

Ā Ao ka Pō Ā Pō ke Ao (Until Night Becomes Day, Until Day Becomes Night): Revolution: A Journey of Self-Reflection

C. Mamo Kim

I am a child of the Pō and the Ao, the Dark and the Light. I entered this third dimensional plane, first, on a double helix ribbon, bequeathed by Korean, Chinese, and Hawaiian ancestors. Nine months later, when the moon was new and the moment was twenty-three minutes shy of an auspicious time to meditate, I entered a new space in the third dimensional realm, whereupon, I took a deep breath, filling myself with Hā,¹ the prayer and the brea(d)th of Life, and I exhaled loudly, releasing what no longer belonged to me. Thus, I began a moving meditation of my own.

The following inquiry is based on my encounter, or lived experience, with a kind of knowing that is not necessarily rational, or linear, in a Western framework of intelligibility. I call this “knowing,” and the healing that springs forth from it, spiritual among other things because of how I perceive and experience the energy/healing when it comes through me. In the literature and oral traditions of many peoples, the term “spiritual” is used for the kind of knowing that I am referring to. For me, I feel expanded, humbled, in awe; I feel great love, like the love one feels when taking in the ocean rising to meet the moon or suddenly walking into a mist of butterflies. This knowing/feeling often comes unannounced, but it doesn’t have to be that way. It is accessible through *pule* (prayer) and especially through *no’ono’opono* (meditation), to name just two possible entry points. Though I am, through time and practice, getting more adept at cultivating balance between the ego and the spiritual state and understanding and nurturing the conditions for this knowing in myself, I am still learning. I am not an expert.

In 1986, I began healing people of diseases from which their doctors had already pronounced they would be imminently dying or chronically doomed to suffer. I was able to completely reverse the diseases or chronic illnesses they had: pneumonia, bleeding ulcer, ovarian cancer, lung cancer, and emphysema to name

a few. There was a lot of talk involved in some cases, but no talk involved in others. I prescribed no herbs or external botanical remedies. I merely lay on my hands around the body or on the body. In a few cases, I sent my energy and wasn’t even in the same room, or on the same continent as the person who was ailing.

My experience led me to question the Western concept of health and healing and the way I was raised to think of it. The Western biomedical model, for the most part, assumes a mind-body dichotomy and although there are physicians who have become more aware of the limitations of this point of view, a majority of Western doctors treat the body in isolation from other facets of a person’s life. The biomedical world assumes that if a body isn’t functioning properly, the causes can be reduced to either a biochemical or neurophysiologic cause. Disease is thought to be caused by a “specific, potentially identifiable agent,” and the body is often treated as though it were a machine needing repair. There is also belief in a standard regimen such as diet, exercise, hygiene, and regular doctor’s visits, in order to maintain or reinstate health (Freund & McGuire, 1999, pp. 6, 7).

The sociological perspective on health and illness understands health and illness differently than the biomedical model in that it sees “...medical ideas of the body and its diseases [as]... socially constructed reali-

ties that are subject to social biases and limitations" (ibid.). Within the process of constructing concepts of illness and health, power exercises itself in implicit, legitimized, taken-for-granted ways that can manipulate people, "unwillingly and unknowingly" and have an influence that impacts "us physically and in how we perceive, care for, maintain, and 'repair' our bodies" (ibid., pp. 8, 9). Thus, for example, as of this writing, the phenomenon of millions of Americans who submit themselves to the prognosis and prescription of doctors without fail and without question, as if the doctors were gods.

I take the sociological perspective of Freund and McGuire as my own, for in my healing encounters, I have found that in addition to the physical factors involved, emotional, psychological, and spiritual components of a person's psyche have as much and sometimes more influence over the well being and strength of their immune systems. I believe that the separation of the body and mind is a fragmented and limited model and have found evidence to this effect in the fields of biochemistry,² neuroscience,³ and parapsychology.^{4 5} Furthermore, I see the body, mind, and spirit as interacting dynamics of the human condition, and as these dynamics respond to stimuli in the environment (social as well as physical), the state of health or illness is affected. I am not intending to bifurcate alternative healing and the biomedical model. I merely wish to outline from which model I am speaking and how I am defining a crucial part of the nature of health and healing for this project. In this discussion, I approach the body/mind/spirit as a unified phenomenon. I see healing as straddling both the biophysical and the body/mind/spirit models.

The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), defines complementary and alternative medicine as "a group of diverse medical and health care systems, practices, and products that are not presently considered to be part of conventional medicine" and lists distinctions such as these:

1. **Complementary medicine** is used **together with** conventional medicine... to help lessen a patient's discomfort following surgery.

2. **Alternative medicine** is used **in place of** conventional medicine. An example of an alternative therapy is using a special diet to treat cancer instead of undergoing surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy that has been recommended by a conventional doctor.

3. **Integrative medicine** combines treatments from conventional medicine and CAM for which there is some high-quality evidence of safety and effectiveness.⁶

My interest in these definitions lies more in the subtext of the classifications, or in the histories that remain hidden beneath the text. For example, a common denominator of the three categories is that all of them, in one way or another, have their roots in native, layman, and ethnic forms of healing, or forms of healing that are, and have been for often thousands of years, *accessible* to (lay) people.

Paul Starr writes in his definitive history of the rise of America's medical profession, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, that in North America, pre-independence, and before the consolidation of the medical profession's authority (1850–1930), native medicine was a source of popular treatment. From the time of the first settlements, colonists were drawn to native healing because initially, natives were "free from all the dread diseases that afflicted Europeans, and their good health was...thought to be a product of their special knowledge of indigenous medicinal herbs." Native cures were, according to an early historian, "too many to repeat," and included surgery. Cotton Mather wrote that "Indian" medicine was "truly stupendous," as did many other colonists who believed some Native healers to be as good as "regular white doctors" (Starr, 1982, pp. 48–49).

Ethnic medicine includes such practices as Ayurveda, Chinese herbology, acupuncture and qigong, to name a few and lay, or popular medicine included such practices as homeopathy, botanics, midwifery, inoculation, chiropractic, bone setting, abortion, osteopathy, and surgery. Although the transfer of information went both ways between lay practitioner and those who were trying to create a medical profession, the relationships between the two entities were

not friendly. Lay practitioners were suspicious of the motives of doctors who lay practitioners felt were more interested in acquiring wealth and status within a restricted domain of practice than in healing. Both lay practitioners and the populace resisted attempts to take the commonsense of healing arts out of the hands of everyday people.

Important remedies used by regular physicians, such as smallpox inoculation and cinchona (quinine), were borrowed from folk cultures as well. In the nineteenth century, lay competition created much of the pressure against the medical profession to abandon “heroic” practices such as bloodletting, intestinal purging, vomiting, blistering and treating people with salves made of mercury (Starr, 1982, p. 47). Starr goes on to chronicle the rise of the American Medical Association and the medical profession from “generally weak, divided, insecure in its status and its income, unable to control entry into practice or to raise the standards of medical education...[to a]... powerful, prestigious, and wealthy profession,” with legitimized authority (pp. 7–9).

The history of American medicine is a long lesson in politics and capitalism intertwined with the, “success in science in revolutionizing...the (adequacy) of the unaided and uneducated senses in understanding the world” (ibid., p. 135).

Nineteenth century medical science had its earliest successful applications in public hygiene. The key scientific breakthroughs in bacteriology came in the 1860s and 1870s in the work of Pasteur and Koch. The 1880s saw the extension and diffusion of these discoveries and by 1890 their impact began to be felt. The isolation of the organisms responsible for the major infectious diseases led public health officials to shift from the older, relatively inefficient measures against disease in general to more focused measures against specific diseases. These new efforts made a particularly notable difference in the control of water-borne and food-borne diseases. Sand filtration of the water supply, introduced in the 1890s, was far more effective in preventing typhoid than was earlier sanitary reform; regulation of the milk supply dramatically cut infant mortality. ...The other early successful use of bacteriology was in surgery. The advent of antiseptic surgery in the late nineteenth century sharply reduced the mortality from injuries

and operations and increased the range of surgical work. (ibid., p. 135)

The introduction of technological advancements such as the stethoscope, ophthalmoscope, laryngoscope, microscope, x-ray, spirometer, and electrocardiograph

produced data seemingly independent of the physician’s as well as the patient’s subjective judgment, while drug companies began deferring to and tailoring their products to be in compliance with the American Medical Association’s (AMA) guidelines. These developments ...further reduced dependence upon the patient, but they increased dependence on capital equipment and formal organizations. Nonetheless, from the patients’ standpoint, these detached technologies added a highly persuasive rhetoric to the authority of medicine. (ibid.,p. 137)

The confluence of developments worked together in the building of an industry and led to the present-day situation in which we currently exist: on the one hand, there is the medical system that has sovereignty and absolute authority over who and what is allowed to legitimately practice medicine, while on the other hand, we have the population, the vast majority of whom can not afford to pay for the services of doctor or hospital or for pharmaceutical costs without health insurance and 50 million Americans unable to afford health insurance (U.S. Dept. of Commerce).

What this brief history demonstrates is that the legitimization of medical knowledge in America—what is designated as worthy of study, what gets subsumed under the category of “science,” and what is relegated or dismissed to the alternative fringe—has had much more to do with an inflection of power than the institutions of science/medicine and academia have so far, in any deeply significant way that trickles into the classrooms of our children, ventured to address.

Insurrection of subjugated knowledges

The term “alternative medicine” then, becomes a historically inscribed, political definition that illustrates both the colonial and the modern stratification of knowledge—colonial because of the period that gave birth to the medical association, and modern because of the earlier period in which the separation of mind

and body (as mechanism) was formulated by the Newtonian/Cartesian world view. The fact that what is now called “alternative medicine” was alive and well prior to the 18th and 19th centuries, and well documented in some cases for thousands of years around the world to work, shows that unlike the sudden springing forth of new knowledge, “alternative medicine” today emanates from knowledge which has been *subjugated* within what Walter Mignolo (1995) identifies as the Occidental, monotopic hermeneutic of the Western modern/colonial world system.

This is an important distinction because the supposed Western *postmodern/post* colonial term “alternative medicine” clearly demonstrates a lingering, present day inflection of what Foucault (1972/1980) referred to as, “*subjugated knowledges*.” That is, “the whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity” Foucault went on to say,

I also believe that it is through the re-emergence of these low-ranking knowledges, these unqualified, even directly disqualified knowledges ... and which involve what I would call a popular knowledge (le savoir des gens) though it is far from being a general commonsense knowledge, but is on the contrary a particular, local, regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it—that it is through the reappearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work. (pp. 81–82).

Years after I first began my healing practice, while I was still bemoaning the fact that I didn't really understand what I was doing and still worried that I could be accused of fakery and peddling of self-delusion, I learned that the Chinese not only had a name for what I was doing (Qigong), but had been practicing it for 4,000 years. At the time, I was highly relieved to know there was an authentic body of knowledge to describe what I had been doing (for a few years and with great anxiety and trepidation) by the seat of my pants. I was also outraged. The fact that

this could have been a 4,000-year-old practice in China and we everyday folk didn't know about it in America astounded me. Was I the only one in America to ever feel healing energies coming through her hands and body the way I was feeling it? Was this energy coming through me because I was *Chinese*? I couldn't have been the only one in America that this was happening to. Did other groups experience this kind of healing energy within their cultures? Well, let me qualify. I did discover that New Agers were doing similar kinds of healing, and though it helped me to know there were others who were waving their hands around bodies, I was never fully convinced of the legitimacy of New Age practitioners who seemed to just sprout, out of thin air (such as myself!), espousing (sudden) awareness of energetic healing techniques and whose efficacy, in my observation, was definitely hit or miss. I didn't trust teachers whom I interacted with, who seemed to have the same “theories” as me about how the energy was working.

However, even with my doubts about the New Age (and myself), I was convinced then, and through my research, have grown stronger in the conviction, that what I have experienced of the spiritual healing phenomenon is a regularly occurring *human* phenomenon not necessarily bound to one culture, but surely and specifically informed through *many* cultures. I would be hard pressed to find a single culture outside of Western modern/colonial science, in fact, that doesn't have a very long history of some facet of energetic, hands on healing. When I say this is a regularly occurring human phenomenon, I mean it is common in the same way that being a musician, an athlete, a builder, a farmer, a linguist, or a mathematician is common. Though not everyone is proficient in any one of these skill sets, they are skills—kinds of knowing that are ordinary to the human condition and can be refined with training and practice.

And since that is the case, I am impelled to pose the question, what forces were/are in play that influence(d) me to self-repress and self-deny, to abnormalize and pathologize myself instead of accept and welcome my experiences as a gift or a skill? How do those forces continue to manifest themselves in the Western/American (post)modern/(post) colonial

iteration of what is considered “real” and “normal” as it pertains, not only to healing practices, but to ways of knowing and ways of *experiencing one’s Self*? What are some of the consequences of these forces on the human experience (which includes the impact on the body as well as the impact through individuals, singly and collectively, on their social and physical environments)?

Because of my ethnicity and the fact that my ways of knowing could have been answered by any of the three cultures (Hawaiian, Chinese, Korean) I descend from—had those cultures been allowed to flourish instead of forced to assimilate into the western, post-overthrow world of Hawai’i—the question, what is the lived experience of an alternative healer in a Western construct of social reality, becomes tied to an historic phenomenon of the subjugation of peoples (in the case of native peoples in America), their ontologies and epistemologies; and their knowledges (both native and otherwise). Ergo, the question is imbued with much more *kaona* and *mana’o ho’onalunalu* (hidden or double meanings that must be pondered, meditated and speculated upon, mulled over) than it initially leads one to assume. The question might also be read as, “What is the experience of the subaltern (that is, an *alternative* healer) who must find ways to live in a world where his/her ontological perceptions are degraded, denied, disqualified, disrespected, or not allowed?” Or, “What is the experience of a subaltern who must find a way to heal (herself and others) in a hostile environment, from the historical ravages of genocide and ethnocide against her people/culture?” Or, “What is the experience of a subaltern who must find a way to restore a connection to her ancestors and her immediate family that have been severed by an imposition of foreign language/ contexts/ technologies/knowledges/powers?” Or, “What is the experience of a subaltern who must heal herself from the devastation of a colonized mind?”

In the mid 1990s, I had a dream that directed me back to the university. I had been a promising student in the late 1960s, but I was dissatisfied with what I felt was the irrelevancy of my university erudition to my daily life. At the time, I had a notion that I was being brainwashed, that much of what I was studying belonged to a world I didn’t inhabit, and with no tolerance left with which to handle even the most mundane

of ritualized behavior, I left unceremoniously. I balked then, at the dream, twenty-five years later, which directed me particularly to take up Hawaiian Studies at the local university. I had already learned to honor my dreams, however, and so with heaviness in my heart, I re-entered the bastion of Western knowledge production known as the University (of Hawai’i).

From Hawaiian studies I moved into political science, with a focus on indigenous politics. It was from these programs and from my own research that I have found a way to think through my encounters with the supernatural; that I have found a way to heal certain of my own imbalances, gaps, and disconnects between my body, mind, and spirit. It is through the act of reflecting upon, not only the historical native encounter with imperializing Eurocentric forces, but the various contingencies, subjectivities, and assumptions involved in the very act of thinking itself, that I have been led to a new appreciation for the difficulties of my childhood relationship with my family.

Because of these factors, and because the prevailing condition of knowledge production in the West is, as Mignolo (1995) conceptualizes, the Occidental, monotopic hermeneutic of the Western modern/ colonial world system, I choose to privilege a non-Western point of view in my approach to this topic. Therefore, I begin again with my genealogy, a Native Hawaiian epistemology.

He Mo’olelo Hikapiliolana Pokole: A Brief Genealogy

He kanaka Hawai’i wahine au. I am a Hawaiian woman of mixed blood, born less than ten years after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and raised in Kailua, O’ahu, Hawai’i. During the time of my childhood, the sugar and pineapple plantations were the main source of economic stability in the islands. The United States enacted statehood upon Hawai’i (1959), the nation it had conspired to overthrow with haole/ foreigner businessmen and had been occupying (and is still occupying as of this writing) since 1893. The resultant effect of “statehood,” was a dramatic proliferation of construction in the 1960s, and the rise of tourism and the United States military as the number one and two economic industries in Hawai’i.

My father's parents were both educators from Korea who came to Hawai'i separately and at different times, as a way to escape imminent death or degradation in their mother country. Their marriage was arranged without either one knowing the finer details of the other. Grandfather had attained the highest honors of a gentleman scholar in what is now Seoul, Korea. He was revered for his position, the status of which was culturally represented by his wearing of a scholar's gat.⁷ The yangban (literati scholars) were an elite class, schooled in both classical and Neo-Confucian thought, who were dedicated to the Confucian ideals and aesthetic both in internal character as well as external practice. They were expected to hold public office and help cultivate and raise the standards of the society in which they lived and were highly respected for their knowledge and pursuits. "Numerous texts were authored by members of the yangban class (which) provide insight into the ancient and contemporary texts they studied, the new ideas they developed, how they discoursed among themselves, and how they developed government policies" (Lee, 2000). The yangban wrote in Classic Chinese even after 1443, when the Korean han'gŭl (alphabet) was developed.

In a nearly untold story, discreetly handed down through my father to my brother,

Japanese Soldiers one day barged into grandpa's class, killing a number of students and severely beating grandpa. The soldiers then dragged grandpa through the streets by his hair, degrading his gat (to symbolize debasement of Korean sensibilities, truth, and knowledge) and all but scalping him. Because a few of his students died and he wasn't also killed, and because he had been publicly "scalped" of his status, Grandpa suffered a great loss of face.⁸ He had two options to retain his honor: either kill himself, or leave Korea, never to return. He therefore, by dawn the next morning, took the first boat out of Korea. The boat was headed to Hawai'i, and in 1906, Grandpa landed at Koloa on the island of Kaua'i.⁹

My grandfather left his hair shorn for the remainder of his life. He never again donned his Korean Literati attire, though he did become a Methodist preacher for the Korean population on the plantation. He never returned to Korea, and he never again saw his parents.

Neither of my grandparents spoke English fluently and therefore, though both were (highly) educated in their own Korean tongue, they worked and lived mostly on the plantation as common laborers for a large part of their adult lives. They birthed, in the process, seven children. Life on the plantation was difficult and Grandmother, who had been a teacher in Korea, lived on no more than three hours of sleep per night. She made her living doing laundry for the plantation workers, acting as mid-wife when called upon, and making kimchee¹⁰ to sell. We were told she was the first person to sell kimchee on the Ewa Plantation. Grandfather arose before dawn to work in the fields, but was fond of drinking and did not usually return home until after midnight. He also subsisted on less than four hours of sleep a night, but it was not because of his industrious nature.

My father, Albert Kwong Ho Kim, the third child and first boy of the Yu-Kim marriage, was given all the leeway of the first son by his father, who was also a first son. That is, in the eyes of his father, my father could do no wrong. Yet, in the eyes of his mother, my father was incorrigible. Grandma didn't have much time and patience for first son privilege and "incorrigible." She spent much time having to whip him with thin tree branches, which she would strip of their leaves and extraneous bark and apply liberally to whatever part of his body she could catch. This must have been quite a feat for Grandma, given her tiny stature. Grandma stood, in her shoes, little more than four and a half feet tall. For various reasons, my father became independent at a young age. He sold lei and newspapers on the streets of Honolulu, near the docks, by the time he was five and became financially self-sufficient by the time he was seven.

My mother's mother, Rose Waiwai'ole Kalāmali'o Naehu, a Kanaka Maoli (full blooded Hawaiian), died upon giving birth to my mother, Rose Chow. My mother's father, Chow Hoon, a Chinese tailor from Guangzhou, broken-hearted over his loss, retreated with his elder sons to China, leaving the younger children to be hānai.¹¹ My mother was hānai by her mother's cousins, Mary Kūkahiko and Gregory Kamanā Kalā. She grew up living on a large piece of land called an ahupua'a¹² that stretched over an

area encompassing parts of Kaupō, Kipahulu, and Hana, on the island of Maui. There were thirteen of them living in the kauhale 'Ohana Kalā (Kalā Family compound): my mother Rose, her (hānai) mother and father, nine siblings, and Tūtū Lōlō,¹³ George Kekahuna, Mary Kūkahiko's grandfather. Tūtū Lōlō was named as such because he was paralyzed.

The kauhale consisted of three small shacks made of wood and tin and an outdoor shower. Two of the structures were connected by a covered, wooden walkway, the lānai. "The main house was like a living room," says my mother. It was the largest house but still, only a tiny room where the family would entertain visitors and congregate. At night, this room was used for the family sleeping quarters. Everyone slept, side by side, head to toe, together on the floor of the screenless-windowed room, sharing space also with a ceiling full of moths, mo'ō (lizards), bugs, and mosquitoes. The structure that was linked to the main hale (house) was used for cooking. The third structure was the outhouse. Off to the side, and only partially enclosed, was the outdoor shower, hooked up to the main waterline. "The water was cold, but we were lucky to have it," says my mother today, "We took a bath once a week, in that cold water."¹⁴

My mother's stand-out memory of her childhood was first and foremost of hunger. In the main, mother's family ate a meal a day. Her father planted what he could and was a lawai'a, a fisherman. The family subsisted on fish and poi, and the children scoured the trees for lilikoi, guava, and mango. They stole into the plantation fields for kō (sugar cane). Although they had title to an entire ahupua'a, the 'ohana never had enough to eat.

An ahupua'a, the traditional Hawaiian land division within a larger district called an 'okana, generally stretched from mauka (the mountains) to makai (the sea) (Abbott, 1992, p. 11). It took a whole community, living dispersed upon the ahupua'a, to cultivate and care for the land and ocean environments necessary to the Hawaiian cosmological, social, and cultural structures. When the 'Aikapu, the "central metaphor ... around which traditional Hawaiian society was organized," (Kame'eleihiwa, 1992, p. 33) was overthrown in

1819, as a result of Hawaiian contact with Western foreigners; and when land was carved up into parcels to be sold and owned as "property," due to legislation in 1845–1850 (known as the *Māhele*), even those such as my grandparents who managed to maintain ownership of an ahupua'a, could not manage to cultivate enough food and resources to adequately feed their 'ohana. Therefore, when Tūtū Lady told my mother that all the land their 'ohana traversed and lived upon during the various seasons was owned by them, my mother inwardly doubted Tūtū Lady's veracity. Mother's doubt pivoted around the understandable and unresolved issue of how one family could own so much land and yet be as poor and as hungry as her 'ohana.

By the time she was an adult, my mother could easily encircle her waist with the span of her two hands, thumbs touching thumbs, fingers touching fingers. My mother had known starvation intimately and on a daily basis for eighteen years. It was at that age that my mother left Maui to relocate to Honolulu. She had no sooner graduated from high school, valedictorian of her class, than she was on the boat. Despite the encouragement of her teachers to continue her education, my mother wanted to begin working immediately. Mother was not interested in more education for herself, she wanted to earn money. In the main, she wanted to eat regularly. By the end of relocation day, my mother knew for the first time in her life, what it was like to go to bed with her stomach sated. She did not know and she did not care that Hawaiians believed (and many still do) that all living things are imbued with a spirit and consciousness and that the universe itself is an interconnected, familial relationship between land, the elements, plants, animals, spirits (ancestors), and people. She had no awareness that, as Haunani Trask elucidates in her book, *From a Native Daughter*, "Nature was not objectified but personified, resulting in an extraordinary respect (when compared to Western ideas of nature) for the life of the sea, the heavens, and the earth" (Trask, 1999, p. 5). My mother was hungry and she wanted to eat.

My mother's second most vivid memory of her childhood was her third grade May Day Health

program, which featured, as the special fun event of the day, the “clean kids,” representing, “Health,” chasing away the “dirty kids,” representing, “Germs.” For the rest of her life, my mother would retell, almost relive, the moment she realized it was only Hawaiian children who were collectively singled out as “Germs.”

“Hawaiian children,” concludes my mother, innocently, were mostly, “...poor, dirty, unclean...I could see why we were selected as ‘germs,’ but I will never forget it.”

It was clear to my mother that most non-Hawaiian kids did not care to be near the Hawaiian kids. “We were all so poor; we wore the same clothing all week long. We went to school in them, we played in them, we swam in them and we slept in the same clothes for a whole week. When we took our weekly showers, we changed our clothes. We had ‘uku (lice), we had kākī’o (impetigo), we were dirty. I can just imagine how we smelled.”

I also noted that she steered us away from learning her language, stating that her mother never taught her to speak Hawaiian. “But if Tūtū spoke Hawaiian and not English,” I asked, “How could she not teach you to speak Hawaiian?”

“I don’t know,” my mother replied impatiently. “My parents spoke to us in pidgin. I learned how to speak English at school... and I was raised by my older sister, Mary. That’s the way we did it. The older children looked after the younger ones.” It is probably worthwhile to note that Aunt Mary did speak fluently in Hawaiian, as did my mother’s older brothers. I asked my mother once, searching for a reason to account for why she chose to learn English and leave Hawaiian behind, if she might have been ashamed of being Hawaiian. My mother answered, “It didn’t bother me to be Hawaiian. I never felt ashamed of being Hawaiian. It just wasn’t good to be Hawaiian.”

The children of my mother’s ‘ohana were also influenced by an ignorance of their historic past; a past that was alluded to by their mother, but explicitly mystified by Tūtū’s insistence that it was “dangerous” for the children to know their past. This erasure of a Hawaiian historical context from my

mother’s memory was underscored when Hawaiian history was not taught in the whole of her educational experience. It was as if Hawaiians did not have a history. The contact between the Western world and a Native world was articulated in my mother’s American History classes as inevitably, “Indians: bad, savage, barbaric, uncivilized; except Pocahontas, who helped Pilgrims and was good.”

Hawaiian language was expressly forbidden to be spoken on the school grounds. English was made the official language and basis of instruction in all schools through legislation in 1896. Although the Hawaiian language is not specifically named in this legislation, coming a mere three years after the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, there is little doubt the ruling was intended to yoke young Hawaiian minds under the Western frame of reference (Schutz, 1994). My mother did not know it was against the law to speak Hawaiian in school, but by implication, Hawaiian became the language of the ignorant, the uneducated.

A deeply interesting detail is the fact that my mother, until my brother and I began our studies into our Hawaiian past, did not know that less than one hundred and fifty years before her time, Hawaiians had a flourishing culture, with an estimated population of close to a million (Stannard, 1994). She also did not know that a mere one hundred fifteen years after the arrival of the Europeans, the Hawaiian monarchy was overthrown and the population of Hawaiians was tragically reduced to a mere 40,000 due to introduced diseases. She did not know that at the time of the overthrow, Hawaiians had the highest literacy rate in the world. It seems unthinkable today, but curiously, my mother had no knowledge of the Overthrow.¹⁵ The truth is, even though my sister and I attended a school for Hawaiian children, the highly revered Kamehameha Schools, for two years in the mid 1960s, neither of us came away with any real, historical, factual knowledge of our Hawaiian history or our culture.

Relativity

My genealogy informs my locus of enunciation. I identify as one whose lineage includes the incursion of US expansionism and Eurocentric imperialism into

my ancestral lands and the imposition of Western state apparatus onto the landscape of my environment and my family relations, as well as upon my mind, body, and spirit. My mother's experiences and her reaction to those experiences have impacted me. Although I live at the intersection of female, Hawaiian, Chinese, and Korean sensibilities, my own rich heritage of ethnic and native culture was systematically suppressed. Otherwise, I would have had a way, as I mentioned earlier, to naturally and organically understand and develop my "extraordinary knowing" (Mayer, 2007).

I was raised mostly in Hawai'i, speaking mostly English and trained, for the most part, in American public schools. That means, to the intersection of female/ Hawaiian/ Chinese/ Korean, I must also add the American (materialist, capitalist, Christian dominant) strand. Additionally, as I was subject to unexplained, energetic phenomena since childhood (that is, psychic knowing, discussions with "guides," seeing auras, vivid dream world, etc.) and I have had, since childhood, to negotiate this type of discourse on my own, without the support of culture, parents, or social practice, and because I have had the experience of participating in healing encounters with people where I was the person "facilitating" the environment of healing; and, because I have had to negotiate and learn to live with my natural energies against great internal struggle and conflict, I also add the strands of "'(alternative)' healer" and "Colonized Other" to the intersection of female/ Hawaiian/ Chinese/ Korean/ American. It is precisely these last two strands that bring me to the conflated experience of being marginalized and "alternative" in a Western construct of social reality, and it is the conflicted experience I have undergone that has finally brought me to the understanding of what it means to be an unwitting subject of the "coloniality of power" (Mignolo, 2000, p. xiv).

For all of these reasons, I find Walter Mignolo's rendering of the subaltern perspective as "fractured enunciation" (ibid., p. x) to be remarkably apt. I can neither belong to only a single category of tradition nor absent myself from any of the categories I name. Mignolo enunciates this as a condition of a global imaginary. Mignolo, using many other scholars as

inspiration, argues the limits of the modern world system discourse, conceiving of it instead as a modern/ colonial world system, and he creates a space, "...to tell stories not only from inside the 'modern' world but from its borders. These are not only counter or different stories; they are forgotten stories that bring forward, at the same time, a new epistemological dimension: an epistemology of and from the border of the modern/ colonial world system" (Mignolo, 2000, p. 52). Very much influenced by Gloria Anzaldúa's work, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Mignolo calls stories or knowledge from this space, "border thinking" or "border gnosis," and defines border gnosis as a knowledge that springs from the cracks between indigenous, subaltern knowledge, on the one hand, and what is legitimized as "true knowledge" in the power structure of colonizing forces, on the other.

Border gnosis as healing practice

The story of my ancestors is a story of subjugation and of world views in collision (Deloria, 1978). The change from a Hawaiian cosmology and way of knowing; from a Hawaiian, "gathering and horticulture," economic structure (Abbott, 1992, p. xi), replete with a comprehension of the stars, which, along with understanding currents, tides, and ocean environment plants and animals, enabled the Hawaiian people, for centuries before European contact, to navigate wa'a (canoe) over vast distances around the Pacific, even to South and North America as legends (and research) have it (Whipps, 2007)¹⁶; of best days and ways to plant and fish; of the importance of co-existing in harmonious, productive, and effective ways with the natural world; of the kind of scientific observation that guided them to construct fishponds that were sometimes as large as 450–500 acres and eliminated a whole trophic level of the food chain (no other group on the planet has done that) (Kelly, 1976, 1979); of how to develop elaborate kalo terraces with complicated irrigation systems; of the need to devise a vast and detailed system of classification for plants (i.e., folk taxonomy) (Abbott); of how to keep drinking and irrigation water pure and flowing, with a minimum of erosive damage (even with a probable population of upwards of a million people); of the kind of nuanced

observation that led them to name nearly 300 types of winds (Nakuina, 1990); of the existence of energetic configurations of the earth by which land boundaries could be determined (papa huluhonua) (Kamakau, 1964/1991, p. 47); of scores of healing plants and healing methods that included and prefigured recent neuroscientific discoveries of the human brain's left and right hemispheric functions (Chun, 1986, p. 23); to an enforced, Western, materialist mindset has been devastating to most Hawaiians and, indeed, has proven to disintegrate and decimate more than just a nation. It has brought about the very near annihilation of a whole system of knowledge and way of apprehending that, far from being better left in the "primitive" past, is a crucial and relevant contribution for the revitalization and rejuvenation of the earth and its earth community.

Europe began ranking cultures and societies chronologically in the eighteenth century. In 1724, Joseph François Lafitau wrote *Moeurs des sauvages américains comparés aux mœurs des premiers temps* (Customs of the American savages compared with customs of primitive times) and in *Philosophy of History*, written in 1822, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel undertook a massive rendering of world history in which he assumed humanity's evolution in successive phases from primitive bondage to the rational freedom of civilizations; from first stage civilizations of the Orient to the later, more enlightened stages of Germanic and Christian civilization (Hegel, 2001). Thus began, as Johannes Fabian (1983) notes, the replacement of savages and cannibals in *space* (that is, in the colonies, in the new world, in Africa, etc.), with primitives and the exotic Other in an earlier *time* (that is, chronologically ordering native peoples to the "primitive" and primal beginnings of humanity and Orientals to early stage civilization). Europeans considered themselves to be (latest stage) civilized, "enlightened," and "rationally free." According to Mignolo (2000),

Toward the nineteenth century the question was no longer whether primitives or Orientals were human but, rather, how far removed from the present and civilized stage of humanity they were. (p. 283)

This shift justified to the European colonist and intellectual alike the dehumanization and dismissal of native peoples' rights, culture, intellectual development, and ways of knowing, juxtaposing natives against a Eurocentric notion of enlightenment, progress, civilization, and coeval.

To be clear, I do not imagine, nor do I advocate, an exclusive return to the ancient Hawaiian traditions, but neither can I accept the kind of Eurocentric thinking that ranks cultures and societies chronologically by ordering native peoples (and native knowledge) closer to "primitive" and Europeans closer to "enlightened." Johannes Fabian calls this transformation of the "Other" in space to the "Other" in time the *denial of coevalness* (1983). In considering the denial of coevalness, one only need remember the modern/colonial enterprise, from the moment of the first European contact, to directly grasp the collective subjectivity, will to power, and the utter blindness with which Europeans elevated themselves despite their own horrific, murderous, and racist actions against the "barbaric" and "primitive" Other. David Stannard, in *American Holocaust* (1992), recounts how tens of millions of Native American peoples were killed by Europeans, making their destruction, "far and away, the most massive act of genocide in the history of the world" (Stannard, 1992, p. x). Massacres were ongoing and as savage and inhuman as can be imagined. About the same people Columbus had on his first voyage described as, "well built people of handsome stature," who were "wondrous timid," "artless and free with all they possess...and (who) show as much love as if they were giving their hearts..." (p. 63), by 1495, during Columbus' second voyage, Bartolomé de Las Casas (a Spanish missionary who was on that trip) reported

Once the Indians were in the woods, the next step was [for Columbus' men] to form squadrons and pursue them, and whenever the Spaniards found them, they pitilessly slaughtered everyone like sheep in a corral. It was a general rule among Spaniards to be cruel; not just cruel, but extraordinarily cruel so that harsh and bitter treatment would prevent Indians from daring to think of themselves as human beings or having a minute to think at all. So they would cut an Indian's hands and leave them dangling by a shred of

skin and they would send him on saying "Go now, spread the news to your chiefs." They would test their swords and their manly strength on captured Indians and place bets on the slicing off of heads or the cutting of bodies in half with one blow. They burned or hanged captured chiefs. (de Las Casas, The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account [1542], as quoted in Stannard, D., 1992, p. 70)

Freud would call this kind of Eurocentric thinking that projected savagery on native peoples while Europeans sadistically and savagely slaughtered, by the millions, men, women and children, a "defense mechanism" (Freud, 1937). And Nietzsche, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, is also helpful in comprehending the phenomenon of projection when he says, "He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster" (R. J. Hollindale, Trans., 1973, p. 102).

I rehash the horrors of the earlier encounters between Native and European in order to unambiguously contextualize the force with which natives and their knowledge were subjugated; to illustrate the deepness with which the European felt how "low down on the hierarchy," how "disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated (these) naïve knowledges" were/are (Foucault, 1972/1980, pp. 81–82). To be sure, this kind of bias still exists within the Western (post)modern/(post) colonial tradition of knowledge acquisition. The scope of so called, legitimate knowledge from within the modern/ colonial world systems tradition and the means of knowledge acquisition and dissemination, though perhaps not in as obviously virulent a form, remains foundationally and predominantly an Occidental monotopic hermeneutic.

The alienation, disempowerment, and psychic/ spiritual wounding that Hawaiians suffer as a result of this kind of institutionalized fragmentation, disenfranchisement, and ethnocide can be quantified by socio-economic and health indicators. In the 1980s and 1990s, Hawaiians were the most highly represented of the US population in high school dropout rates, incarceration rates, and "overall mortality and death rates for heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes, and risk factors, such as obesity,

hypertension and alcohol-use..." In 1990, the life expectancy for Hawaiians continued to be the shortest of all ethnicities in Hawai'i; the age-adjusted mortality rates for all causes of death were higher than for any other ethnicity; with the exception of accidents, the five leading causes of death (heart disease, cancer, stroke, accidents, and diabetes) were highest for Hawaiians over any other ethnicity in Hawai'i; infant mortality rates were the highest: of reported cases of AIDs, Hawaiians ranked the highest (Blaisdell, 1997). These socio-economic and health indicators are similar to the numbers for the dispossessed and colonized native and black peoples across the US.

Although the renewed movement towards Hawaiian sovereignty that began in the late 1970s is changing the trajectory of Hawaiians to a more meaningful, collective self destiny, Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) must still work through the tyranny of, as Ngugi wa Thiong'o calls it, the "cultural bomb" (1994, p. 3). Certainly, in any case, the wedge of doubt and distance that was solidly lodged between my mother and her mother; between my mother, me, our genealogy and culture; and in turn, between me and my essential Self is a wounding yet to be fully healed.

Is it possible to make whole again that which has been ruptured, alienated, fractured, and fragmented? Can this chaos shadow of the native psyche be transformed and healed? My kūpuna used to say, "A'ohē pau ka 'ike I ka hālau ho'okāhi. *All knowledge is not taught in the same school.* One can learn from many sources" (Pukui, 1983/1997, p. 24).

The essence of this ancient Hawaiian proverb contains an inherent healing function similar to that which is contained in the idea of "border gnosis." It allows for a diversity of experience, expression, and knowledge. We can all learn from others. There is no One Way. That is, not East OR West; not Native (primitive) OR Modern (enlightened); not Black OR White, night OR day, but both. That means whole, ALL: human AND animals AND plants AND earth AND sky AND seen AND unseen, material AND immaterial; ALL in existence, together, teaching and learning from each and all.

Bringing about health and healing has much to do with understanding wounding—whether on

a physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual or *intellectual* level; whether the wound is individually experienced or collectively perpetuated; whether the wound is historically, socially, or politically inflicted; intergenerationally or genetically transmitted; consciously or unconsciously, physically or non-physically, materially or immaterially communicated. One doesn't need a college degree to see that wounding happens on much more than just a biophysical level. Non-biophysical, immaterial wounding more often than not negatively impacts the biophysical level; which means, *non physical healing can also positively impact the biophysical level.*

The acceptance of that knowledge alone can bring about revolution.

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ENDNOTE

- ¹ the breath and spirit of one's mouth, see M. K. Pukui & S. H. Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986). p. 44.
- ² Pert, Candace B., (1997). *Molecules Of Emotion: The Science Behind Mind-Body Medicine*. New York: Touchstone
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- ⁵ Radin, Dean (2006). *Entangled Minds*. New York: Paraview Pocket Books.
- ⁶ NCCAM home page. <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/whaticam/>
- ⁷ http://www.korea.net/kois/magazine/pictorialKoreaView.asp?Html_no=179, "Made entirely by hand, the gat is composed of two parts, the crown that covers the head, and the brim which blocks the sun. The crown is made of finely woven horsetail hair or oxtail hair. The brim is made with fine strips of bamboo sewn together with thread finer than a human hair. The gat is finished with a coating of lacquer... When wearing a gat, the hair was first drawn up into a topknot that was kept in place with a headband called *manggeon*, which in turn was tied with a strip called *tanggeon*. The gat was then worn over the top... It has a minimal beauty, being completely black with no ornament except for the string that ties under the chin... These days it is very rare to see anyone wearing a gat on the streets of Korea... This does not mean that the dignity and authority of the gat has disappeared. ... For example...if a man wearing a gat were to board a jam-packed subway train, several youths would immediately get up to give him their seats."
- ⁸ There are two forms of "loss of face" in Korea. One is embarrassing, but can be lived with. It has to do with a lack of ability or trustworthiness. The other is tantamount to loss of moral authority and integrity. My grandfather believed he was responsible for the lives of his students and should have been killed before any of his students suffered at the hands of the soldiers. It is evident that Grandfather never got over this seminal incident, for when his second daughter began dating my uncle, a man of Japanese descent, Grandfather beat her until she was unconscious. My aunt married my Japanese uncle anyway.
- ⁹ Rev. A. Kim, Jr., personal communication, 8/06/2008
- ¹⁰ kimchee, also spelled kimchi or gimchi is a traditional Korean side dish, made with many vegetables, but mostly, in Hawaii, with cabbage, turnips, or cucumbers. It is a fiery dish spiced mostly, since the 17th century, with chili peppers and eaten as an accompaniment to rice and other foods.
- ¹¹ A more modern Hawaiian practice of raising as one's own, children who may or may not be biologically related. Connected in concept, but not exactly the same as the western practice of "adoption" or the traditional Hawaiian practice of *hānai*, which was, the privilege of grandparents to take and raise as one's own, the first-born child of one's children. (Pukui, 1972, p. 49).
- ¹² "Land division usually extending from the uplands to the sea, so called because the boundary was marked by a heap (*ahu*) of stones surmounted by an image of a pig (*pua'a*), or because a pig or other tribute was laid on the altar as tax to the chief?" (Pukui, 1986, p. 9).
- ¹³ Tūtū is the Hawaiian word for "grandparent". Lōlō means paralyzed.
- ¹⁴ Hawaiians lived in groups of houses, not just one house. Traditionally, the houses were generally grouped into the *Hale Mua*, men's eating house; the *Hale 'Aina*, Women's eating house; the *Hale Noa*, the sleeping and visiting/sitting place; and the *Hale Pe'a*, the Women's menstruation house. My mother's family retained that kind of grouping but since the tabu of men and women eating together was abandoned in 1819, they no longer held to the same distinctive groupings. The more traditional hale were cleaner than the tin and wood shacks of my mother's day. They were made of various wood for the skeletal structure and covered with pili grass. For more on this, see Pukui & Handy, *The Polynesian Family System in Ka'u, Hawai'i*. pp. 7-14.
- ¹⁵ On January 17, 1893, Queen Lili'uokalani was confronted by treasonous haole missionary plantation owners and businessmen who sequestered her on false charges. Calling themselves, "The Committee of Safety," they planned and carried out the overthrow of the rightful government of the Kingdom of Hawai'i co-conspiring with the U.S. Plenipotentiary, John L. Stevens, who positioned an armed, U.S. Marine vessel across from her palace. The official U.S. report denouncing this action is contained in the *Affairs in Hawaii/Blount Report, The Executive Documents of the House of Representatives for the Third Session of the Fifty-Third Congress, 1894-1895*. 35 Volumes (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895).
- ¹⁶ Recently unearthed chicken bones, whose DNA matched closely with a Polynesian breed of chicken and discovered at an archaeological site called El Arenal on the coast of Chile, implies Polynesians made contact with the west coast of South America as much as a century before any Spanish conquistadors