

A History of Chamorro Nurse-Midwives in Guam and a 'Placental Politics' for Indigenous Feminism

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Introduction: Stories of the embodied Chamorro landscapes of Guam's *pattera*

1. Among the well-known generative narratives of pre-World War II Guam are stories of the island's native nurse-midwives, the *pattera*.^[1] Chamorro Capuchin priest and historian, Eric Forbes, shared one such story in his recounting of a conversation he had with a Chamorro man who spoke of his intense loyalty to the village where he had lived as a child over the village where he lived most of his adult life. When asked why this was the case, the man replied, '*Siempre nai sa' guihe nai ma hãfot i toayã-ho!*' (Certainly, because that's where they buried my towel!).^[2] It was in this context that Pale' (Father) Eric learned of the *pattera* practice of burying the placenta (in Chamorro, the *pãres*) and of the deep cultural meanings behind this ritual:

The man was pointing to the physical and emotional connection he had with the soil of his native village; something intimately connected with his life in the womb was buried there. In his mind, *he* literally became part of the soil of his village.

2. The meanings and effects inherent in such practice and ritual is as *tãhdong* (deep) as it is multiple and varied. At one level, as Pale' Eric discerns, we see a profound connection between Chamorros and the land, such that landscapes become palpable and visceral so as to 'speak' to Chamorros in ways that, literally and figuratively, root them in the soil and tie them to the land. But such practice and ritual is also important because of the way that such embodied labour bespeaks a history of Chamorro women's persistence and resistance, in this case, the *pattera*'s labouring and 'belabouring' in spite of, or perhaps because of 'modern' rules and regulations under the United States (US) Navy that sought to stamp out native practices, such as the burying of the placenta and umbilical cord (*apuya*) in the interest of health and hygiene, in order to ensure individual and community wellbeing.
3. The *pattera*'s insistence on the old while practicing the new (or their insistence on the new while practicing the old) suggests the possibilities for what I call a Chamorro 'placental politics' of the past and for contemporary struggles and debates concerning a new round of militarisation and development in Guam, but also more generally, for indigenous feminism and indigenous feminist practices.^[3] The inspiration and insight for an indigenous placental politics come directly from how the *pattera*, in defiance of US naval orders to burn or discard the *pãres*, continued to bury the *pãres* or allow family members to do so, out of respect for deep Chamorro symbolic and cultural meanings connecting notions and expectations of self in relation to land and community in a system of reciprocal kinship relations and stewardship obligations. Across the Pacific and traversing empires, feminist scholars have historicised and theorised indigenous women's negotiations of colonial modernity with respect to pregnancy and child birthing and with similar references to the placenta.^[4] My point and slight (but distinct) mode of departure—one that drives the intellectual, scholarly, and political project of this essay—is that, in the case of Guam's *pattera*,

the political, social and cultural act of burying the placenta can be regarded as a specific form of indigenous and gendered resistance against US naval colonialism, and that furthermore, such corporeal politics of foregrounding communal relations and stewardship of lands and people can be seen as *pattera* assertions of cultural self-determination.

4. Thus, the potential in what I am calling a 'placental politics' is a native-inspired theory and practice of being and action informed and guided by ancient ideas of self in relation to land and the primacy of stewardship of land amidst enduring colonial transformations. I am aware of a propensity in the image of a placental politics to idealise a return to nature or maternal, biological, reproductive, or even heteronormative utopia. This is not my intention. Rather, I am interested in how the social and cultural histories of native women's embodied labour as it relates to land can inform continued struggles in the new colonial and settler colonial landscapes in Guam. That the *pattera* and other 'modern' Chamorro women in roles like the *matlina* (godmother) saw the need to continue effectuating old practices involving the land, underscores the lingering importance of land, and especially in view of land as the 'singular issue,' according to Robert Underwood, 'that can radicalise even the most mild-mannered Chamorro from the loyal military retiree and the police officer to the teacher and the nurse.'^[5]
5. This history of asserting a native stewardship over the land and deep connections between Chamorros and the land, captured in the phrase *tao'tao tano'* (people of the land), is especially timely given the latest US military build-up in Guam, in which the US plans to transfer several thousand marines and their dependents from Okinawa to Guam over the next several years.^[6] In this new round of militarisation and Chamorro political unrest, around which Chamorro women have again come to the fore, we might well ask, what are the political possibilities and perils of a 'placental practice'—the embodied practices by native women, in formal capacities as midwives and godmothers, to steward and nurture both Chamorro land and body, especially against the debilitating effects of colonial encroachments, especially as a form of politics culled from the historical and cultural practices of Chamorro women concerned with the wellbeing and balance of Chamorro peoplehood and land? In what follows, I turn first to Guam's *pattera* and an earlier history of women 'delivering the body,' then to Guam's most famous Godmother, Agueda Johnston, for possible answers from the island's past.

The gendered and cultural politics of 'delivering the body' in pre-World War II Guam

6. Following the Spanish-American War of 1898, Guam was placed under the administration of the US Navy. Guam's prewar history under US naval colonial rule, what the Navy dubbed as the 'long road to rehabilitation,' was comprised of or constituted through public health, public works and public education (in the latter, especially the teaching of English).^[7] As scholars of critical Guam/Chamorro studies have argued, this Guam version of the American project of 'benevolent assimilation' was anything but benevolent.^[8] In her analysis of US naval health policies in Guam, Anne Perez Hattori argues that the Navy's assertions of 'power and fecundity' over Chamorro women as 'bearers of the race' was coupled with its rendering absent of Chamorro men as a result of a local history of warfare and widespread epidemics and was constituted by a veritable emasculation of the island and its history.^[9] This simultaneous emptying (of men) and feminisation of the landscape can be seen in a July 1928 advertisement by the Guam Chamber of Commerce, entitled, 'Wanted: American Farmers for Guam.' The advertisement reads:

There are thousands of acres of virgin government land laying waste on this island that should be working for the needs of the world.

Governor Shapley is in favor of American farmers coming to Guam, with the hope that their modern methods will be of assistance and a good example to the inhabitants.

Here is an opportunity for reputable and experienced farmers who wish to settle on this island of edenic virginity where it is summer all winter, and the planting season is every month of the year....[10]

7. Here, the feminisation of the island as 'virgin(ic)' and 'edenic' is the precondition for legitimising the need for a special kind of male labour ('seasoned' American farmers) whose work upon the female land would result in a self-reproduction of a gendered order through the production of agricultural goods for 'the world.' Through such narratives and practices of historic and figurative depopulation (that is, historiographical claims about the demise of the male population through warfare and epidemics across 300 years of Spanish 'misrule' and the figurative emptying of the landscape of men through its feminisation) and discursive repopulation (the introduction of American farmers by US naval administrators to 'rehabilitate' the island, feed the world, and regenerate white malehood), through the process of working the island, was also the very colonial process that subjected Chamorro men, women and children to strict naval regulation and scrutiny. The Naval ordinance was obsessed with Chamorro women especially, as pregnant women, as mothers, as *suruhãna* (folk healers), and, for my purposes here, as the *pattera*—the midwives who enjoyed the trust and confidence of Chamorro women precisely because Chamorro women were singled out and obsessed over as the progenitors of the Chamorro race. Thus were Chamorro women subjected to multiple and various forms of discrimination, surveillance and conquest: from the curtailing of the traditional Chamorro attire, the mestisa, to the more extreme and even violent campaigns on 'proper' mothering, to anti-miscegenation laws. If there was a single class of Chamorro women who received the brunt of the Navy's regulatory attention, it was the *pattera*. [11]
8. The Navy targeted the *pattera*, many of whom doubled as *suruhãna* and who relied on Chamorro medicine and massage to treat women during different life cycles, because they were directly responsible for 'delivering the body,' literally and discursively. [12] Beginning with the island's first American naval governor, Richard Leary, white colonial officials sought ways to regulate the *pattera*, the younger recruits as well as the older lay midwives who were practicing before the Navy arrived, and who, as one US Navy governor claimed, were being 'incapacitated by age.' [13] The Navy's long-term vision was that the younger and more 'adaptable' and pliable cohort of nurse-midwives would replace their older kin and predecessors, and hence, the US Navy recruited and trained the younger recruits precisely to 'incapacitate' or render obsolete their older predecessors. [14]
9. What is particularly telling is the way that the *pattera* at various stages in their profession negotiated and in some instances dictated the terms of US colonialism, whose form of patriarchal engenderment was also evident in the description and division of labour among the naval officials themselves. In places like Guam, for instance, naval officers reserved for themselves the big 'official matters' and relegated to their wife-companions the unofficial 'small matters.' [15] By calling momentary attention to the disparate and asymmetrical but not mutually exclusive worlds of Navy governors and Navy wives, I am continuing to mark the specifically gendered (and racialised, and sexualised, and classed) contours of US colonial modernity in Guam and the new and at times divergent paths that opened up for Chamorro women down the 'long road' and in relation to the work of Navy wives. [16] In looking relationally at Chamorro women and Navy wives, as part of the already multi-contested sites of US Empire, we get a glimpse of the new subjectivities and new subject formations that have been marginalised in canonical as well as by new Pacific historiographies that have focused rather exclusively on the accomplishments of Euro-American men and indigenous men, or have looked at women, native and non-native, but in ways that treat the categories of gender as discrete and mutually exclusive. [17] In her melding of leisure and labour, and in what also seems to be an effort to transplant a particular form of white female

subjectivity now referred to critically as 'the new womanhood' in Guam, for example, the elite New Yorker, Susan Dyer, who also happened to be the wife of Guam Naval Governor George Dyer, founded Guam's first hospital for Native women and children in 1905. [18] Named in her honour, the Susana Hospital had required for its construction an aggressive fundraising campaign that enjoyed the financial support of Susan Dyer's fellow New Yorker and prominent philanthropist, Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage. Sage's beneficence furnished the means through which Dyer asserted what Peggy Pascoe has identified as a kind of 'moral authority' over a racialised and infantilised Chamorro people. This specific kind of gendered philanthropy also led to the establishment of a Native nursing school, which in turn provided an opportunity for and the materiality with which Chamorro women, especially the *pattera*, would culturally and socially invest rather heavily. [19]

10. More specifically, such spaces—the nursing schools and later the clinics, dressing stations and hospitals—furnished Chamorro women with the materiality with which they would transcend Chamorro proscriptions of 'proper' women's behavior under a strict Chamorro Spanish Catholic brand. Through these, Chamorro women would also assert new forms of womanhood, femininity and indigeneity, including a latent or inchoate politics, if not Chamorro feminism. The possibilities, and perils, of this emergent Chamorro politics and feminism are sensed through the figures of the *palao'an chalan* (woman of the road) and *matlina* (godmother). These new forms of indigeneity and mobility can be understood within a larger context of indigenous modernities—new ways of being and enacting what it means to be native without necessarily abandoning earlier conceptions of progress and propriety, and in relation to self and community and stewardship of land.
11. Four dimensions exemplify well *pattera* negotiations of modernity—individuality, innovation and progress, that is—alongside native women's conceptions of propriety in areas of health and hygiene and compensation: 1) the *pattera's* desire and resolve to transcend boundaries and cross over (and back) from Chamorro Spanish Catholic proscriptions around proper women's place even at the risk of being scorned by other Chamorros; 2) the *pattera's* ability to serve as gatekeepers and cultural brokers by working and translating (sometimes literally, as we shall see) the spaces in between Native and US Naval authority, and eventually becoming trusted, revered, and beloved; 3) the *pattera's* insistence on appropriating new ways with age-old Chamorro beliefs and practices; and finally, 4) the *pattera's* management of compensation. What follows is an elaboration of these dimensions based on my interviews with some of the island's last surviving *pattera* trained under the US Navy.
12. For many of these women, nurse-midwifery was an opportunity to leave home and earn money. The interviewees said they wanted to become nurse-midwives to also help other Chamorro women. Joaquina Babauta Herrera (Tan Kina) explained that she became inspired after experiencing first hand an older female relative suffering from severe bleeding during her pregnancy. But Tan Kina also attributed her determination and success in eventually becoming a *pattera* to a Navy wife, a Mrs Plain. Mrs Plain, a former nurse, had encouraged Tan Kina to enrol in nursing school. The Navy wife had employed Tan Kina as a domestic helper—an experience that she claimed helped her in her younger years to become more proficient in English, which, along with 'adaptability,' was another prerequisite for the would-be *pattera*. [20] Indeed, Tan Kina's strong desire to help women deliver babies safely is noteworthy. Also pertinent is Tan Kina's questioning of the efficacy of the old ways, in this particular case, the methods of the older *pattera* attending to her older female relative and whose lack of knowledge and lack of better judgment of the condition known as placenta previa placed the mother and baby in harm's way. [21]
13. Despite such good intentions, the desire to leave home, earn money, and help other women rendered the *pattera* suspect and earned them at times the admonishment of family members. In her study of nursing in Guam, retired registered nurse Oliva Guerrero described the request to

leave home, to pursue a course of study in a foreign language, and to work in strange surroundings in the company of foreigners as 'something akin to horror.'^[22] Chamorro nurse-trainees found themselves in a dilemma because the trainee's living arrangements ran directly against Chamorro prescriptions against a non-chaperoned 'get-together' of the opposite sexes away from home. According to the Chamorro folklorist Carmen Santos, who transcribed and translated the pre-World War II song, *Humalom Enfetmera* (Enrolled as a Nurse), such arrangements accounted for why the nurse-trainees' new found freedom (away from home, in the hospitals) was widely criticised and seen as a source of embarrassment and shame.^[23] Tan Kina described, as well, this quandary, hostility even, toward the *pattera*:

You know the parents before, they don't want their girls to join the nurse because some of them they said if you became a nurse, you puta [whore]. Because the corpsman and the nurse working together. And this old-fashion woman thinks that the corpsman and the nurse are going to be together. But we are not gonna be together, we [are] working together.^[24]

14. At stake were the sanctity of the family, the foundation of Chamorro society, and especially the transgression of preconceived notions of women's sexuality and their roles, duties, obligations, and responsibilities as 'bearers' of culture, language and religion.^[25] Yet, it was precisely in their service to families and communities that the *pattera* would eventually go on to become trusted and highly revered, as evidenced in Tan Kina's insistence that the *pattera* and the American corpsman were 'not going to be together' but that it was simply the case that 'we [are] working together.'
15. The ability of younger, unmarried Chamorro women to transgress Chamorro Catholic patriarchal proscriptions around 'proper' women's behaviour and cross over into newer American 'modern' spaces—often with the help of the older and more experienced Chamorro recruits such as the Chief Native Nurse and lay matrons—enabled the nurse trainees to become knowledgeable and skilled intermediators of Chamorro and American discourses on health, hygiene and child-birthing, and become highly regarded community leaders.^[26] Naval administrators and doctors relied heavily on the *pattera* as native agents to impart American health and hygiene in the villages, because they were more aware of the 'prejudices and popularities of their own people' over American nurses.^[27] In spite of having 'immeasurable advantages' as cultural insiders, the *pattera* had to constantly work the spaces in between.^[28] Because of their careful and successful negotiations of American and Chamorro spaces, regulating and directing the flow in between, the *pattera* can be likened to Malay midwives who were also 'gatekeepers' and whose 'support or resistance to Western health services would determine community acceptance and compliance.'^[29] The *pattera* can also be likened to Japanese midwives, whose status as cultural brokers as well as birth attendants for the Issei was contemporaneous with the transformation of midwifery into a new woman's profession as part of Japan's modernising quest for empire and with the rise of Japanese immigration to the US.^[30]
16. As gatekeepers and cultural brokers, the *pattera* were able to convince Chamorros and pregnant women to avail themselves of naval doctors. Naval administrators begrudged this lack of interest in American doctors as a 'matter of very slow growth.'^[31] This problem persisted in the 1930s and 1940s as Tan Kina and Rosalia Mesa (Tan Liang) spoke of the same dilemma of getting women to see the doctor early in their pregnancies. Tan Kina and Tan Liang knew that only through the constant monitoring of pregnancies for incidences of high blood pressure or the possibility of developing eclampsia would they (the *pattera*) be allowed to safely and confidently deliver babies in the home, as most Chamorro women preferred. The *pattera* articulation of health and progress, building upon their records of success and Chamorro families' trust and confidence in them, also provided the grounds for building trust in American doctors. Tan Kina urged her patients to have that trust because, as she would assure them, the doctor 'cares for you....'^[32] According to Tan

Kina, Chamorro women were *mamåhlao* (embarrassed) about showing their bodies to strangers. Some were also ashamed because they did not have a lot of money and a change of clothes for themselves and their babies if they were to have their babies in the hospital. Tan Liang added that many women did not want to leave their other children home alone for several days while they were in the hospital. She also said that some unmarried mothers were *mamåhlao* because of the stigma attached to having illegitimate children.[33] Privy to information to which American doctors were not, the *pattera* were able to work along with the comfort level of Chamorro women without sacrificing what was in their mutual best interests: a safe and healthy delivery. The *pattera* were able to massage the points of tension that many pregnant women felt about going to the doctor, by helping women understand the value and importance of a regular check-up. Tan Liang characterised this assistance as '*maolek*' (good) for averting possible complications:

You find it very, very *maolek* advice to the pregnant women sa [because] you can spot the high blood pressure you know, any symptoms like for the first three months ... [and] for the second three months, since like some develop hypertension and eclampsia, like eclampsia is like *mañagu* [to give birth] and they're like swollen. So I think it's very important to have them see the doctor first before they come to me.[34]

17. Tan Liang's use of the word *maolek* invokes a deep meaning in Chamorro: the performing of what is good and what is right for the community, with connotations of balance and harmony. It is part of a practice of *inafa'maolek* (to make good), a *tåhdong* (deep) and age-old system upon which most other Chamorro values are built. Woven into the *inafa'maolek* code are other values considered *tåhdong* and with its own connotations of substance and wisdom, such as *respetu* (respect), *gai mamåhlao* (literally, 'to have shame' but loosely 'to save face'), *mangingi*, the sniffing of an elder's hand to take in his or her essence and wisdom as a sign of *respetu*, and *chenchule'*, a gift or form of compensation (often a form of creating and maintaining gratitude and indebtedness). After centuries of Spanish colonisation, but far from simple 'Hispanicisation,' these *tåhdong* values and practices have also necessarily become contained in and maintained through Spanish Catholic rituals such as the fiesta or religious feast, the *nubena* or nine-day prayer vigil, the *lisåyu* or rosary, and in the *kumpaire* system (in Spanish, the *compadre* system, or in English, the Godparenthood system). The *pattera*'s labour to do the *maolek* thing vis-à-vis modern practices of health and wellness can also give us a glimpse into Chamorro feminist re-inscribed notions of health. Clearly, a significant part of the *pattera*'s labour, duty and obligation was to translate the idea and significance of 'prenatal care'—routine visits and monthly check-ups—to monitor conditions like high blood pressure and eclampsia as something *maolek*, and to assure their patients that they would 'be with them' throughout their pregnancy even if it meant at times putting these women's needs first over family obligations.[35]

18. What makes *pattera* notions of progress and propriety specifically feminist is that *pattera* labour in service to clan, land and community was first and foremost in service to/with women while simultaneously challenging Chamorro ideas of *inafa'maolek* especially as it was invoked by their husbands, sons, fathers, uncles and brothers. Tan Kina described instances when she had to accompany her patients in the ambulance and would stay with them for days even after the delivery. Quite often, Tan Kina forgot to call her husband:

Most of the time you know when I go out delivering babies and it's not going to be a normal deliver or [if it's] high blood pressure, I won't allow them [the women to deliver at home]. I told them, 'It's not my responsibility. If you don't do what I said, and if you die with your kid, it's your fault. So make you feel happy for me to take you [to the hospital] because I want you to live and your kid.' But the lady said, 'But are you going with me, Tan Kina, because I'm scared of the doctor?' I said, 'Sure, I'm taking care of you now.' So we go together in the ambulance. I didn't even call my husband to tell him that I am in there. I didn't tell him that I am leaving. That's my job and I have to have good responsibility for the patient. Most of the time my husband used to say, 'Oh my goodness, you always do what you want.' I say, 'It's my job....'[36]

In this quote, we sense Tan Kina's husband's annoyance in not so much her absence as in her frequent pursuit of 'what you want.' That 'always do(ing) what you want' of course is bound up with the principal vocation of helping pregnant women in general, but especially in the case here, of helping them overcome their hesitation at going to medical clinics for prenatal care, especially in the face of apparent complications, the 'not normal' conditions like high blood pressure. This type of assistance to 'recalcitrant' women to concede their bodies to modern delivery procedures that the *pattera* regarded nonetheless to be '*maolek*' involved pressuring (almost guilt-tripping) hesitant mothers ('If you don't do what I say ... and your child dies ... it's your fault') even as that pressure (or guilt-trip) is firmly contained within a tradition of love and caring ('Sure, I'm taking care of you now') aimed at achieving wellness and balance (*inafa'maolek*). In other words, the terms of Chamorro women assisting other women through the regulatory colonial apparatus of the US Navy's hospital and modern codes of individual responsibility and accountability, is still one of indigenous stewardship and custodianship legible under the code of *inafa'maolek*. As we will see shortly, *inafa'maolek* conceptions of stewardship and custodianship would also continue to invoke traditional birthing practices, like the burying of the placenta or the umbilical cord, considered primitive and unsanitary (or superstitious folly) under US colonial modernity. The persistence of indigenous practices in these women's determinations to ensure the wellbeing of native mothers and children at the prenatal, birthing and postnatal stages provides insight into a determined level of indigenous feminism whose energies and time spent away from husbands and fathers could also earn them these men's wraths for how such women's work would cut into what indigenous patriarchy demanded of such labour. This incipient indigenous feminism that is latent in the history of the *pattera* can furnish early materiality and opportunity to develop a placental politics for contemporary Chamorro women activists deeply interested in caring for land and subjectivity.

The gender of self-determination and other forms of safeguarding Chamorro bodies

19. While prenatal care was something the *pattera* insisted was 'good' and impressed upon Chamorro women, there were other naval practices around pregnancy and childbirthing that the *pattera* considered not so *maolek* precisely because of how such practices themselves cut into good traditional birthing practices. Such introduced practices militated against Chamorro beliefs and rituals, which were based on Chamorro knowledge and Chamorro conceptions of progress, propriety and *inafa'maolek*. Though the US Navy forbade and/or discouraged the Chamorro beliefs and rituals, regarding them as silly folkways of a pre-modern society, these practices continued not simply because they did not 'conflict' with American practices or were 'harmless,' but because Chamorros insisted on their cogency and efficacy, and that they were *maolek*.^[37]
20. It was this insistence that enabled even the 'modern' and 'progressive' *pattera* to prevail on the *ãmot Chamoru* (Chamorro medicine) and *lasa* (massage). Tan Liang, who earlier spoke of the importance of routine clinic check-ups with navy doctors for monitoring eclampsia and high blood pressure, continued to hold on to these Chamorro practices handed down by her female elders. Both she and Ana Mendiola Rosario (Tan Anan Siboyas) advised their patients to adhere to such beliefs. Tan Liang spoke of how the expecting mother's position under or near a doorway affected the baby's movement through the birth canal, the duration of the delivery, and the degree of difficulty in the delivery:

Anggen mapotge i palao'an [when a woman is pregnant] ... *tumotohge' i petta* ... standing by the door, *nai* ... then the old people says you go back, because if you [keep] standing by the door, the baby will be born in ... *ayu mappot ma fañagu* [a difficult delivery].^[38]

21. Tan Anan Siboyas also believed that the position of a pregnant woman's head and feet while lying

down affected the baby's position and determined if a woman would need a caesarian section. Amid skepticism, Tan Ānan Siboyas still advised her patients to take precaution:

... ayu nai este ni' manmapotge' na ma chachatge yu' yanggen hu sangāni na mungnga ma na'talakhiong i patās-mu gi i pettan kuāto, na'talakhiong i ilu-mu gi i petta sa' eyague' pātgon para ma fañagu i ilu-ña fine'nenā'.

... that's why sometimes these pregnant women laugh at me when I tell them not to lie down with their feet facing the doorway and that their head should face the doorway—the way a baby's head exits first from the mother's body.[39]

If the baby had been in a breeched position, Tan Ānan Siboyas would massage the woman's stomach to correct it. Tan Liang, on the other hand, did not practice this particular kind of Chamorro massage because of the risks and the possibility that the umbilical cord could wrap itself around the baby during the process. She, like Tan Kina, however, acknowledged that there were certain *pattera*, like Tan Ānan Siboyas, also a *suruhānu*, who had special 'talents' and 'gifts' with *āmot Chamoru* and *lasa* and that these important knowledges worked for many.

22. Another practice maintained by the *pattera*, the inspiration for this essay, was the burying of the placenta, what Chamorros have also historically referred to as the *ga'chong i patgon* (child's companion). Tan Liang learned this from an older aunt who hailed from the 'modern,' not 'rural,' capital city of *Hagåtña*, where the Anthropologist Laura Thompson claimed such 'conservative' traditions no longer existed. According to Tan Liang, the proper burial of the placenta and the cord (*apuya*) under the stairs of the house or near the house ensured that the child would be protected from injury and malevolent spirits as he/she grew older. Other Chamorros believed that the ritual ensured that the child would not run away from home.[40] In burying the placenta and the cord, or allowing family members to practice this protective measure, the *pattera* defied American naval doctors and nurses whose orders were to discard or burn what they saw as dangerous human waste. Even Tan Kina, who herself had reservations about this tradition, respected a family's desire to practice these precautionary rituals.
23. From the knowledge and traditions passed down by earlier women *pattera* to the new generation trained under the US Navy (recall that it is Tan Kina's elder, a *pattera*, who passed down this knowledge to Tan Kina), but also in even earlier accounts of Guam and the Chamorros, we learn that there is an obligation and proper way to deliver the Chamorro body from harm. Eighteenth century Spanish missionary accounts likewise speak albeit sparingly and condemningly of Chamorro women's resistance to the missionaries in Guam. Upon a closer reading of such hagiographic (to Spanish accounts) narratives, however, one surmises the prominence and strength of these women of ancient Chamorro matrilineal society in Guam and the Mariana Islands, the first group of islands to be colonised in Oceania in the sixteenth century. The French Jesuit priest, Charles le Gobien, wrote of one such woman during the seventeenth century Chamorro-Spanish Wars. Referred to simply as the mother-in-law of Masongsong, a Filipino Commander and among the many Filipino soldiers brought to the Mariana Islands by the Spanish to protect the Catholic mission there, this Chamorro woman devised a plan to kill the Spanish governor Major Damian de Esplaña. Under the pretence of bringing food to her daughter at the presidio, Masongsong's mother-in-law tried to convince her son-in-law to carry out her plan. She told Masongsong that it was a disgrace for Filipinos to be treated as subjects by the Spanish and that they should join the Chamorro rebellion against the Spanish.[41]
24. Still, other historical accounts tell of Chamorro women who employed other methods and practices for dealing with Spanish colonisation and oppression. The Jesuit historian Joannis Joseph Delgado described such practice as a possible reason for Chamorro population decline in the early 1700s:

[T]hey cannot abide the yoke of the Spaniards because of their great pride and haughtiness, and that they would like to live as they did in the past, in freedom and [following their] barbarous customs. Because of this, many hang themselves and others kill themselves.... The women ... purposely sterilize themselves; or if they conceive, they find ways to abort, and some kill their children after birth in order to save them from the subjugation of the Spaniards. [42]

The Jesuit priest and historian Juan de la Concepcion wrote:

This very large diminution of population comes from the subjugation imposed upon them by the force of arms. As lovers of liberty they could not tolerate a foreign yoke. This became so painful for them that, not being able to free themselves of it, they preferred to lose their lives by hanging and by other desperate means. The women purposely sterilized themselves, and they threw their newborn children into the sea, convinced that an early death would free them of travails and a painful life ... they would be fortunate and happy. Subjugation was so despicable that, for them, it was the ultimate and most deplorable calamity. [43]

25. Centuries later, the American anthropologist, Laura Thompson, recorded several techniques Chamorro women used to abort their pregnancies, including how women afterwards would bury the fetuses under the house. [44] Such stories of Chamorros taking their own lives, and more specifically, of Chamorro women aborting their babies so that they might avert subjecting their children to a future of tyranny, violence and possibly genocide, present an even earlier Chamorro history of and the possibilities for a 'placental politics.' [45] That Chamorro women buried the remains of their aborted babies underneath their house might suggest that these women afforded these babies the same rituals of deference and worship for the living and the dead and that these women in a sense were delivering their fetuses out of harm's way and further ensuring, even in death, their protection and well-being.
26. Across the indigenous Pacific, there is a proper way to care for the placenta and cord. According to Vicki Lukere, these customs have 'served to identify the newborn with kin, ensure the mother's or child's wellbeing, and renew a visceral connection between people and place.' [46] For the Maori, the fate of the placenta, the *whenua*, which also means 'land,' can mark Maori belonging to and distinctive identity within new lands as well as an essential claim to islands in part relinquished. In averring his ties and claims to his home island upon his return to Niue, poet John Pule wrote, 'I was born here, my whenua buried on this land.' [47] In Samoa and the Marshall Islands, some believe that if a boy's placenta is thrown in the sea, he will become a skilled fisherman. [48] The Kanaka Maoli of Hawai'i believe that the *iewe* (placenta) connects a child to his/her birthplace and that if planted next to a tree ensures that his/her development resembles the growth of the tree. According to Lilikala Kame'ele'ihiwa, Kanaka Maoli regard the *iewe* as sacred and believe that proper handling and burial of the *iewe* is a protective measure that guarantees the child's wellbeing. [49] In 2006, Hawai'i became the first state to pass legislation that allows hospitals to release placentas to the family. In another place in the Pacific, according to Miriam Kahn, Tahitians' sense of place, as rooted in the land, come together 'most poignantly' in the burial of the child's placenta, *pu fenua* (core, heart, and essence of the earth) and the cord or *pito* (navel) in the ground. [50] This 'sense of place,' and the 'genealogical lines of connections,' is embodied and symbolised by Polynesian concepts of 'cordage.' As Ty Kawika Tengan, Tevita Ka'ili, and Rochelle Fonoti argue, the cord literally and figuratively guides and grounds indigenous Pacific Islanders in historical, cultural, intellectual and academic projects. Examples of cordage in such political projects to 'reclaim knowledge and contest imperialism in the Pacific' include the braided *sennit* cords used in *lalava* (the ancient Tongan art of lashing), the *pohaku piko* (the place where umbilical cords were buried), and the cord and fishhook referenced in the Hawaiian Kumulipo. [51]
27. The conscious decision by *pattera* to defy naval orders and to bury (or allow family members to bury) the placenta and the cord in order to maintain and ensure the value of *inafa'maolek*, of

balance and righteousness, and to guide one's growth and development properly, also helps to explain why/how *pattera* handled compensation the way they did. Though the *pattera* saw the potential to earn money, they often acquiesced to other forms of compensation. For instance, the law stipulated a fee for her services—between \$2.50 to \$10.00 in 1925 and \$10.00 in 1936—and yet, the *pattera* did not adhere to such wages set by the Navy.^[52] Tan Ānan Siboyas qualified this amount as 'coming from the heart.'^[53] The *pattera* practice of accepting 'whatever families were happy to give' ran counter to the Navy's modernising and rehabilitating efforts in Guam to establish a cash-based economy and transform Chamorros into productive wage-earners. And even though the law gave the *pattera* the right to refuse a delivery if she anticipated non-payment, they rarely, if ever, refused a delivery because a patient could not pay. To do so would have been culturally inappropriate.^[54] Drawing once again on the concept of *inafa'maolek*, we can see how most *pattera* knew that most of their clients had little or no money at all. To refuse to deliver a baby for this reason would be *tai mamahlao* (to have no shame) or *tai respetu* (to have no respect). Most *pattera* were more concerned about helping families than making money, and thus extended the practice of *fa'taotao* (to treat someone as a person), which provides the model for how to treat someone with decency. This cultural prescription, under certain circumstances, also demanded that the *pattera* reciprocate. Tan Ānan Siboyas, for example, explained that if she got paid but later discovered that the family had more children, she would return the money.^[55]

28. Another form of reverse compensation—of paying your client or customer for the services you perform—came from the fact that oftentimes the *pattera* were asked by mothers to be the child's *matlina* (godmother), a title that comes with enormous obligations and indebtedness, and to which I will return shortly. Since they were more concerned with assisting families than making money, the *pattera* can be considered as 'social workers of sorts,' according to retired nurse, Oliva Guerrero.^[56] The *pattera*'s ability to negotiate between Native and Naval spaces on matters concerning compensation distinguished them from other Chamorro professionals. Guerrero described this trait as the ability to assess not just the mother and the baby, but also the situation of the family.
29. More often than not, the compensation was in the form of produce, things from the *lâncho* (ranch). In my interviews with *pattera* family members, all of them indicated that most of the time their families had been compensated with fruits and vegetables, coconut crabs, corn or bananas.^[57] Though the US Navy denigrated Chamorro labour on the *lâncho* and sought to eradicate and replace it with a wage economy (recall the Guam Chamber of Commerce advertisement for American farmers), *lâncho* labour as a form of compensation and reciprocity actually carried (and still carries) a tremendous amount of social value and cultural capital when attached to the figure and labour of the *pattera*. This particular form of labour and resistance is noteworthy given the Navy's efforts to regulate farming in Guam through a 'back-to-the-farm' campaign that also sought to domesticate, to tame and make 'industrious' Chamorro male bodies that were viewed as 'rowdy' and deviant. The campaign also included a 'training for life' curriculum in schools, which emphasised industry and agriculture, and the establishment of an annual Guam Industrial Fair at which Chamorro farmers were stipulated to showcase their agricultural produce and livestock and to sell native arts and crafts.^[58]

Godmothering and stewardship in Chamorro women's labour and activism

30. As discussed earlier, the practice of naming one's *pattera* as *matlina* to the child she delivered was another form of compensation, a practice counterproductive to the US Navy's efforts to establish a capitalist, wage-based system. A product of intricate relations between Chamorro and Catholic practice and ritual, the *kumpa*ire (godparenthood) system reflected both old and relatively new

forms of political and social patronage. And in the wake of the seventeenth-century Chamorro-Spanish Wars and population decline, it reflected a useful way to reinvigorate and strengthen existing ties, and to recreate new kinship lines among surviving Chamorro families. In this system of patronage, the godparent is obligated to look out for the spiritual and material needs of his or her godchild, while the godchild is obligated to pay respect to the patron. This particular form of payment for services rendered is noteworthy because it put the vendor further into social and economic debt, but even more profoundly, obligated the *pattera* to future services to the family, community and land, and hence explains why *pattera* were also regarded as community leaders and social workers. One of the interviewees recalled the story of a famous *pattera* from his village who, long retired by then, was summoned by villagers to intervene in a domestic dispute. In the larger-than-life narrative he told—a sign of the prominence and highly revered status of the *pattera* even today—the *pattera* hoisted the man up against the wall and admonished him for beating his wife. Such obligations and assertions of godmothering and stewardship of land and community can also best be exemplified in the case of the Chamorro educator Agueda Iglesias Johnston.

31. Known as Guam's 'Godmother of Education,' Johnston was a pupil of American-style education under the US Navy. She is most noted for her role as a teacher and later as the Principal of Guam's first public high school. Johnston has also become a symbol of American patriotism for her role during World War II in organising performances for the Armed Services in Guam and in helping to harbour US Navy Radioman George Tweed from Japanese soldiers. Her patriotism and loyalty to America has been canonised in books, military journals and museums. A 'godmother' of all sorts, Johnston also asserted her role in the preservation of the Chamorro language, the establishment of the Guam Museum, the care of the *manâmkô* (elderly), and the stewardship of the land. It was concern for the land and the US military's post-World War II condemnation of roughly one-third of the island that proved to be a turning point for her. [59] In an unpublished manuscript, Johnston expressed ambivalence, at times opposition, to the military's incessant and relentless bulldozing of the jungles in Machananao, especially the *lâncho*, the area where she spent her childhood in Guam. Johnston bemoaned the loss of farmlands that lay beneath the asphalt and 'unnecessary air fields' of the US military and referred to the ubiquitous bulldozer as the 'dullozer' for the routine and banal way that it replaced the *fusiños*—the traditional Chamorro farming implement that worked the land into food and social space for Chamorros. [60]
32. Redolent of the kind of historical and political positions assumed by Agueda Johnston and the *pattera*, contemporary Chamorro women activists have staked their roles as stewards over community and lands in a new and unprecedented 9-11 global anti-terrorist US militarisation of Guam. At an August 2007 oversight hearing on the military build-up, members of the all-women's organisation, Fuetsan Famalao'an (strength of women or strong women,) invoked an image of stewardship even deeper and older than the *matlina*, that of the *maga'hâga*, the highest-ranking daughter and woman of ancient Chamorro matrilineal society who wielded tremendous power and authority. Fuetsan members have insisted that the build-up be accountable to the needs of women and children and to the health of the land and sea. They have reminded the US military and Guam's political leaders of the 'deterioration of lands as a result of contaminants' and the already 'devastating' effects on Santa Rita and Yigo, villages adjacent, respectively, to Naval Air Station and Andersen Air Force Base and whose residents suffer the highest rate of cancer deaths on island. [61] Much like the way that prewar *pattera* were duty-bound and responsible to the expectant mothers under their care (recall Tan Kina's earlier insistence with her husband that it was her 'duty' and 'responsibility' to accompany her patient), present-day activists, Fanai Castro and Hope Alvarez Cristobal, prefaced their protests with the Chamorro adage: *Isao-ña i tumungo' ya ha sedi, ki ayo i mismo umisagui hao* (greater is the fault of he who allows the injustice upon himself). [62] At a time when even the military invokes the language of 'stewardship' over the island's land and sea in supposed equal partnership with the island's male leadership, Chamorro

women activists reassert their own traditional role, and even perform a little appropriation of their own.[63] At an international conference of women against militarism held in 2010 in Guam, Sabina Perez declared that 'genuine security does not come from military security, [but] from healing and nurturing our communities.'[64] In another instance of anti-colonial and anti-militarisation activism, *manmaga'håga* (women leaders) on 14 August 2011 led a *lukao* (procession) and gathering at Gokña, the site of an ancient village in present-day Gun Beach (in the island's Tumon Bay area), in a ceremony to rectify the recent desecration of a burial site. In the process of building, of all things, a cultural, heritage and ecological park (called Lina'la/Our Heritage), the developers not only disturbed human remains and artefacts, including funerary objects, but also left the remains in an unmarked and nondescript pit adjacent to a nearby parking lot.[65] This they did for a park that would subsequently boast a living diorama where tourists and visitors can 'experience Guam life and culture from 500 years ago.' At the ceremony, called 'Chinachalanan I Manaina-ta' (Creating Pathways for Our Ancestral Spirits), the aforementioned activist, Hope Cristobal, explained that when gravesites are disturbed so too are the *aniti* (spirits), and thus, they (the women) needed to 'offer peace and tranquility to our ancestors, who passed down our sovereignty and human rights.'[66] In what might now be understood as a placental practice of maintaining genealogical cordage to land and ancestry, Cristobal had also further fused the principle of indigenous political self-determination and sovereignty with the long tradition of Chamorro women responsible for the wellbeing of the community and the land:

As mothers and daughters of the community, it is our responsibility to continue this tradition. Due to its historical importance, the ceremonial recognition of our ancestral remains becomes even more significant.[67]

33. Indeed, contemporary Chamorro women activists can be seen to deploy an *inafa'maolek* and a form of placental politics evocative of an earlier practice rooted in indigenous conceptions of self in relation to land and community, but one that is up against new forms of US militarisation and modernisation. In this essay, I have focused on the labour of the *pattera*, who were eventually phased out in the post-World War II era under a new system of health care by the civilian and local-run Government of Guam, but whose legacy and embodied labour I am suggesting can offer an indigenous political lay of the land for contemporary feminist struggles and indigenous feminism and for understanding such present-day praxis and movement. I have privileged the *pattera*, in their role as godmothers and stewards, and in their insistence on doing ancient things like the burying of the placenta and umbilical cord for the powerful and enduring meanings that such practices have for native conceptions of self, land and propriety in modern and colonising contexts. Together, the *pattera* and *matlina* embody the historical and political forces and motives, which, as Teresia Teaiwa has speculated, have driven indigenous women across the Pacific to 'come to political consciousness and take up activism after the bodies of their loved ones become affected, infected by large and previously mysterious forces like nuclear contamination.'[68] Placental politics, for me, adds to this history and possibility. Placental politics, as I see it, names a history and a future by which indigenous women have consciously chosen to act as stewards of Chamorro peoplehood and Chamorro place. In Guam's history, Chamorro women's practice of planting the placenta and the cord that connected and nourished a newborn to his/her mother was also a practice that connected indigenous Chamorros to the land in order to ensure proper growth and directionality. Implanted in their own struggles against reckless development and militarisation, contemporary Chamorro women activists also continue to care and steward Chamorro peoplehood and land in efforts to keep things right and balanced, and to sustain what is *maolek*.

References

- [1] The Chamorro word *pattera* is derived from the Spanish word for midwife, *partera*. In Chamorro, when one refers to

more than one *pattera*, one says, *i pattera siha*. I utilise 'pattera' to denote either the singular or the plural.

[2] Eric Forbes, OFM, Capuchin. 'Chamorro expressions: *Ma Håfot i Toayå-Ho!*,' 11 November 2011, online: <http://paleric.blogspot.com/search?q=placenta> (accessed 30 June 2012).

[3] Various forms of this paper and my theorising and reworking of a 'placental politics' have been presented at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2011, the University of California at Los Angeles in 2011, the University of Washington in 2012, Illinois State University in 2013, the Berkshire Women's Conference in 2014, and more recently (and again) at the University of Washington in 2015.

[4] Tani E. Barlow, ed., *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. I am also indebted to the new imperial histories and scholars that have built on Barlow's conception of 'colonial modernity,' such as Antoinette Burton (ed.), *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999; Kalpana Ram and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Maternities and Modernities: Colonial and Postcolonial Experiences in Asia and the Pacific*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, especially Maila Stivens' 'Modernizing the Malay mother,' pp. 50–80, and Leanne Merrett-Balkas' 'Just add water: Remaking women through childbirth, Anganen, Southern Highlands, Papua New Guinea,' pp. 213–38; Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre (eds), *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010; Vicki Lukere and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Birth in the Pacific: Beyond Tradition and Modernity?*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001. Similarly, Miriam Kahn has analysed the cultural politics and significance in Tahitian burial of the placenta in her theorising of space and counter-spaces of resistance. Miriam Kahn, *Tahiti Beyond the Postcard: Power, Place, and Everyday Life*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011.

[5] Afterword by Congressman Robert A. Underwood in Penelope Bordallo-Hoffschneider, *A Campaign for Political Rights in Guam, 1899–1950*, Saipan: N.M.I. Division of Historic Preservation, 2001, pp. 201–13, p. 211. See also Robert A. Underwood, 'Teaching Guam history in Guam High Schools,' in *Guam History: Perspectives*, ed. Lee D. Carter, William L. Wuerch and Rosa Roberto Carter, Mangilao: Richard F. Taitano Micronesia Area Research Center, University of Guam, 1997, pp. 1–10, p. 9, and Christine Taitano DeLisle, "'Guamanian-Chamorro by birth but American patriotic by choice": Subjectivity and performance in the life of Agueda Iglesias Johnston,' in *Amerasia Journal* vol. 37, no. 3 (2011): 61–75.

[6] In his March 2013 testimony before Congress, Commander of the Pacific Command (PACOM) estimated that the movement of US marines from Okinawa to Guam would be completed by 2020. See Shirley A. Kan, 'Guam: U.S. Defense deployments,' in *Congressional Research Service*, 11 April 2013, pp. 1–29, p. 2. On developments in the US military build-up in Guam and the Marianas, see also [Leevin Camacho and Dan Broudy](#), "'Sweetening' the Pentagon's deal in the Marianas: From Guam to Pagan,' in *The Asia-Pacific Journal* vol. 11, issue 27, no. 1 (8 July 2013), online: <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Leevin-Camacho/3963> (accessed 18 March 2015). Since the initial announcement by the Department of Defense in 2006, and since the publication of these articles, the numbers of Marines and dependents have changed.

[7] *U.S. Navy Report on Guam, 1899–1950*, United States Government, Department of Defense, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington D.C.: U.S. Government, 1950, p. 5.

[8] Among the Guam/Chamorro scholarship, there is: Michael Lujan Bevacqua, 'These may or may not be Americans... The patriotic myth and the hijacking of Chamorro history on Guam,' MA thesis, University of Guam, Mangilao, Guam, 2004; Keith L. Camacho, *Cultures of Commemoration: The Politics of War, Memory, and History in the Mariana Islands*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011; Christine Taitano DeLisle, 'Delivering the body: Narratives of family, childbirth and prewar pattera,' MA thesis, University of Guam, 2001; Vicente M. Diaz, 'Paved with good intentions... Roads, citizenship and a century of American colonialism in Guam,' unpublished paper prepared for the Centennial of the Spanish American War Summer Seminar, Obermann Center for Advanced Study, University of Iowa, 1998; Vicente M. Diaz, 'Simply Chamorro: Telling tales of demise and survival in Guam,' in *The Contemporary Pacific* vol. 6, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 29–57; Evelyn Rose Flores, 'Rewriting paradise: Countering desire, denial, and the exotic in American literary representations of the Pacific,' Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2002; Anne Perez Hattori, *Colonial Dis-Ease: U.S. Navy Health Policies and the Chamorros of Guam, 1898–1941*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004; Anne Perez Hattori, 'Righting civil wrongs: Guam Congress walkout of 1949,' in *Hale'-ta: Kinalamten Pulitikåt: Siñenten I Chamorro*, Agaña, Guam: Political Status Education Coordinating Commission, 1996, pp. 57–69; Laura Marie Torres Souder, *Daughters of the Island: Contemporary Chamorro Women Organizers on Guam*, Lanham, Maryland: University Press of American, Inc., 1992 (2nd ed.); Laura Marie Torres Souder, 'Unveiling herstory: Chamorro women in historical perspective,' in *Pacific History: Papers from the 8th Pacific History Association Conference*, ed. Donald Rubinstein, Mangilao, Guam: University of Guam Press and Micronesia Area Research Center, 1992, pp.

143–61; and Robert Anacletus Underwood, 'American education and the acculturation of the Chamorros of Guam,' Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1987.

[9] Hattori, *Colonial Dis-Ease*, p. 93. Another group of Chamorros to come under the Navy's health policies, according to Hattori, were those diagnosed and misdiagnosed with Hansen's disease (leprosy). Under Governor Seaton Schroeder's administration, Chamorros with Hansen's and those suspected of having the disease were segregated from the community in the early 1900s, placed in the village of Tumon in Guam, and later, were deported to a leper colony in the Philippines, in Culion. See also Anne Perez Hattori's 'Re-membering the past: Photography, leprosy and the Chamorros of Guam, 1898–1924,' in *The Journal of Pacific History* vol. 46, no. 3, (December 2011): 293–318.

[10] 'Wanted American farmers for Guam,' in *The Guam Recorder* vol. 5, no. 4, July 1928, p. 88.

[11] The first naval administration considered the issue of legitimacy to be as troublesome as health conditions and thus issued an order requiring persons living together to be married. See Captain Frederick J. Nelson, 'Lieutenant William E. Stafford, Guam's First Lieutenant Governor,' in *US Naval Institute Proceedings* vol. 78/8/594, August 1952, pp. 851–61, p. 858.

[12] The idea of Chamorro midwives 'delivering the body,' literally and discursively, comes from an earlier study: DeLisle, 'Delivering the body.' Elsewhere in Austronesia, Carolyn Brewer has traced the historical and political agency of traditional female folk healers and midwives in the Philippines, the *catalonan* and *baylan*, and Spanish missionary efforts to usurp the power of these female community leaders. See her books, *Holy Confrontation: Religion, Gender, and Sexuality in the Philippines, 1521–1685*, Manila: Institute of Women's Studies, St. Scholastica's College, 2001, and *Shamanism, Catholicism and Gender Relations in Colonial Philippines 1521–1685*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004.

[13] Naval Government of Guam Annual Reports (NGGAR), 1899–1941, *Annual Report of the Naval Governor of Guam*, 1906, Hagåtña, p. 5.

[14] On the Navy's effort to recruit more 'adaptable' Chamorro women, see: B.C. Bennett, 'The nursing service of Guam,' in *The Guam Recorder* vol. II (October 1925): 198–99; Naval Government of Guam Annual Reports of the Surgeon General, *Annual Report of the Surgeon General, US Navy, Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery*, 1912, p. 25. For a similar U.S. racialised project elsewhere in the Philippines, see Warwick Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. The history of native midwives in Guam can also be situated within the context of the 'midwifery problem' in Europe and the US during the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century. See, for example, early and influential works by Mary Poovey, 'Scenes of an indelicate character,' in *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press and Rich, Adrienne, 1987, pp. 137–68; Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986 (2nd ed.); and Gertrude Jacinta Fraser, *African American Midwifery in the South: Dialogues of Birth, Race, and Memory*, Boston: Harvard University Press, 1998.

[15] Susan H.P. Dyer [SHPD] to Susie, 20 September 1905, p. 61. SHPD to Susie, at intervals from July 1 to 20, 1904, p. 8, SHPD to Susie, n.d., p. 2. Box 340.17.b. George Leland Dyer Papers, Manuscript Collection, J.Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina.

[16] This paper draws from a current book project that examines the historical and cultural relations between Chamorro women and white American Navy wives during the first half of the twentieth century. For an earlier dissertation, on which the book is based, see Christine Taitano DeLisle, 'Navy wives/native lives: The cultural and historical relations between American naval wives and Chamorro women in Guam, 1898–1945,' Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2008.

[17] Chamorro women and Navy wives of course are but one of the many groups along the multi-contested sites to which I am referring, among them, the old elite guard of Chamorro (Spanish) mestizo men, the up-and-coming elite Chamorro (American) mestizo/a, Spanish Catholic priests, American marines, Baptist missionaries, Chamorro farmers, and Carolinians. I first got a glimpse of the critical intersection between Chamorro women and Navy wives while researching the *pattera* for an M.A. thesis. See DeLisle, 'Delivering the body.' On the US Navy's efforts to modernise the Chamorros, which entailed expunging Spanish Catholic priests from the island—but a history beyond simple political motivations around separation of church and state—see Anne Perez Hattori, 'Colonialism, capitalism and nationalism in the U.S. Navy's expulsion of Guam's Spanish Catholic Priests, 1898–1900,' in *The Journal of Pacific History* vol. 44, no. 3 (2009): 281–302. After unsuccessful attempts by Guam's naval governors to 'civilise' Carolinians in Guam,

Governor Seaton Schroeder deported the community of 'unclothed' and 'unlovely heathen' to Saipan. Seaton Schroeder, 'Another view of Guam,' in *Booklovers Magazine*, May 1905, pp. 717–19. For a recent history on the relations between Hawaiian women and American missionary women, see Jennifer Thigpen, *Island Queens and Mission Wives: How Gender and Empire Remade Hawai'i's Pacific World*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014.

[18] In a monthly naval publication in Guam, one anonymous person made a plea to the American ladies to 'help a little.' 'A little civic pride please,' in *The Guam Recorder* vol. v, no. 5, August 1928, p. 100.

[19] Peggy Pascoe argues that white Protestant missionary women infused the terms of true womanhood—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity—with moral obligation and a sense of 'moral authority' in their efforts to establish mission homes in San Francisco, Utah and Colorado. In these 'relations of rescue,' targeted at prostitutes and unmarried women, Victorian missionary women positioned themselves against the stereotypical images of Chinese and Native American women, thereby maintaining their 'inferiority' as a race. Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874–1939*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

[20] Joaquina Babauta Herrera, Interview by author, 12 June 1998, transcript, Hågat. In Chamorro, *tan* (for women) and *tun* (for men) are terms of respect and endearment for the elderly. For the 'penchant for English' as a precondition to becoming a *pattera*, see Bennett, 'The nursing service of Guam.'

[21] Joaquina Babauta Herrera, Interview by author, 9 May 1998, transcript, Hågat.

[22] Oliva Guerrero, 'Growth of nursing on Guam,' in *Pacific Profile* vol. 3, no. 4 (May 1965): pp. 14–15, 41, 43–44.

[23] Carmen Iglesias Santos, 'Guam's folklore,' in *Umatac By the Sea: A Village in Transition*, ed. Rebecca Stephenson and Hiro Kurashina, Micronesian Area Research Center Educational Series Number 3, Mangilao, Guam: Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam, 1989, pp. 87–110, pp. 102–03.

[24] Herrera, Interview, 9 May 1998.

[25] Laura Marie Torres, *Daughters of the Island: Contemporary Chamorro Women Organizers on Guam*, Lanham, Maryland: University Press of American, Inc., 1992; Sister Joanne Poehlman, 'Culture change and identity among Chamorro women of Guam,' Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1979.

[26] American naval doctors actively recruited younger Chamorro women for their presumed 'adaptability' over the senior, lay Chamorro *pattera*. See Bennett, 'The nursing service of Guam.' For another example of the American naval discourse on 'adaptability,' see the *Annual Report of the Surgeon General*, 1912, p. 25. Similarly, French doctors saw younger Sino-Vietnamese midwives as 'less resistant' than their established senior Vietnamese midwives to the new French colonial methods of health and hygiene. See [Erica J. Peters](#), 'Colonial Cholon and its "Missing" Métisses, 1859–1919,' in *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, issue 21, September 2009, online: <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue21/peters.htm> (accessed 22 August 2013). Elsewhere in this issue, Anne-Marie Medcalf examines the movement, if at times, transgressions, of Vietnamese nurses and midwives along specific sites of colonial modernity. [Anne-Marie Medcalf](#), 'The archives' tales: Gender, class and colonial migration practices in Vietnam, 1897–1920,' in *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, issue 21, September 2009, online: <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue21/medcalf.htm> (accessed 22 August 2013).

[27] *Annual Report of the Governor*, 1907, p. 8.

[28] *Annual Report of the Governor*, 1907, p. 8.

[29] Lenore Manderson, 'Shaping reproduction: Maternity in early twentieth-century Malaya,' in *Maternities and Modernities: Colonial and Postcolonial Experiences in Asia and the Pacific*, ed., Kalpana Ram and Margaret Jolly, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 26–49, p. 37.

[30] Susan L. Smith, *Japanese American Midwives: Culture, Community, and Health Politics, 1880-1950*, Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005.

[31] *Annual Report of the Governor*, 1905, p. 10.

[32] Herrera, Interview, 9 May 1998.

- [33] The US Navy considered the issue of legitimacy to be as troublesome as health condition. See Captain Frederick J. Nelson, 'Lieutenant William E. Stafford,' August 1952.
- [34] Rosalia Ulloa Mesa, Interview by author, 24 June 1998, transcript, Yigo.
- [35] The concept of 'prenatal care' was the creation of the nursing profession. See Katy Dawley, 'The campaign to eliminate the midwife,' in *American Journal of Nursing* vol. 100, no. 10 (October 2000): 50–56, p. 53.
- [36] Herrera, Interview, 12 June 1998.
- [37] Laura Thompson, *Guam and Its People: A Study of Culture Change and Colonial Education*, San Francisco: American Council Institute of Pacific Relations, 1941. In the first ethnography of the Chamorros, Thompson wrote that many of the old practices surrounding pregnancy and childbirth were 'dying out,' and that most births were attended by licensed native midwives. For Thompson, the process of licensing had divested the *pattera* of traditional Chamorro culture; if tradition had existed, it was only because it did not 'conflict with modern methods' or had been in practice pre-World War II by 'conservative' families in 'rural' southern villages (p. 191).
- [38] Mesa, Interview, 28 June 1998.
- [39] Ána Mendiola Rosario, Interview by Karen Cruz and author, June 2000, transcript, Barrigáda.
- [40] Thompson, *Guam and Its People*, p. 196.
- [41] Charles Le Gobien, *History of the Marianas Islands*, trans. Father Paul Daly, Agana: Nieves Flores Library, 1949; Rodrigue Lévesque (ed.), *History of Micronesia: A Collection of Source Documents*, vol. 8: Last Chamorro Revolt 1683–1687, Gatineau, Québec: Lévesque Publications, 1996, p. 345; Larry A. Lawcock, 'Guam women: A hasty history,' in *Women of Guam*, ed. Cecilia Bamba, Laura Souder and Judy Tompkins, Agana, Guam: The Guam Women's Conference, 1977, pp. 7–11; *Hale'-ta: I Manfâyi: Who's Who in Chamorro History*, vol. 1, Agana, Guam: Political Status Education Coordinating Commission, 1995.
- [42] Joannis Joseph Delgado, *Historia general sacroprofana, política, y religiosa de las yslas de el poniente lamadas Philipinas*, Escriviala un Religioso de la Compañía de Jesus (Microfilm of partial print-out from Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Spanish Documents Collection, Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam), 1751 (Folio 83, trans. Marjorie Driver) as cited in Donald Rubinstein, 'Culture in court: Notes and reflections on abortion in Guam,' in *Journal de la Societe des Oceanistes* vol. 1, no. 1 (1992): 35–44, p. 36.
- [43] Juan de la Concepcion, *Historia general de Philipinas*, por el Hermano Balthasar Mariano, Donado Francilcano, Manila, 1788, (tomo vii, pp. 48–49, trans. Marjorie Driver) as cited in Rubinsten, 'Culture in court,' p. 36. See also a reference to Juan de la Concepcion in Thompson, *Guam and Its People*, p. 167.
- [44] Thompson, *Guam and Its People*, p. 194.
- [45] In African American history, such a narrative of a 'fate worse than death' is presented in the story of Margaret Garner, the enslaved black woman who kills her child, and whose story is the inspiration for Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1987).
- [46] Vicky Lukere, 'Conclusion: Wider reflections and a survey of literature,' in *Birthing in the Pacific: Beyond Tradition and Modernity?*, ed. Vicki Lukere and Margaret Jolly, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001, pp. 178–202, p. 196.
- [47] Lukere, 'Conclusion: Wider reflections and a survey of literature,' pp. 196–97.
- [48] Tina Cassidy, *Birth: The Surprising History of How We Are Born*, New York: Grove Press, 2006.
- [49] Nancy Cook Lauer, 'Hawaiian law now permits parents to keep placentas,' in *We News*, 28 July 2006, online: <http://womensenews.org/story/parenting/060728/hawaiian-law-now-permits-parents-keep-placentas#.UegooVMVxXE> (accessed 6 January 2011).
- [50] Kahn, *Tahiti Beyond the Postcard*, p. 65.

[51] Ty P. Kawika Tengan, Tevita O. Ka'ili, Rochelle Tuitagava'a Fonoti, 'Genealogies: articulating indigenous anthropology in/of Oceania,' in *Special Issue of Pacific Studies* vol. 33, no. 2/3 (August/December 2010): 139–67, pp. 141, 144.

[52] Karen A. Cruz, *The Pattera of Guam: Their Story and Legacy*, Maite, Guam: Guam Humanities Council, 1997, p. 34.

[53] Rosario, Interview, June 2000.

[54] Cruz, *The Pattera of Guam*, p. 34.

[55] Cruz, *The Pattera of Guam*, p. 26.

[56] Oliva Guerrero, Personal Communication, Tumon, June 2000.

[57] *Hale'-ta: I Manfâyi: Who's Who in Chamorro History*, vol. I, Agana, Guam: Political Status Education Coordinating Commission, 1995, p. 95; Fred Diego, Catalina Estâquio, and Felix Perez, Personal Communication, Tumon, June 2000.

[58] Governor Edmund Root exclaimed in his *Annual Report* to the Navy that some young Chamorro men were becoming too 'proud' and 'arrogant' and 'walked about streets in a state of rowdyism.' Naval officials believed this rowdyism was the result of too much education and little or no physical labour, the right kind of labour as taught in agriculture and industry courses in the Navy's 'training for life' curriculum in prewar Guam schools. According to Governor Root, Chamorro men were too concerned with leading a 'dressed up life' rather than engaging in work that 'soiled their hands.' See Naval Government of Guam Annual Reports, 1899-1941, *Annual Report of the Naval Governor of Guam*, 1932, p. 153. On specific reference to 'rowdyism,' see also Robert Anacletus Underwood, 'American education and the acculturation of the Chamorros of Guam,' Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Southern California, May 1987, p. 135. On the first Guam Industrial Fair established by Governor Roy Smith, see 'First Guam Industrial Fair – 1917,' in *Guam News Letter* vol. ix, no. 1 (July 1917): 1–2.

[59] Johnston referred to herself as 'Guamanian-Chamorro by birth but American patriotic by choice.' See DeLisle, "Guamanian-Chamorro by birth but American patriotic by choice."

[60] Agueda Johnston and Clyde Cramlet, 'Chamorrta: As gleaned from *Memorias de Una Chamorrta*,' unpublished manuscript, nd, pp. 281, 284, and 319. See also Miyume Tanji, 'Chamorro warriors and godmothers meet Uncle Sam,' in *Gender, Power, and Military Occupations: Asia Pacific and the Middle East*, ed., Christine de Matos and Rowena Ward, New York: Routledge, 2012, pp. 98–117.

[61] See also [LisaLinda Natividad and Gwyn Kirk](#), 'Fortress Guam: Resistance to U.S. Military mega-buildup,' in *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 10 May 2010, online: <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Gwyn-Kirk/3356> (accessed 10 April 2011).

[62] For Fanai Castro's quote, see Part 2 of a two-part series on a Congressional hearing in August 2007 when members of Fuetsan Famalao'an confronted Guam's non-voting delegate to Congress, Madeline Bordallo, a long-time resident and 'settler' of Guam who was also married to the late-Governor Ricardo Bordallo, and then-delegate to the Virgin Islands, Donna Christensen. See clips from the meeting (in two parts): '[Maga'haga' \(Part I\)](#) and '[Maga'haga' \(Part II\)](#)', 8 February 2008, online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW5aFuw5MDM> (accessed 9 February 2008). For Hope Cristobal's quote, see: '[Military build-up on Guam and challenges facing the community](#),' Oversight Field Hearing before the Committee on Insular Affairs of the Committee on Natural Resources, 13 August 2007, online: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-110hhr37527/html/CHRG-110hhr37527.htm> (accessed 9 February 2008). For Fuetsan's demand of more accountability, see also Mar-Vic Cagurangan, 'Women's group demands impact study on troupe buildup,' in *Variety News*, 15 August 2007, as cited in '[Fuetsan Famalao'an in action](#),' 15 August 2007, online: <http://decolonizeguam.blogspot.com/2007/08/fuetsan-famalaoan-in-action.html> (accessed 16 September 2007).

[63] In his testimony, Admiral Bice tried to assuage people that 'DOD is committed to being a good steward of the environment.' See 'Military build-up on Guam and challenges facing the community.' On a history of native Pacific Island women elsewhere calling out the complicity of Pacific Islander men around 'development,' see Atu Emberson-Bain, *Sustainable Development or Malignant Growth? Perspectives of Pacific Island Women*, Suva: Marama Publications, 1996.

[64] [Ellen-Rae Cachola and Terry Bautista](#), 'Women's rights groups urge the Philippines to rethink Guam military

buildup bid,' 1 March 2010, online: <http://www.genuinesecurity.org/actions/FilipinosNoBidGuam.html> (accessed 9 December 2010). Part of a feminist movement that calls itself, 'Women for Genuine Security,' Perez does a provocative inversion of the misnomer given to the Mariana Islands by Spanish colonisers in the sixteenth century, but in this case calling out the US military in its already long-standing history of land grabs in Guam. See [Sabina Perez](#), 'Ladrones de la Isla/Thieves of the Island,' in *(Re)Collection: A WGS Quarterly Publication*, country highlight, June 2008, online: <http://www.genuinesecurity.org/Newsletter/countryhighlightjune2008.htm> (accessed 10 October 2008).

[65] [Zita Taitano](#), 'Ceremonies performed at disturbed ancestral graves,' in *Marianas Variety*, 15 August 2011, online: <http://mvguam.com/local/news/19435-ceremony-performed-at-disturbed-ancestral-graves.html#.VPynQWboseI> (accessed 15 August 2011).

[66] Taitano, 'Ceremonies performed at disturbed ancestral graves.'

[67] Taitano, 'Ceremonies performed at disturbed ancestral graves.'

[68] Teresia K. Teaiwa, 'Reading Paul Gauguin's Noa Noa with Epeli' Hauofa's *Kisses in the Netherends*: Militourism, feminism, and the "Polynesian body," in *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural Politics and Identity in the New Pacific*, ed., Vilsoni Hereniko and Rob Wilson, Lanham, Maryland and New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999, pp. 249–64.

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