

Colonialism is not, in the end, beneficial to anyone--neither the colonized nor the colonizer. Those who are oppressed by it lose culture and self respect and go on suffering from cultural post traumatic stress syndrome long after openly colonial governments are gone. Those of us who deliver colonial culture via education are also colonized by it and have an additional handicap--not being able to see our oppression and the damage we are perpetuating because of our privilege. When we educate those we are colonizing by teaching them to think "critically" according to western standards, to write in acceptable Standard English, to produce valid research papers (according to western standards), what we are doing derives from a place that is also colonized. Education systems rising straight from a colonizing culture base carry the distortions and destructive messages of colonialism despite the best intentions of good hearted people within them. Attempts to sidestep this truth result only in more hidden agendas, even when the intentions are admirable, and it is for this reason that the subject matter of this dissertation is so pressing.

Excerpt from the introduction of  
*Too Many Deaths!*

Commitment to the formation of relationships--to engagement (as opposed to disengagement) with solid, day-to-day, interactions as allies with the people we are used to writing and teaching about--can alleviate repeated colonization of others. Engagement rather than distance, however, cannot be a guideline without acknowledging and adjusting for the imbalances of privilege and oppression. Haole (white) Political Science scholar Kelly Kraemer, in her dissertation, does much to clarify a "core/ally distinction" among those within liberation movements, whereby "the core group claims control over access to itself and its affairs, thereby redefining the relationship between itself and other social groups".

A year after I arrived and following a session at the 1994 Pacific Writers Forum at the East/West Center of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, a colleague, who had also recently arrived in Hawai'i, despaired over the "lack of theory" in the discussion among writers who had come from all over the Pacific to talk about their work. I thought that everything I had heard at the session was theory--about writing or problems of language, audience, publishing, and sovereignty among indigenous writers of the Pacific, so I said maybe we needed to listen for theory in such discussions, oral or written, rather than imposing our own criteria for recognizing it from a western academic point of view, that it was important for theory and criticism to come from within a writer's culture at least as well as but preferably rather than be imposed from without. In a recent conversation, the same colleague acknowledged he was probably incapable in 1994 of recognizing the conceptual differences revealed in the writers' conversations. He has also found ways to engage with life in Hawai'i and he presently occupies a position similar to that taken by this dissertation and is developing his own ideas about engagement and friendship.

I have been told that sources I was wedded to were fakes. Each time, I have been knocked off my feet for a time while I let the new information percolate. The outcome of this struggle has been that the struggle itself has become my focus, replacing what I was originally going to write. What I have found to be most important and compelling has not been what I was going to focus on, but what happens when a scholarly project causes pain to one's friends. I believe a close and honest study of this dilemma will be a powerful tool in understanding and hopefully acting to alleviate deep-rooted and bitter criticisms we have and continue to receive from the indigenous community about responsibility in scholarship.

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*Too Many Deaths!* was my dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, from the Graduate Division of the University of Hawaii, May 2003.

I look forward to comments on my work. I am currently looking for a publisher.

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# *Too Many Deaths!*

*Decolonizing Western  
Academic Research  
On Indigenous Cultures*

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