The Aloha ‘Aina Adolescent Aloha Day Treatment Program (AAADTP) Team:

An Ethnographic Study as Surrealist Collage

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Abstract

This ethnographic study describes the experiences of four members of an interagency, interdisciplinary team who collaborated with one another on a daily basis in order to develop and implement special education and related services for Native Hawaiian youth with emotional disabilities and behavior disorders at an adolescent day treatment program (ADTP) in rural Hawai‘i. This team, which included a special education teacher, an educational assistant, a clinical social worker, and a recreational therapist, was characterized by ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation diversity among team members. Each of the four team members believed that racism, sexism, and homophobia among team members significantly (and negatively) impacted collaborative processes and outcomes at the ADTP, thereby diminishing the quality and effectiveness of the special education and related services offered to the students and their families. The four team members also believed that the colonization of the Native Hawaiian people by the United States government contributed to a lack of trust among team members, one of who was Native Hawaiian, and among the non-Hawaiian team members and the Native Hawaiian youth and their families. This study resulted in the production of a dense, fragmented, and collage-like artifact (i.e., document or text) that blurs the boundaries between “art” and “science” and embodies the theoretical assumptions and aesthetic sensibilities of ethnographic surrealism.
This ethnographic study describes the experiences of four members of an interagency, interdisciplinary team who collaborated with one another on a daily basis to develop and implement special education and related services for Native Hawaiian youth with emotional disabilities and behavior disorders at an adolescent day treatment program (ADTP) in rural Hawai‘i. This team, which included a special education teacher, an educational assistant, a clinical social worker, and a recreational therapist, was characterized by ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation diversity among team members. The recreational therapist was a heterosexual man of Native Hawaiian and Euro-American ancestry; the educational assistant was a heterosexual woman of Japanese, African American, and Cherokee ancestry; the clinical social worker was a heterosexual woman of Euro-American and Cherokee ancestry; and the special education teacher was a gay man of Euro-American ancestry. Each of the four team members believed that racism, sexism, and homophobia among team members significantly (and negatively) impacted collaborative processes and outcomes at the ADTP, thereby diminishing the quality and effectiveness of the special education and related services offered to the students and their families. The four team members also believed that the colonization of the Native Hawaiian people by the United States government contributed to a lack of trust among team members, one of who was Native Hawaiian, and among the non-Hawaiian team members and the Native Hawaiian youth and their families.

The Purposes of this Study

The purposes of this ethnographic study were to: (a) construct a collage of textual images that represents the collaborative experiences of four team members who collaborated with one another on a daily basis to develop and implement special
education and related services for Native Hawaiian youth with emotional disabilities and behavior disorders at the Aloha ‘Aina Adolescent Aloha Day Treatment Program (AAADTP) (cf., Lather & Smithies, 1997); (b) describe the impact of racism, sexism, and homophobia on the four team members and their collaborative experiences; (c) position these experiences within the context of American colonialism in Hawai‘i and the resulting subjugation, degradation, and near eradication of a once proud and sovereign people; and (d) illuminate these experiences and the context in which they occurred by juxtaposing the stories of the four team members with selected verses from *Kumulipo*, the sacred genealogical prayer and creation chant that describes the origins of the Hawaiian universe, contains the *mo‘olelo* (“history”) of *Ka Lahui Hawai‘i* (“the Hawaiian Nation”), and represents the ontological and epistemological understandings of the pre-colonial Hawaiian people (Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992; Trask, 1999). This study resulted in the production of a dense, fragmented, and collage-like artifact (i.e., document or text) that blurs the boundaries between “art” and “science” and embodies the theoretical assumptions and aesthetic sensibilities of *ethnographic surrealism* (Clifford, 1981).

**Historical and Sociopolitical Context of the Study: A Review of the Relevant Literature**

Collaboration can be conceptualized as a dynamic, interactive, and nonhierarchical process characterized by power sharing and equity among two or more partners who collectively set goals, make decisions, and solve problems through negotiation, cooperation, and consensus building. Genuine collaboration is a creative process that generates synergy, resulting in outcomes that are different from and better than those solutions produced by individual team members working in isolation (Dettmer, Thurston, & Dyck, 2002; Thomas, Correa, & Morsink, 2001). Equity and equality among
collaborating partners, however, can be undermined by conscious and unconscious forms of prejudice (e.g., racism, sexism, and homophobia) among team members (Thayer-Bacon and Brown, 1995). Teams that reinforce and reproduce systems of privilege and oppression based on ethnic identity, gender, and sexual orientation are collaborative in name only; that is to say, there can be no genuine collaboration without equity, without equality, and without respect for difference (Duke, 2004).

Thayer-Bacon and Brown (1995) noted that collaborators need to feel safe to speak, and to believe that their voices will be heard and their efforts valued. They suggested that collaborators who work in settings characterized by diversity must understand the impact of history on traditionally oppressed groups in the United States. In order to include the voices and perspectives of each person participating in the collaborative process, and to fully benefit from the contributions that he or she might bring to the collaborative effort, group members must consider the possible impact of historical developments on individual members of the collaborating group. Collaborators should be aware of racism and the oppression of people of color (West, 2001); sexism and the oppression of women (Lorber, 2001); homophobia and the oppression of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals (Kumashiro, 2002); and other forms of oppression and injustice that might silence and/or marginalize individual team members and cause them to feel invisible, unheard, and afraid (Duke, 2004).

Those professionals who collaborate with one another in order to provide special education and related services to indigenous students (i.e., Native Hawaiian, Native American, and Alaska Native students) and their families need to be mindful that these collaborations are taking place within a historical and sociopolitical context characterized
by American colonialism and the conquest of indigenous peoples. These collaborators must consider the impact of this historical and sociopolitical context on their relationships with indigenous students and families. Collaborators must also consider the impact of this historical and sociopolitical context on their relationships with indigenous team members (Adams, 1997; Ah Nee-Benham & Cooper, 2000; Kawagley, 1995; Spring, 2001).

Ah Nee-Benham and Heck (1998) argued “the longest war in history has been the war against indigenous peoples” (p. 3). Modern industrial nations have dominated, enslaved, and colonized these peoples, and have defined the Native role and place at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy. Trask (1999) noted that when the British explorer Captain James Cook arrived in the Hawaiian archipelago in 1778, he brought an entirely foreign system into the lives of my ancestors, a system based on a view of the world that could not coexist with that of Hawaiians. He brought capitalism, Western political ideas (such as a predatory individualism), and Christianity. Most destructive of all, he brought diseases that ravaged my people….In less than a hundred years after Cook’s arrival, my people had been dispossessed of our religion, our moral order, our form of chiefly government, many of our cultural practices, and our lands and waters. Introduced diseases, from syphilis and gonorrhea to tuberculosis, small pox, measles, leprosy, and typhoid fever, killed Hawaiians by the hundreds of thousands, reducing our Native population (from an estimated one million at contact) to less than 40,000 by 1890. (pp. 5-6)

In 1893, the Kingdom of Hawai‘i was invaded by the United States marines. Queen Lili‘uokalani, the last monarch of the Hawaiian Kingdom, was forced from the
throne and placed under house arrest. In 1900, the Hawaiian islands were annexed as a territory of the United States (Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992; Doughtery, 1996; Trask, 1999).

Ah Nee-Benham and Heck (1998) wrote for Native Hawaiians, who were involuntarily colonized beginning with increasing Western contact in the late 1700s and later conquered and annexed by the United States …the result of prolonged contact with foreign values and government has been…devastating. Western domination has largely stripped us of our language, customs, social position, self-governance, and cultural identity. In education, we have often been denied equal access to quality schools and, therefore, more promising economic and social status. Educational policies are often overtly, or covertly, racist and reflect wider cultural attitudes Euro-Americans hold about ‘other’ ethnic groups. (pp. 3-4)

Educators and related services personnel who work with Native Hawaiian students and their families must attempt to understand the cultural traditions of the Native Hawaiian people. In order to understand the Hawaiian worldview and related cultural values, these providers must come to know “the people, the ‘aina (land), the stories” (Trask, 1999). They must listen. They must come, as the American Indians suggested long ago, to understand the land. Not in the Western way, but in the indigenous way, the way of living within and protecting the bond between people and ‘aina. (p. 120)

Conceptual Frameworks

This study was guided and informed by the theoretical assumptions and aesthetic
sensibilities of *ethnographic surrealism* (i.e., relativist ethnography), a method of qualitative research that seeks to synthesize “science” and “art” and blur the boundaries between aesthetics and empiricism. Ethnographic surrealists embrace many of the values, traditions, and techniques of the *Dadaist* and *surrealist* artists, writers, and philosophers who lived and worked in Paris between the first and second world wars (Clifford, 1981).

*Dada, Surrealism, and Ethnography*

Surrealism was an international transdisciplinary intellectual movement that flourished in Paris between the first and second world wars. It encompassed the visual and performing arts, literature, politics, philosophy, and the nascent social sciences. Surrealism (and ethnographic surrealism or relativistic ethnography) is closely related to the Dada movement, from which it evolved (Clifford, 1981; Nadeau, 1968; Rubin, 1969).

The Dada movement was founded by a group of avant-garde European artists, writers, and intellectuals who were vehemently opposed to World War I. Horrified by the death and destruction that accompanied this war, and believing that war was the product of an insane and morally bankrupt civilization, the Dadaists developed a worldview that was simultaneously nihilistic, anarchic, irreverent, ironic, and absurd. The Dadaists sought to destabilize art and philosophy and to undermine Church and State. The ultimate goal of the Dada movement was the total destruction of bourgeois values and the annihilation of modern artistic sensibilities (Peterson, 1971; Richter, 1997).

The Dadaists created works of “anti-art” that mocked European “high art” and culture. Marcel Duchamp, for example, scrawled a mustache and goatee on a reproduction of Leonardo de Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*, accompanied by the message “She has a
hot ass.” Dada artists constructed collages that juxtaposed seemingly unrelated images and text. *Ready-mades* (i.e., found objects), including urinals and garbage cans, were elevated to the status of “high art” and prominently displayed at museums and galleries. Dada writers composed poetry by cutting words from newspapers, shaking them in a bag, and reassembling them in the order in which they were removed. Dada musicians created “noise music” through the cacophonous and random juxtaposition of sound. Dada performers staged public events designed to shock and offend. Dada intellectuals lectured in the nude (Caws, 1970; Richter, 1997; Rubin, 1968).

Like the Dadaists, the surrealists perceived a deep crisis in Western culture. The surrealists shared the Dadaist vision of an insane and chaotic world shaped by random events and irrational forces, a world devastated by the brutality of modern warfare. The surrealists, however, were less committed to destruction and nihilistic exhibition than were the Dadaists; rather, inspired by the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud and Marxist political ideologies, the surrealists sought to restructure values at every level of society. The surrealists were revolutionaries; their intent was to shock a complacent world. They were also somewhat utopian: they hoped to change the world; to liberate the imagination; emancipate repressed sexualities; subvert oppressive social conventions; experience altered states of consciousness; and free language (and knowledge) from the stagnation and constraints of the past (Breton, 1936; Carrouges, 1974; Gresham, 1969).

In his essay *On Ethnographic Surrealism*, ethnographer James Clifford (1981) wrote

“ethnography” and “surrealism” are not stable units… The boundaries of art and science (especially the human sciences) are ideological and shifting, and
intellectual history is itself enmeshed in these shifts – its genres do not remain firmly anchored. Changing definitions of art or science must provoke new retrospective unities, new ideal types for historical description. In this sense, “ethnographic surrealism” is a utopian construct, a statement at once about past and future possibilities for cultural analysis. (p. 540)

Clifford (1981) further noted the coalescence of a research paradigm creates the possibility of an accumulation of knowledge, and thus the phenomenon of scholarly progress. What is less often recognized, for the human sciences at least, is that any consolidation of a paradigm depends on the exclusion, or relegation to the status of “art,” of those elements of the changing discipline which call the credentials of the discipline itself into question, those research practices which…work at the edges of disorder. (p. 554)

Clifford (1981) argued that surrealism and ethnography emerged simultaneously, in Paris, between the first and second world wars, and that the two traditions shared a similar worldview and a common set of aesthetic sensibilities and theoretical assumptions. Clifford described a “modernist” orientation toward cultural (dis)order characterized by the fragmentation and juxtaposition of cultural values. Those who embraced this “modernist” worldview (e.g., the Dadaists, the surrealists, and the early ethnographers) perceived stable orders of collective meaning as “constructed, artificial, and indeed, often ideological or repressive” (p. 539). The early ethnographers, like the Dadaists and surrealists, contested these constructed realities, these “stable orders of collective meaning,” and attempted to subvert, parody, destroy, and/or transform them.
Clifford (1981) noted a subversive attitude among early French ethnographers, who valued “fragments, curious collections, unexpected juxtapositions,” and sought “to provoke the manifestation of extraordinary realities drawn from the domains of the erotic, exotic, and the unconscious” (p. 540). Clifford also noted the surrealist tendency “to see culture and its norms – beauty, truth, reality, as artificial arrangements, susceptible to detached analysis and comparison with other possible dispositions…[as]…crucial to an ethnographic attitude” (p. 541). That is to say, the postmodern belief that truth, reality, and knowledge are constructed by human beings in multiple forms that are forever changing had its genesis in the “modernist” orientation toward cultural (dis)order that subsumed Dada, surrealism, and early ethnography; this “modernist” orientation toward cultural (dis)order, this very essence of the postmodern sensibility, is now considered indispensable to the conduct of social science research in general, and ethnographic research in particular (cf., Breton, 1936; Foucault, 1970, 1972).

Social Science Research, Surrealism, and Collage

A favorite technique of artists working within the surrealist paradigm was collage. Collage involves the juxtaposing of images, text, and materials in order to break down the conventional codes (e.g., objects and identities) that combine to produce culturally (i.e., socially) constructed realities. The surrealists used collage to disorient (or reorient) the viewer, to jar, to shock, and to provoke a sense of the unfamiliar; that is to say, the surrealists intended that the viewer respond to surrealist artworks by questioning his or her own socially constructed realities (i.e., his or her knowledge constructs), a questioning process that provokes profound discomfort among many individuals (Breton, 1936; Carrouges, 1974; Rubin, 1969).
Ethnographers working within the surrealist paradigm also constructed *textual collages*. One of the earliest ethnographic studies (and France’s first fieldwork expedition), the Mission Dakar-Djibouti of 1931-1933, for example, resulted in published texts that can best be described as collages that juxtaposed textual descriptions with photographic documentation in an attempt to represent “the extraordinary beauty and conceptual power of Dogon wisdom” (i.e., the Dogon worldview), (i.e., “a mythic conception of cosmic order that aspires to embrace every gesture and detail of the profane world”), (i.e., “the cosmogonic myth” of the Dogon people) (Clifford, 1981, p. 556).

Clifford (1981) noted the research process that began with the Mission Dakar-Djibouti has produced one of the most exhaustive descriptions of an indigenous people (i.e., the Dogon people and their neighbors) on record anywhere. Little effort was made, however, to provide the reader with a naturalistic account of Dogon daily life. In the words of James Clifford: “Realist attempts…[were]…seldom attempted; indeed, in the wake of surrealist fragmentation, what would be the point?” (p. 556). Rather, these surrealist ethnographers were interested in positioning the Mission Dakar-Djibouti within the Dogon universe: that is, a universe informed by the cosmogonic myths of the Dogon people. Thusly, the Mission Dakar-Djibouti resulted in the construction of *textual collages* composed of “scrupulously explicated ensemble[s] of documents, with the most important, like the cosmogonic myth, manifestly authored by the Dogon” (Clifford, 1981, p. 556).

Other social scientists have, in recent years, blurred the boundaries between “art” and “science” to produce visionary works of great power and beauty that astonish and inspire (cf., Lather & Smithies, 1997, Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Educator Patti
Lather and psychologist Chris Smithies (1997) juxtaposed the stories of women living with HIV/AIDS with works of art, poetry, journal entries, essays, historical and cultural analysis, sociopolitical commentary, theoretical frameworks, popular culture, imaginary dialogs, cosmology, mythology, facts and statistics about the global AIDS epidemic, and autobiographical accounts of their own experiences as social science researchers to construct a fragmented, haunting, collage-like text, *Troubling the Angels: Women Living with HIV/AIDS*. Lather and Smithies developed a social science artifact, a research document, a text, that exists “at the edges of disorder” (Clifford, 1981, p. 13), that subverts, disorients, questions, disturbs. *Troubling the Angels: Women Living with HIV/AIDS* is both ethnographic study and surrealist collage. *Troubling the Angels: Women Living with HIV/AIDS* was, in both form and function, a template for this study.

The purposes of the AAADTP team study were to: (a) construct a collage of textual images that represent the multiple experienced realities of the four team members; (b) position these experiences within a traditional Hawaiian universe (i.e., position these experiences within the ontological and epistemological construct(s) of pre-colonial Hawaiian society, knowledge-constructs based on and reflected by the great cosmogonic genealogy and creation chant, the *Kumulipo*); and (c) position the experiences of the team members within the historical context of American colonialism in Hawai‘i. I embedded the stories of the team members within *Ka Wa Akahi* (“Chant One”) of *Kumulipo*, which describes the birth of life on land and in the oceans (i.e., I juxtaposed the 122 lines that comprise Chant One of *Kumulipo* with the stories of the AAADTP team members). In this way, I hoped to represent the Hawaiian universe as it existed before it was disrupted by colonial processes, and to compare and contrast this traditional Hawaiian universe.
with the ontological and epistemological construct(s) that replaced it (i.e., an ontological and epistemological system comprised of competing worldviews and socially constructed realities as represented by the multiple experienced realities of the four team members).

Clifford (1981) noted ethnographers working within the surrealist paradigm believe that cultural reality is “composed of artificial codes, ideological identities and objects susceptible to inventive recombination and juxtaposition” (p. 550). Clifford wrote:

Unlike the exoticism of the nineteenth century, which departed from a more or less confident cultural order in search of a temporary frisson, a circumscribed experience of the bizarre, modern surrealism and ethnography began with a reality deeply in question… [the “Other”]…appeared now as [a] serious human alternative; modern cultural relativism became possible. As artists and writers set about after World War I putting the pieces of culture together in new ways, their field of possible selection had drastically expanded. The “primitive” societies of the planet were increasingly available as aesthetic, cosmological, and scientific resources. This presupposed something more than an older Orientalism; it required modern ethnography. The postwar context was structured by a basically ironic experience of culture. For every local custom or truth, there was always an exotic alternative, a possible juxtaposition or incongruity. Below (psychologically) and beyond (geographically) any ordinary reality there existed another reality. Surrealism shared this ironic situation with relativist ethnography [i.e., ethnographic surrealism]. (p. 542)
My attempt to construct a textual collage that juxtaposes the experienced realities of the four team members with the indigenous Hawaiian cosmological, genealogical, and mythological values, traditions, and beliefs embedded within Chant One of *Kumulipo* places this study squarely within the tradition of ethnographic surrealism, as does my attempt to utilize the traditional Hawaiian worldview (as depicted in *Kumulipo*) as an aesthetic, cosmological, and scientific resource. Ethnographic surrealism was, therefore, an appropriate paradigm with which to conduct and construct this study/collage.

The Work of *Kumulipo* in this Study: An Imaginary Dialog

**Reader:** What, exactly, is *Kumulipo*?

**Thomas:** *Kumulipo* ("beginning in deep darkness" or "in the far past") is a sacred genealogical prayer and creation chant that describes the familial relationships that existed among the Hawaiian *aliʻi* or ruling chiefs, the ‘*akua*, or Hawaiian gods and goddesses, the *makaʻainana*, or common people of ancient Hawaiʻi (e.g., the farmers, fisherpeople, and craftspeople), the heavenly constellations and stellar bodies, and the plants and animals that inhabit the earth and its vast oceans. Queen Liliuʻokalani, the last monarch of the sovereign Hawaiian Kingdom, described *Kumulipo* as “an ancient prayer for the dedication of the high chief Lono-ʻi-ka-makahiki to the gods soon after his birth.” (Her Majesty, Queen Liliuʻokalani, 1897, as cited in Beckwith, 1972, p. 7). Queen Liliuʻokalani believed *Kumulipo* was composed by Keaulumoku in 1700 AD and transmitted, orally, from one generation to the next.

Professor of Hawaiian Studies Haunani-Kay Trask (1999) observed that the *moʻolelo*, or history, of the Hawaiian people, can be found in traditional genealogical chants, and that the Native Hawaiian identity is derived from the “great cosmogonic
genealogy, the *kumulipo*” (p. 140). Native Hawaiian scholar Lilikala Kameʻelehiwa (1992) noted “the essential lesson[s]” of *Kumulipo* are “the interrelatedness of the [pre-colonial] Hawaiian world and the inseparability of its constituent parts…the genealogy of the Land, the Gods, Chiefs, and people intertwine with each other and with all the myriad aspects of the universe” (p.2). She wrote

in traditional times, the telling of any Hawaiian history began properly with traditional beginnings. A *moʻolelo* (history) would begin with the hero’s immediate antecedents or several generations further back along the ancestral lineage. In some instances, it would start at the very beginning of time, as when Kalani-nui-ʻia-mamao, a Hawaiʻi island Chief, was born. His birth chant was the *Kumulipo*, that distant dark beginning of the earth:

\[
O \text{ ke au i kahuli wela ka houna} \\
\text{At the time of changing, the earth was hot} \\
O \text{ ke au i kahuli lole ka lani} \\
\text{At the time of changing, the heavens unfolded} \\
O \text{ ke au i kuka iaka ka la} \\
\text{At the time when the sun appeared in shadows} \\
E \text{ hoʻomalamalama i ka malama} \\
\text{Causing the moon to shine} \\
O \text{ ke au o Makaliʻi ka po} \\
\text{At the time when the Pleiades were seen in the night} \\
O \text{ ka walewale hoʻokuma honua ia} \\
\text{It is the slime that establishes the earth}
At the beginning of the deep darkness, darkening

At the beginning of the night, only night

In the unfathomable darkness, dark blue and bottomless

In the darkness of the sun, in the endless night

Indeed, it was only night

The night gave birth

Kumulipo [foundation of darkness] was born in the night, a male

Po’ele [the dark night] was born in the night, a female…

From that moment onward, the world and everything in it would unfold in genealogical sequence, from creatures of the sea to those of the Land, from the Land itself to Gods and Chiefs, and so on until the present time. The Chief’s birth chant proclaimed him or her to be an inseparable part of an ancient procession of life. It also defined the Chief’s relationship to the Land. (Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992, pp. 1-2).

According to Kumulipo, the union of Papa, the “earth mother,” and Wakea, the
“sky father,” resulted in the birth of the Hawaiian islands. From the offspring of Papa and Wakea came *kalo*, or the taro plant, and from the *kalo* came the Hawaiian people. The Hawaiian people, therefore, consider themselves to be the younger siblings of the *‘aina*, or land, and the *kalo*, or taro plant (Kame‘eleihiwa 1992; Trask, 1999).

Kame‘eleihiwa (1992) described the epic tradition of Wakea and Papa, the sky-father and earth-mother, who by the Opukakonua lineage were half-brother and half-sister. These two were said to be the parents of islands, Hawai‘i and Maui (and later Kaua‘i, Ni‘ihau, Lehua, and Ka‘ula), as well as the ancestors of *Ka Lahui Hawai‘i* [the Hawaiian people]. According to tradition, their first human off-spring was a daughter, Ho‘ohokukalani (to generate stars in the sky), who matured into a great beauty. A desire for his daughter welled up in Wakea, but he hoped to gratify his desire without his sister and *wahine* (woman, or wife) knowing of it….Wakea was … alone with his daughter, and he seduced her. Being a faithful daughter, Ho‘ohokukalani told her mother what had occurred. After a dreadful row, Papa left Wakea in anger and took other lovers, although they were eventually reconciled and she would bear him other islands. The first child of Wakea and Ho‘ohokukalani was an unformed foetus, born prematurely; they named him of Haloa-naka (quivering long stalk). They buried Haloa-naka in the earth, and from that spot grew the first *kalo* plant. The second child, named Haloa in honor of his elder brother, was the first Hawaiian *Ali‘i Nui* [Great Chief] and became the ancestor of all the Hawaiian people. Thus the *kalo* plant, which was the main staple of the people of old, is also the elder brother of the Hawaiian race, and as
such deserves great respect. (Kameʻelehiwa, 1992, pp. 23-24)

The original text of Kumulipo was first printed, in the Hawaiian language, in Honolulu, in 1889, from a manuscript belonging to His Majesty, King David Kalakaua, Hawaiʻi’s last king. The 2102 line epic poem was published as a 66 page pamphlet titled, He pule hoʻolaʻa aliʻi. He Kumulipo no Ka - I – i māmā o ia Alapai - wahine (“A Prayer for the Consecration of a Chief, a Kumulipo for Ka I i māmā and [passed on] to the Woman Alapai”). The manuscript was translated into the English language by Her Majesty, Queen Liliuʻokalani, and titled, An Account of the Creation of the World According to Hawaiian Tradition. Translated from original manuscripts preserved exclusively in her majesty’s family, by Liliuokalani of Hawaiʻi. Prayer of Dedication. The Creation for Ka I i māmā, from him to his daughter Alapai wahine, Liliuokalani’s great-grandmother. Composed by Keaulamoku in 1700 and translated by Liliuokalani during her imprisonment in 1895 at Iolani Palace and afterward at Washington Place, Honolulu; was completed in Washington D.C., May 20, 1987. Beckwith (1972) described Kumulipo as the principal source of information regarding the mythology, cultural traditions, sociopolitical structures, and cosmological understandings (i.e., the worldview) of the indigenous Hawaiian people before the arrival of Captain Cook and the Calvinist missionaries, beginning in 1778.

Reader: Well, O.K. But why the emphasis on Kumulipo in a research study about an Adolescent Day Treatment Program Student Services Delivery Team that provided special education and related services to Native Hawaiian youth with emotional disabilities and challenging behaviors?
The team members believed that the AAADTP students and their families had been damaged by American colonialism in Hawai‘i. The team members believed that the results of American colonialism in Hawai‘i (i.e., the loss of land, language, and cultural identity among the Native Hawaiian people) contributed to the high rates of poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence, and incarceration that plagued the AAADTP students and their families.

After conducting in-depth interviews with the team members, I formulated a number of questions about what existed in Hawai‘i, and in the minds of the Hawaiians, prior to 1778, the year Captain James Cook became the first European to “make contact” with the indigenous people of Hawai‘i.

What were the Hawaiian people like before they lost their land, their language, their cultural identities?

How did the Hawaiians perceive themselves? And how did they perceive their place in the cosmos?

What was the nature of the pre-colonial Hawaiian universe?

What did colonialism destroy? What was lost? What was disrupted? What was transformed? What was replaced?

The answers to these questions, according to Kame‘eleihiwa (1992), Trask (1999) and other Hawaiian scholars, lie embedded within the 2,102 lines of *Kumulipo*. I, therefore, decided to construct a textual collage that juxtaposed the stories of the AAADTP team members with the 122 lines that comprise Chant One of *Kumulipo*. In doing so, I hoped to: (a) position the stories of the AAADT team members within the larger story of American colonialism in Hawai‘i; (b) provide the reader with
opportunities to experience the traditional Hawaiian universe as depicted by Keaulumoku in the early 18th century; and (c) invite the reader to move back and forth through time, from the cosmogonic beginnings of the traditional Hawaiian universe (a universe inhabited by ‘akua, or gods and goddesses, ‘aumakua, or ancestral spirits, and kumupa’a, or spiritual guides, as well as demi-gods and mortal heroes) to a contemporary Hawai‘i inhabited by people from many ethnocultural backgrounds (i.e., a Hawai‘i characterized by multiple constructed realities and competing ideologies and ontological and epistemological constructs, as evidenced by the competing experienced realities of the four AAADTP team members).

Reader: Kumulipo sounds like a very powerful story. How can the stories of the team members compete with gods and goddesses, demi-gods, heroes, and the cosmogonic beginnings of the Hawaiian universe? Aren’t you worried that Kumulipo will “crowd out” or “overpower” the stories of the team members?

Thomas: No. Not really. The experiences of the team members are vivid and intense. I think the reader will find their stories compelling and interesting. And I don’t think that Kumulipo and the stories of the team members are “in competition” with one another. Rather, I think they complement one another and form a holistic “picture” of what was (i.e., a traditional Hawaiian universe characterized by fluid boundaries between the natural and supernatural realms and an interdependent, interconnected, and genealogical relationship among the Native Hawaiian people and the ‘āina, or earth, from which they descended), what is (i.e., a Hawai‘i characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity and competing ideologies and ontological and epistemological constructs, and by a Native people, Ka Lahui Hawai‘i [“the Hawaiian Nation”], many of whom have been damaged
by the loss of land, language, and cultural identity), and what can be (e.g., a public education system that honors, respects, reinforces, and reflects the ontological and epistemological understandings and related cultural values of the Native Hawaiian people, and educational polices predicated on a deep love and reverence for the ‘aina [“land”], kai [“ocean”], and wai [“fresh water”] of Hawai‘i). Truly, I believe in the viability of this research project as surrealist collage. Each component of the collage, every story, every chant, represents an ontological understanding, a knowledge construct, an experienced reality; every story, every chant, invites the reader to experience the 1998-1999 school year at the AAADTP, and to consider what was, what is, and what can be regarding public education in Hawai‘i.

Reader: O.K. I think I understand why you chose to use Kumulipo as a conceptual framework for this study. But what about the issue of language? Postmodern theorists such as Derrida and Foucault believe that language determines culture, and that a person can never really understand the worldview of another cultural group unless he or she speaks the language associated with that culture. Do you speak Hawaiian?

Thomas: No. I cannot read, write, speak, or understand the Hawaiian language. And I agree with the postmodern assertion that language determines culture. Hence, I do not claim to have a deep understanding of the ontological and epistemological constructs of the pre-colonial Hawaiian people. The limited understanding I do have is based on the work of contemporary Native Hawaiian scholars (cf., Ah Nee-Benham & Heck, 1998; Kameʻeleihiwa, 1992; Trask, 1999), and on English-language translations of Kumulipo (cf., Beckwith, 1972). Furthermore, I did not analyze, or even attempt to describe, the ontological or epistemological constructs of the Native Hawaiian people. Rather, I
attempted to provide the reader an opportunity to construct his or her own knowledge regarding the traditional (i.e., pre-colonial) Hawaiian universe by embedding the stories of the team members within Chant One of *Kumulipo*.

**Design**

I conducted in-depth interviews with the team members to generate data for this study. I asked each participant to describe his or her collaborative experiences as a member of the AAADTP team. Each interview was audio-taped and transcribed. The team members also participated in a variety of self-reflection activities to generate data for this study. These participant self-reflection activities included: (a) the “Culture Learning Process” activity (Cushner, 2002); (b) the “YaYa Box” activity (Janesick, 2004); and (c) essay/journal writing activities.

I was a member of the AAADTP team in the 1998-1999 school year (I was the special education teacher), a participant in the AAADTP study, and the principal researcher for this study. I, therefore, participated in the following researcher-as-participant self-reflection activities to generate data for this study:

1. I completed the “Culture Learning Process” activity (Cushner, 2002).
2. I constructed a “YaYa Box” (Janesick, 2004).
3. I kept a researcher-as-participant notebook. This notebook functioned as a journal in which I: (a) described my own thoughts, feelings, experiences, and beliefs about racism, sexism, homophobia, and colonialism; (b) responded, in writing, to the thoughts, feelings, experiences, and beliefs of the AAADTP team members as expressed through the in-depth interviews and participant self-reflection activity artifacts (i.e., “Culture Learning Process” activity worksheets and essays, “YaYa Boxes,” and
journals); (c) recorded my thoughts, feelings, and observations about the AAADTP study; and (d) reflected upon my multiple roles as researcher and participant.

I used a modified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method to analyze the data generated through the in-depth interviews, participant self-reflection activities, and researcher-as-participant self-reflection activities (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). I used the following procedural steps to analyze this data:

1. I identified significant statements from each of the data sources and developed four lists of nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statements (i.e., I developed one list of significant statements for each of the four team members).

2. I grouped these significant statements, thematically, into clusters of meaning.

3. I developed a written description of each cluster of meaning.

4. I embedded the written descriptions of each cluster of meaning within Chant One of Kumulipo, the sacred genealogical prayer and creation chant of the Hawaiian people; that is to say, I positioned the stories of the four team members (as represented by the written descriptions of the clusters of meaning) within a traditional (i.e., pre-colonial) Hawaiian universe (a universe described in Chant One of Kumulipo: “The Birth of Life on Land and in the Sea”).

The Participants

The AAADTP team consisted of four individuals who collaborated with one another on a daily basis in order to develop and implement culturally relevant education and related services for the AAADTP students and their families. This team was comprised of: (a) a social worker; (b) a recreational therapist; (c) a special education teacher; and (d)
an educational assistant. This team was characterized by ethnic identity, gender, and sexual orientation diversity among team members.

Ali‘iloa Kamehameha

Ali‘iloa Kamehameha is a 35 year old man of Native Hawaiian and Euro-American ancestry. He was the recreational therapist at the AAADTP. Ali‘iloa strongly identifies with the Native Hawaiian culture. He believes that “being Hawaiian basically starts off with love” because the Native Hawaiian people “believed in the love of the land, love of the ocean, love of the air, the birds, the fish. And people.” He noted the importance of God and ‘ohana (“extended family”) to the Native Hawaiian people. Ali‘iloa observed “my culture tells me that spirituality is the most important aspect of my life.” Ali‘iloa combines traditional Hawaiian spiritual beliefs and practices with Christianity. He feels that the Hawaiian “love for the land, love for the ocean, the love for family” is quite similar to the teachings of Jesus Christ “who cared about all living things.” Ali‘iloa maintained that it is “easy” for him to synthesize traditional Hawaiian spirituality with the teachings of Jesus because

I take the good in all things and I put it in my heart and I see how it feels. And if my heart tells me it feels good, I go with that feeling. Because I think Akua, or God . . . tells me in my na‘ao, or in my belly, if it’s right or wrong.

Ali‘iloa is the father of two young children. He is committed to the land and people of Aloha ‘Aina ‘Aina, especially the Native youth. Ali‘iloa chose for himself the pseudonym “Ali‘iloa Kamehameha.” Ali‘iloa can be translated from Hawaiian into English as “Big Chief”; King Kamehameha the Great was the first ruler of a unified Hawaiian kingdom; hence, “Ali‘iloa Kamehameha,” or the “Big Chief Kamehameha.”
Gwendolyn Fairfax

Gwendolyn Fairfax is a 41-year-old woman of Japanese, African American, and Cherokee Indian ancestry. She was the educational assistant at the AAADTP. Her mother was born and raised on the Japanese island of Hokkaido, and moved to the United States after marrying Gwendolyn’s father, who enlisted in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Japan. Gwendolyn’s father died when she was five years old, and she and her four siblings were raised by her Japanese-speaking, Buddhist mother in northern California. Gwendolyn feels “Japanese on the inside,” but is identified by most people in the United States as

Black…because my skin is brown. And I’m tall. And my hair is kinky or thick - it’s wiry. So I have to be Black - because that is how most people in this country see me . . . I understand what it is to be hated. And I understand what it is to be marginalized. I understand these things because of the color of my skin. I have to recognize the prejudice in other people. And that makes me realize that I am very much Black. And I have to live the Black experience.

Gwendolyn stated, “Above all else, I am a spiritual being.” She described herself as an “awakened Buddhist” who believes all people are equal. She wrote “we are all equal because each of us suffer.” Gwendolyn believes her Buddhist spiritual and philosophical orientation “saved” her from racist “oppression - from internalizing . . . racist beliefs, from internalizing [racist] . . . hatred.” She asked, “Can you imagine where I’d be now if I had internalized . . . racist beliefs? If I had listened to those hateful words? What if I had just stayed a ‘nigger’?”
Gwendolyn is a single mother. She lives with her two teenage children in Honolulu. Gwendolyn is committed to returning to Aloha ‘Aina, after obtaining her teaching certificate, to work with at-risk youth. She chose “Gwendolyn Fairfax” as her pseudonym because she once played the role of this character in a production of Oscar Wilde’s “On the Importance of Being Ernest.”

*Molly Brown*

Molly Brown is a 55-year-old woman from Louisiana. She is “part-Caucasian and part-Cherokee Indian,” but identifies, culturally, as a “White, southern woman.” She was the social worker, case manager, and care coordinator for the AAADTP students and their families. Molly continues to live in Aloha ‘Aina and to work as a social worker for the State of Hawai‘i Department of Health (DOH).

Molly is a single mother who raised two adult children. She currently lives with and cares for two foster children with emotional disabilities and behavior disorders. She chose “the Unsinkable Molly Brown” as her pseudonym, and explained that because she has been an outspoken advocate for the “poor and marginalized Hawaiian people” of Aloha ‘Aina, a number of state officials have, throughout the years, attempted to silence her, and have threatened her with termination. She believes herself to be a survivor, against great odds, as was Molly Brown, who survived the sinking of the *Titanic*.

*Thomas Duke*

I am a 36 year old man of Euro-American ancestry. I was the special education teacher at the AAADTP. I usually describe my ethnicity as “Euro-American” or “white,” but I *identify* myself as a “gay white male” because I find it impossible to describe or reflect upon my experiences as a Euro-American male without referencing my
experiences as a gay man in America. As a “white” man in America, I experience
privilege, but as a gay man in America I experience oppression. To be a “gay white male”
in America is to experience privilege and oppression, simultaneously.

I have a deep respect for the Buddhist ideals of kindness, compassion, and
nonviolence. I try to follow the teachings of the Buddha in my everyday living. I believe
that the purpose of life is to experience happiness and joy, and to share this happiness and
joy with others.

I consider myself to be an ecoequalist; that is to say, I believe that all living
organisms are interrelated and interconnected on the biological, ecological, social, and
spiritual levels. Furthermore, I believe that social oppression (e.g., colonialism)
inevitably leads to environmental degradation and destruction. My experiences with the
Aloha ‘Aina community strongly reinforced my ecoequalist worldview because I lived
and worked with indigenous people who had been dispossessed of their ancestral lands,
and I saw, first-hand, how both the land and the people of Aloha ‘Aina had been
degraded and damaged by colonialism. I have developed a deep respect for the Native
Hawaiian people’s love of the ‘aina (“land”), and I have come to believe that traditional
Hawaiian values such as aloha ‘aina (“to love the land”) and malama ‘aina (“to care for
the land”) must replace the values associated with utilitarianism – values such as
materialism and greed – if we human beings are to avoid cataclysmic earth changes and
survive and thrive as a species.

The Setting

Aloha ‘Aina is a moku, or district, in rural Hawai‘i. A majority of Aloha ‘Aina
residents are of Native Hawaiian ancestry. Traditional Hawaiian cultural values, such as
malama ‘aina (“to take care of the land”), aloha ‘aina (“to love the land”), and mana’o’i’o (“respect for nature”) are highly prized by the people of Aloha ‘Aina. Many members of the Aloha ‘Aina community are active participants in organizations that seek to protect and preserve the Hawaiian language and culture. Many residents of Aloha ‘Aina are also involved in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement and in numerous environmental protection and restoration projects.

A disproportionate number of Aloha ‘Aina residents live in intense poverty. The unemployment rate in Aloha ‘Aina is among the highest in Hawai‘i. The Children’s Defense Fund (1999), Harrington (1997), Payne (2001), and many others have noted a correlation between intense poverty and negative childhood outcomes, including school failure. It should not be surprising, then, that the youth of Aloha ‘Aina have disproportionately high school drop-out rates and disproportionately low standardized test scores across all academic content areas (as measured by state and national achievement tests).

The now defunct AAADTP was located on the campus of Aloha ‘Aina High School. Thirteen students were enrolled in the AAADTP. All 13 students were of Native Hawaiian ancestry. These students were diagnosed with a variety of emotional disabilities and behavior disorders, including: (a) oppositional defiant disorder; (b) conduct disorder; (c) bipolar disorder; and (d) major depression. Twelve of the 13 AAADTP students lived in households that subsisted well below the federal poverty level. Most of the AAADTP students were exposed to alcoholism and drug abuse, and many experienced domestic violence, sexual abuse, homelessness, poor nutrition, and/or inadequate health care.
Several students experienced incarceration and/or institutionalization. Several attempted suicide.

The Aloha Aina Adolescent Day Treatment Program (AAADTP) Team:

A Surrealist Collage

When space turned around, the earth heated
When space turned over, the sky reversed
When the sun appeared standing in shadows
To cause light to make bright the moon
When the Pleiades…[were] small eyes in the night
From the source in the slime was the earth formed
From the source in the dark was darkness formed
From the source in the night was night formed
From the depths of the darkness, darkness so deep
Darkness of day, darkness of night
Of night alone
Did night give birth
Born Kumulipo [foundation of darkness] in the night, a male
Born Po'ele [the dark night] in the night, a female …

Connected to the Land

Ali‘iloa believes that the United States government “disrupted a whole way of life” when it colonized the Hawaiian archipelago. He feels that, as a direct result of American colonialism in Hawai‘i, the Native Hawaiian people “lost a lot of our culture and our language and our identity.” Ali‘iloa noted the Native Hawaiian identity is based on the
genealogical/familial relationship of the Native Hawaiian people to the ‘aina, or land. American colonialism in Hawai‘i dispossessed the Native Hawaiian people of their ancestral lands and, in the process, robbed them of their identity. Ali‘iloa wrote

it is really hard for our Hawaiian people to move on without the land, because we’re connected to the land. So the land…needs to be returned. And the return of the lands will bring back our connection with our land and our identity. The land is something we really need to get back.

Ali‘iloa is a person of Hawaiian ancestry, a kama‘aina, a “child of the land,” and at one time, he felt a “terrible sadness” for his people’s “terrible loss,” but he has “been able to move through a lot of the anger and hurt.” He wrote

a lot of people don’t respect the Hawaiian culture because it’s been eaten away for so long…we Hawaiians weren’t even allowed to speak the Hawaiian language. And then we weren’t even supposed to have a Hawaiian name…we had to change our names to some kind of American or Caucasian name. But now, we have this Hawaiian renaissance…the culture is coming back – and we Hawaiians are starting to take back what is rightfully ours. Basically the land…which was taken away so many years ago.

Ali‘iloa believes American colonialism contributed significantly to the emotional disabilities and behavior disorders of the Native Hawaiian youth in the AAADTP because “their Native Hawaiian identity is distorted” and “they don’t really know who they are.”

Ali‘iloa wrote

we do have Native Hawaiian people who are still in touch with their culture and are still functioning okay in today’s society. But then you have these youth who,
from generation to generation, have grown up in an environment of physical abuse, drugs, alcoholism, economic depression, and dependence upon the United States government for welfare, food stamps, and all of this. So their self-esteem is shot. Their identity is gone.

Ali‘iloa believes that the AAADTP youth have the potential to live happy and productive lives. He is convinced that these youth can one day contribute greatly to the well being of the Aloha ‘Aina community and the Hawaiian nation. Ali‘iloa believes that these youth can achieve success through culturally relevant special education and related services programs that directly address the “distorted” identities of Native Hawaiian youth. He noted “we do have the choice to make it right again…to find our identity as Native Hawaiian people.” Ali‘iloa is very frustrated, however, because he feels the AAADTP youth have yet to receive adequate special education or mental health services from the State of Hawai‘i. Ali‘iloa wrote

I feel that the State of Hawai‘i doesn’t want Hawaiians to succeed…the State doesn’t want to see Hawaiians climb the ladder. I mean, why are the Hawaiians the highest percentage of people in prison? There’s a reason why we’re the highest percentage. It’s because we’ve been oppressed. From the day the land got taken away, we have been on the bottom of the totem pole. And if we don’t reach these kids now, they’re all going to end up in prison. And then the State will have to build more prisons, and…lock up more Hawaiians.

Born the coral polyp, Born of him a coral colony emerged

Born the burrowing worm tilling the soil

Born of him a worm [his child] emerged
Born the starfish, the small starfish his child emerged
Born the sea cucumber, a small sea cucumber his child emerged
Born the coral-dwelling sea urchin,
Born of him a short-spiked sea urchin emerged
Born the smooth-spined sea urchin, the sharp-spiked sea urchin his child emerged
Born the unspined sea urchin, the thin-spiked sea urchin his child emerged
Born the barnacle, the reef oyster his child emerged
Born the large clam, the hinged mollusk his child emerged
Born the mussel, the hermit crab his child emerged
Born the dark-fleshed limpet, the limpet his child emerged
Born the cowry [shell], the small cowry [shell] his child emerged
Born the naka…[shellfish] , the chama…[shellfish] his child emerged
Born the drupa…[shellfish], the bitter drupa…[shellfish] his child emerged
Born the triton [conch shell], the small triton [conch shell] his child emerged
Born the nerita snail, the large [burrowing] nerita [snail] his child emerged
Born the fresh-water snail, the brackish-water snail his child emerged
Born male for the narrow waters, Female for the broad waters…

*Mr. and Mrs. Colony*

Gwendolyn believes that American colonialism in Hawai‘i “disrupted the stability and organization of the Hawaiian people, robbing them of their lands and culture.” She
noted that before “the colonizers came from all directions, conquering and destroying,” the indigenous people of Hawai‘i were “a proud people who lived in harmony with Mother Earth.” Gwendolyn mourned the loss of the “blue-ocean-and-rich-taro-field existence” the Native Hawaiians enjoyed prior to contact with the European and American conquerors, and noted

with the loss of their lands and the demise of their culture, the Hawaiian people have been subjected to a lost and uncertain existence. Like ghosts and spirits, the people wander aimlessly…they suffer. Generations later, they pay the price of colonization with the well-being of their children. The land is no longer theirs, even though their ancestors remain buried beneath the red soil.

Gwendolyn believes that the AAADTP youth adopted the “dysfunctional values” of the American and European conquerors. She wrote

the philosophy of the great colonizer is a philosophy of selfishness and arrogance. Like a child without parents, the great colonizer refused to share and respect others. The children of Aloha ‘Aina ‘Aina, like the colonizers that came before them, did not see the worthiness of sharing and chose to disrespect others. The AAADTP youth truly are the children of Mr. and Mrs. Colony.

Gwendolyn believes that the AAADTP youth and their families did not trust the non-Hawaiian team members. She attributed this lack of trust to American colonialism in Hawai‘i, and to the students’ and families’ negative experiences with other educators and related services personnel. Gwendolyn felt that

our arrival upon the scene was like that of missionaries that no one trusted or wanted. Those who had come before, and left shortly thereafter, had already
poisoned the children’s minds and left them emotionally fragile. Parents mistrusted our actions and words, projecting their anger at the system on the “nigger,” the “fag,” the “bitch”… we teachers were… they believed, the pushers of poison. We were the betrayers, the outsiders. It felt as if we were pulling out the stitches to purple gaping wounds, so jagged and deep. The children refused to trust us, or to understand that, in time, these wounds would heal. Crazed with fear, these children chose death, for they did not dare trust us - the foreign shadowy “colonizers” of their minds.

Gwendolyn believes that Ali‘iloa shared the AAADTP families’ distrust of the non-Hawaiian team members, a distrust that she attributes to American colonialism in Hawai‘i. Gwendolyn believes that Ali‘iloa felt a “strong need” to “protect the kids” from those he perceived to be potential “colonizers of their minds”; that is to say, Gwendolyn believes Ali‘iloa was concerned that the other team members might attempt to “distort” the identities of the Native Hawaiian youth by imposing their own “foreign” values and beliefs on these youth. In order to “protect” these youth, Ali‘iloa “ran around trying to interpret everybody’s experiences for them.” Gwendolyn sarcastically referred to Ali‘iloa as the children’s “savior” and “interpreter of all things Hawaiian.”

Gwendolyn identified with the oppression of the Native Hawaiian students and their families because she, too, is a “person of color.” She understood the “eradication and demise of a race,” and connected with the children’s pain, because her own ancestors were the “Africans and slaves who hung from trees,” and who “lived and died as ‘niggers.’” Gwendolyn wrote
I was blind to the children’s world of green lush valleys and blue oceans. I had come from a world of freeways and white people; yet I knew to trust what I could not see or comprehend. I was brown like them.

Gwendolyn’s identification with the AAADTP youth strengthened her resolve to “protect these children from endless suffering” through advocacy and education.

Born the coralline seaweed [Ekaha] living in the sea
Kept by the bird's nest fern [Ekahakaha] living on land
It is a night gliding through the passage
Of an opening; a stream of water is the food of plants
It is the god who enters; not as a human does he enter…

_Destruction of a Culture_

Molly believes that the Native Hawaiian residents of Aloha ‘Aina have been “devastated” by American colonialism in Hawai‘i. She noted “the U.S. government has been unfair, discriminatory, and inhumane to certain segments of our society, and the Native Hawaiians are no exception.” Molly is of Euro-American and Native American ancestry, and she identifies with the Native Hawaiian people’s struggle to regain their ancestral lands and cultural traditions. Molly wrote

the Hawaiians’ loss of their land and culture hurts me because, through the Hawaiians, I have had the opportunity to re-live the loss of my own Native American culture, land, language, and sovereignty. It angers me to see the destruction of a culture in this day and time.

Molly feels that she State of Hawai‘i is “not interested” in “helping the people” of Aloha ‘Aina. She cited the lack of adequate special education and mental health services
available to the AAADTP youth and their families as evidence of the State’s “indifference.” Molly wrote

I have literally had to fight for everything that I have gotten for the people, which is very little. And the one thing that I fought for was the AAADTP, and the closing of that program was the most horrific act of abuse by the State that I have seen so far because I have had to watch those...Hawaiian youth that went to the top, go to the bottom, simply because they had the best, and now they have nothing!

Molly noted that the AAADTP youth and their families did not trust the AAADTP staff, and she attributed this lack of trust to American colonialism in Hawai‘i, and to “many years of neglect” on the part of the State of Hawai‘i education and care systems. Molly wrote “oppression has long lasting effects on any culture and...the lack of trust the youth in the AAADTP had for staff could be directly related to their lack of trust to anyone who was not native to their lands.” Molly believes that the parents of the AAADTP youth “teach their children that no one can be trusted” because “they saw no changes in their lifetime,” and “they do not expect any changes to occur.”

Molly believes that Ali‘iloa shared the parents’ distrust of the non-Hawaiian team members, a distrust that she attributes to American colonialism in Hawai‘i. She feels that Ali‘iloa had “negative feelings about haole (“Euro-Americans”), gays, blacks, and every other culture in the world,” and that he thought only persons of Hawaiian ancestry should be working with the AAADTP youth. She noted “Ali‘iloa believed that he was the only team member culturally appropriate for the program,” and added “[he] thought he could take these...kids and teach them the ‘Hawaiian way’ without the help of the gay school
teacher, the haole (“Euro-American”) social worker, the African American educational assistant.”

Molly feels that the AAADTP team members shared a strong “desire to ‘undo’ the wrongs that had occurred in these youths’ lives,” and she believes that this common desire for social justice made the team “strong and united.” She wrote

when I look back on that year, I have nothing but good thoughts as I know that those youth, as well as the staff, learned so much from each other. We all know deep down in our souls that we did what we set out to do and did a good job at that!

Male for the narrow waters, Female for the broad waters

Born the 'Aki'aki seaweed living in the sea

Kept by the Manienie [Aki’aki] shore grass living on land

It is a night gliding through the passage

Of an opening; a stream of water is the food of plants

It is the god who enters; not as a human does he enter…

Shafted

I feel that American colonialism in Hawai‘i has robbed the Native Hawaiian people of their ancestral lands, their Native language, their traditional culture, and their right to self-determination. Many Native Hawaiian people in Aloha ‘Aina are, therefore, distrustful of state institutions, including publicly funded educational institutions such as Aloha ‘Aina High School, because they perceive these institutions to be “agents of colonialism.”
I believe that American colonialism in Hawai‘i has also contributed to many of the social problems experienced by the AAADTP students and their families—problems such as poverty, addiction to drugs and alcohol, homelessness, illiteracy, unemployment, domestic violence, and incarceration in the prisons. These social problems have, in turn, contributed to the AAADTP students’ emotional disabilities and behavior disorders, and to their lack of school success.

I think the AAADTP students and their families didn’t really trust the non-Hawaiian staff members at the AAADTP, at least not initially, and I think that American colonialism in Hawai‘i significantly contributed to this lack of trust. These families really had been “shafted” by the education and care systems in the State of Hawai‘i. The AAADTP youth received nothing, or next to nothing, in terms of special education and related services for much of their school experience.

I believe that American colonialism in Hawai‘i also contributed to a lack of trust among the AAADTP team members because Ali‘iloa, who is Native Hawaiian, seemed to feel the need to “protect” the Native Hawaiian AAADTP students from the “foreign” staff members—Gwendolyn, Molly, and myself. I think that Ali‘iloa eventually came to believe that Gwendolyn, Molly, and I cared about the kids, but he did say, on a number of occasions, that we did not really understand the AAADTP kids, and that we did not know how to relate to them, because we were not Native Hawaiian and we were not from Aloha ‘Aina.

Male for the narrow waters, Female for the broad waters

Born the fragrant red seaweed [‘A’ala’ula] living in the sea

Kept by the succulent mint living [‘Ala’ala-wai-nui] on land
It is a night gliding through the passage

Of an opening; a stream of water is the food of plants

It is the god who enters; not as a human does he enter…

_Motionless, Speechless, and Drained of Love_

Gwendolyn feels that Ali‘iolo “needed to express his dislike” and “discomfort” with her “brown skin.” Gwendolyn believes Ali‘iolo promoted racist attitudes among the AAADTP youth. She feels that these racist attitudes damaged the youth, and negatively impacted her own experience at the AAADTP. Gwendolyn remarked midway through the school year, the racial stuff really started to escalate. And some of the kids were, you know, “Nigger this, nigger that.” And I said something like, “Well, you know, it doesn’t hurt me personally to have you call me a ‘nigger,’ so much as I really feel sad for all the injustices that have been done against Black people. I really hurt for them when I hear you all use that word.” And I think I also said, “For all of the Hawaiian people. For all of the Filipinos. For all of the American Indians.” I think I told them, “For all the brown-skinned people.” And then things calmed down quite a bit.

Gwendolyn was deeply wounded by the “hateful words” of the AAADTP youth. She wrote

I was distraught with a pain so deep beneath me that their ugly words could not touch me as they had intended. Instead, I silently mourned the loss of those from so long ago who lived and died as “niggers.” These “niggers,” my ancestors, were the Africans and slaves who hung from trees as families wailed in tears of disbelief for their loved ones who knew no justice. I asked, “How could these
children not know their own people and their own struggles?” I sat motionless, speechless, and drained of love for them.

Male for the narrow waters, Female for the broad waters

Born the Manauea seaweed living in the sea

Kept by the Manauea taro living on land

It is a night gliding through the passage

Of an opening; a stream of water is the food of plants

It is the god who enters; not as a human does he enter…

*Definitely Shocked*

Ali’iloa explained that he has always identified with African American people “more than with whites” because he believes that the Native Hawaiian people and African American people share a common history of oppression in the United States. He contended that he would “never, never” encourage the AAADTP youth “to be prejudiced,” or to disrespect anyone because of “the color of their skin.”

Ali’iloa vehemently denied any feelings of animosity toward African American people. He cannot understand why Gwendolyn believed him to be “prejudiced towards Blacks,” and he expressed sadness and bewilderment at the lack of trust that he believes characterized his professional relationship with Gwendolyn. Ali’iloa remarked

I was definitely shocked when Gwendolyn said that she felt I was prejudiced towards her. Because I’ve never been prejudiced towards Blacks. Never….when Gwendolyn said that she thought I was prejudiced – well, I guess that put a barrier between Gwendolyn and me. But I hope she understands that I was never prejudiced towards Blacks. I hope she knows that isn’t true.
Male for the narrow waters, Female for the broad waters

Born the Ko'ele'ele seaweed, living in the sea

Kept by the jointed sugar-cane [ko'ele'ele], living on land

It is a night gliding through the passage

Of an opening; a stream of water, is the food of plants

It is the god who enters; not as a human does he enter…

*Rape, Incest, and Murder*

My relationship with Ali‘iloa was often strained, and I feel that there was a great deal of tension between us. I did not trust Ali‘iloa, nor did I feel comfortable in his presence. I felt that Ali‘iloa was homophobic, that he was extremely uncomfortable in my presence, that he did not wish to interact or communicate with me, and the he did not welcome my presence in the AAADTP. I believe Ali‘iloa felt that my presence in the program might harm the AAADTP youth.

Ali‘iloa made derogatory remarks about gay people in the presence of the students on a number of occasions. He told my students that I should not be allowed to be their teacher, and that he would never allow his own daughters to attend school if they had a gay or lesbian teacher. He also said “AIDS is God’s punishment against homosexuals,” and “homosexuality is the same as rape, incest, and murder.”

Ali‘iloa did not respect me because I am gay. I believe that several of the AAADTP students “acted out” Ali‘iloa’s prejudices toward gay people in an attempt to seek his approval. I felt very marginalized in the program, and dehumanized by Ali‘iloa and several of the students.
Aliʻiloa, I believe, did come to accept me as the teacher in the program, and he frequently complimented me on my abilities as an educator, and on my commitment to the well-being of the students. I never did feel comfortable in his presence, however. I feel that his intensely homophobic remarks about gay people damaged my relationships with several of the AAADTP youth, and I never was able to completely trust him.

Male for the narrow waters, Female for the broad waters

Born the Puaki seaweed, living in the sea

Kept by the Lauaki sugar-cane, living on land

It is a night gliding through the passage

Of an opening; a stream of water, is the food of plants

It is the god who enters; not as a human does he enter…

A Totally Different Person

Aliʻiloa acknowledged that before he and I worked together at the AAADTP, he felt “anger” and “hatred” for gay people. He believes that our working relationship helped him move past these “angry” and “hateful” feelings. He wrote

my relationship with Thomas – that’s probably my biggest growth in a lot of my life. Because of the anger and, well, I guess you can even say hate, that I had for homosexuals. I was blessed that it happened. Because in my life, I could never understand it. And to me, homosexuality – I always felt it was wrong. It was sick. I mean these are the thoughts I had before working with Thomas at the AAADTP. I really was an angry person and a hateful person toward homosexuality. But…I am now a totally different person.
Ali‘iloa feels that the AAADTP youth benefited from having an openly gay teacher in the program. He believes that the students learned to accept differences based on sexual orientation because of his presence in the classroom. He believes that his attempts to teach the students to respect diversity also contributed significantly to these students’ ability to accept him as their teacher. He noted the kids were blessed to...have Thomas for their teacher. That was a big lesson in their lives at an early age. I never got to experience something like that when I was 14, 15 years old. And so I grew up with all this anger – I grew up hating gays...[but] the kids respected Thomas. They expressed that to me...by the time we got towards the end of the year, they respected him as their teacher...[and]...that was one of the things I tried to teach them. We would be just sitting around and talking, and I would be like, “Hey, Thomas is a good guy. He’s a great teacher.” Now, whenever I say the kids, they all go, “Oh, Ali’iloa, I wish you and Thomas was still here. I wish Thomas was the teacher. And I wish you was here.”

Male for the narrow waters, Female for the broad waters

Born the Kakalamoa seaweed, living in the sea

Kept by the Moamoa plant, living on land

It is a night gliding through the passage

Of an opening; a stream of water is the food of plants

It is the god who enters; not as a human does he enter...

*United on the Periphery*
Gwendolyn described Ali‘iloa as “racist,” “sexist,” and “homophobic.” She believes that Ali‘iloa’s prejudices limited his ability to collaborate effectively with the other three team members. Gwendolyn also believes that Ali‘iloa’s discomfort with the other three team members greatly contributed to a “learning environment” characterized by distrust, disharmony, and discord, and that this “dysfunctional environment” damaged the AAADTP youth. Gwendolyn wrote

> the worst part about it is that he dragged the kids through his stuff. His anger. His frustrations. His own fears. And his own shortcomings. And he didn’t have the professional knowledge to say, “Oh, this is my stuff, and I need to keep this in check.” Because each of these children had attachment issues, bonding issues, sexual molestation issues, alcohol and drug issues. And it wasn’t a problem for Ali‘iloa to use that to instigate, or to create dissention, in order to continue his discomfort with “a nigger,” with “a gay,” with “a haole (“Euro-American”) bitch”…Molly’s other name.

Gwendolyn described the solidarity that developed between she, Molly, and myself, as we felt increasingly “marginalized” and “disenfranchised” by Ali‘iloa and “the kids.” We were, she noted, “unified on the periphery” of the program. She added “Molly and Thomas and I were on one side…and Ali‘iloa was going to have to cross that bridge in order to work with us.”

> Male for the narrow waters, Female for the broad waters

> Born the Kele seaweed living in the sea

> Kept by the Ekele taro living on land

> It is a night gliding through the passage
Of an opening; a stream of water is the food of plants

It is the god who enters; not as a human does he enter…

*Three Against One*

Molly is convinced that Ali’ihoa believed “he was the only team member culturally appropriate” to work with the AAADTP youth. Molly feels that Ali’ihoa “took on the role of the Hawaiian activist,” and tried to “brainwash the kids.” She believes that Ali’ihoa thought he could take these...kids and teach them the “Hawaiian way” without the help of the gay school teacher, the *haole* (“Euro-American”) social worker, the African American educational assistant…[he] felt like, “Oh, I can’t let these *haole* ("Euro-Americans"), and this Black person, and this gay person be who these kids respect.”

Molly described Ali’ihoa as a “sexist.” She noted he “did a lot of things…that were a put-down on women.” Molly complained Ali’ihoa sometimes used “inappropriate and explicit language” when talking to the two female students in the AAADTP. Molly said she was “somewhat offended” when Ali’ihoa referred to female breasts as “titties” and “breasties” when conversing with these students.

Molly believes that Ali’ihoa was also “very prejudiced against gay people.” She noted “Ali’ihoa did not want to accept Thomas as the teacher in our program because of the fact that Thomas was gay.” Molly heard Ali’ihoa made “derogatory remarks” about gay people in the presence of the AAADTP youth. These remarks “troubled” her because she felt that Ali’ihoa’s “negative attitudes about gays” might undermine my relationship with the AAADTP students.
Molly believes that Ali‘iloa was “racist against Blacks, and haole (“Euro-Americans”), and anyone else who wasn’t Hawaiian.” Molly does not believe, however, that Ali‘iloa’s “racist attitudes had an adverse impact on collaborative processes and outcomes at the AAADTP.” In fact, she believes that Ali‘iloa’s “racism” strengthened the resolve of the other three team members, who she described as “diverse in every way,” to “present a united front” of “three against one” so that they might provide quality programming for the AAADTP youth. She explained

we were all so aware that it was dangerous for the youth to be influenced by racist ideas, so we worked extra hard to keep the youth focused and on the right track. It worked, and the youth, for the first time in their lives, were able to see what quality services were all about.

Molly acknowledged that there were many “hurt feelings” when the other team members “confronted” Ali‘iloa with what she believes to be his “racism and prejudices,” but she believes that, as a result of this confrontation, each of the team members “grew as a person,” including Ali‘iloa. She wrote

since the program closed, I have seen Ali‘iloa go through many changes, and recently he let me know, (in his own way), that he was sorry for the way he had treated me and the other staff during his time with us...we all grew from the experiences and, for sure, the youth of that program learned more about what is real and what is not, in that one year, than ever before in their lives.

Male for the narrow waters, Female for the broad waters
Born the Kala seaweed living in the sea
Kept by the 'Akala berry living on land
It is a night gliding through the passage
Of an opening; a stream of water is the food of plants
It is the god who enters; not as a human does he enter…

The Only Guy That Was

Ali‘iloa believes that Molly, Gwendolyn, and I enjoyed collegial and supportive professional relationships with one another. He wishes that we would have extended this same collegiality and professional support to him. Ali‘iloa often felt like an “outsider” at the AAADTP staff meetings; at times, he felt that the other three team members “ganged up” to “attack” him. He described the isolation and loneliness he experienced as a member of the team

I felt that Thomas and Molly had a good relationship. And that Thomas’ relationship with Gwendolyn was good. And Molly and Gwendolyn – they had a good relationship, too. And then I was the guy sitting on the outside. And being attacked. That’s what I felt – that it was three against one, and that I was the one being attacked. I felt I was the lonely guy. I was the only guy that was. I was doing one thing, and the other three felt that I was working against them.

Male for the narrow waters, Female for the broad waters
Born the Lipu'upu'u seaweed living in the sea
Kept by the Lipu'upu'u moss living on land
It is a night gliding through the passage
Of an opening; a stream of water is the food of plants
It is the god who enters; not as a human does he enter…

Really Proud Parents
Gwendolyn believes that each team member genuinely cared for the AAADTP youth, and that the students were aware of, and responded positively to, the team’s commitment to their well being. She wrote

the children craved truth and honesty. They wanted someone to show them a glimmer of hope without a beating, without abuse. We, the teachers, planted the seeds of hope, sincerity, compassion, and understanding. And sometimes, the children dared to look, to stare in awe, to feel the breath of joy, or to accept the touch of kindness.

She described the team’s collaborative efforts as “difficult” and “a struggle,” but she believes that the students benefited from this “struggle” because “they witnessed us work and fight for what we thought was right.”

Gwendolyn believes that, despite the difficulties that characterized our team’s collaborative efforts, the AAADTP youth did benefit from the program. She noted “there were good days, also. There were days when the staff - all four of us - when we were just really proud parents.” Gwendolyn noted my educational philosophy seemed to be “Here are the books, here’s the paper, here’s the pencil. Now open your book to this page and let’s get started.” She added “that much, we, the staff…knew and we gave and we provided.”

Male for the narrow waters, Female for the broad waters

Born the long seaweed [Lo loa] living in the sea

Kept by the tall ebony [Kalakoloa] living on land

It is a night gliding through the passage

Of an opening; a stream of water is the food of plants
It is the god who enters; not as a human does he enter…

*People Who Cared About Them*

Ali‘ioloa believes that, despite the interpersonal difficulties that characterized many of the team’s collaborative efforts, our year together at the AAADTP was a “positive experience” for the AAADTP youth. Ali‘ioloa feels that the AAADTP students benefited from the ethnocultural, gender, and sexual orientation diversity that characterized the team. He believes that each of the four team members genuinely cared about the AAADTP students, and he attributes the increased self-esteem of these students to the consistency and the care that was provided by the various team members. Ali‘ioloa wrote:

> I think that the AAADTP was a real positive experience for the kids. Even with all the tension and the problems with the different team members. Because the kids – their self-esteem was lifted. They had a broader education on different diverse cultures – Hawaiian, Black, white, gay – you know. And we gave them structure. And rules. And we challenged them. We helped them set goals. We gave them something to work for. And we helped them to succeed. Overall, I thought the program was great. It could have been better. But…it was something the kids never did have before…a group of people who cared about them, and who were there for them everyday.

Male for the narrow waters, Female for the broad waters

Born the Ne seaweed living in the sea

Kept by the sumac tree [Neneleau] living on land

It is a night gliding through the passage
Of an opening; a stream of water is the food of plants

It is the god who enters; not as a human does he enter…

False Illusions

Gwendolyn feels that each team member was burdened by his or her own “history with oppression,” and that these individual “histories” negatively impacted the team’s ability to work together. She wrote

in our minds and our spirits, we had a difficult time letting go of our own frames of reference. Instead we fought to hold on to our own issues, blaming one another for the collectively painful experience we endured.

Gwendolyn believes that our team’s collaborative efforts also benefited the team’s individual members, as well as the AAADTP youth. She feels that each of the team members had been “damaged, hurt” by his or her pervious experiences with racism, sexism, homophobia, and/or colonialism. She described our experiences at the AAADTP as “healing” and “liberating,” because our work with the AAADTP youth freed us from the false illusions of being ugly, black, gay, desperate, and guilty of sin. They, the children, held up a mirror for us to witness our historical actions in paradise. They, in essence, gave us the chance to run away from the lies and illusions if we wanted to do so.

She added

our year together at AAADTP was so intense. It was an incredible time, and I’m glad we went through it. It was like giving birth. It was a very profound opportunity to have taken part in the AAADTP.

Male for the narrow waters, Female for the broad waters
An Exceptional Year

Molly feels that each team member genuinely cared for the AAADTP youth. She noted “Ali‘iloa, Gwendolyn, Thomas, and myself treated them as we would our own children…I believe that was a major reason why the program was so successful.” Molly noted the team members encouraged the AAADTP youth to be “who they really are,” and added “nothing the kids said or did shocked us.”

Molly believes that, overall, “we had an exceptional year” and “a great program.” She feels that each team member struggled to “cope with all kinds of diversity, shame, discord, ignorance, abuse, [and] neglect,” and that “we [each] learned that we could all be on the same team” and work toward the common goal of developing and implementing an effective special education and related services program for the AAADTP youth and their families. She noted

even if I never see it again, I will always know that what I dreamed of, and what I researched and wrote, and then implemented for one year at the AAADTP, was the best year, ever, for all those kids.

The male gourd of water, that is the god

From whose flow the vines are made vigorous;

The plant top sprouts from the earth made flourishing
To frame the forest bower in the flow of time,
The flow of time gliding through the long night
Fruitful, very fruitful
Spreading here, spreading there
Spreading this way, spreading that way
Until the earth is a brace holding firm the sky
When space lifts through time in the night of Kumulipo
It is yet night.

Note. The English-language translation of *Kumulipo* used in the construction of this textual collage was based, primarily, on the translation of the Kalakaua version of *Kumulipo* by Kamuela Kuali'i Lindsey. Mr. Lindsey’s translation of *Kumulipo* can be read in its entirety at the “Hawaiian Spirituality” website:
(www.soulwork.net/huna_articles/kumulipo_chant.htm).
References


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