in the Lexington (Lexington at 48<sup>th</sup> St.) has all the tricks even down to swinging the Island’s music for dancing. They have native dancers doing the hula as part of the show and native dishes are on the menu.<sup>35</sup>

Though not as pleasurable as going to Hawaii itself, a trip to the Hawaiian Room, located in the basement of the Hotel Lexington, featured tropical palms and a colorful mural of Diamond Head and Waikiki; as in Hawaii, hostesses welcomed patrons with a lei upon entering. Similar to many pop culture trends in the U.S., the Hawaiian Room “craze” began in New York and spread to the rest of the country, with other cities such as Chicago, Denver, Cleveland, Buffalo, New Orleans, Minneapolis, Fort Lauderdale, San Francisco and Hollywood, California, quickly following suit—opening Hawaiian Rooms in their luxury hotels.<sup>36</sup> From the 1910s to the 1930s, the hula symbolized “exotic sensuality,” and Hawaii itself came to embody romance in the American imagination; such late 1930s movies as *Honolulu* and Bing Crosby’s *Waikiki Wedding* captured the so-called “idealized romantic spirit” of the islands. Likewise, Al Jolson’s “Along the Way to Waikiki” (1917) and Harry Owens’s “Sweet Leilani” (1930s) evoked vivid imagery of

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<sup>34</sup> Imada, 127.

<sup>35</sup> Scudder Middleton. *Dining, Wining & Dancing in New York*. (Dodge Publishing Company: New York, 1938). 117-120

<sup>36</sup> According to the *New York Herald Tribune*, “There have been many imitators (of the Lexington), but none have lasted.” “Name Bands Play in Hotels in Competition with Night Clubs.” July 11, 1943; Imada, 133.

Hawaii as a tranquil island paradise.<sup>37</sup> Again, though, due to a negative American perception of the high Asian population in Hawaii, a dichotomy soon played out between how American positively perceived Hawaii and the reality of how Americans negatively treated Hawaiians, many of whom were of Asian descent, as well as other minorities.

According to *Paradise of the Pacific* editor Edward Irwin in 1924:

The Oriental races are practically all of small stature, slight physique, yellow or brown color, and in the case of the Japanese...flat features, protruding teeth and small legs. We have a right to ask ourselves whether we want to incorporate such characteristics into the American body.<sup>38</sup>

Due to the Hawaiian islands' close proximity to Asia, such language affected Hawaiians on the mainland United States because many Hawaiians possessed some Asian ancestry and physical features.<sup>39</sup>

While early twentieth century native Hawaiian-created tourist literature evoked the natural beauty, magic and romance of the islands, these brochures and tour books also used mostly masculine, adventuresome imagery, both Native Hawaiian and Caucasian. For instance, a series of postcards and travel posters, ranging from the 1890s to the 1930s, pictured male surfers and canoers riding tall waves, beckoning travelers with the

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<sup>37</sup> Beth Bailey & David Farber, "The Fighting Man as Tourist: The Politics of Tourist Culture in Hawaii During World War II." *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 56. No. 4, Nov. 1996. 641-660.

<sup>38</sup> Edward P. Irwin, *Paradise of the Pacific*, 1924, 54-56, as cited in Adria Imada, "Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits Through the American Empire." *American Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (March 2004). 137-138; Anti-Asian immigration laws in 1882, 1917, 1924 and 1934 bespoke the nation's underlying prejudice against Asians, especially in light of the war with Japan and the attack on Pearl Harbor. Asians were treated as alien and unassimilable to the U.S. national body; many of the Native Hawaiian women on the hula tour experienced such discrimination firsthand. Similarly, as with many other public spaces in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s, Jim Crow laws kept African-Americans out of the Hawaiian Room in the country's hotels, thereby denying them access to a new culture, a new form of entertainment and a fellow minority. Adria Imada, "Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits Through the American Empire." *American Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (March 2004). 137-138.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 137-138.

slogans: “A Trip to Hawaii” and “Aloha;” a 1930s guidebook entitled *Hawaii and the South Seas: A Guidebook* described Hawaii as “the last frontier” for world travelers.<sup>40</sup> This tourist literature remained heavily laden with such male, thrill-seeking imagery and verbiage until the large-scale arrival of American GI’s during World War II, when the Hula and Caucasian girls dominated tourist posters and postcards. Furthermore, as Hawaii became more Americanized after World War II—ultimately more “feminized” and “submissive” to the imperialist United States—Native Hawaiian women soon prevailed in the tourist and travel literature as the ultimate symbols of Hawaii, as well as in the tourist industry itself.<sup>41</sup>

Lastly, the early tourist literature on Hawaii also emphasized the “simplicity and friendliness” of the natives, who lived in an “unmediated relationship with nature, free of competition and conflict” and were “willing to share their bountiful natural environment with outsiders.”<sup>42</sup> In line with the foundations of cultural tourism, promotional brochures also highlighted these “authentic primitives” for those wealthy travelers seeking relief from the “deadening ennui” of modern urban life.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, when Alexander Winchell published *Preadamites* in 1880, he privileged the Hawaiian race over African-Americans in the fields of intelligence, morality and cultural achievement, as well as

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<sup>40</sup> “Hawaii Airline & Travel Posters/Postcards, 1910-1970.” *Island Art Store*. [www.islandartcards.com](http://www.islandartcards.com) 27 Feb 2008; Review of *Hawaii & the South Seas*. *New York Times*, Oct. 18, 1931.

<sup>41</sup> Beth Bailey & David Farber, “The Fighting Man as Tourist: The Politics of Tourist Culture in Hawaii During World War II.” *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 56. No. 4, Nov. 1996. 641-660.

<sup>42</sup> Goss, 676.

<sup>43</sup> Jane Desmond. “Picturing Hawaii: The “Ideal” Native & The Origins of Tourism, 1880-1915. *Positions*. Vol. 7, No. 2, Fall 1999. 459-501.

qualified them as possessing a “superior facial structure” to that of the black race; some of the Hawaiians, Winchell said, expressed a “truly Aryan intelligence.”<sup>44</sup> As a result, the contemporary, late nineteenth and early twentieth century tourist literature commodified this “civilized, safe, non-black exoticism” to attract visitors.<sup>45</sup> Yet, this increasing appeal toward exotic difference degraded the integrity and character of Hawaiian culture over time.<sup>46</sup> As early as 1934, Native Hawaiian Pualani Mossman, a participant in the 1930s and 1940s hula tours, felt a loss in her Hawaiian heritage resulting from tourism:

The old people with the knowledge of the old Hawaiian customs are dying rapidly and their knowledge is dying with them. Our task now is to preserve everything we can.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the misgivings of Native Hawaiians like Mossman, Hawaii persisted in its early quest for statehood in the 1930s. However, a 1931 rape case in Hawaii dealt a near-fatal blow to the image of Hawaiians as “safe exotics.”<sup>48</sup> During the case, American cartoonists depicted the five accused working class Native Hawaiian men as “dark-skinned sexual predators in loincloths” and as “guerillas leering at white women.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> For more on Winchell’s complete theory of racial hierarchy, see Jane Desmond. “Picturing Hawaii: The “Ideal” Native & The Origins of Tourism, 1880-1915. 484-485.

<sup>45</sup> For more on Social Darwinism and evolution, see George W. Stocking, *Race, Culture & Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982), 122, as cited in Jane Desmond. “Picturing Hawaii: The “Ideal” Native & The Origins of Tourism, 1880-1915. 484-485; For more on Native Hawaiians making arguments about being “non-black” during the push for statehood in the 1950s, see Edward Said, *Orientalism*. (Vintage, 1979).

<sup>46</sup> Jane Desmond. *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World*. (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2001).

<sup>47</sup> Imada, 122; For more background on the rape case, see David Stennard, *Honor Killing: Race, Rape & Clarence Darrow’s Spectacular Last Case*, (Penguin, 2006).

<sup>48</sup> Imada, 144.

<sup>49</sup>Imada 144; Richard Borreca. “During the uproar over the racially divisive Massie case, the Navy seriously considered making Hawaii a naval district, under permanent military rule.” in “The 50<sup>th</sup> State: For Hawaii, At Long Last...The Goal Was Democracy for All.” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, Oct. 18, 1999.

While the press declared the Hawaiian islands unsafe for Hawaiian women and pushed for martial law, the Thalia Massie case ended in a mistrial—but not before the accusers, pegged as “barbarians” and “savages” murdered one of the defendants. Five days after the mistrial, a Hawaii statehood bill failed in Congress. As Hawaii continued its campaign for statehood and tourism, this trial left the islands with the challenge of fighting this stereotyped image of Hawaiians in the American imagination as “dangerous, racial” Others.<sup>50</sup>

### **World War II: Soldiers, Hula Tours & Aloha Comes to America**

To combat such negative stereotypes as perpetuated by the Masei trial and to promote tourism to Hawaii in the 1930s and 1940s, hula dancers from Hawaii toured nightclubs on the mainland. Depicted in the media as “hula queens” and “cinderellas,” these native Hawaiian women, decked out with leis and hula skirts, became ambassadors of ‘Aloha;’ their tours also transformed Hawaii in the minds of Americans from minor tropical colony to an American tourist paradise and military stronghold.<sup>51</sup> Thus, such Hawaiian music and performances, particularly the chant and the Hula, which to Native Hawaiians represented ancient songs to praise the Polynesian gods, painted Hawaii’s as a paradise for tourists, “something to be seen and enjoyed without wondering about the past or its meanings to Hawaiian performers;” these shows merely existed as exotic

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 144.

<sup>51</sup> For more information on the hula contests that led to the hula tours, which were sponsored by MGM and the Hawaii-based Consolidated Amusement Company, see Imada, 111-114; Also, see Imada, p. 114, for evidence of increased American involvement in promoting tourism to Hawaii, as Hawaii moved closer to statehood, in the 1934 promotional film, “Song of the Islands.”

festivities for foreign consumption, without an awareness about the meaning behind these songs for native Hawaiians.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, these commercial performances created an “imagined intimacy” between Hawaii and the mainland United States, which produced a fantasy of “reciprocal attachment” that allowed Americans to possess their island colony “physically and figuratively.”<sup>53</sup> Although the hula performances featured Hawaiian women as the “principal agents” of Hawaiian culture, they also “feminized and eroticized” Hawaii on stage, implying that like a woman, the islands were “willing to submit” to and be “penetrated by” American tourist and military ambitions.<sup>54</sup> In keeping with the feminine theme of the hula tours—contrasting with the masculine images of surfboarders and rafters in the early twentieth century tourist literature—the increased presence of American GI’s during World War II contributed to the gradual transformation of Hawaii’s image as feminine and conquered by the imperialist United States. The onset of World War II, then, marked a significant shift, or benchmark moment, in changing the popular image of Hawaii in the American imagination, from one of masculine, exclusive fantasy island for the rich and famous to a more commodified, accessible, feminine image of paradise.

Thus, through the narrative of the hula tours, Imada illuminated the two great

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<sup>52</sup> For more on Native Hawaiians’ misgivings about performing the hula for tourists, see Betty McDonald. “Our Envoys of the Hula.” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, Sept. 30, 1939; For more on the phenomenon of scopophilia, which refers to an obsession with gazing, in this case, Americans’ obsession with Hawaiian culture, see Goss, 663-688.

<sup>53</sup> Silva, 25.

<sup>54</sup> Imada, 115; For more information on the femininity of the islands, natural environment and its people, see Goss, 663-688.

myths of colonial oppression: a tragic myth of romanticized Hawaiians exploited by demonized whites, and the comedic myth of crude savages redeemed by civilized culture and economic progress.<sup>55</sup> While this tour did objectify Native Hawaiian women's bodies, it also enabled sophisticated Hawaiian women to take an active role in shaping their own destiny; the tours offered these women opportunities for other careers, as this extensive traveling on the U.S. continent allowed them to engage in broader educational and employment opportunities not available in Hawaii.<sup>56</sup> As a result of these promotional tours, in combination with World War II's exposure of soldiers to the allure of Aloha, the "secret" of the island's natural beauty was out of the bag, as was the image of Hawaii as a distinctly "feminine" place; this feminine image of the islands, coupled with the newly found economic independence of the hula tour Hawaiian women also served to emasculate Hawaiian men, yet strangely seemed to empower Hawaiian women.<sup>57</sup>

During World War II, one million soldiers, sailors and war workers, who pumped \$5 million dollars into the Hawaiian economy, were stationed at Pearl Harbor, Many of these soldiers, who later married Native Hawaiian women, brought back to the mainland "good tidings" of the islands' distant but "pleasurable, safe, exotic" lure.<sup>58</sup> However, due to the obvious economic benefit for Hawaii, it is important to note that this

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<sup>55</sup> Elizabeth Bentzel Buck. *Paradise Remade: The Politics of Culture & History in Hawaii*. (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1993). 5.

<sup>56</sup>Imada, 115.

<sup>57</sup> Imada 130; Goss 678.

<sup>58</sup> Beth Bailey and David Farber, *The First Strange Place: Race & Sex in World War II Hawaii*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1992), 15-31; Only 7,000 soldiers were stationed in Hawaii before World War II. For more information on this, see Bailey & Farber, "The Fighting Man as Tourist."

image of the Hawaiian islands as a “safe paradise” was no accident; U.S. military command and Hawaiian elite consciously constructed this image through a cooperative propaganda effort. Meanwhile, soldiers were carefully cast in the role of tourists to “mediate the potentially explosive tensions produced by this influx of homesick and battle weary men into an unfamiliar and highly diverse society;” the word “tourist” held many political implications and was a very “loaded” label for the soldiers to bear.<sup>59</sup> While soldiers had already been exposed to images of Hawaii as luxurious “tourist fantasy” in U.S. pop culture through radio, movies and music, co-existing with the Hawaiian “natives” proved an entirely different, more challenging proposition, mainly due to the fact that these white, working class soldiers did not “fit into” Hawaii’s diverse racial dynamic, consisting mostly of native Hawaiians and those of Asian/Pacific descent, nor did they meet the typical criteria associated with the wealthy tourists who frequented the islands.<sup>60</sup>

Therefore, in order to acclimate soldiers to this “strange, new paradise” and encourage them to enjoy the islands’ “authentic, exotic, pleasurable encounters” usually reserved for the “rich and famous,” the Special Projects Branch published *A Pocket Guide to Hawaii*. This pamphlet, written in “plain-spoken, tough-guy” language, described Hawaii as “a new friend” of the U.S., asking soldiers to “engage the friendly

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<sup>59</sup> Bailey & Farber, “The Fighting Man as Tourist,” 642.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 641-644.

natives” about the islands’ “special cultural richness” and “aloha spirit.”<sup>61</sup> Despite the Hawaiian islands’ uniqueness, as touted in the brochure, the *Pocket Guide* also emphasized that Hawaiians were indeed Americans who were “just as proud of the stars and stripes” as the soldiers; the pocket guide also said that Hawaiians “enjoy American soft drinks” and “love Bob Hope.”<sup>62</sup> While the overall message of the pamphlet encouraged tolerance and open-mindedness about Hawaiians, illustrations of a “little naked man” smiling up at a “gigantic, smiling, well-dressed white man” therein sent a drastically different message of Hawaiians as “primitive and non-threatening.”<sup>63</sup> To combat “war nerves” and “homesickness,” the USO also instituted a recreation program through which soldiers “relished playing the slack key guitar, going to luaus and crowding the beach; brothels, strip clubs and “tawdry amusements” now dotted the overcrowded, hyper-masculine Hawaiian landscape.<sup>64</sup>

Evoking his own recent World War II experiences as a U.S. Navy lieutenant commander, James Michener emerged with the 1947 novel, *Tales of the South Pacific*, a

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<sup>61</sup> Army Information Branch, Information and Education Division, Morale Services Section, Central Pacific Base Command. *A Pocket Guide to Hawaii*. (Washington, D.C.: 1942). 7-8. Hawaiian Collection, Hamilton Library, Univ. of Hawaii at Manoa, as cited in Bailey & Farber, “The Fighting Man as Tourist,” 648.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 7-8.

<sup>63</sup> “Considering that the average Hawaiian man was taller and more powerfully built than the average white man, this representation served rather dramatically to undercut, or at least to shape, the message of tolerance and open-mindedness the text seemed to deliver to serviceman.” As such, this depiction of Hawaiians as shorter than whites was certainly meant to make tourists feel superior, and thereby to make Hawaiians feel inferior. Bailey & Farber, “The Fighting Man as Tourist,” 649.

<sup>64</sup> “War nerves” referred to the fact that the exoticism and beauty of the islands proved grating and enraging for soldiers returning from combat. Many soldiers found it ironic, irritating and uncomfortable to be “stationed” and “working” in paradise, for Hawaii was “no paradise” as long as the war continued. Therefore, many Hawaiians often said that, despite the propaganda of the national government, “you can’t call ‘em (soldiers) tourists.” Bailey & Farber, “Fighting Man as Tourist,” 652, 655, 658.

series of related short stories that “blend fact and fiction” about the horrors of war and his encounters with the “native peoples” of Hawaii.<sup>65</sup> In his explication of the soldier’s experience in war, Michener posed the question about how men and women faced their own mortality and dealt with “war nerves” each time they entered the battlefield:

Each man I knew had a cave somewhere, a hidden refuge from war. For some it was love for wives and kids back home. When bad food and Jap shells and the awful tropic disease attacked, there was the cave of love. There a man found refuge. For others the cave consisted of jobs waiting, a farm to run, a business to establish...For still others the cave was whiskey, or wild nights in the Pink House at Noumea or heroism beyond the call of valor.<sup>66</sup>

In another passage, Michener extolled the virtues and heroism of the American soldier in the Pacific as men “who would be remembered as long as our generation lives.”<sup>67</sup> Despite Michener’s compassion for the natives, his passion for and privileging of the American soldiers’ point of view in the Pacific revealed itself clearly in his stereotypic, racist portrayals of native Hawaiians as primitive and uncivilized. Throughout his book, he repeatedly and consciously discredited Hawaiians, describing their men as sporting “bracelets of pig’s teeth” produced after a “gruesome ceremony;” according to Michener, Hawaiian women were often “barely dressed.”<sup>68</sup> Additionally, as Michener detailed the “lovely pine trees, thin streams and curves lost in the vales that swept down to the sea,”

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<sup>65</sup> James Michener, *Hawaii*, (Random House, 1959); For an in-depth analysis of the novel, see Madhumalati Adhikari. “History & Story: Unconventional History in Michael Ondaatje’s *The English Patient* & James A. Michener’s *Tales of the South Pacific*.” *History & Theory, Theme Issue 41*. (December 2002) 43-55. For more information on the Broadway play/movie *South Pacific*, see “Let’s Go to the Movies” later in this paper.

<sup>66</sup> James Michener, *Tales of the South Pacific*. (Binghamton, N.Y.: Curtis Publishing Company), 1947. 83, as cited in Adhikari.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 35.

he feminized the island landscape, mirroring a trend of contemporary Hawaii travel guide books.<sup>69</sup>

As World War II and the hula tours heightened Americans' interest and raised curiosity about the romantic, tropical islands, Hawaii travel posters and guide books soon flooded the U.S. marketplace.<sup>70</sup> Consistent with the highly masculine atmosphere that permeated Hawaii as soldiers populated its shores and Michener's novel, *Tales of the South Pacific*, images of the "scantly clad" native and Caucasian women who predominated in 1940s travel posters perpetuated the image of Hawaii as feminine, submissive, primitive and native.<sup>71</sup> For instance, a 1943 United Airlines poster pictured a super-sized native Hawaiian woman pleurably dancing on the islands, dwarfed by her sheer size. A pair of 1942 Matson Steam Lines ad depicted a Hawaiian woman tantalizingly holding a plate of pineapples and coconuts, as well as a group of voluptuous Hawaiian women doing the hula near a Matson ship; a 1949 poster actually featured a Caucasian pin-up girl dressed in a coconut bra and grass skirt, tempting the traveler with the words, "Aloha from Hawaii."<sup>72</sup>

Likewise, in a 1948 travel photography book simply entitled "Hawaii" by Fritz Henle, a native Hawaiian woman in the shade of a palm tree—ostensibly used to demonstrate the photographer's use of shadow and light—featured prominently throughout the book. As did the earlier literature from the Hawaii Tourist Bureau, Henle's

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>70</sup> Bailey & Farber, *Race & Sex in World War II Hawaii*. 25.

<sup>71</sup> Imada, 125; Buck, 55.

<sup>72</sup> For more of these posters, see "Hawaii Airline & Travel Posters/Postcards, 1910-1970." *Island Art Store*. [www.islandartcards.com](http://www.islandartcards.com) 27 Feb 2008.

books and photos also demonstrated the “harmonious relationship between the islander and their environment,” as well as the “natural, magical” beauty of the islands; the “crystal, clear, pure blue sea” turbulent with “heavy surf” beat against the “ageless rocks” on the shores of “white, sandy beaches.”<sup>73</sup> In an earlier travel book about Hawaii published just months prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, *Hawaii U.S.A.*, Bob Davis and George Armitage also described Hawaii as an “earthly paradise” populated by friendly, hospitable, gentle, giving, humans” who endeavor to bring a “smile to the face of all who visit the islands.”<sup>74</sup> As the title suggested, the authors declared that “Hawaii is, and she always will be, an integral part of the United States,” perhaps a foreshadowing of Hawaii’s eventual induction as a U.S. state in 1959.<sup>75</sup> In using the feminine pronoun “she” and referring to native Hawaiians as “gentle” and “giving” and to the ocean waters as “pure,” Davis, Armitage and Henle again respectively evoked the systematic feminization of the islands’ natural environment and its people over time, first provoked by the hula tours and the subsequent arrival of soldiers during World War II.<sup>76</sup>

As Americans grew more enamored with and exposed to the “exotic, primitive, native, pleasurable,” yet safe, fantasy of Hawaii during and after World War II via Michener’s novel and travel books, U.S. pop culture—not satisfied with a mere taste of

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<sup>73</sup> “Review of *Hawaii*, (New York: Hastings House, 1948) by Fritz Henle in “Picture Books, Travel Photography by Henle—Other Guides,” as cited in *New York Times*, Sept. 12, 1948.

<sup>74</sup> “Review of *Hawaii, U.S.A.*, (New York: Stokes Company, 1941), by Bob Davis & George Armitage in “Mr. Davis Likes the Hawaiian Islands, In Fact He Considers Them the Loveliest Lands He Has Seen,” *New York Times*, Aug. 17, 1941.

<sup>75</sup> For more information on Hawaii’s introduction into statehood, see Lefeber.

<sup>76</sup> For more information on feminization and the marginality/mystery of the islands due to their sheer distance from the American mainland, see a description of “Hawaii as Siren...with distractions in her verdant valleys” in Goss 678, 683.

life on the islands—soon co-opted and commodified this image for a mass tourist market on a large-scale in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s; a virtual explosion and obsession with Hawaii in American pop culture had begun. No longer was Hawaii a “secret” getaway for the rich and famous.<sup>77</sup> Although the U.S. government had worked jointly with the Hawaiian elite to promote Hawaiian tourism since annexation, the characterization of Hawaiians as feminine and inherently inferior to mainland American whites—as in the aforementioned *A Pocket Guide to Hawaii* and travel books—signaled a systematic shift in the strategy of attracting tourists to Hawaii.

From World War II onward, the U.S. government and U.S. pop culture assumed a more powerful, authoritative role over Native Hawaiians—initially very prominent in the promotion of Hawaiian tourism—in creating the tourist image of Hawaii as simultaneously “feminine, primitive and American.” Thus, similar to the feminine image of Hawaii presented in the hula tours, the “obedient” Hawaiians grew more submissive to the U.S. as they continued to advocate for statehood; World War II, then, operated as a major turning point for Native Hawaiians, as this marked the time period in which they lost primary control of Hawaii’s image in U.S. pop culture.<sup>78</sup> So, while native Hawaiians still participated in and perpetuated the tourist culture after World War II, they ultimately lost their position as co-pilot to the U.S. government of promoting the image of Hawaii’s

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<sup>77</sup> In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, an explosion of movies and music emerged in American popular culture, such as *From Here to Eternity*, *South Pacific* & *Blue Hawaii*. Images of Hawaii also appeared at the New York & Seattle World’s Fair in the 1960s. The 1960s also saw a further increase in Hawaiian Rooms in hotels across the country. Again, this relates to the notion of scopophilia, America’s growing obsession with “tourist gazing” at so-called “exotic” cultures. For more on the phenomenon of scopophilia, which refers to an obsession with gazing, in this case, Americans’ obsession with Hawaiian culture, see Goss, 663-688.

<sup>78</sup> For more information on the feminine image of the islands and American imperialist policy in Hawaii, see Bailey & Farber’s “The Fighting Man as Tourist, Imada 110-149.

“exotic magic and beauty” to the world; this marked a shift to a “highly commercialized, submissive state of mind” for native Hawaiians.<sup>79</sup> Since Hawaiians co-constructed this tourist culture that they later grew to resent, tourism, then, became somewhat a prison of their own making, forcing them to compromise the integrity of their culture to make a living.

### **1950s: The “Safe Oriental,” Statehood & “Aloha” on The Big Screen**

Throughout the 1950s, the campaign for Hawaiian statehood, namely in promoting Native Hawaiians as “the safe other,” further ensconced the tourist image of Hawaii as a popular, yet “tranquil, submissive, feminine fantasy island” in the American imagination; in other words, Hawaii was primarily perceived as a “pleasurable, tropical fantasy land” of hulas and luaus, not as a real place where its natives lived and worked in the long shadow of United States’ imperial dominance and controlled incorporation.<sup>80</sup> The statehood campaign, then, increased Americans’ fascination with the “mystery and magic” of Hawaii, as well as the islands’ exposure to the mass tourist market and in American pop culture, a process begun during World War II that would persist into the 1960s and 1970s; movies such as *From Here to Eternity* and *South Pacific*, which will be discussed shortly, best illustrated this American obsession with Hawaii.<sup>81</sup> As a result of the increased exposure during World War II, tourism to Hawaii nearly doubled between

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<sup>79</sup> *A Pocket Guide to Hawaii*; Desmond, *Staging Tourism*; Imada.

<sup>80</sup> For more information on American imperialism in Hawaii and elsewhere, see LaFeber, *The New Empire* and Jane Desmond, *Staging Tourism*.

<sup>81</sup> See Tom Coffman, *The Island Edge of America*, for more on the changing image of Hawaii from an American imperialist stronghold to a tourist paradise.

1940 and 1950—from 25,000 to 50,000.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, the heavily consumptive Cold War culture of the 1950s also contributed to Americans’ increased obsession with purchasing and possessing “anything and everything Hawaiian.”<sup>83</sup>

Nevertheless, it is important to realize that Native Hawaiians, who believed statehood would allow access to federal funding and prove a path to improving their basic civil rights, played a crucial role in this campaign for statehood; many Hawaiians, enthusiastically touting “Vote Yes! Yes! Yes! For Statehood!” placards, participated in statehood parades and marches throughout the 1950s:<sup>84</sup> “The goal was democracy for all in Hawaii, to give our Asian population a voice equal to their numbers,” said A.A. Smyser, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin Contributing Editor*. Likewise, Ah Quon McElrath, a social worker and support of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union, added that:

We could see where an extension of democracy could be cemented...We wanted to extend democracy to an isolated group of islands with a multi-ethnic group. We wanted to be absolutely sure we got that kind of democracy.<sup>85</sup>

While it later hopped on the “statehood bandwagon,” *The Honolulu Advertiser* sensed trouble on the horizon for its native islands if they were to become a U.S. state,

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<sup>82</sup> Sumner La Croix. "Economic History of Hawai'i". EH.Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples. May 1, 2008.

<sup>83</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, (Basic Books, 1990); So pervasive was Hawaii in the 1950s U.S. that American teenagers even included a stop at Hawaiian Rooms on their prom night. For more info on this trend, see Michael Birkner, “Remembering Teenage New Jersey: An Exhibition.” *Wintherthur Portfolio* 34 (1999), 139-146.

<sup>84</sup> Richard Borreca, “The 50<sup>th</sup> State: For Hawaii, At Long Last,” Special issue: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Hawaiian Statehood, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, Oct. 18, 1999; U.S. Government, “Hawaii Statehood Commission Pamphlet,” 1959.

<sup>85</sup> Borreca, “The 50<sup>th</sup> State.”

commenting that Hawaii needed statehood “like a cat needed two tails.”<sup>86</sup> However, most Native Hawaiians proved instrumental in relinquishing Hawaii’s ultimate control over its own public image in the United States, which ultimately led to its “double-edged” sword fate as the United States’ “ultimate paradise mecca” for tourists. In August 1959, under the Act to Provide for the Admission of the State of Hawaii into the Union, the U.S. territory of Hawaii finally achieved statehood.<sup>87</sup> However, statehood proved an uphill battle for Hawaii; some of its fiercest advocates, such as congressmen Joseph Farrington and John A. Burns as well as Hawaiian Sen. Daniel Inouye, feared that the 1931 Masei rape case, which portrayed the accused Hawaiians as “sexually aggressive, primitive natives” signaled the death knoll in Hawaii’s campaign for statehood.

Furthermore, even prior to the Masei rape case, Hawaii already faced a negative American perception of its islands due to its high Asian population and close proximity to Asia, mainly in light of the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor. Yet, even prior to World War II and Japanese internment camps in the United States, a series of Anti-Asian immigration laws between 1882 and 1924 illustrated an already existent racial prejudice that perceived Asians as inherently inferior.<sup>88</sup> As alluded to earlier, the American media did not hide its negative assessment of the Asian population when in 1934 a *Paradise of the Pacific* editor described the Oriental races as being of “small stature, slight physique” with “protruding teeth and small legs;” he also emphasized that Americans “had the

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<sup>86</sup> Statehood Editorial, *The Honolulu Advertiser*, Jan. 10, 1959, as cited in Borreca, “The 50<sup>th</sup> State.”

<sup>87</sup> For more on the history of Hawaii as a U.S. territory, see LeFeber, *The New Empire*.

<sup>88</sup> Imada, 137-138.

right” to determine whether they wanted to include “such (so-called inferior) Asian characteristics into the American body.” Asians, then, became portrayed as “foreign” and unable to assimilate into the American national image. At least initially, such powerfully provocative, charged language about Asians and discrimination against Asians greatly impeded Hawaiians’ campaign for statehood, since many Hawaiians had at least some Asian ancestry and physiological features.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, a tension developed between the positive perception of Hawaii in American pop culture and the harsh reality of how Americans negatively treated some Hawaiians in everyday life, particularly in the quest for statehood.

However, to combat such negative stereotypes and prejudices in its efforts to become a state, Hawaiians seized upon earlier perceptions of their race as “superior” to African-Americans, as outlined in Alexander Winchell’s 1880 *Preadamites*.<sup>90</sup> Winchell also commented that Hawaiians superseded the “intelligence, morality and culture” of blacks and also had a “stronger, better facial structure” than African-Americans. With a foreshadowing, haunting hint of Nazi philosophy, Winchell said, Hawaiians also expressed a “truly Aryan intelligence.” Therefore, in order to make Hawaiians more palatable to the average American, a majority of whom were Asian, 1950s statehood advocates soon began describing Hawaiians as exotic “non-blacks.”<sup>91</sup> Playing into the racially charged atmosphere of 1950s United States prior to and during the early years of

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 137-138.

<sup>90</sup> Desmond, “Picturing Hawaii.”

<sup>91</sup> For more information on Cold War Orientalism, see Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism in the Middlebrow Imagination*. (Univ. of California Press, 2003); Also see Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (Vintage, 1959).

the civil rights movement, the “non-blackness” of the islands and its people, then, became the principal vehicle through which Hawaiians, argued for statehood.

On the west coast of the United States, Asian-Americans, namely Japanese-Americans in the Japanese-Americans Citizens’ League, as led by National Secretary Mike Masaoka, also used this growing “non-black” image to fight for equal access to education, health care and basic civil rights.<sup>92</sup> Similarly, the 1951 movie “Go For Broke!” about Japanese soldiers serving in World War II, which featured actual Japanese war veterans and Mike Masaoka as a special consultant, as well as the federal radio program, “Chinese Activities,” sought to portray Japanese-Americans as heroes and celebrate Chinese-American culture; both the movie and the radio program, then, sought to rehabilitate Americans’ previous negative image of Asians, and therefore images of Hawaiians as well.<sup>93</sup>

In addition to promoting the perception of themselves as “non-black,” Hawaii statehood advocates, which included both Native Hawaiians and U.S. government officials, employed “racial imaginings” to depict Hawaiians as a “Model Minority,” a “civilized, safe, distinctive, harmonious” Asian community in the United States who would “behave” and “easily assimilate” into the nation’s “already diverse tapestry.”<sup>94</sup> Specifically, in order to meet the United States’ increased global expansionist ambitions

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<sup>92</sup> James Michener, “Model Minority,” *New York Times Magazine*, March 1959.

<sup>93</sup> Klein, 20-25.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 20-25; Said later debunks the concept of Orientals as distinctive others in his book *Orientalism*; Of course, this “already diverse tapestry” did not make reference to the nation’s severe issues with racism against blacks.

and desire to bolster its international image within the politically tense environment engendered by the Cold War, statehood advocates depicted Hawaii as an “idealistic racial paradise” that encompassed diverse peoples who all co-existed peacefully (Klein). In fact, statehood propaganda images pictured Hawaii overhung with a rainbow to symbolize the islands as a “harmonious meeting place” between East and West, the United States’ very own “racial democracy;” Mike Masaoka described Hawaii as the “bridge between the United States and the Orient.”<sup>95</sup>

During the 1950s, then, when the United States had to combat negative international perceptions about cruel racism and discrimination against blacks, Hawaii sharply contrasted with this image, supposedly representing American democracy “at its very best.”<sup>96</sup> As such, both Native Hawaiian and U.S. government advocates for Hawaiian statehood, then, argued for and succeeded in their cause within the larger context of American expansionist tendencies and American international interests within the Cold War era, as well as within the context of American racial prejudices toward blacks.<sup>97</sup> In portraying Hawaii as this “somewhere over the rainbow” Wizard of Oz- esque “racial paradise,” though, to achieve statehood, Hawaiians further ceded/sacrificed their control over public images and portrayal of their islands to mainland U.S. popular and tourist culture. This further reinforced the idea of Hawaii as a submissive, feminine

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<sup>95</sup> Klein, 25-27; *Time Magazine*, March 1949; In 1959, Masaoka reiterated his earlier comments from *Time Magazine* to the U.S. Senate Committee, 1950.

<sup>96</sup> Klein, 28-29.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, 28-29.

“fantasy paradise” for tourists rather than as a “real” place where “real” people with a “real” history lived and worked in “everyday life.”<sup>98</sup>

Throughout the 1950s, both before but especially after statehood, Hawaii, as a “safely exotic tourist fantasy,” exploded onto the American pop culture scene—at the height of the country’s feverishly consumptive Cold War culture.<sup>99</sup> In this same vein, mid-twentieth century tourist literature and advertising on the mainland commodified the same “feminine, harmonious, submissive, non-black exoticism” as statehood advocates, so as to attract more visitors to Hawaii’s shores.<sup>100</sup> Travel books on Hawaii, such as Richard Joseph’s 1951 “Your Trip Abroad,” as well as newspaper advertisements for steamship cruises to Hawaii flourished in the 1950s. Furthermore, images of both Native Hawaiian and white American women, mainly “scantly clad” pin-up girls in skimpy bathing suits, predominated amongst 1950s airline travel posters and postcards.<sup>101</sup>

As such, these feminine images reinforced the concept of the Hawaiian islands as “submissive” to the whims of American imperialism. For instance, a 1953 Pan American travel poster featured a Native Hawaiian woman, complete with the stereotypical “thick, abundant, pursed” lips encircled by palm trees, beckoning to tourists: “Aloha from

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<sup>98</sup> Native Hawaiians soon realized the folly of sacrificing control of their image in exchange for statehood; “Hawaii celebrated its new found American identity with a 50<sup>th</sup> state birthday cake, linking its quest for statehood to the nationalistic pride so characteristic of Cold War ideology,” in Klein, *Cold War Orientalism & Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, Oct. 18, 1999.

<sup>99</sup> For more on Cold War culture in the United States, see May, *Homeward Bound*. Evidence of Hawaii’s increasing popularity in the American imagination will also be illustrated shortly, through an analysis of the movies *From Here to Eternity* & *South Pacific*.

<sup>100</sup> Desmond, 484-485.

<sup>101</sup> Hawaii Airline & Travel Posters/Postcards, 1910-1970.” *Island Art Store*. [www.islandartcards.com](http://www.islandartcards.com)  
27 Feb 2008.

Hawaii;” another airline advertisement, this one from United Airlines, depicted a Native Hawaiian woman in a muumuu—once again surrounded by palm trees—preparing to welcome visitors to the islands by placing a lei around their necks.<sup>102</sup> Lastly, a 1955 and 1957 ad respectively pictured white Caucasian women in bikinis, one laying invitingly crouched on the beach, and the other, a Libby’s Girl, sporting a lei and a smile as she surfs and enjoys Hawaii’s high waves. Perhaps the increased appearance of white women in such advertisements suggested the transition to Americanism and assimilation in the islands, as well as to the higher frequency of tourism in the late 1950s.<sup>103</sup>

So, while Native Hawaiian women retained power as the ultimate symbol of Hawaii in the 1950s tourist literature, their respective images now shared the spotlight with Caucasian American women in ads and travel posters beckoning tourists to the “islands of Aloha.” This reflected, ever so subtly, the merging, or assimilation of the “Model Minority” known as Hawaiians into the American “melting pot,” as well as the “celebratory American democracy” so emblematic of the Cold War Era United States.<sup>104</sup> In addition, frequent images of women in the tourist literature also reinforced the concept of the islands as “willing to submit” to American ambitions. Nevertheless, Hawaiians initially pushed for statehood based on the belief that they would garner increased civil rights as American citizens.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*.

<sup>104</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 30-32.

<sup>105</sup> Hawaii Airline & Travel Posters/Postcards, 1910-1970.” *Island Art Store*.  
[www.islandartcards.com](http://www.islandartcards.com)  
 27 Feb 2008; LeFeber, *The New Empire*.

Not only did the prospects for more tourism to Hawaii grow exponentially in the 1950s from the heightened exposure that accompanied the statehood debate, but it also inspired filmmakers to portray Hawaii on the big screen in mainstream, big budget movies, namely *From Here to Eternity* (1953) and *South Pacific* (1959), which themselves as “entertainment commodifications of history themselves became a form of history.”<sup>106</sup> While *From Here to Eternity* narrated the fateful story of an American non-combat military brigade stationed in Oahu prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, as well as a forbidden romance against the backdrop of war, *South Pacific*, a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical set in World War II Hawaii based on Michener’s *Tales of the South Pacific*, depicted how racial prejudices impacted the lives of two sets of star-crossed lovers involved in the war effort.<sup>107</sup>

Within both movies, directors depicted Hawaii not as a “real place,” but as an “adventuresome, fantasy paradise” complete with “swaying palm trees, sandy beaches and exciting tales of romance in the tropics”—almost as if Hawaii was literally “another world” altogether; the movies—perhaps subtle public relations tools encouraging statehood and tourism—seemed to beckon travelers to Hawaii’s “sunny shores.”<sup>108</sup> In a subtle commentary on the growth of tourism on the islands in *From Here to Eternity*,

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<sup>106</sup> Philip D. Biedler, “*South Pacific & American Remembering; or Josh, We’re Going to Buy This Son of a Bitch!*” *Journal of American Studies* 27: (1993), 2, 207-222.

<sup>107</sup> “The Screen in Review: *From Here to Eternity* Bows at Capitol With Huge Cast, Five Starring Roles.” *New York Times Review*, Aug. 6, 1953; Justin D. Edwards, “Polynesian Paradises: Explorations in the Hollywood Island Drama,” *American Studies in Scandinavia* 33 (2001), 1, 12-25.

<sup>108</sup> Edwards, “Polynesian Paradises,” 14-15; This refers back to the Cold War “Safe Other” argument that enabled Hawaii’s successful admission as a U.S. state. For more information on the Hawaiian statehood argument, see Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*.

First Sgt. Milton Warden (Burt Lancaster), a strappingly masculine picture of a military man, exclaimed that “This place is getting to be like the Royal Hawaiian Hotel,” as Mrs. Karen Holmes (Deborah Kerr), the dissatisfied, sulking, restless military housewife of Capt. Dana Holmes (Philip Ober), with whom he would have an affair, first drove up to the military base in her sparkling white Rolls Royce.<sup>109</sup>

In fact, several scenes in both films assumed the visage of a “picture postcard.”<sup>110</sup> Perhaps the best illustration of this postcard phenomenon can be found in *From Here to Eternity*’s “Rainy Day Woman” scene, in which the rain-soaked Sgt. Warden and Mrs. Holmes exchanged the first passionate embrace of their forbidden affair. Similar to many postcards and contemporary airline posters for Hawaii, directors framed the characters’ first tender kiss inside a small, square window, which was encircled by palm trees.<sup>111</sup> Likewise, the characters of Princess Lorene (Donna Reed), a salaciously seductive prostitute in the American soldiers’ nighttime haven, The Congress Club and Mrs. Holmes in *From Here to Eternity*, as well as Nellie (Mitzi Gaynor), a wholesome, respectable, blond Navy nurse, and Emile (Rossano Brazzi), a wealthy French planter, in *South Pacific* respectively commented on the beauty of the islands:

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<sup>109</sup> “Mrs. Holmes (scene name),” in (director) Fred Zinnemann’s *From Here to Eternity*, Columbia Pictures, 1953.

<sup>110</sup> Edwards, “Polynesian Paradises,” 15-16.

<sup>111</sup> Hawaii Airline & Travel Posters/Postcards, 1910-1970.” *Island Art Store*.  
[www.islandartcards.com](http://www.islandartcards.com).

27 Feb 2008; “Rainy Day Woman,” (scene name), in (director) Fred Zinnemann’s *From Here to Eternity*, Columbia Pictures, 1953.

*From Here to Eternity*: "It's very beautiful here, isn't it?" said Mrs. Holmes. "It's the most beautiful place in the world," answered Lorene.<sup>112</sup>  
*South Pacific*: "Gosh, it's beautiful here," said Nellie. "Yes, it is," agreed Emile.<sup>113</sup>

In their now infamous love scene, Sgt. Warden and Mrs. Holmes' frolicking picnic on the beach, though filmed in black-and-white, displayed the natural beauty of Hawaii, with waves crashing spectacularly on shore and Diamond Head standing majestically in the background. In their passionate moment on the beach, the two characters, emboldened by their heightened emotions in this breath-taking scene, in *From Here to Eternity*:

"I never knew it could be like this. I've never been kissed like this, never by another man," said Mrs. Holmes. "Until I met you, I didn't think it was possible," answered Sgt. Warden.<sup>114</sup>

However, perhaps due to the fact that it was filmed in color, *South Pacific* showcased the visual spectacle and beauty of the islands even more dramatically than *From Here to Eternity*. Within the opening sequence alone, the director treated the audience to the stunning beauty of the islands via an orange-red sunset over sparkling blue waters, a purplish-pink sky at sunrise over Diamondhead and endless rows of swaying palm and banyan trees; flowing waterfalls, white, sandy beaches, spectacular rainbows and brilliantly colored flowers found their way into almost every scene of *South Pacific*.<sup>115</sup>

Not only did the movies' characters and the directors' generous visual showmanship extol the beauty of the islands, but they also described the islands as "other worldly" and

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<sup>112</sup> "Returning Stateside," (scene name), in (director) Fred Zinnemann's *From Here to Eternity*, Columbia Pictures, 1953.

<sup>113</sup> "Fugitives" (scene name), in Rodgers & Hammerstein's *South Pacific*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1958, which was based on the famous Broadway musical of the same name, as well as derived from Michener's *Tales of the South Pacific*.

<sup>114</sup> "On the Beach," (scene name), in (director) Fred Zinnemann's *From Here to Eternity*, Columbia Pictures, 1953.

<sup>115</sup> "Opening Credits," (scene name), in Rodgers & Hammerstein's *South Pacific*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1958; Biedler, "*South Pacific & American Remembering*;" Edwards, "Polynesian Paradises," 14-15.

“adventurous, exciting.”<sup>116</sup> In fact, the characters of Princess Lorene in *From Here to Eternity* and Nellie in *South Pacific* both described Hawaii as an “adventure-filled” place that appealed them because it was so “different” from their respective hometowns in Oregon and Arkansas; as they gazed down upon “native” huts from his expansive estate, even Nellie and her beau, Emile, a wealthy French plantation owner in Hawaii referred to themselves as “fugitives” from their “real lives” in France and the United States.<sup>117</sup>

Despite the serious historical backdrop of World War II, then, both films, consistent with the depiction of Hawaii in 1950s tourist literature, captured Hawaii as “another world, a fantasy paradise,” not as a real place where Native Hawaiians lived, worked and carried out their everyday lives.<sup>118</sup> Even in their characters’ description of themselves as “fugitives” on the islands of Aloha, Nellie & Emile, who admitted to Nellie that he had killed someone in self-defense back in his native France, evoked a sense of artificiality about Hawaii, as if they would face no consequences for past actions as long as they remained on the islands, thus implying that they lived outside reality, in “another world” there.<sup>119</sup> Likewise, in *From Here to Eternity*, Sgt. Warden and Mrs. Holmes successfully carried out their secret, illicit, extramarital affair without being discovered

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<sup>116</sup> Edwards, “Polynesian Paradises,” 14-15.

<sup>117</sup> “Princess Lorene,” (scene name), in (director) Fred Zinnemann’s *From Here to Eternity*, Columbia Pictures, 1953; “Fugitives,” (scene name), in Rodgers & Hammerstein’s *South Pacific*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1958

<sup>118</sup> Similar to many British imperial dramas, such as *Four Feathers* (1939) & *King Solomon’s Mines* (1939), starring Paul Robeson, both *From Here to Eternity* & *South Pacific* narrate a tumultuous romance against the backdrop of a significant, usually tragic, historical backdrop. Consistent with the Cold War ideology of the 1950s, as described by Christina Klein in *Cold War Orientalism*, both films celebrate the military “might” of the United States. In fact, the only truly horrific scene in *From Here to Eternity* was the depiction of the attacks on Pearl Harbor.

<sup>119</sup> “Fugitives,” (scene name), in Rodgers & Hammerstein’s *South Pacific*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1958.

by his superior in the military, who was, incidentally, Mr. Holmes.<sup>120</sup> Similarly, in *From Here to Eternity*, Maggio's (Frank Sinatra) punishment in the stockade, in which it was implied that he was severely beaten by a military superior, Sgt. "Fatso" Judson (Ernest Borgnine), a smug military prison officer, occurred off-screen. Later, when Private Robert E. Lee Prewitt, (Montgomery Clift) the headstrong, defiant "lifelong" military "first bugler," murdered Sgt. Judson, this action also took place behind a pile of crates in a dark alley, suggesting an "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" mentality about crimes being committed and a denial that "bad things" could happen in such an "idealistic paradise."<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, it could suggest that the islands still possessed a certain primitive, uncivilized, lawless character, as was illustrated in the 1931 Masei rape case.

Thus, the link between travel, tourism and film, as illustrated by the above-named scenes in *From Here to Eternity* and *South Pacific* lay in the "fabric of looking" at other, far-off, fantastical places, such as Hawaii; both allow the traveler and the audience, as voyeurs, to "peep into other spaces...other worlds."<sup>122</sup> Therefore, it stands to reason that such films proved "appropriate venues" in which to "examine cross-cultural relations:"

Film itself travels, is a particular kind of space, and offers narratives about spatial relations. The film site allows speculation on how changes in looking relations may mitigate racism as well as sexism...Who is allowed or forbidden to look? What constraints does Western culture set up around the look? How do looking relationships exacerbate race relations?<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> "On the Beach," (scene name), in (director) Fred Zinnemann's *From Here to Eternity*, Columbia Pictures, 1953.

<sup>121</sup> "Gonna Cut His Heart Out" & "A Word with Fatso" (scene names), in (director) Fred Zinnemann's *From Here to Eternity*, Columbia Pictures, 1953; For more on soldiers' violent tendencies from resulting from traumas experienced on the battlefield, see Farber & Bailey, "The Fighting Man as Tourist."

<sup>122</sup> Edwards, "Polynesian Paradises," 15.

<sup>123</sup> E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film & The Imperial Gaze*. (New York: Routledge, 1997). 6, as cited in Edwards, "Polynesian Paradises," 15.

In fact, *South Pacific*, which depicted a “then-daring multi-cultural, inter-racial relationship” between Lieutenant Joe Cable (John Kerr), the all-American, devoted military pilot with a girl “back home in Philadelphia,” and Liat (France Nguyen), the Asian beauty who fit the typical “Oriental” stereotype, with long, flowing black hair, a light blue kimono, a slender figure and demure personality, sparked “controversy amongst critics” and “certain active resistance” in the American South during the tense years of the Civil Rights movement.<sup>124</sup> Upon being introduced by her “uncharacteristically sexually aggressive” mother Bloody Mary (Juanita Hall), the pair, who did not even speak the same language, immediately embraced and had sex.<sup>125</sup> Throughout their courtship, Bloody Mary encouraged the lovers not “to work but to play all day,” as she’d “cleaned up” in profits from selling “Hawaiian” souvenirs to soldiers and tourists since World War II began; again, the film showcased Hawaii as a “fantasy play land,” not as a “real place” wherein its residents had to work for a living. Similar to Nellie’s “sense of excitement” in coming to Hawaii, the carefree, fast-paced nature of the relationship between Lt. Tate & Liat depicted the islands as a place of “sexual adventure, fantasy and conquest.”<sup>126</sup>

Not only did the movies portray Hawaii as a “paradise playground,” but both *South Pacific* and *From Here to Eternity* also essentialized certain “authentically

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<sup>124</sup> Beidler, “*South Pacific & American Remembering*,” Imada, 111-149; Similar to the portrayal of Hawaii as an “idealistic racial paradise” in the Cold War, so too does *South Pacific* portray Asians as the “safe Other;” For more info on the Civil Rights movement, see Aldon Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (Free Press, 1986).

<sup>125</sup> “Falling for Liat” (scene name), in Rodgers & Hammerstein’s *South Pacific*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1958.

<sup>126</sup> “Fugitives” & “Joys of Balu Ha’I” (scene names), in Rodgers & Hammerstein’s *South Pacific*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1958.

Hawaiian” traits.<sup>127</sup> In *South Pacific*, such scenes included Polynesians dancing on the beach with tiki torches, toting a pig through the village en route to a luau and performing “tribal dances” in “traditional Polynesian masks.”<sup>128</sup> Similarly, *From Here to Eternity* depicted soldiers’ “acting out” such stereotypes about Native Hawaiians as sporting “aloha shirts” and “drinking mai tai’s” on their furloughs from duty at “authentically Hawaiian nightclubs, complete with fake palm trees and so-called island music.”<sup>129</sup>

In a parallel plot in *South Pacific* about inter-racial relationships, Nellie discovered that her beloved Emile previously married a Polynesian woman, fathering two children with her. Even before Nellie found out such “shocking” information, a soldier commented that “No one wants to dump a bunch of Polynesian kids on someone right away.”<sup>130</sup> When attempting to explain why neither he nor Nellie could “carry on” their respective relationships, Lt. Joe Tate, in a frankly honest, daring way—especially for the year in which it was released—said that “you’ve got to be taught to hate and fear... people whose eyes are oddly shaped or people whose skin is a different shade than yours.”<sup>131</sup> Although Lt. Tate ultimately decided to be with Liat, he died in combat. Perhaps fearful of a public backlash in a society not ready for Lt. Tate & Liat’s happy

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<sup>127</sup> Edwards, “Polynesian Paradises,” 14-15.

<sup>128</sup> “Opening Credits” & “Bali Ha’I” (scene names), in Rodgers & Hammerstein’s *South Pacific*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1958.

<sup>129</sup> “The Princess Lorene” (scene name), in (director) Fred Zinnemann’s *From Here to Eternity*, Columbia Pictures, 1953.

<sup>130</sup> “A Surprise for Nellie” & “Some Dope on the Frenchman” (scene names), in Rodgers & Hammerstein’s *South Pacific*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1958.

<sup>131</sup> “You’ve Got To Be Carefully Taught” (scene name), in Rodgers & Hammerstein’s *South Pacific*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1958; For more info on the Civil Rights Movement, see Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*.

ending, the plot thus denied the inter-racial relationship, then, due to Tate's death. However, somewhat hypocritically, Nellie and Emile, the "white couple," happily reunited at the end of the movie.<sup>132</sup>

### **1960s: "Jet-Setting" to the "Paradise Playground"**

Along with the 1950s Hawaiian statehood campaign, the 1959 Cuban Revolution, combined with the advent of Hawaiian Airlines jet flights to Hawaii and more dispensable income in the mid-1960s, served to open the floodgates in Hawaii to the mass U.S. tourist culture; Waikiki Beach alone now boasted 150 hotels, with "nearly 6,500 rooms," whereas the other islands also offered visitors a choice of almost 1,400 rooms.<sup>133</sup> Thus, the South Pacific islands of Aloha soon became a new alternative "tropical fantasy," as had been depicted in the above-named films *From Here to Eternity* and *South Pacific*.<sup>134</sup> By the 1960s, Hawaii was no longer an exclusive getaway paradise for the "rich and famous;" in fact, between 1950 and 1960, the number of tourists annually visiting Hawaii surged from 46,000 to 300,000.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> "Together Again," (scene name), in Rodgers & Hammerstein's *South Pacific*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 1958.

<sup>133</sup> Hawaii Airline & Travel Posters/Postcards, 1910-1970." *Island Art Store*. [www.islandartcards.com](http://www.islandartcards.com) 27 Feb 2008; Charles H. Turner, "Holidays in Hawaii, Varied Fetes Enliven the Summer Season," *New York Times*, May 7, 1961.

<sup>134</sup> Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*; "Hawaiian Airlines web site." [http://www.pacificislandtravel.com/hawaii/flights/hawaiian\\_history.html](http://www.pacificislandtravel.com/hawaii/flights/hawaiian_history.html). 4 April 2008; Hawaii's infrastructure seemed prepared for the onslaught of tourism, with the opening of the Hana Belt Road on the island of Maui—astonishingly back in 1926. For more info, see Dawn E. Duensing, "The Hana Belt Road: Paving the Way for Tourism," *Hawaiian Journal of History* 41 (2007). 1-25.

<sup>135</sup> Previous to the 1950s and 1960s, Hawaii had always been a tropical paradise catering to the rich and famous; Sumner La Croix. "Economic History of Hawai'i". EH.Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples. May 1, 2008.

Much to Native Hawaiians' dismay, their islands had been transformed into America's "Disney-like" paradise playground, not a "real place." Specifically, as U.S. tourism to Hawaii increased, Native Hawaiians' control of their islands' and their peoples' image in U.S. popular culture proportionately decreased; in the 1960s, then, the image of Hawaii became increasingly commodified, Americanized and feminized.<sup>136</sup> Since Hawaii had achieved statehood, the portrayal of Native Hawaiians in American movies, television, books, magazines and advertisements increasingly feminized and essentialized stereotypes about elements of Hawaiian culture, spreading the myth that all Hawaiians spent their days attending luaus, doing the hula and surfing, as shall be evidenced below with the movies *Blue Hawaii* (1961) and *Hawaii* (1966), the latter of which was based on Michener's novel of the same name.

Similar to Michener's novels, then, the aforementioned movies as well as other contemporary cultural commodifications evolved into fictional "histories" of the islands in the United States; such stereotypical images of Hawaiians depicted in movies became the vehicle through which many Americans—many of whom never personally visited the islands—perceived the "reality" of life in Hawaii for most Hawaiians.<sup>137</sup> For instance, a 1961 travel preview described Hawaiians as follows, even directly using the word 'essentially' when referring to the fact that:

The Hawaiian islanders are constantly seeking new entertainment, not merely to attract more visitors, but also because they are essentially a fun-loving people themselves.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, Buck, *Paradise Remade* & Jane Desmond, *Staging Tourism*.

<sup>137</sup> Biedler, "South Pacific & American Remembering," 208.

<sup>138</sup> Turner, "Holidays in Hawaii."

Therefore, while the 1960s American tourist gaze fixed itself squarely on the islands of Aloha, Hawaii took center stage at the New York and Seattle worlds' fairs. The ostentatious scope and character of such world's fair exhibits, touting supposedly "authentic" Polynesian foods ("fish and poi"), drinks (mai tai's and Blue Hawaiians) and ceremonies (luaus), reinforced the Cold War argument of Hawaiians as racially "safe others" and Hawaii as a "harmonious racial paradise," which had first enabled Hawaii to achieve statehood: "Because there are so many racial groups here, the islands are able to provide attractions in a variety unmatched anywhere..."<sup>139</sup> As Hawaiian "hula fever" gripped the country in the 1960s, the number of Hawaiian Rooms at hotels, inspired by its earliest incarnation at New York's Lexington Hotel, also surged nationwide in this decade.<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, newspaper advertisements for flights to the islands, and travel to the islands in general, skyrocketed in the 1960s.<sup>141</sup>

Likewise, new travel guide books about Hawaii, such as Euell Gibbons' *The Beachcomber's Handbook*, flooded the U.S. market nationwide.<sup>142</sup> Similar to the World War II soldiers' *A Pocket Guide to Hawaii*, Gibbons' book presented Hawaiians in an

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid; Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*; In the 1960s, Hawaiian culture abounded at the Seattle & New York World's fairs respectively. For instance, according to the *official guide to the 1965 New York World's Fair & the 1962 Seattle World's Fair*, "The island state comes to life in song and dance...as costumed Hawaiian girls meet fairgoers within this melting pot of the Pacific..." Both the Seattle & New York world's fairs also featured Hawaii Pavilions elaborately decorated with palm trees and hula girls, "Aloha Theaters," canoe rides and the Five Volcanoes luau.

<sup>140</sup> Desmond, *Staging Tourism*; "Whoopie! Hawaii, Here We Come Again," *New York Times*, Jan. 21, 1968.

<sup>141</sup> "Whoopie! Hawaii, Here We Come Again," *New York Times*, Jan. 21, 1968.

<sup>142</sup> Jean Hewitt, Review of "A Guide for Gourmet Beachcombers," *New York Times*, Oct. 11, 1967.

“inferior, primitive, barbaric” light.<sup>143</sup> In fact, this handbook narrated the author’s three year adventures of “foraging for food in Hawaii...beckoning the reader with promises of a tropical paradise where food and drink can be plucked from the nearest tree.”<sup>144</sup> Thus, through Gibbons’ eyes, the reader perceived Hawaiians to be “simple, humble, resourceful natives” who lived without the “comforts of civilization” and dined on such “exotic, romantic, wild cuisine as coconuts, avocados, mangoes, manini and maiko (fish);” in truly “native fashion,” Gibbons dined over a “disposable banana or ti leaf plate, washed down with okolehau (a brandy-like beverage from fermented ti root).”<sup>145</sup> In describing the ideal characteristics of a “successful beachcomber,” Gibbons said that he must be “hyperactive, be able to cope with nature in the raw and have no food prejudices.”<sup>146</sup> Finally, the author illustrated his condescending attitude toward what he saw as the authentically “Hawaiian, but backward” way of life:

Why isn’t he (Gibbons) back there now if beachcombing and island life are all that pleasant? Answers the author: I have learned never to try and recapture an experience that is past...<sup>147</sup>

Similarly depicting the Hawaiians as “simple, humble, harmless natives” with a “unique, proud history,” a 1961 *New York Times* travel preview described “King Kamehameha (I) Day, which celebrated the Hawaiian monarch who “united all the islands in the early

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid; Bailey & Farber, “The Fighting Man as Tourist.”

<sup>144</sup> Euell Gibbons, *A Guide for Gourmet Beachcombers*, (David McKay Company, 1967), as cited in Jean Hewitt, Review of “A Guide for Gourmet Beachcombers,” *New York Times*, Oct. 11, 1967.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

nineteenth century.”<sup>148</sup> Thus, unlike earlier Hawaii travel literature which simply offered travel suggestions on points of interest for the tourist, such books as Gibbons and articles as Turner’s bluntly passed clear value judgments about what they saw as the “inferiority of the Native Hawaiian way of life and the superiority of the American way of life.”<sup>149</sup>

Furthermore, as if to suggest the non-threatening, submissive, conquerable nature of the Hawaiian islands from the U.S. perspective, images of Native Hawaiian women dominated most 1960s travel posters and brochures. For instance, in a 1960s United Air Lines poster, a plane flies in the background as a Native Hawaiian woman—an olive-skinned beauty in a muumuu, sporting the stereotypical long, dark hair, with a flower tucked behind her ear—prepared to welcome tourists with a lei. Similarly, a Pan Am poster lured travelers to “Fly to South Sea Isles” with a similar-looking Native Hawaiian woman laying suggestively on a lonely beach as she watched a plane zoom by her.<sup>150</sup>

Just two years after Hawaiian statehood and consistent with glorifying the simple, natural beauty of the islands as an American tourist tropical paradise while emphasizing the inferiority and submissiveness of the Hawaiian people, Elvis’ movie *Blue Hawaii* (1961) really epitomized the image of the islands as America’s “Exotic Eden” and fantastical “Polynesian Paradise.”<sup>151</sup> The movie focused on the playful, carefree

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<sup>148</sup> Turner, “Holidays in Hawaii.”

<sup>149</sup> Desmond, *Staging Tourism*, 54-55.

<sup>150</sup> Hawaii Airline & Travel Posters/Postcards, 1910-1970.” *Island Art Store*.  
[www.islandartcards.com](http://www.islandartcards.com)

<sup>151</sup> “Blue Hawaii Opens,” *New York Times Review*, 1961; “Opening Sequence” (scene name) in Norman Taurog’s (director) *Blue Hawaii*, Paramount Pictures, 1961; As in the statehood campaign, Hawaii is not depicted as a “real place” in *Blue Hawaii*, but as the ultimate fantasy paradise.

character of Chad Gates (Elvis) in playful, carefree Hawaii, a returning GI who preferred working in the tourist industry than in his wealthy father's pineapple business. Demonstrating a celebratory, patriotic mood about Hawaii's recent achievement of statehood, the film's theatrical trailer promised a "Waikiki Welcome" from the "Newest, Most Shining Star on the Flag."<sup>152</sup> In fact, direct references to Hawaii's the importance of Hawaii's statehood, as well as its "growing, booming tourist business" also pervaded the movie. For instance, Elvis and his girlfriend Maile Duval (Joan Blackman) discussed the tourist boom in the islands, almost as if they are not so subtly promoting tourism to the islands, as well as national pride:

Elvis: "Hawaii's got a big future...I want to be a part of it...This state is growing by leaps and bounds, and has more visitors than any other state in the union... Your (tourist) business is booming, right?  
Maile: Yes, it is.  
Elvis: "That's it then. I'll be a tourist guide."<sup>153</sup>

Later, when Elvis explained to his mother that he'd met many "nice people" while working as a tour guide, his mother criticized tourists, remarking to him: "Nonsense, tourists aren't people. They're tourists."<sup>154</sup> While the movie largely celebrated Hawaii's statehood and American tourism to the islands—almost serving as Elvis' picture postcard to the U.S. tourist market—his mother's condescending attitude toward tourists suggested the unwelcome onslaught of mass tourism to Hawaii for its residents.

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<sup>152</sup> "Opening Sequence" (scene name) in Norman Taurog's (director) *Blue Hawaii*, Paramount Pictures, 1961.

<sup>153</sup> "The Tourist Guide" (scene name) in Norman Taurog's (director) *Blue Hawaii*, Paramount Pictures, 1961.

<sup>154</sup> "My Son, the Chaffeur" (scene name) in Norman Taurog's (director) *Blue Hawaii*, Paramount Pictures, 1961

While “romantic sunsets” and “moonlit nights” beckoned travelers to Hawaii’s “sun-drenched shores,” Elvis, serving as American movie-goers’ “personal tour guide,” promised viewers the “vacation of their life” with the “Musical Lu-Wow of the Year.”<sup>155</sup> In the opening sequence, as the film treated the audience to a virtual cornucopia of stunningly beautiful scenery, such as Hawaii’s “tranquil, calm, turquoise-blue waters, spectacularly colorful, brilliant sunsets, rainbows, playful dolphins and white, sandy, soft beaches,” a smiling picture of Elvis appeared as the soothing, calming sounds of his perfectly pitched pipes sweetly sang the film’s signature tune, “Blue Hawaii.”<sup>156</sup> Upon his return to Hawaii after two years in the military, Elvis illustrated the supposedly perfect, unchanged beauty, “lovely sameness” of the islands over time: “When I was over in Europe, I used to think it would change. But it (Hawaii) hasn’t. It’s still beautiful.”<sup>157</sup>

As the above scene implied that Hawaii’s essence lay in its character as a “beautiful, not a real, place,” other later scenes illustrated an imposition of Western values and culture on Hawaiians after statehood, as well as the implied inferiority and primitive “incivility” of the Hawaiian people.<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, these scenes also reinforced traditional, over-generalized stereotypes and myths about Native Hawaiians.

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<sup>155</sup> “Opening Sequence” (scene name) in Norman Taurog’s (director) *Blue Hawaii*, Paramount Pictures, 1961. Elvis shot two other movies shot in *Hawaii, Girls! Girls! Girls!* (1962) and *Paradise, Hawaiian Style* (1965); Also, in 2002, Jerry Hopkins’ book *Elvis in Hawaii* (Bess Press) shows off the visual spectacle of beautiful Elvis in beautiful Hawaii, much like the movie *Blue Hawaii*.

<sup>156</sup> “Blue Hawaii Opens,” *New York Times Review*, 1961.

<sup>157</sup> “The Shack” (scene name) in Norman Taurog’s (director) *Blue Hawaii*, Paramount Pictures, 1961; Again, the movie puts a positive “Polynesian spin” on Gilbert Osofsky’s “tragic sameness” argument about the stagnant ugliness of life in the ghetto, in *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto, Negro New York, 1890-1930*. (Ivan R. Dee Publishers, 1996).

<sup>158</sup> “Blue Hawaii Opens,” *New York Times Review*, 1961.

During the scene “Chad Returns,” Elvis’ girlfriend Maile said that she was angry with Elvis for kissing the stewardess as he left an airplane when he came back from his wartime stint in Europe. Similarly, in an obvious allusion to the feminine submissiveness of the islands in its relationship with the United States, Maile commented that “while my French blood tells me to be angry with you (Elvis)...my Hawaiian blood tells me not to be upset.”<sup>159</sup> Likewise, in a scene entitled “Schoolgirl Tour,” Chad severely distorted and oversimplified the history of U.S. imperialism in Hawaii: “Since 1778, we’ve been welcoming mahalini (newcomers) and wahalini (women) to these beautiful islands.”<sup>160</sup>

Similarly, when Elvis attended Maile’s grandmother’s birthday party, Elvis gave her a European music box for her birthday. To reinforce the value and importance of his “Western gift,” Elvis said that “it plays a European love song, but they’re the same in any language;” subsequently, as he serenaded Maile’s grandmother, who donned a “traditional” Hawaiian violent muumuu, with the tune, “Can’t Help Falling in Love With You,” Elvis demonstrated that love truly was the “universal language.”<sup>161</sup>

In yet another series of *Blue Hawaii*’s endorsement of Western impositions upon Hawaiian culture and glorification of Hawaiian mythical stereotypes, a group of Native

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<sup>159</sup> “Chad Returns” (scene name) in Norman Taurog’s (director) *Blue Hawaii*, Paramount Pictures, 1961.

<sup>160</sup> “Schoolgirl Tour” (scene name) in Norman Taurog’s (director) *Blue Hawaii*, Paramount Pictures, 1961; For more info on US imperialism in Hawaii, see Walter LeFeber, *The New Empire*. As in this scene, Schoolgirl Tour, the movie frequently used “Hawaiian” words such as aloha (Hello) and mahalo (Thank You), among others).

<sup>161</sup> “Grandmother’s Birthday Party” (scene name) in Norman Taurog’s (director) *Blue Hawaii*, Paramount Pictures, 1961. In a similar scene in the movie *Hawaii (1966)*, starring Julie Andrews, which was based on Michener’s novel about his experiences in the South Pacific, a reverend and his wife attempted to impose European laws about adultery on what they saw as the “scantly clad, primitive natives.”

Hawaiian men, shirtless and clad in only aloha wraps as they rowed toward him in a canoe, welcomed Elvis home with a song and a blow on the conch shell, a so-called sign of Hawaiian “brotherhood.” Once the men reached shore, though, Elvis assumed control of the music, directing them with his hands, as a conductor would direct his orchestra. However, no one questioned Elvis’ authority to lead the Native Hawaiian men in a performance of their own culture; thus, these men took a back seat to Elvis musically speaking—harmonizing behind him. By referring to them as “slap happy,” Elvis also jokingly mocked the way in which his Native Hawaiian friends made rhythm by slapping their bodies as they sung in harmony.<sup>162</sup>

Likewise, as they performed at a luau, Native Hawaiian men, wearing brightly-colored aloha shirts and playing bongo drums, declared “Let’s Rock,” thus suggesting Hawaiian acceptance of and assimilation into America’s 1960s rock ‘n’ roll musical culture; this scene, then, on some level, signified the loss of “authentic” Hawaiian culture and music. Thus, Elvis sporting a pristine white suit, led the “simple natives” in song, shaking maracas and flowers as he “shook his pelvis” to the music.<sup>163</sup> While Elvis performed this song alongside his politically correct, half-Hawaiian, half-French girlfriend, it was clear that their interracial relationship received much less scrutiny than had the respective love relationships of a white soldier and Polynesian woman in South

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<sup>162</sup> “Aloha Oe” & “Slap Happy” (scene names) in Norman Taurog’s (director) *Blue Hawaii*, Paramount Pictures, 1961

<sup>163</sup> “Rock a Hula Baby” (scene names) in Norman Taurog’s (director) *Blue Hawaii*, Paramount Pictures, 1961.

Pacific, released just two years earlier.<sup>164</sup>

In other scenes during which Elvis displayed a clear knowledge of Hawaiian culture, Elvis spoke authoritatively as he scolded young female tourists for not participating in the Hukilau: “If you don’t pull the net, you don’t eat the fish.”<sup>165</sup> Amidst sparkling Tiki torches, slack key guitar playing and this group fishing expedition, Native Hawaiian men repeatedly chanted “Huke” so as to attract the fish; such chanting, as well as the fact that many of the men were barely dressed, reinforced Americans’ preconceptions of Hawaiians as “primitive, primordial and uncivilized.”<sup>166</sup> Similar to the Hukilau scene, the luau in which Elvis once again appeared front-and-center—flanked by beautiful, alluring Native Hawaiian women “clad in coconut bras and grass skirts”—occurred inside the hotel, perhaps designating the event as “less than primitive” this way; Native Hawaiian men also appeared shirtless as they played the bongo drums. In keeping with the “happy” nature of the islands where “life was a picnic,” Elvis had his own happy ending, wedding Maile in a “traditional” Hawaiian wedding on the water.<sup>167</sup>

Thus, the film’s sequences, such as the luau and Hukelau scenes respectively, essentialized Hawaiians as people who lived on a fantasy island, “drinking mai tais and

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<sup>164</sup> This was of course, despite the intense racial tension in the U.S. at this time. For more info on the Civil Rights movement, see Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*.

<sup>165</sup> “Hukilau” (scene names) in Norman Taurog’s (director) *Blue Hawaii*, Paramount Pictures, 1961; The Hukilau was a Polynesian practice in which an entire village or community assisted in catching fish, and was also accompanied by a song.

<sup>166</sup> Similar to Elvis’ perceptions of Native Hawaiians in the “Hukilau” scene, a scene in the film *Hawaii* (1966) in which a priest refuses help from the “heathen, primitive medical methods of the Hawaiians when they offer to help deliver his baby,” reinforces this perception as well.

<sup>167</sup> “Hawaiian Sunset” (scene names) in Norman Taurog’s (director) *Blue Hawaii*, Paramount Pictures, 1961; This scene reinforces the perception that nothing bad really happens in paradise, as in the director’s choice to depict most of the negative scenes in *From Here to Eternity*...

eating “fish and poi” all day, instead of as real people with jobs, lives and hardships, many of which resulted directly from the growth of Hawaiian tourism from the 1940s to the 1970s.<sup>168</sup> After the hula performance, an obnoxious tourist, completely objectifying Hawaiian women whom many Americans viewed as “exotic” and sexually promiscuous, commented to Elvis in the movie that the Hawaiian women “sure knew how to shake their grass.”<sup>169</sup>

Furthermore, in this scene and throughout the movie, Elvis repeatedly co-opted Hawaiian culture and practices as if they were his own. Similar to the “Aloha Oe” and “Slap Happy” scenes, in which he “directed” Native Hawaiians in singing and playing instruments, Elvis, the ultimate embodiment of white America on the natives’ island, always stood as the “main attraction” of every scene, not the Native Hawaiians.<sup>170</sup> Therefore, after statehood, this symbolized the ever-increasing control and influence of America in lives of Native Hawaiians, for good or for ill; Native Hawaiians regretted the role they had played in their own undoing by attracting tourism to their shores.

Similar to Elvis’ character in *Blue Hawaii*, between 1940 and 1970, the U.S. tourist and pop culture “powers-that-be” assumed control of and transformed the

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<sup>168</sup> Desmond, *Staging Tourism*; “Blue Hawaii Opens,” *New York Times Review*, 1961.

<sup>169</sup> As in “Blue Hawaii,” which objectifies Native Hawaiian women as “hula girls,” the movie *Hawaii (1966)* depicts young, naked Native Hawaiian women swimming out to boats to meet European ships, implying that Hawaiian women were highly sexual promiscuous. Such portrayals of Native Hawaiian women suggest a loss of agency for Hawaiian women in relationship to the Hawaiian tourist culture. Thus, as the image of Hawaii becomes more feminized, mainly with the growth of tourism in the mid-to-late twentieth century—designating Hawaiian women more as sexual objects—women proportionately lose their negotiating power. However, in response to the many negative social problems resulting from tourism in Hawaii, Native Hawaiian women respond by forming the Hawaiian Women’s Legislative Caucus in the 1970s and 1980s. See the 1970s, “Hawaiian Renaissance,” for more information on the women’s legislative caucus.

<sup>170</sup> “Blue Hawaii Opens,” *New York Times Review*, 1961; Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*.

Hawaiian image in the American imagination—from a “real, far-off island” to a carefree, fantastical, feminized paradise.<sup>171</sup> Over the course of the twentieth century, then, the tug-of-war between cultural imperialism and Hawaiian agency in their culture waged on, with Native Hawaiians finally pushing back in the mid-to-late 1960s and early 1970s in the guise of the Hawaiian Renaissance.<sup>172</sup>

### **1970s: Tourism vs. The Hawaiian Renaissance**

During the 1970s, travel and tourism to Hawaii surged to all-time highs for the islands which had become a U.S. state just a decade earlier. Between 1960 and 1970, the annual number of tourists to Hawaii more than tripled—from 300,000 to 1.8 million; this represents the largest increase in tourism over the period between 1940 and 1970.<sup>173</sup> Similarly, even more airlines began to offer regular jet flights to the islands of Aloha from the mainland U.S. Additionally, the availability of more dispensable income in the U.S. meant that Hawaii was no longer the premier paradise playground for the rich and famous, as it had been in the 1920s and 1930s, but a more accessible paradise for all who wished to escape to its sunny shores.<sup>174</sup> To meet this demand, the number of hotels on the island of Maui alone tripled from 1970 to 1980; the popularity of such movies as *From Here to Eternity* and *Blue Hawaii* further showcased the beauty of the islands for a mass audience, even more so than it had during World War II. In fact, the popularity of the

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<sup>171</sup> Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*.

<sup>172</sup> John Dominis Holt, *On Being Hawaiian* (Topgallant Publishing, 1976); Davianna Pomaika'i McGregor, “Kaho’olawe: Rebirth of the Sacred,” *Amerasia Journal* 28 (2002), 3, 68-83.

<sup>173</sup> Sumner La Croix. "Economic History of Hawai'i". EH.Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples. May 1, 2008.

<sup>174</sup> Mansel G. Blackford. *Fragile Paradise: The Impact of Tourism on Hawaii*. (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2001

movies themselves earned them a place in the “history” of the islands as well; it seems that the films, as entertainment “commodifications” of the islands, had been mythologized as part of the island’s history.<sup>175</sup>

Despite this virtual explosion in tourism to Hawaii during the 1970s, particularly from the mainland U.S., a fascinating phenomenon simultaneously evolved among Native Hawaiians. Perhaps as a knee-jerk reaction against the tourist boom, Hawaiians initiated a distinct cultural resurgence in this period, which focused on recapturing the traditional “kanaka maoli” culture; this refers to the original inhabitants of the Hawaiian islands, most of whom died off after contact with Europeans. Soon, the enthusiasm for awakening ethnic consciousness spread across the islands like wildfire. In direct defiance of the tourist throngs which swelled their shores, Native Hawaiians proudly and unapologetically began performing the hula and holding luaus for their own enjoyment, far away from the fixed gaze of tourists. Outspoken Hawaiian activists of this cultural rebirth, such as Walter Ritte, spoke boldly against what he saw as the tourist industry’s “invasion” of his island home:

I hate tourists. Oh, I don’t hate the tourist person—I hate the industry. We have no control over that industry. It’s like a malignant cancer that’s eating up all of our beaches, all of the places that are profound for our culture. It’s grabbing them. They take the best.<sup>176</sup>

Such blunt, harsh criticism of the tourist industry sharply contrasted with that of earlier members of the elite Native Hawaiian community and business interests who had first

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<sup>175</sup> Biedler, “*South Pacific & American Remembering*.”

<sup>176</sup> Walter Ritte, “Interview,” *Honolulu*, 1982, p. 68, as cited in George H. Lewis, “Style in Revolt: Music, Social Protest, & the Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance,” in *International Social Science Review* 62 (1987), 4: 168-177.

attracted American tourist interests to the islands just after annexation. Once again, the tourist culture that these elite Native Hawaiians had helped to co-construct—a culture in which many more native Hawaiians participated and perpetuated—had now morphed into a phenomenon beyond their control, a source of resentment and social problems despite the boon tourism provided to the economy.<sup>177</sup>

### **Hawaiian Renaissance: Ladies, Start Your Social Consciousness**

Throughout the campaign for statehood, Native Hawaiians, many of whom were women, had believed that U.S. statehood would translate into improved civil rights and a better quality of life. However, during the Hawaiian Renaissance, Hawaiian women realized the error of their ways, recognizing how U.S. tourism had gradually led to a meteoric rise in the cost of living as well as to a surge in homelessness. Therefore, Hawaiian women—who ironically served as the ultimate icon of Hawaii in much of the 1970s tourist literature—played a crucial role in crusades for civil and equal rights, anti-poverty and anti-homelessness, social problems resulting directly from the “growing pains” of U.S. tourism. As such, the Hawaiian Women’s Legislative Caucus, specifically created to address Hawaii’s new social crises as well as women’s issues, emerged in the early

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<sup>177</sup> Despite Native Hawaiian backlash against tourism and an attempt to reclaim Hawaiian culture for themselves during the Renaissance, television shows such as the *Brady Bunch in Hawaii* continued to essentialize and perpetuate many supposed “authentic” Hawaiian characteristics, such as the luau, the conch shell and the tiki as a bad omen when Greg crashed while surfing; However, *Hawaii 5-0*, named to honor Hawaii as the 50<sup>th</sup> state, marked a shift to portraying Hawaii as more of a “real place,” where crime, violence and other “bad things,” such as violent car chases can take place; Hawaii was no longer simply a “peaceful paradise” as portrayed by Elvis in *Blue Hawaii*. Thus, *Hawaii 5-0* lessens the romanticizing of Hawaii’s public presentation in popular culture.

1980s; more Native Hawaiian women also joined the Congressional ranks in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>178</sup>

Therefore, statehood proved a double-edged sword for Hawaiian women, for as statehood led to a spike in tourism, this opened the door to new economic opportunities. Yet, statehood, and ultimately, tourism simultaneously created new social problems against which Hawaiian women resolved to take an active stance. However, in response to these new problems on the islands, such social advocacy also infused Hawaiian women with agency to assume a more active role in politics and public advocacy during the Hawaiian Renaissance.<sup>179</sup>

### **The Hawaiian Renaissance: Play It Again, John Holt**

While the Hawaiian Renaissance inspired Native Hawaiian women to crusade for social causes, ethnic pride also surfaced across many facets of Hawaiian life, like the rebirth of such native Hawaiian languages as Pidgin English and an increase in Hawaiian studies. However, no aspect of Hawaiian culture was revived as much as that of Hawaiian music.<sup>180</sup> In fact, Alphonse Silberman's *The Sociology of Music* argued that the study of music represented the "study of a social force."<sup>181</sup> In Hawaii, music, which permeates all

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<sup>178</sup> Silva, 77.

<sup>179</sup> Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar. "Rainbow Radicalism: The Rise of Radical Ethnic Nationalism," in *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*, edited by Peniel E. Joseph, New York: Routledge Press, 2006.

<sup>180</sup> In the 1970s, the historiography on Hawaii began to shift away from political history, and toward its social and cultural history, as evidenced by Silva's *Aloha Betrayed* & Haunani Kay Trask's *From a Native Daughter, Colonialism & Sovereignty in Hawaii*, (Honolulu: Univ. Of Hawaii, 1993).

<sup>181</sup> Alphonse Silberman, *The Sociology of Music*, (London: Rutledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 32, as cited in George H. Lewis, "Style in Revolt: Music, Social Protest, & the Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance," in *International Social Science Review* 62: 4 (1987). 168-177.

aspects of Hawaiian culture from luaus to fishing chants to the hula, was certainly a force with which to be reckoned; native Hawaiians perceived their music as a way to express pride in their ethnic identity as well as a way to communicate their close connection with nature and the land:

Hawaiian views on nature are the subject of many songs and contain a true respect for nature. Many of the songs now openly express, if one understands the words, the language—pain, revolution; it expresses the emotional reaction the Hawaiians are feeling to the subversion of their lifestyle. <sup>182</sup>

In fact, some Hawaiians said that the U.S. military post-statehood occupation of the Hawaiian island Kaho’olawe alone inspired the Hawaiian Renaissance. As such, many of the same Native Hawaiians who had advocated so fervently for statehood to improve their civil rights now regretted that decision; perhaps in a direct affront to movies such as *Blue Hawaii*, which glorified tourism to the islands, songs such as “Hawaii ‘78” bluntly criticized American tourism and imperial interest in the islands. <sup>183</sup> Whatever the catalyst, native island music, such as traditionalist slack key guitar, resurfaced with a vengeance in the 1970s. <sup>184</sup> In response to the call for preserving Hawaiian culture and music, George Kanahele, who coined the phrase “Hawaiian Renaissance” to refer to this period of psychological renewal among Native Hawaiians, also established the Hawaiian Music

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<sup>182</sup> George Helm, “Language-Pain Revolution,” *Ha’lono Mele*, 1976, p. 2, as cited in George H. Lewis, “Style in Revolt: Music, Social Protest, & the Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance,” in *International Social Science Review* 62: 4 (1987), 168-177.

<sup>183</sup> Davianna Pomaika’i McGregor, “Kaho’olawe: Rebirth of the Sacred,” *Amerasia Journal* 28: 3 (2002), 68-83.

<sup>184</sup> “Slack key guitar refers to an experimenting with tuning a guitar, wherein the player tunes down various strings to create an open chord; the key to this art is in the art of experimentation. This has become such a distinctive and significant feature of island culture that individual families have their own favorite tunings,” in Tim Brookes, *Guitar: An American Life* (New York: Grove Press, 2005); Musicians such as Keola and Kapono Beamer, slack key guitarists, as well as musicians Gabby Pahuini & the Sons of Hawaii, Dennis Pavao and Ledward Ka’apana were among the most prominent musical leaders of the Renaissance.

Foundation in 1977.<sup>185</sup>

Mainly, Hawaiians sought to wrest the richness of their musical tradition away from the “grubby hands” of American interests, who had co-opted the “native Hawaiian” sound to meet the growing American obsession with Hawaiian culture throughout the twentieth century. The prevalence of such “slick and symbolically empty music” as Al Jolson’s “Yaaka Hula Hickey Dula (1930s)” to Bing Crosby’s “Sweet Leilani (1939)” angered Native Hawaiians for claiming authenticity as “uniquely Hawaiian” in the mainland’s Hawaiian Rooms, hotels and at such venues as the New York world’s fair.<sup>186</sup> Therefore, Hawaiian musicians Gabby Pahuni and Dennis Pavao, began recording songs in Native Hawaiian, like “E Kuu Morning Dew” and “Nankuli Blues.”<sup>187</sup>

While the surge in Native Hawaiian music symbolized the rebirth of Hawaiian culture in the 1970s, John Dominis Holt, himself a Native Hawaiian who penned the infamous short book, *On Being Hawaiian*, first openly broached the issue of Native Hawaiian ethnic identity (Holt):

Yes, I am proud of being a Hawaiian...to be linked to the heritage that gave the fiftieth state some of its blessed uniqueness of character...a heritage which laid the foundations for inter-racial harmony in Hawaii, which gave the world the word aloha, and which has given me certain advantages of perception...<sup>188</sup>

In response to a negative newspaper editorial about Hawaiians, Holt decried the encroachment of U.S. tourism and imperial interests on the islands, calling for Pacific islanders to “protect the great legacy of ancient Hawaiian culture...the irreplaceable

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<sup>185</sup> Lewis, 170.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, 171.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>188</sup> John Dominis Holt. *On Being Hawaiian*. (Honolulu: Booklines Hawaii Ltd., Feb. 1995) 20.

treasures and traditions...the hula...the villages...and the beaches” against the “rivers of (U.S.) concrete and steel ravaging the unspoiled wilderness of our sacred valleys...”<sup>189</sup> .

Similar to contemporary Hawaiian music, Holt also extolled Polynesian culture for its deep respect and reverence for nature:

We are the links to the ancients...connected by inheritance to their mana, their wisdom, their superb appreciation of what it is to be human...this is the foundation of the aloha spirit...to understand the value of loving what it is in nature...living with it in a balance of co-existence, respecting all things of the earth, including rocks and dirt, as living things...related somehow through a cosmic connection to ourselves...<sup>190</sup>

Not only did Holt praise Hawaiians, who unlike mainland Americans, possessed the “grace of the aloha spirit,” but he also identified the Native Hawaiian struggle with that of African Americans in the civil rights movement.<sup>191</sup> Asserting that Polynesians have been “wronged cruelly,” Holt demanded the restoration of self-respect for Hawaiians, the right to “be ourselves as Polynesians of today, as our black brothers and sisters have fought so hard to regain a respect for blackness, for Africanness in the turbulence of recent years.”<sup>192</sup>

Therefore, it is important to recognize that neither Holt’s claim upon authentic Hawaiian identity, nor the Hawaiian Renaissance, occurred in a cultural vacuum; he indeed had a receptive audience for his plea. In fact, the Civil Rights movement inspired

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 9-10; Considering how Hawaiians relied upon Alexander Winchell’s racist assessment of Hawaiians in *Preadamites* as superior to blacks to argue their “non-blackness” to become a state, this sudden, common identification with African-Americans is rather ironic. For more on Winchell’s complete theory of racial hierarchy, see Jane Desmond., “Picturing Hawaii: The “Ideal” Native & The Origins of Tourism, 1880-1915. 484-485.

a spate of racial and ethnic pride across the United States in the late 1960s and 1970s. As such, in this time period, Americans began referring to themselves as “Irish American,” “Italian American” and “Polish American.” No longer was anyone simply satisfied with being labeled as “American;” thus, Americans became increasingly obsessed with discovering their ancestral background, a persistent trend which has birthed a plethora of “family tree” research web sites.<sup>193</sup> Likewise, Hispanics, long classified as an ethnic group, demanded a racial classification along with their ethnic “label,” arguing that it was crucial to their group identity, especially considering that they will eventually account for the largest non-white population in the country.<sup>194</sup>

### **Conclusion—Hawaii: Tourist Trap, Perfect Paradise, Ethnic Eden or Pop Culture Icon?**

During the twentieth century, tourism became the major economic force in Hawaii. However, it is crucial to recognize that Native Hawaiians and the United States government co-created this tourist culture. In fact, Native Hawaiians actively inscribed their islands as “magical and beautiful” in the American tourist imagination.<sup>195</sup> After World War II exposed the beauty of Hawaii to American GI’s and to a mass tourist market, Native Hawaiians soon lost control of the exclusive “magical island fantasy” they themselves created; they would not assert their Hawaiian identity until the Hawaiian

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<sup>193</sup> Felicity Barringer, “The Nation: Ethnic Pride Confounds the Census,” *New York Times*, May 9, 1993.

<sup>194</sup> Barringer; For more information on the ethnic resurgence in the United States beginning in the 1970s, see Jonathan D. Hill, *History, Power & Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992* (Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 1996).

<sup>195</sup> Soile Veijola & Eeva Jokinen. “The Body in Tourism.” *Theory, Culture & Society*. (Sage: London, Thousand Oaks and New Dehli). 125-151.

Renaissance in the 1970s.<sup>196</sup> Shortly following the World War II, U.S. popular culture soon commodified this “perfect island” image in movies, novels, television, travel guidebooks, and the hospitality industry; the hula was now “hip” and “trendy,” as it was an “authentically Hawaiian” tradition being carried out on the mainland United States.<sup>197</sup> Therefore, World War II became the first of many significant turning points for Hawaii’s evolution into an exclusively tourist culture. Statehood, Cold War Orientalism, the Cuban Revolution, movies and television shows, such as *South Pacific* and the *Brady Bunch*, among other pop culture phenomenon, all inscribed Hawaii as ‘the’ ultimate paradise for U.S. tourists.

This depiction of Hawaii as a “perfect paradise” created tension between the popular, idealistic representation of Hawaii versus the reality of how Hawaiians saw themselves and reacted to the harsh economic realities of their (tourist) economy. Between 1940 and 1970, then, the U.S. tourist and pop culture altered the Hawaiian image in the American imagination—from a real, distant place to a premier, feminized paradise.<sup>198</sup> This century-long tug-of-war between cultural imperialism and Hawaiian agency in their culture waged on, with Native Hawaiians finally responding in the mid-to-late 1960s and early 1970s in the guise of the Hawaiian Renaissance; Native Hawaiian

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<sup>196</sup> John Dominis Holt. *On Being Hawaiian*. (Honolulu: Booklines Hawaii Ltd., Feb. 1995); Elinor Langer. “Famous Are The Flowers: Hawaiian Resistance Then & Now.” *Special Issue, The Nation*. April, 28, 2008.

<sup>197</sup> “Placing the Market & Marketing the Place.” *Environment & Planning D, Society & Space*. Vol. 11, No. 6, 1993. 663-688; Jane Desmond. *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World*. (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2001).

<sup>198</sup> Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*.

women also pushed back against the negative impact of tourism by replacing their roles as tourist boons to social activists.<sup>199</sup>

However, because this paper explored the evolution of this tourist culture over thirty years of the twentieth century, one can recognize Hawaiians' persistent agency in their own fate for good or for ill, alternately vacillating between resistance, collusion and accommodation to Americanization. Over the course of this paper's sweeping chronological time span, the change in public representations of Hawaii as increasingly feminine and less controlled by the Native Hawaiians also surfaced. While past Native Hawaiians' participation in or resistance to the tourist culture still impact Native Hawaiians today, the question remains as to who retains ultimate control over the tourist culture, Hawaiians or the U.S. government; another question lingers, then, concerning who bears ultimate responsibility for Hawaii's present-day social problems that largely resulted from the tourist economy, such as the alarmingly high rates of homelessness, the painfully high cost of living and the gradual decimation of the Native Hawaiian population.

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<sup>199</sup> John Dominis Holt, *On Being Hawaiian* (Topgallant Publishing, 1976); Davianna Pomaika'i McGregor, "Kaho'olawe: Rebirth of the Sacred," *Amerasia Journal* 28: 3 (2002), 68-83.







