



The Hypothesis of Cultural Indigeneity

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The Hypothesis of Cultural Indigeneity

Sean Jordan Manross

A Thesis in the Field of History
for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

Harvard University

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Abstract

The Hypothesis of Cultural Indigeneity proposes the novel concept that a non-native culture may qualify as indigenous to an area and, by extension, imply a right to legal protections for a non-native human population whose existence preserves an indigenous culture. This master's thesis focuses on the contemporary field of indigeneity studies and the quintessential case study of the hypothesis, the culture of the Pitcairn Islands, through the lens of the intersection of culture, indigeneity, and international law. The methodology adheres to best practices of history, anthropology, and sociology, while taking particular care to place the views of indigenous populations at the epicenter of analysis, respecting the axiological standard of indigeneity studies. The present paper does not seek to make sweeping assertions about culture, indigeneity, nor even about "cultural indigeneity." Rather, this research identifies how culture can be considered indigenous; how that status might provide legal protections for human populations which preserve such indigenous cultures; and why there is an extensive opportunity for an academic intervention in the field of indigeneity studies through the introduction of the niche of cultural indigeneity.

Author's Biographical Sketch

Sean Jordan Manross is a Candidate for a Master of Liberal Arts in History at Harvard Extension School, focusing on the Pacific Islands and overseas imperialism.

Dedication

This research is dedicated to all people who may identify with their homeland through the concept of cultural indigeneity. If my dispassionate scholarship in any way contributes to the conservation of culture, then it has been worth every effort.

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Acknowledgments

The guidance, mentorship, and tutelage of Dr. Elise M. Ciregna, Dr. Ariane Liazos, and the staff of Harvard Extension School have been indispensable to this project and to my education. Many thanks are due to the scholars who have pioneered the field of indigeneity studies; to Herbert Ford for leading research into Pitcairn Island for the last half-century (and for encouraging me to follow that legacy); and particularly to my father and mother, Dr. George Gary Manross and Dr. Debra Schultz Manross, for forging me into an academic from my childhood years. Above all, I wish to thank and acknowledge my soul mate, Tedra, and my son, Troy, without whose love, devotion, and unconditional support the constant nights of research would have been utterly impossible.

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Chapter I.

Investigating Inclusive Indigeneity

The academic field of indigeneity studies is a “burgeoning”¹ subset of social studies that promises to grow at an extraordinary rate going forward.² Certain cultures are not recognized as being indigenous when a counter argument might well be made that they should qualify. Such cultures are often unique and impossible to replicate anywhere else in the world — an indigenously occurring process of a homeland. The present research paper will seek to add to this massive canon of scholarship. Specifically, I will test the extent to which culture is underappreciated at the core of indigeneity studies.³

Indigeneity has no universally-recognized definition; thus, it is more useful to recognize it by some of its ubiquitous qualities.⁴ First and foremost, all indigenous populations are native to a specific region — an “ancestral homeland.”⁵ Indigenous populations tend to have distinct cultures, with cultural norms and linguistic dialects.⁶

¹ Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, 2nd Ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), 10. Kovach details how indigeneity studies has changed in recent decades. Important advancements include the prioritization of indigenous scholars in the study of the intersection of colonialism, imperialism, and indigenous human rights, as well as a general indigenization of pedagogy.

² Ned Blackhawk, “American Indians and the Study of US History,” in *American History Now* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 376.

³ Lavonna L. Lovern and Carol Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities* (Cham: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2021), 4 and 13; Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 11.

⁴ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 12-13; Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 19-20; Elizabeth Harney and Ruth B. Phillips, *Mapping Modernisms: Art, Indigeneity, Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 5; Fatima Pirbhai-Illich, Shauneen Pete, and Fran Martin, “Culturally Responsive Pedagogies: Decolonization, Indigeneity, and Interculturalism,” in *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Working Toward Decolonization, Indigeneity, and Interculturalism* (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 7.

⁵ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 13.

⁶ Lovern and Locust, 13.

Importantly, in the modern world, indigenous populations must endure pressure from non-indigenous groups representing what might be perceived as the “developed” world (which should not be taken to imply that indigenous populations are, by any means, not developed or underdeveloped).⁷ That said, at its most fundamental and basic level, the word “indigenous” refers to any naturally occurring product of a region⁸ — hence, the far more specific notion of being a human who is born in a particular area is something of a misconception of indigeneity, belonging more properly to the similar concept of *aboriginality*.⁹

I hold that the notion of indigeneity is *inclusive and virtually never exclusive*.¹⁰ To be a natural product of a given area is not necessarily to exclude any other natural product of the same area. Rather, it simply means that the indigenous have natural and inalienable rights to the specific region in question.¹¹ Therein lies the complication of indigeneity — and a central purpose of studying this phenomenon: indigeneity, in the modern world, implies legal rights to land and natural resources.¹² Studying the underappreciated link between culture, indigeneity, and the legal protections which isolated, indigenous groups may be rightfully entitled to promises to enrich indigeneity studies and to offer insight to why indigeneity studies and inclusion are interdependent.¹³

⁷ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 11.

⁸ Luis A. Vivanco, *Oxford Dictionary of Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), accessible online at <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191836688.001.0001/acref-9780191836688>.

⁹ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 13; Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 19.

¹⁰ Blackhawk, “American Indians and the Study of US History,” 381. This simple issue that indigeneity is inherently *inclusive*, rather than exclusive, is extremely important in the present thesis.

¹¹ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 12.

¹² Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 5; Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 12.

¹³ Lovern and Locust, 5.

Background of the Problem

The historiography of indigeneity is a complex web of history, anthropology, and sociology.¹⁴ Culture is somewhat overlooked. To date, scholars have accepted that people, plants, animals, and diseases can be “indigenous” to a specific region. Scholars who have defined the standard, methodological approach of indigeneity studies include Lovanna Lovern and Carol Locust, Margaret Kovach, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, Fatima Pirbhai-Illich, Shauneen Pete, and Fran Martin, and, most recently, Dana Brablec. The background of the present problem can be summarized as expanding upon these scholars’ collective understanding of indigeneity by hypothesizing a novel, qualitative link between culture and indigeneity, within the overarching field of indigeneity studies.

I define “culture” as any formal or informal understanding of collective core values, mentalities, perspectives, and characteristics that unite a population in a self-fashioned identity. Cultural artifacts can be either tangible or intangible. From folklore to unique knowledge of local flora and fauna, the intangible elements of indigenous culture may be even more important than physical symbols of their identity, such as totem poles and landmarks in a geographic area. Identity is more closely related to intangible traditions than palpable objects. A scholar and indigenous politician of Chilean-Mapuche descent, Elisa Loncón, opines that “Indigenous peoples can continue to be Indigenous peoples with our [self-identified] languages, philosophy...[and by] exercising autonomy” without needing to also possess tangible artifacts.¹⁵

¹⁴ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 181.

¹⁵ Elisa Loncón, *The Mapuche Struggle for the Recognition of its Nation: From a Feminine and Decolonizing Point of View*, <https://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/the-mapuche-struggle-for-the-recognition-of-its-nation-from-a-feminine-and-decolonizing-point-of-view>, 2023.

Indigenous culture is comprised of traditions, linguistic patterns, cuisine, objects and cultural antiquities, rituals, practices, and — above all — the people who preserve and enact it. The concept of colonialism exists in contrast to indigenous culture, demonstrating that when two cultures come into contact a process of cultural diffusion begins to occur. When indigenous cultures resist cultural diffusion, either deliberate inclusion or cultural genocide begins to occur. That process is less a symbiotic pattern of development than it is a combative tug of war between indigenous self-identity and the imperialistic compulsion to impose cultural assimilation on all native groups. Culture is at the core of indigeneity for the indigenous, especially when colonizers ignore, suppress, or undermine collective self-identity.

Brablec favors the concept that culture's link to indigeneity can be understood through the lens of self-identity. The scholar analyzes the notion that populations traditionally indigenous to a rural, ancestral homeland possess the ability to "reconstruct" their identity after migrating to an urban area, thereby retaining a legitimate claim to indigenous status in the city to which they have relocated. Brablec focuses on the plight of the Mapuche population of Santiago de Chile, whom she refers to as "urban indigenous." I argue that Brablec's findings can be extended to any culture which can be documented to possess a unique self-identity.¹⁶ Indeed, if a culture possesses a unique self-identity which is embattled by other groups — such as the case of the Mapuche — then I argue controversy only strengthens the population's claim to indigeneity.

¹⁶ Dana Brablec, "Who Counts as an Authentic Indigeneous? Collective Identity Negotiations in the Chilean Urban Context," in *Sociology* 55, no. 1 (2021): 129-145, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0038038520915435>.

The Mapuche are an example of a culturally indigenous population who number nearly two million and constitute approximately ten percent of the total Chilean population.¹⁷ According to Loncón, the Chilean government continues to operate under oppressive and unjust laws passed by the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, in the 1980s. These antiquated penal codes ignore the identity and rights of the Mapuche population, who have struggled against foreign imperialism and cultural genocide since the Spanish colonization of South America, in the seventeenth century.¹⁸ As a proud Mapuche, Loncón feels that the Chilean government, which was founded over a century ago, is simply the legacy of Spanish colonization in the form of modern, military occupation of the indigenous Chilean people's ancestral homeland.¹⁹ Hence, the laws of Pinochet which govern modern Chile are perceived by the Mapuche as a symptom of a form of feudal colonialism that ceased to be accepted by modern society centuries ago.

Loncón implies that the intangible element of gender dynamics are at the heart of the Mapuche's ongoing struggle for self-selected identity. Specifically, she cites Mapuche women as the conduit through which culture is preserved. Loncón explains that it is specifically the Mapuche women who "pass down traditional knowledge, language, [and] culture" in order to preserve the ethnic group's identity.²⁰ Loncón underscores that the self-selected identity of the Mapuche urban indigenous revolves around preserving matriarchal culture: axiological respect for such a perspective is requisite for compliance with the changing nature of indigeneity studies.

¹⁷ Loncón, *The Mapuche Struggle for the Recognition of its Nation*, 2023.

¹⁸ Loncón, 2021.

¹⁹ Loncón, 2021.

²⁰ Loncón, 2021.

Brablec recognized that homeland may no longer directly link to Mapuche indigeneity, as land dispossession obliged the group to become a diaspora to preserve its indigeneity through means other than retaining their original, ancestral homeland. Brablec bemoans the fallacy that ancestral homeland might supersede culture in indigeneity studies.²¹ The Mapuche demonstrate the evolving nature of indigeneity studies because they have been disconnected from their original, ancestral homeland and have made the conscious decision to reform their identity around a new, adopted homeland, while retaining their matriarchal culture. Brablec argues that “mainstream research and practice continue to render urban indigeneity invisible and assume that Indigenous groups remain confined to a rural ancestral homeland.”²²

The notion that indigenous groups can continue to exist without being confined to an ancestral homeland is a core tenet underlying the hypothesis that culture can be indigenous. Homeland is of great financial value but is deceptively *exclusive*. Brablec observes that the Mapuche have been accused of attempting to usurp a foreign land as their own by partisans who have overlooked the ability of indigenous groups to reform their identity.²³ If indigenous groups can selectively reform their identity by selecting a new homeland, then the link between homeland and indigeneity is theoretically weakened. Brablec insinuates that the concept of ancestral homeland can be utilized to exclude itinerate indigenous cultures, like the Mapuche, from being able to reform their identity to achieve a status of permanence and belonging.

²¹ Brablec, “Who Counts,” 2021.

²² Brablec, 2021.

²³ Brablec, 2021.

If culture is a naturally occurring process of a region, then it can be considered indigenous. I argue that if a culture is indigenous, then the people who preserve that culture qualify for recognition as indigenous.²⁴ At the core of this intellectual problem are questions such as who determines when a group is considered indigenous and by what metric(s) indigeneity is evaluated.²⁵ Quantitatively evaluating indigeneity is a slippery slope; it leads to the intellectual fallacy of attempting to rank degrees of indigeneity. Ranking degrees of indigeneity is at the heart of the “problem” which this paper seeks to penetrate and expand upon. Quantifying indigeneity is, by definition, conducted quantitatively: that is a process known as “blood quantum,” which examines the percentage of indigenous blood that flows through a person’s veins.²⁶ Blood quantum and other quantitative measurements of indigeneity lead down a pathway of *exclusivity* which is antithetical to the constant theme of *inclusion* implicit in indigeneity studies.²⁷ *Exclusive* ideas that stem from quantifying indigeneity include more than blood quantum, such as the antiquated notion of “*authentic indigeneity*.”²⁸ I argue that it is reckless to quantify indigeneity because the effort tends to justify *exclusion*.²⁹

The Impact of Empire and Colonialism

It is a principle of indigeneity studies that the researcher must remain cognizant of the interplay between indigenous populations and colonial influences.³⁰ The canon of historical scholarship on colonialism is as robust as that of indigeneity (perhaps, more so)

²⁴ Brablec, “Who Counts,” 2021.

²⁵ Brablec, 2021.

²⁶ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 90.

²⁷ Lovern and Locust, 90.

²⁸ Brablec, “Who Counts,” 2021.

²⁹ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 90.

³⁰ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 29.

and is intrinsically linked to the histories of most indigenous groups.³¹ Studies on empire and colonialism tend to focus on economic issues, control of land, and linguistic dynamics — indeed, it is not for want of cultural elements.³² Unlike the case for the overarching body of scholarship related to indigeneity, scholarship on colonialism may not be central to linking naturally developing culture and indigeneity. Colonialism may even overshadow the more important issue of imperialism.

Imperialism is born of an absence of experience with indigeneity, according to Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang.³³ For Tuck and Yang, indigenous groups resist against imperialism and, by extension, being colonized, both subconsciously and deliberately.³⁴ The scholars note that a factor in oppressing indigenous groups is sovereignty.³⁵ They hold that the oppressor will tend to insist on “sovereignty over all things in their new domain.”³⁶ From laws to linguistics, oppression of an indigenous group is a cultural war for sovereignty.

Pidgin language³⁷ is at the center of a struggle for indigenous identity — a struggle which is a naturally occurring phenomenon from extreme isolation, such as that experienced by islanders. Tuck and Yang explain that proximity is an essential element of

³¹ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 3.

³² Lovern and Locust, 5.

³³ Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 9, <https://clas.osu.edu/sites/clas.osu.edu/files/Tuck%20and%20Yang%202012%20Decolonization%20is%20not%20a%20metaphor.pdf>.

³⁴ Tuck and Yang, 3.

³⁵ Tuck and Yang, 5.

³⁶ Tuck and Yang, 5.

³⁷ Like “indigeneity” and “culture,” the term “pidgin language” can hold slightly different definitions — typically implying a Eurocentric fusion of a colonial language (e.g. Latin based) with an indigenous tongue. In the present case, I define pidgin language as a dialect derived from the cultural interaction of multiple populations who do not share a common linguistic tradition. One example includes the interaction of English and Tahitian that form the language of the Pitcairn Islands, “Pitkern.”

colonialism.³⁸ In their view, “special separation between metropole and colony” destabilizes the colonial system. One reason for this is that distance allows for the natural development of pidgin language and other factors that begin to delineate the locals of the region within which culture is becoming an indigenous process. When colonizing powers exert an imperialistic force upon cultures and peoples whom they are not geographically close enough to permanently colonize, Tuck and Yang perceive efforts to “destroy and disappear the indigenous peoples” in question.³⁹ Yet, I argue that the assault of the imperialist power seems not to be against the indigenous *people* inasmuch as it is targeted against the indigenous *culture*.

Establishing Research Parameters

An underlying research parameter I will consistently utilize is identifying what factors make a population’s culture indigenous, unique, and impossible to duplicate anywhere else on Earth. There is an overarching gap in knowledge: in most research that discusses the intersection of culture and indigeneity, the notion of culture seems to flow from indigeneity.⁴⁰ I postulate that this dynamic has, in some instances, been turned upside down — meaning that indigeneity might flow from culture. To date, no scholar appears to have asked if a culture can be indigenous. Beyond that, the question arises of whether an indigenous culture constitutes grounds for an associated population’s legal recognition and protection as an indigenous group.

³⁸ Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” 5.

³⁹ Tuck and Yang, 6.

⁴⁰ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 36-39.

Thus, it is also important to investigate the query of whether protection for indigeneity can flow from the establishment of culture, just as cultural preservation can flow from the recognition of indigeneity. Other gaps in knowledge include the fallacy of “*genuine indigeneity*.” For example, if a population can be culturally indigenous, then it is important to ask if a culturally indigenous population can also be considered to possess a blood quantum and, if so, how this can be quantified. Furthermore, there is a gap of knowledge which appears to exist about the rights of populations which might be culturally indigenous. The issue of repatriation of cultural artifacts may be of extreme interest. Indigeneity studies promises to offer profound questions to research as more is learned about the intersection of culture and indigeneity.

The Gap in Knowledge Compelling Academic Intervention: “Genuine Indigeneity”

There is a gap in knowledge regarding the ability of non-native populations to develop indigenous cultures which establish that group as a de-facto indigenous population.⁴¹ Indeed, this sentiment is encapsulated by a famous indigenous author, Mourning Dove,⁴² who stated in the 1930s that she “was born a descendent [*sic*] of the genuine Americans, the Indians.”⁴³ She implies that an indigenous Native American should view herself as more “*genuine*” than those whom she evidently perceives as interlopers. Mourning Dove’s association of being a *genuine* American with being

⁴¹ Brablec, “Who Counts,” 2021.

⁴² Flourishing in the 1930s, Mourning Dove uses some lexicon, such as “Indian” that is now antiquated but was entirely mainstream during her contemporary period; her concept of “genuine indigeneity” remains mainstream.

⁴³ Frederick E. Hoxie, “Exploring a Cultural Borderland: Native American Journeys of Discovery in the Early Twentieth Century,” in the *Journal of American History* 79, no. 3, (1992): 969, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2080795>.

“Indian”⁴⁴ (as opposed to Native American) inadvertently perpetuates one of the sentiments for which, in more progressive locales, Columbus Day has been replaced with Indigenous Peoples’ Day.⁴⁵ It is intriguing to see noted indigenous scholar Frederick Hoxie begin his famous journal article from 1992, “Exploring a Cultural Borderland: Native American Journeys of Discovery in the Early Twentieth Century,” with Mourning Dove’s aforementioned quote that promotes the fallacy of believing that a cultural or ethnic group can claim to be more “*genuinely indigenous*” than those they perceive as rivals.⁴⁶

This concept of “*genuine indigeneity*” betrays the fundamental aspect of *inclusivity* which is at the heart of indigeneity studies. This issue compels a reevaluation of “indigeneity.” In the field of indigeneity studies, “words are neither benign, nor are they neutral...[a term] reveals cultural dynamics, institutions, and values.”⁴⁷ Indeed, “inclusion” is the one word which is often repeated because it is at the heart of the goal of indigeneity studies. Inclusivity is the fundamental point at issue for the hypothesis of cultural indigeneity.

The question to resolve is simple: is “indigeneity” inclusive or exclusive? If we accept that the definition of an indigenous process is any naturally occurring process, then — even if one process may exclude some other, random process — there is no rule which holds that natural processes automatically *exclude* other natural processes.

⁴⁴ Christopher Columbus infamously mistook the Caribbean islands for the East Indies, leading him to erroneously label the indigenous population “Indians.”

⁴⁵ Liz Mineo, *A Day of Reckoning*, 2020, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/10/pondering-putting-an-end-to-columbus-day-and-a-look-at-what-could-follow>. The federal government has yet to adopt the change of the holiday’s name and the issue remains extremely controversial.

⁴⁶ Hoxie, “Exploring a Cultural Borderland,” 969.

⁴⁷ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 12.

Similarly, it would be faulty to assume that one group of people being indigenous to a region should automatically *exclude* another group from being indigenous, even if it complicates the very unnatural dynamic of legal issues. I argue, therefore, that the notion of “indigeneity” is unequivocally inclusive.

Hence, we arrive at an extremely important query: if it is theoretically possible to have more than one *genuinely indigenous* element in an area, does it not follow that the culture of the United States, if not the non-native people, is *genuinely* American? As an American citizen who has never lived in any other nation, I argue that American culture is, indeed, *genuinely* American through its design as an amalgamation of cultures, just as Native Americans are *genuinely* American — and, perhaps, just as I am *genuinely* American. Being genuinely American has nothing to do with blood quantum; rather it has everything to do with the culture which built my persona, delivered my education, and formed my belief system. If the culture in which I was raised is *genuinely* American, then it is no less genuine than any other naturally occurring process of the American landmass. If the fact that my ancestors immigrated from a different land merely hundreds of years ago means that I am, therefore, *less genuinely* American than someone whose ancestors immigrated to the same land thousands of years ago, that does not necessarily mean that the culture which developed organically from the interaction of the groups we respectively hail from is somehow *unnatural* and not a *genuinely indigenous* process of where those interactions occurred.

The apparently innocent notion of *genuine* Americanism should not be allowed to persist unchecked. The implications are utterly unacceptable if we apply such a definition to the history of slavery and the status of African Americans. Mexican nationals emigrate

away from oppression and poverty to seek asylum and a better life in America — but who would be so naïve as to assert that, because Mexican Americans are not a recognized First Nation tribe by the United States Federal government,⁴⁸ they are somehow *less genuinely American*? Blanket statements that allocate *exclusive* rights based upon any factor — particularly those such as ethnicity, religion, culture, or the like — run the risk of alienation from the fundamental principle of *inclusion*. Hence, no person, group, state, society, or civilization should seek to monopolize some natural right to claim to be the most *genuinely* indigenous.⁴⁹

The allocation of exclusive rights based on being more genuinely American is an infamous *cause célèbre* originating in the eighteenth century's concept of "Just One Drop." Corresponding to the centuries-long campaign to deny African Americans basic human rights, "the one-drop rule was instituted in 1790 to increase the size of the slave population, [but] its influence has long outlasted the practice of American slavery."⁵⁰ "Blood quantum" is merely another label for describing the analysis of a person's ethnic background to determine just how many "drops" of indigenous blood course through a given person's veins. According to indigenous scholar, Kimberly Tall Bear, allocation of funds for access to healthcare and similar benefits are attached to this exclusionary, quantitative paradigm of blood quantum,⁵¹ just as the suppression of rights was attached

⁴⁸ National Conference of State Legislatures. *Federal and State Recognized Tribes*, 2022, <https://www.ncsl.org/legislators-staff/legislators/quad-caucus/list-of-federal-and-state-recognized-tribes.aspx>.

⁴⁹ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 3.

⁵⁰ John W. Miller, Jr. "Beyond Skin Deep: An Analysis of the Influence of the One-Drop Rule on the Racial Identity of African American Adolescents," in *Race, Gender & Class* 17, no. ¾ (2010): 40, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41674750>.

⁵¹ Kimberly Tall Bear, "DNA, Blood, and Racializing the Tribe," in *Wicazo Sa Review* 18, no. 1 (2003): 88, 92,

to a person having just one drop of African American blood in the nineteenth century.⁵² Having non-European blood was perceived by American authorities as grounds for exclusion from genuine Americanism, just as Hoxie and Mourning Dove view having non-First Nation blood as grounds for exclusion from the status of genuine Americanism.

There is a modern, cultural link between Blackness, the plight of African Americans, and the existential desire to avoid exclusion from the status of genuine Americanism. It is not wise to ignore the distinction between identifying as “Black” and “African American.” Some arguments seek to place African Americans within a debate about “origin.” These are maleficent attempts by white supremacists, dating back to Marcus Garvey and his *Black Star Line*,⁵³ to imply that Black citizens have less right to America because they are somehow naturally from a different land. Parrying this assault, some Black Americans have pointed out that their bloodlines have been in America since the seventeenth century and that they retain virtually no links to Africa. Hence, the Black American might claim to possess a culture which was naturally created in America and that is genuinely indigenous to America.

Hoxie’s interpretation of Mourning Dove’s “*genuine*” indigeneity as merely “refusing to identify with her conquerors”⁵⁴ is incomplete and compels scholarly

https://web.archive.org/web/20170322195419id_/http://genetics.ncai.org/files/TallBearRacializingtheTribe.pdf.

⁵² Miller, Jr., “Beyond Skin Deep,” 40.

⁵³ Marcus Garvey was a noted, early-twentieth century version of an “Originist” (fl.1916-1940) who sought to remove all Black Americans to Africa, under the malicious guise of resettling them to an original, ancestral homeland. This effort dates back at least to Abraham Lincoln, who “advocated shipping [Black Americans] to Central America, the Caribbean or ‘back’ to Africa” (<https://www.history.com/news/abraham-lincoln-black-resettlement-haiti>). This position illustrates why some Americans identify as “Black.” To be “African” implies being something other than “American.” Many Black Americans identify as American, not as African — a semantic supporting the idea of Black culture being genuinely indigenous to America.

⁵⁴ Hoxie, “Exploring a Cultural Borderland,” 974.

elaboration with a sophisticated, educated, and — most importantly — an open mind. Hoxie clearly and unambiguously explains that Mourning Dove perceived “non-Indians, not as visitors on native land, but as a daily, conquering presence.”⁵⁵ For Mourning Dove, the non-native is an interloper who can never belong — and that evidently includes liberated slaves and all the other non-native people that, with Hoxie’s agreement, she perceives herself as surpassing in *genuine* Americanism. The problem with such a reckless and exclusionary paradigm is that if Hoxie’s Native American is, indeed, by birthright the most *genuine* American, then, by implication, Hoxie’s American of non-native ancestry is *less genuinely* American and must be *denied inclusion* to indigenous status: Hoxie’s cultural egalitarianism is stubbornly conditional and subject to the judgement of *exclusive* groups.

If we accept Hoxie’s combative definition of indigeneity, then indigeneity becomes an *exclusive* paradigm. Surely Hoxie, like many scholars of indigeneity, would be the first to decry such a conclusion — asserting, without equivocation, that indigeneity is a paradigm of *inclusion*. Indeed, Hoxie might be compelled to amend his position to acknowledge that the only form of “*genuine*” indigeneity is the state of being a naturally occurring process or having been born of such a naturally occurring process. Other interpretations of indigeneity deceptively debate the time frames related to who arrived in an area first and the granted legal rights, which encompass one human population antedating another in a given location. The point at issue is equality and egalitarianism: it

⁵⁵ Hoxie, “Exploring a Cultural Borderland,” 969.

would appear impossible to perpetuate indigenous equality by imposing fabricated, sociological superiority over exclusive terminologies, such as “*genuine*.”

Scholars must not fail to recognize the ubiquitous and archetypal fact that *culture is genuine* — and, when it is a naturally occurring process, *genuinely indigenous*. If that reality is ignored, for only one example, to be Creole would no longer be to belong to a *genuine* cultural group.⁵⁶ By extension, when individuals who have never set foot off their ancestral homeland declare that they are a proud member of their culture group, a failure to recognize that person’s culture as indigenous would oblige the obnoxiously preposterous follow-up query, “But, what culture do you *genuinely* hail from?” The researcher can imagine the disgust which a hypothetical person of indigenous heritage would hold for their inconsiderate interrogator, who overlooked the link between culture and indigeneity — more so, if no group was displaced, who might cite Hoxie in claiming to be more “*genuinely indigenous*.”

Some scholars might protest that Mourning Dove’s quote is being taken out of context, and that it was a one-off slip of the tongue that is being deliberately misinterpreted. Yet, the understanding of the concept of indigeneity is presently shifting; it is a phenomenon of modern, urban development. Brablec’s 2021 article, “Who Counts as an Authentic Indigenous? Collective Identity Negotiations in the Chilean Urban Context,”⁵⁷ demonstrates the dangers of exclusionary methods of recognizing indigeneity. Brablec describes the Mapuche as rural-to-urban migrants with “indigenous

⁵⁶ National Park Service, *Creole History and Culture*, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/cari/learn/historyculture/creole-history-and-culture.htm>.

⁵⁷ Brablec, “Who Counts,” 2021.

organizations” that allocate to themselves the title of “urban indigenous.”⁵⁸ She specifically states that “urban indigenous individuals are forced to perform...the dominant understandings of what counts as indigeneity,” and that they are often resisted by “tensions of authenticity...when claiming an indigenous identity.”⁵⁹

Indigenous communities are not necessarily tied to an ancestral homeland, yet Brablec explains that indigenous communities are treated with prejudice if they migrate away from their ancestral homeland.⁶⁰ As a result, she holds that urban indigenous are “perceived as less authentic [and] less legitimate,” and that they face “accusations of identity invention and illegitimacy.”⁶¹ One reason that indigenous groups face such prejudice is competition from the indigenous community for a monopoly over some form of “genuine” or — in Brablec’s lexicon, “authentic” — indigeneity. “Genuine” and “authentic” indigeneity are not only exclusionary, but also ignore that “indigenous peoples can construct and reconstruct identity.”⁶² This argument implies that indigeneity can link to culture more so than land.

If culture cannot be demonstrated to link to indigeneity as a theoretical construct, then this too will be of use to scholars of indigeneity. Fatima Pirbhai-Illich, et al, postulate that the use of language is a construct in education, which offers options to restrict the language code of certain groups.⁶³ Indeed, demonstrating an empirical link between culture and indigeneity seems quite likely to impact indigenous pedagogy.

⁵⁸ Brablec, “Who Counts,” 2021.

⁵⁹ Brablec, 2021.

⁶⁰ Brablec, 2021.

⁶¹ Brablec, 2021.

⁶² Brablec, 2021.

⁶³ Pirbhai-Illich, et al., “Culturally Responsive Pedagogies,” 237.

According to Lovern and Locust, the indigenizing of education is an important method for the preservation of indigenous culture.⁶⁴ Accordingly, if culture does not imply indigeneity, the implication for naturally indigenous populations (e.g. “First Nations”) is effectively a monopoly over the entire notion of indigeneity and all of the important legal protections such a status perpetuates and guarantees.

The notion of “First Nation” populations is an important one in this study. Pirbhai-Illich, et al explain how non-First Nations scholars often misconstrue elements of indigenous culture or misunderstand their own inabilities to analyze First Nation culture without having originated within it.⁶⁵ This is intrinsically linked to the issues of colonialism and how peoples who have been impacted by decolonization perceive the world differently from those who come from groups that were never subjugated. Nevertheless, it raises the question of how non-native populations, which arrive in geographically vacant areas, perceive the world around them after years of isolation or inequality within an overarching economic empire.

Taking the argument of Pirbhai-Illich, et al, to its logical conclusion, if a population has developed an indigenous culture, then it is incorrect for any scholar who was not *genuinely* raised within the culturally indigenous population to cast aspersions about that group. This follows from the principle that the only scholars who are positioned to rightfully analyze a First Nation are those who are *genuine* members of a First Nation. Even if indigeneity was *not inclusive*, the scholars hold that outsiders are not able to cast judgement on culture groups. That philosophical shield extends to all

⁶⁴ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 181.

⁶⁵ Pirbhai-Illich, et al., “Culturally Responsive Pedagogies,” 137.

indigenous cultures, regardless of if a given First Nation from some landmass might consider itself to be *more genuinely indigenous* than another.

Pirbhai-Illich, et al's *exclusive* argument threatens to divide, rather than unite. Pirbhai-Illich admits that she personally believes "teaching work *is* political work."⁶⁶ For this reason, she will "assert a radical indigeneity in [her] teaching work with...white learners in the hopes that they will move past their narrow, colonial views."⁶⁷ It is disappointing, as a "white learner," to know that a scholar would stereotype me as "narrow" and "colonial minded," based solely on the color of my skin and without consideration for my education, which includes her own important work on "Culturally Responsive Pedagogy." I argue that indigeneity studies are *not* political, nor radical: indigeneity studies are empirical, cultural and, above all, axiological.

Like the fundamental issue of the historian using the footnote with integrity, the field of indigeneity studies revolves around certain fundamental ideals. One of those ideals is the notion that Western scholars must adhere to an axiological perspective, which is the combining of dispassionate research with placing respect for the subject population's perspective at the center of the search for empirical truth. According to Margaret Kovach, "axiology and epistemology are interwoven in indigenous methodologies...the ethics of research lands us squarely in the zone of axiology."⁶⁸ At the heart of axiology is a combination of respect for the subject population and integrity in the analysis of local, cultural norms. This concept of respecting cultures and the people

⁶⁶ Pirbhai-Illich, et al., "Culturally Responsive Pedagogies," 71.

⁶⁷ Pirbhai-Illich, et al., 71.

⁶⁸ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 92.

who have developed them is the essence of the present hypothesis that culture may be an indigenous process which occurs naturally in a given region.

Axiology is at the heart of combining culture with indigeneity studies. Kovach argues that the metaphors and symbolism which are integral to an indigenous population's way of thinking are overlooked when indigenous peoples engage with audiences from other cultures.⁶⁹ She underscores that the "basic philosophical dimensions of paradigm proposal" must include reliance on axiology and extracting the legitimate, local narrative from scholarly analysis.⁷⁰ For Kovach, indigeneity studies requires an "axiological-cultural focus"⁷¹ — which precludes determining truth by quantitative measurements, favoring inclusive, open-minded approaches.

The natural development of indigenous dialects is part of a process which Kovach identifies as "cultural grounding."⁷² Cultural grounding is, in essence, an indigenous population's axiological effort to establish what qualities they identify themselves with. It is a search for truth that an entire population collectively engages in. When that search for axiological truth intersects with linguistics, a unique language is born that has no value to conquering or colonizing powers. Thus, language is archetypal of indigenous culture.

Beyond an adherence to axiology, this study relies upon an interwoven web of methodologies that adhere to the wisdom of Kovach who states that selecting the appropriate methodology for a given research question is "not a linear process but rather

⁶⁹ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 46.

⁷⁰ Kovach, 67.

⁷¹ Kovach, 188.

⁷² Kovach, 140.

spirals back and forth with standstills.”⁷³ Lovern and Locust provide an example of such a spiraling process when they discuss the widely misunderstood necessity of utilizing oral histories in studying anthropological trends of the indigenous, citing a Western tendency towards a presumed superiority of written histories.⁷⁴ For studies of indigeneity, it remains important to focus upon primary sources, particularly in written form. Yet, these primary sources should be analyzed according to an axiological methodology, with attention being paid to the weighty oral histories which tend to serve as a counterbalance.

The axiological perspective offered by Lovern and Locust is that “indigenous communities understand language endangerment and extinction as part of colonization strategies promoting assimilation.” They elaborate that authorities “including academics, have not been convinced that preservation of indigenous languages is a [crisis],”⁷⁵ even though it is linked to disappearance of culture. Merely studying the meaning of a word is not sufficient; to understand its cultural impact, the researcher must focus on *how* the community uses a term.⁷⁶ The retention of antiquated terminology correlates with an overarching, subconscious effort by a population to retain a culture which they are aware is dying.⁷⁷ Therefore, areas with pidgin languages tend to be engaging in a process of cultural preservation. The *creation* of language versus the *conservation* of language are separate issues, which must be independently considered.

The imposition of a foreign language does not necessarily impede the ability of an indigenous population to conserve a dying language as a deliberate act of cultural

⁷³ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 161.

⁷⁴ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 134-5.

⁷⁵ Lovern and Locust, 127.

⁷⁶ Lovern and Locust, 128.

⁷⁷ Lovern and Locust, 128.

preservation. For example, Lovern and Locust argue that the use of the dominant nation's language is simply an effort of the respective, indigenous population to "participate in sovereignty."⁷⁸ The notion that an indigenous population must take special action to participate in sovereignty not only betrays the impact of colonization upon them, but also demonstrates the motivation behind the tendency of Western authorities to ignore the fact that indigenous populations have written languages while simultaneously devaluing the indigenous oral traditions.⁷⁹ They indicate that culture can be preserved through the connotation of sounds which only indigenous people understand. Hence, indigeneity forms culture through communication patterns in which the linguistic patterns convey meaning(s) that "transmit spirit through inflection and sound to indicate meaning and context," such as religious, spiritual, and metaphysical concepts.⁸⁰

An indigenous population may naturally develop linguistic traditions that bind together generations.⁸¹ They link these linguistic traditions to the land that the generations of indigenous people occupy, explaining that they will literally be "grown" from the area in which the culture is created.⁸² More than education and external influence, Lovern and Locust state that the indigenous linguistic patterns that define indigenous cultures are derived from "lived experiences in nature, including water, wind, and animals," all of which may be unique to a given area. Thus, Lovern and Locust see a clear link between an indigenous population, a unique culture, and an associated

⁷⁸ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 134.

⁷⁹ Lovern and Locust, 135.

⁸⁰ Lovern and Locust, 135.

⁸¹ Lovern and Locust, 137.

⁸² Lovern and Locust, 139.

language. This link is a natural product of the region in which the population, culture, and language are found.

The evidence does not support the notion that is contrary to the hypothesis — namely, the erroneous idea that culture is not indigenous to an ancestral homeland. If culture is not indigenous to a homeland, then culture by implication can be *unnatural*. Indigeneity currently revolves around the status of a population as a native “First Nation.” To hold that a culture is unnatural is tantamount to arguing that the only pathway to indigeneity is to be the original people to populate an area with no obvious lineage tying that group to another state or society. Thus, if culture can be demonstrated to link to indigeneity, this will imply that culture is potentially as important in identifying an indigenous group as are other dynamics, such as blood quantum. Indeed, the very notion of blood quantum will be intertwined with identifying members of culturally indigenous groups, providing one more example of a potential gap in knowledge which the testing of the present hypothesis might fill.

The Hypothesis of Cultural Indigeneity

The hypothesis of “cultural indigeneity” holds that culture is indigenous. The hypothesis postulates that cultures can, and sometimes must, be considered indigenous processes, native to an ancestral homeland. *Cultural indigeneity* can be defined as the existence of a unique culture that is indigenous to an area. My overarching hypothesis of cultural indigeneity can be summarized in the following way: *Should a non-native population establish a unique culture which becomes a natural product of an ancestral homeland, then the culture may be considered indigenous, and by extension, the*

population which created and preserves that culture may be considered as culturally indigenous to the area, as well. The niche of cultural indigeneity therefore places culture at the epicenter of indigeneity studies.

The signpost of the hypothesis is that a unique culture may be created by a region and its environment. Whenever people from a region express or demonstrate a feeling of uniqueness, differentness, or communal identity, that may be evidence of indigeneity derived from culture.⁸³ Cultural accounts are stronger, not weaker, when disputed by scholarship or journalism. Disagreements between islanders and outsiders demonstrate not that one side is correct, only that they are different. Indigeneity involves natural uniqueness and cultural uniqueness — and *uniqueness* can be construed as *differentness*.⁸⁴

The signposts which the hypothesis tests for include linguistic traditions, attachment to an ancestral homeland, a history of stewardship of the area, self-selected identity, cuisine, material culture, burial traditions and attachment to burial grounds, and much more. Answering the question of whether cultural indigeneity can be demonstrated to exist would only be the start of academic interventions. Cultural indigeneity promises to burgeon into a subset of cultural anthropology and indigeneity studies which will be rife with novel niches. Evidence against cultural indigeneity is not irrelevant but could potentially serve as a pedagogical tool for the empowerment of other indigenous peoples around the world. Hence, the question is not if researching cultural indigeneity addresses

⁸³ Pirbhai-Illich, et al., “Culturally Responsive Pedagogies,” 6.

⁸⁴ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 3.

a gap in knowledge — but rather, the extent to which such research will provide new gaps in knowledge for research by scholars from multidisciplinary backgrounds.

Cultural Indigeneity Juxtaposed Against and Within Indigeneity Studies

The most important difference between the hypothesis of cultural indigeneity and the mainstream concept of indigeneity is what indigeneity links to. In other words: is the foremost foundation of indigeneity *a link to an indigenous, ancestral homeland* — or is homeland superseded by *a link to indigenous culture*? Hypothetically, cultural indigeneity indicates that indigeneity links, first and foremost, to culture. Current legal paradigms of indigeneity tend to link either land or other tangible (e.g. quantitative) ideas, such as blood quantum, to indigeneity. Lovern and Locust hold that this approach is flawed, because it fails to recognize indigenous cultural identities.⁸⁵ Kovach reinforces this by underscoring that indigeneity studies — when conducted from the appropriate, indigenous perspective — are inherently qualitative.⁸⁶

A simple thought experiment can illustrate that indigeneity is defined not by ancestral homeland, blood quantum, or other quantitative factors, but rather by the qualitative metric of indigenous culture. Let us take the example of the Hawaiian Islands — what I will call the “Hawaiian Urban Indigenous Thought Experiment” — for whom the Hawaiian, indigenous culture is a political focal point of the first rank in relevance. Gavan Daws, in *Shoal of Time: History of the Hawaiian Islands*, states that the original Hawaiian islanders were migrants from Marquesas and the Society Islands, who arrived

⁸⁵ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 90.

⁸⁶ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 29-30.

around the eighth century CE and developed a unique culture in isolation.⁸⁷ The Hawaiians established a monarchy under Kamehameha I, in the eighteenth century, becoming a unified nation that naturally built upon their culture: that monarchy was overthrown by Sanford Dole and his cohort, the *Committee of Safety*, in the late nineteenth century.⁸⁸ Today, the issue of Hawaiian recognition as a First Nation is controversial, because some Native Hawaiians argue that it impedes their appropriate recognition as a sovereign island which, in their view, should be fully independent — not recognized as a First Nation of an imperialist power.⁸⁹ This is an argument about preserving Hawaiian *culture*, not their ancestral *homeland*.

For the sake of this thought experiment, assume that a heinously more extreme, Pearl Harbor-style ambush was launched against Hawaii — except, a devastating weapon totally obliterated the entire archipelago, or at least rendered it permanently uninhabitable. Would the surviving Hawaiian diaspora cease to be considered indigenous for want of an ancestral homeland, or would their culture qualify them for *inclusion* under the umbrella of indigeneity? According to the principle that indigeneity is *unequivocally inclusive*, clearly, Hawaiian indigenous culture would qualify for preservation and protection. Pushing the hypothetical scenario further, it would not be inconceivable that Hawaiians might become a diaspora in, for example, Los Angeles — adopting a self-selected identity as the “Hawaiian urban indigenous of the City of Los Angeles.” This would fit into Brablec’s conception of “authentic” urban indigenous who

⁸⁷ Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: History of the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968), xiii.

⁸⁸ Daws, 44, 274.

⁸⁹ Cecily Hilleary, *Native Hawaiians Divided on Federal Recognition*, 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/a/native-hawaiians-divided-on-federal-recognition/4775275.html>.

reconstruct indigenous culture to adapt to evolutions of the modern world without losing their indigenous identity as a consequence of having lost an ancestral homeland.⁹⁰

The “Hawaiian Urban Indigenous Thought Experiment” supports the hypothesis of cultural indigeneity. It demonstrates that indigeneity and colonialism are not in competition over land; rather, colonialism vies for forced assimilation, while indigeneity compels cultural inclusion. Because it is distasteful to think in negative terms, it is inconvenient to consider the hypothetical loss of ancestral homelands as a victory for the indigenous. Yet, if we suppose that a culture is destroyed but their ancestral land remains for someone else, a colonist has won. By contrast, if a land is destroyed but the culture survives, indigeneity has won. In a situation where something must be destroyed, indigeneity would preserve indigenous culture over an ancestral homeland because the sanctity of *inclusion* for indigenous culture is the ultimate point at issue in indigeneity studies.

This thought experiment also demonstrates how Hawaii illustrates both examples of indigeneity, on the one hand, and archetypical themes of indigeneity, on the other. Kovach underscores that the study of indigeneity is noticeably different from Western qualitative approaches, which follow distinctly Western paradigms — but there are also overlaps.⁹¹ Thus, cultural indigeneity offers a lens that provides an individualized study for any respective indigenous culture. In theory, just the hypothesis that cultural indigeneity may exist substantiates the principle that further research is compulsory in the field of indigeneity and that it can incorporate an even more multidisciplinary, as well as

⁹⁰ Brablec, “Who Counts,” 2021.

⁹¹ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 37.

multicultural approach. This promises to yield answers to a myriad of valuable research questions that will fill gaps in knowledge, helping scholars build upon, rather than dismiss, the pitfalls inherent to such antiquated and emotionally driven concepts as “*genuine indigeneity*.”

Indigeneity is a multidisciplinary subset of social science, in general.⁹² Quantitative studies might take into consideration calculations of blood quantum, whereas more qualitative studies consider the legal rights of indigenous groups reclaiming antiquities.⁹³ Indigenous studies can simultaneously serve as primary and secondary sources when the researcher is of indigenous heritage. The parallels between a concept of cultural indigeneity and the overarching field of indigeneity studies are robust, but so are the differences in methodology. Beyond methodological investigation of the intersection of culture and indigeneity, the hypothesis requires specific test subjects: the quintessential archetype is that of the most isolated archipelago on the planet, Pitcairn Island.

⁹² Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, Rear Cover.

⁹³ Lovern and Locust, 90.

Chapter II.

The Case of the Pitcairn Islands

The Pitcairn Islands are the quintessential case study of the hypothesis of cultural indigeneity. In the Pitcairn Islands, virtually every member of the community is wholly and integrally connected by a web of culture, ethnicity, and one form of indigeneity in which it is difficult to distinguish family from friends.⁹⁴ The Pitcairn Islanders have endured a complex history with imperialism. An extremely isolated, strategically irrelevant location, the Pitcairn Islands were historically ignored by the British Empire, viewed as little more than a burden.⁹⁵ The Pitcairn Islanders developed an identity as a self-sufficient population, accepting only select parts of the outside world, such as their practice of Seventh Day Adventism, dating to the nineteenth century.⁹⁶ In their isolation, they naturally developed an indigenous culture that Pitcairn expert, Herbert Ford, identifies as a “a product of the thousands of ships which have called by the island.”⁹⁷

There are virtually no cultural divides on Pitcairn Island and the individual families demonstrate only the most insignificant differences.⁹⁸ Divides that surface evaporate on the island. Pitcairn’s uniqueness and indigenous culture is linked to, in the words of the Pitcairn Islanders’ ardent detractor, Kathy Marks,⁹⁹ a “sense of isolation

⁹⁴ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 46.

⁹⁵ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island: The Bounty Mutineers and their Descendents* (Jefferson: McFarland and Co., 2008), 4.

⁹⁶ Herbert Ford, *Island of Tears: John I. Tay and the Story of Pitcairn* (Oakland: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1990), 74-76.

⁹⁷ Herbert Ford, *Pitcairn: Port of Call* (Angwin: Hawser Titles, 1996), II.

⁹⁸ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 182.

⁹⁹ Kathy Marks is a journalist who was selected to report on the *Sexual Assault Trials of 2004*. Marks became a self-appointed expert on Pitcairn Island’s contemporary culture and seems to have predetermined to write a book before setting out on her working vacation. Ultimately, she published a book which is a

[that] is overpowering.”¹⁰⁰ The culture that is indigenous to the islands transcends nationalism or tribal identity; it is a ubiquitous, indigenous kinship that represents an unbreakable bond of familial blood, developed in lonesome isolation.

The canon of scholarship on the Pitcairn Islands is a combination of local, primary source autobiographies and amateur histories, alongside a few pieces of academic research, such as the work of Robert Kirk. While the islanders have produced the most important bulk of research on their island’s history, Kirk’s work is notable because he is a protégé of the most published researcher of Pitcairn studies, Herbert Ford.¹⁰¹ Kirk’s book, *Pitcairn Island: The Bounty Mutineers and Their Descendants*, is a scholarly, non-biased study of Pitcairn’s history. The Government of the Pitcairn Islands have not officially denounced Kirk’s work — a factor which makes it rather unique among published works about the island, since the Pitcairn Islanders have spoken out against most histories of their island, generally conducted by journalists. Indeed, overseas imperialism has so colored the modern political landscape in the Pitcairn Islands that the islanders are skeptical of virtually any outside opinion.¹⁰²

focal point of the present study: I view her book as a classic example of imperialistic journalism, but I do not view the work as constituting academic scholarship — a position which I will elaborate upon herein.

¹⁰⁰ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 12.

¹⁰¹ Herbert Ford is among the world’s leading scholars on Pitcairn Island. Ford is the namesake and benefactor of the *Herbert Ford Pitcairn Islands Study Center*, at Pacific Union College, in Angwin, California — the world’s most important and robust research center dedicated to the Pitcairn Islands. Beyond dedicating decades of meticulous research to Pitcairn, Ford has established personal relationships with most of the islanders. Ford is a noted Seventh Day Adventist, with strong religious ties to the island and to Pacific Union College. The study center maintains a constant line of communication with Pitcairn.

¹⁰² Sean Manross, *Pitcairn Islands and Indigeneity: A “Unique” Relationship with Overseas Imperialism*, 2021, 11,

https://www.academia.edu/50939585/Pitcairn_Islands_and_Indigeneity_A_Unique_Relationship_with_Overseas_Imperialism.

Pitcairn's antipathy of outside opinion is steeped in history. The island exists in relation to visiting ships. This was the case even before British mutineers marooned themselves on their tiny oasis in the barren waters referred to in *Moby Dick* as the "Offshore Grounds."¹⁰³

A Brief History of the Pitcairn Islands

The Pitcairn Islands were visited by itinerate, Polynesian seafarers, during the twelfth or thirteenth centuries,¹⁰⁴ who left stone tool artifacts that were claimed (with consent of the islanders) by visiting British sailors in 1841.¹⁰⁵ More cultural antiquities were seized in the late nineteenth century, some claimed by scientists from the United Kingdom and taken to Auckland Museum in New Zealand,¹⁰⁶ and others by Lieutenant Gerald T.F. Pike, on an expedition in the late 1890s.¹⁰⁷ Those relics are the only evidence of what occurred before the colonization of the island by its first generation of full-time residents.¹⁰⁸ When the original generation of Pitcairn Islanders arrived, in 1790, they were mutineer fugitives fleeing from the British Empire. The reason the leader of the mutineers, Fletcher Christian, specifically chose Pitcairn Island for a refuge is because its

¹⁰³ The "Offshore Grounds" was the name of the desolate expanse of water in the South Pacific that has virtually no winds, no currents, and is a trap for sailors caught unawares.

¹⁰⁴ Louise Furey and Emma Ash, "'Old Stones for Cash': The Acquisition History of the Pitcairn Stone Tool Collection in Auckland Museum," in *Records of the Auckland Museum* 55, no. 1 (2020) 1, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27008989>.

¹⁰⁵ John Allen Brown, "Stone Implements from Pitcairn Island," in *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 30, no. 1 (1900): 86, https://ia600708.us.archive.org/view_archive.php?archive=/22/items/crossref-pre-1909-scholarly-works/10.2307%252F2841975.zip&file=10.2307%252F2842620.pdf.

¹⁰⁶ Furey and Ash, "'Old Stones for Cash,'" 1-2.

¹⁰⁷ Brown, "Stone Implements from Pitcairn Island," 83.

¹⁰⁸ Furey and Ash, "'Old Stones for Cash,'" 1.

existence was only rumored by contemporary sources.¹⁰⁹ The first and most important motivation of the original Pitcairn Islanders was to avoid the overseas imperialism of the British Empire.¹¹⁰

The cause of the mutiny was the combination of poor leadership in a picturesque paradise when Captain William Bligh of the HMS *Bounty* allowed his sailors to fraternize with Tahitian women, during his voyage for breadfruit,¹¹¹ in 1789. Over half of the crew was magnetized to the beauty of the local women, took wives and refused to obey Bligh's order to return to Britain.¹¹² When Bligh forced them out to sea, the officers declared a mutiny, cast Bligh and those loyal to him adrift without resources in a tiny lifeboat, and turned back to live in Tahiti. King Tinah of Tahiti realized what had transpired, so he exiled the mutineers with their wives, predicting that the British would come looking for the *Bounty*. Hence, when the mutineers arrived on Pitcairn Island with their wives, the first generation of the community was comprised of British men, their Tahitian wives, and a few ill-fated Tahitian men.¹¹³ The sailors and their Tahitian counterparts burned the *Bounty* to prevent the British from finding their sailors' hideaway by sighting the moored vessel: Today, the location is immortalized as "Bounty Bay."¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Richard Hough, *Captain Bligh & Mr. Christian* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1972), 193; H.E. Maude, "Tahitian Interlude: The Migration of the Pitcairn Islanders to the Motherland in 1831," *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 68, no. 2 (1959): 115, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i20703718>.

¹¹⁰ Manross, *Pitcairn Islands and Indigeneity*, 2-3.

¹¹¹ In need of a hardy cash-crop for Caribbean colonies, Britain's voyages for breadfruit were considered by the admiralty to be "a project of considerable scientific and economic importance." (Richard A. Howard, "Captain Bligh and the Breadfruit," *Scientific American* 188, no. 3 (1953): 88).

¹¹² Robert Langdon, "Dusky Damsels': Pitcairn Island's Neglected Matriarchs of the "Bounty" Saga," *The Journal of Pacific History* 35, no. 1 (2000): 29, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25169464>.

¹¹³ The Government of the Pitcairn Islands, *Pitcairn's History*, 2023, <https://www.government.pn/history>.

¹¹⁴ The Government of the Pitcairn Islands, *Pitcairn's History*.

The first generation of Pitcairn Islanders were different from all of their descendants in their penchant for flagrant violence. There were nine mutineers, six Tahitian men, and twelve Tahitian women.¹¹⁵ Fletcher Christian commanded that the Tahitians share wives to offset the imbalance.¹¹⁶ The infighting amongst the mutineers, plus the hatred between the Tahitian men and the British resulted in the deaths of all but two of the men within a decade.¹¹⁷ The future generations of Pitcairn Islanders were virtually all peaceful, following the legacy of their patriarch, Alexander Smith, self-rechristened after the mutiny as “John Adams,” who devoted himself to a life of peace and Christianity in the wake of chaos.

The mutineers had effectively marooned themselves on the island and the demographics created a powderkeg situation because there were fewer women than men on the island. Tensions revolving around sharing wives erupted into murderous violence. After three years on the island, the mutineers had made a habit of abusing the six Tahitian men, even killing two; the Tahitian men retaliated with five murders on “Massacre Day,” September 22, 1793.¹¹⁸ Fletcher Christian was killed along with four other English mutineers.¹¹⁹ That evening, the Englishmen’s Polynesian wives ambushed and killed

¹¹⁵ Maude, “Tahitian Interlude,” 115.

¹¹⁶ Pitcairn Islands Study Center, *History of the Pitcairn Islands*.

¹¹⁷ Maude, “Tahitian Interlude,” 115.

¹¹⁸ Dan Coenen. “Of Pitcairn’s Island and American Constitutional Theory,” *William & Mary Law Review* no. 38, no. 2 (1997): 655., <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1674&context=wmlr>.

¹¹⁹ Coenen, 656.

three of the Polynesian men.¹²⁰ Allegedly, Ned Young's wife, Teraura, decapitated her victim, Tetahiti, after killing him in his sleep.¹²¹

One of the remaining mutineers, named Quintal, killed the last of the Polynesian men soon thereafter, effectively ending the conflict between Englishmen and Tahitian men.¹²² Quintal appears to have been motivated to commit the murder because of a love affair with Teraura, who may have asked him to eliminate what she perceived to be the final threat of chaos: that resulted in his own demise when Ned Young found out about his wife's affair, became jealous, and killed Quintal.¹²³ As a result, the only men left alive on the island were Ned Young and John Adams. Young taught Adams to preach the Anglican bible and the enduring religious and linguistic tradition of Pitcairn was founded under their joint leadership.¹²⁴ Both were noted for devout Christianity and established a relationship that lasted until Young died, on December 25, 1800.¹²⁵

Thus, when the British finally rediscovered Pitcairn Island, in 1808, only one mutineer was still alive. The crew of the HMS *Topaz* that landed at the capital and only village, Adamstown, found that John Adams was the undisputed figurehead and patriarch of the second generation of Pitcairn Islanders, all of whom were the progeny of six of the nine mutineers and their Tahitian wives.¹²⁶ The British sailors were struck by the fluency of the islanders in both the native tongue of Tahiti, as well as in their own King's

¹²⁰ Coenen, "Of Pitcairn's Island," 655-656.

¹²¹ Rick Sims. *Teraura*, 2000, <https://web.archive.org/web/20080724095549/http://www.lareau.org/teraura.html>.

¹²² Coenen, "Of Pitcairn's Island," 656.

¹²³ Coenen, 656.

¹²⁴ Peter Mühlhäusler, *Ned Young, Creator of the Linguistic Landscape Pitcairn Island*, <https://www.pisg.net/2012bpc/muhlhausler-text1.pdf>, 2012.

¹²⁵ Mühlhäusler.

¹²⁶ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 66.

English.¹²⁷ Herbert Ford elaborates that the crew of the *Topaz* described the Pitcairn Islanders as having unique complexions of “English [faces], under [a] dark tan and long, plaited hair.”¹²⁸ Yet, the physical characteristics and the linguistic preferences of Pitcairn Islanders are only two elements of the culture that is indigenous to their archipelago.

The tiny population of the Pitcairn Islands is an archetype of cultural indigeneity. Pitcairn Islanders speak predominantly English with a minor, native language (perhaps a dialect) derived from a local pidgin tongue.¹²⁹ The Pitcairn Islanders are isolated from the outside world to such a degree that their way of life is predicated upon extracting maximum resources from their ecological area.¹³⁰ This group relies on a sustained connection to the outside world, as well as a supply chain of resources which is reinforced against failure by a local staple industry, namely, fishing and the growth of vegetables throughout the island’s collective gardens.¹³¹ Above all, the Pitcairn Islanders’ way of life is unique to their de-facto “ancestral homeland” and their culture cannot be duplicated anywhere else.

Because the Pitcairn Islands did not feature a pre-existing First Nation but was populated by people from the outside world, one could technically argue that the area is a colony, and therefore has been colonized. This would be the position of Tuck and Yang, who opine that colonization would render Pitcairn Islanders as non-native “settlers.”¹³² However, this would miss the notion that the culture — not the population — is the

¹²⁷ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 52.

¹²⁸ Herbert Ford, *Island of Tears: John I. Tay and the Story of Pitcairn* (Oakland: Pacific Press Publishing, 1990), 19.

¹²⁹ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 173; Mühlhäusler, *Ned Young*.

¹³⁰ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 117.

¹³¹ Kirk, 193.

¹³² Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” 6.

indigenous element of the discussion. Moreover, the notion that these areas have been colonized would not be correct. Colonization, as Tuck and Yang describe it, implies a power disparity, whereby a larger, chauvinistic power dominates a smaller, victim state.¹³³ This dynamic was leveraged to unjustly legitimize the Sexual Assault Trials of 2004.¹³⁴

Indeed, a prime example of the difference between overseas imperialism and colonization is the dynamic between the Pitcairn Islands and the United Kingdom: Pitcairn Islanders are an example of a group which has neither colonized nor been the victims of colonization.¹³⁵ Left to their own devices, the Pitcairn Islanders have a unique perception of the world, due to having a low population that exists in geographic isolation.¹³⁶ The Pitcairn culture is an amalgamation of British and Tahitian,¹³⁷ but this should not be misunderstood to imply that the islanders are British imperialists; to the contrary, they are the offspring of mutineers who fled Britain and hid on Pitcairn until rediscovered decades later.¹³⁸ The British subjects of the Pitcairn Islands live under the yoke of British imperialism, but do not represent British sea power in virtually any way.¹³⁹

The Pitcairn Islands illustrate imperialism juxtaposed against colonization. The Pitcairn Islands were not colonized in the traditional sense of the terms of dehumanizing

¹³³ Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," 4.

¹³⁴ Manross, *Pitcairn Islands and Indigeneity*, 13.

¹³⁵ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 4.

¹³⁶ Kirk, 166.

¹³⁷ Kirk, 49.

¹³⁸ Kirk, 50.

¹³⁹ Kirk, 4.

a population, such as Tuck and Yang espouse.¹⁴⁰ There was no population that was controlled and subjugated in the area. Rather, islanders became a colonial part of an economic empire while retaining local autonomy.¹⁴¹ The Pitcairn Islands were subjected to burdensome imperialism during the Sexual Assault Trials of 2004 (to be discussed momentarily), but not colonized.¹⁴² Pitcairn Islanders routinely demonstrate that their culture is unique and misunderstood by the outside world in their own writings, such as those in their publication, *The Miscellany*,¹⁴³ which deliberately seeks to engage what islanders perceive as errors in journalism about their island.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, the case study of the Pitcairn Islands provides extensive empirical and anecdotal evidence, supporting a provisional definition of cultural indigeneity as the existence of a unique culture, created by a non-native population, which can be considered culturally indigenous to an ancestral homeland.

The identification of subsets of populations may present one of the most relevant difficulties for the present hypothesis. Within the population of the Pitcairn Islands there are multiple subsets that impact these groups' dynamics, collective core values, and common expectations of interaction with the outside world. Within the Pitcairn Islands, dynamics such as generational differences and familial wealth drive the creation of different subsets within the respective society, which may have competing agendas.

¹⁴⁰ Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," 6.

¹⁴¹ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 4.

¹⁴² Kirk, 228-229.

¹⁴³ *The Miscellany* is the official publication of the Pitcairn Islands and has been published continuously, since 1962. The Government of the Pitcairn Islands continues to publish the periodical and offers an encyclopedic collection of back issues at <https://www.visitpitcairn.pn/miscellany>.

¹⁴⁴ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 181.

Rather than view such disparity as insignificant, cultural indigeneity seems to provide room to examine the effect competing elements may have on the members of that society.

This study operates from the underlying assumption that it is not a population of humans, but rather the culture they have established, which might be interpreted as indigenous to an ancestral homeland. There may be a causational relationship between culture and indigeneity in isolated regions, as illustrated by the Pitcairn Islands. The culture of the Pitcairn Islands is dramatically colored by the fact that this archipelago is the most isolated landmass in the world, situated in the offshore grounds of the South Pacific.¹⁴⁵ The culture of the Pitcairn Islands is a naturally occurring product of the archipelago's extreme isolation and unique environment.

The culture of the Pitcairn Islands exists in symbiotic relationship with the outside world,¹⁴⁶ which has a similar effect upon Pitkerners' culture as the dynamic does with most indigenous groups. It is within this seclusion that the "*Pitkern*" pidgin tongue developed.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, remoteness allows established norms to slowly change, over time, without exposure to their original influences. As those pathways diverge, culture that is peculiar and abhorrent to the outside world can be protected by geographic seclusion. Therefore, in interactions between the original culture and the newly formed indigenous culture, the destruction of language is a phenomenon stemming from xenophobia.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Kathy Marks, *Lost Paradise: From Mutiny on the Bounty to a Modern Day Legacy of Sexual Mayhem, The Dark Secrets of Pitcairn Island Revealed* (New York: Free Press, 2009), xxi.

¹⁴⁶ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 166

¹⁴⁷ Kirk, 133-134.

¹⁴⁸ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 127.

In attempting to prevent change, colonizing nations seem to generally employ the same two-step pattern: first, refusal to recognize the creation of a new culture and, second, ambivalently degrading and ignoring local dialects and pidgin languages when dealing with the indigenous population.¹⁴⁹ As Lovern and Locust suggest, the belligerence behind ignoring the development of local language patterns is not surprising, as it involves the notion of sharing sovereignty.¹⁵⁰ However, the issue of refusing to recognize a population as indigenous is another issue. Indigeneity is not an issue that has been considered at depth, to date, for non-native populations. That said, it would be impossible to say that colonizing powers *deliberately* ignored the indigeneity of non-native populations that naturally developed indigenous languages, if neither party can be demonstrated to have been conscious of the theoretical implications of the development of pidgin language in terms of its ramifications under the paradigm of indigeneity.

The population of the Pitcairn Islands has yet to be officially recognized under the umbrella of indigeneity.¹⁵¹ Defining indigeneity as any naturally occurring process in a region, Pitcairn's population cannot be considered a "naturally occurring product" of its ancestral homeland. Rather, during the eighteenth century the population was transported to Bounty Bay,¹⁵² where cultural diffusion took place during every engagement between the islanders and foreigners.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, the first group from the outside world to populate the Pitcairn Islands did not displace any original, "indigenous" human population.¹⁵⁴ Thus, when the colonizers laid down permanent roots, they did not destroy

¹⁴⁹ Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 133-134.

¹⁵⁰ Lovern and Locust, 134.

¹⁵¹ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 5.

¹⁵² Kirk, 46-48.

¹⁵³ Kirk, 183-185.

¹⁵⁴ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 16.

a preexisting culture; rather, they planted the seeds of a culture which was a naturally occurring product — an indigenous manifestation — of the population's new, adopted, ancestral homeland.

Thus, the Pitcairn Islands constitute a classic case of cultural indigeneity. By no means is it the only such example. Rather, as the theory of cultural indigeneity is expanded upon, it is likely to become nuanced and add to *inclusion* of population groups. For example, the self-declared “urban indigenous” Mapuche population in Chile is a relevant example of how this might hold immediate relevance in both the academic and applied sectors of indigenous studies, particularly indigenous law.

Current Historical Scholarship on the Pitcairn Islands

The current canon of research on the Pitcairn Islands is somewhat sparse. Formal research is limited as far as robust, academic scholarship is concerned, but a few scholars picked up on the gap as early as the late nineteenth century, each providing his or her own rather encyclopedic volumes to fill the void. There is no current academic journal that has recently focused on the Pitcairn Island. That said, the Pitcairn Islanders continue to routinely write about their history and culture.

One scholar of Polynesian indigenous heritage who has studied Pitcairn Island's culture is Maria Amoamo, who notes that “Pitcairn culture has developed its own unique ways of life.”¹⁵⁵ Amoamo studies Pitcairn's idea of community as an entity, even if not

¹⁵⁵ Maria Amoamo, “Fieldwork in Remote Communities: An Ethnographic Case Study of Pitcairn Island,” in *Advances in Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research* 6 (2012): 428, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235269736_Fieldwork_in_Remote_Communities_An_Ethnographic_Case_Study_of_Pitcairn_Island.

through the lens of indigeneity.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, she identifies Pitcairn as entirely unique from the perspective of ethnographic analysis — indeed, she specifically underscores that Pitcairn’s culture demonstrates “a process of becoming.”¹⁵⁷ It is intriguing to note that Amoamo explains that Pitcairn Islanders deliberately leverage the concept of exclusivity in preserving their culture.¹⁵⁸ That said, she acknowledges that Pitcairn Islanders use the negative notion of exclusivity specifically “to exploit/entice passing ships to part with some of their supplies.”¹⁵⁹

Some of the most important research on the Pitcairn Islands has been compiled by the Pacific Union College’s Herbert Ford Pitcairn Islands Study Center, in Angwin, California.¹⁶⁰ Operated for the last three decades by Herbert Ford — who spoke before the United Nations about ending colonialism, citing Pitcairn’s culture as an example¹⁶¹ — and a dedicated team of college staff, the study center is a trove of sources on the history of the islands of which only the surface has been scratched. It is, arguably, the world’s most important collection of data on Pitcairn Island that can be found outside of the archipelago.¹⁶² Beyond primary resources, it has an abundance of secondary sources less related to scholarship and more to journalism.

¹⁵⁶ Amoamo, “Fieldwork in Remote Communities,” 430.

¹⁵⁷ Amoamo, 431.

¹⁵⁸ Amoamo, 431-432.

¹⁵⁹ Amoamo, 432.

¹⁶⁰ Pacific Union College, *Pitcairn Islands Study Center: Center Collections*, 2022, <https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/studycenter/holdings.shtml>.

¹⁶¹ Herbert Ford, *United Nations: Statement by the Pitcairn Islands Study Center*, 2010, <https://docslib.org/doc/1596140/discussion-paper-of-mr-herbert-ford-pitcairn-islands>.

¹⁶² Pacific Union College.

Much of the journalism is focused on the Sexual Assault Trials that rocked the region in 2004.¹⁶³ This journalism is dangerous, according to locals — they bemoan such writings as the opinions of outsiders, casting judgements based on foreign, cultural values.¹⁶⁴ The journalism is not academic in nature, seeking to frame Pitcairn as a “hellish little universe” that can “offer a glimpse of the darkness that lies within every one of us.”¹⁶⁵ Investigative journalists seem to have compiled articles under the guise of academic literature, with the intention of selling stories in the form of profitable trade books.¹⁶⁶ Such literature has deliberately and combatively put itself into debate against the study center and denounced Herbert Ford in *ad hominem*.¹⁶⁷

The Indigenous Culture of the Pitcairn Islands

If cultural indigeneity is confirmed, then there may be major pedagogical implications for the study of indigeneity, which is predicated upon a study of cultural groups. In the field of indigeneity, it is an accepted notion that individual indigenous groups have unique and individual cultures, which were created by the people in question, over centuries, if not millennia. The notion of cultural indigeneity turns that on its head, postulating that through the development of a unique culture, the people of the Pitcairn Islands can be considered to have demonstrated indigeneity. There was no indigenous population at the time of settlement of the Pitcairn Islands and a linguistic tradition has developed that is unique to the population. To quote (and underscore) a

¹⁶³ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, xxii.

¹⁶⁴ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 231-232.

¹⁶⁵ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 284.

¹⁶⁶ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 248. This is the Works Cited of Kirk’s research, which lists Kathy Marks’ journal articles that were compiled into the book, which is cited herein, *Lost Paradise* — the most antagonistic work on Pitcairn’s culture.

¹⁶⁷ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 63-64.

master's thesis, written by Roy Sanders, in 1953, the Pitcairn Islanders "have retained their *indigenous culture* [emphasis mine]" ¹⁶⁸

The most important issue facing the Pitcairn population is the need for cultural preservation, lest the people and the indigenous culture it protects slip into extinction. ¹⁶⁹ The Pitcairn Islands group appears to be extremely vulnerable to such a fate. Suffering from the threat of imminent pedigree collapse, by the 1960s Pitcairn had a population of less than fifty inhabitants that was in rapid decline. ¹⁷⁰ Of the remaining population, virtually all were blood related. Hence, without emigration and support for the aging population, the island was in peril of being left to demise if reliant solely upon its own devices. The notion of cultural indigeneity may imply an important, applied purpose: a legalistic doctrine may be developed through cultural indigeneity that supports the preservation of the *Pitkairn* culture that can be documented to have been in existence for centuries.

An underappreciated element of the Pitcairn culture is the burial traditions which highlight the cultural development of its generally Western, Christian leanings. The first funeral on Pitcairn was presided over by the island's patriarch, John Adams. Adams "found himself, for the first time, having to officiate at the burial services [of the last of

¹⁶⁸ Roy Sanders. *Our Island: A Study of Pitcairn Community in Transition* (Auckland: University of Auckland Press, 1953), 260. This is the only use of the term "indigenous culture" I have encountered in my research about Pitcairn Island. Sanders mentions "indigenous culture" only once, in passing, and makes no allusion to any form of desire to study the correlation between culture and indigeneity; he certainly does not mean to imply the sweeping assertion, tested in the present paper, which posits that culture might be an indigenously occurring phenomenon. However, Sanders unwittingly confirmed that he perceives the Pitcairn culture to be an indigenously occurring phenomenon — at the very least, that Pitcairn does have an "indigenous culture."

¹⁶⁹ Amoamo, "Fieldwork in Remote Communities," 422.

¹⁷⁰ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 182-3.

his fellow mutineers, Edward Young], and from that point on took his [religious] responsibilities very seriously.”¹⁷¹ Young “died of asthma (or perhaps tuberculosis) on Christmas Day 1800, [and was] the first man on Pitcairn to die a natural death.”¹⁷² It is not clear what became of Young’s grave because Adams’ grave is the sole “known mutineer grave on Pitcairn...of the whereabouts of the remains of the eight others we can only speculate.”¹⁷³

Adams’ grave may be the only known gravesite of the mutineers — and Young’s service may be the first confirmed funeral — but there were certainly deaths that occurred earlier at the location that came to be known as Adamstown in honor of the island’s patriarch. Pitcairn culture takes the history of the gravesites so seriously that it named the cave in which the leader of the mutineers, Fletcher Christian, was murdered, “Fletcher’s Cave”¹⁷⁴ (Figure 1). Christian’s murder, along with all those of “Massacre Day,” seem to have resulted in the bodies being desecrated.¹⁷⁵ The gravesites have apparently been lost; it is not clear if the burials were conducted in anything more than a shallow ditch.¹⁷⁶ It is almost certain that cannibalism was not involved and that the sailors would not have risked the pyre associated with burning bodies, nor with casting a corpse to sea, where it might be discovered or wash ashore in a distant area.

¹⁷¹ Herbert Ford, *Who are the Pitcairn Islanders? A-C*, 2023, <https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/pitcairn/Pitcairners/index.shtml>.

¹⁷² Pitcairn Islands Study Center, *Bounty's Crew Encyclopedia*, 2023, <https://library.puc.edu/pitcairn/bounty/crew5.shtml>.

¹⁷³ Pitcairn Islands Study Center, *United States and United Kingdom Academics Begin Studies to Authenticate 'Bounty' Mutineer Hair*, 2016, <https://www.puc.edu/news/archives/2016/puc-collaborates-with-kings-college-london-to-authenticate-bounty-mutineer-hair>.

¹⁷⁴ The Government of the Pitcairn Islands. *Places of Interest*, 2023, <http://www.pitcairn.pn/tourist.php>.

¹⁷⁵ Pitcairn Islands Study Center, *History of Pitcairn Islands*, 2022, <https://puc.libguides.com/PISC-pitcairn-history>.

¹⁷⁶ Pitcairn Islands Study Center, *United States and United Kingdom Academics Begin Studies to Authenticate 'Bounty' Mutineer Hair*, 2016.

In 1814, the British vessels HMS *Tagus* and HMS *Briton* arrived at Adamstown, aware of the reports of the HMS *Topaz*.¹⁷⁷ Captain Thomas Staine was persuaded by the second generation of Pitcairn Islanders to overlook the fact that they realized Adams was a mutineer. Adams was allowed to remain on the island because his family relied on him.¹⁷⁸ During the 1820s, the population doubled in size to over sixty.¹⁷⁹ Adams became convinced that the resources (particularly the water) were overtaxed. Adams lobbied his people to leave the island, in 1825, when they were visited by HMS *Blossom*. Captain Frederick Beechey offered to transport the entire population to Australia, but against Adams' judgement, they declined.¹⁸⁰

When Adams died in 1829, the Pitcairn Islanders followed his advice to abandon the island.¹⁸¹ An archaeologist who specializes in Pitcairn Island, Nigel Erskine, confirms that:

The rapid increase in shipping in the 1830s and 1840s resulted in...the cultivation of new crops...[which] seriously depleted the natural resources of the island and were attended by catastrophic environmental changes which may have influenced the Pitcairn Islanders' decision to abandon the island.¹⁸²

The combination of overpopulation and environmental collapse combined to create the circumstances for the abduction of Pitcairn's most important cultural antiquity. Within a year of losing their leader, the Pitcairn Islanders were ready to evacuate Adamstown.

¹⁷⁷ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 52.

¹⁷⁸ Manross, *Pitcairn Islands and Indigeneity*, 4.

¹⁷⁹ Nigel Erskine, *The Historical Archaeology of Settlement at Pitcairn Island* (Queensland: James Cook University Press, 2004), 166.

¹⁸⁰ Pauline Grimshaw, 1825, *Beechy, Pitcairn Island*, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/30593522@N05/6283036208>.

¹⁸¹ Maude, "Tahitian Interlude," 115.

¹⁸² Erskine, *The Historical Archaeology*, 213.

The Repatriation of Pitcairn's Cultural Artifact: The Adams Tombstone

The entire population of the Pitcairn Islands evacuated the island in favor of Papeete, Tahiti, in 1831.¹⁸³ Due to a combination of cultural factors reflecting the Pitcairn characters as being “too European in their ways and, on the other, stricter in morals and sexual behavior than their hosts,”¹⁸⁴ and biological vulnerability to local, endemic disease, the Pitcairn Islanders returned home, in 1832.¹⁸⁵ The Pitcairn Islanders realized, arguably for the first time, that their culture was at some level so indigenous to their own island that they were in need of legal protection.¹⁸⁶ As a result, the Pitcairn Islanders made their own constitution which formally incorporated them into the British Empire, on the HMS *Fly*, in 1838. This constitution was the first in the history of the British Empire to include female suffrage and mandatory education. The constitution also formed the Island Council which was designed to provide representation for the Pitcairn Islanders in the governance of day-to-day affairs, officially rebranded as the Government of the Pitcairn Islands, in 2014.¹⁸⁷

Within two decades, the population of Adamstown was approaching two hundred and the British authorities began to exert pressure upon the Pitcairn Islanders to, once again, evacuate their tiny, remote island.¹⁸⁸ Because of their failed emigration to Tahiti, “the islanders insisted that if they were compelled to emigrate it should be to an

¹⁸³ Maude, “Tahitian Interlude,” 123-124.

¹⁸⁴ Pitcairn Islands Study Center, *History of Pitcairn Islands*.

¹⁸⁵ Maude, “Tahitian Interlude,” 131-132.

¹⁸⁶ Pitcairn Islands Study Center, *History of Pitcairn Islands*.

¹⁸⁷ The Pitcairn Islands, in cooperation with New Zealand, made a formal constitution which repurposes their “Island Council for Pitcairn, which shall be composed, and shall have such functions in relation to the government of Pitcairn, as may be prescribed by any law” (The Government of the Pitcairn Islands. *The Constitution of Pitcairn*, <https://www.pitcairlaws.epizy.com/The%20Constitution%20of%20Pitcairn.pdf?i=1>, 2014, xlvi).

¹⁸⁸ Pitcairn Islands Study Center, *History of Pitcairn Islands*.

uninhabited island”¹⁸⁹ — a wish that was not granted. The Pitcairn Islanders seemed to realize that the biological factors that contributed to their return to Pitcairn from Tahiti, in 1831, were outweighed by cultural factors that rendered their way of life too peculiar to be acceptable to other cultural groups.¹⁹⁰ The only reason that the incident did not make a more significant impact in the Pitcairn cultural memory was that “there was no ‘Special Correspondent’ on Tahiti ready to make the most of a journalistic scoop”¹⁹¹ — a factor that allowed the Pitcairn Islanders to largely dismiss the episode in their cultural memory.

During the Pitcairn Islanders’ sortie in Tahiti, Adamstown was ransacked. In December of 1830, the French brig, *Le Courier de Bordeaux*, made call at Pitcairn Island, under the command of Captain Arnaud Mauruc.¹⁹² The French learned that the islanders were planning on evacuating; curiously, the ship returned a few months later. When the Pitcairn Islanders returned from their six-month stint in Tahiti, their livestock was running wild, farms were carelessly rummaged, and the houses had been plundered.¹⁹³ While the evidence that Mauruc’s crew pillaged the island is admittedly circumstantial, it is also quite compelling.

The evidence which supports the notion that Mauruc must have pirated Pitcairn Island are the records and behavior of a sailor named Jacques-Antoine Moerenhaut, who wrote about his voyages in the region in the 1830s in his two-volume journal, *Voyages aux Îles du Grand Océan*. Moerenhaut travelled with Mauruc during his voyage to

¹⁸⁹ Pitcairn Islands Study Center, *History of Pitcairn Islands*.

¹⁹⁰ Maude, “Tahitian Interlude,” 130-131.

¹⁹¹ Maude, 136.

¹⁹² Maude, 132.

¹⁹³ Pitcairn Islands Study Center, *History of Pitcairn Islands*.

Pitcairn, in 1831.¹⁹⁴ Moerenhaut does not mention a ransacking — but, a few months later, he made the unusual decision to order his employees to station at facilities on the island closest to the Pitcairn archipelago, Mangareva. Moerenhaut intended them to be an “advance guard [for] the maintenance of the plantations and livestock and [to] prevent their destruction by the crews of any ships that should happen to call.”¹⁹⁵ Due to the isolation of Mangareva, it would seem that Moerenhaut must have witnessed the ransacking of Adamstown — or else he could not have justified the expense of securing his company’s insignificant holdings on such a remote island without at least appearing paranoid.

Most importantly for the present study was the vandalism of the grave of the original patriarch, John Adams, whose missing tombstone must have been stolen by Mauruc’s crew.¹⁹⁶ British Admiral Sir Edward Gennys Fanshawe was a noted world traveler, from a wealthy family, who wrote about visiting Pitcairn Island, in 1849.¹⁹⁷ Fanshawe ultimately became Admiral President of the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, in 1875.¹⁹⁸ Greenwich, England’s National Maritime Museum currently possesses the Pitcairn grave marker: while Fanshawe does not mention if he took the marker, it would appear that Fanshawe left Pitcairn in possession of the “original wood and lead

¹⁹⁴ Maude, “Tahitian Interlude,” 132.

¹⁹⁵ Maude, 132.

¹⁹⁶ Pitcairn Islands Study Center, *History of Pitcairn Islands*.

¹⁹⁷ Edward Gennys Fanshawe, *John Adams House and Grave Pitcairn's Island, Augt 12th 1849*, pp.1-2, 1849, 1-2.

¹⁹⁸ John Knox Laughton. *Dictionary of National Biography, 1912 Supplement: Fanshawe, Edward Gennys* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912).

marker.”¹⁹⁹ The museum has taken the marker off display and has yet to be pressured to repatriate the tombstone to its ancestral homeland, nearly two centuries later.²⁰⁰

The British possession of the Pitcairn tombstone may be one of the most unexpected and underappreciated tools for the hypothetical recognition of Pitcairn’s cultural indigeneity. Repatriation of cultural artifacts has proven to be an effective means for making claims to possessing legal rights over land in the United States and might be relevant for Pitcairn Islanders. Researching the issues surrounding repatriation of rights to graves of slaves in Richmond, Virginia, Mai-Linh K. Hong observed that “because the law did not offer redress for the alleged desecration of the Burial Ground, the issue was relegated to the more volatile political arena.”²⁰¹ At the heart of the issue was whether people who could not prove direct familial lineage to the slaves in the Burial Ground could claim legal rights to the ancestral grounds to which they remained culturally attached. Ultimately, Hong opined that a negotiation that led to a memorial was a “victory.”²⁰² The victory of securing a memorial in Virginia may have similar implications for a potential legal claim by Pitcairn Islanders for the repatriation of the tombstone in association with claiming the right to practice cultural customs that are not native to the British.

If the Pitcairn Islanders were to claim a direct ancestral lineage to John Adams, they would have precedent in international law to at least sue for the repatriation of the tombstone. Hypothetically, winning such a lawsuit would reinforce the notion that

¹⁹⁹ Fanshawe, 1849, 1.

²⁰⁰ Pitcairn Islands Study Center, *History of Pitcairn Islands*.

²⁰¹ Mai-Linh Hong, “‘Get Your Asphalt Off My Ancestors!’: Reclaiming Richmond’s African Burial Ground,” *Law, Culture, and the Humanities* 13, no. 1 (2017): 83.

²⁰² Hong, 101.

Pitcairn maintains a culture that renders it unique and different from its imperial overlords, the British. It would not be an easy victory for the Pitcairn Islanders to attain: they would be compelled to document that they could preserve the artifact (assuming the exhibit has not been taken off display because the lead and wood have already decayed) — a tall order for a remote island with perpetually-pinched resources. For the islanders, the only victory they seek are legal protections under the umbrella of indigeneity, granted because of recognition of their culture's uniqueness. Moreover, the Pitcairn Islanders might be able to establish a more unconditional legal claim to their own ancestral homeland, preventing future legal incursions from the British.

There are both legal and moral precedents within the British empire for the repatriation of artifacts to groups that are recognized as legitimately indigenous or otherwise possessing an ancient, natural right to the cultural antiquities.²⁰³ The most important examples of such repatriation campaigns within the British empire undoubtedly is the British Museum's reluctance to return the Parthenon Marbles,²⁰⁴ and the same institution's legal battle over its unjust refusal to return Australian boomerangs and human remains that rightfully belong to Aboriginal First Nations.²⁰⁵ While British law remains ambivalent about the moral necessity to return cultural antiquities, the work of lawyer and cultural historian Jeanette Greenfield demonstrates that international law is more progressive.²⁰⁶ At the core of each of these legal issues is identity and the

²⁰³ Richard Joyce, "Cultural Treasures and Slippery Slopes," *Public Affairs Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (2003): 1, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40441339>.

²⁰⁴ Oliver Meyer, "Review: The Return of Cultural Treasures by Jeanette Greenfield," *The International Lawyer* 25, no. 4 (1991): 1096, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40706934>.

²⁰⁵ Jeanette Greenfield, *The Return of Cultural Treasures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 156.

²⁰⁶ Meyer, "Review," 1098.

recognition that cultural antiquities belong to the area to which they are legitimately indigenous. Pitcairn Islanders share a general enthusiasm for their cultural antiquities that implies they have an interest in suing for the return of the tombstone.

The Pitcairn Islanders might support a hypothetical legal claim for the repatriation of their tombstone by citing their long-established precedent for the public memorialization and preservation of cultural antiquities from the eighteenth-century *Bounty* saga. Cultural antiquities underpin the indigenous culture of the Pitcairn Islands and seem likely to be a decisive factor in an international lawsuit. The nomenclature of “Adamstown” renders the capital as an artifact preserving a distinctly *Pitkern* culture, following the legacy established by its patriarch. At the epicenter of Adamstown is Bounty Square where the HMS *Bounty*’s anchor has remained on display since 1957. Inside the town church is the *Bounty*’s bible, linking Seventh Day Adventism to Anglicanism, the older sect of Christianity practiced by “Father” John Adams.²⁰⁷

Based on how it has been deliberately preserved, the Adams tombstone is evidently more important than these other cultural antiquities. Since their return to find that the original grave marker had been removed, in 1831, the Pitcairn population has replaced the grave marker with a tombstone that has been refurbished multiple times to preserve the site (Figure 2, 2.1, and 3). Beyond this, Erskine notes that on another island within the Pitcairn archipelago, the Pitcairn Islanders go out of their way to maintain the headstone of Captain Thomas Knowles. It is “a simple marble headstone laying face up

²⁰⁷ Herbert Ford, *Religion on Pitcairn Island*, 2022, <https://puc.libguides.com/PISC-religion>.

on the sand,” preserved to be “tangible evidence of the wreck of the *Wild Wave* at Oeno Island.”²⁰⁸

The Pitcairn Islanders could document that burial practices are more important in their culture than for other populations in less remote regions. On October 9, 2007, Ford relayed a report about the islanders’ behavior upon the death of Vula Young. Ford reported that “burial came quickly...in the island cemetery because no embalming is available.”²⁰⁹ The Pitcairn culture has adopted funeral traditions that are also a facet of their complex cultural heritage. An island representative reported to the Pitcairn Islands Study Center that “bell ringing is something we do for every person who dies here on Pitcairn; normally it is done on the day of the funeral,” and that during the ceremony “life on Pitcairn [will] virtually shut down.”²¹⁰

Nowhere else in the developed world does an entire nation “shut down” for one individual’s funeral. This tradition, however, is in keeping with the longstanding habit of ringing bells for the deceased that originated in New England’s colonies, and which is associated with the ominous saying, “for whom the bell tolls.” The bell toll is a remnant of the British society even though Amoamo repeats a commonly accepted, but erroneous perception that “Pitcairners are British in name only...everything about them is different.”²¹¹ Yet, Pitcairn retains “customs developed by the islanders themselves, especially their self-government, and their social and religious attitude.”²¹² For example,

²⁰⁸ Erskine, 393.

²⁰⁹ Herbert Ford, *A Pitcairner Dies*, 2007, <https://puc.libguides.com/PISC-news-20071009>.

²¹⁰ Pitcairn Islands Study Center, *Remote Pitcairn Island Marks Queen's Death, Charles' Ascension*, 2022, <https://puc.libguides.com/PISC-news-20220911>.

²¹¹ Amoamo, “Fieldwork in Remote Communities,” 428.

²¹² Amoamo, 428.

the Pitcairn cultural custom that the locals become “upset at the thought of deceased relatives in untended graves,”²¹³ is not derived from their British roots. The islanders compensate for quick burials with filial piety and lasting respect.

If any artifact is more precious to the people of Pitcairn, then it is the alleged hair locks of the *Bounty* mutineers being held at the Pitcairn Islands Study Center (Figure 4). Amongst a collection of biographic busts (Figure 5), handmade art from Pitcairn (Figure 6), and murals of postage stamps (Figure 7), these nine cuts of human hair are accompanied by a “Sotheby’s ‘Travel Sale’ (Auction)” label, dated 14 December 2000:

H.M.S. Bounty – Locks of hair and a handkerchief...belonging to members of the HMS *Bounty*, collected by Able Seaman and mutineer William McCoy, together with a label in a nineteenth century hand explaining the provenance...housed in a nineteenth-century cylindrical tobacco tin, the label and tin number worn; sold not subject to return.

The locks of hair were sent to the Pitcairn Islands Study Center by a donor from Hertfordshire, England. Pacific Union College is engaged with King’s College in a genetic study to confirm the authenticity of the hair. According to the daily steward of the Pitcairn Islands Study Center, chief librarian Patrick Benner,²¹⁴ the Federal Bureau of Investigation has taken an interest in the technology which may succeed in confirming the identity of hair that is over two centuries old.

The repatriation of artifacts may seem minor, but it is the preeminent legal issue facing the Pitcairn Islanders. If Pitcairn can mount a legal bid for protection as an indigenous group under international law, it would protect them against being forced to

²¹³ Ford, *Religion on Pitcairn Island*, 2022.

²¹⁴ I conducted an informal, oral interview with Patrick Benner on August 7, 2023, from 1:40 pm – 2:22 pm, during an impromptu tour of the Pitcairn Islands Study Center, at Pacific Union College, in Angwin, California.

repeat a version of the most dramatic and damaging episode of their history. Arguably, nothing has defined the modern culture of Pitcairn Island more than recent legal episodes. Pitcairn's constitution immortalizes a need for laws which are "appropriate and proportionate to Pitcairn."²¹⁵ If Pitcairn could guarantee that they were never again subject to the unilateral authority of the British legal system, it would constitute a historic achievement for Pitcairn national security.

Pitcairn Island's Sexual Assault Trials of 2004

The Pitcairn Islands were rocked by the infamous Sexual Assault Trials of 2004, in which every male on the island was arraigned on charges of sexually abusing minor girls,²¹⁶ typically from the age of twelve. In modern scholarship, the Sexual Assault Trials have been somewhat overshadowed by theatrical interest in the deliberate scuttling of the HMS *Bounty* — the seminal moment in the history of the island, effectively marooning the entire first generation of Pitcairn Islanders.²¹⁷ Mutineers wanted by the British empire, the original Pitcairn culture marooned itself in fear of the specter of death at the hands of imperialism.²¹⁸ The burning of the HMS *Bounty* was immortalized in no less than four major films. *The Wake of the Bounty* (1933) with Errol Flynn discussed the ship's scuttling; more poignantly, it was the triumphant ending scene of both *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935) with Clark Gable and its 1962 remake starring Marlon Brando (which

²¹⁵ The Government of the Pitcairn Islands, *The Constitution of Pitcairn*, xxxix.

²¹⁶ Manross, *Pitcairn Islands and Indigeneity*, 10.

²¹⁷ Caroline Alexander, *The Bounty: The True Story of the Mutiny on the Bounty* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 364.

²¹⁸ Alexander, 141.

inspired the actor to purchase a private island), as well as in *The Bounty* (1984) with Anthony Hopkins and Mel Gibson, as Bligh and Christian, respectively.

In 2004, the islanders once again feared the specter of British imperialism, albeit under unrelated conditions.²¹⁹ Imperialistic interference loomed over the culture of the island as “justice” from thousands of miles away was hastily applied to the “unique” situation of Pitcairn.²²⁰ The British, not ironically, chose a militaristic label when they coined the Sexual Assault Trials of 2004, “Operation Unique.”²²¹ The trials were the result of a clash of cultures. The British enforced the sexual morality of mainstream society on the people of a remote island.

Pitcairn’s culture, and their sexual morality codes, were the product of a tiny population’s perpetual plight of survival. The Pitcairn population had a cultural custom (dating back to at least the end of the Second World War) of encouraging girls to engage in sexual intercourse once they were capable of reproduction: this norm was viewed as preserving the dwindling population, which was suffering from pedigree collapse²²² at around fifty individuals. New Zealand’s governance includes a constable to oversee Pitcairn Island as a British Overseas Territory. In 1999, constable Gail Cox realized that Pitcairn’s customs were inconsistent with laws in the United Kingdom, triggering an investigation that found evidence of prosecutable activity in the form of the statutory rape

²¹⁹ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 5.

²²⁰ Marks, 3.

²²¹ Manross, *Pitcairn Islands and Indigeneity*, 1; Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 27.

²²² Pedigree collapse occurs when a population becomes unhealthy due to a lack of genetic difference amongst offspring. This phenomenon is particularly acute on modern islands, where small populations are all blood related. Historically, pedigree collapse was a serious threat to European monarchies, who tended to intermarry to the point of creating inbred children. In the modern world, only the most isolated islands suffer pedigree collapse.

of local girls. The crimes had been committed by literally every male on the island and virtually all the females had been victims at some point in their lives.

Although the males were extradited to New Zealand for trial, their prison terms were short and soon the island's economy recovered a critical subset of its population.²²³ Part of how the island held together was its linguistic system, *Pitkern*, that maintained cultural continuity during the trials by reinforcing identifying terminology such as "the Pitcairn family."²²⁴ Journalists, such as Kathy Marks, did not understand the subtle link between culture, indigeneity, and pidgin language: this was evidenced by her judgment denouncing "the locals' earthy language, peppered with innuendo and swear words [linked to their culture's] relaxed sexual morals."²²⁵ Self-selected identity was central to females maintaining a link to their men: Betty Christian, wife of one of the accused, Tom Christian, stated she feared that "her very existence [was] at stake."²²⁶ The ability to communicate in their unique, cultural, pidgin tongue was a tool available to unite the embattled families of the Pitcairn Islanders in rebuilding in the wake of legal domination by a foreign system that labelled fathers and sons as rapists and pedophiles.²²⁷

In some communities, it appears that indigeneity can be more influenced by linguistic and oral traditions than in similar, but distinct, populations. For example, the Pitcairn Islands have a history and culture which is intimately linked to their unique language, *Pitkern*. Therefore, it is logical that the researcher of culture and indigeneity place a strong emphasis on oral history when studying the Pitcairn Islands' linguistic

²²³ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 146.

²²⁴ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 226.

²²⁵ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 59.

²²⁶ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 226.

²²⁷ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 4.

tradition. Firsthand accounts of the Sexual Assault Trials of 2004 are a common example of oral traditions. By contrast, the Government of Pitcairn Island is wary of salacious, accusatory, foreign opinions that conflict with oral traditions.

Marks is the epitome of the foreign journalism that she acknowledges was unwelcome by Pitcairn Islanders, regardless of her ethical argument. Marks admits her presence on the Pitcairn ancestral homeland was “more or less banned,” because of slanderous habits that the Pitcairn Islanders “detested” and predicted would surface in her journalism.²²⁸ Marks proved the prediction correct when she denounced their male population as a “viper’s nest of sex offenders, with their own children as defenseless prey,”²²⁹ married to women that “are having sex with anyone,” with children that “at five or six knew what ‘come here’ meant...viewed their parents’ pornographic videos...take off their clothes and touch each other’s bodies [and] beyond.”²³⁰ Marks states that her version of the “Pitcairn story makes us shiver. We recognize that hellish little universe and we recognize ourselves. The island offers a glimpse of the darkness that lies within every one of us.”²³¹ Marks frames all Pitcairners as evil.

Marks is not necessarily wrong to cast ethical judgements from the perspective of a western journalist, however, she is woefully uninformed of the best practices of indigeneity studies, as well as of the theory of Pitcairn’s culture being indigenous and thereby meritorious of protection. Since the Sexual Assault Trials of 2004, the Pitcairn Islanders have accepted international conventions and United Kingdom law, adjusting

²²⁸ Marks, 6.

²²⁹ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 209.

²³⁰ Marks, 265.

²³¹ Marks, 284.

their sexual mores to those of the Crown to which they enthusiastically remain loyal subjects. Nevertheless, “Operation Unique” demonstrated the threat that modern imperialism can pose to indigenous cultures. Without embracing Pitcairn’s defunct sexual customs, it is possible to denounce imperialistic sentiment.

Marks and her pointed judgments can be subjected to the tests proposed by noted and established scholars in the field of indigeneity studies. Lovern and Locust warn that it “belies the underlying colonization”²³² tendencies of outsiders when hurtful, accusatory, defamatory, or other negative labels are applied to any indigenous group. Kovach states that any research within indigeneity studies must recognize that:

Indigenous identity will always be a factor [and] there are two questions that a researcher must ask: do I have a relationship with the community I seek to represent through my researcher’s voice? Am I trusted by that community? These questions can apply to any type of Indigenous community...researchers need to “do the work” of honoring place and being in a relationship with the research community regardless of whether it is urban or rural. At the end of the day, it’s all about relationships.²³³

Marks fails the test of relationships, being viewed as unfriendly by the subject population of Pitcairn Islanders and, moreover, as a voice of oppression. She acknowledges that the laws of Britain had a history of antipathy towards Pitcairn culture and relays Britain’s official belief that “the island needed to be properly policed,”²³⁴ insinuating that the local female officer, Gale Cox, needed “to be a police officer, not the islanders’ friend.”²³⁵ Marks adds her opinion that “the first problem [Officer Cox] had to deal with was theft, particularly of government property,” even though, to the Pitcairners, “every thing [that]

²³² Lovern and Locust, *Global Indigenous Communities*, 15.

²³³ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 39.

²³⁴ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 31.

²³⁵ Marks, 35.

arrives on the island is Pitcairn property.”²³⁶ Nevertheless, Marks recollects a story about when the islanders were interrogated by imperial officials about the “thefts” and confidently asserts that “nearly everyone, even the elderly folk, owned up to something.”

That said, Marks owns up to something as well, which is her adamant refusal to bow to furious, local resistance from the Pitcairn culture:

We received feedback from the locals...Cookie Warren, who had attended court on the first day, wrote to tell me that I was clearly “prejudiced towards conviction.” Meralda Warren fumed, “Our men are not rapists or child molesters. The media including you, Kathy, have been getting things printed well out of proportion.” At the same time as our relations with the islanders declined, we journalists were getting to know each other better...with a reassuring air of having seen it all before...my media colleagues and I decided to hold a cheese-and-wine party in the evening...Most of the outsiders on the island accepted our invitation, but not the defense lawyers: Paul Dacre, Allan Roberts, and Charles Cato...Roberts explained quietly they couldn’t be seen socializing with us: their clients would be furious.²³⁷

Marks recognizes that her colleagues expressed discomfort with how locals perceived the behavior of the foreign journalists, who seemed to be ganging up on the Pitcairners.

Elaborating upon her view on the dynamic between journalists and their indigenous hosts, Marks recounted an exchange with the local pastor, Ray Coombe, which occurred on the day after her wine-and-cheese party that deigned to tolerate “only one variety of cheese available on Pitcairn.”²³⁸ Marks did not understand that her party smacked of Eurocentrism and an inability to understand the local culture. The Pitcairn Islanders did not view easily perishable wines and cheeses as staples and were taken aback at being judged by a party of journalists who featured an unmistakable air of

²³⁶ Marks, 35.

²³⁷ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 96.

²³⁸ Marks, 96.

arrogance. Marks illustrates her refusal to listen to the community, bragging about casting judgements upon the views of those whom she interviewed:

I...spoke to Coombe in the pews. He said it had been a “rough week” for the islanders. “They feel threatened and under attack,” he told us. “They feel a sense of inadequacy, that they can’t do anything except submit to the process. Others want to fight what’s happening. Apprehension is the prevailing mood.” I wondered if Coombe appreciated how serious the charges were.²³⁹

Marks seems befuddled about the fact that her judgements imply that she is superior to Coombe.

If both the hypothesis of cultural indigeneity is supported and then the public educated about its existence, then future instances of such blatant attacks will likely not occur as frequently against indigenous populations. When Marks published her book, she did not realize that she might be making statements against a culturally indigenous group, nor is indigeneity in any way a theme of her thoroughly researched book: indigeneity does not occur to Marks. That said, indigeneity did not necessarily occur to the collective, conscious mind of the Pitcairn population, either. The theme of indigeneity is never mentioned by the Amazon.com review that lauds the book as a “riveting account [of] a society gone badly astray...a paradise lost.”²⁴⁰

The need for academic intervention appears to have the possibility for immediate application to international law, so far as the Government of Pitcairn Island is concerned. I would argue that, from the perspective of the Pitcairn Islanders, the hypothesis of cultural indigeneity represents a tool for national security more than cultural preservation.

²³⁹ Marks, 96.

²⁴⁰ Amazon.com, *Lost Paradise: From Mutiny on the Bounty to a Modern-Day Legacy of Sexual Mayhem, the Dark Secrets of Pitcairn Island Revealed*, 2022, <https://www.amazon.com/Lost-Paradise-Modern-Day-Pitcairn-Revealed/dp/1416597476>.

For Pitcairn, knowledge of its own cultural indigeneity would represent a defense for its culture against what it perceives as the existential threat of cultural genocide, even in the wake of having embraced the laws of the United Kingdom in their cultural custom for the last two decades.

The Pitcairn Islanders have bemoaned that the outside world does not understand their culture and that they fear this could spell the end of their existence.²⁴¹ Amoamo explains that “Pitcairn ‘identity’ is [a] dichotomy whereby a clear ideological [and] practical division between ‘us’ and ‘them’ is practiced...the construct of ‘community’ is fundamental to Pitcairn’s future survival.”²⁴² Amoamo specifically elaborates that Pitcairn Islanders perceive themselves as suffering “marginalization” and “neglect” at the hands of British overseas imperialism.²⁴³ At the root of this sentiment is the public vilification of their island. Pitcairn Islanders seem to view their culture as the only satisfactory shield against the lethal weapon of foreign journalism.²⁴⁴

Kathy Marks has become the poster child of their concerns by using statements which could be interpreted as implying a threatening sentiment, such as, “the climate appears to be infectious...despite the way the women and children were treated, the community survived.”²⁴⁵ Marks ignores the imperialistic implication when she blithely basks in the victory of the Western system, stating that:

The case has been shattering for the island, but that was an inevitable side effect of the law being imposed on a lawless community...trials were

²⁴¹ Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 226.

²⁴² Amoamo, “Fieldwork in Remote Communities,” 422.

²⁴³ Amoamo, 421.

²⁴⁴ Manross, *Pitcairn Islands and Indigeneity*, 12.

²⁴⁵ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 283.

needed...[and] “if this has achieved nothing else, the islanders will realize they can’t do whatever they want, there’s a law and it applies to them.”²⁴⁶

Marks drives this comparison to its darkest conclusion when she makes a chilling comparison in her book, that could be perceived as indicative of her personal hatred for the Pitcairn culture and a wish to see it exterminated. Because of Marks’ words, the only way to assume she does not hate the Pitcairn Islanders would be to also assume she does not hate Nazis, because she states that she “remember[s] how ordinary the island men appeared to be. The philosopher and journalist Hannah Arendt wrote famously of ‘the banality of evil’ in relation to the Nazi leader Adolf Eichmann. It’s a phrase that applies equally to Pitcairn.”²⁴⁷ If Marks would have the evil of the Nazis destroyed, then she would evidently also destroy the people and culture of Pitcairn.

Marks compares the indigenous population of Pitcairn Islands to “a child rescued in impossible circumstances.”²⁴⁸ Marks shares what she perceives to be a generous offer for the indigenous population, stating that “Matthew Forbes says, ‘the future depends on the islanders themselves. If they start working cooperatively together, and accepting other people who come to the island, then it does have a future’.”²⁴⁹ Yet, Marks also warns that:

Pitcairn and its inhabitants are still being mythologized...while some of the island’s admirers now grudgingly recognize that unsavory things did happen on Pitcairn, they pin the blame on recent generations of men — determined to view the child sexual abuse as a temporary aberration, rather than a long-entrenched tradition.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ Marks, 294.

²⁴⁷ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 284.

²⁴⁸ Marks, 296.

²⁴⁹ Marks, 296-297.

²⁵⁰ Marks, 294.

This statement could be construed as a threat against the people of the Pitcairn Island and admission of the imperialistic sentiment that the Pitcairn *culture*, specifically the Pitcairn cultural traditions, are viewed as expendable and even evil by Marks.

Towards the conclusion of her book, Marks literally lays out a blueprint for a cultural genocide against Pitcairn Island:

Pitcairn still faces major challenges. If the island is to move forward, the old power structure will have to be smashed...At last count, there were a dozen outsiders on the island: nearly one-quarter again of the local population. They included four prison officers; one community constable; one social worker; the doctor, teacher, and pastor; the governor's representative, and various spouses. Their presence significantly altered the power dynamics, while providing a stabilizing influence, the British officials believe. Pitcairn will have a social worker and a doctor for the foreseeable future. A governor's representative will be there for as long as the prison is open...Locals are, in theory, subjected to more scrutiny...the men who received prison sentences will not be able to hold public office for five years from the date when they began those sentences...Britain hopes that others will follow, bringing new blood, new ideas, new expertise, and, most important, new attitudes. Only then, probably, will the culture change: when Pitcairn has a critical mass of people who have grown up overseas and can bring a different outlook to bear. If that happens, those who insist on clinging to the old ways will be outnumbered and marginalized.²⁵¹

This passionate speech from Marks harkens to the hypothetical legal implications of cultural indigeneity. If we apply the "Hawaiian Urban Indigenous Thought Experiment" to the case of the Pitcairn Islands, then an immediate destruction of their ancestral homeland would almost certainly equate to the eradication of their culture. If Pitcairn faced a plight like Brablec's Mapuche, there would be little (or even no) hope of survival. The Pitcairn Islanders have repeatedly and explicitly underscored that they are aware of the threat of their culture's extinction.²⁵²

²⁵¹ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 292-293.

²⁵² Kirk, *Pitcairn Island*, 226.

Hence, cultural indigeneity is clearly of immediate relevance to the Government of the Pitcairn Islands, which might make legal claims for protection under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.²⁵³ The United Nations could consider updating the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* to increase protection for culturally indigenous groups. The UN is currently operating on antiquated definitions, selected in 1982, that have not entirely kept up with modern understandings of indigenous human rights.²⁵⁴ There is room for modernization. The Government of the Pitcairn Islands may have the strongest legal claim in the world, today, for the purpose of catalyzing such modernization.

Marks should be admired for her passion for exposing antiquated sexual practices as unethical and agree with the laws of the United Kingdom being applied to an island nation which has historically made it a point to remain within the legal system of the British Empire. Marks is certainly not wrong to criticize hypothetical Pitcairn Islanders who refuse to acknowledge that their past sexual customs hurt girls. Yet, her scathing hate threatens to presage cultural genocide.

Even if the hypothesis of cultural indigeneity evolves into a theory that is eventually nullified, the issue of Marks' harsh judgement of Pitcairn promises to be of interest to the indigenous studies community. Pitcairn is not a one-off example: Marks states that on Norfolk Island, there are "eight hundred or so Pitcairn descendants, who make up about 40 percent of the population [and] are fiercely proud of their roots."

²⁵³ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 99-100, 123, 271.

²⁵⁴ Kovach, 114.

Marks seems to label Norfolk Island as a target for cultural genocide.²⁵⁵ Regardless of how one feels about the status of Pitcairn Islander's history with Western perceptions of sexual abuse, the hypothesis of cultural indigeneity is relevant to preventing cultural genocide. Therefore, I take the position that cultural indigeneity compels research by the indigeneity studies community.

Towards the end of future research, there is no shortage of examples of populations which may exhibit evidence of the existence of cultural indigeneity. Important legal claims might be made by the Mapuche; or, perhaps, cultural indigeneity may add a dynamic to the sophisticated arguments made about the Mapuche by noted scholars, such as Brablec. Other examples include Antarctica and many island nations which seem to have a claim to possessing an indigenous culture meritorious of international legal protection. Relevant examples to modern international law abound from the forgotten corners of the South Pacific to the Falkland Islands, for which a war was fought that drew in multiple major world powers.

²⁵⁵ Marks, *Lost Paradise*, 282.

Chapter III.

Two Other Case Studies

While there are myriad examples of potential cases of cultural indigeneity that are meritorious of future research, the cultures of Antarctica and the Falkland Islands are the two more relevant and obvious examples. In the case of Antarctica, noted scholar Jessica O'Reilly mentions a link between Antarctica and an indigenous culture; she uses terms such as "Antarctican," embracing her own identity that appears to qualify her as a culturally indigenous researcher.²⁵⁶ Falkland Islanders also note their organically derived cultural dynamics, such as the cultural historian Ian Strange's recognition that he is a member of an islander community that recognizes the so-called "Campers" of the interior as being the group that is authentically indigenous to the Falkland Islands.²⁵⁷ While the Falkland Islands and their culturally indigenous researcher, Ian Strange, seem to join Antarctica as an important addition to this paper, they were secondary to the quintessential case of the culture of the Pitcairn Islands in illustrating the hypothesis that culture can be indigenous. While Antarctica and the Falkland Islands constitute examples of cultural indigeneity, they each are more nuanced than the case of the Pitcairn Islands because they both feature the presence of multiple cultural groups.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ Jessica O'Reilly, *The Technocratic Antarctic: An Ethnography of Scientific Expertise and Environmental Governance* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 31.

²⁵⁷ Ian J. Strange, *The Falkland Islands* (London: David & Charles Publishing, 1983), 15.

²⁵⁸ Antarctica has part-time resident scientists who hail from virtually every developed nation in the world, creating a cultural melting pot in a landmass formally governed by the United Nations. The tripartite population of the Falkland Islands is comprised of British, Latin, and indigenous elements; the latter population probably present the most relevant example of ongoing cultural oppression in the world, today, through their policies that create the preconditions for a de-facto indigenous schools system, such as the infamous Canadian and American varieties.

The Falkland Islands

The Falkland Islands are a unique example of cultural indigeneity. With a culture that is an amalgamation of South American, Spanish, British, and the local Campers, the Falkland Islands population has a recent history of resisting subjugation. During the Falkland Islands War of 1982, the tiny population collectively formed the self-selected identity of an underdog against a mighty imperial power.²⁵⁹ Such a mentality of resisting subjugation at the hands of a foreign power is a quintessential sign of indigeneity and an indicator that the Falkland Islands are a potential example of the notion of cultural indigeneity. Yet, researchers to date have overlooked the possibility that even though the population of the Falkland Islands is controlled by neighboring powers, and even though the people of the Falkland Islands are not originally native to the archipelago, the people of the island group may constitute an indigenous population.

In 1764, the French established a colony called Port Louis on the island of East Falkland. Two years later, that colony was surrendered to Spain, which changed the name of the area to Puerto Soledad.²⁶⁰ The British attempted to maintain a foothold nearby, but it was temporarily captured by the Spanish in 1770, leading the British to withdraw from the island four years later.²⁶¹ Puerto Soledad became a penal colony, which was abandoned three decades later. Both Britain and Spain continued to claim the colony,

²⁵⁹ Strange, *The Falkland Islands*, 253-255.

²⁶⁰ Daniel Gibran, *The Falklands War: Britain Versus the Past in the South Atlantic* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 1998), 28.

²⁶¹ Andrew Graham-Yooll, *Imperial Skirmishes: War and Gunboat Diplomacy in Latin America* (Oxford: Signal Books, 2002), 54.

with Spain encouraging Buenos Aires to accept the islands as Argentina's sovereign territory.²⁶²

During the 1820s and 1830s, Argentina made multiple attempts to assert control over the island, leading to the establishment of a permanent population of Argentinians to the present day. The Americans wanted open fishing rights and sent an officer to crush Argentina's first attempt at control, in 1831; when Argentine forces returned a year later in 1832, they soon mutinied and formed their own government.²⁶³ The British invaded and destroyed the mutineers' garrison, in 1833, and left shortly thereafter.²⁶⁴ Throughout the tribulations of this period, some individuals had remained on the island and a small population became established that were the forerunners of the Campers.²⁶⁵ In 1840 the British returned, moved the capitol away from the Campers to Stanley (originally known as Port Jackson), and have maintained their presence since that time.²⁶⁶ Argentina constantly communicates their passionate pleas for sovereignty over the islands and the population of Argentine nationals continues to grow through emigration and reproduction.²⁶⁷

The modern culture in the Falkland Islands is unique amongst the three case studies. The Falkland Islanders consider defense of their ancestral homeland to be a cultural core value of the population.²⁶⁸ Strange is an example of a scholar who serves as

²⁶² Gibran, *The Falklands War*, 29.

²⁶³ Graham-Yooll, *Imperial Skirmishes*, 49.

²⁶⁴ Graham-Yooll, 50.

²⁶⁵ Graham-Yooll, 51.

²⁶⁶ Strange, *The Falkland Islands*, 118.

²⁶⁷ Lowell Gustafson, *The Sovereignty Dispute Over the Falkland Islands* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 35.

²⁶⁸ Strange, *The Falkland Islands*, 246.

evidence for a hypothesis that his study of his ancestral homeland, *The Falklands Islands*, is representative of research from a distinctly *culturally indigenous* perspective. Strange explains that his history of the Falkland Crisis of May to June 1982 comes from the perspective of “feelings experienced by [himself] and family who were in Stanley [the capital of the Falkland Islands] at the time.”²⁶⁹ The Falkland Islands culture was forged by their fiery relationship with colonialism, most notably the occupation of their island during the Falkland War.²⁷⁰ The British subset of the population has a culture that embraces and identifies with colonialism, with islanders allowing a “Colonial Office” for London’s representatives to oversee fisheries.²⁷¹

In 1982, the Falkland Islands became the epicenter of a major, international conflict which permanently changed the lifestyle and outlooks of a wide swath of the local citizenry.²⁷² When Argentina took over the Falkland Islands, they immediately alienated the majority of the citizenry by enforcing the South American custom of driving on the right side of the road.²⁷³ Moreover, with the British fighting to liberate the Falkland Islands from the Argentine invasion, language became enmeshed in a struggle for cultural preservation.²⁷⁴ Strange observes that there was a “conflict over language [which] extended beyond the spoken word.”²⁷⁵ For the Falkland Islanders, the linguistic battle centered on the implications of accepting the Argentine’s Spanish versus

²⁶⁹ Strange, *The Falkland Islands*, 246.

²⁷⁰ Strange, 58-59.

²⁷¹ Strange, 182.

²⁷² Strange, 247.

²⁷³ Strange, 254.

²⁷⁴ Strange, 254-255.

²⁷⁵ Strange, 255.

maintaining an adherence of only speaking English: Stanley's subcultural group was closer to the British and he found that "notices in Spanish were largely ignored."²⁷⁶

The Falkland Islands possess their own, unnamed dialect of pidgin language which is neither English, Spanish, nor that informal fusion of the two languages which is not native to any one area, "Spanglish." Strange illustrates a few examples of the dialect, stating that "the Islanders' goodbye is 'cheers che'," and that coffee breaks before noon are referred to as "smoko time." The Falkland Islanders even use their pidgin dialect to identify differences amongst their own subcultural groups which are indigenous to the region: Strange observes that the urban dwellers of Stanley have coined the rural region, "the 'camp,' a Falkland derivation of the word 'campos' or countryside. Here live the 'campers,' the other half of the Falkland population."²⁷⁷ Inadvertently hinting at a subtle elitism which may be native to his subset of indigenous culture, Strange views the "campers" as the indigenous group in whom "the insular character of the islands is portrayed even more,"²⁷⁸ while he acknowledges that all Falkland Islanders, regardless of their specific subcultural niche, are united in passionate, cultural appreciation of an "attraction these Islands have...[the] dominant factors which can only be appreciated by those who walk these lands."²⁷⁹ Strange sees a connection between physical occupation of the land and belonging.

Strange emphasizes that the people of the Falkland Islands do possess a distinct, unique culture.²⁸⁰ Deceptively, he speaks of a culture that is "distinctly informal" and he

²⁷⁶ Strange, *The Falkland Islands*, 255.

²⁷⁷ Strange, 14.

²⁷⁸ Strange, 15.

²⁷⁹ Strange, 15.

²⁸⁰ Strange, 14-15.

compares an average home to “a very typical British village home, with just a touch of its own special colour.”²⁸¹ The scholar acknowledges that, within the population of Stanley at the far eastern edge of the nation, there are two, separate and distinct cultural groups — two urban indigenous populations. While both groups are examples that support the hypothesis of multiple cultures being indigenous to the same ancestral homeland, they overshadow a third, unrepresented group, the campers. Strange adds that during the height of the Falkland War, he “was surprised to see small blue and white stickers resembling the Argentine flag displayed on house windows.”²⁸² The British scholar represents the massive cultural rift between the two urban indigenous cultures of the Falkland Islands when he rhetorically jeers that, from his Anglocentric position, the fact that “these stickers had been given to some householders and not to others remained a mystery,” when Argentinians would never have given the flag to those whom they perceived as ethnic outsiders and enemies. When the British Falklander muses that the flags were probably “part of some propaganda campaign”²⁸³ to impact public opinion on the Argentine occupation, he habitually ignores the campers, who seem to be dismissed as an irrelevant, third wheel in an imperialistic tug-of-war for sovereignty over a massive archipelago east of South America.

The Falkland Islands have multiple culinary traditions, but Strange only mentions one. The English-Falklander of Stanley highlights his cultural passion for “tea making formalities” and alludes to breakfast fare occasionally including penguin eggs.²⁸⁴ While

²⁸¹ Strange, *The Falkland Islands*, 15.

²⁸² Strange, 254.

²⁸³ Strange, 254.

²⁸⁴ Strange, 14.

the British urban indigenous culture allows for the interruption of mornings with the aforementioned “smoko time,” they also find time for “the Colonial touch of pre-lunch gins.”²⁸⁵ One wonders if that “Colonial touch” that the colonizer so innocently alludes to is repulsive to the campers. Strange’s lexicon betrays an elitism that may be endemic to Stanley: indeed, the *third*, “other half of the population” may have strong feelings about their countryman’s “colonial touch.”²⁸⁶

The underappreciated, indigenous camper culture of the Falkland Islands revolves around traditional, pastoral labors. In the interior the most common occupation of the campers is the husbandry of animals, mostly sheep. Fishing is far and away the most important industry by the coastline and in Stanley. Education is centered on Falkland College, which represents the focal point of the island’s culture. Because the college deliberately reaches out to all subsets of the population in both English and Spanish, it might be considered the most cosmopolitan element of the society. That said, the overall system of education is orchestrated by the Falkland Islands Government and may be less inclusive for youth than it appears.

The Falkland Islands Government maintains a webpage for the Falkland Islands Community School which explains that “schooling is free and compulsory for children between five and sixteen years of age...[utilizing] the English curriculum and [its] teaching methods.”²⁸⁷ The peculiar system of “Camp Education” seems to feature that “colonial touch” Strange alluded to when the Falklands authorities state “Camp

²⁸⁵ Strange, *The Falkland Islands*, 14.

²⁸⁶ Strange, 14.

²⁸⁷ Falkland Islands Community School, *School Policies*, 2022, <https://www.secondary.ac.fk/FIG-Education>.

Education is for all children who do not live in Stanley...[who] have their educational requirements met through...[up to] 4 week[ly] visits from a travelling teacher, followed up with daily telephone lessons and homework for the remainder of the 6 week beat.”²⁸⁸

In a system eerily reminiscent of the infamous Canadian and American “Indigenous Schools Systems,” the Falkland Islands Government separates campers from their children, divulging that “most children in Camp move to the main school in Stanley when they are 9 or 10 years of age and lodge in Stanley House, the boarding hostel,”²⁸⁹ where they are taught a “compulsory” curriculum that does not mention indigenous culture or pidgin tongue.

Stephen Royle, a geographer who specializes in island cultures, references the “Falkland government,” which views everything outside Stanley as “the Camp.”²⁹⁰ Royle identifies a camper antipathy towards “too many outsiders who will affect Falkland society.”²⁹¹ Campers protect their indigenous, Falkland culture. While camper children are compelled to go to the capitol for school, the adult campers avoid “moving to Stanley,”²⁹² which is separated from their ancestral homeland of the rural interior by “200 miles of largely un-surfaced roads [accessible only] by four wheel drive vehicles.” Royle reports that the “traditional Falklander, the farm laborer, has become rarer...Falklanders hope...[for] improved living standards without destroying the traditional way of life.”²⁹³

²⁸⁸ Falkland Islands Community School.

²⁸⁹ Falkland Islands Community School.

²⁹⁰ Stephen Royle, “Changes in the Falkland Islands since the Conflict of 1982,” *Geography* 79, no. 2 (1974): 175.

²⁹¹ Royle, 176.

²⁹² Royle, 174.

²⁹³ Royle, 176.

Compulsory exposure to the United Kingdom's "Camp Education" implies assimilation and the eventual extinction of the campers' indigenous culture.

Urgent research into the indigenous culture of the Falkland Islands must start from the perspective of the "Campers."²⁹⁴ It is unlikely that the Falkland Islands Government would be opposed to this because there is no reason to doubt their claim that "Camp Education is one of learning and enjoyment. Pupils enjoy going to a school where their educational attainment and welfare are uppermost in the minds of the Executive Headteacher, the Principal and staff."²⁹⁵ Indeed, if the Falkland Islands Government wanted to provide evidence of keeping the welfare of the Campers "uppermost" in their minds, then they might sponsor a research grant for a scholar to interview and study the Campers. The United Kingdom could also demonstrate commitment to axiology in indigenous governance by underwriting Stanley's hypothetical Camper research.

Antarctica

The fact that Antarctica has no indigenous language should not be taken to detract from the fact that Antarctica does have forms of indigeneity, which contribute to the notion that Antarctica may also feature cultural indigeneity.²⁹⁶ Jessica O'Reilly is an "Antarctic anthropologist" who specializes in researching "the deep connection field scientists and modelers have with Antarctica."²⁹⁷ O'Reilly observes that across the vast landscape of the continent, "indigenous plants and animals are hardy survivors in an

²⁹⁴ I believe it is more inclusive to treat "Camper" as an identity, not just as a mere occupant of a rural "Camp."

²⁹⁵ Falkland Islands Community School, 2022.

²⁹⁶ O'Reilly, *The Technocratic Antarctic*, 31.

²⁹⁷ Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, *Interview with Antarctic Anthropologist*, 2023, <https://www.scar.org/scar-news/humanities-and-social-science-news/antarctic-anthropologist>.

extreme environment, symbols of a last wilderness.”²⁹⁸ The first generations of humans to come to Antarctica were audacious explorers who died heroic deaths in this extreme, last wilderness, during the second decade of the twentieth century. By the 1960s, a major settlement was created by the US Navy on New Zealand’s dependency at McMurdo Sound, which annually is host to thousands of international scientists, virtually all of them only overwintering before returning overseas.

The modern scientists who routinely overwinter on the southernmost continent take pride in defending the indigenous plants of Antarctica as a matter of national security.²⁹⁹ Indeed, this behavioral trend is reflected by the Antarcticans who are responsible for the management of their news periodical, the *Antarctic Sun*. The magazine writes articles that are geared towards “anyone with an interest in Antarctic science.”³⁰⁰ Moreover, there are Antarctic cultural issues that would be irregular anywhere else in the world, such as a controversy among scientists and tourist campers about a policy preventing the rearranging of rocks.³⁰¹ This is specific evidence of cultural indigeneity, predicated upon Antarctic scientists who deal with Antarctic issues and preserve an Antarctic culture.

The scientists view themselves as uniquely qualified elites who serve as governors of an ancestral homeland to which they perceive themselves as retaining an unalienable right. O’Reilly first travelled to Antarctica in 2005, returning most summers

²⁹⁸ O’Reilly, *The Technocratic Antarctic*, 85.

²⁹⁹ O’Reilly, 85.

³⁰⁰ *The Antarctic Sun*, “The Antarctic Sun Turns 25,” October 26, 2022, <https://www.usap.gov/news/4734>.

³⁰¹ O’Reilly, *The Technocratic Antarctic*, 58-59.

for research to the present day³⁰²: she qualifies as an indigenous scholar writing about her own population. O'Reilly specifically focuses on the culture of the southernmost continent throughout her book, *The Technocratic Antarctic: An Ethnography of Scientific Expertise and Environmental Governance*.³⁰³ Antarctica's is a "culture of expertise," directly linked to scientific research.³⁰⁴ In a land populated by postdoctoral researchers, Antarctica probably can boast of the highest average level of education per capita of any of the continents. Culturally, the fascinations of such an extraordinarily educated and cosmopolitan population range from environmentalism to egalitarianism, gender equality, and much more, in what amounts to a perpetually frosty, intellectual's utopia where there is often erroneously assumed to be no culture at all.³⁰⁵

Support for the notion of a modern, culturally indigenous Antarctica can be found in primary sources from the continent, such as *The Antarctic Sun*.³⁰⁶ Covering rivalries between Americans and New Zealanders, as well as the photography of solar eclipses and more, the periodical, which was run by the United States government but is now operated by civilians, focuses on the everyday life of American-Antarcticans.³⁰⁷ The distinct impact of omnipresent scientific research affects virtually every news story. While this periodical does not constitute scholarship about the frozen land, it is an excellent source to supplement knowledge claims made by O'Reilly. It provides cultural insight; for example, it has a comics section, which features artwork such as a drawing by

³⁰² Greg Dietz, *Intimacy and Expertise: A Conversation with Antarctic Anthropologist Jessica O'Reilly*, 2026, <https://glacierhub.org/2016/06/15/intimacy-and-expertise-a-conversation-with-antarctic-anthropologist-jessica-oreilly>.

³⁰³ O'Reilly, *The Technocratic Antarctic*, 9.

³⁰⁴ O'Reilly, 9.

³⁰⁵ O'Reilly, 9.

³⁰⁶ United States Antarctic Program, 2020, <https://www.usap.gov>.

³⁰⁷ United States Antarctic Program, *Around the Continent*, 2020, <https://antarcticsun.usap.gov>.

“Davidson,” mocking a group of seals in a yoga class lamenting the interruption of a rude Orca whale who successfully hunts one of their classmates.³⁰⁸

O'Reilly links Antarctic perceptions of its indigeneity to their cultural commitment to defending the environment of their ancestral homeland.³⁰⁹ Scientists view themselves as stewards of indigenous plant and animal life because visitors to their homeland might inadvertently bring in some pathogen that is toxic to the local species.³¹⁰ G.T. Sachs, et al, argue that a desire for the preservation of indigenous culture through the pedagogy of critical ethnography compels any given teacher of an indigenous student to place that student in a position of being “the knower and leader.”³¹¹ The technocrats of Antarctica identify with their indigenous leadership style, which they coin “Antarctician exceptionalism.”³¹² That said, there is a competition for claim to Antarctica.

There is no shortage of scientists who have visited Antarctica and whimsically written about experiences with the intersection of science and local culture. Bailey Morse is a scholar who studies power dynamics and states that “Antarctica has no indigenous population...in terms of culture, this constitutes...a ‘blank slate territory’.”³¹³ That overgeneralization misses subtleties: O'Reilly's research demonstrates that decades of

³⁰⁸ United States Antarctic Program, *Level 1 Comix from Matt Davidson*, 2020, <https://antarcticsun.usap.gov/aroundthecontinent/1199>.

³⁰⁹ O'Reilly, *The Technocratic Antarctic*, 31.

³¹⁰ O'Reilly, 85.

³¹¹ G.T. Sachs, Barbara Clark, Meral Durkaya, Annmarie Jackson, Charles Johnson, William Lake, & Patty Limb, “Decolonizing Pedagogues: Disrupting Perceptions of “The Other” in Teacher Education,” *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Working Toward Decolonization, Indigeneity, and Interculturalism* (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 81.

³¹² O'Reilly, *The Technocratic Antarctic*, 31.

³¹³ Bailey Morse, “Freedom en el fin del Mundo: Antarctica as the Key to Renegotiating Identity-Based Power Hierarchies,” *Dissenting Voices* 7, no. 1 (2018): 97, [https://soar.suny.edu/bitstream/handle/20.500.12648/2755/dissentingvoices/vol7/iss1/10/fulltext%20\(1\).pdf?sequence=1](https://soar.suny.edu/bitstream/handle/20.500.12648/2755/dissentingvoices/vol7/iss1/10/fulltext%20(1).pdf?sequence=1).

scientists have colored the technocratic culture of Antarctica, rendering it no sort of blank slate territory. Mark Cravalho, an ethnopsychologist who has done field research in the Antarctic, argues that “each station in Antarctica possesses a distinctive ‘microculture’...[which] include a number of distinctive rituals...to express individual identity.”³¹⁴ Cravalho confirms that Antarticans possess a “distinctive lexicon,”³¹⁵ which supports the notion that Antarctica has an indigenous culture.

An Antarctic researcher who overwintered in 2002, Shirley Oakes Butler, opined that “the human presence defines the Antarctic problem.”³¹⁶ While Butler means to say that humans represent a threat to the environment, there seem to be real problems that humans have brought from foreign cultures which the local, Antartican culture has rejected and attempted to remedy. The most prominent problems seem to revolve around gender equality. O’Reilly argues that the technocratic culture of Antarctica is distinctly feminist, with an increasing proportion of female scientists involved in governance.³¹⁷ O’Reilly’s observation implies that Antarctica’s indigenous culture would feature an unattractive signpost in the form of having a documentable history of misogyny against female scientists.

The Antarctic Sun’s editorial team, as of 2022, certainly seems to reflect the feminism which O’Reilly alludes to. Female issues are tangentially addressed by the two main stories offered on the periodical’s website. On November 7 and 21, 2022, two

³¹⁴ Mark Cravalho, “Toast on Ice: The Ethnopsychology of the Winter-over Experience in Antarctica,” *Ethos* 24, no. 4 (1996): 629, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/640517>.

³¹⁵ Cravalho, 629.

³¹⁶ Shirley Oakes Butler, “OWNING ANTARCTICA: Cooperation and Jurisdiction at the South Pole,” *The Journal of International Affairs* 31, no. 1 (1977): 36, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24359531>.

³¹⁷ O’Reilly, *The Technocratic Antarctic*, 31-32.

stories were posted about heroic female figures — but these journalistic biographies were about cultural icons who are not technocrats, nor even scientists. Maria Marabito wrote about how the native “Female leopard seals are way, way bigger than their male counterparts,”³¹⁸ and the periodical’s editor, Lauren Lipuma, seemed to offer an anthropomorphic insight about of the plight of marine mothers, writing about how “Weddell seal moms sacrifice diving capacity to help pups grow.”³¹⁹ These women are the voice of American-Antarcticans and they are in no way patriarchal.

Regardless of modern journalism, the misogynistic signpost of Antarctica’s indigenous culture is on display for researchers as gender studies scholar Robin Burns explains how female scientists have historically suffered extraordinary prejudice in Antarctic professional and political circles, adding that the unique situation is prohibitive of scientists being mothers.³²⁰ Bailey Morse echoes Burns, explaining that “women now find themselves with a relatively large degree of representation on Antarctic research bases compared to historical demographics...[even though there remains some degree of unacceptable] inequality,”³²¹ and, as a result, the conversation shifted back to pedagogical methods for preserving the landscape and egalitarianism of Antarctica via governance.

At this juncture, the sociological notion of action theory³²² may become an important element in demonstrating that the cause of the modern female representation in

³¹⁸ Maria Marabito, *Female leopard seals are way, way bigger than their male counterparts*, November 7, 2022, <https://antarcticsun.usap.gov/science/4736>.

³¹⁹ Lauren Lipuma, *Weddell seal moms sacrifice diving capacity to help pups grow*, November 21, 2022, <https://antarcticsun.usap.gov/science/4739>.

³²⁰ Robin Burns, “Women in Antarctic Science: Forging New Practices and Meanings,” *The Feminist Press* 28, no. ½ (2000): 168, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40004452>.

³²¹ Morse, “Freedom en el fin del Mundo,” 103.

³²² In essence, action theory holds that any scholarly analysis of repetitive actions among a target population must be interpreted in light of the collective core values and expectations that drive the decision-making of the group.

Antarctic technocratic governance is a specific underlying factor, which I identify as cultural indigeneity.³²³ Because there is a causational relationship between scientists defending indigenous, Antarctic flora and fauna as a form of cultural identity and those scientists utilizing effective cultural pedagogy to teach that behavior to their colleagues, then the scientists seem to represent a generation of culturally indigenous “Antarcticans.”³²⁴ Beyond this, action theory underscores that scientists feel the right to defend the flora and fauna as if they were the appointed guardians. This qualifies as an internal feeling of belonging — hence, Antarctica is the *cultural* homeland of scientists...including those, like O’Reilly, whose *ancestral* homeland is somewhere else and who have only occupied that landmass for a short or even temporary time.³²⁵

The notion that Antarctica should have a group of local people who have a special knowledge of indigenous flora and fauna and enjoy a recognized, self-appointed status as a sentinel in the defense of their homeland constitutes a traditional ecological knowledge, which is a fundamental factor of indigeneity.³²⁶ Kovach defines such traditional ecological knowledge as coming “from multiple sources...not solely the human species.”³²⁷ While spirituality is often a facet of such knowledge according to Kovach, there is no rule which demands that spirituality be incorporated for such knowledge to contribute to the notion of a subset being indigenous. Therefore, the important question is not whether the scientists practice a religious rite while defending their local flora and

³²³ Anas P. Aboobacker, *Parsons Action Theory*, 2019, https://www.academia.edu/37340993/Parsons_action_theory.

³²⁴ O’Reilly, *The Technocratic Antarctic*, 30.

³²⁵ O’Reilly, 10.

³²⁶ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 67.

³²⁷ Kovach, 69.

fauna, but rather, whether any subset of Antarcticans might experience some form of religious or spiritual link to this adopted behavior.³²⁸

Antarcticanism and spirituality intersect for at least one scientist who is currently in Antarctica, as of May 2023. Elaine Krebs is a researcher at the South Pole who states that “religious people are the minority here at the station.”³²⁹ Krebs directly links Antarcticism to spiritualism, attesting that “when I arrived at the South Pole, I was immediately overwhelmed with this sense of Wonder and Awe...as my mind struggled to grasp the seemingly never-ending expanse of ice that extended beyond my eyesight, I couldn’t help but think of God.”³³⁰ Indeed, Krebs exclusively reports her spiritual views through the lens of her Antarcticism.

At least for Krebs, there appears to be a link between religion and the preservation of an Antarctic ancestral homeland that engaged with her sense of spirituality. Some Antarctic people practice forms of spirituality which are intrinsically linked to the Antarctic environment: this cultural practice includes a combination of religion, science, and linguistic tradition — or, in Krebs’ words, “my wonder for [Antarctica] turns into awe of God.”³³¹ Antarctica is emerging as an understudied region, through the lens of Antarctic cultural indigeneity. Indigenous “Antarctican” scientists defending the environment of their ancestral homeland collectively serve as evidence that Antarctica has an indigenous culture that merits further research.

³²⁸ Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies*, 54.

³²⁹ Elaine Krebs, *Antarctica: Science and Faith, Part 1*, 2023.

³³⁰ Krebs, *Dispatch from Antarctica, Part 3: Finding God in Nature*, 2023.

³³¹ Krebs, *Dispatch from Antarctica, Part 3*.

Chapter IV.

Conclusion: The *Theory* of Cultural Indigeneity

What might henceforth be called the “Theory of Cultural Indigeneity” is, first and foremost, a theory of inclusion within the overarching field of indigeneity studies. Historians, ethnographers, lawyers, and other diverse forms of experts will have different perspectives about the intersection of culture and indigeneity, as well as the implications of that correlation. This thesis has not been intended to accomplish a thorough investigation of cultural indigeneity. Its sole purpose has been to investigate whether culture can be an indigenously occurring process. As a result of that inquiry, it has been demonstrated that culture can be an indigenously occurring process. As a result, across the world, there are myriad opportunities for research into the implications of the findings.

Culture can be indigenous to an ancestral homeland. I have demonstrated that the link between culture and indigeneity merits urgent, further research by the scholars of the indigeneity studies community. The examples of cultural indigeneity from this study include the Pitcairn Islands, Falkland Islands, and Antarctica — however, these are merely three examples of the tip of a proverbial iceberg that promises to be robust. From isolated populations in small nations to First Nations in developed, modern nations, researching the intersection between culture and indigeneity promises to be a boon for global *inclusion*. International law will be updated as scholars elaborate upon and refine the understanding of the Theory of Cultural Indigeneity.

Examples of potential research projects which might spring from the establishment of this theory are as diverse as the multifarious elements of interdisciplinary studies. Scholars of indigenous law may have a different application for this theory than will traditional trial lawyers. The most important economic notion may be the complex, slippery slope of a potential shift of quantification of indigeneity within legal studies. Because so many official programs revolve around the concept of blood quantum, destroying the paradigm simply because it is exclusionary would nevertheless imply serious implications for many innocent, indigenous persons receiving legitimately deserved assistance based on their dense blood quantum. This is a prime example of such a hypothetical, nuanced and esoteric scientific question that goes beyond the parameters of this research that only illustrates that culture *can* be indigenous.

If culture is framed as an indigenous process, it has implications for the study of sociology that extend beyond the law or objective scholarship and into subjective politics. Sociologists do not discount the value of human opinion when they study such phenomena as voting behavior; understanding cultural indigeneity will expand knowledge of what drives public opinions. As the fledging concept of cultural indigeneity becomes recognized and established, sociologists who deal with indigeneity will have to calculate for the behavioral effects of the widespread realization that cultural indigeneity may have increasingly serious legal and economic implications. Cultural indigeneity thus will offer unpredictable civil applications. Quoting Pulitzer prize-winning military

historian John Lewis Gaddis, “the point is not so much to predict the future as to prepare for it.”³³²

Beyond applied uses, cultural indigeneity should be useful for generating a boon for research grants in academic institutions. Contemporary respect for indigeneity studies across the world coincides with acknowledgement of historical events of cultural genocide and extinction. Canada is an example of a progressive nation in confronting its history of abuses against native indigenous peoples during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Cultural indigeneity offers an opportunity to improve methodologies for inclusion in Canada. Therefore, the Canadian government is an example of a likely source of research funding.

Canada’s experience with cultural indigeneity is, in many ways, reflective of the situation in the Pitcairn Islands. It could be postulated that Canada’s culture is an organically derived, indigenous process that has developed over centuries as a natural result of the intersection of the United Kingdom’s imperialism against the ancient, indigenous people of North America’s forests. Indigeneity is understood by Canada’s First Nations through a lens that the government underscores merits recognition. Virtually all educated Canadians are aware of the atrocities of the Indigenous Schools System which occurred across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,³³³ drastically impacting modern public opinion on the issue of indigeneity. For this reason, it is more

³³² John Lewis Gaddis, “History, Theory, and Common Ground,” *International Security* 22, no. 1 (1997): 84, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2539330>.

³³³ The Canadian and American indigenous schools systems carried out a heinous program of cultural genocide against members of indigenous, North American First Nations that claimed the lives of over 150,000 innocent children. Indigenous schools relocated children hundreds of miles away from their parents, gave the children new names and identities, and then engaged in oppressive child labor in de-facto reeducation camps. When children died from abuse, starvation, poor nutrition, subpar healthcare, exhaustion, exposure, and murder, they were typically buried in unmarked, mass graves.

likely than not that Canadian politics would be impacted by the introduction of the concept of “cultural indigeneity.”

Following the wisdom of Gaddis, it would be an irrelevant and unproductive endeavor to attempt to predict every possible implication of cultural indigeneity. Surely, we should prepare for cultural indigeneity to evolve into an important niche within the field of indigenous studies; yet, at a more individual level, the concept already serves as a tool for individuals. Just as a Native American might claim to be “genuine” indigenous, is it doubtless that some random American of a non-native ethnicity who has never left his or her hometown self-identifies as a “genuine” American. Competing views of genuine Americanism thus inform different lifestyle decisions, which impact other indigenous individuals, as well as the society we all live in. Sociologists, historians, lawyers, economists, and many other specialists will likely find uses for leveraging a deeper understanding of the esoteric link between culture and indigeneity in researching and examining the ways in which identity and culture operate in and impact society.

While diverse leaders from powerful parliaments to isolated island councils will eventually become aware of it, cultural indigeneity promises to offer a more immediate impact in the academic arena. For example, cultural indigeneity will almost certainly be relevant to the sophisticated work of Dana Brablec as she continues to expand the modern, theoretical understanding of “authentic” indigeneity. Brablec has an important opportunity to elaborate upon how the inclusion of authentic indigeneity reinforces Mapuche legal claims that are predicated upon self-perception of legitimately deserved exclusive rights. To the contrary of suggesting that it is impossible for indigenous peoples to construct “authentic” identities, I would argue that Brablec may expand upon how

cultural perceptions of exclusivity might compel modern authorities to reconstruct antiquated applications of the protocols of inclusion for the indigenous.

An unfortunate, but unavoidable controversy is likely to be put forth by any group that continues to rely upon blood quantum to preserve their culture through exclusive means. To offer false comforts or in any way obfuscate would be unscientific and naïve. The findings of this study indicate that quantitative methods of awarding protections for indigeneity inadvertently instill the structures of exclusion. If a hypothetical implication of inclusivity is the extinction of a given culture, this problem should not be interpreted as a prohibitive dead end, but rather as a complication compelling urgent research to curtail a calamity. This study's findings reaffirm that protecting culture through qualitative measures will serve inclusivity, regardless of the inconveniences that may result from moving beyond quantitative institutions such as blood quantum.

Culture can be indigenous. Moreover, the notion of indigeneity is unequivocally inclusive. The implications are unforeseeable in their magnitude. Accordingly, scholars of indigeneity studies should feel compelled to revisit established ideas. The Theory of Cultural Indigeneity that I have put forth in this work is a useful lens through which indigeneity can be reanalyzed and reimagined.

Appendix



Figure 1. Fletcher's Cave from below.

Photo credit: Pitcairn Islands Study Center

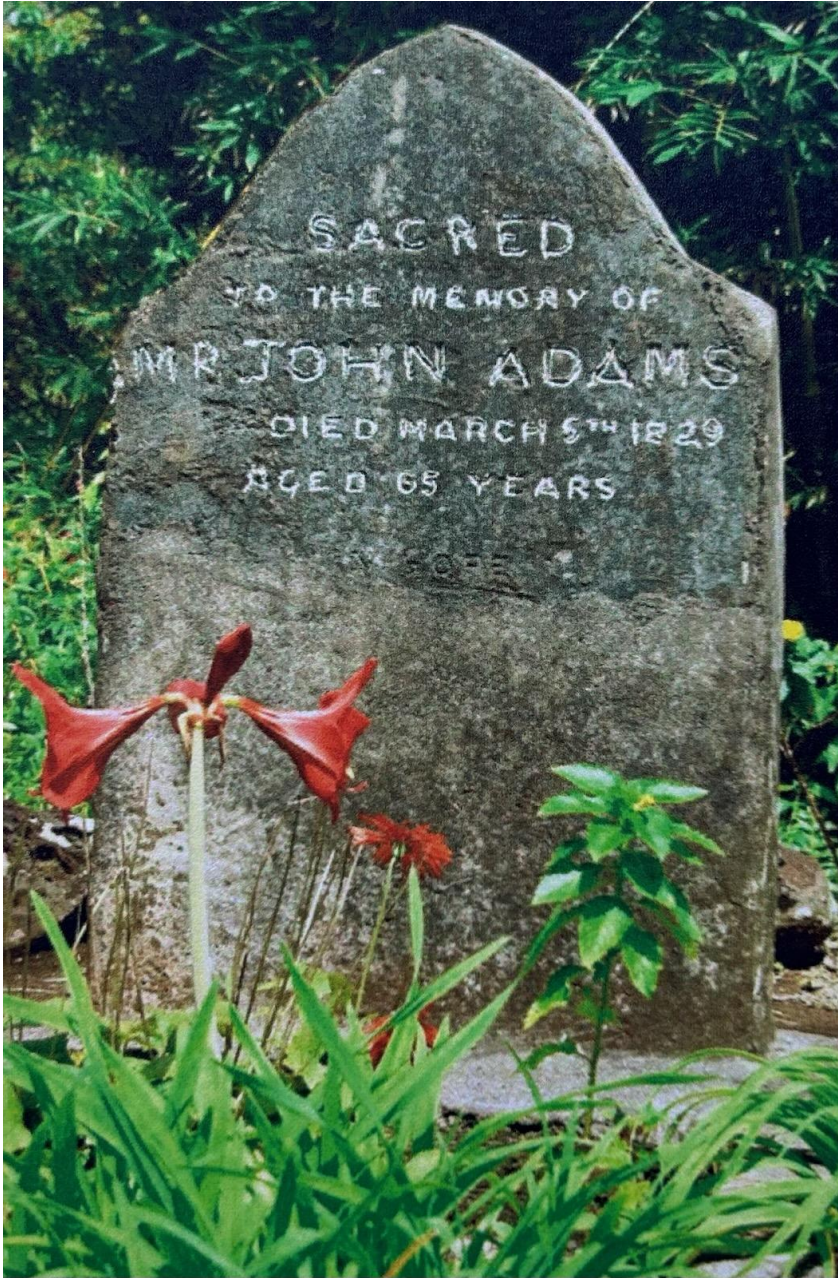


Figure 2. The tombstone of John Adams.

Photo credit: Pitcairn Islands Study Center



Figure 2.1. Broken Tombstone, circa 1980, Unknown Person

Photo credit: Pitcairn Islands Study Center



Figure 3. The Adams family graveplot and memorial grounds.

Photo credit: Pitcairn Islands Study Center

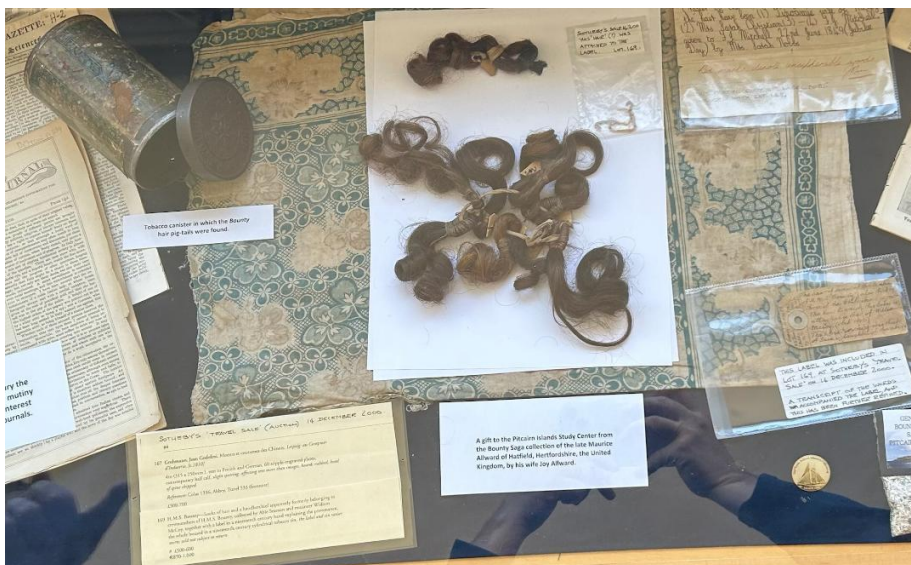


Figure 4. Locks of hair from the mutineers of the HMS *Bounty*.

Photo credit: Tedra Manross, taken at Pitcairn Islands Study Center



Figure 5. Bust of John Adams.

Photo credit: Tedra Manross, taken at Pitcairn Islands Study Center



Figure 6. Cultural antiquities from Adamstown.

Photo credit: Tedra Manross, taken at Pitcairn Islands Study Center



Figure 7. Postage stamps and envelopes from Adamstown.

Photo credit: Tedra Manross, taken at Pitcairn Islands Study Center

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