Native Hawaiian voice because it reduces indigenous Hawaiians to be simply one of many other ethnic groups in Hawai‘i.

Haole Today

*Haole*, like the label of any ethnic group, masks the diversity of its membership. It is far too easy to stereotype all haole according to a prescriptive set of markers and behavior. The more complicated reality is that *haole* is a socially constructed category based largely on idealized and homogenized views of White foreigners. At the same time, framed by a particular chain of events, these perspectives remain in people’s minds as a collective public history and discourse. Precisely because of this, haole are perceived as White wealthy individuals who are set apart from Native Hawaiians and locals due to their shallow roots in the islands and perceived negative behaviors.

The arrival and ascendency of haole, as a group, is comparatively small when measured against the duration of indigenous Hawaiian occupation and stewardship of the land. Although a highly racialized ethnic group, haole are also culturally conspicuous. The Hawaiian word, *ho‘ohaole* means to act like a haole and is applied to individuals who are perceived to be strange, uppity, ignorant, arrogant, or even condescending. Some scholars suggest that there are different types of haole. In particular, it is argued that there is a difference between mainland haole and *kama‘aina* haole (sometimes referred to as local haole). The latter category refers to Whites who have lived on the islands for generations, share a love for the land, and act in culturally appropriate ways.

Still, the term *haole* recalls the painful history of Hawai‘i and the role many prominent haole played in the forced transformation of Hawaiian society and culture. Modern-day implications of haole provoke overlapping notions of race, class, and politics for island residents. Because haole were the primary agents of past missionary activity and a race/class-organized plantation economy, as well as expansive militarism and tourism, attitudes toward them run deep and continue to manifest in everyday life in Hawai‘i. Given this historical framework, there is often little attention paid to the positive value of haole in today’s politically charged climate where indigenous Hawaiians’ claim to the land is foregrounded.

Brandon C. Ledward

See also Colonialism; Hapa; Hawai‘i, Race in; Hawaiians; Native Americans; Pacific Islanders; White Privilege

Further Readings


HAPA

The term *hapa* is a Hawaiian word literally translating to portion, mixed, or fragment with no racial inference. However, on the inclusion of Hawai‘i as a U.S. territory and the introduction of racial classification during the late 1800s, the term quickly took on racial overtones as a way to identify people of mixed race. Early references to the term *hapa* referred to Hawaiians of mixed Japanese European heritage, but its contemporary use extends to a variety of mixed-race people in Hawai‘i and even beyond the island to include Afro-Asians, Latin Asians, Native Asians, and transracial adoptees. This entry describes the evolution of the term and the conflict related to its adoption by mixed-race people outside of Hawai‘i.

Definition and Background

Originally a pejorative term, *hapa* referred to the children of mixed Hawaiian Caucasian descent. Its pejorative use dates to the surge in White immigration to Hawai‘i that occurred during the 1880s and resulted...
in intermarriage between the native and Caucasian populations. The Native Hawaiian population’s disapproval of these mixed marriages (and, by extension, of the offspring of these unions) stemmed from the White population’s role in exploiting and colonizing Hawai‘i.

The term *hapa* was later expanded to include all children of mixed Asian heritage after a surge in Asian immigration to the island that occurred during the mid-1880s through 1910 with the recruitment of Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Koreans, Puerto Ricans, and Filipinos to work as laborers and the mixed racial/ethnic marriages that arose following this large-scale immigration.

Because of the long history of intermarriage in Hawai‘i, the negative aspects associated with biracial or multiracial identification (and the designation of *hapa*) has largely disappeared. Once an adjective used by group insiders to describe an outsider, it is now a noun or subject (describing an insider); the designation is a source of pride and a link to others in the same insider category. Furthermore, use of the term is no longer limited to those who are part Hawaiian but rather has expanded to include all multiracial/multiethnic Asians as well. Other terms such as *Eurasian*, *biracial*, *multiracial*, *Amerasian*, *mixed Asian*, * blasian*, *hafu*, and *half Asian* are also used to describe those of mixed Asian descent; however, the term *hapa* seems to have resonated most among multiethnic Asians and has been widely adopted. Although it is used by multiethnic/multiracial Asians both in Hawai‘i and on the U.S. mainland, the term has different connotations in each place.

Of all the states, Hawai‘i has both the highest percentage of Asian and Pacific Islanders (41.6%) and the highest percentage of people who identify themselves in categories of two or more races (21.4% vs. 2.4% in the United States). The long history of racial/ethnic intermixing in Hawai‘i has allowed its multiracial populations to inhabit multiple racial/ethnic categories simultaneously. In Hawai‘i, the term *hapa* has been normalized to the extent that to be hapa is to be local because so many of the children are of mixed ancestry. The ambiguous hapa identity distinguishes Hawaiian locals from more recent foreign immigrants (nonlocals) to Hawai‘i. This is in marked contrast to the mainland United States, where race has historically been socially constructed along a single dimension, thereby forcing those of multiracial heritage to elevate a single racial category at the expense of the other, and where considerable ink has been devoted to the problematic results and consequences of this practice for the multiracial population.

**Contested Terrain**

Multiracial Hawaiians resent the adoption of the term *hapa* by multiracial Asians on the U.S. mainland who have little knowledge of the historical struggles of the peoples of Hawai‘i. From their perspective, the term’s use by multiracial Asians is a form of symbolic ethnicity—trendy and ephemeral with only a superficial connection to, and little understanding of, the term’s meaning.

Part of the controversy is rooted in the history of Hawai‘i and stems from lingering resentment of Hawaiian people over the forced and unlawful overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893—an event that was aided and abetted in large part by the United States (and an act that President Bill Clinton formally apologized for in 1993). As a result, Western laws and customs were imposed, including the legal categorization of people by “blood” or heritage in 1900. Hawaiians were “colorized” and quantified along a range from indigenous to (non-White) others, to Whites. This strategy served to limit the number of “native” Hawaiians; the designation was restricted to those who could legally prove their indigenous heritage—something extremely difficult to do in a nation steeped in oral tradition as Hawai‘i was. Consequently, indigenous Hawaiians were marginalized socioeconomically, and a decrease in their numbers was nearly ensured given the narrow racial definition that was imposed.

This paved the way for land and asset appropriation by the Western colonizers. Indigenous Hawaiians, or Kanaka Maoli, became minorities in their own homeland, taking on the characteristics of other racial/ethnic minorities in the United States, including high morbidity and mortality rates, poor educational outcomes, and marginalized socioeconomic positions.

The question of who has a valid claim to identity in Hawai‘i continues to be a highly contentious and politicized issue, as indicated by the *Rice v. Cayetano* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2000. This decision invalidated the state’s limitation to Native Hawaiians (defined as descendants of those inhabiting the Hawaiian Islands in 1778) the eligibility to vote in elections for the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.
With these tensions serving as the backdrop, the widespread adoption of the term *hapa* by multietnic Asians with little knowledge of the tumultuous history of Hawai‘i or of the continuing struggles for identity by indigenous Hawaiians is viewed as reflecting the continuing marginalization and colonization of Hawai‘i and its history, people, and culture by groups with more power.

**Contemporary Use**

The proliferation of the term *hapa* among mainland multiracial Asians and its use in the mass media reflect the term’s enduring application and continuing viability, albeit slightly different from its origins. In fact, in many instances, the original Hawaiian roots of the term are not recognized. For example, in her article titled “Mixed-Race Asians Find Pride as Hapas,” *Los Angeles Times* staff writer Teresa Watanabe defined *hapas* as all mixed-race Asians. In this article, Watanabe detailed some of the struggles of mixed-race Asians, including the constant questioning of racial/ethnic identification and issues of inclusion and exclusion by the dominant society.

Thus, while Hawaiian hapas see the term as a source of pride, acceptance, inclusion, and desirability, mainland hapas must continuously contend with the mainland’s adherence to monoracial categorizations of people such that a multiracial designation remains both suspect and subject to constant question.

*Karen Manges Douglas*

*See also* Asian Americans; Asian American Studies; Hafu; Hawaiians; Identity Politics; Intermarriage; Multiracial Identity

**Further Readings**


**Harlem**

Harlem, a neighborhood in the Manhattan borough of New York City, has long been associated with Black culture. It stretches from the East River to the Hudson River; its northern border is 155th Street, and its southern border is roughly 96th Street. Although Harlem has been home to a multitude of immigrant communities, since the beginning of the 20th century it has been a decidedly Black space. Harlem has been host to jazz, the Harlem Renaissance, poverty, riots, strikes, crime, and influential leaders in the Black community. It is also home to famous landmarks such as the Apollo Theater and Hotel Theresa. Throughout time, Harlem has been one of New York City’s most recognized neighborhoods worldwide.

**Immigration in Harlem**

Harlem, originally a farmland settlement in New Amsterdam known as Nieuw Haarlem, was purchased from the Manhattes tribe during the mid-1600s and settled by Dutch immigrants. In 1626, the first Blacks were brought to Harlem as slaves to labor on Dutch farms. In 1664, the English attacked and seized the property from the Dutch and turned greater New Amsterdam into New York, officially incorporating the village of Harlem. The slave trade grew rapidly under the English, and by 1708 there were thousands of Black slaves living and working in Harlem.

By 1820, there were still only ninety-one White families living in Harlem, and in 1840, after the land was devastated by constant use, many wealthy homeowners sold their land to the city. This led to poor Irish immigrants squatting on the deserted land and establishing shantytowns of living quarters.

Throughout the 19th century, community improvements included the construction of fashionable brownstones and apartment houses and the installation