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### Half Breeds in the Bay Area: Fusion of Relevance

This exhibit consist of the process of discovery and revealing of the variations of the multiracial peoples within the Bay Area and how their environment, communities placed in, influences of extended families and ancestry, self discovery, life experiences, societal influences, created a personally constructed identity which demonstrates the ideal American essence of individuality. Half Breeds takes place within the demographics of the San Francisco Bay Area and in the New Era from the late 1980s to present day. The goal is to understand the underlining relevance of how multiracial peoples are constructed and how they one of many examples of the failure and successes of the attempt in the pursuit of the American essence of individualism. Multiracial peoples are exposed to more identities because of there ancestry allows the option for one to explore avenues of their identities and their environment nourishes their culture one chooses to construct. There is a growing problem of self-identity because of the sways of biologically identification along with ethnic identification with an shadowing of environmental; and societal pressures of how one is suppose to be constructed. This is an important and relevant to the progressiveness of universal mixtures of racial, ethnic, and transnational disparities within our communities. Multiracialism creates more room for discrimination from all types of peoples along with creating a space of acceptance of clashing diverse coloring. There is a growing fear of the decrease in representation of one minority group because the mixed peoples don't identify with just one group. Creating apprehension of what will happen to the future of our universal race and individual race. Society has constructed this expectation of each culture, religion, and racial group of how they are "suppose to be" because of their identity and/or identities they were given with by birth. Multiracial peoples experience multitude of identities illustrated and multiply cultures revealed with a constant self-challenge of one's true identity, thus leading to fusion of relevance where one creates a genuinely individualistic constructed self-identity.

Half Breed: People whose biological parents are not the same racial or ethnic background that produces a person who carries two or more difference racial ancestry and/or ethnicity.

Fusion of Relevance: Thus, a person who was brought up with multiplies cultures and identities that create a fusion of relevance to one's personally constructed identity through the experiences of the challenges of pain and pride.

“Everyday you are surrounded by your culture. It's in what you eat and drink, the way you walk and talk, the clothes you were. Every single moment you're engulfed in it. It's like breathing, it just happens” (Ishida). There is no true defining way of identifying a culture. No two people have carry the exact same experiences, may possibly be similar but it is impossible to be the same. Therefore, everyone has his or her own personally defining culture. In this exhibit we will explore and examine the challenges of pain and pride along with the definition of culture to half-breeds.

The most common question asked is, “what are you?” Creating an uncomfortable feeling of no sense of belonging and being easily spotted out of the crowd as the minority. Similar to the one-drop rule during the era of slavery, if a person had one-drop of African decent that they were automatically alienated from the majority group that was present. “...I feel like which ever ethnicity is the majority, I become the minority ethnicity” (Thomas). From a young age many of us were told of who we are, or whom we are suppose to be which leads to this internalization of the social construction of this is who you are or who you are expected to be based on appearance. When a person who doesn't look like the other people within the majority group, they are told that they are not “one of us” purely off the judgment of how they appear not for whom they are. Although given that one is raised similar to their experiences, it is believed by the pure blooded that “it's not good enough.” Jonathan Mortara an Italian/Mexican/Black Oakland native associates himself “with the white because of [his] skin tone.” In his experiences he didn't have much experiences of discrimination of his appearance but “more discrimination for [his] orientation.”

Chris Miller, a Peruvian/European and a Hayward native claims that the “white culture is

homogenized and socialized as a 'blank slate' norm". America was founded by and for immigrants, because of the euro-centric cannon it is claimed that Europeans are the purest of all race leading to the belief that any other race is "as worthy". Creating he constructed social acceptance of the mixture of European races after a process of about 300 years created a "blank slate" race of what we know today as "white". Miller's father is a prime example of the broad understanding of being an American, of the wide range of the opportunities of trans-nationalism for his father "has always been open to all types of cultures". Like Miller's father and many other Americans, and newly adopted Americans of the new wave of immigration, there is larger growth of multiracial marriages creating half-breeds. According to the Pew Research Center study interracial marriages in 1980 was 6.7% to a growing percentage of 14.6% in 2008 (Delfin-Polk). Today inter-racial dating is very common among young people. Because of the mixing this creates a very tough particular definition of a half-breed's definition of culture.

"If I had to put a name on it, I'd just say it's American, because American culture is supposed to be a 'melting pot' of hundreds of different traditions anyway" (Parr). Meindl, Puhlovski, and Parr all referred to their culture of the legitimate honest American culture in which it is not restricted of one avenue or race, ethnicity, society, or environment yet free to explore all world cultures. The definition of American is not accountable for being an American consist of being in American citizenship. Each citizen of the New World is allowed to define his or her own definition of American. The American Dream is founded on being independent and pursuing the aspiration of success within one's environment whether it is in the work place, school, community organization, et cetera. Since mixed peoples are exposed to many different traditions and environments one can soon to construct and continually build a sense of independence. "I have come to deeply embrace this sense of individualism" Andrej Puhlovski, an Filipino/Croatian and San Franciscan, "traveled to the countries of [his] parent's origins... aboard in hopes to 'find [him]self'" to have a clear understanding of who he really was. In Andrej's case it lead to a self-liberation of embracing his parents' ancestry. Yet prior to the sense of freedom was a long weary moments and experiences of the emotionally conflict within self

and identity which every multiracial person experiences. Puhlosvki is “one of many representative of modern American melting pot.”

The half-breed culture has been around since the dawn of conquest in the North Americas. It began with Spanish conquer of the California, where the mixture of Spaniards, Mestizos, Natives then it progress into the occupation of Mexico leading to US- Mexican War that promptly brought California to a 31<sup>st</sup> slave free state to the United States (Cherny). The Gold Rush brought immigrants from all over the country along with peoples from all other the world that was the beginning of the formulating diversity here in California (Cherny). The result of the Gold Rush lead to the birth of the metropolis of the west San Francisco, which attracted thousands of people to immigrant to the west coast furthering the levels of diversity (Cherny). In more recent years, World War II and the Vietnam War created “war babies” whom most were only allowed at that time check one box for the US consensus (Valverde). The generations prior to the current pushed for allowing the option to check more then one box. In 2000, was the first year that a person can pick more the one box 2.4% of the population marked more the one (Delfin-Polk). There is a growing issue of picking just one box or occasionally stated in Cork’s situation she feels not applicable to claim her Japanese ancestry.

Another problem that occurs is the Post Racial theory that Barack Obama significantly is challenged with (Escudero). The Post Racial Theory consists that soon t heir will be no classification of the science of race. Obama leans towards representing his African American side when biologically he is white and black also ethnically he is Indonesian. Some people claim he is the first Asian American president yet politically Obama purposefully stands on the African American platform of representation. It is questioned that more people would be upset if Obama rose to claim mixed. “The mixed-race body then does not destroy race, but leads to a repolitization of race” (King-O’Riain, 22). The presences of mixed people make the society realize that race is still among us, and looking at these mixed peoples makes society question, “what are they?” The offspring of a half-breed throughout the history of human kind is seen as unnatural and tragic. There is a sense of discomfort within the society

of mixed people and often people who are mixed feel lost in identity until the pain is revealed. Half-breeds are continually loosing and finding themselves because there are not allowed to embrace their mixed heritage and culture for society is unfamiliar.

Multiracial peoples are in constant challenge with the affiliation of their biological background and the measurements of authenticity. Keely Cork, a Japanese/Swedish/Irish/Native American who is fifth generation of Japanese ancestry from Cupertino, feels that she is not worthy of being categorized as an “Asian American” because her Japanese “traditions have disappeared over the year,” that she feels “like [she] has the advantage in life because [she] has more perspective than many other people do in American society.” All these situations create a problematic issue of self-identity and the favoring of one parent or group, worthiness of being associated, conflict with self-image and appearances and a constant battle between the socially constructive perspective and self.



Andrej P. Filipino/Croatian, Lacao F. Black/White, Stacey P. Filipino/German, Kevin E. Chilean/Vietnamese, Cynthia A. Japanese/White, Anthony W. El Salvadorian/White, Katie B. Black/Indonesian/White

This picture was taken after the Diversity within the mixed race experience: Double minority mixture workshop which was lead by Kevin Escudero a Ethnic Studies Ph.D. Student at UC Berkeley. In the workshop we discussed the racial mixtures and how white/nonwhite domination within the self-identification. Where half-breeds who have European blood feel guilty of being European decent or have self-hate issues because of the European domination throughout the histories of the world. Another problematic about our culture is self-identity crisis that is constantly being re-examine and will face challenges eternally.



This is a picture is of my brother, sister, and myself which we are all Japanese, British, and Irish. My brother is visiting from the Marines for his birthday weekend party. My siblings and I get along very well for we have the similar struggles and experiences of being white in Japan and being not Japanese enough within the Japanese American community in America. When we are in the busy streets of Tokyo we often hear people speaking Japanese about how long our legs are, the big noses, the height, and the body shapes. When we participate in Japanese American community events like mochi making a fundraiser for the Japanese American Citizen League, our mother is often given the hardest task of mochi cutting because she is Japanese. Although we face many cases of unwantedness and discrimination we continue to push for acceptance to a degree. We are very proud of being Japanese but we are equally as proud of being American. We know who we are and we feel that we don't need to explain our roots for we are half-breeds. As half-breeds our culture is a fusion of both because of it relevance to us from our experiences.



"I uploaded the picture of the American Flag from different times through out the history of the US because though I am African-American and Japanese, I am still an American and it's culture is, for the most part, is what I know, it's just how I was raised. Don't get me wrong, I am still more than proud to tell people what my ethnic background consists of, but at the end of the day I'm just another American in the US with the same main values and beliefs." -Candace Douglas, Hayward

Although half-breeds cannot be categorized into a mono-racial community we can be categorized as American race. We can be affiliated with communities and cultures of all types. I feel that as long as a person carries an interest, curiosity, and passion of any type of culture, then their skin color doesn't matter. As long as they continue their growth of that culture and embrace it. No one can stop learning about a culture. Especially if they practice the culture without even realization, it comes second nature. It cannot be prevented it just occurs. Living in American, particular in California's best the Bay Area, the American values and beliefs are instilled internally within us because merely because we are raised in American schools, environments et cetera.



This is photo submitted by Joshua Scott a French/Irish/Scottish/German/Dutch/Japanese.

This is a photo that mirrors the demographics of the Bay Area. The growth of understanding and acceptance, shows that the Bay Area are speckles collected from all places in the world placed into a down-to-earth environment which allows people to study and investigate other cultures and races. Half-breeds are a result of the acceptance of people allowing themselves to marry inter-racially. This is referring back to the melting pot of America. “As a whole, my conglomerate of cultures formed into one melting pot culture” (Scott). For the past 300 years America has breed “white” people. Now America is slowly but surely creating half-breeds. Americans adopt multiply culture based on the environment they are placed on or choose be belong to, it’s not all biological yet it does place a vital role within one’s culture. “This [culture] is a process” (Scott).



Sammy Potenti third from the left a Hayward Native, Italian/Korean. Second from the left is his South Korean mother.

Potenti enlisted in the military two weeks after graduating from high school. There he learned to be “... Proud of both ethnicities [because] both of them have a very huge sense of pride in family and loyalty” (Potenti). Another example of the beauty of the American melting pot, even though the cultures of both races are significantly different Potenti found a common highlight of what he learned from both cultures, which is the pride and loyalty to his family. Showing the true beauty of bringing people together based on mere interest of being together, and not letting social construction of race-lines divide us.

“All of my heritages make who I am if I was to say I’m just this or I’m just that it would be like ignoring part of who I am” (Philpott). Each individual does not have a choice of what they are born into such as their biological backgrounds, class stance, environment, and many other factors. One cannot deny who they are.

The half-breed is particularly leaning toward the ambiguous spirit of the American community. “I will continue discovering new answers throughout my lifetime” (Carvey). Culture is a pure process in which it will reveal itself through periods of time and continue to reveal more beauties, it can even reveal more beauties if you let the wounds heal. Multiracial peoples like many Americans, experience multitude of identities illustrated and multiply cultures revealed to them through their environments they are placed in. Half-breeds are with a constant self-challenge of one's true identity because the surrounding environment constantly brings up the expected social construction of who they are supposed to be. Each American in an essence is an individual who creates their own culture based of the traditions they feed off of. For the half-breed’s case there is this fusion of relevance because of the blend of identities and culture where one creates a genuinely individualistic constructed self-identity based of one’s life experiences.

“An important component of the cultural genogram was to take ownership of issues of pride and shame, because they exist in every culture. But mostly, this experience fostered a sense of pride in the fact that I had finally developed and accepted an identity through a deeper understanding of my family and cultural history” (Carvey).

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Special thanks to all of my friends who filled out my painful survey Questionnaire:

- Cavey, Mariko. 22y. Castro Valley, CA. Japanese/French-Canadian. Student.
- Cork, Keely. 21y. Castro Valley, CA; Cupertino, CA. Japanese/Swedish/Irish/Native American. Student.
- Douglas, Kandice. 20y. Hayward, CA. African-American/Japanese. Student.
- Ishida, Ryden Christopher. 20y. Castro Valley, CA. Japanese/Canadian. Military, Army.
- Meindl, Gabrielle, 19y. Sacramento, CA. Latina/ German. Student.
- Miller, Chris. 19y. Hayward, CA. Peruvian/ European. Student.
- Mortara, Jonathan. 19y. Oakland, CA; Castro Valley, CA. Italian/ Mexican/ Black. Student.
- Otarola, Isabella. 22y. Hayward, CA. Finnish/Japanese-Peruvian. Student.
- Parr, Katie. 22y. Born in Hong Kong lived in Castro Valley, CA. Chinese/ Portuguese/English. Student.
- Philpott, Kwai. 20y. Castro Valley, CA; Santa Cruz, CA. Chinese/ White. Student.
- Potenti, Sammy. 20y. Hayward, CA. Italian/Korean. Military, Marines.
- Puhlovski, Andrej Ivan. 24y. San Francisco, CA. Filipino/Croatian. Student.
- Thomas, Carrie. 20y. Milpitas CA; San Jose, CA. Chinese/Italian/Irish. Student.
- Scott, Josh. 20y. Hayward, CA. French/Irish/Scottish/German/Dutch/Japanese. Student.
- Wilkinson, Kara Mariko. 20y. Castro Valley, CA. Japanese/Irish/English/Scottish/Welsh/ Spanish/American Indian. Student.
- Zaro, Keri. 21y. Hayward, CA. Chilean/ Italian. Student.