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Working the Skies: Representations and Reality, 1930 - 2010

CAUTHE 2010: Tourism and Hospitality: Challenge the Limits

Baum, Tom¹

Abstract: Working in the sky, whether as a pilot or member of the cabin crew, continues to hold a fascination and attraction for potential entrants that far exceed the technical demands or financial rewards of the reality of such work. Perceived as glamorous work since the early days of commercial flight in the 1930s, this tag has

largely remained, despite major changes to the business and workplace environment in the intervening years. It is also an area of work that has inspired a genre of romantic fiction and numerous 'real life' recollections alongside serious academic analysis. This paper charts the representation of, in particular, female flight attendant work from its 'golden era' through to the present, drawing on both fictional and factual accounts, in order to ask whether contemporary representation is any more a true reflection of this work than that of previous generations.



FULL TEXT PDF (152KB)

To cite this article: Baum, Tom. From Upper-class to Underclass: Working the Skies: Representations and Reality, 1930 - 2010 [online]. In: CAUTHE 2010: Tourism and Hospitality: Challenge the Limits. Hobart, Tas.: University of Tasmania. School of Management, 2010: [119]-[136]. Availability: <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=814559952671830;res=IELBUS>. ISBN: 9781862955608. [cited 23 Jul 18].

Personal Author: Baum, Tom;

Source: In: CAUTHE 2010: Tourism and Hospitality: Challenge the Limits. Hobart, Tas.: University of Tasmania. School of Management, 2010: [119]-[136].

Document Type: Conference Paper, Research


ISBN: 9781862955608

Subject: Sex discrimination in employment; Airlines--Employees; Flight attendants; Flight crews;

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