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New Geographies

Hawaii
Drew Karp

Pictorial Maps of Hawaii

The Cartogramaphy of Paradise

However, the decision process involves gathering and analyzing information from various sources. The cartograms used in this analysis help visualize the data and make it easier to understand the relationships between different factors. The cartograms highlight key areas of interest and provide insights into the underlying patterns and trends.

Some Things Never Change
every person is subject to pictorial representation, a trend that continued into
even more. In the process and service fields of the nation, more
workings in the public and service fields of the nation—possibly even—found
superior a role of figures of entertainment. With this exception, the visitor
lands most frequently seen with few exceptions. His view is
subject is distinctly for example, on the multitude. Can’t anybody
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A portion of Ruth Taylor White's O'ahu "Cartography"

Petrial, Maps of Hawaii

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The essence of this passage is quite abstract and difficult to comprehend without a visual aid. It seems to discuss various concepts, possibly related to psychology or philosophy, but the text is not clear enough to provide a coherent summary. The presence of technical jargon and complex ideas suggests that the text might be from a scientific or academic source.
cartographic information and vice versa. Two images deserve special mention. In one, a woman assuming a mermaid-like pose is seen half-rising from a green lawn. We might expect a luxuriant coconut grove or splashing waterfall as a backdrop, common representations on pictorial tourist maps. Serving as the backdrop for this sensual figure in this case, however, is Iolani Palace, a symbol to many of sovereignty (or lost sovereignty), and the site of the overthrown Hawaiian kingdom’s political—and geographic—power. Positioning a woman whose sole characteristic is languid sensuality in front of such a political symbol not only sexualizes the landscape—one might think inappropriately—but also undermines any respect for the idea of Hawaiian political sovereignty. The photograph is simply titled “Iolani Palace”—a strategy that expropriates any identity this exotic female might have. An adjacent photograph brings the issue of gender and politics full circle: Here we see an infantryman standing quite erect in counterpoint to the Iolani Palace maiden. He is dressed in white, with the Arizona Memorial as a backdrop, and holds a piece of artillery in a manner suggestive of phallic power. The juxtaposition of such images is certainly not new in non-native discourses about Hawai‘i.

Shortly after the emergence of White’s earliest maps, other entities began producing pictorial maps of the Hawaiian Islands. A souvenir pictorial map of Honolulu created around 1935 and “intended for sale to servicemen” is highly reminiscent of White’s style. This map highlights the entertainment offerings of Downtown Honolulu and Chinatown, some of which are illicit and all of which are aimed at male military personnel. A serviceman asks where the “hula girls” are, and a pregnant Japanese woman is accompanied by a caption describing her as a “Japanese belle all puffed up over attention from US Army.”

In 1950, the Hawaiian Pineapple Company Ltd. produced a distinctive map, large and suitable for framing as souvenir art. This “Dole Map of the Hawaiian Islands” is characterized by considerable detail, the use of color that is perhaps more subdued than garish, the relative sensuousness (rather than cartoonishness) of the imagery, and the unique legends that can, as the map itself recommends, be removed before framing.

Around the time of statehood (1959) there appears to be a spate of tourist-map production. Aloha and Hawaiian Airlines produced some of the most provocative maps, in which image is emphasized over geography; the cartouche, a feature we often associate with historical maps of mythical places, appears and even becomes the predominant image on the map. Kodak created a pictorial map of O‘ahu around this time that enumerated and represented for the map reader “Good Shots” and “where to find them.” A map published for Hawaiian Magazine Publishers by a cartographer in Massachusetts is so full of pictorial and textual information, it is overwhelming. On many of these statehood-era maps, the fact that Hawai‘i is “American soil” is emphasized in map subtitles, captions, and even visual imagery. A host of “picture maps” were produced by private companies, including one entitled “Picture Map of Maui” that sports on its cover an image of the landscape of Kalaupapa Peninsula. Despite the dramatic beauty of the image, it is not a geographic site found on Maui at all, but rather on the island of Moloka‘i. It is a bit alarming to consider the selection of such an image to represent Maui for the resort-seeking tourist, as Kalaupapa has the unfortunate legacy of having been the place of exile for victims of Hansen’s Disease (leprosy).

In the 1970s, the Hawai‘i Visitors Bureau began to publish the maps that have probably enjoyed the most currency in the tourist market, and ones that hark directly back to the earlier White “cartographs.” They are geographical cartoons that emphasize fun, not fact, and probably represent Hawai‘i and indigenous culture in what would seem the most insensitive manner, dispensing even less information on the map surface than earlier “cartographs.”

In fact, there is not much new in this last series of pictorial maps. Although the work of different cartographers has been employed, and more than half a century has passed, the maps seem to have informed each other stylistically and content-wise to a great extent. I conclude that these maps serve to restrict, rather than broaden, knowledge of a place—something antithetical to the ostensible purpose of mapping.

I have chosen to address these texts because I am concerned about degradation of Hawaiian culture and the intense American militarization of the Hawaiian Islands. I am also interested in the contested meanings of place and the fact that such pictorial tourist maps fail to recognize features of the landscape that exist outside of the discourse of tourism development. Lastly, I am curious about the ways that propaganda is deployed through geographic and visual imagery and seek small ways to intervene.