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I'm Polynesian Too: Philosophy of Assimilation, Cosmopolitanism, Colonialism, Race, & Culture

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I'm Polynesian Too:

Philosophy of Assimilation, Cosmopolitanism, Colonialism, Race & Culture

By:

Aaron Hire

A thesis submitted to the
Department of Philosophy, Linfield College
In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
Fall, 2012

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Table Of Contents:

Introduction:..... 3

History and Colonization of Hawai’i and Samoa:..... 9

Polynesian Philosophy:..... 23

Family and Social structure:..... 25

Pride & Balance:..... 28

Religion:..... 31

Relevant Sociological data:..... 33

Cosmopolitanism and Acculturation:..... 36

Assimilation And “Race”:..... 44

Philosophy of Race:.....50

Cosmopolitanism & Polynesians:.....61

Assimilation under American Cosmopolitanism:.....62

Solutions:..... 65

Conclusions:..... 69

Works Cited:..... 75

My father was recruited to play football at Linfield College after losing a scholarship at the University of Hawai'i because of his diagnosis of Leukemia. The man to persuade him to join Linfield was and is nothing short of a coaching legend in the northwest, a man that my father would eventually consider to be the father figure of his own life.

My own father, Douglas, grew up on the island of Oahu as an "Afakasi", or what Samoans call a person of "Palagi"(white) and Samoan descent. My father's mother was born and raised in the village of Faga'alu, America Samoa and eventually married an American Navy man from the east coast. The home life my father grew up in was abusive; his father (my grandpa) constantly drank, smoked, and harshly disciplined his children. His war duties, bar fights, family history and Navy habits could have been some reasons for the way he acted at home. My grandmother worked her teenage years in Samoa to pay for the efforts (or squandering) of the decorated first son of her Samoan family who was trying to make it in Hawai'i, a newly opportunity-rich area at the time. Being tired of working long hours to pay for her brother, she eventually moved from Samoa with some of her sisters (from a family of 14 siblings) for Hawai'i in search of those same opportunities. Years later, she was married quite young and had four children of her own.

The dynamics between my grandmother and grandfather gave rise to a complicated clash of culture and philosophy within the house in which my father grew up, a clash that I myself started to pick up on as a young person. My grandmother was a granddaughter of a Mata'i (chief), and thus part of a royal Samoan bloodline that traditionally practiced Fa'a Samoa & aganu'u, or the Samoan way & culture—a

philosophy revolving around respect, servitude and obligation. Everything was done so that the family, community and church could prosper. My Grandfather, in contrast, had only one blood related brother and experienced his father's death at a young age. His mother then remarried, only to die herself shortly after. To complicate matters further, my grandfather's step-dad remarried, meaning that two adults of no blood relation whatsoever raised my grandfather. The home life became even more unusual when new kids were born into the family, also of no blood relation. My grandfather ran away and joined the military before he was 18 and never made contact with his family again. The term "opposites attract" may be appropriate in regards to my grandparents as one came from a background of absolutely no roots of family importance and the other from a land of overwhelming family heritage. It is safe to say that they simply came from two entirely different worlds. This combination, along with other cultural differences created a very complicated upbringing for my father and his family as values, norms, customs, morals, and identity were all jumbled.

There are many complicated families who come from Hawai'i, Polynesia, or the rest of the world for that matter, but the most beautiful part of *my* family history is that my father somehow managed to take much positive cultural and philosophical content from both his mother and father despite the abundant negative experiences around him—"the best of both," so to speak. For example, strictness, beatings and abuse were translated to my generation as self-control and habitual fortitude backed by healthy communication. I still got spanked and punished, but never without a talk and explanation afterwards. There are many encouraging changes my father made to family conducts, but there undoubtedly remains very complicated cultural and philosophical

crossroads in “mixing” white with Polynesian ancestry, which is the inspiration for my research and work.

Returning back to the story with which I began, my father escaped many possibly overwhelming circumstances by leaving Hawai’i to be the first member of his family to ever go to college and graduate. He was also able to funnel misplaced hostility into the outlet of sports. Considering his past (and genetic disposition), I can understand how he ended up being great at a passionate sport like football—eventually becoming one of the most decorated players and coaches Linfield has ever had to date, with three national championship titles. This is where I finally come into the story.

A generation later I was born and have had to deal with my own new share of cultural and philosophical trials/follies in being mixed culturally, philosophically and “racially,” as my father was. I attended the same school as my father, and was even coached by the same man my father considered to be the most influential man in his life. Perfectly enough, a conversation between the coach and myself wraps up this brief family history and shows a complicated, amusing, irritating, and yet fitting example of the common experiences in being of mixed “race” and culture, Polynesian-American:

Coach: “look there,” (putting his arm next to mine) “my skin is darker than yours, I’m more Hawaiian than you!”

Myself: “I’m not Hawaiian coach, I’m Samoan. And I’m glad your skin is dark, you must have got a bunch of sun lately.”

Coach: “And what’s with this garbage on your arm? You’re degrading your body.”

Myself: “Coach, these symbols have been around for as long as tattooing has. They are beautiful and each marking has significance. They tell the story & history of my family and people for many generations.”

Coach: “Your Dad is Samoan? All this time I thought he was Hawaiian!”

Myself: “He’s Samoan... like me.”

Coach: “Samoan, Hawaiian it doesn’t make a difference!”

This conversation is just one example of numerous scenarios that mixed race and culture Polynesian-Americans go through on a constant basis. In this conversation specifically, I was amazed how such a figurehead could be so insensitive and controversial in his thinking and actions. The man who helped straighten out my father, and many other people had such simplistic and ordinary thinking concerning race and culture.

I was dumbfounded. He judged me on my lighter skin, and my tattoos—my most evident/obvious claims to my heritage. I realized that most tattoos he was familiar with were of little tradition and importance, but the term “garbage” set me off, and was the final straw in making me explore my interest & struggles with the philosophies of race, integration, and assimilation, most specifically concerning people of Polynesian ancestry.

How could my lifelong struggle for racial and cultural acceptance be “garbage”?

Finding identity is difficult for mixed race and culture Polynesian Americans because there is no full integration into either racial/cultural side. One American perspective concerning race is to view mixed race Polynesian-Americans as “mutts,” or “racially unidentifiable” and not really white. Another American perspective, as shown in the conversation with my coach above, may see mixed race Polynesians as not looking

Polynesian enough to be Polynesian, and therefore as white or something unknown. These two American viewpoints concerning mixed Race Polynesians are most common, and most likely are due to the inability to correctly recognize and categorize Polynesian traits. Both viewpoints however lead to a mixed race Polynesian being alienated from the American society. There is the possibility for a mixed race Polynesian to be accepted as “white” when others recognize him/her as so, but mixed race and culture Polynesians do not wish to be categorized as “white” completely, which makes any categorization from an American viewpoint end in non-association (culturally and racially) because mixed race Polynesians identify with being Polynesian. But Identifying as Polynesian also in turn leads to further non-association, as the Polynesian side of one’s ancestry most of the time views mixed race Polynesians as not full Polynesians because of racial importance that will be explained later. Culturally, mixed race Polynesian Americans and Polynesians both have trouble dealing with the dominant philosophies of American Culture.

For many Polynesian Americans (mixed race or not), finding an ethnic, cultural, and philosophical identity is a life-long struggle that constantly toils in matters tied to their souls and well being; issues of right and wrong, gender roles, morals/ethics, acceptance, and what it means to be human. Such struggle can be seen in high numbers of Polynesians living below poverty level, arrest rates, occupational anxiety, and death & suicide rates. For Polynesians and mixed race Polynesians, tribulation and alienation stem from the assimilation model that is present in the world today. “American Consumerist Cosmopolitanism”, as descended from colonialism, has impacted the well being of Polynesian Americans (mixed race or not) for the worse. This model places too much

importance on American capitalistic consumerism and thus “white” culture and power, which has led Samoans and Hawaiians to have a warped emphasis on race. Numerous structural power changes have made race especially important within Samoa and Hawai’i, as well as in other areas with people of Samoan and Hawaiian ancestry. I will argue that the values of Polynesian culture are best preserved by a reevaluation of racial categories and ethnic practices in light of the unique colonialist history of Polynesians and that we need to move toward a model of Pluralistic Cosmopolitanism, which promotes true multicultural autonomy and both inter- and intra-cultural acceptance, rather than elitism. Consumerist American Cosmopolitanism cannot ethically address the issues of race and ethnicity in a manner that will promote the traditionally based values of Samoan and Hawaiian cultures, in particular. To explain and back this, I give brief histories of the Samoan and Hawaiian people, as well as some background in Polynesian philosophy, relevant sociological issues, assimilation/acculturation models, and look at racial philosophy, particularly in how these issues impact the continuation of Samoan and Hawaiian culture.

History and Colonization of Hawai'i and Samoa:

So what's the relevant history here?

When colonization was still prominent, the Pacific islands were seen as tactical points for the western world. France, Germany, Great Britain and the United States had their sights on islands such as Hawai'i and Samoa for use as military and naval outposts and also capitalistic expansions. Hawai'i is located at the center of the Pacific and was seen by the United States as a pivotal naval outpost that was necessary for control of the whole ocean. Besides its location value, Hawai'i's sugar cane plantations were pursued by the U.S.'s capitalist class and were foreseen to make large amounts of revenue. The sugar cane plantations were set up by generations of missionaries who settled on the islands and imported cheap labor from Chinese and Japanese migrants, increasing overall population within Hawai'i. The growing success in the sugar trade led to wealthier American families on Hawaii, who slowly moved their way into the government. In 1875, a trade reciprocity agreement was made so that America could have special economic privileges in return for military protection of the islands. But the tariff-free trading as well as the exploitation of resources eventually led to American dominance over trade and politics in Hawai'i. The planter elite class then pushed for the annexation of Hawai'i to the United States in order to negate a new sugar tariff that president McKinley placed on sugar. In response, Queen Lili'uokalani tried to restore voting rights to native Hawaiians and to reinstate former members of the monarchy to combat the growing authority of the sugar planter elite class. But the Planter elites—made up of wealthy men, lawyers, the ambassador of Hawaii, and even the minister to Hawai'i, worked to seek annexation of Hawai'i and ordered marines to station themselves across

from the Hawaiian government building just before proclaiming that the Hawaiian monarchy was no more—a violation of past Hawaiian-American treaties. Under a Provisional government and with gunships at her front door, Queen Lili'uokalani conditionally yielded her rights to the land in order to defer violence. President Cleveland however, withdrew the annexation and requested that congress reinstate the Hawaiian kingdom, only to be defied by the Planter elites. They renamed themselves the Republic of Hawai'i, and waited for Cleveland's term to be up. They also made English the main language of Hawai'i, changing the linguistic structure and culture of the islands. Eventually Hawai'i was annexed under President McKinley.

Around the same time, the Samoan islands were being pursued by Britain, Germany and the United States. Western Samoa ceded to the Germans and Eastern Samoa was then taken by the US, later to become American Samoa. Like Hawai'i, American Samoa was used for a military base but also was used for economic purposes as a coaling station, for tuna trade, and as whaling grounds. Also, the harbor at Pago Pago was excellent and was deep enough for large ships. It was in this harbor that the naval ships of Germany, The United States, and Great Britain all had a standoff to acquire the islands since all three had economic and political interest in the area. After a storm, only one British ship remained and Great Britain's forces lost interest and set their sights on other islands. In 1899 Germany annexed Western Samoa. A year later the United States formally annexed eastern Samoa. Besides the importation of religious practices from missionaries, the Samoan Islands, Savai'i and Upolu, Western and eastern respectively, remained traditional in their ways of life up until the 1960's. After a bad public image in the United States, President Kennedy took to modernizing American Samoa by importing

things like western homes, a hospital, roads, sewage plants, schools, an international airport, canneries, and television. Western Samoa went through several periods of annexation, foreign authority and control but eventually gained its own independence in 1962, the first Pacific Island Nation to do so.

It is important to be aware of and understand the past history of Samoa and Hawai'i—even if briefly—before diving into other aspects of investigation, because colonialism and capitalism are two roots of many tribulations that these island groups encounter on geographic, social, moral, religious, political, and personal levels. The people of Hawaii and Samoa, especially Hawai'i, came to trust immigrants, missionaries, travelers and strangers alike only to be deceived by some of them. The tension, dislike, or even hatred of people that look of European, Anglo, or Caucasian descent has in many island families been passed down throughout the years. The Samoan and Hawaiian words for “white person”, “palagi” and “haole” respectively, are commonly phrased in a negative connotation, especially “haole” because it insinuates racial inferiority and ignorance. Hawai'i and Samoa both have their nicknames and slurs for many immigrants and “racial” groups that travel to their homeland just like many other local people of history who felt invaded. But Hawai'i and Samoa are unique to the immigration and colonial periods because of the distinctive cultures and limited land space available to accommodate so many different people. On an island, or within a small area, people are forced to interact often and the clash of cultures within the Samoan and Hawaiian islands allowed for some of the most interesting blends of philosophy, morals, religious views, political actions, personal ideals, race and everything else involved in the debate about

what it means to be human. The tensions from such large scale mixing will be explained in more detail as I progress, but I would like to concentrate first on how mixing in the large scale sense—the result of colonialism—has affected the indigenous populations of Hawai'i and Samoa.

The negative attitudes felt by the locals of Hawai'i toward outsiders started with the deception by the planter elites and the later annexation. But there are multiple reasons why Hawaiians do not trust and dislike western ways and people. When Hawai'i's government was overthrown the native Hawaiians were not given the right to vote, then were later threatened by firepower to give up their land. They were not seen as equals to the invading colonists and the wealthy, who forced the native people to give up their rights and homeland for many generations on groundless claims and the advantage of firepower. The loss of land is the most powerful and reoccurring source of negativity among the Hawaiian population (as I will explain further in the Polynesian philosophy section.) In 1993, during the 100th anniversary of the 1893 overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i, thousands of locals protested for rights to the land, showing hostilities that have been passed down over a couple of generations. Mark Niese of *The Seattle Times* explained that, "Native Hawaiians are the last remaining indigenous group in the United States that has not been allowed to establish their own government, a right already extended to Alaska Natives and 564 Native American tribes"(Niese, 2010). It was not until 2010 that government action was taken to give Hawaiians federal recognition and rights. The closest attempt before 2010 was the 1993 "Apology Resolution," a speech Clinton gave to admit the United States' responsibility in the overthrow of the Hawaiian

government.

Hand in hand with the loss of land, Hawaiians have had troubles finding adequate housing after colonial times, and still to this day. Mark Niese writes again saying that, “A disproportionate share of Native Hawaiians find themselves homeless, huddled beneath plastic tarps in beach camps or living in shelters. Native Hawaiians make up 28 percent of the state's homeless who receive outreach services, while accounting for about 20 percent of the population, according to last year's report by the University of Hawaii Center on the Family” (Niese, 2010). This homeless population stems from colonialism as Hawaiians struggle to adapt to culture and lifestyle of the dominant American population. Admittedly, however, much of the homeless population does not consider themselves “homeless” per say, but rather as people with a lifestyle that refutes adaption to or acknowledgement of western influence. Much of the “homeless” population consists of native Hawaiians living that way by choice. In 1920, the Hawaiian homes commission act was passed as a way to give native Hawaiians part of the land back that was taken by the sugar cane industry. Homes and farmland was given out to Hawaiians with at least 50% native Hawaiian blood allowing for traditional practices. This act still stands today, and only a select few are allowed to live in these designated areas, making Hawaiian blood a source of power and privilege. The return of land may be seen a positive gesture that gave some power back to natives, but realistically it installed a naïve privileged feeling that makes one part of a dislocated and ghettoized community. The assignment of these areas can be paralleled to what happened to Native Americans, as they also were not allowed to live wherever they wanted, and instead were put in areas that were not usually hospitable and also restricted in size and range. Finding affordable

and adequate housing (according to American standards) in Hawai'i means that one must be wealthy and therefore a success on the basis of Capitalism/inheritance, or a result of lucky genetic disposition.

The blood controversy is also prevalent in Hawai'i's education system, as the Kamehameha schooling system will only accept students with Hawaiian blood who are in need. The online admissions page states:

“Kamehameha Schools' admissions policy is to give preference to applicants of Hawaiian ancestry to the extent permitted by law. If you would like to be considered under that policy, your Hawaiian ancestry must be verified by Kamehameha's Ho'oulu Hawaiian Data Center. After your completed application is received in the Admissions Office, a Hawaiian Ancestry Registry (HAR) packet will be sent.” (Kamehameha Schools)

The acceptance process is highly selective and a very low percentage of applicants are admitted into the school. The kids in the most need (poor, large family, single parent) are typically chosen as priority, especially if they score well in testing. Getting accepted into the school encourages a sense of pride and deserved right, though much of the time the sense of “deserved right” is wrongly upheld. The selection process also considers the number of Native Hawaiian students enrolled in public school districts and the more kids enrolled in an area means that Kamehameha will take a higher percentage from that area (Kind of like the electoral college and representative votes). More kids are taken from the Waianae Coast and the Windward side compared to the Central District of O'ahu— meaning that selection in the central district is more competitive and often unfair. Much of the time the situation of the child is more of a determining factor than the actual

amount of Hawaiian blood present.

Another example of oppression can be seen in the new age symbol of Hawai'i: its flag. Kamehameha III decided to incorporate the stripes of America and the union jack of Great Britain into the current day flag of Hawai'i in order to accommodate the foreign powers and legislature that were present in Hawai'i (<http://www.netstate.com>)—a sign of admiration and a symbol of the Hawaiian ways of respect and gratitude. The Hawaiian culture has always been one to accommodate guests and to show "aloha". The cultural tradition of hospitality and respect may have been a doorway that allowed for a speedy control of Hawai'i. The flag that Kamehameha allowed still remains the flag of Hawai'i but now can be considered an ironic, symbolic representation of how Hawai'i was insulted and Hawaiians cheated out of their homeland. Although many of the indigenous population instead acknowledge a "people's flag" of Hawai'i called the Kanaka Maoli flag, instead of the state flag.

On top of these examples, the very spirituality of the Hawaiian and Samoan people has been changed due to Western influence. Like many other Polynesian islands, missionaries penetrated the culture of indigenous Polynesian people and passed down religious beliefs. In Samoa and Hawai'i missionaries adapted creation stories to relate to the people's view of spirituality. The majority of Hawai'i and Samoa in return adapted their religious views in one-way-or-another in order to accommodate the wants of missionaries. Samoa more than Hawai'i incorporated Christianity into its culture on a large scale as Samoans converted to Congregationalism and made the church a central part of the community (Misatauveve). The missionaries also played a major role in converting language to English, removing linguistic—and therefore cultural—ties in the

replacement of the native Hawaiian and Samoan languages. In missionary schools, the native Hawaiian students were not allowed to speak Hawaiian at all and were punished for doing so. Phrases like “God doesn’t speak Hawaiian” were common in an attempt to change the Hawaiian culture and replace the traditional education structures with western ones.

Beyond replacing the spiritual connection associated with prayers and chants in the Hawaiian language, the tourism industries that later boomed in Hawai’i helped allow the onset of larger cities, large corporations, and other forms of large-scale western civilization. The movement towards an urban Hawai’i in numerous instances came at the cost of desecrating sacred Hawaiian burial grounds and spiritual areas. The Mount Haleakala controversy on Maui is one of the most famous examples because scientists paid for the world’s most expensive telescope to be built on Maui’s most sacred mountain. The telescope is right next to a national park and attracts scientists and tourists from all over the world to venture over ancient Hawaiian hallowed burial grounds and spiritual areas. Hawai’i and Samoa are two of many Pacific islands that connect deeply with the land—land which many believe, was taken away from them unjustly. The very motto of Hawai’i: “Ua Mau Ke Ea O Ka Aina I Ka Pono”, which means, “the life of the land perpetuates only in righteousness,” accentuates how important and integral the land is with the people. The relationship between land and people was believed to be a harmonious and symbiotic connection. On top of being taken away, many also believe that the land has now been taken control of by foreign affairs in commerce, tourism, big corporations, and quite over-simply put “the white man”. Tourism was said to be the savior of Hawaiian industry but has rapidly expanded the population (well over a million

and a half on the island of Oahu), created more foreign investment, and therefore given rise to inflation and higher costs of living. Tourism has also left poor work opportunities for the indigenous Hawaiians (and Samoans) who have moved to Hawai'i. The higher cost of living has forced the poor natives out of homes and gives rise to non-native people buying more homes in Hawai'i and forcing natives out of some of the most beautiful and resource rich areas, like the locales with access to flowing surface freshwater. Many native families have to force more and more members into shared housing situations because they cannot afford to live in multiple homes.

In all, the native Hawaiians have been oppressed in many ways. I am surprised that the American government has not given them the rights to have casinos on their reserved lands yet. (A joking solution to the problem, but not likely to happen since a lot of natives associate problems like organized crime and personal/individual social and financial problems with casinos and gambling.) The views I have stated above seem to be one-sided and take in only the views of the native peoples. That is what I intended to do, to first give the opinions and feelings of people from their indigenous perspective. From the native Hawaiian viewpoint, one can get a glimpse into how local Hawaiians must feel: The Land was taken away by force unjustly. They moved us away from where we used to live. Only some get premier education and housing. Outsiders live where our family once roamed for thousands of years. We cannot spiritually access our most sacred spots. And they want us to salute a flag that is the symbol of our oppression?

Though the events that have taken place in Hawai'i may seem unfair from an indigenous perspective, many would say that native Hawaiians are just one of many

groups of people to feel taken advantage of by the US. Just because this may be so, it does not make the hegemony of American ways and capitalism right or just. I intend to explain further why it was morally/ethically wrong for the US to do what they did to Hawai'i and Samoa, and also show the drastic changes made to Hawaiian/Samoan culture and philosophy by American influence. Lastly I will see if Hawai'i and Samoa are "better off" in today's age. Cosmopolitanism and Tribalism are central to the philosophical discussion of "change" and will be incorporated later. The two island groups, Hawai'i and Samoa, responded differently to American influence despite commonalities in culture and philosophy ending in a worse outcome for the Hawaiian people. Though, through all the events that Hawai'i has experienced, a "melting pot" of races, beliefs & cultures has occurred. Hawai'i remains the most diverse and "mixed" state in the US. Thus, the history I have presented is the foundation for mixed philosophical beliefs and values that begin to arise in the contrasting and sometimes conflicting Polynesian and American viewpoints.

From Colonialism, similar elements of philosophical, cultural, and "racial" mixing have also changed the Samoan people. Scott Pelley of *60 Minutes* did a story about the Samoan people and wrote that, "The capital, Pago Pago, has an American feel. Flag Day is the most important holiday and there's a tradition of sending kids into the U.S. military. But for all its beauty, American Samoa is not blessed with wealth. For the most part, Samoans make a living canning tuna. Two-thirds of the people are below the poverty level"(Pelley, 1). Only one main cannery is running in American Samoa and to this day remains one of the main capitalistic ways of making a living in Samoa, even

though the profits are very little. American Samoa has become dependent on Capitalism (roughly 80% of the economy is tied up in the tuna industry, (Pelley, 4), even though American interest in Samoa started with its use as a refueling station for war ships. During World War II, the United States employed many Samoans at the military base in Pago Pago, which very much changed the once farming based community into one that was dependent on American trade (Mayeda). A few years after the war, Samoa was more capitalistic in nature and had factories for producing goods. The situation in Samoa at the time resembled that in Hawai'i with the capitalistic change due to sugar trading. The capitalistic and economic changes that came from colonialism along with changes in education, law, and religion drastically changed the grounds for all institutions within Samoa and Hawai'i. In Polynesia, the shift from a family-based, agrarian community to a more individualistic and capitalistic way of life has had a number of effects, specifically on Hawaiian and Samoan families (mixed racially or not), no matter where they live.

It's incredible how all events in Polynesia surrounding colonialism have happened because of capitalist interest and geographical location. One would like to assume that Samoa will become like Hawai'i one day, but the geographic location of Samoa was actually not as advantageous a location in wartime as was Hawai'i, making the migration patterns of people different. The history of the Samoan islands is a slightly different example of an island system that really *could* have been "Hawai'i" if it were located a couple hundred miles to the northeast. The Samoan islands had similar foreign interference, but actually did not quite end up like Hawai'i for some very interesting reasons.

Some of the earliest records of Samoan folklore tell of a massacre of many French

tradesmen and could have been one of the initial reasons for foreigners staying away from Samoa, as word spread of the Samoans being barbaric people. Samoa, like other Polynesian islands took on a reputation as being “savage” and few dared to venture into Samoa for a great while. The massacre really was a miscommunication between two groups (and really wasn’t a massacre—more like a deadly disagreement as both sides lost men) during trading of goods. A Frenchman accused a Samoan of stealing and events escalated. Avoiding more digression, it was not until much later that missionaries started to settle in the Samoan islands. Christian missionaries, like the ones of Hawai’i, were some of the most influential people in starting changes in the Samoan islands:

“Warfare as an instrument of political change was discarded, as was polygamy, abortion, "indecent" dances, and certain common articles of clothing (such as the *titi* , a skirt made from *Cordyline terminalis* leaves). The missionaries introduced new agricultural plants and practices, new items of clothing (*siapo* or tapa cloth), and new forms of housing construction. In only a few years, a fundamental restructuring of traditional Samoan society had taken place” (Cox).

Missionaries were the first to change Samoan ways that much of the western world would view as “barbaric”. The introduction of Christianity to all Polynesian islands may be the cause of the most drastic and cornerstone changes in Polynesian thinking ever. John Charlot, the author of *Classic Polynesian Thinking*, believes that the Polynesian people, and the Samoans most notably, have historically been masters of compartmentalization, or the ability to not let conflicting values cause anxiety or discomfort. I believe that Charlot was right in saying that the Samoan people were masters at learning quickly,

adapting, and being skilled at many things, but the psychological, cultural, and personal effects associated with “compartmentalization” may have been wrongly observed, or understood, in that Christianity and Christian culture have caused negative changes in multiple areas of Samoan life, whether those changes are visible or not.

The Christian gospel itself was brought to Samoa in 1830 and was even eventually translated into Samoan (Misatauveve, 1). The newly introduced Christianity began to be interwoven with the Samoan creationism story and eventually became an integral part of Fa’aSamoa (the Samoan way). Samoans, Hawaiians and all Polynesians have always accommodated to new ideas and ways without completely abandoning tradition, which stems from the Polynesian philosophy of knowledge seeking and humbleness. As Charlot writes, “Samoan intellectuals sermonized on Sundays and interpreted the ancient Tangaloa chants during the week” (61). (Tagaloa* is a classical Polynesian God). Shortly after missionary influence, the annexations of Western and Eastern Samoa occurred and both islands experienced something different compared to that of Hawai’i. Much more of the Samoan populations migrated out of the Samoan islands, especially from American Samoa. The new philosophies, teachings and ideals from missionaries in many cases opened up a whole new world of experiences and knowledge for Samoans and they wished to learn more about the world. After the war, the employment boom that was once prevalent during the war faded out and there were not many opportunities to succeed capitalistically in Samoa. Many Samoan men signed up to be ship hands in order to see the new world and also to obtain material that foreigners had. My Grandmother left Samoa because she was fed up with working all the time and having to give her money to her eldest brother, a family tradition in Samoa—to

support the eldest male. She, like many other new-age Samoans, wanted to have opportunities.

In a way, the cultural and “racial” mixing that has gone on in Hawai’i is similar to that of the newer age of Samoan mixing, except Samoans began to migrate and mix outside of their native origins, unlike the majority of native Hawaiians. As I will explain shortly, the different Samoan and Hawaiian philosophies in regard to foreign influence gave rise to the travel patterns of each island group and also the different abilities to cope with foreign philosophy. The major areas to which Samoan immigrants moved were California, Hawai’i, Utah and New Zealand. These areas still have some of the highest populations for Samoans outside of Samoa. (Decent numbers also reside in Oregon, Washington and Alaska.) I believe the geographical location of Samoa compared to Hawai’i and the contrast between Polynesian philosophy and American philosophy are the real cause for drastic differences between the two island groups (Samoa & Hawai’i). The Hawaiian people had mental resilience and cultural framework similar to that of the Samoan people, but Hawai’i was transformed into an urban, “Americanized” area where Samoa only gained some of those technological and cultural changes. And it is these changes—with the inability to freely practice religion, culture and practices contributing to well being—that have made Hawaiians struggle to maintain their sense of identity, whereas Samoans have preserved their strong identity more effectively.

Polynesian Philosophy:

So why are changes to Polynesia such a big deal?

Polynesian philosophy begins in the migration history of people to the Pacific islands. The first known settlers navigated across the ocean to Samoa and Tonga from Fiji (Charlot, 49). From there, it is believed that the rest of Polynesia was inhabited. It is interesting to notice that full-blooded Fijians might be mistaken as “black” under an ordinary concept of race and that full Samoans will have characteristics that suggest a lesser need to adapt to very high levels of radiation from the sun and a harsh climate as do Fijians. Besides this, the histories of travel are also supported in the language of the Polynesian islands as cultures of Polynesia share huge similarities in language:

“...intellectual traditions share terms, symbols, concepts, personages, schemes and questions” (Charlot, 49). The languages of Polynesia are cognate (Charlot, 49) and share a common ancestral language along with common lessons and worldviews. Similar language allows for shared philosophy and culture in Polynesia and makes relations among different Polynesians more comfortable, even though there are still disputes and differences. The Hawaiian and Samoan cultures and philosophies are by extension very similar.

Central to Polynesian culture and philosophy is the quest for knowledge and also the respect people hold towards those who have knowledge and are of high social status. The Polynesian cultures have knowledge that is portrayed through stories, mottoes, lessons, myths, chants, and rituals. Many Polynesians will not consider someone else *truly* Polynesian if they are not able to attain and share this type of knowledge. For example, it is crucial in Polynesian thinking to be able to speak your cultural language,

tell your family story, pass down myths, and carry on ritualistic traditions like ceremonies, chants, tattooing knowledge and taboos. The high importance of knowledge within the Hawaiian culture resulted in the formation of its early educational system. Social stratification allowed for specialists in many areas and also teachers who could have apprentices within or outside of the family. Family itself was the core of cultural and philosophical lessons; uncles, aunties and extended family members also were there as informants for youth. In Hawai'i, "Schools were established, based on the model of the family, with their own lineages of teachers, craft gods, literature, and ceremonies" (Charlot, 50). Students could travel from teacher to teacher to gain different insights and also to share what they have learned in new areas. Within the Polynesian communities, information spread widely as knowledge had to be applicable and efficient for living and also useful for understanding history and stories. "Knowledge was therefore power on every level of human activity—a power that could seem godly and magical to the ignorant" (Charlot, 50). Because of this importance of knowledge and power, the Polynesian people developed a kind of pragmatic way of life in everything they did. Practicing of techniques, ideas, conduct and morals had to work in everyday life and were constantly tested, and revised so that an intelligent and efficient way of life could be ongoing and improving. In a way the villages of Polynesia were communities that constantly checked and balanced each other. Even outsiders were amazed at how quickly Polynesians learned and conquered components of the western culture. New knowledge was enormously significant to Polynesian culture because it was interesting and also useful in the pragmatic sense. However, the Polynesian interest in foreign customs and knowledge combined with the Polynesian philosophy of hospitality were huge factors

that allowed for easy infiltration of Western culture into Polynesia because foreign influence eventually came to dominate the politics and well-being of Polynesia. With the arrival of capitalism, Polynesians gained new political, economic and cultural values and realized too late that the adopted values had tampered with their traditional ones. The overzealous philosophies of control and power that the United States had in colonial times took advantage of the Polynesian Philosophies and in turn allowed for control over Polynesia.

Family and Social structure:

In Samoa, the idea of checks and balances were especially relevant to cultural norms. The Samoan Culture, and the Samoan way (faasamoa) is all about respect, or “Faaaloalo” in Samoan Language. Faaaloalo (respect) governs every action in Samoan thought and is one of the first parts of a worldview that Samoans learn. Embodying appropriateness, selflessness, virtue, honor, respect, servitude, humbleness, and shame are all part of Faaaloalo and help maintain hierarchy and order. (These philosophical guidelines are much of the time at odds with American culture, and way of life). For example it is considered rude and unacceptable to think of yourself before others, to cut off the ties between family members, or even to divorce. Although many American philosophies do not fit well in Polynesia, the ideology of power and control could not be considered a western import. The villages were essentially extended families where members of the social hierarchy, the mata’i being at the top of each village dynamic and having the highest say, closely monitored actions. When someone in the village stepped out of line, they had to answer to the mata’i, and would feel a sense of shame and

embarrassment in having to do so. Much of the time a payment would have to be given to the chief as a way of cancelling out the bad action. The type of pride, honor, respect and community that was present in these villages closely parallels the Confucian philosophy of self and social interaction called “the focus field notion of the self,” where each individual is a small knot in a web of social relationships. Each knot is then connected through strands to outward knots that make up a “web” representative of a community. Negative actions pull on the immediate strands in the web around the individual “knot” and reverberate through every strand and individual in the community. In turn, the whole community feels disgrace for a shameful action. In this analogy, it is evident that actions affect everyone around you, good or bad, so actions become political, honor provoking, and pride oriented. The Governor of American Samoa, Togiola Tulafono, was quoted as saying that: “His people come from a farming culture that prizes hard work, reverence and discipline” (Scott Pelley, 1).

This model is prevalent in many Polynesian cultures and is one reason for why there is so much emphasis on family. The people in a family act in ways to honor the family and to bring righteousness the family name. The Polynesian philosophy about family is one that is central to the idea of servitude, more so in older times. Much of the time, therefore, the individual is defined by his/her role to the family & society and does not always enjoy freedoms that people of western philosophy have. Scott Pelley writes again to emphasize this point: “This is a place where kids use machetes to do their chores. Come to think of it, it’s a place where kids do chores. Seventeen-year-old Aiulua Fanene does a day's work before school, under the direction of his father, David. He's cooking in this house. He's cleaning in this house. That is something that kids back on the

mainland would not believe if they didn't see it" (Pelley, 2). Samoans and Polynesians put such importance in obedience and discipline because it allows for order within the social hierarchy and family. The relationship is not strictly "for order's sake" however.

Polynesians still love their family and feel duty and pride in supporting and helping out. The idea of family is so strong within Polynesian cultures that the idea of divorce was non-existent in Polynesian culture until it was introduced to the islands later. Divorce is still looked down upon. Also, in Polynesian philosophy the ability to cut the ties to your family and start a new life on your own is utterly unimaginable. Family is everything in Polynesian culture—the past, the present and the future. Cutting family ties means that someone is disgracing a long line of family tradition and also destroying the ability to carry on family: which is completely disrespectful and not common. The family is who you have been, who you are today, and what you will be with new generations to come.

Polynesian knowledge also strived to create people that were experts in as many areas as possible. (This becomes a problem in adapting to an American culture that suggests a person should be an expert in one field). To be As to be respectful, the youth in Polynesia are taught to first observe and listen to activities and traditions before asking questions and acting disorderly. In this practice Polynesians become very practiced at many forms of imitation, especially observation and listening. These lessons were practiced throughout ones lifetime, as it was normal and necessary to be humble and patient and listen to what others had to say before interjecting ones own opinion. Lessons learned from observation and listening also allowed for the Polynesian ability to learn quickly, organize things into groups, and also to memorize well. In Hawai'i "well over a hundred words and expressions are recorded for the colors and states of the

ocean” (Charlot, 51). The large vocabularies associated with memory allowed for a nearly complete categorization of vegetation, wildlife and environment. Fisherman could remember ridiculous amounts of shore, reef, and deep-sea fish (Charlot, 51) and people could recite every location on an island detailing specific traits for each area as well as navigate the ocean by the use of stars. In Samoa, the males that campaign for being mata’i, (chief), must show their vast knowledge in history, language skills, cultural knowledge, sayings and symbols. It is possible that the cultural customs of grouping, organizing, memorizing and classifying gave rise to the Polynesian habit of seeing similarities among things rather than differences (Charlot, 51). Memory and knowledge also were areas of competition and pragmatic philosophy because those traits had to be adaptable, applicable and innovative as to make one a beautiful artist of living. The Polynesian philosophies of conduct and behavior may be seen as a way of creating the “appropriate” or desired personality, but the Polynesian education system gave importance to imitation, observation, curiosity, memory, competition, and speediness to learn which made these traits useful and common to have in Polynesian culture. Like any group there are a wide variety of personalities, but these specific traits all help fuel Polynesian behavior and pride.

Pride & Balance:

Pride in being Polynesian begins in the deep connection to the ancestors of Polynesia. “Hawaiians retained a pride in the intellectual achievements of their ancestors, in the grand scheme of the universe they had constructed in such detail” (Charlot, 53). As knowledge seekers, the new generations of Polynesians were

always taught to respect what the past generations had learned before them creating a sense of awe and reverence. Polynesian antiquity separated the world into equal pairs, most noticeably in land/sea, up/down, male/female, and night/day (Charlot, 52). These pairings promoted balance within everything in Polynesian life and explained the workings of the universe. The connection the people have to the land, for instance, is a symbiotic relationship that could be seen as emphasizing Aristotle's "golden mean", or a "middle path" because every relationship within Polynesia was believed to exist between the two vices of excess or deficiency. This is a very different philosophy than dominant American/western practice, which bases environmental arguments on the long-term self-interest of human beings (Charlot, 545). All relations, from the mystical to the practical within Polynesia, were seen as necessarily balanced and healthy. And balance first starts with how the first Polynesians ordered the universe. "As in much ancient thinking, identifying the origin of a thing is considered a way of understanding its nature or principle of operation" (Charlot, 53). Creation stories are an illustration of such operation. In Samoan myth, the people came from worms/grubs that inhabited wood and then were carved and given breath, soul and spirit that made them human. In Hawaiian creation myth, the God of the sky, (Wākea) and Goddess of the earth, (Ho`ohōkūkālani) create man from the soil of the earth—the man's brother being the first Kalo plant. In these depictions, people do not just come from the land, but are an integral part of it. These creation stories are most obviously different from Christian ones because the people are more closely related to the mystical/Godly, whereas (for example) Adam was made in God's image, and then Eve made from Adam. In original Polynesian thinking, the people, world, and Godly beings are more closely interconnected. In Polynesian

creation stories, the people come from the land, which is made possible by Gods. For Polynesians, this innate order explains hierarchy, intelligence, and the appropriate relationship to the land that one should have.

Identifying the origins of things corresponds with how Polynesians express their inherent tie to the land. The elaborate knowledge of genealogies that Polynesians hold gives connections back to the original people to settle Polynesia and therefore a history of inborn connection with the land. These long lines of ancestral lineage make the appreciation and connection of homeland and cultural ways greater, especially when families come from royal bloodlines (Coming from a line of kings and queens), because the land transcends materialistic relationships and becomes an integral part to who someone is—It is a part of ones identity, soul, and spirit. In Samoa and Hawai'i, bloodlines have traditionally been very important. Unusual to most outsiders, Samoans and Hawaiians have been able to trace back their lineage and ancestry over hundreds and hundreds of years back to the original rulers of their homelands. It is also common and expected for people of Polynesian descent to be able to track their ancestry in order to tell where their family is from and also show the honor and rank in their family name. Similar to Hawai'i, Samoa originally operated under a caste system and somewhat still does today. The mata'i were village elders—chiefs of royal lineage—and were selected by being the best leaders. A select number of mata'i make up a council called the “fono” and the fono is lead by the “ali'i”, the high chief who is in turn represented by the talking chief, “tulafale”. This select group of men were considered the Samoan elite class and held high prestige within communities. Today some mata'i lineages remain as well as other full blood Samoan families. But in general, Samoans are now entering the age

where “pure blood” is starting to fade out, just like it was for Hawai’i in the past. Samoans like Hawaiians cling to racial and ancestral lines because for both cultures, these ties are a source of power, deserving nature, and pride. With mixing and the availability of the American/western influence and culture, Samoa and Hawai’i have rights. This change in particular has had numerous sociological effects, which I find relevant and important for groundwork in the more important, larger philosophical discussion. In Polynesian systems, everyone is expected to know their place within the social hierarchy, family and environment and live appropriately within them. Polynesians that practice “pono”, or righteousness translated simply from the Hawaiian word, have great respect and admiration for the land and refuse to take advantage of it, or harm it. The genealogical connection to land and creation stories also gives rise to Polynesians seeing family connections and likenesses between things because it is believed that at some point everything is connected—Everything has a family connection, an origin, and an order. The idea of “family” once again become paramount because the family explains the past heritage, the family is who you are in the “now”, and the family is what will continue your legacy into the future.

Religion:

The cultural philosophy of seeing similarities rather than differences is also prevalent in the different religious systems within Polynesia. Creationism that was introduced to the Polynesian islands from missionaries was more accepted in some island traditions than others. Samoa for instance saw similarities with Christianity and integrated Christian beliefs into their cultural system. For Samoa especially, this adaption

was easier because the Power of a single God fit better with the myth of Tagaloa (Sky God) and their creation stories, whereas the Hawaiian Islands seemed to reject Christianity fairly unanimously. This may be because Polynesian philosophy clashed against Christian ideals in the basics of human nature. The Polynesians believed that humans were made inherently good—part of the natural, positive order of the universe – whereas Christianity taught that humans were inherently evil and needed salvation to reach heaven upon death.

The Hawaiian refusal of Christianity may have also stemmed from the religious and spiritual values of the Hawaiian people that were practiced through activities done on an every day basis: “Net making, fishing, farming, chanting, and dancing are filled with religious values and form an important part of ka’imi loa, the study of the universe in order to better love and appreciate it” (Charlot, 545). The inability to partake justly in these daily activities, due to the onset of Christianity, too easily interfered with daily life and spirituality of the Hawaiians making them feel not fully human. What was seen as beautiful or powerful to Polynesians would be regarded as sin in missionaries’ eyes. Much of the traditional practices of Polynesians were eventually prohibited by missionaries then later by Western civilization because they were ruled as disorderly, barbaric, violent, etc. But unruliness has a rooted place in Polynesian philosophy and religion, most evident in the Hawaiian goddess “Pele”. Charlot writes that Pele was, “the one God the court Priests could not handle and the Christian missionaries could not destroy” (56). Polynesian social systems and hierarchy are very orderly, but Pele was the one God that could explain chaos and the disorderly in the world. Pele survived though the Christian contact period because missionaries could not disprove the reasons for

destructiveness and turmoil always happening. For the Polynesians, unexplained chaos was a natural occurrence in life. This acceptance of disorder is also why Polynesians have naturally been so tolerant and embracing of violence. Violence is customary and normal to Polynesian life because it has always been so. The people of Polynesia come from a warring history where warfare and bloodshed were common among island groups. The ancient Polynesians recognized violence in the clash of waves upon land and the clash between earth and sky. Natural disasters like tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, thunder and lightning all enhanced the mystical power of unknown forces. In this, violence was beautiful, powerful, and philosophically customary at the same time.

Relevant Sociological data:

Does Polynesian Philosophy relate to Dominant American Culture?

Violence is a reoccurring theme surrounding Polynesians in the contemporary world. In light-hearted Polynesian philosophy the people tend to think that “big is beautiful”. In ancient times being big was a sign of good health and also strength and was prized as a cultural preference. By extension many Polynesians are in fact large (though not all of course) and Polynesians are stereotyped as being larger than the average human beings. They are also stereotyped as being more violent, which also is not necessarily true. The cultural and philosophical background mentioned before gives rise to a strange combination of values and traits within the Polynesian framework, especially in the Samoan one. Being raised humble, Samoans listen, serve, observe and learn very quickly. Being family/community oriented, they exhibit discipline, loyalty, pride, and hard work. By cultural experiences and natural disasters many become very mentally and physically

tough. Lastly, by genetic disposition, many are coupled with being very large and athletic. Strangely enough I believe these characteristics to be the most notable reasons for why so many Samoans succeed in the NFL:

“From an island of just 65,000 people, there are more than 30 players of Samoan descent in the NFL and over 200 playing Division I college ball. That's like 30 current NFL players coming out of Sparks, Nev., or Gastonia, N.C...In the last five years alone, the island's six high schools have produced 10 NFL linemen. It's estimated that a boy born to Samoan parents is 56 times more likely to get into the NFL than any other kid in America” (Scott Pelley, pg 3, 2010).

The statistics listed above are overwhelming in regards to Samoan capability in an American game and may seem to imply that these philosophies and traits would make them successful in American culture as well. Samoans may be tremendous football players with these traits but, surprisingly, they do not necessarily lead to success in American society and culture.

“Prevalence studies have indicated that Native Hawaiians and Samoans are arrested at a disproportionately higher rate than other ethnic groups. Native Hawaiians represent about 22.1% of Hawai'i's total population, but make up 39% of the inmate population in Hawai'i correctional facilities (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2002). Samoans comprise about 1.3% of all Hawai'i residents (U.S. Census, 2000), while making up 5% of the incarcerated population (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2002). Furthermore, youth from these ethnic groups have recently been found to comprise a disproportionate number of yearly juvenile arrests (Mayeda & Okihara, 2003)” (Mayeda, Okamoto, and Mark, 107).

Interestingly, these arrest rates are also confidently correlated with high poverty rates, low rates of college admittance, high death and suicide rates, and high rates of diabetes, obesity, and hypertension among Samoans and Hawaiians (Mayeda, Okamoto, and Mark, 107). Though many Samoan, Hawaiian, and other Polynesian groups do just fine within a capitalistic society, many do not. David T. Mayeda, Scott K. Okamoto, and Gregory Y. Mark argue that the disproportionate statistics are due to colonial influence. The restructuring of the religious, educational, economic, and legal systems within these Polynesian sovereignties made many aspects of Hawaiian and Samoan ways of life outlawed and punishable. Role strain and acculturation were also introduced into Polynesian lifestyles and seem to be the two most evident reasons for social changes, according to Mayeda, Okamoto, and Mark. After the war, many Samoan families started to migrate, like my own family did, mainly due to the hardships associated with assimilation into American culture. The once bustling economy died out after the war and all the military ships left as means of transportation. There were not many opportunities to succeed capitalistically in Samoa. Instead of being agrarian, Samoans and Hawaiians had to change their way of life to have time management skills and new lifestyles revolving around income. But even after making changes, many in the Polynesian populations were still not able to succeed with American ways.

Cosmopolitanism and Acculturation:

So what? Tons of people have had to deal with foreign influence.

As presented above, relevant sociological issues tend to show data that supports Polynesians as being victims of the American “system”. This is only partially true, as the issue is an assembly of complicated issues—a “mixed bag”. The inability to adapt and cope with American ways also actually has a lot to do with the philosophies that Polynesians themselves uphold cognitively and culturally. Polynesian “Pride” may be the main culprit. Though pride may be very useful in some aspects of life, it actually hinders success in an American lifestyle. Polynesian groups have recently become more resistant to other cultural groups, a change from traditional Polynesian thinking, and do not try and find important lessons/techniques in other cultures and people as they used to. A cultural chauvinism has been created within Polynesian people, a “return to roots” movement that naively accentuates certain traits of older ways of “tribalism”, and in many cases also leaves Polynesians unable to find a niche within American life. Hawaiians and Samoans may be arrested at higher rates, but they also refuse to back down from confrontations. Role strain and lifestyle changes may leave many Polynesians out of work, but those Polynesians believe they come from the land, and therefore should not have to work for an imported system that was not their own. On a social level, many Polynesians *think* they have a hard time relating to other people, and their worldviews, because they believe them to be dishonorable, when at times judgment is actually preconceived bias.

Having a strong individualism, on which the American culture insists, may be a way to escape from the conformities of tribalism and group identity as shown above. A strong group identity, in many racial and cultural groups, often leads to the lack of a full-

bodied identity through the lens of American culture. However, the American and individualistic mindset that comes with integration to American life *also* allows a person to think of himself/herself before others and will always be considered selfish and dishonorable to Polynesian people. Under the American culture, “American Consumerist Cosmopolitanism” as I dub it, people are able to “fulfill wants and needs,” cut the roots from the family tree, divorce, and “start over” whenever they want to. This philosophy incompatibly clashes with Polynesian nature, which puts the group, family and community before the individual always. Under “American Consumerist Cosmopolitanism” (America today), people can “practice whatever culture they want” on an individual level, which is superficial, meaningless, and ridiculous to the Polynesian people. For example, the commodification of culture within America allows for people to fulfill cultural wants/needs in yoga practice, Buddhism, and martial arts, to name a few, even though much of the time those practices are distorted from their original content and unrecognizable to the cultures that originated such practices. The fulfillment and practicing of culture on the individual level alone is not true culture to Polynesians.

As Hawaiians and Samoans are starting to face more cultural and ethnic diversity within their respective groups and also within their communities, topics of cultural assimilation become more important. Cosmopolitanism, or the ideology that all humans belong to a worldwide community and should be treated with equal moral consideration, is one model for dealing with cultural relations. This “pure” theoretical form of Cosmopolitanism, (Not to be confused with “American Consumerist Cosmopolitanism”) is juxtaposed with pluralism/multiculturalism, or the ideology that recognizes that groups

within societies should be able to maintain their unique cultural identities and customs. On the one hand, cosmopolitanism implies that individuals must assimilate into the dominant culture of the world, in which each should share morals in a worldwide framework. H.E. Baber explains cosmopolitanism: “Cosmopolitanism, or “transculturalism,” represents an assimilationist alternative according to which the aim is not cultural hegemony for the dominant group but cultural convergence, with each social group contributing something of value to the new, blended mainstream culture”(1). In other words, this view of cosmopolitanism does not imply that the dominant culture rules over the other, non-mainstream cultures in a forceful, intimidating way, *but rather allows the minor cultures to contribute to a more mixed mainstream culture*. On the other hand, pluralism/multiculturalism suggests that groups of people are in fact different and should be able to preserve and express their identity and culture. Baber writes: ““pluralism,” holds that there is no one mainstream or cultural canon but rather many mainstreams and cultural canons” (4). In other words, pluralism acknowledges different cultural groups that do not have to be “under” the umbrella of one overarching culture. The third hand, so to speak, is the ideology and structure that originated in Hawai’i and Samoa—which is having the utmost loyalty to one’s ethnic group and cultural practices. The first two are similar in that, under both cosmopolitanism and pluralism, groups can express their cultures and be respected, but they vary in regards to how much assimilation into the dominant culture is expected of a group. Tribalism rejects assimilation altogether and values the groups’ right to practice culture and social traditions without interference. Tribalism is similar to pluralism but is the most extreme version because tribalism does not necessarily respect or find importance in other cultures – only in their right to exist.

In Hawai'i and Samoa, assimilation originally was forced upon the indigenous people and is evident in the changes made to industry, family life, and culture, as discussed earlier. America in past imperialistic history has forced cultural integration upon smaller groups. As Baber states, "cultural integration is a one-way process, going from majority to minority groups" (Baber, 1). And as shown before in American history, "cultural assimilations insist that the white middleclass folkways should prevail" (Baber, 1). Hawai'i and Samoa originally rejected ideas of cultural subordination but were forced to assimilate by dominant force of "white" culture and capitalism. Originally, Samoa was more interested in the material and capitalistic gains that would come with assimilation, whereas Hawaii initially wanted no part in American folkways. Today, both groups mixed or not, regardless of location, have to deal with the culture of America, which is American Consumerism/Capitalism.

Important questions arise from the ideas of each model of assimilation (or non assimilation in the case of Tribalism). One is: Which of the three cultural philosophies is actually present in the world? This is coupled with, "Which is present in the United States?" To start with the latter of the two, it seems at first glance as though America lifts up the notion of being aware and respectful of other people's cultures—traditions, practices and customs. In this sense, America gives the illusion that pluralism is widespread and valued. After all, this is the cliché idea of America: A land where everyone is accepted and everyone can be himself or herself and have individual and group rights and liberties. I believe this only to be true to an extent, within the framework of American society and law. Multiculturalism/pluralism (and to an extent tribalism) is allowed in so far as distinct groups' rights and liberties do not interfere with laws and

liberties that the United States has already deemed inherently deserved. It is very probable that multiculturalism will lead to infringement of rights of other groups. If multiple groups are living within an area, conflicts, disagreements, and differences in opinion are all likely to happen if every group practices their different ways of life. America of course, protects values that the American government has decided necessary for living properly and adequately: allowing “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” some might say. The idea of pluralism also may lead to balkanization, or the division of cultures/groups within a region that are hostile or non-cooperative (Baber). This theory is especially interesting within different areas of the United States because many states are very diverse racially, ethnically and culturally. In times of trouble, will these groups separate and look out for their “own”, or will they unite under the United States’ banner and the connection of being American? In this scenario, I believe that many groups living within the United States have not fully adopted or realized themselves as “American,” because they identify more sturdily to racial/ethnic/cultural groups. Being “American” does not necessarily override the ties that individuals have to the respective ethnic/racial/cultural groups they choose, are born into, or are placed into by society.

In past examples of hardship and strife, and war in particular, people have placed blame on American citizens who look like the “enemy”. When waves of different immigrant groups flocked to the United States in the nineteenth century, each succeeding group to come to America became the new hated group. In World War II, the United States had internment camps for Japanese-Americans and during 9/11 Muslim-Americans faced scrutiny, racism, and hatred from many Americans and in American society. There are many more examples, but the point is that people in general tend to assimilate in

groups that are comfortable, trustworthy, and familiar to them. I do hope that American citizens are becoming less openly prejudiced and harsh than they were during the nineteenth century, but the more recent examples make one wonder if many in America are really operating under the ideas of equality and freedom of culture that it boasts. The most recent instance may be America's concern with the immigrant population from Mexico. Debates over healthcare, jobs, and taxes endure, placing Mexicans and Mexican-Americans as the root of these problems.

Notions of multiculturalism exist in America, but I believe that American cosmopolitanism trumps both pluralism and tribalism. By "American cosmopolitanism," I mean "American Consumerist Cosmopolitanism," which is the universal natural law and moral code that America deems necessary for human beings within America, and possibly worldwide. This moral code is the new age guideline for the rest of the world and puts strain on many other world cultures. It is evident that the American culture and law dwarfs competing forms that may be present in America, because everyone in America must operate within American culture and law (law especially) in order to function and live in America. One may abide by laws and cultures other than the American if and only if those ways do not conflict with the dominant American traditions. Much of the time people practice cultures other than the "American one" and manage within the American framework just fine, but the American culture still remains the dominant form of explaining shared, learned guidelines for behavior to citizens.

"American Consumerist Cosmopolitanism", infused with American ways assumed as the hegemonic grounding, seems like a romanticized way of imposing a

particular worldview. It is confusing and difficult to try and be a world citizen, while at the same time incorporating oneself into a worldwide framework dominated by the powerhouse culture. With the American cultural framework today, it can be very hard for groups of people to practice their own religions and cultures because it may be uncomfortable, or distressing, socially and politically. Tobias states that: “Current formulations of cosmopolitanism have been shaped by a post-World War II North Atlantic liberal political culture, and a discourse of liberal multiculturalism that has its geopolitical roots in the postcolonial period and its effects” (Tobias, 74).

Cosmopolitanism could be seen here as a powerful tool used in the postcolonial period. During colonialism, the people in power found justification for annexations and territory gains by creating imbalanced power relationships—much of the time making other cultures feel as if they needed to be helped or protected by use of overwhelming forces that were intimidating. During postcolonial times, more people began to be more aware of ethical issues like those involving racism, ethnocentricity, identity, and other relationships between the ones in power and the powerless that were prominent during colonialism. Some might say that the shift was a moral improvement because people felt the need to justify colonialism rather than to just do it. Cosmopolitanism could be seen in the postcolonial period as shift towards human rights thinking. And Cosmopolitanism now is leaning toward rights-based goals, where it used to be more cooperation-based as in its original understanding by the Stoics, whose Cosmopolitanism is similar to that of the Postcolonial time: “Their views followed from the convictions that human beings are a shared species; that they share a common capacity for reason and communication; and that all human beings are bound by a universal natural law with which morality and

positive law should be in harmony” (Tobias paraphrasing Brown 74). This view of Cosmopolitanism is terribly romantic and utopic and does not exist in this manner in America, or the rest of the world.

Philosophers like Anthony Appiah believe this is what Cosmopolitanism should strive for, and that the world would be a better place if people were to see each other as equal world citizens, but this ideal remains elusive. It is especially confusing when people not of the dominant culture are expected to see each other as equals and shared world citizens and then are also expected to function under a foreign world culture; in our world’s case—the American one. How can someone exhibit moral and ethical conduct under this cosmopolitanism when they are not treated with equal respect? The American culture is controlling and overriding on all levels: social, political, cultural, moral, interpersonal, etc. The fact of the matter is that people not of the American culture, or people who do not identify with the American culture, are not equal to those who do identify with the American culture. The American involvement in world affairs is an extension of the powers granted to a dominant culture and exemplifies how America impacts the rest of the world by forcing its laws, values and morals upon distant nations. Even positive actions, with good intentions, performed by the United States overseas, can be understood by indigenous populations as unnecessary or inappropriate. The indigenous, in return, have little voice or power to change the American opinion. The question then becomes, “what is ethically right?” This will be addressed later. Cosmopolitanism may be interpreted as an ethnocentric view of how the world should operate, rather than “each social group contributing something of value to the new, blended mainstream culture” as Baber proposed earlier. The point is that, under

cosmopolitanism, dominated cultures do not have much sway, because they have little power in American politics, law, morals, and culture -- other than just being there as a conscientious reminder of other types of people who should be respected and accepted/added, and not offended. The dominant American moral standards and point-of-view have been set up as the guidelines for society if and when cultural groups clash.

Assimilation And “Race”:

What does Cosmopolitanism have to do with Polynesia?

As Hawai’i and American Samoa are part of America, it now becomes meaningful to see if and how American cosmopolitanism affects Hawai’i and Samoa. Of tribalism, pluralism, and cosmopolitanism, which is/are present? I think of Hawai’i as different than much of the mainland United States because Hawai’i has more areas where tribalism and pluralism remain more profound and resilient even to this day. The island of Ni’ihau (part of the Hawaiian island chain), is inhabited only by, roughly, 140 native Hawaiians. This population speaks a traditional dialect, and practices their culture almost completely traditionally. The phrase “no man is an island” is ironically and comically relevant, however, because as tribalistic as Ni’ihau is, there are still foreign technologies present. But Ni’ihau is as close to an example of tribalism (where this is gauged by a high level of autonomy) as any other competing area in the world, because the few technologies do not interfere with traditional practices.

Tribalism is also evident in the native populations of Hawaiians that congregate on beaches and do not abide by many rules or practices of the mainstream culture and

government. The mainstream culture does inevitably affect, obstruct, and play a role in their lives because those populations still use tents, containers and other simple, new-age technologies. This group, however, refuses to pay taxes, work, and do most everything else associated with mainstream American life and instead tries to live off the land and ocean as their ancestors did. Suggestions of tribalism are also found within the many cultures that congregate in Hawai'i because those cultures are known for looking out for their own exclusively. Hawai'i is built upon knowing "how much blood" someone has of a certain "race". People admit to being one-fourth this or one-half that so as to find a niche within a group. The centrality of racial ties in Hawai'i is very strong and is a source of pride, belonging, or even power. As I stated before, being a certain percentage Hawaiian in Hawai'i gives an individual opportunities to better education, housing, and even right to the land.

In the Samoan tradition, being full Samoan also echoes the same sources of pride, belonging, and power as individuals of full blood retain rights to be leaders and chiefs. In Western Samoa, traditional cultural practices follow norms that have been in place for hundreds of years. That is to say that much of Western Samoa is completely tribalistic, because it is a free nation. They are free to practice their culture without American influence, although foreign influence undeniably makes its ways into the island. Eastern, or American Samoa, however, has had a much more steady influence from American ways and is like a new-age Hawai'i in that different groups have recently started to come to American Samoa, making the island more multicultural in nature.

The definition of tribalism may not be exactly fitting to the scenario of Hawai'i;

most would consider Hawai'i more pluralistic. Pluralism itself is hard to give evidential support for; it is hard to determine whether one area is more multicultural than another. Nevertheless, Hawai'i is known for its vast number of cultures within a small area. Many of these cultures represent different time periods, as some have arrived to the islands at different points. Depending on how early they came to the islands and the type of culture, the amount of pluralism varies because the newer cultures to an area usually remain more traditional than ones that have had more time to integrate. Hawai'i has cultures that are more traditional and tribalistic, and also ones that have integrated quicker into the mainstream American culture and that act as mainland Americans do. Multiculturalism is very prevalent in Hawai'i, and more so than anywhere in the mainland United States because of the larger number of different cultures clashing more often. (This claim is supported here only anecdotally, but go to Hawai'i for an extended period of time and try to "interact" with people to see). "Kill Haole day," or the last day in school before summer where school children attack and harm "white kids", is an example of forced/entrenched dispute. Much of the time, disputes occur when people are aware of differences between groups and clash purposely, but just as often, new groups are not aware of differences and may insult accidentally (As visitors surely do all the time).

Hawai'i is made up of small islands and contains a population too numerous, resulting in a scarcity of resources that adds more tension to racial conflict. The people who inhabit Hawai'i are constantly struggling to prove who has the rightful claim to Hawai'i—whether that is by inheritance, blood, wealth, or physical dominance (brawling/fighting/violence). In Samoa, the same disputes occur, but ensue in a lesser scale of conflict, due to less foreign influence. The "right to the land disputes" cause a

hierarchical formation of groups to occur. In Hawai'i, the Hawaiian "race" is at the top, followed by other Polynesian groups. And in Samoa, the Samoan "race" is most valued. The consequential "bond" that follows between Polynesian groups within Hawai'i, and Samoa especially, (but also outside of it), is so strong that a mere introduction of race can result in a shared acceptance and connection. The bond is based in the recognition that another individual has similar cultural lessons, upbringings, and experiences. Many other cultures have this bond, but the Polynesian bond is in some ways different or unique due to the associations with power. Some may also say that the bond, or "power" (Mana, Malosi, & Moni in Hawaiian and Samoan) is made more evident through physical brutality, as Polynesians can represent group identity through overpowering violence. I am not assuming other cultures/ethnicities/races do not have this type of bond; rather I am trying to explain the worldview that makes the bond unique. The Polynesian philosophies regarding "being Polynesian" encompass every aspect of Polynesian philosophy explained earlier. The family connections that may surface during a simple introduction of lineage and family between two Polynesians has the potential to bring out the deepest feelings of pride, respect, and honor rooted in ancestral connection and shared values. It is these bonds of power and pride that make Polynesian bonds so strong and also very stubborn.

An example story may help illustrate. A friend of mine by the name of Peter, a half Samoan man, recalled to me a time when he was in jail. Within the first few days in prison, Peter got into a scuffle with a Mexican man and boasted his Samoan heritage. Peter did not realize the political ramifications for his actions. Word had spread throughout the prison that the Mexicans within the complex were going to come at Peter,

full force, for his life the next day. Peter sat alone on his cot contemplating that night when a note in the form of a paper airplane hit the bar of his jail cell. It read, “be ready tomorrow, because [its] going down”. Peter arose the next day and went through his daily routine but was eventually surrounded by a gang of Mexicans with jail-made shanks in the courtyard. Ready to face his imminent demise, Peter was abruptly braced from behind, back to back, by four other Samoan men—the source of the late night airmail. The men who joined Peter were ready to die for him, a man they had never met before. And why? There was no material interest, or positive gain of any matter, for the other men. The call to action came from the deepest feelings of shared pride in being Samoan—a sense of family, shared values and belonging.

Some may say that this example however may be somewhat beside the point because of the ranking, grouping, and tribalism that already goes on in prison. Most within prison tend to form packs with “their own” so why would this so called “bond” be any different than bonds between other cultural/racial/ethnic groups? To this it should be noted that the other Samoan men recognized in Peter, even though he was mixed racially, a pride, violence, fervor, and tenacity that could only come from a man raised in the fa’asamoa, the Samoan way. Though many other groups may have similar bonds, the bonds between Polynesians, especially Samoans, and Hawaiians, are unique because of the Polynesian philosophies concerning family, self, violence, and pride.

One might also add that the people in the story were in fact inmates, and they were already predisposed to a history of violence and wrongdoing and therefore the “noble” actions were misleading because of the circumstances. Concerning egalitarian solidarity, (or ties among people with fundamentally equal worth), Philip Green writes:

“It is the disposition to ally oneself with others not because they are similar to oneself in social background or agree with one’s own tastes and values but precisely because they are different *and yet* have permanently common human interests” (Green, 177.) This view is “Cosmopolitanistic” and contradicts my point about Samoan Pride, which is important to note. “Permanently common human interests” as Philip Green states are in fact “values” and part of the larger worldview of individuals. Social backgrounds help to shape “human interest” and therefore values, thus the relation between the two is not mutually exclusive. So by extension he basically says, “It is the disposition to ally oneself with others not because they have all the same values but precisely because they are different *and yet* have some of the same values.” This type of solidarity would seem strong, but descriptively it is not common. Normatively, this type of solidarity would be beneficial if people could go beyond race, ethnicity, and culture to recognize shared values. Green later goes on to say that: “It is the mutual recognition of *these* interests, not the mere recognition of being in the same economic or social position, that defines solidarity among equals” (Green, 177.) Though I agree with Green in part, he seems to fail to recognize how closely related common human values are with the differences in cultures. The “common human interests” that are shared between Polynesians incorporate history, social upbringing, Polynesian philosophy, family, demeanor, and race in order to achieve a bond, or connection. One of the common human interests for humans is to be able to live out their cultural differences, but this interest is exactly what the dominant culture interferes with. Much of the time economic and social positions are part of “permanently common social interests” because they are shared throughout new, and old age Polynesian culture—much of the time continuing racial lines. Polynesian values,

habits and way of viewing the world all continue to perpetuate social and economic conditions, as well as racial continuation and sexual selection.

The topic of pride is hard to explain beyond empirical terms, especially in Polynesian cultures that base so much of their interaction around race, pride, honor and respect. Pride in being Polynesian is something learned and shared at a young age and embodies all the aspects of Polynesian philosophy from the Polynesian philosophy section (and material not mentioned). High regard for consciousness of pride and belonging exist within other groups within Hawai'i and Samoa, but are most evidently strong within Polynesian groups. People from Hawai'i living outside of the islands need only mention their origins and an immediate connection is made. The same is true with people of Samoan ancestry, as Polynesians tend to look for family connections.

Philosophy of Race:

Why do Polynesians care about race so much? Holy smokes.

For Samoans and Hawaiians, the idea of cosmopolitanism resonates themes of racial dominance because the people “in charge” have tended to be “white”. By “in charge” I mean people with more wealth, economic command, superior technology, and better education – simply put, that which is political and social capital in the dominant U.S. culture. Cosmopolitanism in general may be more appealing and identifiable to “whites” because being “white” means having more opportunity to be neutral to cultural ties. “Being white” (which is a combination of races anyway), can mean that one practices the “American Consumerist Cosmopolitanism”, or some other (combination of)

“ethnic” culture, whether that culture has been “watered down” or not. The possibilities on the individual level are endless. In contrast, the strong racial ties among Polynesian people combats the commodification of culture that “American Consumerist Cosmopolitanism” allows for because race and culture are necessarily connected in order to be fully Samoan or Hawaiian. Hawaiians and Samoans also have loaded feelings toward those who look white racially because of the stigma from colonialism. Cosmopolitanism is more appealing to the dominant culture and “race” because they have less to worry about in terms of remnant feelings. They have less to worry about because their “people”, so to speak, were not oppressed, or taken advantage of, or are no longer (though there are historical exceptions—white slaves, human trafficking of whites, etc). As unfair as it may seem, this is one of the main reasons for racial ranking and significance within Polynesia. Coupled with Polynesian philosophies of family, genealogy and pride, the identification of race in Samoa and Hawai’i becomes extremely important. As mentioned earlier, the strong racial identity within Hawai’i and Samoa can be a source of pride, belonging, and power, but also a disadvantageous mindset for learning from others due to cultural chauvinism. Being a certain amount of Hawaiian in Hawai’i gives individuals opportunities to better education, housing, and even right to the land. In Samoan tradition, race gives the same sources of pride, belonging and power. (Especially when of full blood because individuals preserve rights to be leaders and chiefs.) Because of the way Polynesia has been influenced by America, these racial ideals on what it means to be “authentically Polynesian” will not go away anytime soon. The changes in the economic, educational, cultural, etc., systems within Hawai’i and Samoa specifically have changed the emphasis on race.

Racial eliminativism, as a solution, is impractical and naïve within Polynesia because racial importance is too central to life, and because the barriers to practice Polynesian culture are too high. If the world could be reduced to ethnicity alone, (which it cannot currently), there would still be disputes of cultural authenticity within Polynesia. Being authentically Polynesian demands a worldview that is too difficult to realize, or learn, through practice later on in life—being born into the culture is a condition of really being Polynesian. That being said, if a Caucasian individual were to be born into a Polynesian family, and was to practice the culture in the utmost sense, that individual would most likely not be viewed as authentically Polynesian. Descriptively the situation of Polynesian race is the reverse of the “one drop rule”. The more “drops” of Polynesian blood one has, the greater the potential power and cultural authenticity (though this still depends on where one was born and grew up).

Originally the people of Polynesia viewed everyone as family members and equals—everyone was shown hospitality and respect. But the transformations on every level of living that the Samoans and Hawaiians have dealt with changed the importance of race within the islands, and also in all places that Polynesians interact. In order for Polynesians and mixed-race Polynesians to view others as “equal world citizens” again, without racial association and importance, the whole system within Polynesia will have to change. The new-age Polynesian is therefore going against the Polynesian philosophies of ancient times that valued similarities over differences. Polynesian philosophy originally had little interest in race (possibly due to little foreign influence—people were on relatively isolated islands), but now holds it in the highest regards. In other words, race used to be of little importance, but now is at the forefront of most all interactions

within Polynesian communities. Normatively, this should not be the way it is anymore. Race plays too central a role within Polynesian interaction that hinders other aspects of relationships and individuality. The race identification trends are so poignant that they are blatantly obvious, and upsetting to see at the youth level. Within Hawai'i especially, it is normal for school children to practice racial slurs, racial bullying, racial hatred, and racial violence. Of course, part of the problem is due to parents and other factors, rather than just foreign influence.

In Naomi Zack's work, there is constant reference to how "whites" originally identified themselves racially. To be "white" meant that a person had to have all descendants be "white" without any "exotic" blood. In opposition, Naomi Zack explained that African Americans were defined as being "black" as long as they had an African American Ancestor (the "one drop" rule). In Hawai'i and Samoa, as said before, the conversation is quite different. Being Hawaiian is "concretely" determined by paperwork, justifying certain percentages of Hawaiian ancestry in the form of fractions. However, in Samoan and Hawaiian communities, being Hawaiian or Samoan is typically decided by how Hawaiian or Samoan a person looks. In this practice, Polynesians and especially the people of Hawai'i have become very skilled at recognizing and differentiating "races" and combinations of races as if they were biological categories. This is an idea with which Naomi Zack, a scholar in Philosophy of race, does not agree. I agree with Naomi Zack in saying that racial characteristics cannot be traced back to genetic origins (Philosophy of Science and Race, 41). But just because there is no biological/genotypic proof for a racial characteristic now, does not mean that there will not be in the future. To illustrate, no one knows the gene sequence(s) that cause a bigger nose, high cheekbones,

narrow eyes, certain hair types, or other characteristics that appear “racial”, but future genetic evidence may show what sequences cause racial traits. Just because the evidence is not present now, does not mean that it will not be later on. In fact, more and more evidence is being discovered in support of genetic differences among “races”, the most recent of which may rule out race as merely a social construct. In Nicholas Wade’s book, Before the Dawn, he gives scientific cases explaining how genetic differences among races cannot be simply social constructs. In practical instances, he describes how doctors have applied race to how they treat patients. The Pima Indians are vulnerable to diabetes, Hemochromatosis—a likely Viking genetic condition—is found mainly in Europeans, Pacific Islanders are susceptible to obesity, and African Americans prove to respond extraordinarily better to the drug BiDil (Wade, 182-3). Other pressures like sexual selection, disease, warfare, and climate also lead to genetic drift and mutation/variation that make distinct characteristics among people living in distinctively separated areas (Wade, 186, 7). A more interesting and controversial study by Neil Risch and Marcus Feldman provided an impartial way of determining a person’s race by looking at 377 sites throughout the human genome for “1,000 people from 52 populations around the world” (Wade, 187). A computer grouped the individuals based on their DNA differences into 5 clusters that accurately matched the continent that they were from. “Africa, western Eurasia (Europe, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent), East Asia, Oceania, and the Americas” (Wade, 187). Social sciences in the past have denounced racial classification because of inaccurate categorization based on skin color, but in Risch and Feldman’s work categorization is based in genotype, not phenotype. As Wade says, “...the genetic markers used to identify race are not part of the genes or their control regions, so far as is

known, and therefore play no part in the physical appearance or behavior of an individual” (Wade, 188). And also means that someone could be more of a race “biologically” even if they don’t “look it”.

These control regions are strands of repeated DNA, or “filler” DNA, which does not determine physical make-up of an individual. Certain areas of repeats are indicative of race and it turns out only about 100 sites were needed to show which of the five major races an individual came from. If Naomi Zack were responding from her book, Philosophy of Science and Race, she would say that this study tells very little, or nothing at all about racial identification, definition, or taxonomy (41). It turns out however, that migration histories of groups—which is also associated with sexual selection, disease, climate, warfare, and natural selection—actually can be correlated with phenotypical traits. The genes ASPM, and SLC24A5 are good examples of this. ASPM is a gene that 44% of Caucasians have that is non-existent in sub-Saharan Africans, and less common in East Asians (Wade, 193). The ancient form of SLC24A5, that causes pale skin in Caucasians, is present within almost all Africans and Asians, and 99% of Europeans have the newer version. This shows how skin color originally was, and also indicates how important the mutation was for the European population to survive. Naomi Zack backs her science and logic very soundly throughout all her works. I am simply showing that there may be a more biological grounding to race than is popularly accepted—despite some areas where evidence is lacking.

In addition, a study by geneticist Richard Lewontin showed that, “the degree of differentiation he had measured in the human population was similar to other estimates that put the value of global (F_{ST}) (F_{ST} meaning expected level of heterozygosity, or

gene/allele similarity, in Layman's terms) as between 10 and 15%. Sewall Wright, one of the three founders of population genetics and the inventor of the (F_{ST}) measure, commented that "if racial differences this large were seen in any other species, they would be called subspecies"" (Wade, 192). So is it possible that Hawai'i is more "in tune" with "subspecies" and racial/phenotypical characteristics than the rest of the world? Is it just coincidence that populations in Hawai'i can point out the differences between Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean people whereas the vast majority of mainland Americans cannot? It's a tricky claim. No one should deny that there are biological differences between groups of people; the real question is what to "do" with those differences socially.

In contrast, Naomi Zack states that: "Therefore, there is no certainty that a child will inherit those traits possessed by parents, which society considers to be racial"(Zack, 73). To this, it should be stated that some groups of people pass down *certain* racial traits almost certainly. For example, it is confidently known that a child of a black parent will usually display "ordinary racial characteristics," or obviously notable characteristics associated with being black under a societal scope (such as skin color/melanin content and hair type), despite genotype background. The onset of a dark skin mutation in an extremely hot environment is so advantageous to survival that the gene (or combination of genes) would, and does become dominant and more quickly shared. Like blacks/African Americans, Polynesians also have racially identifiable characteristics made socially normative. Originally on islands, the inhabitants would have lived in a small area for a long period of time making the genetic gene pool somewhat isolated. These "clines" (Zack, 73), or groups within the same area for a long period of time,

would have given rise to the idea of racial characteristics because some traits would circulate more commonly and noticeably, and some traits would drift out of the population altogether. These phenotypical traits, however, are not as dominantly visible as black characteristics, making categorization more ambiguous. Still, characteristics are regularly noted among populations of Hawaiians and Samoans despite commonly faulty labeling. Polynesians now mirror America's trend of fulfilling racial prototypes, or "tokens", when in fact a "racial" group has a multitude of phenotypical diversity. In this respect, the Polynesian identification of race may be considered very superficial because of the lack of recognizing genetic variation beyond obvious traits. A person may also *not* have "racially common" traits and be considered an outsider to the racial group he/she actually genetically belongs. In fact, the populations within Hawai'i, especially, have become extremely skilled at recognizing these differences, despite the irrelevance in explaining biological categories or actual genetic variation that may be present within one "racial" group. Just because racial biological categories are irrelevant in this regard, does not mean that people do not or will not use them. In the case of Hawai'i, and other places with high concentrations of Polynesians, people use racist and racial categorizing everyday. This type of categorization needs to end. Too many people are wrongly categorized, which socially gives false cultural and racial "right".

Within Hawai'i especially, the identification of combinations of different races has become socially acceptable and normal. Many coming to Hawai'i might even consider the local population "racist" in the open conversation about mixing and race in general. Like the new age American population, people in Hawai'i are considered to be of a certain "race" by others if and only if they *look* like the race they claim to be.

However much of the American population is not as “in tune” with specific (ordinary) racial differences as is Hawai’i. That also being said, in Hawaiian and Samoan populations individuals are considered to be “white” if they simply look white, no matter the genetic or cultural background. So the same attention to detail concerning identification among other races is not as prevalent in discerning between white and other races in Polynesia. This may indeed be due to the harshness toward and foul opinions of white people within Polynesia, but could also be due to less familiarity with certain races (though less likely).

Mixed race Polynesians have a hard time in being identified and fitting in to a category by outside populations because of ties to power. A Polynesian family will sometimes not view mixed offspring as “full” Polynesian. The possible loss of royal lineage, the loss to certain land/education/etc. rights and pride are also determining factors in viewing mixed offspring as not fully Polynesian. Other communities of Polynesians outside the immediate family will also view a mixed race Polynesian—more often than not—as not “full” blooded. Being mixed “white” with Polynesian is an even more difficult situation to be in as far as “fitting in” goes because if a mixed individual is to have white traits, then not only are they seen as *not fully Polynesian*, but also as something despised due to many remnant feelings associated with white people. This is common treatment for people with combinations of mixed Hawaiian, Samoan, and white genealogy and genotypes.

Ronald C. Johnson Author of *Offspring of cross-race and Cross-Ethnic Marriages in Hawaii*, disagrees and thinks that any group within Hawai’i that is mixed racially or ethnically will not have social, cultural or psychological maladjustment. He

states: “Authors claiming that offspring of intergroup marriages will be maladjusted typically have limited their support for their views to anecdotes or case histories” (Johnson, 239). Following this statement, Johnson goes on to present information from a case study that only involves a few (five) combinations of mixed race within Hawai’i (Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian or part Hawaiian, and Japanese). Beyond this, the paid participants in said case study were also people described as “of higher educational and occupational levels than the population at large” (240). Within this article, it is interesting how claims surrounding mixed race/ethnicity within Hawai’i as a whole are backed by studies that are representative of the privileged percent of the population—a representative population that most definitely cannot lead to conclusions about Polynesian racial/ethnic/cultural mixing. Because studies relevant to Polynesians are limited in number, (or not appropriate/applicable), case histories and anecdotes are actually extremely helpful in at least explaining feelings of alienation and cultural exclusion—especially when stories, myths, and legends have been central to explaining feelings and continuing lessons of Polynesians. This is not to say that just because someone does not have any Polynesian ancestry that they do not have any influence in what they say about the issue. It is just that stories, anecdotes, and histories have a lot of sway in Polynesian culture, and should continue to have sway for purposes of continuation of culture, and moral improvement through conversation.

The stories, anecdotes, and histories surrounding mixed race/culture Polynesians share many common elements and themes. One theme is that being a mixed race/culture Polynesian is especially trying because such an individual cannot fully access a culture that is based in pride and power. In this theme, such an individual possibly cannot relate,

or connect to family members because the family members are believed to hold a higher status/prestige/rank. It is common practice within Polynesian conversation to refer to, or rank, ancestry/genealogy by fraction terminology, although it is inherently inaccurate, as Naomi Zack points out. Genetics do not work in terms of fractions. Offspring may carry genetic information that may lean more strongly toward either parent rather, than an orderly numerical representation that is expressed through fractions. In Hawai'i when people are surprised by phenotypical traits they often say, "he/she don't look anything like...", or "that side pulls so weak". These types of comments reflect how people in Hawai'i have expectations of those who claim a race, yet those expectations are often trumped through genetic mixing. A person could be part of a race genotypically, but not fulfill expectations phenotypically. Racial categorization is unfair to those people who are mixed racially and culturally with Hawaiian and Samoan backgrounds because they are looked down upon by the Polynesian community and thought of as not worthy of practicing their respective cultures. When mixed with "white" ancestry, the white community either sees these individuals as foreign or not truly white, or as "kind of white." Both options do not satisfy a sense of cultural belonging if an individual identifies at all with being Polynesian. This racial treatment is also unfair because much of the time the mixed genetics that Polynesian may have can be a sufficient cause for the inability to practice and learn culture and therefore the incapability to access knowledge needed to be and feel fully human.

Cosmopolitanism & Polynesians:

How do Polynesians see Cosmopolitanism in regards to race & culture?

Resurfacing the Polynesian philosophy expressed earlier, “the bond” between Polynesians is representative of the Polynesian philosophy of family and pride. It is honorable and necessary to find similarities and family connections in order to be a “full” person. The Polynesian custom of seeing similarities among things rather than differences would seem as sufficient foundations for a successful cosmopolitanism like that presented by Appiah. But the American influence in Polynesia, specifically American Samoa and Hawai’i, has changed how many Polynesians (including mixed heritage Polynesians) view the world. The philosophical knowledge regarding similarities and family is often lost or distorted in response to the American impact. ““American Consumerist Cosmopolitanism” trumps the tribalism and pluralism of Hawai’i and Samoa, even though they have significant concentrations of tribalism and multiculturalism. American cosmopolitanism, or (“American Consumerist Cosmopolitanism,”) has played an unfair role in the islands and if this type of cosmopolitanism were to remain the model, it will continue to have a degenerate effect on the islands of Hawai’i and Samoa. Considering the philosophical background regarding how quick Polynesians learn and adapt, it is naïve to think that Polynesians will accept an idea of cosmopolitanism in the future because of the circumstances that came before the noble idea of “being a world citizen.” Simply put, the western world forced its way to the pacific islands and took over and because of this the Polynesians still feel resentment toward western ideas. Polynesian people do not and will not entirely respect cosmopolitan beliefs (in any version) because respecting American race, culture, religion,

and what have you is all tied to a past of abused trust. Hawaiians and Samoans were first “cosmopolitanistic” in nature when they accepted foreigners as friends to their islands for gifts, trades and good relations, but those settlers saw the islands of Hawai’i and Samoa as a means to an end. In Hawai’i especially, foreigners now dominate everyday life: trade, business, aesthetically pleasing areas, housing, test scores, etc. In other words, joining the American way was and is not a choice; it was and is an unnatural movement full of deceit and heartbreak. The Polynesian people can get by just fine without a worldwide, dominant culture and in many cases do not want anything to do with one. If American influence were removed from Hawaii and Samoa, the dispute of race would lessen. American cosmopolitanism is fused with the ashes of colonialism. Indigenous populations will continue to identify American cosmopolitanism with capitalism and consumerism because those are the foundations and the most evident forms of American culture. And those foundations will never be fully respected by Polynesian culture. If American influence would decline in Polynesia, people could go back to recognizing more honorable and aesthetic aspects of people, instead of being so involved in racial dispute.

Assimilation under American Cosmopolitanism:

Is it just?

American cosmopolitanism is not as mixed and as sharing as H.E. Baber presented it. This is made evident through the examples of Hawai’i and Samoa. The American culture may adopt other cultural lessons and traditions, but not in a vitally integral way, as Baber explained. The American culture is one that often imitates and

copies various indigenous world traditions, but much of the time skews, misinterprets, or misrepresents other cultures so that the practices become disrespectful or meaningless. This may be due in part to the interpretive confusion of importing an indigenous practice of a culture to the mainstream, often capitalistic and consumerist, scope of the American culture. People of the American culture want to experience “everything that’s out there” and are able to pay a price to achieve that want. Yoga classes, hula lessons, Zen meditation, are some of many examples of how American culture has transformed other cultural traditions into an “American mainstream” commodity practice.

Commodifying culture can be seen as a positive or a negative effect. On one side, people get to possibly experience the constructive lessons/teachings of a different viewpoint. On the other, they may be disrespectful, inappropriate, and may possibly be creating or continuing stereotypes. This also raises the issue of racism in the form of *exoticism*. It is common in America for people to lift up a “different” culture or person based on the belief that they are exotic. They essentially place worth in and desire for people who look different or exotic. In Hawai’i and Samoa this trend has also transferred into everyday life, as being Hawaiian or Samoan within Hawai’i or Samoa respectively, gives an individual higher social status and appeal. Marrying into a Hawaiian family within Hawai’i is desired among the general population. Much of the time marrying outside of “race” within Hawaii/Samoa is also looked down upon because of the loss of connection to “power”.

Though America seems to adopt other cultural behaviors and seems to be accepting of other cultures in general, these notions are not a nod toward equality as

much as they are toward simply being aware of differences. And being aware of differences is nice and a step in the right direction toward equal human rights as Anthony Appiah and the Stoics would believe, but as long as the American culture is “at the top of the pyramid”, other cultures of the world will suffer and be in the shadows of American culture. It is the identification of American culture, with its consumerism/capitalism, with cosmopolitanism, that makes the cosmopolitanism of today essentially and fundamentally flawed and unjust. The hegemony of American capitalism taints the positive possibilities of cosmopolitanism under Appiah’s definition.

When people argue for the ideal form of cosmopolitanism they say that people should preserve the cultural values and ancestral tradition, while also upholding a Pluralistic attitude that recognizes different cultures, and also the mixing of cultures and values. Under this model, all cultures are said to have traditions that are valuable to “us”, that “we” should be open to receiving. In this, “us” and “we” are people that can supposedly suck up or absorb cultural knowledge from other people. But can they do so in a morally virtuous way? What happened after the Native Americans showed settlers how to farm and live off the land? What happened to Hawai’i and Samoa after the Hawaiians and Samoans shared everything they had? What happened when any colonizer “learned” from another people? Why is everything termed as “learning from the indigenous culture?” It’s usually a one-way street. People routinely say: “These cultures have a lot of lessons we can learn.” Why is everything in relation to who is on the top? Can these cultures learn anything from the top of the daunting pyramid? Do they want to? Not always—and for good reason. They should not want to learn everything from American Consumerist culture anyway. Its impossible to export only the good aspects of

American culture because it is laced with corruption: bright lights, fine print, debt, taxes, video games, prostitutes, social strain, drugs and everything else that comes with the false idea of the “American Dream.”

This is not to mention that the “top” of the pyramid of American Consumerist Cosmopolitanism is a mainly “white” capitalist/consumerist America. When this America “learns” from cultures, it finds marketable goods/wants, creates a need, and then sells it to make a profit. There is always danger in romanticizing the past, as things were not always easy in tribalistic and culturally separated times, but many groups do not wish to have anything to do with foreign influence. People should not be forced to share, or give up their cultural ways and values. But this is not the case as “ethnic” people, or “indigenous” people, are forced to interact with the dominant cultures in a manner that does not have other people’s long-term well-being in mind.

Solutions:

Whose morals and point-of-view should lead society if and when cultural groups clash? What should be the model?

The most beneficial changes are possible in a truly multicultural Pluralistic Cosmopolitanism.. Involuntary acculturation into Consumerist American Cosmopolitanism will continue to cause tension in Samoan and Hawaiian communities, no matter where they live, because it is evident that Hawaiian and Samoan cultures are not compatible with that model of Cosmopolitanism. Furthermore, Polynesians should not be required to assimilate into American consumerist culture, because for many it

leads to a multitude of intractable problems, including warped racial identifications, the roots of which are morally wrong. Colonialism and annexation were inherently wrong, being based on threat, as are, by extension, the cultural and capitalistic changes to the Pacific islands. These changes directly affected Polynesian well-being—in spirituality, education, and many other areas of positive rights that the United States now ironically claims to uphold.

A more multicultural world model would begin with an education system that is more conscientious of Polynesian culture and needs (and by extension other culture's needs.) There are many traditional culture institutions within Polynesia, like Hawaiian charter schools, but most still restrict spirituality and other cultural keystones like language, history, and customs. In addition, the educational system should allow all people of Polynesian descent, mixed or not, should have equal opportunity to access their indigenous cultural knowledge without imposed elitist ideals or approaches to education. A few prestigious schools of Hawaiian culture are not enough within Hawai'i, especially when there is "political" sway in being accepted. That is not to say that everyone of Hawaiian descent will want to continue his or her indigenous culture, but the opportunity to access said knowledge should be easier. Educational changes to support the continuation of traditional Polynesian cultures would be most beneficial, considering that cultural knowledge continues to dwindle in everyday home life in Polynesia, once the essential foundation of Polynesian upbringing and knowledge. There are teachers within Polynesia, who know enough about their own Polynesian culture and American culture, to transform the Polynesian schooling systems if the government were to place greater importance on the issue. Also, many *other* cultures/ethnicities/races that populate a

Polynesian island may feel like they are not given equal rights to practice and obtain their cultural needs and they too should have the same opportunities to access their respective traditions' cultural knowledge. Accessing and absorbing Polynesian knowledge is spiritual, and hands-on, and cannot be fulfilled by online websites or books alone.

If it were possible for a multicultural model to work within Hawai'i, and Samoa, and elsewhere, it would have to give the native populations the ability to choose which culture they would like to be associated with, instead of having external cultural pressures forced upon them. If someone of Polynesian descent wants to gain a lot of money through capitalism and not practice her or his indigenous culture, that should be fine and s/he should be able to do so. Contrarily, if someone wants to exercise her or his culture—in the truest sense—as it was meant to be practiced—then s/he should also be able to do so. In any model, it would be ideal for people to not have racial pressure from either side. They should be free to access whatever side(s) of themselves they want to fulfill and to be able to do so without scrutiny or exclusion. There should be more emphasis on the continuation of culture rather than the continuation of race. That being said, not everyone is justified in practicing “whatever culture they want, however they want to.”

Structurally, the Hawaiian and Samoan cultures have been forced into making blood “count”, and a new model would and should not be based in “blood amounts.” It should not *completely* be about how much an individual is genetically this or biologically that, because the true *power* of Polynesians and mixed race Polynesians lies in their culture, though, “race” in Polynesia still plays a role because it combats the commodification of culture. This also goes to say that a person of little or no Polynesian blood may, and should, be able to uphold Polynesian culture if practiced in the truest

sense. Descriptively speaking, they may not be “fully” Polynesian, because it is not common for someone of no blood to represent the culture correctly. Upholding Polynesian culture is not a “sometime thing”, meaning that the deep connection in “being Polynesian” necessarily entails that an individual embodies Polynesian culture in everything they do, all the time. (This is very hard to do, with capitalistic pulls and attractions). This is why it is rare, and unlikely to see non-Polynesians accepted by the Polynesian community as equals, regardless of racial controversy. *Being* Polynesian requires a worldview that is usually unachievable to “learn” later in life. It is not acceptable when non-Polynesians, mixed race Polynesians, and full Polynesians, boast to be Polynesian, and claim to come from a Polynesian culture, yet behave in ways alien/foreign to the culture itself. People who are by blood, and by first sight, Polynesian should not be able to call themselves Polynesian simply because of their blood relation, or by looking Polynesian—*being* Polynesian demands, and truly is more than that.

It is also common to see non-Polynesians like the appeal of Polynesian culture (for whatever reasons) and try to adopt Polynesian culture, but instead imitate, skew, or insult the culture and its people. Tourism within Polynesia has given in to the capitalistic wants of foreign populations by letting outsiders “sample” Polynesian culture. Some tourists and people in contact with Polynesians are mystified and intrigued by the hospitality, kindness, exotic customs, etc., and try to copy or exemplify Polynesian culture, but most truly cannot. “Race” aside; one is most able to represent Polynesian culture correctly by being born into and raised in the culture. However, marrying into the Polynesian culture may be regarded as the highest form of “liking the appeal” of Polynesian culture, and may be an exception. There is no way to make a universal claim

about what should happen with families, communities, and spouses regarding inter-marriage because it is simply too relative, and people accommodate for each other in different ways.

A new Pluralistic Cosmopolitan model also entails that America should give up much of the economic and political clutches it has on American Samoa and Hawai'i. In Hawai'i, especially, indigenous people should have more opportunities to contact and inhabit the places sacred to them. Reservations or preserved land should be more abundant or have equal proportion to urban areas in order to give Polynesians the ability to access and practice their cultures more freely. If this were to happen, Hawai'i would be a great example of righting the wrongs of colonialism.

Conclusions:

The race controversy still has not been settled...

So how far back does someone's ancestry have to go to be considered indigenous? Who has right to access sacred lands? The people of Polynesia would say that the highest claim to the lands is dictated by how long your family line has been there. In a working/empirical sense, the people who have inhabited the island(s) for the longest time, and the people with the highest percentage of native blood, have the greatest claim to land, although the Polynesian people might not have thought this way originally. In the truest Polynesian thinking, as long as an individual treated the land and customs with respect, racial and ancestral lineage should not be of importance. But with multiple

experiences leading to lack of trust of foreigners, the “racial importance model” is what is now in place. Foreigners have occupied Hawai’i and Samoa for a very long time, resulting in multiple generations of non-native families. These families also believe they have a claim to the land, but is their claim rightly held? Most Polynesians would say, “no”. Much of the time, people within Hawai’i unite in the connection of being “local”, a phrase meaning that someone is from Hawai’i, but beyond this surface connection the bond between bloodlines remains stronger. In a working sense, defining an indigenous person within Polynesia will continue to be measured with blood and family genealogies. In a normative sense, true aesthetic Polynesian thinking would say that anyone who treats the land with respect as the indigenous do should be treated as equals.

There ought to be a change in the present assimilation model combining a true multiculturalism in a pluralistic cosmopolitanism. A mesh between the two, in a multicultural model with the best aspects of cosmopolitanism *may* be a suitable solution if American cultural dominance and capitalism are removed from the top of the structure. Seeing other individuals as equal world citizens would be more probable if more cultures and people had equal say and rights. People should be able to practice different cultures freely, when they do so appropriately, without the intention to harm others. When conflict arises, people should realize that their differences are accepted and respected. People who are reciprocally respectful should not be forced into a way of life. Under a new model, all peoples should be able to access their culture and sacred lands when appropriately applicable (If they practice culture in the “truest” sense). They should also be able to access cultural knowledge that would help them fulfill themselves completely.

Many would say that the model described above is just like the cosmopolitanism we have today. But those who think this do not consider the hegemony of capitalism or the hierarchical racial influence that is present within the current model. If there were to be a new cosmopolitanism, it should not be run by the America's dominant framework and should be free of capitalistic and colonial hegemony. Thus, a new pluralistic cosmopolitanism, if possible, would not have a leading culture that is based in justifying wrong doings by the end gain. It would be founded on trust and moral virtue instead of deceit and personal interest. If possible, a new cosmopolitanism would also not be associated with racial dominance, stereotypes, or violence. For this to happen, people would have to see a leading example without racial sway—an example based on fairness and equality that would help alleviate racial importance. A single country does not have to be “at the top of the pyramid” in a new cosmopolitanism, it could consist of a combination of countries, “races”, cultures, ethnic groups, etc. In a pluralism, without racial essentialism, a new cosmopolitanism would also ease pressures on fitting into racial categories. Under a model like this, people of mixed race, mixed heritage, and mixed culture would have an easier time being accepted by both sides of their ancestry. The tricky part, however, is that this “new” value set may simply be considered as a new dominant set of values and therefore another model to which people have to succumb. In other words, there is a danger of hegemony if the values of the culture become too specific and not protective of pluralism. American cosmopolitanism purports to uphold said values, even though it is evident otherwise. Because of these controversies, and many others, I reject American Consumerist Cosmopolitanism altogether. Insofar as the fabric of Cosmopolitanism suggests a dominant culture, it leads to a plethora of

problems. The beautiful ideas of cosmopolitanism are often “pipe dreams” because they fail to work in practice. That being said, I am unsure of what exact possibilities *could* work under Pluralistic Cosmopolitanism, avoiding the dangers of a hegemonic culture, but a truly pluralistic, multicultural model seems to be most beneficial.

In addition, I am not exactly sure what this new model would look like, but more cultures would have more say, and equal say. Though this is what the world ought to look like, I believe it improbable for changes of such magnitude to happen anytime soon. The dominant American culture simply has too much hegemonic control and influence. In Hawai’i and Samoa the importance of race will continue to be of high importance, assuming that racial lineages are actually maintained. In The Last Best Hope, Philip Green brilliantly states that, “The condition of minorities asserting their identities is simply that they do not have, or reasonably do not think they have, any other chance of obtaining fair treatment from a majority that has never treated them as equals” (Green, 179). So long as minorities believe this, racial importance will continue, especially within communities that have Polynesians. As long as minorities think this, the people of the world who are “mixed” will continue to have feelings of alienation.

Race has become important to Polynesians in a way that is not helpful descriptively. Normatively, the issue is much harder to address. Race should remain somewhat important to Polynesian people because the lineages of Polynesian people are believed to have come from the land through creation. However, race should not just be about how much blood one has, it is about being born into people that *live* that cultural—biologically live it. Race also has the power to combat the ease of commodifying culture—because it challenges people who do not *live* the culture due to greater demands

for authenticity and acceptance. Over time race is important, but it is not *everything*. Biology and ethnicity are integrally connected but they have been warped by colonialism.

What we Polynesians need to decide amongst ourselves, however, is how to balance the issues of race and ethnicity in terms of preserving what is good about Polynesian culture. American Consumerist Cosmopolitanistic culture has created race to be something regressive for the Samoan and Hawaiian people. Hawaiians and Samoans should not be forced into that model, as it continues to manipulate us. By continuing racial conflict amongst ourselves and with others, we feed the American Consumerist Culture system because Samoans and Hawaiians fight for scraps of power “at the bottom”. In the end, the “power” we now fight for on the bottom only leads to narrow opportunities set up by the dominant culture. In other words, we are fighting for limited power that perpetuates the system. Along the way, many people have lost beautiful lessons of Polynesian Philosophy and replaced them with skewed competition and warped racial identity.

People have always scrutinized and made fun of me. Polynesians and Americans alike think of me as a ridiculous and confused individual, but they are the ones who truly do not understand. They ask: Why represent something that you look little like? Why wear the “cultural colors” on your sleeve so boldly?

To them, I will always explain the power of Polynesian pride. The most beautiful lessons and knowledge that I uphold come from Polynesian thinking. Polynesian culture is in everything I do and feel. It is there in how I treat others. It is there in how I conceptualize the world.

To them, I offer this explanation of how American ways have changed the means by which Polynesians are able to express themselves and their identities. The power of colonialism and consumerism is reflected in the way citizens of the world now treat each other: people are defined by what they wear, by what can be seen on the surface, and by how they fit into a cultural/racial/ethnic “ideal/prototype”. What we observe on the skin now displays belonging, rather than the content of one’s cultural character. That line of thinking should be removed from Polynesia because it is so hurtful to our well-being. Inequity in the form of unfair judgment is lazy and heartless.

Maybe one thousand years from now there will be so much “mixing” that racial importance will fade out altogether. Will race have sway when only a few are 1/64 Polynesian? What then? By that time will the islands be raped of any remaining beauty? Will connection to the land be a heartbreaking memory? I hope not. I hope that we will find a balance between race and ethnicity that can preserve the beauty of our culture in all its nuances. Until then, I offer this small contribution to the cause.

...Until then, my genetic line is forced to keep saying:

“I’m Polynesian too”.

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