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Pikinini in Paradise: Photography, Souvenirs and the 'Child Native' in Tourism

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Tourism advertising for Vanuatu has in recent years become saturated with images of children. Brochures, in-flight magazines and digital media productions are repeatedly adorned with photographs of ni-Vanuatu 'pikininis' frolicking on the shorelines of sun-drenched beaches or colourfully dressed up in 'native' costumes. In these images, barefoot island fantasies are infused with an alluring innocence and spontaneity, a narrative conjunction that doubly reinscribes the touristic trope of 'escape' from modern adult life. What is more, cruise ship tourists to Vanuatu may purchase souvenir versions of this fantasy 'child native' at the market stalls that greet them, in the form of colourfully adorned plastic baby dolls. They may also consume real life 'pikinini in paradise' in the form of ni-Vanuatu children who are exhorted by their parents to play dress-up, strike smiling poses, and trade photographic opportunities for 'donations'.

As this chapter explores, far from representing a simple replication or circulation of imagery, such performances reflect the ambiguities and ambivalences that may occur when touristic images of ethnicity become miniaturised in the production of souvenirs and enacted by locals for photographic consumption by visiting tourists. By obscuring rather

than making visible the radically unequal political-economic relations that define many tourism settings, especially in developing countries, as well as the means of production that bring those settings into being, the majority of such advertising and souvenirs constitute classic commodity fetishes. Indeed, in Vanuatu, obscuring massive economic inequalities behind welcoming smiles, resort opulence and sandy beaches, tourism and tourism advertising is currently encouraging and facilitating the alienation of indigenous-owned land to expatriate 'investors',¹ thus furthering the large divide between expatriate haves and ni-Vanuatu have nots in that country. However, increasingly disinherited locals are also taking up such imagery in the pursuit of capital. As argued here, indigenous appropriations of the neo-colonial imagery of tourism may sometimes threaten to break open the efficacy of the fantasy image of a Pacific paradise. In the case examined, by presenting an ambiguous and for some confrontational blend of touristic fantasy and 'photogenic poverty',² real-life performances of the 'pikinini in paradise' are seen to provoke a cognitive dissonance that may disrupt the carefree pleasure of the tourist gaze. In doing so, they invite tourists to consider the inequalities that lie behind the tourism fetish.

Performances such as these may be seen to epitomise the negative effects of what has been dubbed a 'hermeneutic circle of tourism photography': a feedback loop that circulates between; the tourism industry, which produces saleable images of places and people for tourists to consume through travel; tourists, who desire to consume those images through the 'I was there' evidence production of photography; and locals, who likewise aim to reproduce a credible version of such images, and thus satisfy those tourist desires in order to get their hands on a slice of the tourist dollar.³ But as I argue further below, the dissonance produced in this instance also continually

1 Claire Slatter, 2006, *The Con/Dominium of Vanuatu?: Paying the Price of Investment and Land Liberalisation—A Case Study of Vanuatu's Tourism Industry*, New Zealand: Oxfam.

2 John Hutnyk, 2004, 'Photogenic poverty: Souvenirs and infantilism', *Journal of Visual Research* 3(1): 77–94.

3 For recent usages, see Kellee Caton and Carla Almeida Santos, 2007, 'Closing the hermeneutic circle: Photographic encounters with the other', *Annals of Tourism Research* 35(1): 7–26; Olivia Jenkins, 2003, 'Photography and travel brochures: The circle of representation', *Tourism Geographies* 5(3): 305–28; and for a critical discussion with regards to Vanuatu, John Taylor, 2011, 'Photogenic authenticity and the spectacular in tourism', in *Indigenous Tourism and the Intricacies of Cross-cultural Understanding*, special issue of *La Ricerca Folklorica* 61: 32–40.

threatens to fracture the idealised image, break or at least unsettle the circle of reproduction, and allow tourists a perhaps unsettling opportunity to glance beyond the tourist bubble.

Children and photography in Vanuatu tourism advertising

Images of children have a long history in tourism-related publications for Vanuatu, and have featured, for example, on postcards from the early twentieth century onward. Over the course of the last two decades, however, they have come to assume a central role across all major forms of advertising. Photographs of ni-Vanuatu children sitting with tourists in outrigger canoes are especially prevalent, as are those of children colourfully adorned in 'native' dress. Most popular, however, are images of children engaged in joyous play in the shallows of a white sand beach. Such images communicate the generic Pacific Island frame of fun, sun and sand, as well as a sense of playful, carefree and spontaneous happiness that is evidently of great value to selling Vanuatu as a tourism product. Along with the images themselves, children often feature prominently in the pseudo-journalistic stories that also sometimes feature in tourism publications. In doing so, albeit sometimes unwittingly, they also encourage tourists to take souvenir snapshots of children while on their travels.

So apparently popular have images of ni-Vanuatu children become in such contexts that they form the basis of entire publications, such as the 2008 wall calendar that provides the title for this chapter, *Vanuatu: Pikinini in Paradise*.⁴ As stated on the back cover, interaction with smiling children appears as an intrinsic aspect of holidays to Vanuatu:

In Vanuatu—where the name for children is pikinini—it's hard not to be captivated by the smiles and laughter that surrounds you. Says international photographer, David Kirkland, wherever you go in this tiny island nation, you're likely to find a welcoming smile or an entourage of excited kids keen to engage you. This 2008 Wall Calendar is the celebration of the genuine warmth and friendliness of the

4 David Kirkland, 2008, *Vanuatu: Pikinini in Paradise*, Brisbane: Hema Maps.

Ni-Vanuatu children—a souvenir to hang in your home and remind you of the special holiday you are likely to have had in these so-called timeless islands of the South Pacific.⁵

While instances such as these are in many ways reflective of the casual gaze of tourism and tourism-related image production everywhere, the emphasis on children brings the often radically unequal power relations that underpin such acts of voyeurism into sharp relief. Others run the risk of slipping into more explicitly exploitative territory. The feature article of one issue of Air Vanuatu's in-flight publication, *Island Spirit*, presents a case in point. Here images of children playing in the shallows of a sandy beach and a portrait of a wide-eyed 'pot-bellied pikinini' gazing innocently and inquisitively up at the viewer—presumably the child described in the passage below—were accompanied by the following opening passage:

A small hand awoke me from my heat-induced slumber. Two large brown eyes peeked over the edge of the fabric and I saw a one-eyed teddy next to me in the hammock.

'Swing-swing?' the request came with a smile. This pot-bellied pikinini was clearly skilled at the art of wrapping visitors around her chubby little finger.

I dragged her in beside me and she propped two bare, sandy feet on my belly, as if they'd been there a million times before. We top-and-tailed in the shade of an old cyclon tree, silently looking out across a languid sea. I sighed deeply, letting go of my old fabricated world and drinking in this newfound reality.⁶

Such romantic imagery plainly reflects the patronising and exoticising voice of colonialism. However vague and unwitting, there is also the suggestion of a potentially sexualised encounter between tourist and child that is deeply problematic. The passage also strongly articulates a further key theme that repeatedly attaches itself to such imagery. This is the idea that meeting and interacting with indigenous children in tropical island settings may help tourists to unlock and set free their own 'inner child', and in doing so magically liberate them from the 'fabricated world' of modernity.

5 Kirkland, *Vanuatu: Pikinini in Paradise*.

6 Chantal Dunbar, 2015, 'Secluded Santo', *Island Spirit*, Air Vanuatu's in-flight publication, pp. 20–23.

‘Tabu blong pass’

Let us turn to a specific ethnographic example, that of ‘cruise ship day’ in Luganville. Cruise ships with carrying capacities of up to 2,000 passengers or more, including P&O’s *Pacific Jewel*, *Pacific Pearl* and *Pacific Sun*, stop at the northern Vanuatu town of Luganville around 10 times a year, swelling its local population of some 15,000 by more than 10 per cent. While the nation’s capital Port Vila is the primary and more frequent port of call,⁷ Luganville is one of several secondary stopping points in cruises that typically last for one to two weeks. Here, at the threshold between cruise ship and shore, disembarking passengers are met by a male string band who strum out familiarly clichéd picture postcard songs that celebrate ‘my beautiful island home’ and ‘smiling friendly people’ (Figure 117). Such lyrics echo tourism imagery for Vanuatu and the Pacific region, as do the hibiscus print Hawaiian shirts, lava-lavas and the plastic flower leis that are worn by the performers and are on sale in the marketplace beyond. The string band faces a small sign in bold letters stating the legal injunction, ‘TABU BLONG PASS’ (ILLEGAL TO ENTER).

Another sign, handwritten on cardboard, is placed in front of the performers. Diverting from the stock signifiers of a tropical island paradise, for observant travellers these signs foreground the key elements of ambivalence and even contradiction that follow. The sign reads:

Tourism development became priority in Vanuatu & policies and also in provinces. Therefor tourism has a wide rangs of capacity buildings in order to provide better service and effective services in tourism industry. Therefore as a part of this services we want to make it more easy and enjoyable by providing you some C.D. cleaps is our dreams. So we really need your help. Thank you for your coberation. God Bless [original spelling retained].

7 For an in-depth study of cruise ship tourism to Port Vila, see Anne Lucy Naitu, 2007, ‘Dosalsal, the floating ones: Exploring the socio-cultural impacts of cruise ship tourism on Port Vila, Vanuatu residents, and their coping strategies’, Masters of Tourism Management thesis, Lincoln University, Christchurch.



Figure 117. String band greeting *Pacific Sun* to Luganville.

Source. Photographed by John Taylor, May 2007.

Apparently, for some, the incorrect English displayed on the sign seems to prompt responses that call to mind the legacy of the same western evolutionary trope that posited Melanesians as a ‘child race’. As I overheard one woman remarking to her friend, ‘My kids can write better than that!’ Rather than a simple avowal of the image of happy and childlike ‘natives’, however, such statements might equally be taken as an acknowledgement by such tourists of the imbalance of economic, educational and aspirational opportunity that is one key feature of contemporary difference that separates them from vast majority of ni-Vanuatu locals. Indeed, such imbalances are amply present in the content of the statement. They are also highlighted by the presence of a donations collection box that sits on the ground in front of the performers.

Appropriating a mixture of tourism and development industry jargon in describing their own island ‘dreams’ for increased economic growth, such that would contribute to the provision of ‘better services’, the string band comes to embody the potentiality of ‘capacity building’. In this way, looking temporally beyond a promise of ‘native servitude’, a more distant future of enlightened equality is suggested, such that tourism industry development would bring. Indeed, temporally

defined difference and distance is a key feature here, and one that by way of parallel tends to naturalise the abundantly apparent economic differences.

In Luganville, mainly expatriate business owners coordinate pre-booked mini-tours ashore, ensuring that the movement of tourists is closely regulated, as is the flow of their dollars. For tourists who opt to take one of these tours—the vast majority—there leaves just enough time to take a leisurely walk along a stall-lined avenue of some 100 metres that leads from the dock to the town's main street. Beyond the welcoming string band, several similar performances are encountered that also seek to prompt acts of charity; a cardboard collection box in front of one group of children, flowers in their hair and singing 'Jesus is the Living God', asks for 'Sunday School donations', while another solicits donations for 'School Fees'. Facilitating as they do the opportunity for tourists to 'donate' a few coins, and thus contribute to the project of development already suggested in the string band sign, such performances offer the 'added value' of providing what John Hutnyk describes as a 'cheap entrée to virtue'.⁸ It also offers a context in which the tourists may legitimately take their own photographs of ni-Vanuatu children. Overall, given the sense that such photographic opportunities are paid for with 'donations', especially, an ambiguously fraught conjunction of references is generated, one that comprises the imaginary island escapism on one hand and 'photogenic poverty' on the other.⁹

Souveniring children in the cruise ship marketplace

Markets are central to most short-term destination travel experiences. Indeed, it is in marketplaces that tourists are often most easily able to experience a sense of sincere interaction with the everyday life of locals. For this reason, souvenirs purchased in market contexts may not necessarily represent a real 'piece of the wall' or product of local 'traditions' to be effective, but rather act as a memento and proof of face-to-face encounter. Eschewing one of the master analytic tropes

8 Hutnyk, 'Photogenic poverty', p. 81.

9 Hutnyk, 'Photogenic poverty'.

of both tourism and tourism studies,¹⁰ any need to evaluate the relative 'authenticity' of the items on sale appears to be largely irrelevant in this market context. To be effective as souvenirs, however, they do need to signify a generalised sense of place, and/or recall some aspect of the relationship between their new possessors and the perceived sense of otherness from which they are extracted.¹¹ On these terms, the souvenirs on sale do not only encapsulate and communicate the idea of tourist site and market as 'meeting ground',¹² they also signify and enhance the sense of leisure and play that is present in the market as a whole, and of course encompass a key aspect of cruise ship tourism as a whole. Thus, finely woven pandanus baskets and exquisitely carved miniatures based on local artistic traditions are on sale. Yet the primary stock-in-trade of the market stalls is rack upon rack of brightly coloured 'calico' or lava-lavas, cloth bags, plastic flower leis and beaded necklaces, items that vendors produce from materials purchased from the multitude of 'Chinese' trade stores that comprise the town's primary retail industry. As their brochure advertising indicates, large-scale and short-term cruise ship journeys such as those offered by P&O do not offer touristic searches for 'tradition' or pilgrimages into the 'real'. These are, after all, island escapes where the 'customs and cannibals' do not frighten,¹³ but are all part of the front-page theme of 'No hassles and no worries. Fun for the whole family.'¹⁴ Collectively, the colourful stock items on sale in Luganville appeal to this overarching sense of childish fantasy play that permeates the cruise ship tourism experience more generally. This is seen most explicitly in the humorously titillating coconut bras and colourful plastic dolls that are also on sale. On these terms, rather than encouraging serious cultural, historical or political-economic reflection, the market as a whole appears as a kind of fun fair.

10 Carol Steiner and Yvette Reisinger, 2006, 'Understanding existential authenticity', *Annals of Tourism Research* 33(2): 299–318; John Taylor, 2001, 'Authenticity and sincerity in tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research* 28(1): 7–26; Ning Wang, 1999, 'Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience', *Annals of Tourism Research* 26(2): 349–70.

11 John Taylor, 1998, *Consuming Identity: Modernity and Tourism in New Zealand*, Auckland: Department of Anthropology, University of Auckland, p. 44.

12 Graeme Evans, 2000, 'Contemporary crafts as souvenirs, artifacts and functional goods and the role in local economic diversification and cultural development', in *Souvenirs: The Material Culture of Tourism*, ed. Michael Hitchcock and Ken Teague, pp. 127–45. Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 129.

13 P&O Cruises, 2011, *2011–2013 Pacific – Australia – Asia* [Cruises Departures Brochure], Sydney: Carnival, trading as P&O Cruises, p. 16.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 1.



Figure 118. Dolls and handicrafts for sale at a roadside ‘cruise ship day’ market, Luganville.

Source. Photographed by John Taylor, May 2007.

Also working to obscure the means of production, the (mainly) women who run the stalls appear as the primary artisan producers of the items on sale.¹⁵ Occasionally seen working at manual sewing machines, and typically dressed in brightly coloured ‘island dresses’¹⁶ comprising the same colourful fabric of the lava-lavas and bags they stitch and sell, these women blend seamlessly into the market world and indeed appear as an intimate source of the products on sale. Their presence is also reflected in another miniaturised form, for nestled amongst the strings of beads, the coconut bras, and rack upon rack of colourful lava-lavas, sit miniaturised plastic versions of ‘market mamas’, and more predominantly, the ‘pikinini in paradise’ as South Seas golliwog/hula doll.

15 For a discussion of the Port Vila handicrafts industry, see Haidy Geismar, 2003, ‘Museums, markets and material culture: Prestations and presentations in rural and urban Vanuatu’, PhD thesis, University College London.

16 See Lissant Bolton, 2003, ‘Gender, status and introduced clothing in Vanuatu’, in *Clothing in the Pacific*, ed. Chloë Colchester, pp. 119–40, Oxford: Berg.

The sense of childlike play referred to above is reinforced in these souvenirs. However, given the evocation of dual ‘semiotics of nostalgia’¹⁷ involving ideas of human evolution and the life-course of individuals—a narrative through which such images or objects come to represent a simplicity that the tourists are themselves supposed to have lost, yet that may be regained through childlike play—rather than the native/savage other it is the lost child of the tourist that these souvenirs more properly represent.

The fantasy ‘child native’ as photographic fetish

In tourism, photography is intimately connected to the processes and products of souveniring practice. Since the advent of digital photography, selfie sticks and social media, especially, taking photographs has also become an important focus for play. It is therefore not surprising to find that photography plays a key role in the context discussed here.



Figure 119. Children posing for photographs, Luganville.

Source. Photographed by John Taylor, May 2007.

17 John Frow, 1991, ‘Tourism and the semiotics of nostalgia’, *October* 57: 123–51.

In general, photographic practise in this street market context assumes the familiar touristic form famously described by Susan Sontag: the photographer, an 'armed version' of Walter Benjamin's 'voyeuristic stroller', discovers around them a picturesque 'landscape of voluptuous extremes'.¹⁸ As has already been suggested, however, the tourists in this market do not only stroll, watch and take photographs, they also encounter, interact, and in doing so consume aspects of their own imagined identity.

Rather than paying the short-term business licence of 1,000vt that is required for those operating 'legitimate' market stalls, and as already seen in the string band and other performances, here some locals offer photographic opportunities in return for 'donations'. Alongside opportunities to pose with examples of local wildlife, such as birds, snakes, lizards and turtles, tourists may take photographs of and pose with brightly costumed children who are exhorted by their parents to smile for 'donations'. One mother, for example, dresses up her daughter in bright tinsel to pose with a clipped-wing bird behind the following words:

My name is Mweikensery. I am female and wants to say Hellow and wants to welcome you all. And here with me to my thatched house of my fascinating and attractive birds. So anyone is welcome and feeling free to take films about it. Any way your help will be much appreciated to me in advance. Thank you very much. God Bless.

Further down the market street, two children sit on a bench beneath an archway that is brightly decorated with hibiscus flowers, their parents inviting tourists to pose with them:

We're on display of how the natives dress themselves. So don't hesitate to take any photographs. We do appreciate any donation given cheerfully. Thanks for your giving. God Bless you [original spelling retained].

Here, like the dolls, the tourist brochure image of the fantasy 'child native' is again replicated. However, in this instance, profound dissonances emerge. The primary basis for these are signalled in the slippage from first to third person in the sign quoted above—'We're

18 Susan Sontag, 1979, *On Photography*, London: Penguin Books, p. 55.

on display of how the natives dress themselves’—such that signals the ambiguous position between indigenous subject and tourist role that the children are exhorted to assume.

Like the souvenirs that surround the children, these performances do not seek to reproduce the ‘stret *kastom*’ found in longer-term ‘eco-tourism’ excursions to the Ambrym ‘rom ceremony’, the *toka* of Tanna, or at the famous Pentecost island *gol* (land dive).¹⁹ Rather, in keeping with the values of the cruise ship market more generally, the native body is instead presented as a prettily decorated trinket—the souvenir fetish is brought to life.

Once again, the narrative that connects the child performer and souvenir fetish to the tourist self—the key structural component of souvenir ‘use value’—are the entwined meanings of childhood and primitive ‘nativeness’. This suggestion of a primordial connection linking western tourist and native child operates through the equation of ideas of the life-course to the myth of evolutionary progress. This is the same aetiological framework by which indigenous people under colonialism everywhere were confined to ‘the past of which the white man is the future’.²⁰ As one tourist told me as she sat with ‘Mweikensery’, handing her camera to me so I could take her picture and mimicking with amazing clarity the clichéd jargon of tourism advertising, ‘They’re just like little children of paradise. So happy! They seem to have something we’ve lost.’ A few minutes later, I encountered a more blatantly racist statement that also echoed this sense of temporal disjuncture as an expatriate tourism operator described to me how a tourist had questioned him for reprimanding a member of his adult staff. His justification, he told me, ‘They have to realise, it’s like talking to 12 year olds!’²¹

Of course not all tourists believe the industry-produced catalogue images are in any way ‘real’. Nor do they necessarily wish to consume them as a part of their own tourism experiences. Just as many tourists are drawn towards the brightly costumed and painted children,

19 Margaret Jolly, 1994, ‘*Kastom* as commodity: The land dive as indigenous rite and tourist spectacle in Vanuatu’, in *Culture – Kastom – Tradition: Developing Cultural Policy in Melanesia*, ed. Lamont Lindstrom and Geoffrey M. White, pp. 131–44, Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific; Taylor, ‘Photogenic authenticity and the spectacular in tourism’.

20 Homi K. Bhabha, 1994, *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge, p. 238.

21 Author’s fieldnotes, May 2007.

others find the displays 'weird', even distasteful. Yet the dissonance of these performances not only has to do with any resonances of a 'human zoo'. Given the immediate economic context in which photographic opportunities are offered in exchange for 'donations', they may also disconcertingly evoke what Hutnyk has described as 'photogenic poverty'.²² Ubiquitously found in UNICEF and other aid or charity brochures, images of a poor indigenous or ethnic children provide, as he puts it, 'the necessary motivator for even just a gesture (send just a few coins) of care or concern for dispossessed human beings'.²³ But in this particular context of producing touristic 'added-value' there is an additional double bind. That as a demonstration of 'victimology', such performances may expose to tourists the very inequality between touring tourist and toured indigenous subject that the souvenir fetish would otherwise ideally seek to hide. No wonder many local people I spoke to about the practice were so quick to denigrate it as a form of begging. No wonder, too, that many tourists give the children a wide berth, skirting or quickly distancing themselves from the disconcerting scene.

As numerous commentators have argued, toured places the world over are continually reproduced according to tense processes of negotiation.²⁴ Local people must wrestle with the desire of the tourism industry that their pre-existing habitats and practices be 'dressed up' according to its own specific aesthetic requirements. As articulated in the case presented here, however, and extending beyond Hutnyk's text-based examples, performances reflecting processes such as these often come to inhabit an uncomfortable and uncanny non-space, hovering uncomfortably between touristic visual 'fantasy' and socio-economic 'reality'. Such displays of ethnicity or culture are not only at odds with everyday realities, past and present, but often conflict with the moral judgement or aesthetic tastes of tourists on the ground.

Whether they are viewed as ironic, humorous, or tragic, such blended instances of photogenic poverty and touristic fantasy also demonstrate how cultural stereotypes may be hijacked, reiterated and transformed

22 Hutnyk, 'Photogenic poverty'.

23 Ibid., p. 79.

24 For example, Dean MacCannell, 1976, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, New York: Schocken Books; John Urry, 1990, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, London: Sage Publications; Chris Rojek and John Urry, 1997, *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, London: Routledge.

by local people. If the images produced are sometimes discomfiting, then perhaps this is as it should be. Indeed, we might consider that the often forced photographic smiles that are produced in so much tourism advertising get to very heart of the problematic relationship between 'object authenticity' and 'existential authenticity' discussed by Ning Wang on the one hand,²⁵ and of the relationship of these to the rather distinct notion of sincerity,²⁶ or a congruence between avowal and actual feeling on the other. Far from representing objects of authenticity, they bring into question the sincerity of the intersubjective encounter that defines such photographic exchanges. Further, they may expose their basis in economic and political inequality. Yet, in the costumed children prodded by their parents to smile in exchange for 'donations' there is in equal measure a sense of the agency of a real life photographic subject who likewise seeks to capture the gaze of the tourist in the interest of profit.

Paradise lost and found: Lands behind the tourist fetish

This chapter has explored the workings of the souvenir fetish within the context of cruise ship tourism to Vanuatu, focusing especially on the ubiquitous image of the smiling fantasy 'child native'. I have argued that at its most effective the souvenir fetish seeks to magically obscure the unequal relations of power that underpin the mode of production by which it is produced. As Claire Slatter has so forcefully revealed, perhaps the most pressing concern relating to tourism in Vanuatu is the indelible linkage of that industry to the rampant and ongoing alienation of indigenous-owned land.²⁷ As she suggests, the current tourist boom, triggered by a mixture of international development industry-led investment liberalisation policies, may be seen to have spurred positive economic growth in Vanuatu. And yet ni-Vanuatu are being increasingly marginalised economically and dispossessed of their land in the process.²⁸

25 Wang, 'Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience'.

26 Taylor, *Consuming Identity*.

27 Slatter, *The Con/Dominium of Vanuatu?*

28 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

On this key point I note that in the Americas where the term is ultimately derived, the image of the smiling 'pikinini' appears to have been crucially linked to such processes of dispossession and denial of sovereignty historically. Likewise in Australia, as argued by Liz Connor, black child beauty has acted since the eighteenth century as a 'commodity form for white consumption', providing 'a fetish which disavowed the injury of these children's disinheritance and delimited their cultural presence to cute domestic and tourist bric-a-brac'.²⁹ As the beachfront properties around Vanuatu's main towns of Port Vila and Luganville are bought up by expatriate 'sea changers', it becomes apparent that Vanuatu is not an idyllic playground for ni-Vanuatu, but rather, as one young ni-Vanuatu man suggested to me with more than a hint of irony, a '*paradaes blong waetman*' (a 'whiteman's paradise'). At its most effective, the souvenir fetish would erase from view the unequal relations that constitute tourism production as a whole. However, as this chapter has also shown, where the souveniring of destinations involves the visual consumption of photogenic fantasy alongside 'photogenic poverty',³⁰ an unsettling and uncanny tension between the 'really real' and 'really imagined' may occur, and with it a cognitive dissonance that disrupts both the pleasure of the tourist gaze and the efficacy of the fetish. In these fractured and unsettling performances resides the potential to unravel those hermeneutic circles of tourism image production, and in doing so render visible the very inequalities that the tourism industry produces yet also seeks to hide.

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29 Elizabeth Connor, 2012, 'The "Piccaninny": Racialised childhood, disinheritance, acquisition and child beauty', *Postcolonial Studies* 15(1): 45–68.

30 Hutnyk, 'Photogenic poverty'.

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