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Hopitu

The Process of Globalization and the Demise of Culture

Native Americans have a rich and diverse culture that seems to be fading into the past about as fast as our own here in the United States. Transience is becoming more prevalent, drawing us away from our kin and heritages. The fact that our society is so flux, has caused a blending of cultures turning all of us into a sort of culture stew. Globalization is undoubtedly responsible for this new age of *culturelessness* within globalized society. The cultural values that are adhered to in nations such as our own primarily reflect what the most powerful capitalists want populations to value. In other words the richest of the rich can invest in marketing and have us running a rat race our entire lives, just so we can afford a new frivolous object (although sometimes useful). We believe in strict personal hygiene and frivolous clothing because it makes us “happy,” to acquire and use these things, although there are billions of people on this planet without these items who are perfectly happy.

Civilized society is indisputably capable of accomplishing astonishing things, but at what cost? Globalization is complex by nature: On one hand we can use technology to advance our standards of living, while on the other hand it is abused by corrupt/ greedy individuals to make more money than they could ever spend. Just because a culture is poor monetarily, by no means should we conclude they are any different than us, aside from their opportunities. It is important to realize they can be so valuable in other ways. In the case of the Hopi Native Americans we see a intelligent, happy, peaceful, and culturally rich people; that have been so afflicted by European settlement that they have been struggling to hold on to their way of life.

Beginning with their first contact with Spanish conquistadors, the Hopi have been forced out of their native ways, the religions and cultures of colonizing countries forced down their throats.“The deeply rooted racial prejudice of the Anglo-white Americans against the Red Indians, virtually a national psychosis, is one of the most terrifying phenomena in all of history.” (Waters 339) When Spanish missionaries began building churches and baptizing the Hopi, while violently suppressing any shows of their original religion, the tension quickly escalated. There was a Spanish attempt at assimilation of the ancient Hopi village of Oraibi in 1598. This village is the oldest continually inhabited settlement in North America; in the ground there you can see the tops of the walls of the houses that were built over by new generations. Soon after a mission church was constructed in old Oraibi, a bloody revolt resulting in the deaths of over 500 Spanish (including 22 missionaries) occurred roughly 75 years later around 1680 (311). While visiting the Hopi Reservation last spring my classmates and I saw that church from the edge of Oraibi, our guide Lee would not allow us to go any closer, he said that bad spirits reside there and they may follow you if you get too close. About 140 years later in 1819, the French purchased mid-continental America from the Spanish. They had given up on colonization of the Native American occupied lands, mostly due to serious resistance to assimilation which was causing too much bloodshed and expense for the Spaniards. The French then sold the land to the United States in the Louisiana Purchase, for about two and a half cents an acre (331). The province of New Mexico (including the states Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, and southern California) was purchased by the US Government in about 1850 for $15,000,000, as it was not part of the purchase (332), but the trade route was valuable to the growing nation which had spurred the acquisition.

This time around the expansion was contacted by the Hopi. A small group of Hopi traveled to Santa Fe to ask the governor for religious tolerance (in light of the previous colonizers attempts at conversion), and was intended to be the basis for establishing a good relationship with the new government. They met with the new New Mexico governor: James S. Calhoun, post discussions with the Hopi spokesmen, Calhoun wrote a letter to the president explaining the situations of the native pueblos (332). Briefly, the letter expressed sympathy for the peaceful Hopi tribe, while warning of the aggressive and violent ways of their neighboring tribe: the Navahos. This eventually led to five or six Hopi chiefs traveling to Washington DC and negotiating a treaty with the president. The treaty promised certain land and protection from the Navajo, of course it was too good to be true. The most respected chief of the five/six to make the journey to Washington, Chief Lololma of Oraibi, was most open to the idea that the government would help and was on their side. The Hopi were the first to extend a hand in their relationship with the United States Government. The tribe had suffered from Navajo mooching and aggressions for well over a half of a century, significantly damaging the Hopi way of life. The Navajo simply took advantage of the Hopi’s hospitality and general pacifism. It is extremely unfortunate, the way in which first the Spanish, then the Navajo, and finally the US Government has been this noble people abused and taken advantage of for their hospitable, peaceful nature time and time again. (351) A school was opened on the Hopi reservation in 1887. Once again this subjected the Hopi to the standards of a more resourceful nation.

One of the government’s stipulations for helping the Hopi, was that they had to enroll their children in school. Chief Lololma was well respected by many members of the tribe at the time, leading by example and enrolled his children in school on the res. This marked the split of the Hopi tribe into two factions: The Traditionalists and the Progressives (351-57). Traditionalists did not trust the white men to begin with and still do not 100 years later, and with good reason, we barely helped the tribe as we said we would. Progressives on the other hand, believe in the ways of white men, and hold the understanding that in order to compete economically, the tribe must make some adaptations to their changing world. Traditionalists hold that, in spite of a changing world, the Hopi way must be preserved and the best way to do that is the same way they were doing it before the Spanish ever interrupted the way of life in the 1500s. This split in basic principles of foreign policy causes unrest and hinders the betterment of the entire tribe, splitting it down the middle (French 129).

Like many Native American cultures, the Hopi have a guttural indigenous language. “The Hopi speak a Shoshonean dialect of the Uto-Aztecan language phylum. Their name is a contraction of the Shoshonean *hopitu,* meaning ‘peaceful.’” (Dozier 1). True to their name, the Hopi have never invaded another tribe, nor infringed upon their land. That incident highlights the Hopi way, intense defense, not invasion. As their name suggests, the Hopi have developed an extremely literal language. It seems to have evolved on its own thus making it extraterrestrial to English speakers. Hopi language is a direct descendant of the Shoshonean dialect, Shoshone is one of eight dialects in the Uto-Aztecan language phylum (\*). The Uto-Aztecan phylum is the umbrella term to include all of the languages of the pueblos of southwestern North America and Central America as far south as Guatemala. There is much to be learned here; primarily, we should realize that this culture has a language that developed independently for thousands of years before we ever encountered them. It is therefore imperative to consider the fact that their language is not based on Latin, rather it is a unique language that developed independently. From this we can see that humans have naturally come to be in all parts of the world and also have similar cultural skeletons, in that regardless of the place on earth, human evolution [of culture] tends to run a similar course.

Myths and legends all seem to be extremely self centered, the applicable term is ethnocentrism (Nanda 339). Ethnocentrism potentially effects cultural relevancy, in the context of the fact that the information contained herein is biased upon what the Hopi tell us (this is true in all anthropological studies); although, how else would anyone gain information on another people besides asking them or studying their leftovers (archeologically and literally). Hopi myths and legends seem to be genuine representations of the people’s beliefs, while still adhering to the generalization of portraying themselves righteously. The Hopi point of view is reflective of their acclaimed philosophies; however, I doubt they can possibly be as righteous as they portray themselves to be (who ever is?). In 1700 a missionary settled in the village of Awatovi, (Waters 315-20) baptizing 73 Hopi who were willing. This lead to a rational descision by tribe leaders: Awatovi must be stopped (destroyed) before baptism gains a foothold and begins to cause separation in the tribe. A violent extermination of the village of Awatovi by the other Hopi followed. In response to this Frank Waters, author of *Book of the Hopi* said: “Never again could the Hopis justify their supreme religious idealism as a faith more workable than others.” In this I believe he is pointing out how the Hopi were so irrational to do such a thing, however without being there when the decision was made we cannot really judge.

The Hopi Creation Myth places their people apart from all other peoples (Courlander 20). The myth is complete in that it specifies the activities of the Hopi people since their creation, leaving no part of their history to question. Leaving little room for major dispute, this ultimately is better for the survival of the tribe, adverting serious future separations over disagreements in interpretations of myths. In reality however, there are many variations in myths and legends among the Hopi. These variations in the basic myths lead to ‘organized separation’ within the tribe: clans. In the peaceful Hopi tribe these clans give individuals a sense of identity, although this is a precursor to dispute and true separation. This is a cultural norm, and it gives us a controlled example of how the worlds’ races all began with a similar idea of “how things came to be this way,” -Daniel Quinn. *Ishmael: An adventure of mind and spirit* pp: many. Hopi religion is extremely complex, and is characterized by an extensive calendar of events, dances, and rituals through each year, each having some religious significance. The order of, as well as the timing and content of these religious practices among the clans can vary. The important thing to remember is that these clans have much in common, particularly the basis of the legends that their religion is based upon, although these legends will also vary from clan to clan.

The clan that a man or woman will belong to is the clan of his mother, and the same is true for the kinship system, you belong to the maternal side of your own lineage in the Hopi tribe (Wright 13, plate 26). Marriage has become less formal over the years in the tribe, marking the downfall of a tradition, probably because people today would rather watch TV than uphold the ways of their ancestors. “Courtship was an elaborate procedure involving a rabbit hunt, corn grinding, and family approval of the marriage. The bride was married in traditional white robes woven for her by her uncles. The couple lived with the bride’s mother for the first year.” (French 127) Nowadays these customs are often forgotten, yet another testament to globalization and greed destroying our world cultures.

The Hopi inhabit the North Eastern region of Arizona, their reservation is centered around the village of Oraibi, which is located on a peninsula of Black Mesa. The region is extremely arid, isolated, and harsh, only those who have spent thousands of years living in this environment can even survive. The biggest adaptations that the pueblos such as the Hopi had to make were their farming methods, particularly during a drought that occurred from 1279-1299 (French 125-26). This drought inspired innovations such as planting moist areas that retain water or are more likely to see some: those around a wash will flood sooner or later or in sand dunes which contain more moisture than the rocky soil. The Hopi grow a host of crops, primarily corn, but also cultivating varieties of squash, as well as beans. Before the herds were over hunted the Hopi also killed and ate lots of wild game, including killing rabbits with boomerangs and larger game like elk and deer with bow and arrow. The Hopi use their resources to the maximum extent that is sustainable, while visiting the reservation I was shown how to look for wild carrots, the Hopi harvest a wide range of things from nature, foods, materials for crafts or paints, as well as many medicinal herbs and plants. The Hopi have truly mastered the art of wilderness survival, the loss of Hopi culture (and those like it) eventually may lead to the loss of these basic human survival skills. Is this a matter of life and death for our race, or merely the process of growing up?

Imagine a world where we all believe the same things, act the same way, and uphold the same customs and cultural values. The capitalist powers in the world would have it that way, just to make a buck. There is a serious connection to culture though kin groups, but the evidence shows us that as material possessions become more popularized, we stop caring about who we are and where we came from. So much of our energy as a race (humans) is devoted to technological advancement, it is the new frontier after all. I for one, have always heard how the human mind is more powerful than even the most complex computers, what could we do if all that energy was spent advancing ourselves? It is as if our species has set out to conquest the planet in so many different ways, truth is that we already have. What is interesting is that this conquest is so addictive, that our species cannot stop its self from continuing once it begins. It seems the more developed we become as a race the farther it pushes us away from each other and our natural environments, causing artificially induced stress and unreasonable levels of complication. The Hopi tribe is just one of many all over the planet that has been conquered and is now nearing cultural assimilation. After contact with Spain and America, who both disrespected and stepped on the pueblos (Hopi obviously included), 500 years later the Hopi are still waiting for the arrival of Pahána: “lost white brother,” (Waters 308).

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