

Deculturation, Assimilation, Accommodation and Ethnic Reconstruction: Lessons from Hawai`i*

Introduction

It was noticed many years ago that Hawai`i is a "laboratory" for social study. There are two main reasons for this. First, from the time of the migration of Polynesians from the South Pacific to Hawaii, perhaps 2000 years ago, Hawaiians produced, without interference or influence from the outside world, a vibrant autarchic, moneyless, but prospering society. This was broken by Captain James Cook in 1778. From a monarchy under Kamehameha I to a colony and then to the 50th of the United States, traditional Hawai`i was transformed to a modern capitalist society with a rapidity that was remarkable. But second, for historically distinct reasons, Hawai`i became a place peopled by many groups, from Asia, the Pacific, and North America and Europe. Even today, no ethnic group constitutes a majority.¹ I want to use this fascinating history to examine, in sketchy fashion, some key themes regarding ethnicity. I begin with the idea of "deculturation."

Deculturation

If we can think of assimilation as the process by which emigrants become socialized to the dominant culture, usually of a "nation-state," we need a term to denote the process by which a colonized culture is transformed by a colonizer. Following Haunani Kay Trask (1984/85, I use the term "deculturation" for this process. It is particularly graphic in Hawai`i's history.

Two opposing attitudes must be rejected. The first, earliest and still too widely assumed posture is the belief that the native culture simply collapsed under the weight of a `superior' Christian civilization. The other, too often promoted by writers who rightly reject this as a Eurocentric provincialism, is to assume that the process is wholly or mostly in the control of the colonizers. The fundamental problem with this attitude is that it makes the colonized passive, almost agentless. This is never the case, even if the nature and degree of participation in the process will be concretely various. More generally, the operative principle is the idea that active agents work with materials at hand which are themselves concretely various across time and space.

We can see this clearly in Hawai`i where deculturation is best described as going through two stages. The first was initiated and was wholly under the control of the Hawaiian royalty themselves; the second was initiated and controlled by the colonizing Americans. In the second stage, the Hawaiians found ways to resist and were able, fortunately, to preserve important aspects of their culture. It remains a critical part of the cultural complex which today is Hawai`i.

The decisive step in the deculturation of Hawaiians was the edict of Queen Ka'ahumanu to abandon the *'Aikapu* (literally `sacred eating'), the center of a highly developed set of practices which governed the life, land practices, and belief system of Hawaiians. She did this just before

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the arrival of the first Christian missionaries (in 1820), became herself a Christian (in 1825) and then instructed her people to be instructed in Christian missionary schools which she instituted. There were, at that time, fewer than one hundred foreigners in Hawai'i; so there is no question of coercion of any sort involved here.

But she had her reasons--and we may judge that they were good reasons. Before Cook, Hawai'i was prosperous, as Sahlins noted, perhaps the first "affluent society." It had *pono*--as understood by the Hawaiians. But within 30 years of Cook's arrival, it was clear that this was no longer the case. During this period, perhaps half the population of perhaps 800,000 had perished, a stunning devastation. We know why. Isolated from the entire world for perhaps 700 years, Hawaiians lacked immunities from the diseases of Europe and Asia. But this explanation was not available to the Queen or to other Hawaiians. The *haoles* (foreigners, and now in general use in Hawai'i, Caucasian foreigners) were not dying; the problem was for the Hawaiians. As Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa (1992: 82) wrote:

In traditional Hawaiian society, the universe was **pono** [in a state of perfect harmony] when the **Mo`i** [what Westerners would call king or high chief] was **pono**. Conversely, when disaster struck, it was because the **Mo`i** was no longer **pono**; he or she had neglected the **kahuna** [priests and priestesses] or offended the **Akua** [Gods or Goddesses] and had to be replaced....

If the old **Akua** did not **ho`omalu** and preserve the **Lahui** [the Hawaiian people], even when the **Mo`i** was as faultless in his **pono** as had been Kamehameha, why should the **Lahui** continue to **malama** [care for, preserve and serve] the **Akua**?... If Kamehameha's **pono** did not save lives what would?

But we are misled if we think that Christianity *replaced* the traditional belief system, either all at once or in the course of the decades which followed. To be sure, it is not easy to provide a easily manageable framework for grasping the transforming belief system, containing as it does, transformed elements of the belief complexes which informed it. Again, the general principle is that active agents worked creatively with the materials at hand. Indeed, although the matter has not been studied, I would argue that even today, the belief system and practices of Hawaiian Christians are, in significant ways, unlike the belief system and practices of European Christians. This is true, of course, of other Christianities in the world, especially perhaps in Korea, Japan and other parts of Asia.

As above, we need to pay attention to the concrete materials which actors have at hand. That the depth of this disaster provoked a crisis is hardly surprising; but if we are to make sense of Ka'ahumanu's decision, we need to enter imaginatively into the "worlds" of the Queen (and her Christian advisors). The importance of this is most dramatic in the argument between Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere regarding the Hawaiian understanding of Captain Cook and the God Lono.² Obeyesekere holds that the Hawaiians, practical people that they were, surely knew that Cook was not a manifestation of Lono. Sahlins is convincing, however, in offering an account which allows us to see how easy it would have been for a Hawaiian to come to the conclusion that he was. But we must keep firmly in mind that the metaphysics of the Hawaiian belief system have

little in common with the metaphysics of the Western Christian belief system and that second, there was debate among Hawaiians at the time as regards the status of Cook. Here, as always, one must also ask pertinently, who was able to gain control of the interpretation which prevailed and why. That is, finally, political questions are unavoidable.

Pertinent also is Obeyeskere's assumption that since he is a Sri Lankan and thus not a European-Caucasian, he is in a privileged position to "understand" Polynesians. Unfortunately, the principle underlying this assumption are too widely held, even by some writers who have made notable contributions to our understanding of colonized societies. While I cannot pursue the point here--Sahlins musters considerable argument against the principle of privileged access--its implicit racism should be evident. Interpretation is always a problem, of course, but as philosophers since Quine have acknowledged, the problem of interpretation begins at home. That is, the epistemological problem of judging whether one has understood some "other" is identical for *all* "others," irrespective of time, or the gender, ethnicity or class location of the parties. Nor, of course, can we ever be sure that we have gotten things right.

But with the adoption--and adaptation--of Christianity, the next very dramatic change, also wrought by Hawaiians, was made easier. Hawaiians lacked utterly a conception of private property; the means of life were considered communal and were organized into a complex system of more or less autarchic sub-divisions called *ahu pua`a*. This ended in 1848 with the *Mahele*.

Two explanations for this dramatic event have largely prevailed. Some have held that it was "forced" on the Hawaiians by *haoles* who wanted to be able to purchase land and then to develop plantation agriculture in Hawai`i. But as above, this makes the Hawaiian royalty agentless or unintelligent; they were either "coerced" or manipulated by "smart" haoles. They surely were not coerced since, as above, the haoles were few in number and had no army behind them. Nor did the haole advisors to the King then envisage what Hawai`i would become.

The other explanation holds that the royalty, seeing that their interests were best served under a system of private property, acted from fundamental greed. There may well something to this view, but it fails to allow that the Hawaiian royalty were neither omiscient nor budding capitalists. Moreover, it disallows the real possibility, argued by Kame'eleihiwa, that there is little reason to assume that the royalty acted consciously against the interests of the common people (the *maka`ainana*).

First, the missionary advisors argued that unless the land of Hawai`i was secured by sanctions of a Western legal system, it would be vulnerable to appropriation by foreigners. And the threat was real. French and British imperialism was proceeding apace, in the Marquesas, Tahiti and New Zealand. Second, the missionary advisors believed, following John Locke, that as the Bible attested, God had given the earth to "mankind in common" to "use and enjoy." Private property was justified on grounds that the "labor of our bodies" is ours and thus that "appropriation" from the common store was justified. The the ruling Ali`i could accept this and build it into the prevailing scheme of land use. As Kame'eleihiwa notes, *Mahele* connotes both divide and share.

As with the ruling *Ali`i*, there is no reason to deny self-interest on the part of the missionaries. Still we must admit the possibility that they believed Hawaiians could be converted into Anglo-American yeoman farmers for the good of all. Subsequent events, of course, proved that benign assumptions of all parties wrong. The *Ali`i* began to sell their extensive holdings to foreigners (and did not become capitalist landlords or entrepreneurs!) and the commoners continued, now without the safeguards of the tradition, to reproduce, as best that they could, the inherited mode of subsistence agriculture. Ultimately, when with developed capitalism, this became impossible, they would pay dearly for their relative success at this. Lacking the education necessary for a modern economy, they would become marginalized in their own nation.

But a class perspective needs here to be added. As with the status of Cook, we cannot speak of "the Hawaiians" as if they had but one voice. Many commoners had a better grasp of their future. Ignored for the most part in all the older accounts, there was a significant petition movement which only recently has been studied. A Maui petition makes the main point clearly. It pointed out that *maka`ainana* were:

...not prepared to compete with foreigners. If you, the chiefs, decide immediately to sell land to foreigners, we shall be overcome...we, to whom the land has belonged from the beginning, shall dwindle away (Quoted from Kame`eleihiwa, p. 11).

The lesson of this episode confirms the earlier point. As above, actors always work with materials at hand; we need to identify the key actors and to have an understanding of the "materials" which both enabled and constrained their decisions. And again, the "colonized" are neither passive nor agentless.

Haoles will come to control the political economy of Hawai`i and will, not uncharacteristically, demand political control as well. After the overthrow of the Queen, the now dominant colonizers worked actively to suppress the culture of Hawaiians, including their language, their forms of worship--which included forms of dance and chanting, and their traditional festivals and celebrations. Again, while usually ignored in older accounts and still not adequately studied, Hawaiians resisted. The language and the traditional hula (the *Kahiko*) very nearly died. But they were preserved for what became the basis of the Hawaiian Renaissance of the 1960s, the basis for the reconstruction of the Hawaiian and then for the Hawaiian movement for sovereignty.

Accommodation

My second concept is "accommodation," a not entirely satisfactory term. The example is the case of the "diaspora" Japanese in Hawai`i.³ After the American Civil War, world market demand for sugar escalated. Haole's had land for plantations, but insufficient numbers of workers. Chinese were brought first, then large numbers of Japanese. Between 1868 and 1890, some 159,000 Japanese immigrated to Hawai`i mainly from Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Kumamoto, Fukuoka and Okinawa Prefectures. Critically also, in addition to family migration, the 'picture bride' movement assured that sex ratios for Japanese would be balanced. This contrasts markedly with

both earlier Chinese and later Filipino migration to Hawai`i, a fact of considerable importance.

There is good reason to assume that ethnic groups have spontaneous suspicion of other different groups. Indeed, difference is always troublesome, perhaps always an easy potential to be exploited. This was surely the case in Hawai`i where the Hawai`i Planter's Association quickly came to see that they could achieve greater effective control over workers if they were divided, beginning with the construction of plantation camps in which ethnic groups lived separately.

A consequence of these two contingent facts in Hawaiian labor history was the capacity of Japanese to reproduce the culture of Japan. Until World War II, Japanese in Hawai`i were, as Gerry Kosasa-Terry will develop in work now in progress, a diaspora community. This was not without problems, of course. One difficulty was the problem of the second generation. As Cindy Kobayashi (1995) notes, "by 1920, 98 percent of the 20,651 Japanese students attended Japanese school in addition to their English school." Moreover, as a consequence of the household structure of immigrants, the overwhelming majority of children in public schools were Japanese. Finally, because among Japanese, sex ratios were balanced, Japanese were able to maintain what for them was desirable: Throughout this period (and well into the post World War II period), there was practically no Japanese outmarriage. Were the Japanese to be assimilated?

The issue exploded in a controversy over Japanese language schools, a response to 1920 legislation aimed directly at what the Territorial legislature, comprised of Hawaiians and Haoles, perceived to be a problem. It was led by Fred Kinzaburo Makino of the *Hawai`i Hochi* and Yasutara Soga of the *Nippon Jiji*. Kobayashi (following Shigehiko Shiramazu) summarizes well the difference:

Soga was interested in cultural assimilation which meant that if individuals decide not to take their children back to Japan, they would "unavoidably" have to "raise them the American way." Makino, on the other hand, considered Soga part of the mentality of "flunkeyism" and insisted that the Japanese must assimilate with American society only on the structural level (1995: 88).

The US Supreme Court vindicated Makino's position. Thus past practices could continue. Whether this was fortunate or not is contested. More important here is the question of what counts as "assimilation"? But other matters first need to be mentioned.

Everyone agrees that World War II was a "watershed" for the Japanese, both in Hawai`i and on the US mainland. I do not consider that experience here, an experience which, of course, is dominated by the fact of internment. I sketch what I take to be the most plausible interpretation of the impact of the war on the Japanese of Hawai`i and comment on problems as we proceed. Everyone also agrees, I think, that the Japanese in Hawai`i were given a forced choice. As Kawahara and Hatanaka, writing in 1943, well summarized the matter:

Many Japanese, prior to the war, lived in a sort of tolerated marginal position, but the war has necessitated the abandoning of this position of "sitting on the fence" between two

cultures. For a very large number of Japanese, mainly the second generation, the choice was an easy one. For the first generation, the situation produced inner conflict.⁴

They were forced to shed their Kimonos and to speak only English in public; they hid their *kamidana* and destroyed their flags and portraits of the imperial family. Many rejected even the traditional dishes and *hashi*.

But this did not amount to assimilation in any useful sense, since to be assimilated is to be accepted, without notice, as a member of the dominant community. As David Hollinger has noted, Euro-Americans have assimilated.⁵ Initially ghettoized and discriminated against (though no European immigrant group was singled out and repressed by the state), Euro-Americans are now all white Americans, and their ethnicity (as in my own case) is purely symbolic.⁶

I follow Kawahara and Hatanaka and call the experience of the Japanese in Hawai`i "accommodation." Accommodation, roughly, is the effort of group to survive in the face of systematic oppression against them. In this regard, I would say that the experience of the Black American is an experience of accommodation--and will remain so until race, like ethnicity, is recognized to be a social construction having no biological meaning.⁷ I would offer also that the history of European Jewry is a combination of both assimilation and accommodation--until 1938 when even those who supposed that they had successfully assimilated were identified as alien and then systematically annihilated in Germany.

But the war also gave the Japanese of Hawai`i an unprecedented opportunity. First, by virtue of their stunning achievements in the US military, the Nisei established that they did not have to take a backseat for any American. Indeed, they do not have to be "American" to be as good any American. Second, when they returned to Hawai`i with the benefits of the GI Bill, they returned to a Hawai`i ready for change.

By the late 1930s, the ethnic divisions which had haunted unions in Hawai`i were already breaking down. The longshoreman of 1940 Port Allen-Ahukini strike refused to be divided in a action which lasted 208 days. In 1946, the communist and mainland led ILWU managed a industry-wide sugar strike. When the HSPA threatened eviction, the union responded that all 33,000 sugar workers would vacate their houses. Of course, this would have created an utterly unmanageable social service problem for the Territorial government. Class consciousness was replacing ethnic consciousness--at least as regard their identities as workers. As we shall note, this bears importantly on the construction of "local" in Hawai`i.

Meanwhile the planters (The Big Five) who had suffered losses during the war began to shift their energies. It was soon clear that tourist development was the answer. The Democratic Party would be the organizing committee.

During the Territorial period (from 1900 until nearly statehood), the government of Hawai`i--the instrument of the Big Five--was constituted only of *haoles* and Hawaiians: Until the *Nisei* came to voting age, they were the only ones who could vote. That Japanese would soon

become a plurality by 1950, perhaps 40% of the potential electorate, and that they might block vote, had been a worry of the ruling Republicans. But their fears were not realized until 1954. George Cooper and Gavan Daws have provided some striking numbers.

From 1960 to 1980, Japanese averaged 50% of the total membership of both houses. From 1955 to 1980, the percentage of Japanese Democrats in the legislature was twice the percentage of Japanese in Hawai'i population...In 1980, with 25% of the population, they were 60% of democratic legislators (1985: 42).

Similarly, *haoles*, Hawaiians and Filipinos were dramatically under-represented. Filipinos had come late as workers and in contrast to the Japanese, they lacked families. There were, accordingly, many fewer second generation Filipinos in Hawai'i at the time.⁸ The relatively small percentage of well-educated middle and upper-class Hawaiians who were active politically were still very much part of the *haole* territorial regime which was thoroughly Republican. They would be the biggest losers in the Democratic "revolution" to follow.

Cooper and Daws summarize:

So a picture emerges of the typical successful legislator of the post-World War II period: a Burns Democrat; of Japanese background, nisei; likely to have been born on an outer island, meaning essentially in a plantation community; an attorney, often with war service (p. 43).

And as their book, *Land and Power in Hawai'i*, makes crystal clear, these same Democratic legislators used their new found power to advance their interests, which fortunately, for them, happened to coincide with the landed interests of the old Oligarchy. Together, they would fashion a new Hawai'i.

Can one now say that this was successful assimilation? In one sense, it obviously was: Japanese in Hawai'i were no longer to be treated as second class citizens; but critically, there were still very much Japanese. Indeed, it is just this which has given rise to the standard interpretation of Japanese success in Hawai'i.⁹

In standard interpretations, Japanese success in Hawai'i (surely the most successful of any non-white immigrant group in America), is attributed to the Japanese-ness of the Japanese. On this view, Japanese in Hawai'i succeeded because they are loyal and hardworking, because they respect all their obligations, but especially *Kodomo no tame ni*, because they are willing to sacrifice. But even if this were true of most Japanese--something very much doubted by Kobayashi--it still would not explain success. Even given the best of personal attributes, success depends upon opportunities for groups as well as individuals--and some good luck to boot.

In the Japanese case, I have sketched what some of these were. Because Japanese generated a second-generation in Hawai'i, school was possible for them. It was not even possible for Filipinos during this same period. Because Hawaiians were always marginal in the plantation

economy and could reproduce their traditional way of life, they did not have to aspire to leave the plantation. Kamehameha Schools, founded in 1887 and restricted to Hawaiians was single-mindedly vocational in its goals.¹⁰ Because World War forced a choice and became a means to prove oneself (and to get away from the plantation!), the opportunity was provided to make heroes of boys. Because their success in War could be used to constitute a myth about themselves, they could assert themselves into a political arena ready for change, and they could succeed simply because they had the numbers. Finally because their interests happily coincided with the interests of the old oligarchy, they could also make money.¹¹

But such is not the case for the *Sansei* and *Yonsei* of Hawai'i. They have grown up in a place which has been dramatically transformed. Hawai'i is now highly dependent on tourism; low-paying, often part-time service jobs dominate. The so-called "paradise tax," representing the high cost of living, is now perhaps 40%. Rentals are perhaps twice the US median and Hawai'i has the worst overcrowding of any state in the US, a rate of 15.9% against the national average of 4.9%.¹² Their BAs and law degrees do not guarantee good jobs in Hawai'i, still less political clout.

Nor is this generation interested in reproducing Japanese culture. Indeed, while as recently as 1950, the Japanese outmarriage rate for males was 7%, it is now 52.7%. One can now say that the Japanese in Hawai'i have "assimilated." But what have they assimilated to?

Assimilation

The parties on all sides of the arguments about Japanese "assimilation" share in assuming that to be assimilated is to become "American." I have already suggested that assimilation, properly understood, is more than this: that it requires also that members of the dominant society accept, without question, that they are (now) American. But there are two other problems pertinent here: First, what is the content of being American and second, how are we to understand the phrase, "members of the dominant society"?

There are different styles or modes of "being American" even if there are some very high level abstractions which might be used to identify the typical American, e.g., their often nearly obsessive individualism, their commitment to a vague notion of "democracy," their belief (common, of course, to some other societies), that they are members of a superior society. But if the paradigmatic American is the White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP), the model for all hyphenated Americans (Italian-Americans, Greek Americans, etc.), Americans in (say) New England exemplify their Americanism in different ways than do Americans in (say) the deep south or California. And some places today, for example, south Florida, where Spanish is heard as much as English, seem oddly American.

As regards the sense of "members of the dominant society," we can say that they constitute the ethnic group which defines what others are to assimilate to. But they could be either the majority of the members of the society or not. Usually, of course, they will be the overwhelming majority: Frenchman, Germans, Japanese. If they are not, then perhaps the idea of deculturation will apply: Members will be expected to assimilate to the culture defined by a minority, as in Hawai'i or other "colonized" societies. Hawai'i fits neither of these models adequately. At the same time, its history allows us to see the flexibility in the social construction of ethnicity. The key

concept for this is the ethnic construct "local," a relatively fluid binary term in wide use in Hawai`i.

I have already suggested that Hawaiian culture remains pertinent to the culture of Hawai`i and I suggested that the forced choice for the Japanese in Hawai`i produced by the War involved at least a three-way ambivalence: to Japan, to Hawai`i and perhaps less critically to the United States. I noted also that during the fight over Japanese language schools, Fred Makino insisted that the Japanese needed to "assimilate" with American society "only on the structural level." The sense I give to this is just that they should remain Japanese, yet exploit all of the rights of Americans: They would retain their ethnic identity in a *pluralist American society*. The strategy worked and, for better or for worse, it has been the model for other groups in Hawai`i.¹³ I suggested also that with mainland-led unionization, class consciousness submerged ethnic consciousness among plantation workers. A further consequence of this was the class polarization between the *haole* managers and workers who shared in being non-*haoles*. All of this bears on the construction of "local" as a class and ethnic category.

There are, I think, three definitions of local, all still in use. First, someone is 'local' in Hawai`i if one is "born and raised" here. During the plantation period, non-locals were few and easily identified: the military and the very few tourists. The *haoles* were *kama`~ina* and there was, accordingly, no contradiction in referring to someone as a local *haole*.

Second, there is a racialized version which was an unintended consequence of the formation of class consciousness among plantation workers. As Kiyoshi Ikeda (1951) has argued, with unionization, the ethnic divisions between workers was mollified and along with this, came an easy bifurcation between "us" and "them"--the *haole* planters who owned and controlled the means of life. The result was the emergence of the idea of locals as non-*haoles*. Despite recent immigration from Asia and the Pacific, and for reasons suggested by our third conception, the idea today has considerable force.

The third conception, then, was offered in 1975 by Eric Yamamoto. He holds that "local" symbolizes "people who belong to Hawai`i--however defined--and their struggle to retain or regain control of Hawai`i and its future" and second, it symbolizes an appreciation by these people of "the goodness" of the land, people and cultures of Hawai`i.

To get the flavor of this I offer some texts by "locals."¹⁴

It takes a special understanding of Hawaii's history, its communities, its people, its cultures, to bring to life a side of Hawaii that outsiders here to exploit Hawaii can never appreciate.

A student writes:

Well look at my side of things. Suppose I came over to your house and said you weren't dressing right and you weren't living right and this and that. It's a lot

deeper than that, I guess, but that's the way we feel.

*You mainlanders come over here and try to run the show, and we are supposed to be your servants. The trouble is, we are slaves to your system. You've taught us to need your money and your conveniences, but we'll never respect you.*¹⁵

But it is not only mainland *haoles* who are a problem:

*The Japanese investors are the same as the mainland Haoles. They view Hawaii as a source of either investment or pleasure, not as a place of people.*¹⁶

Another writes:

It makes my blood boil when I see all the hotels, stores, ships in our harbors, servicemen on our streets and tourists jamming up everything.

I get plenty burned up when I think of what's happening to my brothers and sisters and our island. But we still have our pride.

Finally:

Having been born in Hawai'i I have seen the slow death of an island and its people. Rapid social change is leading our island to a confrontation it must face up to. People say why can't locals stop this madness. The locals can't stop it because they don't know how. We've been indoctrinated into believing that the system has people's interest at heart. They tell locals that they never had it so good. The people see this process as a fact of life. What they don't see is the genocide of the self.

There is a good deal that might be said with reference to the phenomena illustrated in these texts (including explaining recent tensions which have erupted into violence in Hawai'i), but I want to concentrate on the question of ethnic construction and assimilation.

I suggest that "local" is class-generated ethnic construction and that anti-*haole* backlash on the part of "locals" is best understood as involving both frustration at degenerating conditions of everyday life--unfortunately, not articulated in class terms, and at the same time, an incapacity or unwillingness on the part of mainland *haoles* to assimilate to the "local" version of American culture.

Of the mainland *haole*, Whittaker concludes: "The Caucasians seem to be saying through their objections that they dislike having ethnicity become their most identifying feature.... For the first time in their lives many of them face their own ethnicity. Previously it had been irrelevant. Now, however, ethnic recognition determines interaction' (Whittaker, 1986: 153). The mainland *haole* wants to thought of as "an individual." Moreover, in a stunning lack of understanding, they

compare themselves to black Americans. Of course, as mainland *haoles*, they may well *experience* discrimination for the first time here in Hawai`i; but even if they do, they fail utterly to see that *unlike* black Americans, they are, as whites, privileged persons who gain enormous benefits at the expense of non-whites.¹⁷

It is hardly that the mainland *haole* and the "local" is not American. Nor is being "local" incompatible with being "Japanese" or "Filipino." Rather, for historically apt reasons, mainland *haoles* (unlike other non-white immigrants) are easy scapegoats who contribute substantially to their situation as scapegoats because they do not understand a ethnically pluralist society in which they are the minority! Of course, *all* tourists--despite the need for them, and *all* outside investors, Japanese and all others, are also "alien" even if no one expects them to assimilate. The construction of local also explains efforts on the part of local Japanese and local Filipinos--themselves heavy contributors to local culture--to distance themselves from Japanese and Filipino nationals who have more recently immigrated to Hawai`i.¹⁸ Finally, and of some importance, ethnicity, in this case, the construction "local," can and does serve to obscure class.

Unfortunately, in any class society, there are benefits and liabilities bequeathed on people just because of their race and ethnicity; those who suffer the liabilities are acutely aware of this. These liabilities are both structural and interactional: the quality of a neighborhood and its schools, the assumption made known that the person is not expected to be "smart" or ambitious, the contempt communicated to a pidgin speaker by a person who thinks that *he* does not have an accent.

By way of conclusion, then, Hawai`i is not the "melting pot": France is the best case for this. It may be, as somebody suggested, more like a salad bowl with many ingredients. Nor is it the case that it lacks deep ethnic tensions, too often obscured by the idea that there is a unique "local culture." Still, it is not wrong to say that "Hawaii's peoples have created a culture in which everyone feels they can make a contribution, be a part of," even if much of this is ideological. But I would insist that a non-mythological understanding would deepen, not undermine, the multi-cultural social fabric of Hawai`i. Put in other terms, a widely shared understanding of class and of the critical role of transnational capital in the complex history of Hawai`i would, I think, give "local" a genuine political clout. Thus Noel Kent and Jon Okamura are correct that real power in Hawai`i is in the hands of the multi-nationals which dominate its economy. As Kent has said, "the AJA elite has never constituted a legitimate ruling class in Hawai`i. Instead, they have skilfully performed a multitude of roles--front men, middle men, mediators, agents, and power brokers--in the service of the authentic ruling class, much of which does not reside in the Islands and which prefers invisibility as one element of its power." Of course, (as Okamura argues) "local identity is very exclusive rather than all inclusive," and within its exclusivity, there are boundaries. None of this, however, disturbs me. I would wish only that the potential benefits of local identity could find a political expression in Hawai`i.

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Endnotes

The state Department of Health which does the most useful survey reports the ethnic composition of Hawai`i as follows:

White-Americans	23.4%
Japanese-Americans	23.0%
Native-Hawaiian-Americans	4.8%
Portuguese-Americans	11.3%
Chickano-Americans	1.3%
Hispanic-Americans	2.3%
Cuban-Americans	0.4%
Irish-Americans	0.4%
Unknown-Americans	1.2%
Native Hawaiians	0.8%
Mixed Part-Hawaiian	19.8%
Mixed Non-Hawaiian	11.3%

This excludes persons in military and in institutions. The last statistic is one that has only recently been introduced, since until recently it was not a significant item.

See Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific* (Princeton University Press, 1992); Marshall Sahlins, *How 'Natives Think' About Captain Cook, For Example* (University of Chicago Press, 1995). A forthcoming issue of *Current Anthropology* contains a lengthy assessment of this delusion. Borofsky with responses by both Sahlins and Obeyesekere.

I tend to agree with those who use the term "diaspora" more narrowly; but in the spirit of the conference, it is, I think, appropriate in this context. That is, it can usefully apply to ethnic communities which (1) are dispersed and (2) are able to produce, more or less, the culture of the "homeland," which could be real or imagined.

Although everyone recognizes that the inner conflict regarding loyalty to Japan (and to Japanese culture), the opposition was, likely, confused. As Kawahara and Hatanaka rightly note, there was, at least "a passive loyalty" to Hawaii, though not, critically in my view, to the United States. America was at best an abstraction, a far-off place. While all Japanese (especially *Nisei*) could feel affection for Hawai`i, it was the government of the abstraction which was now demanding loyalty of Japanese.

See Hollinger, "PostEthnic America," *Contention*, Vol. 2, No.1 (1992). How one characterizes "dominant community" shall subsequently argue, critical.

A mark or symptom of the assimilation of a group is that it will not stand disproportionately in a range of statistics, income and occupational status, criminal records, educational levels, etc., as compared to the dominant group. Income distribution among white Americans of any ethnicity is thus about the same.

France is the best case for assimilation. France would be some 22% smaller than it is without immigrants, but non-French Europeans are virtually invisible in France. There is nothing comparable to St. Patrick's Day or a Festival of Saint Gennard fully attended by the Governor or the Mayor of New York. There are several pertinent historical reasons for this recorded by Gerard Noiriel, in his *The French Melting Pot* (University of Minnesota Press, 1997). The upshot is summarized by Reid Bell in his TLS review of this book. What began as merely temporary "guest workers" "gradually metamorphized." "The change did take place, in part because the children and grandchildren of immigrants, willingly took up the French language and customs, and in part because the native population readily accepted them as fully French" (p. 7). Indeed, "how many people remember that such quintessentially French figures as Emile Zola and Yves Montand had Italian roots?"

This is reflected in the way that the US census now classifies Americans: there are five categories: white, African American, Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander and Native American. Compare also the question of assimilation for Japanese in the US and in Hawai'i, below.

In the territorial election of 1934, there were but 102 registered Filipinos. By 1941, perhaps two-thirds of the Filipino immigrants to Hawai'i either returned to the Philippines or went to California. See Fred Soriano, "Filipino Hawaiian Migration: Adaptation: New Paradigms for Analysis," reprinted in Manicas (ed.), *Ethnic Sources in Hawai'i* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996).

And to a criticism of the standard interpretation by Cindy Kobayashi (1995).

In 1920, of the 41,350 students in public schools, only 1,222 were haoles. They attended the excellent private schools Kamehameha and Iolani. In 1929, 43% of the student body of 2,339 of Honolulu's McKinley High School--known also as "Tohoku"--were Japanese; 20% Chinese, 11% Hawaiian and 4% Portuguese. Through the 1920s, more than half of all the high school students in the Territory attended McKinley! In the graduating class of 1928, 249 of the class of 394 were enrolled for further education, one at University in Japan.

The contrast with Kamehameha, generously funded by the Bishop Estate Trust, is stunning. In 1929, its principal, Fred Midkiff, wrote Frank Atherton, President of the Hawai'i Sugar Planter's Association urging him to appoint a committee to work out methods "for directing thousands of our Hawaiian-born children into happy service in connection with the sugar industries." Two of every three male graduates, he surmised, could be induced to work as field laborers on plantations!

Kobayashi rightly rejects the idea of a Japanese "essence" and sees also that a constructed Japanese identity, wrought by the experience of the war, was critical in the subsequent political project of the Japanese in Hawai'i. But she seems to think that Japanese identity before the war emerged only "out of the rebellion by the Issei against their oppressive condition and, that the colossal loss of the lives of their fellow Nisei in the rescue of the lost battalion taught them the stark reality of their status as 'other' in the eyes of America" (p. 6). But the Issei were always Japanese in Hawai'i and were always "Other" even while their experience as Japanese in Hawai'i was quite unlike the experience of Japanese on the US mainland and, even more, of other racialized groups. Moreover, as she seems to admit, the Nisei both created problems for Issei and were, for good reasons, ambivalent about their identities.

See Patricia Gibbs, "Join the Crowd, " *Honolulu Weekly*, Vol. 7, no. 9 (26 February 1997).

Kobayashi seems to see this, but seems offended by it. She writes, e.g., "the Nisei heroes had played a crucial role in the formation of identity; their victory on the battlefield opened public space, which is symbolized in the Democratic Revolution; it allowed them to define the order of meaning not only in the Japanese community, but in the larger society. As a result, the philosophy of "Otherness" became a fundamental part of politics in Hawai'i" (p. 6). Three quick comments here.

First, the philosophy of "Otherness" (putting aside the theoretical mystery of this idea) was always fundamental to the politics of Hawai'i and indeed, more generally, to *all* politics. Second, it is hardly clear that they could have done better even if they wanted to. They were not, despite their power, in control and very much needed to collude with the Old Oligarchy. Third, historically, for historically distinct reasons, they could do with relative ease what the Irish or Italians would have liked to have done, but could not. In this sense, they acted in a distinctly American way! In the discussion which followed, Dr. Kobayashi was not unsympathetic to the foregoing.

These are quoted from Yamamoto's essay, "The Significance of Local," reprinted in Manicas (ed.), *Social Processes in Hawai'i: A Reader*, 2nd Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995). I have rearranged these texts.

In 1970 there were some 178,531 *haoles* who had been born on the mainland living in Hawai'i. Of these, 125,732 were born on the mainland in 1965 or later. They tended to be young and they were well-educated. About 65.5% of these would be considered "high status" workers (Whittaker, 1986). This process has continued. According to the 1990 census, almost 36% of *haoles* in Hawai'i in 1990 did *not* live in Hawai'i in 1985. (For comparison, only 3.5% of the Japanese did *not* live in Hawai'i in 1985). We are, accordingly, talking here about a relatively large and recent influx of *haoles* who, critically, have tended to take the better jobs in a state which, sadly, has appreciably fewer good jobs.

Okamura (op. cit.) notes that "between 1986 and 1990, Japanese investment in Hawai'i, including purchases of real estate and businesses, totalled more than \$11 billion." The total amounted to about 11% of the total value of real estate in Hawai'i.

The mainland *haole* attitude, often characteristic of the better educated, high status, and best-intended of individuals, would go some way to explain the distress felt by mainland *haoles* to be called a *haole*, to be upset by what they take to be the extraordinary ease of local people to identify a person as, for example, "the Filipino who sits in the front of the room and looks at the Japanese," to be annoyed at having a local person served before them in a store, to be genuinely frightened by the hostility expressed by locals at a beachpark, to be outraged at tuition waiver being granted to Hawaiians "just because they are Hawaiian."

See Jonathan Y. Okamura, "Immigrant and Local Filipino Perceptions of Ethnic Conflict," in W.C. McCready (ed.), *Culture, Ethnicity and Identity* (New York: Academic Press, 1983).