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Out of the 100,000 native Hawaiians left today, seventy-five percent are under the age of eighteen. The potential is tremendous. The state of the Hawaiian today in terms of finding out his identity is wonderful. It has never been at a greater peak than at this moment and it's the youth that are correcting things and bringing to light knowledge that before hand was not even whispered about in public. The youth want to know and they're asking but according to the old system you don't ask questions, you just sit and learn. Many people have no use for the young Hawaiian radicals but I count our blessings for them. They're telling people we're Hawaiians, we love who we are, we're intelligent, and we're ready to speak up and be heard and finally be counted since the fall of our monarchy.

I didn't realize I was interested in the hula because I was already in it from a very young age. To me it was a natural and normal thing to do. My mother and grandparents were my first teachers and we were raised as children to not only dance and sit right and stand right and talk correctly but to also understand the healing ingredients of Nature. We not only learned basic hula movements but also laaukahea, the practice and use of herbs for healing and other purposes. It became a natural learning experience. We were taught the importance of first healing the body then developing it. The healing was laaukahea and the developing was hula. From our grandparents we learned the naanaa, the ancient arts. As children our responsibility was to nail the blankets to the windows to block out any light and let the kahuna go and do his healing. We were taught every morning and every afternoon. If someone had a cold we would head out to the side of the mountain to gather things to heal ourselves with. While we gathered, mother and grandpa would ask us can you sound like the wind? Without us realizing it we were being trained to chant and like all children it was only after we had grown up that we realized what we had been given. Like all children we just wanted to play.

In 1963 I entered Church College and informally trained under George Naope, Sally Wood Naluai and Emma Paishon until my graduation in 1969. Finally through all of that I came to Grandma Lokalia, ^{Cherry} who finished my formal training in ancient hula. My family had taught me that the feeling for hula should come naturally from within you, Grandma Lokalia formalized that feeling. She took the feelings of hula and put them into a hula class. She made hula a formal learning experience and it was then that I came to see hula in it's classical form. No one had ever taken me and gone over the entire structure of the hula step by step. Grandma Lokalia was a very hard-nosed, no-nonsense, stout teacher. She would summon me at any time of the day and I would have to come whether I had other appointments or not. That was the structure of the learning. I would be summoned whenever she felt the spirit and the mood and the time. The hula is more that getting up to dance and following your kumu. Getting up to dance is the last thing. Dancing is something that just summarizes everything else. It is not even seventy-five percent of the hula.

The hula is not an acceptable art form in the Western World and especially in America. In Washington we are still having a difficult time realizing that jazz is an acceptable art form. The hula has finally begun to be recognized in Hawaii as a viable and very rooted art form. One that was governed by kings and required within Hawaiian Culture. The hula will survive in its traditional form only as long as we Hawaiians want it to. If we do not want the hula to be perpetuated as it was during the Dorothy Lamour Age; the hula-hula, the wicky-wacky hula, then we as a race have to make sure that we are in a position to clarify, correct and prevent the rebirth of that horrible era. An ugly time where the culture was horribly abused by the foreigner to serve his purpose. Now we have to speak up and say it is our Culture, it is a classical art form, and it is required to be accepted as such. We have to get it out of the Waikiki entertainment stereotype where it's been for the last fifty years and make it acceptable on the concert stage. We have to begin to legalize ownership of the chants as well as define and classify hula kahiko and its basic steps. We have to structure the hula like the other classical art forms or it will be overwhelmed.

When today's teachers dance their creativity has changed the structure of the hula kahiko. I'm frightened by the theatrics which are a priority today. Everyone seems to think that bombastic, overexaggerated motions are what are saleable which is so sad. When we change the hula kahiko we change the mana and power of the culture. With the innovations of today we are losing our culture. The kumu of today have to come together and put our thoughts down. Should we structurally preserve it or should we allow each halau to be independant and on their own? If we do the latter then we will always have confusion and turmoil. The real problem to me is that the hula is only a small portion of the Culture. Before we can ever unify as a race again, the foundation of our Culture has to be rebuilt and the hula is only a miniscule portion of that foundation. The language, the alii, the kahuna, the kawa and makaaihana systems had a much higher priority in the Culture and the hula wasn't even secondary. Today it is the instrument we are using to get to where we're going as a people and I'm all for it. Is it a source to re-identify ourselves? I say definitely.