Japanese tourists’ image of Hawaiian Japanese Locals:
A focus on tourism reality shift

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Abstract: The thirst for tourism is based on a natural desire to taste the “extraordinary” or “otherness” outside everyday life. Tourism reality is not fiction, but is distinguished from daily life’s realities. It is also influenced by tourists’ shared background stories of the destination. This paper discusses the status of tourism images of people living in “paradise” as represented in Japanese films about Hawaii. They mainly consist of Hawaii’s picturesque locations and Japanese immigrant stories, which make up a prototypical American film set in Hawaii. As mass Japanese tourism in Hawaii expanded and changed its patterns from group tour to individual tour, Japanese films shot in Hawaii have gradually lost the depth of Japanese immigrant stories as well as the picturesque symbols and places to be discovered, leaving superficial fictional narratives. This was partly due to the low economic position of Japanese Americans at the time, but the main reason relates to the consequences of post-modernization on tourism patterns and realities. Japanese tourism in Hawaii has changed from one based on public stories to one based on private stories.

Keywords: tourism reality, Japanese Hawaii film, post-modernization, story, privatization

Introduction

Tourism comes from a natural desire for the “extraordinary” or “otherness” that is separate from everyday life (Graburn 1989; Urry 1990). Tourism practices are created from differences in daily life experiences even though contemporary tourism has shown such reality to be close to everyday life, such as showing people working in a factory (MacCannell 1976). This reality in tourism is generally different from the reality of daily activities or the reality of fiction. Since cultures constantly change or create authenticity in their respective histories, realities in tourism or tourism cultures are undergoing such a process as well (Mckean 1989). They are related to the complex local
culture, but these complicated realities are usually deduced from simple versions of such cultures, meaning they are continuously evolving.

Tourism culture is often represented in special places that are distinguished and different from the daily life of local people; they become a sort of tourist enclave such as Waikiki in Honolulu or Kaosan in Bangkok. The tourist gaze appears limited to the inside of the enclave and not beyond the border into the daily life reality of local people. Therefore, we might understand tourism reality along the lines of Jean Baudrillard’s “simulation” or “simulacra” (Baudrillard 1996). Existing tourism studies have discussed the reality of tourism representation, referring to the degree to which we can experience “authenticity”, sometimes “authenticity of the body” from them (Desmond 1999). MacCannell demonstrated the reality of contemporary tourists seeking reality from tourism representation using Goffman’s “front stage” and “backstage” reality-setting theory (Goffman 1959; MacCannell 1976). MacCannell referred to tourism reality as “staged authenticity.” Tourism reality includes the performative role of a “backstage” story to construct “staged authenticity.” Backstage stories of tourist destinations contain nationally generalized accounts especially in the modern period, which possesses socially shared stories or a “grand narrative” which provides the ideology of modernity such as development or equality (Lyotard 1984). Tourism is thus constructed by front-stage locations and backstage stories.

Tourism reality reflects the mentality of the people, especially that of the tourism market, which is also reflected by political powers or ideologies such as orientalism or imperialism (Nash 1989). I will demonstrate the change in backstage stories from national to personal, from deep to light, and from narrative to picturesque. In this paper, I will try to use Japanese Hawaii films from the 1950s to 2010s to explain the change in Japanese mentality and destination image from modern era to postmodern era.

**Framework and Methodology: Media as reflexive vehicles for tourism reality**

The relation between tourism and the visual images in films and television dramas has been the subject of numerous media studies. For example, in 1922, W. Lipmann published a book titled “Public Opinion,” in which he indicated that the “stereotypes” that people generally use to perceive their daily realities...
are important for living in information-based societies. In other words, they are simplifying the complicated realities of daily life through the “pseudo-environment” made by the media. Subsequently, Boorstin (1962) theorized the role of visual media toward tourism by focusing on the impact of films or television news, both of which generate the reality of daily life. He also cleverly found that the virtual and the real are not completely different. He referred to this type of reality as a “pseudo-event,” in which the copied fiction generates the real; that is, films are not copies of reality, but they create the reality itself.

From the 1910s to 1930s, many Hawaiian films were made in Hollywood, thus popularizing Hawaiian images (Yamanaka 1992, p. 132-149; 2004, p. 63-86). As Desmond (1999, p. 65) demonstrated, the images of Hawaii were mainly created by American mainland show business. For instance, the Broadway play, “Bird of Paradise,” was a love story about a Hawaiian princess and a white medical doctor, which was eventually remade into the 1930 film. This particular story depicted the stereotypes of Hawaii, including Hawaiian music, hula dancing, and erupting volcanoes.

Tezuka described the changes in Japanese films of Hawaii (Tezuka 2015). He analyzed the contents of Japanese films of Hawaii employing Foucault’s sense of social constructivism (Foucault 1972). He described the role of the films as the means of discursive formations that construct certain social realities. He divided the Japanese films of Hawaii into two booms. The first boom is from 1960s and the second one is from the 1980s. He described the shift from “Traumatic Hawai’i” (or intermediate “Liminal Hawai’i”) to “Healing Hawai’i”. Japanese films of Hawaii did not only match the changes of the lifestyles of Japanese people, but also created their patterns.

These examples and theories that stress the role of the media as the creator of the reality of places are very suggestive. However, they were not mainly focused on the changes in the tourism style. The realities of the tourist images, mediated with tourism policies and styles, are more complex. For example, according to Tada, Okinawan society in Japan includes two worlds or a “double reality.” On the one side, there is the society based on images of World War II, the military base, and poverty, while on the other side, there is the image of beautiful sunny beaches and resorts (Tada 2004). Tada also pointed out the connection between the media’s portrayal of Okinawa and actual reality. In
the same way, Takahashi pointed out the complexity of Hawaiian images of “paradise” and war in Arizona Memorial and Punchbowl (National Memorial Cemetery of The Pacific) (Takahashi 2012). Similarly, the present paper focuses on the role of films as reflexive vehicles that connect the images of tourist attractions made by the media, and the actual reality of such attractions.

Finally, it is important to note that, although the simple inversion theory regarding the virtual and the real was criticized by MacCannell (1976), he did not stress the roles of the tourists themselves, but rather the roles of the apparatus supported by the tourists’ performance. According to his “staged authenticity” theory, the apparatus include airline networks, bus systems, tour guides, beaches, hotels, shops, restaurants, theaters, theme parks etc., all of which are constantly presented in the contents of films, television dramas, guide books, and tourist attractions. Therefore, such images are used in this paper to highlight the relation between the tourism images reconstructed by the media and the actual performance of the tourists themselves. Especially I want to stress that shifts in tourism styles also cause changes in the Hawaii locals’ images represented in the Hawaii films. In order to explain that shift, I will pick up and use nine typical Japanese films of Hawaii, out of about twenty.

The Japanese “Hawaiian dream” before the liberalization of individual overseas tours in 1964

Paradise image created by TV shows

Japanese Hawaii tourism operates as a prototype for Japanese fantasies of overseas tourism. A TV quiz show titled The Up-down Quiz started with a song from the soundtrack of the film Blue Hawaii followed by the narrator exclaiming “Get 10 answers correct and win a chance to go to Dream Hawaii!” The catchphrase of this program-“Dream Hawaii”-proved that Hawaiian tours were one of the most popular aspirations for the Japanese at that time. Also, in the 1960s, Japanese brewing company Suntory, through their Torys whiskey, raffled Hawaiian tours through a lottery prize system with the catchphrase “Let’s drink Torys and go to Hawaii,” which is still familiar to middle-aged Japanese people. After the Japanese government liberalized individual overseas tours in 1964, Hawaii became internalized as a typical tourist destination.
One week after the liberalization, the first group of Japanese tourists went on a 9-day tour of Hawaii. Although the tour price at the time was six times as much as the average monthly salary, even middle-class office workers aspired to save up for it, as it was a period of economic growth. One-fifth of Japanese outbound tourists in 1964 went to Hawaii, showing how the Hawaiian tour became the “national dream” for Japanese people in the 1960s (Asato 2000).

The Hawaiian fantasy and Japanese show business celebrities

One other point must be made clear: fantasies of Hawaii were not inspired by the 1964 travel liberalization. In Japanese popular culture at the time, the song “Akogareno Hawaii Koro” (“Longing for Hawaii Cruise,” sung by Haruo Oka) had already been a hit in the country in 1948. This suggests that the patterns of a particular fantasy of Hawaii had in fact been forming before the liberalization of overseas tourism.

Japanese immigrants who had experienced hardship and discrimination in the sugarcane fields before and during World War II mediated between dreams of Hawaii and the Japanese desire to travel there. After World War II, Nisei (second-generation Japanese immigrants) who fought in the US Army returned to their homeland - Hawaii - and assumed powerful economic and political positions. These Japanese descendants laid the foundations of Japanese Hawaii tourism.

Although most of them had become Americans through the Naturalization Act of 1949, their language, culture, and means of entertainment still remained firmly rooted in their old hometowns in Japan. Two big theaters, Kokusai Gekijo (opened in 1941) and Toyo Gekijo, with three more added in the late1950s, specialized in Japanese movies. They were all located in a Japanese ethnic community area in downtown Honolulu (now called Chinatown). These theaters were popular not only among the Japanese community but also among other ethnic groups, resulting in big business for their owners. Muneco Kimura and other Japanese theater owners and some agents hosted Japanese movie stars and athletes, as well as other celebrities (Gondo 2004, p.139-144). Through the mediation of Japanese Hawaiian agents, Kinuyo Tanaka, a popular actress during that time, visited Hawaii in 1949, and songwriters Masao Koga and Ryoichi Hattori and world-renowned singer Hibari Misora were also invited (Tasaka 1991, p. 260-270). From the world of sports, the
Mainichi Orions, who won the first Japan baseball championship in 1950, visited Hawaii the following year, and Rikidozan, one of the most famous pro wrestlers in postwar Japan, visited in 1952. A “Sakura Matsuri” (Cherry Blossom Festival) was first held in 1952 as a celebratory event for Japanese entertainers. Takarazuka actresses, Shochiku Revue dancers, and other popular actors visited Hawaii one after the other. Japan’s popular New Year’s Eve TV special Kohaku (song festival program) was also broadcasted in Hawaii in 1951, and other Japanese programs in 1952. These events boosted the eagerness to host Japanese entertainment and sports celebrities. However, at this time, only those who were invited by Americans could obtain passports, so both Japanese Hawaiian agents in Hawaii and Japanese celebrities in show business benefited from these invitation programs. Thus, the strong connection between Japanese entertainment and sports and Japanese Hawaiian agents was established in the 1950s. News reports always showed popular movie stars playing at the Waikiki beaches, which created celebrated images of Hawaiian tours. Hawaii’s image, which had previously been linked to scenes of defeat from the war as a result of the Pearl Harbor attacks and the miserable immigrant Japanese sugarcane workers, transformed to that of a “paradise” in the 1950s. Nevertheless, the complex mentality of the Japanese toward Hawaii remained for a long time.

The image of Japanese immigrants in Japanese films before 1964

*Hawaii no Yoru (Night in Hawaii 1953)*

Nisei show business agents especially Muneo Kinura’s company, “Nichibei Kinema” provided the locations for making films in Hawaii (Gondo 2004, p. 140). *Hawaii no Yoru* (Night in Hawaii 1953) especially served as a template for Japanese movies set in Hawaii, which always had love stories between Japanese American girls living in Hawaii and Japanese tourist boys against a backdrop of all the touristic places in Hawaii. These patterns originated from 1930s Hollywood movies, which focused on love stories between white American boys and Hawaiian girls. They also described Hawaiians as “noble savages”, further complementing Hawaii as a “paradise” (Yamanaka 1993, p. 92-100). Japanese films not only followed this kind of “paradise” image through Hollywood films but also created a Japanese version of Hawaii: a hybrid of American modern life, gentle old Japanese (immigrants), and “paradise.” In addition, Japanese films about Hawaii at the time often depicted
sad love stories or separations of immigrant families because of the war, even if they were comedies.

**Hawaii no Yoru (Night in Hawaii) and American movies about Hawaii**

_Hawaii no Yoru_ (Night in Hawaii 1953) is a sad and serious love story. This movie is set between the beginning of the Japanese-Chinese War and the end of the Pacific War. It includes traces of sorrow through the Nikkei’s painful experiences in Hawaii. The protagonists are a Japanese swimmer and a second-generation Japanese immigrant (Nisei). It tells the story of how the war forced the two of them apart, leading to a sad ending. This pattern (but with most versions having happy endings) is quite similar to American Hawaii movies that feature a Caucasian American hero and an erotic Hawaiian native heroine, including _Aloha_ in 1931 (a Caucasian businessman and a native Hawaiian girl), the musical movie _Bird of Paradise_ in 1932, (the actress who played as a native Hawaiian girl was Mexican), _White Heat_ in 1934 (a Caucasian farmer and a native Hawaiian), followed by many similar love stories such as the famous _Blue Hawaii_ in 1961 (featuring an army officer played by Elvis Presley and a native girl) without any opposite gender patterns (Yamanaka 2002, p. 167-168). In Japanese Hawaii movies, Caucasian American boys were replaced with Japanese boys, and the native girls were replaced with Japanese immigrants, also without an opposite gender pattern. This implied the yearning and the inferiority complex of the Japanese toward the American after the war and the complex feeling of defeat from the war as well as the Japanese mistakenly telling Japanese Americans that they must fondly remember Japan (Yaguchi 2002, p. 80). Some first-generation immigrants obviously missed Japan, but most of them who had stayed in Hawaii during the war did not share the same sentiment even though their identities were “Japanese Hawaiian” (or “Japanese American”). The second generation were educated in America (going to Japanese schools after attending American schools) and had to identify as American especially during the war even though they felt they were the majority among Hawaiian people (40% of the prewar Hawaiian population was Japanese) and identified as Japanese Americans or Asian Americans speaking Japanese at home. This sometimes caused families to separate, and Japanese movies liked to portray these stories and believed that Japanese Americans in Hawaii should have felt the need to return to Japan.
One more point here is that no native Hawaiian has appeared on screen except the heroine narrating the story of the native Hawaiian prince Manoa, who lived a pure, natural life. She said, “The savages (Dojin) here always say ‘Aloha’ whether they are happy or not.” The Japanese perception of native Hawaiians at the time followed the “noble savage” image of Caucasian Americans.

**Hawaii Chin Dochu (Road to Hawaii 1954)**

Subsequent movies such as the 1954 comedy *Hawaii Chin Dochu* (Road to Hawaii), coordinated by Nichibei Kinema, described the same kind of “gaze” implied by the serious dark movie *Hawaii no Yoru* (Night in Hawaii). Since *Hawaii Chin Dochu* featured many popular Japanese comedians, it was a typical light comedy, but it also told the story of the separation of Japanese immigrant families in Hawaii. In the beginning of the story, a middle-aged man was searching in Tokyo for his daughter who had been separated from him because of the war. Even though the background was sad, the story’s comedic tones lightened up the movie. He could not meet her in Tokyo, but the daughter grew up and aged 17 went to Hawaii for a short period as an actress. She and her father finally met in Hawaii after a member of the group encountered a strange adventure in a savage island involving comical “head hunters.” This movie also represented a version of Hawaii where Japanese second generation immigrants are longing to go back to Japan and where happy savages lived.

**Yumeno Hawaii de Bon-odori (Let’s Dance Bon-odori in Hawaii 1964)**

A similar movie, released about 10 years later, was 1964’s “*Yumeno Hawaii de Bon-odori* (Let’s Dance Bon-odori in Hawaii).” This was a story about the breaking up of Japanese immigrant families in Hawaii. It deals with a grandfather living in Hawaii and his grandson who is living in Tokyo. The old man had a son in Hawaii, but before the Pacific War, his son left for Japan with a Japanese girl whom he fell in love with in Hawaii. However, he was called up for military service in Japan and died on the battlefield. For a long time, the old man resented the girl who took his son to Japan, leading to his son’s death. Because this girl was his grandson’s mother in this story, the grandson tries to reconcile his mother and grandfather. The grandson thinks of holding a Bon dance party (traditional group dance in Japanese local festivals) at a beach in Hawaii because he knew his grandfather wanted to come back.
to his homeland of Hiroshima to dance “Bon-odori.” This plan ended up a success, and his grandfather was reconciled with his mother, which represents the reconciliation between Japan and America. The reconciliation of Hawaii where he lived and where Pearl Harbor was situated, and his home town Hiroshima where the atomic bomb was dropped, was the key. However, no native Hawaiians appeared in this movie.

**Hawaii no Wakadaisho (Young Master in Hawaii 1963)**

The most famous Japanese movie about Hawaii (three million views), released almost at the same time as the previous movie, was *Hawaii no Wakadaisho* (Young Master in Hawaii) in 1963. This movie had no serious story but also expressed the relationship between Japanese immigrants and Japanese tourists. The protagonist in this movie visits a family of an acquaintance in Hawaii and is wooed by the girl of a second-generation family. He does not feel strongly about it, saying, “I like Japan, so I cannot stay here in Hawaii for a long time.” Although *Hawaii no Wakadaisho* (Young Master in Hawaii) had the same love story involving a girl in an immigrant family, the young master (*Wakadaisho*) was merely a Hawaiian tourist playing the ukulele, enjoying surfing or sailing a yacht. This movie represents a turning point on how Japanese films represented Japanese immigrants in Hawaii. After this film, no other serious stories about Japanese immigrants in Hawaii were told. Note that the Japanese government liberalized individual overseas tours in 1964.

**Characteristics of Japanese Hawaii movies**

From these movies, we can understand the Japanese perception of Hawaii. We can then summarize the characteristics of such representation in Japanese movies before the 1964 liberalization as follows:

1. They all elicit nostalgia for Japanese immigrants who missed Japan and wanted to return.
2. The Japanese dream about the American way of life. This is why they were attracted to the life of Japanese Americans in Hawaii.
3. No real native Hawaiians appeared on screen, but stories of native Hawaiian beliefs or culture, which are always distorted, are told and appreciated by immigrants.
4. The patterns copied from and mixed up in Hollywood’s representation of Hawaii are (2) and (3).
Therefore, Japanese movies about Hawaii represented Hawaiian images and told Hawaiian stories before the 1964 liberalization. But as Takagi stated, Japanese cultural characteristics created by immigrants were not from a place of nostalgia or a feeling of wanting to return to Japan but rather from a desire to build their community’s “minority” identity, as they make up about 40% (37.3% of 423,000 people in Hawaii in 1940) of the Hawaiian population from 1900 to the end of the war (Takagi 1992, p. 20-21,84).

**Japanese mass tourism in Hawaii**

**Japanese group tours to Hawaii**

The introduction of the Boeing 747 in the 1970s caused a big change in tourism in Hawaii. Not only was there a revolution in airfares, but there was also a revolution in terms of travel agency initiatives. A new airfare system called bulk fares (40% discount) applied only to tourists who stayed for more than four nights and to groups of more than 40 people. From then on, the standard for Japanese group tours, that is, six days and four nights, became a regular feature in tour packages. These short holiday packages suited those who were not accustomed to taking long vacations, and are now a staple of holiday packages.

Because of restrictions on the amount of foreign currency Japanese nationals could take with them overseas, the Japanese were allowed to bring a maximum of $1,000 dollars in 1970, which rose to $3,000 in 1971 before the restriction was abolished in 1978. With this change, Japanese travel agencies such as Kinki Nihon Tourist, the Hankyu transportation company, and Japan Travel Bureau entered the market with their own brands. The rapid rise of the yen exchange rate after the collapse of the Breton Woods system led to a floating exchange rate system in 1973, which boosted the enthusiasm of Japanese tourists who were infatuated with goods. Duty-free shops (DFS) opened in 1968, and the Ala Moana shopping center, known as the mecca of Japanese omiyage (souvenirs), attracted many Japanese tourists. As more new travel agencies started to participate in mass tourism to Hawaii, at the end of the 1970s, the price of group tours went down to the equivalent of 1 month’s white-collar worker’s salary. Hawaii tours were not “dreams” anymore, and the presenter of *The Updown Quiz* no longer mentioned “Dream Hawaii.” The Hawaiian image of a paradise where Japanese language can be spoken became accessible to the Japanese.
Japanese tourists’ image of Hawaiian Japanese Locals

From second-generation Japanese immigrants to the Japanese travel industry

As mentioned before, Japanese immigrants’ efforts to create a Japanese culture in Hawaii were substantial enough to lead to the “gaze” as well as Japanese representations of Hawaii. In the late 1960s and the 1970s, the economic and political role of the second-generation “Nisei” immigrants as Americans became more significant, and the presence of Japanese companies in the tourism industry grew. In the mid-1970s, Japanese companies took over the mediating role that Nisei had played before. This is partly because Nisei politicians such as the well-known George Ariyoshi had strong ties with Japanese companies like Seibu, and money from affluent Japanese coupled with a strong yen encouraged investment (Cooper and Daws 1985, p. 278-279). The deregulation of Japanese investment in 1971 caused the first investment boom. Kokusai Kogyo, owned by Kenji Osano (who was arrested in the well-known Lockheed Scandal), bought six famous hotels in Waikiki from the 1960s to the 1970s. First, Osano purchased Kyoya, a Japanese restaurant owned by Nisei Americans, and then continued to acquire old but high-grade hotels such as the Moana, the Kaiurani, and the Royal Hawaiian (all sold off at a later date). This was followed by a successive occupation of resort areas by Japanese developers. Daiei, which opened some shops in the 1970s, bought Ala Moana (even though this took place through a partnership with DE Investment). Thus, Japanese interests had created an almost all-encompassing system for tourists by the early 1980s. It was at this time, during mid-1980s, that the “bubble” economy hit Hawaii and affected the main Hawaiian resorts. In just two years (1986 and 1987), $2.2 billion was spent on investments in Hawaii, which is half the total money invested by the Japanese after World War II. Moreover, a total of $2.6 billion was invested in 1989 (East West Journal 1991, p. 182). Japanese Hawaii tours were operated almost exclusively by Japanese companies, and Hawaii, especially Waikiki, gradually became a Japanese cultural concession.

The total number of Japanese visitors in Hawaii, which was around 130,000 in 1970, rose to 640,000 in 1984 and then jumped to 1.3 million in 1989 (which was almost the same as the 2007 figure) (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Although tourism had become the number one industry in the Hawaiian economy during that period, having been sustained by Japanese tourists from the end of the
1980s, Hawaiian people including Japanese immigrants became critical of Japanese investments, which did not benefit Hawaiian communities. The Japanese comedian and film director Takeshi Kitano opened a curry restaurant, and *Tonneruzu* (The Tunnels), a standup comedy duo, opened a souvenir shop at the center of Waikiki, followed by a host of other “talent shops” from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. Oahu, especially Waikiki, slowly transformed into a Japanese theme park not only as a paradise of the Pacific but of America as well.

*Japanese films after 1964: “Yoakeno hurtari” (Rainbow over the Pacific 1968) and “Plumeria no Densetu Tengokuno Kiss” (Legend of Plumeria, Kiss in the Heaven 1983)*

After 1964, some Japanese movies about Hawaii were released, and most of them, such as *Yoakeno Hutari* (Rainbow over the Pacific 1968), were an imitation, or a “pastiche,” of “Hawaii no Yoru” (Night in Hawaii 1953). It also has a love story of Japanese boy and a girl of Japanese third generation immigrants. It showed touristic places of Oahu and neighboring islands as well, but it lacked the shadow side of the immigrants’ story. *Plumeria no Densetu Tengokuno Kiss* (Legend of Plumeria, Kiss in the Heaven 1983), whose protagonist was the popular singer Seiko Matsuda, showed many typical touristic places in Hawaii (Oahu) although it still had the sad love story of a Japanese boy (windsurfer!) and a second-generation Japanese immigrant girl (student of University of Hawaii Mana. After this film, UH became a tourist destination). Japanese films in this period corresponded to Japanese mass tourism which served to promote Hawaiian tourism.

**The individualization of overseas tours and the shift of Japanese tourism in Hawaii**

*From package tours to individual tours*

Characteristics of the change in Japanese overseas tourist patterns included not only a full-service system controlled by Japanese travel agencies and land operators but also the individualization or privatization of tourist trends, which at first glance was contradictory to that system. Companies that paved the way for the individualization of travel arrangements were new discount wholesalers such as H.I.S. and MAP International (now known as H.I.S. Across). These
companies were born from the politics of deregulation that took place within international tourism. Since the owners and the staff of these companies used to be individual backpackers, they taught their customers how to travel individually and sold travel tickets and hotel accommodations separately. This helped young people become independent travelers and look for their own private meanings of travel and life. By the 1990s, most tours became what is known as a “skeleton”-type tour, which includes only transportation and accommodation. This kind of individualized travel was substantially different from the older full-service tour systems.

By the end of the 1980s, most package tours transformed into skeleton-type tours, with free-ride stagecoach bus systems, such as the Waikiki Trolley and the Olioli Trolley which connected Waikiki’s hotel areas with some shopping centers and tourist attractions in or near Waikiki. While airfare prices dropped, the introduction of the skeleton system led to a reduction in profits, and operators tried to tap new sources through gift shops and optional tours. As tourists’ freedom increased, tour operators needed well-controlled tourist management and highly reliable customer information. As the number of individual repeaters increased, tourists who got tired of going to stereotypical tourist destinations began to search for travel information themselves. Tourists were not dependent to the point where they would spend money on the operators. Thus, a struggle clearly took place between tourists and operators where the former wanted independence and the latter wanted them to be incorporated into their business model: this tendency was seen not only in Hawaii tours but also in other overseas tours.

The strength of the yen after the Plaza Agreement in 1985 further helped increase overseas tourists. Overseas tourist magazines such as AB-road in the 1990s helped consumers compare tour prices, which in turn propelled fare discounts. Japanese tours to Hawaii peaked in 1997 (2.22 million) (See Figure 1 and Figure 2). Besides the yen’s sudden appreciation and the drop in airfare prices, the American government offered Japanese visitors a visa waiver program, which led to a rapid increased in the number of Japanese tourists. The total number of Japanese visitors in 1989 doubled from that of 1984.
After the Japanese economic bubble burst, the Hawaii tour fever did not come to an immediate end; rather, it just shrank for one year. With the help of the yen’s high appreciation, the number of Japanese tourists increased, but this was also the result of a business model that focused on small profits (and quick returns) selling cheap skeleton-type tours. JTB even created a FIT center and took part in the cheap-tours wars. One reason for the price reductions was that travel magazines and air ticket websites helped people compare prices. Thus, the number of Japanese visitors in Hawaii went over the 2 million mark in 1995 and reached 2.22 million in 1997 (which was the highest number of Japanese visitors from that time on) (see Figure 1). Catering to Japanese FIT tourists who have visited Hawaii several times, the stereotyped package tours reached their limit. The desire to go to extraordinary places led the Japanese to turn their interest toward cheaper Asian resorts. As a result, the number of Japanese visitors fell by half since the peak in 1997. After 2000, the Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau changed the promotion approach to Japanese tourists from “mass tourism” to “new tourism.”

**Changes in the image of “paradise” tourism**

As mentioned before, the Hawaiian “paradise” image plays upon the image of the “noble savage.” Over time, the culture of Hawaii has changed in that people can easily understand the context of the white American culture of mainland America. Native Hawaiians call the Hawaiian imagined by white Americans the “Hapa Haole,” meaning half-white American, which in turn strongly emphasized the Hawaiian Renaissance movements from 1970s onward. This movement took the Hawaiian tourist culture in several new directions, prominent among them being the sophistication or gentrification of tourist culture commercialized for an affluent American class. The American nouveau riche avoided mass tourist areas such as Waikiki and went directly to Maui or Big Island where traces of the former Hawaiian atmosphere remained. Kaunapari, Kihei, or Waimea, which have low-rise hotels and condos along the coast and are surrounded by green areas at the back, were getting popular among the nouveau riche. Many of them move to Hawaii as seasonal or lifetime settlers after retirement. The Japanese followed this kind of sophisticated image of Hawaii, although the number of the tourists going to neighboring islands out of Oahu was not so large. The image of “paradise” or the “noble savage” became more sophisticated.
New-wave Japanese films about Hawaii: Honokaa Boy (2009) and others

Japanese movies about Hawaii tried to correspond to the trend of ‘new tourism’. Honokaa Boy in 2009 is one of the typical new-wave Hawaii films. Although it still has the nostalgic image of Japanese immigrants, the “gaze” toward Hawaii is quite different from that of previous movies. It begins with a monologue of a Japanese boy who went to Honokaa in Big island and found himself a new way of life working in the small town’s movie theater. It shows the local places, foods, and way of life in Big Island that are unknown to Japanese tourists. This film does not show any typical touristic places, signs, or symbols. It suggested that the Japanese FIT tourists ought to look for their own way of life and healing experiences through the locals’ indigenous culture. But it still had the nostalgic image of Japanese immigrants. It shows that Japanese tourists still maintain a stereotyped image of immigrants who miss Japan and speak Japanese although this nostalgic framework no longer exists within the Japanese immigrant community, especially from the third generation onward. In addition, the “gaze” toward native Hawaiian culture was renewed; the Hula danced by local Asians was its old version (Hula Kahiko), but no native Hawaiian appeared on screen. Thus, Honokaa Boy was a movie with a brand-new healing image of Hawaii and one that suggested finding the “self” as a new way of tourism, but still had some traces of old Japanese Hawaii movies.

Recent Japanese Hawaii movies include “Watashino Hawaii no Arukikata” (My Way of Traveling in Hawaii 2014) and “50 Kaime no First Kiss” (50 First Kisses 2018). Although the former shows a way to find one’s “self,” it is merely a restaurant and shopping guide (with even a guidebook map in its DVD). In both movies, only Japanese tourists or long stayers appeared. These new Japanese Hawaii movies tend to omit Japanese immigrants who are uninterested in Japan and do not speak Japanese anymore. Generally speaking, the new-wave Japanese Hawaii films do not have profound stories but represent a superficial and fictional picturesque image of Hawaii.
Before the Japanese government liberalized individual overseas tours in 1964, Japan’s image of Hawaii was depicted by the hardships of Japanese immigrants as well as a localized image of *paradise*, which white Americans had created. As noted previously, these images were combined with a feeling of adoration for American life after Japan’s defeat in the war. Immigrants who were American but spoke Japanese, were the special object of adoration. Dreams of an American way of life were integrated with those of an indigenous Hawaiian way of life. This Japanese image of *paradise* inspired Japanese Hawaii films. The latter, in turn, paved the way for Japanese tourism in Hawaii.
As many tourists visited Hawaii, the image of Hawaii became concentrated on touristic symbols and signs that were shared with Japanese people living in Japan. As the Japanese mass tourism of Hawaii developed, the tourists’ image became larger while the Japanese immigrants’ image of hardship retreated into the background. Furthermore, Japanese immigrants’ stories remained in the background as a kind of fantasy.

The presence of Japanese immigrants in Hawaii tourism was related to the language they were able to speak. Although most of the second generation and some of the third generation could speak Japanese, the majority of the fourth generation could not. As the Japanese-speaking population of immigrants became smaller, the Japanese tourists were unable to communicate with them.

Waikiki, in particular, represents a Japanese dream of Hawaii where Japanese is spoken throughout, even in American territories. It is isolated from other districts by the Alawaii Canal. Although it used to be a marshy district, it was drained during the 1920s. Indeed, with its hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops, it is an enclave for tourists. It is made wholly of tourism reality and is the principal place most Japanese tourists stay. Japanese tourists are welcomed by Japanese-speaking people though they are no longer immigrants. After the 1980s, Japanese or American spouses took their places. Japanese complex feelings for the Japanese immigrants gradually faded even though they remained nostalgic.

**Discussion and conclusion**

*Tourism changes and Images of the reality of the place*

Reality in tourism is constructed not only by images, but by supply and demand. While the group tour was the major type of tourism, namely, during mass tourism before 1980, suppliers such as the tourism industry were strong because the reality depended on an authentic national story in conjunction with veritable and famous places to visit. Although tourists enjoyed typical places provided by the tourism industry, in the “new tourism” period after the 1970s, suppliers of tourism had to pay more attention to consumers psychographics and tourists became more flexible, more experienced, more independent, more quality conscious (Poon 1993, p. 9-11). This meant that the demand power became stronger, and tourists (mostly repeaters) began to search for
their own stories and favorite destinations. Consequently, after the 1970s and especially after 1980, the Japanese Hawaii tourism reality expanded beyond the tourist enclave. Furthermore, backstage stories shared socially by the Japanese gradually lost their depth and became more private and superficial.

Tourism reality exists between the reality of daily life and that of fiction. It is distinguished from the reality of daily life not only by the tourists, but by the locals. Furthermore, it is differentiated from the reality of fiction because tourism is largely based on materialism. The reality of tourism definitely needs an image created by both front-stage appearances and backstage stories. It is based more or less on fiction, which is required by both the front stage and backstage. If parts of our daily lives are based on fiction, then the reality of tourism becomes more fictional. However, if the fiction of the place becomes similar to the reality of daily life, then the reality of tourism becomes virtually parallel to it. In a postmodern society, the line separating fiction from reality is undermined (Lash 1990; Urry 1990). We may be living more and more in borderless realities in postmodern societies that are losing “grand narratives.”

As far as tourism is concerned, at a time when everyone could have the same “grand narrative” or the same dream, people could create the same solid image for their destination. Before the 1980s the Japanese could imagine authentic appearances and stories for Hawaii. Subsequently, they gradually lost their genuine stories of Hawaii, and had to construct their own fluid stories from the database the Hawaii films provided. Japanese Hawaii films now correspond to the database consumption of Japanese Hawaii tourism (Azuma 2009). The content of the database on Japanese immigrants and native Hawaiians is now minimal.

**Tourism shift and transformation of consumption style of the image**

Tourism reality reflects the mentality and the culture of the people in the tourism market. This paper demonstrates a discernable shift in the reality of a destination at different levels from national to personal, in-depth to superficial, and narrative to picturesque, depicting changes in the image of the place. This shift was reflected in the change from mass tourism to new tourism which may also be described as a change from modern to postmodern travel culture among Japanese tourists.
Tourism is a consumption of place (Urry 1995). The actual practice depends on the consumption style of the societies. The Hawaiian images and tourism of the Japanese shifted from the modern to the postmodern type, as well as the Fordism to the post-Fordism type, which lost the collective images shared in a society. As the style of the tour becomes more personal, the image of the places in contemporary society is perceived more personally. The Japanese image of Hawaii was a typical example of this shift.

Notes

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References


Japanese tourists’ image of Hawaiian Japanese Locals


