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A Look into Polynesian Culture

Introduction

Whenever my family and I travelled to Hawaii they used to always warn me about two things. The first was to never turn my back on the ocean. They explained the ocean is extremely powerful and to turn your back on her was not only a sign of disrespect, but of danger, as waves could pull you in at any second. The second, much to my displeasure when it was time to leave, was that no stone or shell could ever leave the islands. If done, the volcano goddess, Pele, would become very angry and you would be unable to return to the islands again. Even as someone who grew up on the mainland (the rest of the United States), I was surrounded by these legends that translated into everyday practices. It wasn't until doing this research paper that I realized these stories had more than just a cultural significance, but are also important to understanding the history of the Polynesian Islands.

Almost two and a half thousand miles away from California, Hawaii has always had a distinct culture of its own. When it finally became the "Aloha State" in 1959, natives already had their own language, art, food and traditions, cultivated by centuries of relationships between other Polynesian islands and an extended period of isolation. This also meant Hawaii had its own history, which in the absence of a written language, was passed down through chants that told of great legends and noble genealogies. One chant told of Mo'ikeha, Ali'i Nui or high chief of Moa'ulanuiakea and his voyage from Tahiti to Hawaii. While he was not the first to discover, live in or even rule the islands, his story is an essential part to understanding Hawaiian history and Polynesian voyaging. Half legend, half truth, the story of Mo'ikeha's voyage from Tahiti to Hawaii, is not only uniquely different than European primary sources, but also tells the cultural

relationship between the Polynesian islands, while providing inspiration to the cultural revival project, *Hokule'a*.

Location of the Society Islands

Located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, the Polynesian islands have mostly been excluded from the narrative of world history, due to their isolation from the western world. While their interaction with the rest of the world was limited, activity within the Polynesian triangle was significant. Explorers from Southeast Island Asia, most likely from the eastern tip of New Guinea, called *Lapitas*, first reached Tonga and Samoa in a 1000 BCE. Scholars have debated when and what order these migrations occurred, but by 800 CE humans settled in the three points of the Polynesian triangle: Hawaii, New Zealand and Easter Island. The Society Islands, of which Tahiti is the largest, lie in the very center of the triangle. While many different migration theories exist, Jesse D. Jennings believed that people spread from Samoa and Tonga to the Marquesas, and from there voyaged to Hawaii around 500 CE, and to the Society Islands around 600 CE.¹ Tahiti is made up of two peninsulas, Tahiti-nui (big Tahiti) and Taïarapu. Just nine miles northwest is the smaller island of Mo'orea and another 90 miles northwest of that are the islands Huahine, Raiatea, Tahaa, Bora Bora, Maupiti and Tupai.² In Tahiti and Hawaii, the land was ruled by the high chiefs or the Ali'i Nui, all of whom are able to trace their ancestry back to two gods, Wakea and Papa. Wakea, meaning midday in Hawaiian, is the god of light and the heavens. Papa, a term used to describe flats surfaces, especially to the land under the ocean that gives rise to new islands, was the goddess of earth and the underworld. From them stems the two genealogies that all high chief families claim to descend from, the Ulu and Nana-ulu line.

According to Beckwith, many chiefs that migrated to Hawaii come from the Ulu line, including Pa'ao and Maweke. Maweke and his sons came to the Islands around the eleventh and twelfth century, his family ruling all of Oahu, and reaching Kauai, Maui and Molokai. However, other sources believe that Maweke is a linear descendant from Nana-ulu, the more reliable lineage compared to Ulu, which had been subjected to more interpretation. According to Fornander, Maweke is 29 generations after the gods, Papa and Wakea, and is the first recorded chief of O'ahu. In the end most sources do agree that Mulieleali'i, Maweke's oldest son, had three sons of his own, Kumuhonua, Mo'ikeha and 'Olopana. After the Kumuhonua line ends with Haka, the Mo'ikeha line is eventually established as the ruling chiefs in O'ahu.³

Mo'ikeha's Voyage from Tahiti to Hawaii

Hawaiians and Polynesians relied on an orally preserved history, where legends, myths, and family genealogies were memorized through chants passed down through generations. Therefore, there's a few variations and debates about Mo'ikeha's voyage from Tahiti to Hawaii. The primary source I used for this paper is Teuira Henry's version in her book, *Voyaging Chiefs of Hawai'i* and an excerpt from it is featured in the world history textbook, *Traditions and Encounters*. It is said that Mo'ikeha came from a land called Moa'ula-nui-akea (where the actual location is has been debated).⁴ With his wife Kapo, he had one son named La'amaikahiki. When his brother and good friend, 'Olopana and his wife, Lu'ukia, came to Tahiti, Mo'ikeha fell in love with her. Instead of being offended, 'Olopana encouraged his brother's affair and was then appointed highest officer of the land, the Kuhina Nui. Mua, a local Tahitian prince, also fell in love with Lu'ukia's beauty, but she rejected his advances in favor of Mo'Ikeha. Out of

jealousy, Mua convinced Lu'ukia that Mo'ikeha was publicly defaming her during a sports event. Angry, Lu'ukia refused to speak to Mo'ikeha and bound her legs and private parts with cords with a five layer thick skirt. After four nights of Lu'ukia refusing to talk to him, the tormented Mo'ikeha decided to leave. He set sail for Hawaii and says, "Here I'm tormented by my love for Lu'ukia; when the ridge-pole of my house Lanikeha disappears below the horizon, I'll no longer think of Tahiti".⁵ Mo'ikeha planned to take his sisters, younger brothers, his priest, best men, navigators and lookouts. When they finally reached the shore of Hilo, Hawaii, his foster son, Kamahualele shouted with glee a chant that celebrates the great chief's arrival to the islands. Mo'ikeha's younger brothers wished to remain in Hilo, while his sisters wished to reside in O'ahu. When Mo'ikeha finally reached the shores of Wailua in Kaua'i, it was dark. In the morning, among the people to welcome the travellers were the daughters of the Ali'i Nui of the Kaua'i, Ho'oiipoikamalanai and Hinauu. The two sisters took him as a husband and after the death of his father-in-law, Mo'ikeha became the Ali'i Nui of the land.⁶

While technically not part of Mo'ikeha's voyage from Tahiti to Hawaii, the second part of the legend about his son, Kila, is almost always included and provides significant historic and cultural context. Mo'ikeha had five sons with his two wives. From Ho'oiipoikamalanai came Umalehu, Kailea, Kila and Hinauu birthed Kekai Hawewe and Lankapalli. While the chief was happy on Kaua'i and no longer cared about Lu'ukia, he wished to see his first son La'amaikahiki. After much contention between the five sons and a sailing competition, Kila, the youngest was finally picked to sail back to Tahiti and retrieve his eldest brother. When he searched for days without any sign of La'amaikahiki, Kila and his companion Kamahualele decided to consult Kuhelepolani, an aged Kahuna (Shaman) of 'Olopana. After finally meeting,

the two half brothers returned to Kaua'i, where La'amaikahiki decided to remain for awhile, but eventually sails back to Tahiti. After learning about his father's death, La'amaikahiki returns to Hawaii for the final time to collect the bones of his father. He retrieves them on Ha'ena cliff and with his brother Kila, who inherited the role of chief, they make the final voyage home to Tahiti. No other stories of the brothers were recorded after this voyage.⁷

Being a legend, there are many variations and inconsistencies in Mo'Ikeha's story. There's a couple possibilities about the original home of 'Olopana and his wife, Lu'ukia. While in this version, Teuira Henry just vaguely mentions the couple coming to Tahiti, the source Bishop Museum recommended me to, Abraham Fornander and Martha Beckwith, go into more detail. Beckwith lists that Lu'ukia is the granddaughter of Hikapoloa and Kohala, who belong to the Nanaulu line. 'Olopana and Lu'ukia settle in Waipio on Hawaii, but then are driven out to Tahiti due to a flood, where Mo'ikeha is already living.⁸

Perhaps the most obvious flaw in the story is how the legend mainly focuses on Mo'ikeha's voyage from Tahiti to Hawaii, yet according to most sources, his grandfather Maweke was already a well established chief in O'ahu. Some point from Mo'ikeha's birth to when his legend starts, the chief must've made a voyage back to his homeland that goes unmentioned. Patrick Vinton Kirch in his book, *A Shark Going Inland is my Chief: The Island Civilization of my Chief*, tells a slightly different story than Henry Teuira. Kumuhunua, Maweke's grandson and Mo'ikeha's oldest brother was the successor to their father Muli'ealeali'i's lands, upsetting his two siblings. 'Olopana and Mo'ikeha planned an uprising of war canoes against their older brother but were eventually captured and defeated. Bitter family relations lead to the two brothers sailing together and settling in Waipi'o valley, known for it's

fertile land. The chief of this Kohala district was Hikapoloa, who welcomed the brothers and made them *Hakas* or lords. ‘Olopana eventually marries Lu’ukia, and after years of massive earthquakes and landslides, the couple accompanied by Mo’ikeha made their way back to the distant Tahiti.⁹

As Mo’ikeha’s story was passed down through generations, the chief turned into a legendary figure but other parts of his life faded from memory. Although many details have long been lost to history, Mo’ikeha’s legend will go on to be written down in a couple hundred years and will be remembered as one of the greatest voyages between the Polynesian Islands.

Mo’ikeha Introduced to the West

When Captain Cook first arrived to the Hawaiian islands in 1778, he was astonished by the level of complexity in the already well established societies in the Polynesian triangle. In many ways 18th century Hawaii was similar to famous ancient civilizations such as Egypt and China. Leaders maintained control over the islands on the principles of divine kingship, and like so many other civilizations, there were two social classes in Hawaiian society; the select few of elites made up of warriors, priests and chiefs and the majority of the commoner middle classes who worked the land.¹⁰ As Cook traveled to Tonga, Tahiti, Easter Islands and New Zealand he saw the linguistic patterns and similarities of physical features between many of the Polynesians. In his notebook, he pondered the question of how this “same nation” could be spread apart over far away islands and how these “noble savages” were able to organize themselves in a way like the Europeans.¹¹ After opening the previously isolated islands up, the western world wouldn’t know about the legendary tales that make up Hawaiian history and culture until about a century

later. Many historians like David Malo, Abraham Fornander, Martha Beckwith and William D. Westervelt were some of the first to start recording and translating the oral history that were passed down for hundreds of years.

When Protestant missionaries came to Hawaii in 1820, setting up schools to teach reading and writing for the bible, David Malo and Samuel Kamakau were some of the very first to start recording Hawaiian legends. David Malo, born around 1793 in Keauhou, Hawaii, was one of the most influential Hawaiian scholar and historian of his time. Also known as Davida (Hawaiian names are usually ended with vowels), he was well associated with chief Kaukini, brother of Kamehameha I, who was at this time uniting the islands into a single kingdom. Malo soon converted to Christianity and learned to read and write in both Hawaiian and English under Reverend William Richards. While Malo wrote a poem for Queen Kamehameha after her death and translated sections of the bible to Hawaiian, his most famed work didn't begin to 1835, when he started making notes about Hawaiian history and culture. This work would be compiled into the book *Ancient Hawaiian Antiquities*, including legends like Mo'ikeha's and the god Lono. Malo then started the first Hawaiian Historical Society with Samuel Kamakau, and will go on to be known as on the most important native historian and an influential piece to the historiography of legends like Mo'Ikeha.¹²

Westervelt's four earlier novels along with his fifth publication in 1923, titled *Hawaiian Historical Legends*, is some of the first material to expose Europe to the legends that make up Hawaiian culture. His compilation of tales were not new material, but were composed of heroes like Maui, chiefs like Hawaii'loa, Mo'ikeha and Ulu and more modern stories of Captain Cook's landing and Kamehameha's reign in a compact useful form. Westervelt does not cite his sources

and often time makes some personal additions that appear more western in nature. For example, in the story of Paau, when his son is accused of eating stolen fruit, he pleads for his stomach to be cut open to prove his innocence. This proclamation is a more western noble deed, rather than something typically seen in Polynesian history. While Westervelt's stories serve their purpose and are efficient in their goal, they ultimately take on a western point of view on Hawaiian legends, which can often take away from their source.¹³

Martha Beckwith, author of *Hawaiian Mythology*, was born in 1871 and moved to Hawaii with her parents where they worked as teachers. Beckwith grew up surrounded by Hawaiian culture and it was her childhood that launched her into a career researching folklore. She would go on to teach at Vassar college and become a research professor in their new folklore department. Over her lifetime she would return to Hawaii and working closely with the Bishop Museum, she would publish her most famous work, *Hawaiian Mythology* in 1940. Including Mo'ikeha's legend and many other, Beckwith described her novel as a "guide to the native mythology of Hawaii" and would include rare texts along with the multiple variations that came with each story. Beckwith was one of the first to see these stories as something more than legends, and her work continues to influence the historians of today.¹⁴

When comparing Polynesian primary sources to its western counterparts, the Polynesians' historical background is more reflected in their story tellings of the legendary chiefs, gods and their creation of the islands. In Hawaiian, the term Kaa is used to describe fictional stories, while the term Moolelo is one that describes a narrative figure. Stories that recall gods, local legends, chiefs and family history can all fall under the Moolelo, therefore one cannot exclusively describe Kaa as fact and Moolelo as fiction.¹⁵ While many Hawaiian accept

the close relationship between god, man and nature as part of their history, many westerners would dismiss these stories as false tales with no true significance. Mo'ikeha was no different and many historians believed his intentional voyage was just a chance of luck when wandering the ocean, or perhaps never even happened at all. This was a European superiority view, as historians like Andrew Sharp, believed that without sophisticated instruments like the compass, sextant and maps and the fragile and uncomplicated canoes, the Polynesian people could never purposefully make it to islands like New Zealand, Easter Island and Hawaii. However, historians like Ben Finney thought that they were selling them short. How could canoes drift 7,000 miles by chance and make it to Hawaii?¹⁶ After piecing together many Maori and Hawaiian legends, including Mo'ikeha's, about voyaging between the islands, historians were able to realize the cultural significance and degree of fact these stories had, giving more credit to other folktales, as something more than just fiction. To accept Hawaii's legendary chants as history, one must understand that these chants don't state facts, dates and events, but instead tells the history of its culture, which is just as important to understanding its past.¹⁷

Ties Between the Two Islands

Secondly, analyzing all parts of the primary source allows historians to fully understand the cultural relationship between Tahiti and Hawaii. For example, scholars have long debated where Mo'ikeha originally came from. Maweka, Mo'ikeha's grandfather and his sons came to Hawaii between the eleventh and twelfth century, but all of the stories list that Mo'ikeha lives somewhere in Tahiti.¹⁸ Between Maweka and Mo'ikeha, a trip was made back to Tahiti, but when and who made it was not mentioned in any sources. Where Mo'ikeha's ancestors lived is

murky at best, but where his homeland is surrounded by even more mystery. In Rubellite Kawena Johnson's essay, "From the Gills of the Fish: the Tahitian Homeland of Hawaii's Chief Mo'ikeha", the author considers Fornander and Henry's conclusions about where the fictional Moa'ula-nui-akea is. During the early 1900's Abraham Fornander decided that Ra'iatea, the island northwest of Tahiti, was the homeland of Mo'ikeha due to the end sound -akea in Moa'ula-nui-akea and -atea in Ra'iatea. Twenty years later Teuira Henry disputed this and decided that it was the Tahiti-nui side of the peninsula. After examining many Polynesian oral traditions, and Teuira Henry's discovery of Mo'ikeha figures having a Tahitian counterpart, Johnson decides that it's Tahiti'iti, also known as Tai'arapu, based on creation chants about Mo'ikeha's grandson, Ahukini-a-la-a. Ka-haku-ku-i-ka-moana describes Akukini-a-la-a as a chief from foreign lands and from the gills of the fish. Tahiti was said to be the angry fish of the maiden Terehe, and the land only formed after the sinews were cut. Where the gills of the supposed fish were, was Tahiti'iti. After examining one of the debated aspects of the primary source, Johnson was able to see just how intertwined Mo'ikeha's voyage was with other Tahitian legends.¹⁹

Arguably the most important aspect of Mo'ikeha's voyage from Tahiti to Hawaii was his influence on the social ties between the two islands. While Mo'ikeha and his sons were some of the last chiefs to voyage back and forth between islands, they brought many essential components of modern day Hawaiian culture. When Lu'ukia bound herself, the technique became known as "Pa'u of Lu'ukia" where the cords seemed to wrap around each other with no beginning or end. This lashing was also used to secure water gourds and the Lu'ukia lashings on a canoe were only reserved for royalty.²⁰ When La'amaikahiki came back to Hawaii for the

second time he played the drums or “Pahu” as he passed the shores of the island. When people heard his music they thought it was the god Kupulupulu, god of canoe builders and welcomed him with a feast everywhere he landed. This is when La‘amaikahiki introduced pahu and hula dancing to Hawaii and stayed in the islands for some time, teaching the people the art of hula ka‘eke or drum dancing.²¹ Linked by the family ties of Mo‘ikeha, Hawaiian culture prospered during this time of cross cultural interaction, but he was one of the last explorers. During the twelfth and thirteenth century AD, the second migration came to an end as people stopped making voyages between the islands, and Hawaii was in isolation until its discovery by Europeans. However, Hawaii never forgot its origins. Many chants and stories referred to their homeland of Kahiki (Tahiti) which as time wore on and relationship with the island was forgotten, gradually became known as a mythical faraway land.²²

Hokule‘a: A Cultural Revival

Lastly, projects like the *Hokule‘a* and the recent hit movie, *Moana*, have no doubt been inspired by Mo‘ikeha and similar stories. The Polynesian Voyaging Society was founded by Ben Finney, Herb Kawainui Kane and Charles Tommy Holmes in 1973, during a period of the Hawaiian cultural renaissance. Their main purpose was to prove that stories like Mo‘ikeha’s could be true; that Polynesians were able to make such long voyages without the help of traditional navigating resources and discredit Sharp’s assumption that many people settled in the islands from accidental drifting.²³ By 1965, Finney came up with the idea to make a double hulled canoe to sail from Hawaii to Tahiti, using the navigation techniques of Mo‘ikeha and

other legendary chiefs. To make his dream a reality, Finney began to study the ancient Polynesian migration patterns and fundraising for his project. After the boat was completed in 1974, it finally made its first successful journey to Tahiti and landed in Pape'ete Harbour, greeted by 17,000 people. This voyage from Tahiti to Hawaii wasn't just about experimental voyaging. After 800 years since Mo'ikeha had first made his famous trip, the *Hokule'a* was meant to revive Polynesian culture and establish islander identity, which was one of fearless voyagers and expert navigators.²⁴

Norman Piianaia, a distant relative to our family was involved with the 1977 Kealaikahiki project and the attempted 1978 voyage to Tahiti. Piianaia was a shipmaster for Matson, a shipping company that took products back and forth from Hawaii to the mainland and a graduate from the Marine Merchant Academy. Although hearing about the *Hokule'a* in 1974, due to his work, Piianaia wasn't involved until 1977. Invited by the three men who started the idea (Herb Kane, Tommy Holmes and Ben Finney) he became part of the crew on the Kealaikahiki project. "Kealaikahiki", first mentioned in Mo'ikeha's legend, literally means "the path to Tahiti" and the channel was the departure point for La'amaikahiki when he travels back to his homeland. This experiment attempted to answer the question of if this actually was the path used by ancient voyagers by sailing out of the Kealaikahiki channel and seeing if at any point their course would intercept with the course of the 1976 *Hokule'a* trip to Tahiti. While the *Hokule'a* did not bisect the 1976 course after two days of sailing, the crew concluded that under the right circumstances concerning wind and weather it could have.²⁵ Piianaia described daily life on the boat as wet and uncomfortable. Water is thrown on you while you're sleeping, food is cooked on an open deck on a portable gas stove and without toilet facilities, it was like camping outside with very little

protection from the elements. Problems on the boat were both physical and mental, as being exposed to the elements can be tiring and being in a confined space for so long with other people can also take its emotional toll.²⁶

The second trip that Piianaia was invited on was the 1978 attempted trip to Tahiti. After the first successful trip in 1976, the Polynesian Voyaging Society decided to go again, this time with the goals of, “[Documenting] a round-trip navigated without instruments and to test traditional lauhala sails and traditionally preserved food.” They departed from Ala Wai harbour in Honolulu at 6:30 pm on March 16, 1978, with Norman Piianaia as the instrumental navigator, who recorded the actual position of the canoe and would only correct Nainoa Thompson, the non-instrumental navigator of the boat, if he was dangerously off-course. The day they departed, the swells of the ocean were high and a gale warning was in effect, but the *Hokule’a* had handled these kind of conditions before and the captain, Dale Lyman, felt this would give them a fast start. Approximately 5 hours after leaving Ala Wai Harbor, the boat had capsized due to a heavier load filled with food and high waves. The crew clung onto the boat, floating with life jackets and when a particularly large wave hit the boat again, it turned over. While the islands, O’ahu, Moloka’i and Lana’i were all in sight, the crew was unable to get their attention or the attention of the planes overhead with their flares. Crew member, Kikili Hugho, describes the crew as, “Hours away from losing people. Hypothermia, exposure, exhaustion” and they feared that they were drifting farther away from airline routes and land. Eddie Aikau, a famous surfer and one of the best lifeguards at Waimea Bay, volunteered to paddle a surfboard back to the islands and after being denied twice, Captain Lyman let him go around 10:30 am. Finally at 8:47 pm a Hawaiian Airline plane saw the crew’s flare and notified the US Coast Guard. However,

Eddie was never seen again. The Polynesian Voyaging Society considered quitting after the loss of a crew member, but decided to carry on in honor of Eddie's dreams of finding islands the way their ancestors did. To ensure something like this wouldn't happen again, escort boats with radio connection always accompany the *Hokule'a* on trips and safety checklists and procedures, along with more rigorous crew training were added. Eddie's loss was a huge awakening to the group, and Thompson explained that they're now more aware of "How dangerous our adventure was, how unprepared we were in body, mind, and spirit." When I asked Piianaia about his fears of the boat not making it, he replied with, "I don't think anyone ever thinks about the voyage not making it...or they probably wouldn't go at all," which most likely is more in line with the mindset of many ancient polynesian voyages. Yet, this tragedy brought the reality of the risks that can occur on these trips, and it's possible that the answer to why Polynesians stopped voyages lies in the danger of the ocean.²⁷

By the time Captain Cook reached the Hawaiian islands in the 18th century, voyaging between Hawaii and the rest of Polynesia had already stopped for hundred of years. Mo'ikeha and his family or Pa'ao were one of the last to make the two way voyage between Tahiti and Hawaii during the 14th century. Some possibilities were that as Mo'ikeha faded into history, many Hawaiians began to forget their family ties to the Tahitian homeland. Combine this with the fact that after the 14th century, evidence had shown that Hawaii experienced a population explosion and as people began focusing more on their land,²⁸ they had less effort to put into the month long trip it would take to get back to Tahiti. Either way, after Mo'ikeha the era of voyaging was brought to an end and Hawaii continued to prosper in isolation for many centuries.

The Future and Past of Mo'ikeha's Voyage from Tahiti to Hawaii

Recently, a movie that's been making waves in the media and was nominated for an Oscar is the Disney animated film, *Moana*. After complaints about culture appropriation and insensitivity in *Aladdin* and *Pocahontas*, (two earlier films) the creators of the movie did extensive research on Polynesian culture. The movie follows the strong-willed and determined Moana, a girl drawn to the sea, but held back due to her duties as future chief. After their fictional island, Motunui, starts to die, Moana, with the help of demi god Maui, sail to restore the heart of Te Fiti. Polynesian legends take center stage in the movie and the similarities between Mo'ikeha's story and Moana can be drawn. The idea of this voyage to Tahiti's reimagined form, Te Fiti, is parallel to Kila and La'amaikahiki's voyage back to their homeland, both had purpose and succeeded in their goals. Furthermore, earlier drafts of *Moana* indicate a more direct reference to the legend of Mo'ikeha and his sons. A deleted scene, included as an extra on the DVD, features Moana and her six older brothers in a sailing competition to see who gets to accompany her father back on a trip to Tahiti. Moana, the youngest, wins, but unlike Kila, her father denies her the opportunity to go due to the fact she's a girl.²⁹ Eventually the movie ultimately decided to take a different turn, and became a big success, generating \$82 million at opening weekend. While *Moana* has received some mixed reviews on its use of culture, to many Islanders, the idea that Polynesian history is finally shown in mainstream media is extremely satisfying. Many of my family members in Hawaii have gone to see it multiple times and feel a strong connection to the movie, instilling pride for the global attention. Stories like *Moana*, inspired by Hawaiian oral legends such as Mo'ikeha's, show the importance of their history

especially when it is finally able to give a voice to Polynesian culture, having been virtually absent from mainstream media.

The story of Mo'ikeha's voyage from Tahiti to Hawaii was so interesting to study, because the relationship that many Polynesians have with their history and myth is so intertwined, that fact often blurs into fiction. This non-European way of oral storytelling also reflects in the motives of the Polynesians. What motivates Mo'ikeha and his family to make these month-long trips also heavily contrast with many other western primary sources. Many famous voyages, Christopher Columbus, Ferdinand Magellan and Hernan Cortes, were all motivated by "God, gold and glory". All three men were commissioned by the crown in search of more land and wealth for their country and themselves. However, in most Polynesian cases of travelling, some of the main reasons that interaction happened between islands were to maintain family connections, marriage, family affairs and love quarrels, escaping flood and natural disasters, adventure and burial in the homeland.³⁰ Mo'ikeha, 'Olopana, Kila and La'amaikahiki all check one or more of these boxes when they traveled between the two islands. These men's desires, hopes and actions centering around family, motivate them to set sail and are reflected in traditional Hawaiian values.³¹

While this legend is no doubt partially fiction, the embellishments just provide more insight to their way of thinking. The exaggerated features of the stories provide clues to the ideologies of Hawaiian culture and their ties to Tahiti. Lastly, Mo'ikeha's voyage continues to inspire modern day projects like the *Hokule'a*, which was a symbol of the revival of Polynesian culture during the late 20th century. For a long time Polynesian culture has been ignored and is not taught in many school history curriculums, as well as almost absent in mainstream media and

Hollywood. The recent hit Disney movie, *Moana*, helped to shine a light on many island cultures as well as highlighting a story that captures the spirit of Mo'ikeha; to voyage and explore. While the cultural significance of Mo'ikeha's story is obvious, in the absence of written records, many factual questions are left to be answered. One of the biggest theme that both the *Hokule'a* and *Moana* touch on is the question of why voyaging stopped between the two islands after Mo'Ikeha. While *Moana* depicted the reason as an evil god, the actual reasons behind the change in the once voyagers attitude might not ever be known. In the past Mo'ikeha's trip from Tahiti to Hawaii was used to remember the cultural ties between the two islands; in the future it can provide as an opposite narrative to many European narrative and like the *Hokule'a* and *Moana*, serve to inspire and revive the Polynesian culture.

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