

# **“A Fascinating Interracial Experiment Station”: Remapping the Orient-Occident Divide in Hawai‘i<sup>1</sup>**

**Shelley Sang-Hee Lee and Rick Baldoz**

## **Introduction**

During the 1920s and 1930s, American intellectuals on the U.S. continent often described Hawai‘i as a “racial frontier,” a meeting ground between East and West where “unorthodox” social relations between Native Hawaiians, Asians, and Caucasians had taken root. The frontier metaphor evoked two very different images, the “racial paradise” and the “racial nightmare,” and in both characterizations, Asians figured prominently. In 1930, of the islands’ civilian population of nearly 350,000, about 236,000 or 68 percent were classified as Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, or Korean.<sup>2</sup> Political, religious, and educational leaders in Hawai‘i were the main propagators of the racial paradise image, which expressed optimism in the ability of Caucasians and Asians to live together, while also celebrating the presence of Portuguese, Spanish, Puerto Ricans, Native Hawaiians, and an array of mixed-race groups.<sup>3</sup> They touted the assimilative powers of American institutions and promoted Hawai‘i as a model of colonial progress to audiences on the U.S. mainland. David Crawford, the president of the University of Hawai‘i,<sup>4</sup> summarized this view during a 1929 visit to Los Angeles where he spoke before a group called the Advertising Club. Hawai‘i society, explained Crawford, was “demonstrating the possibility of the meeting of Orient and Occident on terms of friendship that practically eliminate race prejudice.”<sup>5</sup>

This celebration of interracial harmony and cultural assimilation contrasted with views advanced by West Coast nativists who portrayed Hawai‘i and its preponderance of Asians in the population as a cautionary example of the pitfalls of American expansionism. During debates in the early 1920s over renewing the Alien Land Law in California, anti-Japanese agitators cited Hawai‘i as a failed experiment where the color line had been irretrievably breached by a vanguard force of unassimilable “Asiatic” labor. Marshall De Motte, the chairman of the California State Board of Control, urged that Japanese on the West Coast “must not be allowed to gain a foothold that will eventually enable them to control a single state of the nation as they virtually control Hawaii today.” Claiming that Japanese and other Asians in the islands had already sapped “our vital strength and drained our finances,” Motte implored Californians to guard themselves against the same fate.<sup>6</sup>

In the meantime, a group of American social scientists and intellectuals sought to add a third perspective on Hawai‘i, one they claimed was scientific and objective in comparison to the simplistic “paradise” and “nightmare” characterizations. They called the islands a “racial laboratory” where social relations broke from conventional codes of racial conduct in the United States. Led by sociologist Romanzo Colfax Adams of the University of Hawai‘i, these researchers published their work in books and academic journals and also had their findings reported on in major newspapers and magazines across the continental United States. Many of them were associated with the so-called “Chicago school” of sociology and had studied race relations on the West Coast and in urban America. While their findings would educate readers about Hawai‘i’s unique society, they were ultimately meant to yield insights about racial dynamics and social change that might be brought to bear on understanding and solving race problems in other parts of the United States.<sup>7</sup>

Building on the work of scholars such as Jonathan Okamura and Lori Pierce, who have critiqued the role of early twentieth-century academics in propagating Hawai‘i’s “unorthodox race doctrine,” this essay describes social science writings produced in the 1920s and 1930s that focused on Asians and interracial marriage in the islands.<sup>8</sup> Because these subjects generated significant concern and debate in parts of the continental United States at the time, the writings shed light on how influential early twentieth-century American scholarship and thought was shaped by the backdrop of extra-territorial expansion into the Pacific and anxiety over the presence of Asian people in the United States. Historian Henry Yu has incisively demonstrated how the Chicago sociologists studying Asians primarily on the West Coast upheld the liberal orthodoxy that Asians could assimilate to American society, while at the same reproducing many of the Orientalist stereotypes that pervaded American racial thinking during this period.<sup>9</sup> Building upon these insights, we find that the researchers studying Hawai‘i were similarly influenced by Orientalist ideas in their descriptions of Asians and Native Hawaiians, and they furthermore upheld whiteness as the civilizing force that directed and determined the process of assimilation. This led them to downplay data attesting

to the persistence of racial boundaries, interethnic conflict, and group hierarchy in Hawai‘i, as well as ignore class and population ratios that might explain the atypical social relations in the islands. The rigid hierarchical organization of the plantation system and power relations underlying American colonialism in Hawai‘i were either rarely acknowledged or dismissed as inconsequential to the inexorable movement towards amalgamation and social harmony.

The social scientists analyzed in this study were drawn to Hawai‘i because, in their view, it was a society uniquely unburdened by prejudice and fundamentally defined by the crossing of racial lines, offering a powerful counterexample to the conventional thinking of the period that placed Asians and whites at opposite sides of the *Orient/Occident divide*. The Orient/Occident divide explained the unassimilability of Asians in American society and was used to justify a litany of legal and political proscriptions barring them from immigrating, becoming naturalized citizens, and intermarrying with whites.<sup>10</sup> The Chicago sociologists provided a departure from this accepted wisdom and their research afforded opportunities to analyze direct crossings between whites and Asians through social and cultural encounters, intermarriage, and the lives of mixed-race offspring. Their findings on this topic, however, were ultimately limited and superficial, in part due to their own ideological and analytical blind spots. Likewise, the work on race mixing, which focused almost exclusively on two groups—Chinese-Hawaiians and Caucasian-Hawaiians—did not so much reveal glimpses of racial egalitarianism as it commented on class, gender, and population dynamics underlying relationships between small numbers of individuals from these groups, as well as the researchers’ own preoccupations with the racial traits of Asians (here Chinese) and whites.

Because this essay seeks principally to analyze the racial discourse disseminated in a discrete set of writings, it is not intended as a social history of Hawai‘i, and so urges against taking the social scientists’ claims about relations in the islands at face value. Instead we hold that their work is valuable as a window to early twentieth century intellectual efforts that offered an alternative to the nativist and racist ideology that dominated American popular discourse during this era. The exoticization of Hawai‘i and racialization of Asians and Native Hawaiians propagated by a cohort of social scientists have come under scrutiny by scholars in recent decades, the view of the islands as an otherworldly paradise where the unorthodox race doctrine lives on persists.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the belief endorsed by these intellectuals that interracial marriage and race-mixing signify progress in race relations both overlooks the ways that interracial sex and marriage can *perpetuate* racial and gender inequality and continues to influence the discourse intermarriage in Hawai‘i and other parts of the United States.<sup>12</sup> For these reasons, a critical analysis of these early twentieth century writings can be instructive.

## Mainlanders “Discover” Hawai‘i

A territory of the United States since 1898, Hawai‘i became the subject of heightened interest on the U.S. mainland in the 1920s and 1930s, judging from a flurry of articles in newspapers and popular magazines on topics from tourism to sugar cane production.<sup>13</sup> *National Geographic*, *Travel Magazine*, *Harper’s Monthly*, *Scribner’s*, and *The Nation*, as well as the major newspapers in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles devoted significant amounts of coverage to life in the islands. Nicknames like “Our Mid-Pacific Experiment Station,” “Pacific Paradise,” and “Cross-Roads of the Pacific,” indicated that much of the public’s burgeoning interest in the archipelago lay in its mysteriousness. Due to cost and distance, Hawai‘i was inaccessible for most Americans, which made its landscape and people seem all the more exotic and unfamiliar. Economic growth and technological advances facilitated commercial tourism, and the desire among many middle- and upper-class Americans for exotic experiences made Hawai‘i an appealing destination. For those without the means to travel there, films, novels, and travel articles with Pacific island themes provided consumers with a lush and bucolic escape. These cultural productions, which included traveling hula shows, became all the more popular into the 1930s as they offered a tropical and luxurious contrast to the stark realities of the Great Depression.<sup>14</sup>

The convergence of important historical developments also made Hawai‘i suddenly relevant in the national consciousness. Romanticized portrayals of the islands as a welcoming tropical oasis ruled by a pro-Western royal dynasty were challenged by political unrest in the early 1920s. Japan’s rising power in the Pacific combined with news of Japanese and Filipino-led sugar-cane worker strikes raised questions about the security of the islands as an American possession.<sup>15</sup>

More than anything else, however, the racial and ethnic composition of Hawai‘i’s population seemed to draw the attention and interest of readers. Mainlanders’ curiosity about this locale was shaped by their own experience and history of interracial encounters and expanding diversity. As early as the 1910s, newspapers reported with a combination of wonder and trepidation on Hawai‘i’s “mixture of races” which included Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, Caucasians, Native Hawaiians, Portuguese, Spanish, Puerto Ricans, and blacks.<sup>16</sup> Readers were captivated by descriptions of Honolulu as a “cosmopolitan” city where diverse peoples lived side-by-side rather than in racial and ethnic clusters, and of the islands’ “motley” crowds that were “representative of the Melting Pot of the Pacific.”<sup>17</sup>

Because Asians constituted a majority of the population by the 1920s, they drew frequent notice as the focus of these articles. In 1914, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* tried to dispel fears of “oriental” unassimilability, predicting that the civilizing tendencies of American institutions would help the “hitherto backward oriental and other dark skinned races” would “become efficient citizens of a self-governing community” under the leadership of whites “of the best type.”<sup>18</sup> Considerable attention was devoted to the consequences of interracial marriage

and race mixing. In 1930, Gwenfread Allen, a staff writer for the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* penned an article that appeared in the *Oakland Tribune*, in which she remarked on the emergence of a “neo-Hawaiian race”—an amalgam “breed” of Asians, Caucasians, and Native Hawaiians—that would be the future of the islands.<sup>19</sup> As to the question of whether or not a small island possession could withstand such a preponderance of Asian people, Allen assured readers that the anti-Asian conflict and strife that the U.S. west coast had endured with Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos would not repeat in Hawai‘i. In contrast to the continental experience, “oriental” and “occidental” cultures were reportedly finding a happy middle ground. As a writer for the *New York Times* explained, “We find the conservatism of the East being mellowed by the optimism of the West. . . . We find the fatalism of the Orient being leavened by the hopefulness of the Occident.”<sup>20</sup>

Not all mainland writers shared this optimism about Hawai‘i’s racial future, and instead commented on the “serious problems” and “grave consequences” of the islands’ unusual demography.<sup>21</sup> In 1911, a writer for *Outlook* magazine warned American readers about the scourge of “Oriental immigration” in California and Hawai‘i. The article emphasized that Asiatic barbarism, penchant for vice, racial inferiority, and permanent alien-ness would prevent them from ever making a successful adjustment to American society. “No nation is strong enough for two races. The East for the Oriental, the West for the Occidental.”<sup>22</sup> In a 1925 article in the *Washington Post*, Arthur Sears Henning blamed planters’ greed for bringing about the current state of affairs, in which a multiethnic laboring class made up the overwhelming majority of the islands’ population. Henning was particularly concerned about the large number of Japanese, which he believed represented a threat to Hawai‘i’s future as an American territory:

With the Japanese at present constituting nearly one-half the population of the islands, maintaining racial solidarity, remaining strongly nationalistic, if not, anti-American and constituting an anonymously disturbing element in local affairs, the eyes of the most intelligent American citizens are anxiously turned toward that day when it appears probable the sons of Nippon will control the Hawaiian electorate and be able to work their will with this Pacific bulwark of the United States.<sup>23</sup>

The threat posed by Japanese immigrants centered on anxieties about political competition and labor unrest in the islands. This resonated with similar concerns voiced by American military and business leaders about the inter-imperial rivalry with the Japanese government for control of the Pacific Rim.

Popular narratives about Filipinos and Native Hawaiians raised a different set of problems, notably their indolence and vulnerability as targets of racial violence. In 1930 Paul Scharrenberg, a spokesman for the California State Federation of Labor decried a series of recent bloody anti-Filipino race riots on the West Coast, and said that “Hawaiian sugar planters [were] primarily to blame.” He cited the

exploitative policies of the islands' plantation bosses as the root cause of the "swarming of cheap labor from across the Pacific," a phenomenon that "inevitably" resulted in violent reactions by white workers.<sup>24</sup> University of Hawai'i professor Stanley Porteus noted that Filipinos were "decidedly improvident and shiftless" and added that their "lack of planning capacity and foresight" explained why as a race they were stuck at "an adolescent stage of development."<sup>25</sup> His characterizations of Native Hawaiians were equally disdainful. This population, he described, belonged to a "stone age culture" and tended to "follow impulses and short sighted plans," which made them susceptible to criminality and the "temptations of alluring vice."<sup>26</sup>

On the issue of interracial marriage, others raised fears that the racial heterogeneity had fostered a state of degeneracy and lawlessness in the islands, especially during the high-profile Massie trials of 1931 and 1932, in which a multiracial group of men were accused of raping a white woman.<sup>27</sup> Assistant Secretary of State William Castle blamed intermarriage and the "dilution" of Native Hawaiian blood for contributing to social degeneracy on the islands, saying, "The mixture of Hawaiian with foreign blood does not usually result well . . . as a rule, among the men at least, it seems to be the weak qualities of both races which are exemplified in the children of mixed marriages."<sup>28</sup> The result was "a people despicable and thoroughly degraded." Assistant Attorney General Seth Richardson offered a different hypothesis, somehow finding a way to pin the explanation for dangerous conditions on the presence of Asian people. Hawai'i's "unusual socialization problems," said Richardson, stemmed from "problems which have come from trying to impose Occidental laws and customs upon Oriental people."<sup>29</sup>

### **Sociologists Take on the Islands**

With their wide geographic dispersion through research projects and academic appointments and the scholarly authority with which they discussed the "Oriental," sociologists of the Chicago school had a profound impact on academic thinking about Asian immigrants in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. Most of them trained at the University of Chicago under the direction Professor Robert Ezra Park, one of the "fathers of modern sociology" and a pioneer in the study of immigrant assimilation. Park's theory of the "race relations cycle" purported to explain group competition, accommodation, and assimilation. He and his associates argued against prevailing explanations of race, proposing that the differences among peoples usually attributed to race and ethnicity were not biologically based, but rather the outcomes of environment and social structures. Thus, racial prejudice was merely symptomatic of a lack of familiarity resulting from the social and physical distances that separated groups of people.<sup>30</sup> Ideas about space and distance were also central in their understanding of human difference and change, and Park and his colleagues perceived a strong correlation between "social distance" and physical or geo-

graphic distance. Because of this presupposition, the Chicago sociologists were interested in social changes that resulted from spatial movements, be it rural to urban, traditional to modern, and ethnic homeland to host society. If physical distance could be diminished, so could social distance. Along similar lines, the topic of interracial relationships held great interest because a person’s willingness to engage in intimate relations with someone of a different race indicated the ultimate closure of social distance.

Cultural contact and adjustment among Asian immigrants in America, especially on the west coast, had drawn considerable scholarly attention by the 1920s. Because of the vast physical space they overcame to reach the United States, and the perceived massive cultural distance between the “Orient” and “Occident,” Asians represented the ultimate “others” in modern American society. From the late nineteenth century onward, Japan’s international ascendancy and the United States’ own quest for power and influence among Asian nations and in Pacific territories further magnified the salience of questions regarding “East-West” relations and understanding between whites and “Orientals.” Researchers became particularly intrigued by conditions on the U.S. west coast, where the “yellow-white” color line appeared to be the dominant factor shaping race relations there, in contrast to other parts of the nation where the black-white dyad defined the racial discourse. The Chicago school’s most ambitious and comprehensive attempt to study Asians on the west coast was the *Survey of Race Relations*, directed by Park, which deployed teams of researchers all over the coast to collect data and conduct interviews on topics like cultural contact and change, socialization, and discrimination.<sup>31</sup> The overall objective of this effort was to understand the stages of assimilation, triggered by migration and ending with incorporation into the dominant society. By demonstrating the malleability of racial and ethnic traits, they would refute the nativist claims of the unassimilability of Asians in American society.

Eventually, several of these sociologists turned their attention to Hawai‘i and the 1930s saw a profusion of new research on Asians and race relations in the islands. As early as 1924, however, one researcher described Hawai‘i as the ultimate “racial laboratory” and “greatest research chance in the world” because both physical and social distance between racially and ethnically diverse peoples had apparently been eliminated, as evidenced in mixed schools, neighborhoods, sports teams, and homes.<sup>32</sup> Most notable among the sociologists who studied Hawai‘i were Romanzo Adams, Andrew Lind, Edward B. Reuter, Clarence Glick, Bernhard Hormann, and William C. Smith, all earning their doctorates in sociology from the University of Chicago. Robert Park served as a visiting professor at the University of Hawai‘i between 1931 and 1933. Romanzo Adams, who had received his PhD in 1904, joined the University of Hawai‘i in 1919, and soon after established himself as a leading authority on race relations in Hawai‘i. Andrew Lind was a Park-trained student of Park who would make his mark in the islands. After completing his dissertation, “Economic Succession and Racial Invasion in Hawaii” in 1931, Lind joined Adams in the Department

of Sociology at the University of Hawai‘i.<sup>33</sup> Also making crucial contributions were graduate students Margaret Lam of the University of Hawai‘i and Doris Lorden and Jitsuichi Masuoka of the University of Iowa (students of Edward B. Reuter), who studied different aspects of race relations in the islands for their doctoral work. The “Oriental” identities of Lam and Masuoka allowed them to play the important roles of “native informants” in Hawai‘i’s majority Asian population where the intentions of white researchers might have been suspect.<sup>34</sup>

These researchers often used mainland conditions as their initial points of reference. They noted in Hawai‘i the absence of Jim Crow practices, the seemingly widespread acceptance of Asian people, and the permissibility of interracial marriage, which made conditions in the islands all the more stunning. For example, William C. Smith remarked that a white person on the west coast who was friendly toward an “Oriental” would “have been made uncomfortable,” but in Hawai‘i, “the various races intermingle freely and a white person will not be ostracized if he shows himself friendly to the Orientals.”<sup>35</sup> Romanzo Adams attributed this unique pattern of social relations to “The Unorthodox Race Doctrine of Hawaii,” which was characterized by the “apparent absence . . . of race prejudice” in the islands and the assertion that “the race mores of Hawaii are, or tend to be, mores of race equality.”<sup>36</sup> Relatively high rates of intermarriage and the absence of state-sanctioned racial segregation evidenced this putative equality found in Hawai‘i. These ideas deviated from the conventional wisdom of the period, which portrayed Asians as an unassimilable racial menace whose presence threatened the national integrity of the United States. Popular perceptions about the unbridgeable cultural gap between Asians and whites were reinforced as both matters of law and custom on the U.S. mainland where a variety of legal proscriptions aimed to regulate the sexual and marital propriety of Asian immigrants.

In much of urban America, migration, industrialization, and economic growth had increased opportunities for interracial encounters, giving rise to concerns and anxieties about race-mixing and its attendant threat to white racial purity. In addition to the resurgence of nativism, the early twentieth century saw the rise of “race suicide” discourse, which dominated scientific and popular discussion by the 1920s and underlay the rise of a eugenics movement during the 1930s.<sup>37</sup> Scientists linked feeble-mindedness and immorality to genetics, and by the early twentieth century, increasingly to race. In what historian Kevin Mumford describes as a “swirling current of sexual racism,” many states moved to enact or tighten miscegenation statutes between 1910 and 1940.<sup>38</sup> At one time or another in American history, forty-one states or colonies eventually enacted miscegenation laws. Whites were urged to have more children to counter the high fertility of people of color. Reformers calling for policies to prevent the mixture of “disparate types,” whether between the intelligent and the feeble-minded, the wealthy and the poor, or white and black succeeded in getting bills to authorize sterilization introduced in state legislatures.

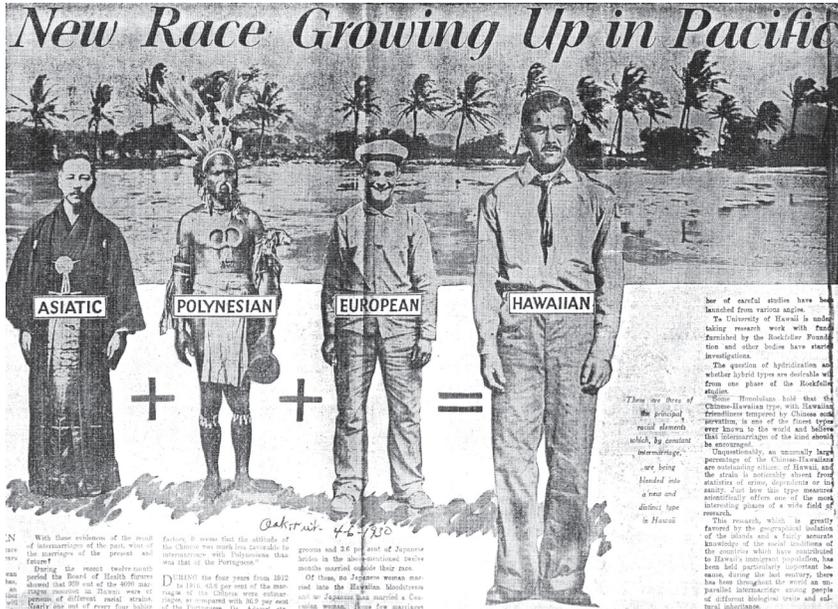
During the 1930s, much of the miscegenation concern about Asians in California focused on male Filipino immigrant, as the Chinese and Japanese “races”

had already been restricted from immigrating and intermarrying with whites. A violent nativist movement aimed at excluding Filipinos from the United States placed interracial romance between Filipino men and white women at the center of their campaign. The unique racial classification of Filipinos as “Malays” rather than “Mongolians” allowed them to temporarily circumvent miscegenation statutes in some western states. In 1933 legislators in California passed a new anti-miscegenation law targeting Filipinos in order to close up this loophole that allowed for unwelcome breaches of the color bar at the altar.<sup>39</sup>

With this anxiety around race mixture as a social, moral, and public health crisis, scholars in various disciplines undertook studies of the phenomenon, seeking to bring some much-needed objectivity and rigor to a greatly sensationalized subject. But they also conceded with the panic-mongers that interracial contacts had reached a heightened stage. As E.B. Reuter stated in 1930, “At present time the contact of racial stocks is incomparably greater than at any previous time in world history.”<sup>40</sup> Popular beliefs about the unassimilability of Asians directly challenged the Chicago school’s theories about the race relations cycle, which posited the inexorable progress of all immigrant groups towards assimilation into the larger society. It is important to note that the Chicago sociologists studying Hawai‘i and the nativist ideologues to whom they responded actually agreed that interracial marriage was the ultimate symbol of racial equality. They differed, however, on the desirability and consequences of this phenomenon. Chicago sociologists and their allies saw Hawai‘i as a beacon of progress that might offer hope for communities on the U.S. mainland. Nativist leaders on the other hand saw this as a nightmare scenario, a harbinger of white racial suicide that needed to be checked before it took hold on the west coast.

Romanzo Adams and his colleagues believed that Hawai‘i offered a unique case study that might bolster their theories about the cyclical movement of all newcomers towards assimilation. The experiments they saw unfolding among the population made the islands an “unusually good place for the scientific study of . . . social problems.”<sup>41</sup> To social scientists, interracial intimacy and marriage on the islands were especially significant because they indicated the ultimate erasure of physical and social distance, which, in turn demonstrated the diminution of race antipathy. Adams said that attitudes about intermarriage in Hawai‘i were not just permissive, but favorable, and suggested that a person would put his or her social standing at risk by speaking out against it.<sup>42</sup> If interracial marriage truly was the normative state of affairs in Hawai‘i society, this “unorthodox race doctrine” begged explanation. Posing the central question of his research, Adams asked, “Why, in Hawaii did the people of British and American origin fail to set up the obstacles that are so commonly found where English-speaking people have established contacts with the darker races?”<sup>43</sup>

The sociologists clung to peculiar interpretations of Native Hawaiian traditions and Hawai‘i history to explain the islands’ interracial exchanges. In his 1937 book *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*, considered to be the Chicago school’s major contribution to the study of race relations in Hawai‘i, Romanzo Adams



**Figure 1:** This layout appeared in the *Oakland Tribune* on April 6, 1930, with an accompanying article by Gwenfread Allen, who was a staff writer for the *Honolulu Star Bulletin*. Illustrating the emergence of the “neo-Hawaiian race” three figures represent Asians, native Hawaiians, and Caucasians and are lined up as if factors in an addition equation with the multiracial “Hawaiian” as the product. Such mixed-race offspring were also referred to by social scientists as “triple hybrids.” Gwenfread Allen, “New Race Growing Up in the Pacific,” *Oakland Tribune*, April 6, 1930, 10.

cited the receptivity of native culture and social status of Euro-American men arriving during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For thousands of years, he explained, Native Hawaiians had practiced “freedom” in their marriage traditions; furthermore, their centuries-long isolation had resulted in an absence of “any traditional bias antagonistic to other races.”<sup>44</sup> As for the white and Asian male newcomers to the islands, two conditions—the lack of women of their own race and separation from their communities of origin—placed them in a state of social disorganization, making it exceedingly difficult to adhere to the mores and dominant attitudes of their home cultures.

Adams also pointed to the “equality” that existed between the Native Hawaiian monarchy and European and American merchants and traders during the pre-annexation period. These traders recognized the legitimacy and sovereignty of the native ruling class, which in turn, facilitated high-status intermarriages between Native Hawaiian elites and ambitious white foreigners. Evidence of this purportedly egalitarian dynamic was supported through anecdotal accounts

... of careful studies have been launched from various angles. The University of Hawaii is undertaking research work with funds furnished by the Rockefeller Foundation and other bodies have started investigations.

The question of hybridization and whether hybrid types are desirable will form one phase of the Honolulu studies.

“Some” Hawaiian hold that the Chinese-Hawaiian type with Hawaiian predominance (except by Chinese and American) is one of the finest types ever known in the world and believe that intermarriage of the kind should be encouraged.

Unquestionably, an unusually large percentage of the Chinese-Hawaiian are outstanding citizens of Hawaii and the strain is noticeably strong from statistics of crime, delinquency or big game, and few have any type of economic difficulties other than the usual interesting phases of a wide field of research.

This research, which is greatly favored by the geographical isolation of the islands and a fairly accurate knowledge of the ancient conditions of the continent which have contributed to Hawaii's ancient isolation, has been held particularly important because during the last century there has been throughout the world an unparalleled intermarriage among people of different biological races and subsequent hybridization.

There are three of the principal racial elements which, by constant intermarriage, are being blended into a new and distinct type in Hawaii.

With these evidences of the result of intermarriage of the past, with it the advantage of the present and with the future?

During the recent twelve-month period the Board of Health figures showed that 950 out of the 8900 marriages recorded in Hawaii were of persons of different racial strains.

Every one out of every four marriages...

It is seen that the attitude of the Chinese was much less favorable to intermarriage with Polynesians than was that of the Portuguese.

Of these, the Japanese women and 54 per cent of Japanese males in the same percentage twelve months married outside their race.

Of these, the Japanese women married into the Hawaiian, American and the Japanese, but married a Caucasian woman, 18 per cent.

... of the Hawaiian to American and...

told by Adams and his colleagues. Typical of these was the oft-repeated tale of a “high-born” Scottish adventurer who arrived in Hawai‘i in the mid-nineteenth century. He eventually plied his military and technical skills in the service of King Kamehameha. He was rewarded by the king with a high-status position in the Hawai‘i government and was given a woman of chiefly rank to be his wife. His kinship ties to the royal family enhanced his social status in the islands and he learned to respect native traditions and culture. Because of his family ties he “inevitably had to support the doctrine of racial equality if he responded in a normal way to the requirements of his situation.”<sup>45</sup> The men had plenty to gain from marrying Native Hawaiian women—fictive kinship ties, land, political influence—and in the case of early white male settlers who had developed strategic alliances with the monarchy, status, and wealth. In other words, the atypical marriage patterns of white settlers in colonial Hawai‘i was more likely the product of instrumental considerations regarding access to land, power, and status than by enlightened race thinking in the islands. Moreover, negative attitudes about these unions did not form because, “Public opinion adverse to interracial marriage never develops among men isolated from women of their own race.”<sup>46</sup>

These scholars traced the relatively egalitarian race relations they discovered in Hawai‘i to the longstanding missionary influence in the islands, which they believed nurtured a more civil and inclusive set of social relations.<sup>47</sup> These examples were used to show the historical backdrop of racial egalitarianism, yet the assumption that interracial marriage was synonymous with social equality was problematic. Similar dynamics of interracial marriage had occurred during roughly the same period in the American southwest. White settlers had formed familial ties with Mexican landed elites and *ranchero* families either through intermarriage or *compradrazgo* relationships. The deference and respect shown initially by white settlers for Mexican ethnic traditions, however, was temporary and fragile as Mexicans were quickly marginalized and confined to a subordinate status at the bottom of the region’s social order.<sup>48</sup>

Adams and other social scientists frequently claimed racial conflict was non-existent in Hawai‘i and that any individual who endorsed racist ideas would be censured by the larger society, yet evidence of both practices was abundant. The eugenicist research of University of Hawai‘i colleague Stanley Porteus on race and intelligence received international attention during the 1920s and 1930s. Porteus claimed among other things that non-whites were biologically and intellectually inferior to whites and that Asian immigrants posed a threat to the racial integrity of the United States. He also advocated forced sterilization and or exclusion of non-whites to protect white racial purity.<sup>49</sup> Adams and his colleagues also ignored the aforementioned high profile and racially charged Massie trials in Honolulu in 1931 and 1932.<sup>50</sup> This example along with long-standing racial hierarchies in the islands’ plantation economy somehow escaped their scrutiny.

## Race-Mixing Literature

Romanzo Adams's declaration that, within a few generations, all of Hawai'i's residents would belong to a "new Hawaiian race," the islands' mixed-race, or "hybrid" population, stood out as especially compelling to researchers.<sup>51</sup> In 1934, William C. Smith wrote that regardless of their composition, "hybrids" in Hawai'i usually expressed pride in their mixed ancestry, a striking finding considering the pariah status that most mixed-peoples on the mainland experienced. As far as the broader impact of the mixed population, "the presence of a considerable group of hybrids in Hawai'i has been an important factor in developing a situation where race prejudice is practically absent."<sup>52</sup> Smith further affirmed that mixed-race individuals not only experienced little to no social stigma, but they also played a key role in neutralizing racial and ethnic discord in the islands' diverse society. To illustrate, he remarked, "If a person with Chinese, Native Hawaiian, and Scotch blood was president of the students' association, all three groups would consider themselves represented." Moreover, he asserted that the ethnicities or races not represented in the mixed-race individual, would, nonetheless, more wholeheartedly support "such a cosmopolite than of a pure-blood representative of any single group."<sup>53</sup>

The shape of scholarly studies of mixed-race peoples in Hawai'i were influenced by preexisting racial categories. In 1900, the first official territorial census was undertaken in Hawai'i. Initially it merely employed the racial classifications "white," "Negro," "Indian," "Chinese," and "Japanese," but soon found that this configuration did not sufficiently account for Hawai'i's social makeup and organization, so in 1910 a more elaborate system was adopted.<sup>54</sup> The territorial government recognized only two mixed-race groups: Asiatic-Hawaiians and Caucasian-Hawaiians. In most of the cases of "hybrids" studied by the sociologists, the mother of the mixed child was Native Hawaiian.

In studying the two officially recognized mixed-race groups, the sociologists delineated distinct historical narratives for their emergence. Caucasian-Hawaiians, who according to the census numbered 15,632 in 1930, were described in these narratives as descendants of nineteenth-century unions between American and European men of the non-laboring class and elite Native Hawaiian women. The men were usually powerful economic elites, professionals, children of missionaries, or adventurers. They were also known as *haole*, a racial and class term that denoted their outsider status, but increasingly indicated whiteness and privilege. The Caucasian-Hawaiian population had a longer history and was numerically larger than the Asiatic-Hawaiian population, which started appearing around the late nineteenth century. Because they were almost all of a Chinese and Hawaiian combination, the researchers used the terms "Asiatic-Hawaiian" and "Chinese-Hawaiian" interchangeably. The dynamics of these marriages, as described by the sociologists, were very different than those of Caucasians. The Chinese men who intermarried tended to be former plantation workers who had settled in urbanized areas and achieved some economic success. This group for

the most part married Native-Hawaiian commoner women who had little social status or access to land, so unlike the white men who gained status and power by marrying into Native-Hawaiian ruling families, the Chinese men did not experience upward social mobility through their kinship ties. By 1896, there were 1,387 part Hawaiians with Chinese fathers, and it was estimated that 43.6 percent of the marriages of Chinese were outmarriages.<sup>55</sup> According to the 1930 census, Asiatic-Hawaiians numbered 12,592 out of a total population (civilian and military) of 368,336.<sup>56</sup>

Researchers studied these hybrid populations, focusing on an array of adjustment and identity issues, among them the cultural borrowings and transformations that occurred in the households of interracial couples. In 1935, University of Iowa graduate student Doris Lorden, who had conducted her doctoral research



ANCESTRY, CHINESE-HAWAIIAN

**Figure 2:** Photographs of high school students in Honolulu were included in Romanzo Adams’ *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii* to illustrate the variety of races and race-mixtures that abounded in the Hawaii population. Captions beneath the illustrations only indicate the racial composition of the pictured student. Above is a “Chinese-Hawaiian.” Romanzo Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii: A Study of the Mutually Conditioned Processes of Acculturation and Amalgamation* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 90.

in Hawai‘i, published “The Chinese-Hawaiian Family” in the *American Journal of Sociology*, in which she brought an ethnographic eye to her subjects. Observing some of the cultural adaptations that Chinese husbands and Native Hawaiian wives made in building their families and households, she concluded that neither culture was dominant. For instance, in studying adaptations in food and language in one Chinese-Hawaiian home, Lorden learned from a mixed-race daughter: “We always had two kinds of food on the table—Hawaiian and Chinese food. . . . My father spoke Chinese to us at home. We answered him in Chinese most of the time. My mother spoke Hawaiian to us and we answered in Hawaiian.”<sup>57</sup> In other cases she found that a merging, as opposed to a pluralistic practice of cultural traditions, took place, evidenced in the development of a Chinese-Hawaiian pidgin spoken in some homes.

Researchers were also interested in comparing mixed-race offspring to the parent groups, in large part to refute the perception that race-mixing led to social degeneracy and was thus detrimental to human progress. Among Chinese-Hawaiians, S.D. Porteus noted “strong sense of family duty and responsibility of the Chinaman combined with the affection-



PARENTAGE  
 Father, Irish-Hawaiian  
 Mother, American (white)-Hawaiian

**Figure 3:** The photo above shows a “Caucasian-Hawaiian” student whose parents were likewise of Caucasian-Hawaiian descent. Romanzo Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii: A Study of the Mutually Conditioned Processes of Acculturation and Amalgamation* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 98.

ate home loving disposition of the Hawaiian created excellent conditions for the upbringing of the children.”<sup>58</sup> In general, the researchers concluded that in temperament and the ability to adapt to a modern commercial society, a mixed child occupied an intermediate station in between the mother and father’s qualities.<sup>59</sup> Specifically, the child represented a step up from the Native Hawaiian parent and a step or two down from Chinese or Caucasian parent. Comparing the educational performance of Chinese, Chinese-Hawaiians, and Native-Hawaiians, Romanzo Adams stated, “in school the Chinese-Hawaiians are retarded more than the Chinese, less than the Hawaiians.”<sup>60</sup> In light of the long-standing perceptions of Chinese backwardness and immorality in the mainland, such remarks about Chinese superiority over any group are striking. By contrast, Caucasian-Hawaiians allegedly “inherit[ed] very few of the virtues of their white parents,” and were “considered less stable and industrious than the Chinese-Hawaiians.”<sup>61</sup> Additionally, William C. Smith reported that Caucasian-Hawaiians tended to be “of mixed mind” because they were not fully accepted by whites in Hawai‘i, whereas Chinese-Hawaiians could mix freely in both parental groups.<sup>62</sup>

Whether they had intended to or not, the sociologists’ efforts to study the emergence and defining characteristics of Asiatic-Hawaiians and Caucasian-Hawaiians usually ended up commenting on the differences between Chinese and Caucasians. In summarizing a key conclusion from his research, Romanzo Adams stated, “In the story of the amalgamation of race in Hawaii, the immigrant peoples, especially the white and the Chinese, appear to have played the more active part, while the role of the Hawaiian has been of a more passive character.”<sup>63</sup> Margaret Lam reaffirmed and clarified this position, arguing that the differences between Asiatic-Hawaiians and Caucasian-Hawaiians, as groups, could be attributed to the “sharp physical and cultural differences and social status between the Chinese and the Caucasians.”<sup>64</sup> Judging from the minimal degree of attention they received, Native Hawaiians were effectively canceled out by the researchers, presumably because they were the common factor in the marriages under examination. The studies of the two mixed groups produced knowledge about the racial differences between Chinese and white people, which worked to reinforce the Orient/Occident divide while



PARENTAGE  
Father, English-Hawaiian  
Mother, Japanese-Hawaiian

**Figure 4:** Above is a Honolulu high school student whose father was English-Hawaiian and whose mother was Japanese-Hawaiian. Such persons, described by one sociologist as “triple hybrids,” would be classified in the Census as “Asiatic-Hawaiian” despite their Caucasian ancestry. Romanzo Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii: A Study of the Mutually Conditioned Processes of Acculturation and Amalgamation* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 126.

legitimizing a racial hierarchy in Hawai‘i society in which whites were at the top, Native Hawaiians were at the bottom, and Chinese formed a caste somewhere in the middle.

In her study of “socio-psychological processes,” or the development of group consciousness, among Chinese-Hawaiians and Caucasian-Hawaiians, Margaret Lam cited the formation of myths and race doctrines as a critical part of the process of accommodating their “biracial constitution.” Chinese-Hawaiians, she said, developed a “race doctrine of the ‘superiority of the Chinese blood’ and the contamination of the ‘Hawaiian blood.’”<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, she claimed that they “ascrib[ed] to the ‘Chinese blood’ all the desirable attributes and qualities that abstractly constitute general success.”<sup>66</sup> These desirable attributes were a strong work ethic and quickness of mind. On the other hand, her subjects did not find much to value on their Native Hawaiian side, which they associated with laziness and lack of ambition. This doctrine, furthermore, was often passed on to the mixed child from the native mother. One Chinese-Hawaiian woman told Lam that her mother would tell her: “if I didn’t have any Chinese blood, I would be like other Hawaiian girls—don’t go to school. . . . This is something that you can’t deny—it’s true and I believe it is true.”<sup>67</sup> According to the social scientists it was the native commoner women who experienced social mobility and increased status in these relationships by marrying Chinese merchants and artisans.

On the other hand, Lam argued that Caucasian-Hawaiians found their “self-gratification not in race doctrines but in family traditions of antiquity.” Their sense of group pride and identity derived from the “glorious deeds of their ancestors and the grandeur and pomp of the past.”<sup>68</sup> They would often claim a maternal ancestor with royal blood or kinship ties, but would more emphatically extol their paternal white ancestor, purportedly someone who had served King Kamehameha and was, thus, an “outstanding character” in Hawai‘i history. According to the archetypal narrative of the Caucasian-Hawaiians, this paternal white ancestor was

“given” a native wife in return for his service. They passed on their “traditions of antiquity” through storytelling, photos, and heirlooms.

As the example above demonstrates, the sociologists’ efforts to study intermarriage and race-mixing among the Chinese-Hawaiian and Caucasian-Hawaiian groups often ended up commenting on the significance of being half-Chinese or half-white. This is paradoxical, as the subjects of intermarriage and race-mixing in and of themselves evoke the blurring of racial lines. Yet these attempts to explain mixed-race identities focused attention on purported Chinese and Caucasian qualities. The Chicago sociologists attempted, to their credit, to dislodge biological definitions of race by showing the assimilability of Asians and, thus, socially constructed racial boundaries, but they nonetheless perpetuated their own brand of Orientalism. This is not to suggest that they deliberately and knowingly upheld a racial hierarchy. But their overarching analysis of interracial marriage and race relations in Hawai‘i tended to exaggerate the levels of egalitarian relations in the islands and downplayed the persistence of racial divisions among the population.

The reification of this Oriental-Occidental polarity was more apparent when researchers delved into the issue of competition between Caucasian-Hawaiians and Chinese-Hawaiians. According to Romanzo Adams, Chinese-Hawaiians were most responsible for this, as they allegedly harbored resentment toward Caucasian-Hawaiians because the latter as group enjoyed a higher social and economic status on the islands. Adams explained that this higher status was largely because Caucasian-Hawaiians as a group had emerged first and had more time to establish themselves. While holding that any competition between the groups was due to the class jealousy that Chinese-Hawaiians felt, he acknowledged that their resentment was often expressed in terms of race. For instance, the common complaint by Chinese-Hawaiians of Caucasian-Hawaiians, as Adams observed, was that they were too “haole-fied,” meaning they held excessive pride in their whiteness and flouted their class privileges.<sup>69</sup> While some Caucasian-Hawaiians believed their white blood and more elite status made them superior to Chinese-Hawaiians, Romanzo Adams found that Chinese-Hawaiians would counter this claim, saying *they* embodied the more desirable mixture. As he postulated, while hardening a host of new and old stereotypes, because Chinese treated others well, worked hard, and picked the most beautiful Native women, the Chinese-Hawaiian hybrid was far superior to Caucasian-Hawaiians. But as Adams further observed, these claims of superiority among the mixed groups really spoke to notions of Chinese-ness and Caucasian-ness. Emerging from this analysis, then, was a narrative of Chinese-white competition:

Here is a basis for the developing myth relating to the superiority of the Chinese-Hawaiians. . . . This myth is attractive not only to the Chinese-Hawaiians, but also to the Chinese and to many white people. As the Chinese see it, the superiority of Chinese-Hawaiians over the Caucasian-Hawaiians points to the superiority of the Chinese over the Caucasians. To the

Caucasian racial purist the myth has value in that it constitutes a further argument against the out-marriage of whites who are supposed not to mix well with the darker races because of their own great superiority.<sup>70</sup>

In dealing with Asian-white crossings, the sociologists tended to reproduce and perpetuate the state's elision of the subject, which is all the more curious considering their tendency to describe Hawai'i as a crossroads between the Orient and Occident. The official territorial census categories essentially rendered Asiatic-Caucasians invisible by classifying them as “Asiatic.” For instance, data collected in 1935 by the territorial board of health showed that of 2,094 Caucasian men who married that year, the largest percentage married Caucasian women, followed distantly by Caucasian-Hawaiians. However, the rate at which they married Asians and part-Asians, at 6.5 percent, was significant, but nonetheless went unexplored. Romanzo Adams simply said that any mixtures that did not involve a Native Hawaiian were too recent to merit serious scholarly attention. The most common way that Asians and whites crossed was indirectly, through two mixed-race parents, to produce an Asiatic-Hawaiian-Caucasian offspring, which the Census also ignored. These “triple hybrids” as dubbed by William C. Smith, were counted as “Asiatic-Hawaiian.”<sup>71</sup> Romanzo Adams estimated that up to one-third of those classified as Asiatic-Hawaiian had Caucasian blood and that this three-way mixture was the fastest-growing mixed race group in the 1930s.<sup>72</sup> In describing their emergence, Adams emphasized that these offspring were the product of part-Hawaiian unions most likely between white men mixed-blood women. From 1912 to 1916, 9 percent of marriages were between Caucasian-Hawaiians and Asiatic-Hawaiians, a percentage that increased to 17 between 1930 and 1934.<sup>73</sup> The sociologists left unexamined the growth of this “triple hybrid” population, beyond pointing out that it was a fast-emerging group. While it represented an opportunity to discuss crossings of Asian, Caucasian, and Native Hawaiian bodies and cultures, Adams and other researchers chose not to explore it. In this way, they again ignored the class and gender dynamics underlying marital choices and continued trumpet their theories of racial equality across all groups.

Bringing neither a critical nor inquisitive eye to the ways in which Asians and Caucasians were meeting and crossing in Hawai'i, the sociologists missed an opportunity to analyze the patterns of Oriental-Occidental encounters with their research findings. For instance, at one point in *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*, Romanzo Adams remarked that some mixed people with white, Asian, and Native Hawaiian blood, who would otherwise be categorized as Asiatic-Hawaiians, “prefer to escape from the arbitrary classification by claiming only the white and the Hawaiian ancestry.”<sup>74</sup> This finding, which might have led to an examination of the existence of anti-Asian attitudes and privileging of whiteness among the mixed-race population, was characteristically left unexplored. Perhaps doing so would have undermined their claims about racial harmony and equality in the

islands. The sociologists, thus, ignored ample evidence of racial hierarchy and stratification even when it appeared in their own research findings.

In her study of “socio-psychological processes,” Margaret Lam asserted that family narratives employed by Caucasian-Hawaiians were developed in response to their pariah status among pure-blooded whites. “The white-Hawaiians, in other words, have been rejected and given a derogatory status by their paternal race,” she stated. “It is only natural for them to react by proving that they are descendants of ancestors of distinction, chiefly status, wealth, as well as ability.”<sup>75</sup> Lam was interested in Caucasian-Hawaiians’ responses to rejection by whites, rather than in the rejection itself. Other research showed evidence of attitudes against intermarriage. Graduate students Leatrice and Marion Wong surveyed attitudes of white, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, and “part-Hawaiian” students at the University of Hawai‘i and found that among haoles, “The typical ‘Haole’ would not consider marrying an Oriental because it would mean a lowering of his social status. He clings to the traditional idea of unconquerable differences between Oriental and Caucasian. He believes that the Oriental has strange customs and an inscrutable way of thinking.”<sup>76</sup> The sociologists’ usual way of explaining these attitudes was to distinguish public from private views. Thus, studies were oddly removed from the social and class realities in Hawai‘i. They never really acknowledged or critiqued white racism or analyzed the highly stratified nature of Hawaiian society where a small group of whites and increasingly marginalized Natives ruled over a multiracial and mixed working class population.

Also problematic, and exceptionally undisciplined, were the sociologists’ descriptions of Native Hawaiian people and culture. Popular and nonacademic writers had originally constructed condescending and simplistic images of Native Hawaiians in their attempts to explain why social patterns differed there from the mainland. In 1924, the missionary Albert Palmer said that it was the influence of Hawai‘i’s “basic race . . . the kind-hearted, tolerant, loveable Polynesian whose most characteristic contribution to present day Hawaii is the spirit of ‘aloha,’” which made Hawai‘i society somehow invulnerable to the racial problems seen in the mainland.<sup>77</sup> The sociologists similarly relied on one-dimensional characterizations of Native Hawaiian people and culture to account for the islands’ unique social landscape. But in their minds, it was not the kind-hearted loveable native, but rather the unstructured, undisciplined native that facilitated racial harmony. To explain the relative frequency of interracial marriage, Adams cited a pre-existing disorganized “Hawaiian family system,” which was characterized by an “exceptional degree of freedom . . . and very little in the way of ceremony.”<sup>78</sup> In Native Hawaiian society, conjugal and parental responsibilities were not taken very seriously; men and women married as many times as they wished, divorce was a casual matter of an unhappy spouse simply leaving, and children would routinely be given away to friends. Nor was there any public disapproval of abortion and infanticide. All of this attested to the freedom that natives were accustomed to in their social and sexual relations, and it was this freedom that led

many Native Hawaiian women to consent to interracial marriages without much pause or forethought. As Doris Lorden explained, these women intermarried because their culture “was more or less thoroughly disorganized. . . . The family pattern, at least as it had survived Western contact, was flexible and imposed little restriction on individual behavior.”<sup>79</sup>

Arguing against the contaminating effects of miscegenation might have represented a politically liberal position for the sociologists, but they also advanced very uncharitable views of native people. Their discussions of hybrids and their rankings in relation to the Caucasian, Native Hawaiian, and Chinese parent groups almost always disparaged natives. For example, Romanzo Adams remarked that “part-Hawaiians” benefited from the “better adapted culture of the white and the Chinese ancestors and they suffer from the persistence of features of the old Hawaiian culture and its disorganization.”<sup>80</sup> This was probably one of the main reasons why, speculated Margaret Lam, Chinese-Hawaiians were more likely to “flaunt their Chinese blood and look down on their Hawaiian side, they wished to escape the stigma attached to the natives.”<sup>81</sup> A hardly subtle subtext running through nearly all of the analyses was that interracial marriage involving Native Hawaiians was positive because it resulted in the dilution of native blood.

The most unsettling aspects of the simplified and often racist presentations of Native Hawaiians were descriptions of the women as mere pawns or opportunists. Native women who married Chinese men were characterized as scheming climbers who sought social and economic advantage by intermarrying. “The Chinese have economic status,” observed William C. Smith. “The Hawaiian [women] early recognized their industriousness and a Chinese husband was considered a good prize in the matrimonial market.”<sup>82</sup> This, of course, suggested that native men lacked these positive attributes; S.D. Porteus, for example, affirmed this when he reported that native women found Chinese and white men to be thriftier, kinder, and more prosperous than men from their communities.<sup>83</sup> The higher status Native Hawaiian women who married white men were not credited such shrewdness; instead they came across as passive, powerless pawns used in transactions aimed at consolidating the power of white and native men.

## Conclusion

This essay has tried to show how the Orient/Occident divide, or descriptions of Asian-white difference, were recast in sociological writings about interracial marriage in Hawai‘i during the 1930s. A related objective of this essay is to problematize the view, which still holds popular currency, that Hawai‘i is a “racial paradise.” Mainlanders as well as local academics and journalists continue to romanticize the islands and look to them as an answer to contemporary racial problems, but as histories of race relations in Hawai‘i have shown, it was far from an idyllic melting pot.<sup>84</sup> Many of the questionable assumptions advanced by the Chicago sociologists remain popular in social science literature today, in particular the belief that higher levels of interracial dating and marriage are key

indicators of racial equality. Whether an individual's level of attraction and/or aversion to romantic partners of another "race" is closely correlated to changes in the larger structures of racial hierarchy and disadvantage remains an open question.

Despite their claims to objectivity and scholarly detachment, the sociologists were neither working nor thinking in a vacuum; they could not escape many of the assumptions and ascriptive biases embedded in the larger culture and regularly traded in the same essentialist formulations that dominated popular discourses on race relations. Their thinking about Asians and race in Hawai'i was framed by a history of anti-Asian racism in the American west, long-standing Orientalist presumptions about incompatibility and opposition between the "Orient" and "Occident," overarching anxieties about Hawai'i's security, as well as emerging liberal thought about the transformative power of American values and institutions to turn the most threatening foreigners into good Americans. The researchers might have espoused what could be termed a progressive outlook by arguing for the potential assimilability of all races and taking intermarriage as a sign of social progress, rather than as a threat to white hegemony. They were not, however, able to transcend fully many of the ideological blind spots that dominated popular thinking on race relations during this period. The Chicago sociologists ended up reproducing many of the same Orientalist formulations that they sought to overturn, in particular their assumptions about the inherent backwardness of Asian and Native Hawaiian culture—a deficiency that could only be overcome by adaptation to the superior norms of Anglo-Saxon society. Thus, their work on race mixing in Hawai'i neither blurred nor challenged racial boundaries, but remapped them.

## Notes

The authors thank Jonathan Okamura, Judy Wu, Rachel Jean-Baptiste, and the three anonymous readers for the *American Studies* journal.

1. Albert Palmer, *The Human Side of Hawaii: Race Problems in the Mid-Pacific* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1924), 3.

2. According to the same census, Hawaiians numbered 22,636. Romanzo Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii: A Study of the Mutually Conditioned Processes of Acculturation and Amalgamation* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 13.

3. Portuguese and Spanish were not considered Caucasian by the Hawaiian census.

4. Though during the time period this essay covers, the university did not include the 'okina in its name. For the sake of consistency, we use the current format, "University of Hawai'i."

5. "Hawaii Called Race Cauldron," *Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 1929, A1.

6. Marshall De Motte, "California—White or Yellow?" *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 93 (January 1921): 18-23.

7. On the origins and persistence of the Hawai'i as racial paradise myth, see Jonathan Okamura, "The Illusion of Paradise: Privileging Multiculturalism in Hawaii" in *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*, edited by Dru Gladney (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 264-284.

8. Jonathan Okamura, "The Illusion of Paradise"; Lori Pierce, "Creating a Racial Paradise: Citizenship and Sociology in Hawaii," in *Race and Nation: Ethnic Systems in the Modern World*, edited by Paul Spickard (New York: Routledge, 2004), 69-86. See also John Chock Rosa, "The Coming of the Neo-Hawaiian American Race: Nationalism and Metaphors of the Melting Pot in Popular Accounts of Mixed Race Individuals," in *The Sum of Our Parts: Mixed Heritage Asian Americans*, edited by Teresa Williams-León and Cynthia Nakashima (Philadelphia: Temple University Press,

2001), 49-56 and Paul Hooper, *Elusive Destiny: The Internationalist Movement in Modern Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1980).

9. Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Exoticism, and Contact in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). To be sure, Yu’s focus isn’t exclusively on the west coast, as he provides a brief discussion of Hawai’i on pages 80-84, which principally serves to open up the topic for further investigation.

10. On the origins of this idea in western thought, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979).

11. For a fairly recent example of a scholarly invoking of the racial paradise image, see Glen Grant and Dennis Ogawa, “Living Proof: Is Hawaii the Answer?” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530 (November 1993): 137-154.

12. For a provocative exchange on the significance of interracial sex and marriage, see David A. Hollinger, “Amalgamation and Hypodescent: The Question of Ethnoracial Mixture and in the History of the United States,” *The American Historical Review* 8 (December 2003): 363-390 and Henry Yu, “Tiger Woods is not the End of History: Or Why Sex Across the Color Line Won’t Save Us All,” *The American Historical Review* 8 (December 2003): 1406-1414. Scholarship specifically examining aspects of race mixture involving Asian Pacific Americans has proliferated, and key works include Paul Spickard, *Mixed Blood: Inter marriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth Century America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989) and *Racially Mixed Peoples in America*, edited by Maria P.P. Root (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992) and *The Sum of Our Parts: Mixed Heritage Asian Americans*, edited by Teresa Williams-León and Cynthia Nakashima (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).

13. For a small sample of these works, see Helen Carew King, “Found: A Young Folks’ Paradise,” *St. Nicholas* 49 (December 1921): 38-42; Padraic Colum, “America in Polynesia: Where Sugar is King,” *The Nation*, February 6, 1924, 138-141; Padraic Colum, “America in Polynesia: Hawaiian Village Life,” *The Nation*, March 5, 1924, 251-253; Padraic Colum, “America in Polynesia: Polynesian Romance,” *The Nation*, April 9, 1924, 395-397; Gilbert Grosvenor, “The Hawaiian Islands: America’s Strongest Outpost of Defense—The Volcanic and Floral Wonderland of the World,” *National Geographic Magazine* 155 (February 1924): 115; Frances Parkinson Keyes, “Verdant Islands in the Mid-Pacific,” *Travel* 67 (October 1936): 20; Charles H. Sherrill, “At the Pacific Cross-Roads,” *Scribner’s Magazine* 67 (January 1920): 98-105.

14. On the traveling hula circuits in the mainland see Adria Imada, “Hawaiians on Tour: Hula Circuits Through the American Empire,” *American Quarterly* 56 (March 2004): 111-149.

15. On labor unrest in Hawaii, see Edward Beechert, *Working in Hawaii: A Labor History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985) and Moon-Kie Jung, *Reworking Race: The Making of Hawaii’s Interracial Labor Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

16. “Mixture of Races Seen in Hawaii: Observer Finds the Varying Standards of Living a Big Factor in Relations of Yellow and White Men in the Pacific,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 12, 1914, A1.

17. “Easter in Honolulu Shows Colorful Mingling of Races,” *New York Times*, April 2, 1927, 9.

18. “Hawaii Now Facing Race Problem,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 5, 1914, A1.

19. “New Race Growing Up in the Pacific,” *Oakland Tribune*, April 6, 1930, 10.

20. “Says ‘Twain’ Have Met,” *New York Times*, August 14, 1932.

21. “Alien Races Form Hawaiian Blocs,” *New York Times*, May 24, 1925, 30; “U.S. Faces Grave Race Problems in Pacific,” *The Chicago Defender*, September 4, 1926, A1.

22. “Oriental Immigration,” *Outlook* 97 (January 14, 1911): 63.

23. Arthur Sears Henning, “Future of Hawaii Overshadowed by Tokyo’s Influence,” *Washington Post*, May 20, 1925, 1.

24. “Rioting Blame Charged To Planters’ Policy,” *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, January 23, 1930, 1.

25. Stanley Porteus, *Temperament and Race* (Boston: R.G. Badger, 1926), 58, 67.

26. Emory Bogardus, “Native Hawaiians and Their Problems,” *Sociology and Social Research* 20 (Jan-Feb 1935): 261.

27. For more on the Massie affair, see David Stannard, *Honor Killing: Race, Rape, and Clarence Darrow’s Spectacular Last Case* (New York: Viking, 2005) and John P. Rosa, “Local Story: The Massie Case Narrative and the Cultural Production of Local Identity in Hawai’i,” *Amerasia Journal* 26:2 (2000): 93-115.

28. David Rankin Barbee, “Inter marriage Held Partly to Blame for Change in Native Quiet,” *Washington Post*, January 17, 1932, 15.

29. Russell Owen, “Hawaiian Crimes a Social Problem,” *New York Times*, March 19, 1932, 5.

30. This dynamic was evidenced through Emory Bogardus’s famous ‘social distance scale,’ a survey instrument that measured sympathy and/or antipathy to participate in social contacts with members of other racial groups. The survey asked a series of questions regarding people’s willing-

ness to interact with members of other racial or ethnic groups in a variety of social situations. See Emory Bogardus, *Immigration and Race Attitudes* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1928).

31. On the *Survey of Race Relations*, see Yu, *Thinking Orientals*, Chapters 1-4.

32. Edward Ross, "Inter-racial Cooperation: The Greatest Research Chance in the World," *Journal of Social Forces* 2 (May 1924): 549.

33. For a more comprehensive view of his work in the islands see Andrew Lind, *An Island Community: Ecological Succession in Hawaii* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938).

34. On the dilemma faced by Asian American sociologists, as both professional academics and "native informants," see Yu, *Thinking Orientals*, Chapters 5-7.

35. William C. Smith, *Americans in Process: A Study of Our Citizens of Oriental Ancestry* (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1937), 20.

36. Romanzo Adams, "The Unorthodox Race Doctrine of Hawaii," in *Race and Culture Contacts*, edited by E.B. Reuter (New York: McGraw Hill, 1934), 148.

37. Kevin J. Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 164. On eugenics and public health responses to racial and ethnic minorities in California, see Natalia Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) and Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

38. Mumford, *Interzones*, 166. Also on miscegenation laws during this period, see Peggy Pascoe, "Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies of 'Race' in Twentieth-Century America," *The Journal of American History* 83 (June 1996): 44-69.

39. Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Race, Class, and Conflict in Filipino America 1898-1948* (New York: NYU Press, 2010).

40. E.B. Reuter, "Civilization and the Mixture of Races," *The Scientific Monthly* 31 (November 1930): 442.

41. Romanzo Adams, *The Peoples of Hawaii: A Statistical Study* (Honolulu: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1925), 42.

42. Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*, 61.

43. *Ibid.*, 44.

44. *Ibid.*, 47.

45. Adams, "The Unorthodox Race Doctrine of Hawaii," 153. This narrative was described elsewhere, in William C. Smith, "The Hybrid in Hawaii as a Marginal Man," *American Journal of Sociology* 39 (January 1934): 460 and Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*, 47.

46. Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*, 53. He then said that even after the arrival of more white and other immigrant women to better balance the foreigner gender ratios in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, still no negative sentiments took root because the dominant ethos was too deeply entrenched and could not be dislodged.

47. *Ibid.*, 61.

48. David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1936-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 35-37.

49. See Porteus, *Temperament and Race*. It is interesting to note that the Social Sciences building that housed the sociology department among others was later named after Porteus and not after Adams (it has since been changed again, to Saunders Hall). This is suggestive about the influence of the scholar's ideas in Hawaii.

50. This case involved Thalia Massie a white woman and military wife, who claimed she was raped by a gang of Hawaiian and Asian local boys. Hysterical media narratives of the case portrayed Hawai'i as a dangerous place where bands of dark-skinned men roamed the streets preying on white women. The boys would eventually be freed after a mistrial to the chagrin of white elites and military authorities. Two of the boys would quickly become victims of vigilante justice, one was kidnapped and beaten by a gang of whites and another was kidnapped and murdered by the Massie family and associates. The assailants were convicted of the of the premeditated killing but had their prison commuted under pressure from the white power structure and served only one hour of their sentence hosted by the Governor in his office. See Stannard, *Honor Killing*.

51. For more on the "neo-Hawaiian" race, see Rosa, "The Coming of the Neo-Hawaiian American Race."

52. Smith, "The Hybrid in Hawaii as a Marginal Man," 467.

53. *Ibid.*, 467.

54. The federal census divided the population into 13 groups in 1920: Hawaiian, Asiatic-Hawaiian, Caucasian-Hawaiian, Portuguese, Porto Rican, Spanish, Other Caucasian, Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Negro, Other.

55. Doris Lorden, "The Chinese-Hawaiian Family," *American Journal of Sociology* 40 (January 1935): 454.

56. Smith, "The Hybrid in Hawaii as a Marginal Man," 459.

57. Lorden, "The Chinese-Hawaiian Family," 459.

58. Porteus, *Temperament and Race*, 41.

59. Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*, 235.
60. *Ibid.*, 233.
61. Smith, “The Hybrid in Hawaii as a Marginal Man,” 462.
62. *Ibid.*, 461-462.
63. Romanzo Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*, 69.
64. Margaret Lam, “Racial Myth and Family Tradition-Worship among the Part-Hawaiians,” *Social Forces* 14 (March 1936): 408.
65. *Ibid.*, 405.
66. *Ibid.*, 406.
67. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 407.
68. *Ibid.*, 407.
69. Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*, 104.
70. *Ibid.*, 97.
71. Smith, “The Hybrid in Hawaii as a Marginal Man,” 465.
72. Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*, 134.
73. *Ibid.*, 93.
74. *Ibid.*, 229.
75. Lam, “Racial Myth and Family Tradition-Worship,” 409.
76. Leatrice and Marion Wong, “Attitudes Toward Inter-marriage,” *Social Process in Hawaii* (May 1935): 16.
77. Albert W. Palmer, *The Human Side of Hawaii: Race Problems in the Mid-Pacific* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1924), 73.
78. Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*, 46.
79. Lorden, “The Chinese-Hawaiian Family,” 455.
80. Adams, *Interracial Marriage in Hawaii*, 247.
81. Lam, “Racial Myth and Family Tradition-Worship,” 409.
82. Smith, “The Hybrid in Hawaii as a Marginal Man,” 461.
83. Porteus, *Temperament and Race*, 40.
84. See Okamura, “The Illusion of Paradise,” 264-283.