

ANKH, UJDA, SENEBA (LIFE, STRENGTH, HEALTH):
“LET FOOD BE THY MEDICINE,” AN EPISTEMIC EXAMINATION ON THE
GENEALOGY OF THE AFRICANA HOLISTIC HEALTH TRADITION, WITH
PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA,
1967 TO THE PRESENT

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ABSTRACT

The utilization of natural elements of the earth to remedy corporeal maladies dates back to the medical systems of ancient Nile Valley culture. Given the continuity and intergenerational transmission of knowledge evident in African expressions of culture, these olden naturalistic health techniques, throughout time, have continuously been used as therapeutic modalities by posterior African cultures—both continental and Diasporic. Due to its tripartite approach to healing—of mind, body and spirit— this age-old African healing tradition has gained popularity in contemporary times and is commonly known today as the locution: holistic health.

The principal objective of this intellectual project is to reveal an unbroken genealogy of a thriving Africana holistic health tradition upheld by both advocates and practitioners in the field. Notwithstanding the current state of health of Africans residing in the United States, the praxis of these ancient healing customs is extant within communities which the population is predominately African. Through considering the publication of *How to Eat to Live* in 1967, this study articulates a resurgence among contemporary African healers of an olden healing tradition once customary on the banks of the Nile. The proposed outlook of this work to highlight the various means of alternative health available by and for African descendants that ultimately serves as a catalyst to take matters of health into our own hands.

DEDICATION

To Emille Alexander, Chalesia D’Sean and D’Antre Marquise—my 1st, 2nd and 3rd born and the triumvirate foundation of my existence! To Maude Evelyn Willis, my mother’s mother (“grandma”) who saw and heard forces from which we lacked the ability and whose constant display of Mer (Love) and nurturing will always be with me. — Much Mer!

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The following is an ancestral and extant roll call, which serves as testament to those individuals (the transitioned and the living), institutions, organizations, and periodicals, who have reared, inspired, enlightened, molded my development, supported, and left an indelible mark on my Spirit—either through familial ties, divine intervention, direct correspondence, or me being educated by means of, in the words of Greg Carr, those “ancestral whispers on a printed page:” the Ancetors, the Netcheru—most notably Sekhmet, Seshat and Djehuti—, Aha (Narmer), Djoser, Imhotep, Peseshat, Seneferu, Khufu, Khafre, Isesi, Ptahhotep, Merikare, Mentuhotep II, Amenemhat I, Kheperkara Senwosret I, Seqenenre Tao; Aahotep, Wadjkheperre Kamose, Nebpehtire Ahmose; Ahmose Nefertari, Tiy, Maatkare Hatsephsut, Djehewtymose III, Shabaka, Piankhi, Taharqa, Hattie Brown, Mickey Brown, Minnie Brown-Torres, Maude Evelyn (Brown) Willis, Melvin Willis, Augustus “Uncle Gus” Wilson, Jr., Dolores Theresa Donaldson, Tonya (Willis) Thomas, Eric Samuel Willis, Stephanie (Willis) King, Santanino “Nino” Torres, Papito “Pete” Torres, Christopher Winters, Anthony “Amp Dog” Person, Robert Taylor II, Dawud Rahmah, Michelle Thornton, Elon Diallo Bomani, Raufu Bey, “Mama” Nia Barnes, Juanita Marie Nicole Simmons Thomas, Morene Abdullah, Ausar Ari Ankh, Lisa Simmons, Jerry Simmons, Nastassja Kajejan Whitman, Pat “Mama Pat” Washington, Elizabeth Clarke, Lisa Jenkins-Carter, Rashida Jenkins, Carol Blissfur, Shelly Johnson Payne, Mark Anthony Garth, Alex Asare, Souily Wan N'Tani, Patrick Seyon, Michelle Howard-Harrell, Randolph Bromery, Brenda Mercomes, Askia Muhammad Touré, Tony Menelik Van Der Meer, Yolanda “Candy” Adams, Greg Kimathi Carr, Mario Hollis

Beatty, Valethia A. Watkins, Walter B. Hill, Jr., Russell Adams, Nastassja Kajean Whitman, James E. Turner, Robert L. Harris, Jr., Mwalimu Abdul Gulu Nanji, Carole Boyce Davis, Keisha Hicks, Luqman Abdullah, Eric Kofi Acree, Marion J. Paskins, Rose “Mama Rose” Norment, Nathaniel “Pop” Norment, Jr., Abu Shardow Abarry, Wilbert L, Jenkins, Amy Oppong Yeboah, Aaron “Anyabwile” B. Love, Joshua Maurice Myers, Tamica Oglesby, Jacqueline “Jakki” D. Johnson, Addis Drewery, Trina Slaffey, Soniah Trinette Scott, Ngola Mbondi, Nzingha, Gaspar Yanga, Jean Baptiste Point DuSable, Richard Allen, Bookman Duty, Jean Jacques Dessalines, Nana Yaa Asantewa, James McCune Smith, John Rock, Callie House, James Theodore Holly, Hosea Easton, William Henry Brown, John Russwurn, Samuel Cornish, Gabriel Prosser, David Walker, Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, Maria Stewart, David Ruggles, Sojourner Truth, William Wells Brown, Harriet Wilson, Martin Robison Delany, William C. Nell, Araminta Ross (Harriet Tubman), Henry McNeal Turner, Alexander Crummell, Ida Bell Wells-Barnett, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, William Leo Hansberry, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, Shirley Graham-Du Bois Carter Godwin Woodson, Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, William Monroe Trotter, Timothy Thomas Fortune, Drusilla Dunjee Houston, Hubert Henry Harrison, Amy Jacques Garvey, Marcus Garvey, Cyril Briggs, Richard Benjamin Moore, Oscar Micheaux, Willis Nathaniel, Huggins, John Glover Jackson, Charles Seifert, William Montague Cobb, Cheikh Anta Diop, Chancellor Williams, John Henrik Clarke, Yosef Alfredo Antonio Ben-Jochannan, Eslanda Robeson, Paul Robeson, Joseph DeGraft-Johnson, George Granville Monah James, Cyril Lionel Robert James, Charshee McIntyre, Jacob Hudson Carruthers, Jr. (Djedi Shemsu Djehuty), Asa Grant Hilliard III (Nana Baffour Amankwatia II), Ankh Mi Ra, Nzingha Ratibisha Heru, Bobby Wright,

Theophile Obenga, Rkhty Amen, Amos Wilson, Walter Rodney, Robert Franklin Williams, Lorenzo Dow Turner, Elijah Muhammad, Noble Drew Ali, Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, Ella “Fundi” Baker, Queen Mother Audley Moore, Fannie Lou Hamer, Fred Hampton, Sr., Kwame Ture, Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis, Ishakamusa Barashango, Ayi Kwei Armah, Kimbwandende Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau, Chinweizu, A. Hampâté Bâ, Chukwunyere Kamalu, Kwame Agyei Akoto, Anderson Thompson, Conrad Worrill, Vincent Gordon Harding, Larry Obadele Williams, Cedric J. Robinson, Acklyn Lynch, Neely Fuller, Ivan Van Sertima, Frances Cress Welsing, James Small, Linda James Myers, Marimba Ani, Richard King, Timothy Owens Moore, Shawna Maglangbayan, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Mfundishi Jhutyms Ka N Heru Hassan K. Salim, Gerald Horne, Alvenia Fulton, Paul Goss, Alfredo Bowman (aka Dr. Sebi), Llaila Olea Afrika, Queen Afua, Jewel Pookrum, Suzar, Clovis E. Semmes, Queen Vida, Keith Wright, Sam Greenlee, Ivan Dixon, William James “Count” Basie, Herman Poole Blount (“Sun-Ra”), Billie Holiday, Thelonius Monk, John Birks “Dizzy” Gillespie, Charles “Bird” Parker, Jr., John William Coltrane, Miles Davis, Abbey Lincoln, Max Roach, Larry Neal, Nina Simone, Oscar Brown, Jr., X-Clan, Poor Righteous Teachers, Dead Prez, The American Negro Academy, The African Grove Theatre, The Philadelphia Vigilance Committee, *Freedom's Journal*, The Liberty League, *The Voice*, *Negro World*, Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League, The African Blood Brotherhood for African Liberation and Redemption, The Krigwa Players, The Harlem History Club, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC), *Kemetiic Voice*, *Compass*, The Republic of New Afrika, The Deacons for Defense and Justice, DuSable Museum of

African American History, S.T.U.D.Y. Group, The Bennu Group in Atlanta, Third Eye Study Group in Dallas, The Afrikan Center in Columbus, Eye of Heru in Detroit, Afrikan Echoes in Newark, The East, The First World Alliance, West Side High School, Roxbury Community College, The Department of Afro-American Studies at Howard University, The Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University, and The Department of African American Studies at Temple University— Medase Pa!

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Truth-tellers are not always palatable. There is a preference for candy bars.¹

There are other ways to kill a people or colonize them, but none is more certain than the denial or control of their food.²

We have important memory work to do if we are to recover what we lost – is the image of the Sankofa bird. The bird is shown in mid-flight: history flows on. Its forward motion is not in doubt; nevertheless, the bird is aware of having dropped something valuable, indeed indispensable. It therefore casts its vision backward, not with any intention of reversing time and returning to the past to live there, but with the purpose of retrieving from past time just that element of value that should not have been lost, prior to continuing its interrupted motion.³

For warriors, in terms of health, performance, endurance, vision and life, it always comes down [to] the question, “What are you eating?” which is the flip side of the question, “What’s eating you?” A body cannot operate efficiently carrying dead weight. This applies to individuals as well as an army, a people or any other organism. Dead weight inhibits performance by draining energy, to attend to its distractive, dysfunctional needs, that otherwise could be put to better use by the unencumbered body. It restricts warriors, physically, mentally and spiritually. Agility requires exercise and strength beyond the average. Thought, clouded by layers of saturated doubt, can never express your best. And you cannot open your first eye to divinity bogged down with waste. Warriors, especially, cannot afford to carry dead weight, or any other toxicity in their temples. We must be highly mobile, always ready and prepared to move, always moving, never in a stupor or high on chemicals, illegal or otherwise, that paralyze our actions or reactions. What we ingest should be the medicine food was meant to be. As the multi-genius Imhotep taught, ‘Let your food be your medicine, and your medicine your food.’ We must always be clear and clean, wholistically fine-tuned for building and battle.⁴

¹ Gwendolyn Brooks, “Song of Winnie” *Winnie* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1996), 17.

² Samuel F. Yette, *The Choice: The Issue of Black Survival in America – The Extermination of the Black Man in America* (New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 1972), 14.

³ Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Eloquence of the Scribes: A Memoir on the Sources and Resources of African Literature* (Popenguine, Senegal: Per Ankh, 2006), 118.

⁴ Mwalimu K. Bomani Baruti, *Nyansasem: A Calendar of Revolutionary Daily Thoughts* (Atlanta: Akoben House, 2008), 62.

For Africans held in captivity in an estrange land, they did not at all find solace in the maladroit nature white captors attempted to address their physical maladies, even against their will. Given the horrific circumstances of the chattel system, such medical incompetency by whites—driven by ignorance and distorted sentiments of a superiority complex—meant the destruction of African bodies, as the latter were mandated to accept medical practices that proved ineffective and injurious. And even though health care was provided for the enslaved, treatments were in most cases administered by plantation owners, overseers or even the former’s spouses. The quandary: many of them had no firm grasp of the concept of medicine, and thus lacked the knowledge or experience to properly attend to certain sicknesses thereby administering remedies that were egregiously faulty. As a consequence, Africans often avoided reporting their maladies to eschew treatments that proved to be excruciating and futile. Notwithstanding the forced hand of plantation owners and physicians working on their behalf, Africans invoked innate naturalistic peculiarities to attend to their own health needs.

Forcefully transplanted, Africans were torn from their particular cultural, political and social environment and placed within a chattel system that consciously and vehemently attempted, without success, to destroy all elements of a previous African identity. However, as millions of African bodies were, in the words of John Henrik Clarke, set on course for a “special invitation” to the West Atlantic, the healing customs of various regions from which they were captured were too transplanted westward. In fact, the sustainability of indigenous cultural expressions and subsequent influences upon what became “African American” culture by the intermixing of various African ethnic

groups in slave-holding societies have been well documented.⁵

Most of the structural educational research on the health of African Americans has focused primarily on conventional medicine as the viable option to identify symptoms, diagnose illnesses and treat diseases. With the alarming rates of poor health among African American women, men and children in areas such as Philadelphia, more research should be invested in exploring the efficacy of holistic health and alternative medicinal practices in comparison to standard medical procedures. With the information on holistic health being so limited, human research, through in-depth interviews with holistic health practitioners, natural food and naturopathic store owners, authors on holistic health and alternative medicine, and restaurant proprietors of raw, vegan and vegetarian cuisine will add to the existing knowledge of ways to make available information on holistic health practices, with the intent to improve the health of African Americans.

For the author, the impulse to write this dissertation is both personal and to some degree autobiographical. At a time when I physically suffered from hypertension (i.e., high blood pressure), severe seasonal allergies, gastrointestinal problems and poor eyesight (20/100 vision in one eye and 20/60 vision in the other), the decision was made

⁵ Discourses on the African cultural influences in the Americas include: Melville Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958); Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971); Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory & The Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), and *Diasporic Africa: A Reader*, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Gwendolyn Mildred Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); and Walter Rucker, *The River Flows On: Black Resistance, Culture and Identity Formation in Early America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), inter alia. For an abbreviated discussion on the genealogy of “Africanisms” as it relates to the West Atlantic, see Johnetta B. Cole, “Africanisms in the Americas: A Brief History of the Concept” *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 4 (1985).

to seek treatment options other than those provided by allopathic medicine via the American Medical Association to ameliorate these physical ailments. With a strict commitment to a solely plant-based eating regime—devoid of meat, meat byproducts and dairy products—amid incorporating alternative medicinal practices into my lifestyle, in just two years, all of my corporeal maladies were eradicated, thus, lending credence that they were food-borne illnesses. For the past twenty years the writer has been both an autodidact and apprenticed, by a licensed naturopathic⁶ physician, in various holistic health⁷ practices and continues to be an ongoing student of alternative healing customs and naturalistic therapeutic techniques. Drawing from the intellectual sentiments of African⁸ historian Earl Endris Thorpe (1942-1990), in the most humble sense, I am what you would refer to as a holistic⁹ health practitioner “without portfolio.”¹⁰

⁶ Naturopathy is a system of therapeutics (i.e., a branch of medicine primarily concerned with the curative treatment of dis-ease[s]) that provides care for an individual in an inclusive manner, by which exercise, the eating lifestyle or diet and mental factors are integral to the prevention of physical and mental ailments. Pharmaceutical drugs and surgery are eschewed, and instead, vitamins, minerals, various herbs and nutritional supplements are used to treat and prevent illnesses and/or dis-eases to obtain optimal health.

⁷ As used in this study, the locution “holistic health” refers to an alternative medicinal practice, which all physical, mental and spiritual phenomena are taken into consideration and offers a safe, non-intrusive approach to treating and healing individuals as opposed to medicating the symptoms of illnesses or dis-eases and masking the underlying problems with prescription drugs or surgery. There is an arbitrary agreement among alternative healthcare circles in which this phrase is used universally to describe various branches of alternative medicine and healing practices, e.g., Acupuncture, Naturopathy, Reiki, Reflexology, to name a few, all of which will be appropriately explained and defined infra.

⁸ Throughout this study, the author will use the terms “African,” “African American” and “Black” interchangeably to refer to people of immediate biological African descent as well as their attendant cultural practices.

⁹ The terms “holistic” and “wholistic” will be used interchangeably throughout this dissertation with the understanding that both represent the symbiotic relationship and ontological fusing of the triumvirate: mind, body and spirit.

¹⁰ For a discussion on self-trained African thinkers—outside of academic circles—, who have been major figures of Africana intellectual history and contributors to the philosophy of African history, see Earl E. Thorpe, *Black Historians: A Critique* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1969), 143-153.

Statement of the Problem

One of the critical issues that African people face today is the subject of health. There is a lacuna in understanding the distinction between orthodox or conventional medicine and alternative medicine. A majority of Africans seek conventional medicine methods to attend to their specific illnesses and/or dis-ease(s) and do not take into consideration the plethora of other options available that also address health concerns. This dissertation will provide an understanding of the Africana holistic health tradition, address its distinction from conventional medicine and how it conceptualizes healing, and highlight the availability of the multifarious holistic health practitioners and organizations available to African families as well as the alternative healthcare services they offer to promote health and wellness.

Heeding the call for social responsibility and community engagement, an initiative wholeheartedly embraced by the discipline of Africana¹¹ Studies, the writer feels an obligation to help improve the quality of life for Africans by providing African-Centered¹² alternative healthcare information and services offered by holistic health

¹¹ As popularized in academic circles by the late elder African historian John Henrik Clarke's (1915-1998) appeal to African thinkers to embrace the designation as an attempt to connect history, culture and geography, the term "Africana" signifies for the discipline the tripartite approach embodied by the distinction between African American, African Caribbean, and African Studies, a signal for the essential need to study Africa globally and African descendants in a global context. See John Henrik Clarke, "Africana Studies: A Decade of Change, Challenge and Conflict," a paper presented at the Consolidating Africana Studies: Bonding African Linkages Conference, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University, September 26-28, 1980, 1.

¹² For the purpose of this study, the term "African-Centered" refers to the methodologies (i.e., research approaches), theories and methods designed to study, interpret, rescue, revise and reconstruct the history and traditions of African people—both continental and Diasporic. For an expansive discussion on "African-Centered" knowledge production as well as its unequivocal ideological distinction from "Afrocentricity"—the conceptual paradigmatic framework theoretically initiated by Molefi Kete Asante and espoused by a cadre of Temple University faculty (both former and current) and students within the department of African American Studies, known in academic circles by the self-inscribed appellation the

practitioners attendant to the needs of the African community that would otherwise be overlooked in mainstream medicine. I seek to meet these goals by interviewing individuals who have been and are currently involved in the field of holistic health as (a) certified practitioners; (b) authors of holistic health and salubrious cuisine; (c) natural food and/or naturopathic store owners; (d) advocates of natural health customs; and (e) raw, vegan and vegetarian restaurant proprietors.

In echoing the theoretical sentiments of Maulana Karenga, this point is more succinctly communicated by Shirley Moody-Turner and James Stewart, who acknowledge that “[o]ne of the hallmarks of Africana [S]tudies is the call for social responsibility and the production of knowledge that can facilitate social transformation.”¹³ Correspondingly, from the influential tract in which he edited, James E. Turner, in his own article, “Africana Studies and Epistemology: A Discourse in the Sociology of Knowledge,” posits there are several responsibilities Africana intellectual workers should embrace. Of the four mandates, the third unequivocally captures the intent and scope of this dissertation: “to generate (new) knowledge and codify existing

“Temple School,” see *ASCAC Study Guide, Building for Eternity: Book One* (Los Angeles: ASCAC Foundation, 1991); C.T. Keto, *An Introduction to the Africa Centered Perspective of History* (Chicago: Frontline Distribution International, Inc., 1994), 12; Greg Kimathi Carr, “Temple, Afrocentricity and Knowledge: An African-Centered Perspective (A Critical Inquiry Into the Intellectual Genealogy of Afrocentricity and the Significance of the Afrocentric Idea to African Nationalist Institution Building),” a paper presented at the Seventh Annual Khepera Graduate Student Conference, Temple University, April 26, 1997, “African Philosophy of History in the Contemporary Era: Its Antecedents and Methodological Implications for the African Contribution to World History” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Temple University, 1998), 115-116, 139; and Joyce Ann Joyce, “African-Centered Scholarship: Interrogating Black Studies, Pan Africanism, and Afrocentricity,” *Decolonizing the Academy: African Diasporan Studies* eds., Carole Boyce Davies, Meredith Gadsby, Charles Peterson and Henrietta Williams (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 125-147.

¹³ Shirley Moody-Turner and James Stewart, “Gendering Africana Studies: Insights from Anna Julia Cooper,” *African American Review*, vol. 43, no. 1 (Spring 2009), 36. See also, Maulana Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies* (2nd edition) (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1993), 13-14.

information and predicate contemporary study upon the truths formulated by our mentors¹⁴.¹⁵

Purpose of the Study

At an alarming rate, alternative medicinal practices and healthcare are gaining popularity in the United States, disproportionately among the European populace, either because some individuals have become disillusioned with conventional medicine or simply because family and/or friends have endorsed the efficacy of such practices. However, among the contemporary African American population, there is paucity in the understanding of and exposure to the various practices of alternative medicine and naturalistic healing techniques deemed holistic. In regards to the aforementioned supposition, this study maintains that various holistic health practices could be useful to African Americans in particular and to the mainstream healthcare system in America in

¹⁴ In lieu of utilizing the term “mentor(s),” which is of Greek origin (see *The Odyssey*) and originally used in this quote by Turner, the writer posits that African-Centered scholars should instead employ the African terms “Jegna” and “Jegnoch”—the plural form of the term “Jegna” as alternatives to designate an apprentice/adviser relationship—, both which are taken from Amharic, the language of Ethiopia. Greg Carr provides some insight to this discourse, as the former idiom “raises the issue of what is known in linguistics as ‘semantic translation,’ the appropriation of terms from other languages or usages by a group which then attaches to the terms meanings largely unconnected to their previous ones.” Greg E. Kimathi Carr, “African Philosophy of History in the Contemporary Era,” 48 f.n. 30. Unlike the term “mentor,” “Jegna” or “Jegnoch” has African implications in its meaning, referring particularly to those individuals that possess content mastery in what they teach and are selflessly devoted with imparting knowledge and primarily concerned with the spiritual and intellectual development of African people. See also, Mwalimu K. Bomani Baruti, *Nyansasem: A Calendar of Revolutionary Daily Thoughts* (Atlanta: Akoben House, 2008), 250. For a broader discussion on this subject, see Wade W. Nobles, “From Na Ezaleli to the Jegnoch: The Force of the African Family for Black Men in Higher Education” *Making it on Broken Promises: African American Male Scholars Confront the Culture of Higher Education*, ed., Lee Jones (Herndon, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2002); and Asa G. Hilliard, III, *African Power: Affirming African Indigenous Socialization in the Face of the Culture Wars* (Gainesville, FL: Makare Publishing Company, 2002), 18-20.

¹⁵ See James E. Turner, “Africana Studies and Epistemology: A Discourse in the Sociology of Knowledge,” *The Next Decade: Theoretical and Research Issues in Africana Studies, Selected Papers from the Africana Studies and Research Center’s Tenth Anniversary Conference, 1980* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 4.

general, a system that is failing in many ways in attending to the health concerns and physical illnesses of its denizens—based primarily on the exorbitant rates of obesity and other health epidemics such as heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension, to name a few.

As evidence, in 1988, *The Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health*, which was the first of its kind produced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, offered comprehensive documentation on the “scientific” basis for the recommended dietary changes. The report examined in great detail current knowledge about the correlative relationships between specific eating regime choices (i.e., dietary practices) and specific illnesses and/or dis-ease conditions. The conclusive results of the report suggested that over-consumption of certain dietary components is now a major concern for Americans. While innumerable food factors are involved, former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop argued that chief among them is the disproportionate consumption of foods high in saturated fats (e.g., beef, dairy products, eggs, pork, poultry, refined foods, seafood, inter alia) often at the expense of foods high in calcium, iron, complex carbohydrates and fiber (e.g., fruits, green plants, vegetables, whole grains, etc.) that may be more contributory to optimal health.¹⁶ Despite the revelation of the Surgeon General’s report, the deliberate and systematic alteration of food’s nutrients, causing degenerative, permanent, genetic and terminal physical and mental diseases continues to be produced in the U.S. at an alarming rate, which adversely and

¹⁶ See C. Everett Koop, “The Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health” *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General* ed. Marion Nestle (Rockville, MD: Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General, July 27, 1988), 1-720.

disproportionately affects the health of African Americans.¹⁷ One of the more prominent figures in the African holistic health community is multi-trained naturopathic physician Llaila Olela Afrika. In his approach to health, Afrika is as forthright and uncompromising as African thinkers Marimba Ani¹⁸ and Clyde Taylor¹⁹ are in their critiques of European cultural logic, intellectual history, and the Western notions of aesthetics. In his inexpressibly informative text *African Holistic Health*, Afrika provides an acerbic critique of conventional medicine and European culture but also affirms there is an “overlooked revolution” in which Africans should be attentive. In the struggle for liberation in America and abroad during the 1960s and 1970s, Africans rebelled, engaged in civil disobedience (e.g., marching, protesting, sit-ins, etc.), demanded parity and sought out means to invoke self-determination in a society antithetical to African humanity. Without question, countless historical narratives of emancipatory initiatives have been written by African thinkers within the discipline of Africana Studies as well as those sympathetic and/or ideologically opposed to the Africana intellectual project.

During this era of cultural revolution it is crucial to “recognize the historical depth and heterogeneity of [B]lack struggles against racism, narrowing the political scope of black agency and reinforcing a formal, legalistic view of [B]lack equality.”²⁰ Alongside the Black Power, Black Arts and Civil Rights movements (i.e., African liberation

¹⁷ Llaila O. Afrika, *Nutricide: The Nutritional Destruction of the Black Race* (New York, A&B Publishers Group, 2000), 19.

¹⁸ See Marimba Ani, *Yurugu: An Afrikan-centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1994).

¹⁹ See Clyde R. Taylor, *The Mask of Art: Breaking the Aesthetic Contract—Film and Literature* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998).

²⁰ Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 6.

movements) another significant element and important step towards African liberation in the same demographics that has been neglected in the discourse is “the reclamation of African herbal medicine and a natural whole foods diet and lifestyle.”²¹ This dissertation seeks to contribute to this historical narrative—based on ancestral memory—and argues there is a vibrant yet scant holistic health tradition in the United States, practiced by contemporary Africans both professionally trained and self-taught, which is part of an unbroken genealogy, inextricably linked to preexisting Classical African (i.e., more specifically Kemetic²²) concepts of health and healing. Among the corps of African alternative health specialists in North America, Queen Afua, internationally renowned for her work in holistic health, is unquestionably a linchpin among practitioners in the New York Metropolitan area and abroad, which places her as a central figure in this tradition. With her homebase located in the cultural epicenter of Brooklyn, New York, and with over forty years of holistic health experience, she is affectionately called by her associates and clients “Queen.” In 1991, and subsequently, ten years later in 2001, Afua ushered in a reclamation of the Kemetic heritage and legacy as it pertains to health in her

²¹ Llaile O. Afrika, *African Holistic Health* (New York: A&B Publishers Group, 2004), xxviii.

²² The idiom “Kemetic” is a derivative of “Kemet,” the autochthonous term for ancient Egypt. Charles Grantham, in his display of a working knowledge of the ancient Egyptian writing system, *Mdw Ntr* (or Medew Netcher), provides clarity as to its intended meaning by the indigenous population. His argument derives basically from the misinterpretation of the word “Kemet” by European Egyptologists, a linguistic motive Grantham opines undergirds the intellectual chauvinism in European philosophy of history. In letting the Ancestors speak for themselves, Grantham assuredly proclaims: “The language of the ancient Egyptians indicates that in naming their country, *Kmt*, the ancient Egyptians were referring to themselves as a community of [B]lack people rather than the color of the soil—an interpretation obviously dismissed by [European] Egyptologists. If Egyptologists were to accept this interpretation of *Kmt*, it would necessitate a fundamental shift in European historiography, a shift that would have far-reaching, calamitous effects on the myth of white supremacy.” Charles A. Grantham, *The Battle for Kemet: Critical Essays on Ancient Egypt* (Chicago: Kemetic Institute, 2003), 2. See also, Asa G. Hilliard, “The Meaning of KMT (Ancient Egyptian) History for Contemporary African American Experience” *Phylon* vol. 49, no. 1/2 (Spring - Summer, 1992), 10-22.

pathbreaking tracts, *Heal Thyself* and *Sacred Woman*.²³ A close examination of such a genealogy, undergirded by its accompanying intellectual and curative activist work brought forth by societal conditions, can very well serve as a model for contemporary African scholars to convene space outside of the academia and effectively “bring the [Black] community to the campus and the campus to the [Black] community,”²⁴ thusly carrying out the Africana initiative of bringing the “town” to the “gown” and the “gown” to the “town.” In this regard, this work is indispensable in that it establishes a much-needed discourse and brings to light the community involvement and activism of contemporary African healers who would otherwise be ignored and/or silenced by the academy; a predicament that has up to this point been the norm. Additionally, this dissertation’s primary focus is the articulation of an assessment of numerous central figures and advocates of this efficacious holistic health tradition, concentrated in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and abroad, which gained momentum in the last half of the twentieth century, specifically in 1967, initiated by the publication of Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad’s (1897-1975) groundbreaking text on health, *How to Eat to Live*.²⁵

²³ See Queen Afua, *Heal Thyself for Health and Longevity* (New York: A&B Publishers Group, 1992), 195-196, 213-218, and *Sacred Woman: A Guide to Healing the Feminine Body, Mind and Spirit* (New York: A&B Publishers Group, 2000).

²⁴ Nathan Hare, “War on Black Colleges,” *The Black Scholar* vol. 9, no. 8 (May/June 1978), 16.

²⁵ See Elijah Muhammad, *How to Eat to Live, Book One* (Chicago: Muhammad Mosque of Islam, No. 2, 1967). As alluded to supra, Muhammad’s contribution to the emancipatory discourse on health will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Significance of the Study

This study upholds that the resurgence of a holistic health tradition among the African populace, from 1967 onward, in various municipalities throughout America—at a time of outright violence and aggression against African freedom fighters by the white power structure—is an African living heritage and a posterior cultural extension of the Nile Valley concept of Weheme Mesu: an anterior intellection African linchpin thinker Jacob H. Carruthers, Jr. (1930-2002) operationalizes as an epistemological apparatus. On this very idea, Greg Carr explains:

Whm Msw is a Kemetic phrase, which assumed national prominence and significance in the twelfth Kemetic dynasty with the ascension to the per-uah (pharaoh, or “great house”) position of Amen-em-Hat, who took as his ‘Hr title’ the phrase ‘(the) repetition of the birth’ (*whm msw*). This concept referred to the articulation of a Kemetic national policy of establishing national institutional authority and practice according to the best of the traditions as articulated in the early dynasties. The rough equivalent to the concept in European historical memory is the term ‘renaissance,’ (from the Latin *re* (to repeat) and *naisance* (to be born)). Hence, a ‘renaissance’ woman becomes, in an afrocentric discursive posture, a ‘whm msw’ woman.²⁶

Accordingly, contemporary African American holistic health practices in United States are enmeshed with an enduring impetus of African cultural activity in the West. In congruence with the methodological impetus provided by Jacob Carruthers, this study

²⁶ Carr, *African Philosophy of History in the Contemporary Era*, 56. Akin to the cultural “rebirth” ushered in by “per-uah” Amen-m-Hat of the twelfth (12th) Dynastic period in Kemet whereby medicine, architecture and engineering developed in congruence with the vibrant literary tradition of that period, so too did the contemporary African holistic tradition heed the ancestral call to utilize olden medicinal practices to heal the African community. In the same vein, the African cultural restoration—linked to the foundations of African antiquity—of the 1960s flourished among many African youth (both continental and Diasporic), particularly with the student movements on university and college campuses throughout America, an impetus that ushered in the official institutionalization of the discipline Black/Africana Studies in the academy, argues Carruthers. Jacob H. Carruthers, “Whm Msw, ASCAC and the Spirit of African History,” *The Best of the Kemetic Voice*, vol. 1 (Chicago: The Kemetic Institute, 1993), 18. For a more detailed discussion of this African antiquity conceptualization of cultural revival—*Whm Msw*, see Jacob H. Carruthers, “An African Historiography for the 21st Century,” *The African World History Project: The Preliminary Challenge*, eds. Jacob H. Carruthers and Leon C. Harris (Los Angeles: ASCAC Foundation, 1997), 56-68.

examines the unbroken cultural relationship of African people as it relates to holistic health, despite numerous episodic challenges (e.g., the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, chattel slavery, *de jure* and *de facto* segregation—Jim Crow, inter alia) in the Western Hemisphere.²⁷ The tradition of holistic health practices in African communities is not a recent or ephemeral occurrence. Rather, these customs are linked to long-view genealogies of aggregate health traditions that date back to Classical Africa, as well as medieval and contemporary Africa. While the conventions of alternative health, as practiced by African American health practitioners, are part of a larger continuum of an antecedent African holistic tradition, such iconoclastic activity, diametrically opposed to Western medicine and its notions of health, is also a non-disruptive element of a longstanding self-help and self-reliance tradition as well as a maroon enterprise, in direct contrast with allopathic notions of health, thus making it an essential element of what African thinker Cedric J. Robinson calls the “Black Radical Tradition.”²⁸

²⁷ “In short,” Carruthers solidifies his assertion that: “the concept of Weheme Mesu, or ‘the repeating the birth,’ is a concrete way of conceptualizing the African reaction to ‘interruptions’ in the African cultural stream by drawing upon the deep well of ancestral memory.” Jacob H. Carruthers, “Appendix” *African World History Project: The Preliminary Challenge*, eds. Jacob H. Carruthers and Leon C. Harris (Los Angeles: Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations, 1997), 338.

²⁸ Robinson contrived this locution to illustrate: (1) the inborn nature of Africans to preserve their cultural and political sensibilities; and (2) the instinctual corollary response against European hostility over the past five centuries. Couched in the intentions and sentiments anticipated by Amen-M-hat’s initiative of *Whm Msw* during Africa antiquity in the Nile Valley, Robinson explicates the existential reality of the Black Radical Tradition for Africans in the contemporary era, stating: “In the twentieth century, when Black radical thinkers had acquired new habits of thought in keeping, some of them supposed, with the new conditions of their people, their task eventually became the revelation of the older tradition. Not surprisingly, they would discover it first in their history, and finally all around them.” Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of a Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 170. See also, Greg Kimathi Carr, “You Don’t Call the Kittens Biscuits’: Disciplinary Africana Studies and the Study of Malcolm X” *Malcolm X: A Historical Reader* eds. James L. Conyers, Jr. and Andrew P. Smallwood (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2008), 354-355, “What Black Studies is Not: Moving from Crisis to Liberation in Africana Intellectual Work” *Socialism and Democracy* Vol. 25, No. 1 (March, 2011), 178. The academic journal *Race and Class* dedicated a special issue to Cedric Robinson for his scholarly contribution in the area of, in the words of John Ernest, “liberation historiography.” See

A close analysis of the contemporary (1967 to the present) African American customs of holistic health in the United States reveals a postliminary version linked to the historical continuity of ancient African healing practices that has not been attempted as of yet by any scholar. A review of various works (i.e. theses, dissertations, books, scholarly journals etc.) on African American alternative medicinal and healing practices promulgates virtually no consideration of the lineage of African American health practitioners or their theoretical ideas on health. This study is concerned more specifically with describing how contemporary health practitioners and advocates of holistic health have used medicinal models of the African past to inform their own cultural and socio-political proclivities to attend to the health needs of the African American families in the United States. To date, there are currently no scholarly written works that address the subject matter quite like the endeavor made in this dissertation.

Research Questions

By exploring the multitudinous facets of an African holistic health tradition, divergent from the standards of Western conventional medicine, the following research questions will serve as a lens by which this dissertation is conducted:

(1) What is the explanatory value and curative efficacy of African holistic health and other alternative medicinal customs as a tenable model to improve the health conditions of Africans in America?

Cedric Robinson and the philosophy of Black resistance ed., Darryl C. Thomas *Race and Class* Vol. 47, No. 2 (October-December 2005), 1-118.

(2) Which historical events, societal conditions and central figures constitute the genealogy of an African holistic health tradition?

(3) What are the epistemological circumstances by which advocates and practitioners of holistic health embraced such alternative practices?

(4) What are the paradigmatic implications of African holistic health and other alternative healthcare services as it relates to the imperatives of conventional medicine?

Chapter Summaries

This dissertation is comprised of seven chapters. Subsequent to the introduction, review of literature and methodology sections (Chapters 1-3) of this dissertation, Chapter four will provide a historical overview of Classical African—particularly ancient Nile Valley culture—medicinal practices as an epistemological operational premise of extant holistic health practices. In addition, this section will explore the inherent African customary healing practices applied by Africans displaced and held in bondage in the United States of America during the episodic disruption more commonly known as chattel slavery. Chapter five addresses and defines the glaring dissimilarities between the methodologies and approaches of “scientific” or conventional medicine and holistic or alternative health medicinal practices in how they: address the health concerns of its patients and uphold theoretical assumptions about the cause and/or origin of disease. Chapter six will trace the emergence of a contemporary coetaneous holistic health

movement, which was thrust forward in 1967, at the height of the African Liberation movement in the U.S, with the publication of *How to Eat to Live* by Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad. This section will also highlight the irrefutable influence of the aforementioned written work upon the Black community and address some of its polemic nutritional suppositions. Chapter seven will explore the corpus of medicinal, intellectual and activist work produced by both African American health advocates and central figures of holistic health in the city of Philadelphia and abroad, to include: Zakiyyah Ali, Paul Bohdise, Zeola Brown, Nwenna Kai, Tehuti Khamu, Beverly Medley, Ron Norwood, Atiya Ola Sankofa, Akosua Ali-Sabre, Cheryl Tyler, Yahimba Uruhu, and Ethel Wilson, to name a few. Chapter eight constitutes a concluding and brief note on lending some legitimacy to holistic health practices with the prognostication that if adhered to, African families could have substantial improvements in health. Recommendations for implications for further study that are beyond the scope of this dissertation will also be provided.

Definition of Key Terms²⁹

Acupuncture	A hands-on method of therapy in alternative medicine that involves manipulating and pricking the skin with fine, slender needles on various regions of the human body. In the same manner that physicians of conventional medicine assess the flow of blood through blood vessels practitioners of this complementary form of medicine (i.e., acupuncturists) monitor the distribution and circulation of vital energy known as “meridians” within its perspective pathways. The overall aim of this holistic practice is to adjust the “meridians” so the appropriate amount of vital energy reaches its proper somatic location, thus allowing the body to heal itself and alleviate pain.
Aromatherapy	The therapeutic use of plant-derived, aromatic essential oils to promote psychological and physical well-being.
Ayurvedic medicine	An ancient Indian non-invasive system of healing that utilizes mineral and herbal remedies, varied purification techniques, detoxification, massage therapy, meditation, deep breathing exercises and yoga as holistic healing approaches. In the Sanskrit language, <i>ayur</i> means “life” or “living” and <i>veda</i> denotes “knowledge,” thus signifying the “knowledge of living.” Akin to acupuncture, its objective is prevention as well as the promotion of the human body’s innate capacity for balance and self-maintenance.
Allopathy	The primary Western medical model and a biologically-based approach to healing in which the method of treating illnesses is by the use of prescription pharmaceutical drugs and surgical procedures with the intent to produce effects different from those of the illness or dis-ease. In this conventional method of treating illnesses Spirituality is kept separate from health and healing matters and is particularly viewed as a “non-scientific” approach to health.

²⁹ The glossary of selected terms is provided to facilitate an understanding of various alternative medicinal practices and variant dietary lifestyles, some of which will be used throughout this study. The definitions within this glossary are independently defined by the writer based primarily on the proficiency and familiarity of the subject matter.

Breatharian	An individual who can live without eating food and primarily gets their nourishment from sunlight, air (the oxygen we breathe), water and occasionally from fruit and/or vegetable juices. Breatharianism, the philosophy of advocates of this lifestyle, deem that the human body, when it is in perfect harmony with itself and nature, is at its best to self-heal, regenerate and rejuvenate.
Ethnomedicine	The usage of disease remedies and the diagnosis of disease symptoms based upon the biochemistry of a race. It is a system that applies both art and science to assist the body in the restoration of its health and well-being. It utilizes natural remedies to activate the immune system. Primarily herbs are utilized to assist in the elimination, cleansing and detoxification of the human body.
Fruititarian	A type of raw/live foodist whose eating lifestyle is limited to consuming only the parts of the plant that does not harm the plant. Proponents of this standard of living primarily consume raw fruits; some fruititarians consider “fruits” to be any vegetable with a seed (e.g, cucumber, okra, squash, tomato, etc.)
Halal	Foods that are allowed and regulated under Islamic dietary guidelines. In Arabic, <i>halal</i> means permitted or lawful. According to the Qur’an, Muslims must refrain from eating: (1) pork (and pork byproducts); (2) animals that were dead prior to being slaughtered; and (3) animals not bled prior to slaughter or prayed to in the name of Allah.
Herbalism	The knowledge, study and use of the medicinal properties of any plant or plant extract (i.e., herbs) for such purposes as medical treatment, nutritional value, food seasoning, or coloring and dyeing of other substances. The terms “herbal medicine,” “herbology,” and “botanical medicine” are used synonymously.
Holistic health	An alternative medicinal practice that offers a safe, non-intrusive approach to treating and healing individuals as opposed to medicating the symptoms of illnesses or diseases and masking the underlying problems with prescription drugs or surgery.

Homeopathy	A form of alternative healthcare service that is perhaps closest to “scientific” conventional medicine than other holistic or alternative practices in that its focus on physical wellness and dis-ease it pays close attention to the biological aspects of health. This system of therapeutics, popularized by German physician Samuel Hahnemann in Europe, is premised upon the theory that a large amount of a particular drug may cause symptoms of a dis-ease whereas moderate dosages may reduce such indicia. Diluted remedies are prescribed to patients according to the axiom that “like cures like.”
Hydrotherapy	A division of therapeutics that utilizes water in various capacities (e.g., Spiritual Bath, Enema, Colonic, Colonic Board, etc.) as a curative agent.
Iridology	The study and practice that uses the ocular, more specifically the iris, to detect the severity of disorders or abnormalities within the body.
Ital	Ital food, which is derived from the phrase “vital food,” is associated with and approved by those individuals who adhere to the religious system of Rastafarianism. The term “ital” indicates food that is clean, pure and natural. Rastafarians adhere to a dietary lifestyle that excludes the use of excess salt, chemicals, alcohol, pharmaceuticals, all meat (including shellfish) save fish, and birds of prey (e.g., eagle, falcon, owl, pelican, stork, swan and vulture).
Kosher	In observation of Jewish dietary rules the only meats to be consumed are animals that: (1) “chew the cud;” and (2) have cloven hooves (e.g., cows, goats, lambs, sheep, springbok, and veal, etc.) If an animal satisfies only one of the criteria then individuals who adhere to Kosher law must refrain from eating such meat. Analogous to halal food decrees, and in accordance with the laws of the Torah, before being slaughtered, it is compulsory the animal be: (1) in good health; (2) prayed over; and (3) already deceased. After the ritual slaughtering of the animal, it is essential the animal be bled in conformity with

kosher law. In addition, the kosher eating regime adheres to food combination guidelines whereby dairy and meat cannot be eaten together.

Lacto Vegetarian: Vegetarians that do not consume meat (including seafood) but eat milk, cheese, and other dairy products (e.g., butter, margarine, etc.) but abstain from eating eggs.

Lacto-Ovo Vegetarian: Vegetarians that eat cheese, milk and other dairy products but do not consume meat and seafood.

Macrobiotic: Originating from Japan, the tenets from this dietary lifestyle coalesce a Western vegetarian eating regime with the principles of Zen Buddhism (Eastern). Advocates of this dietary practice live by a philosophy of balance (i.e., *yin* and *yang*) and harmony with nature and prefer locally grown foods. *Yin* foods are provisions that are sweet and cold (passive) while *yang* foods are salty and hot (aggressive). The basis for a macrobiotic diet includes: fruits, vegetables, plentiful whole grains (especially brown rice), legumes (i.e., beans), fermented non-animal protein (e.g., tempeh, tofu, inter alia), nuts, seeds and soups, to name a few. As part of their macrobiotic regimen proponents do not consume “nightshade” vegetables (e.g., green peppers, eggplant, potatoes, spinach and tomatoes), processed foods or refined sugar.

Naturopathy: A branch of alternative medicine that uses a system of therapeutics, which provides care for an individual in an inclusive manner, by which exercise, the eating lifestyle or diet and mental factors are integral to the prevention. Instead of pharmaceutical drugs and surgery, various vitamins, minerals, herbs and nutritional supplements are used to treat and prevent illnesses and/or diseases

Ovo Vegetarian: Vegetarians that consume eggs but do not eat meat, seafood and dairy products.

Pescetarian: Individuals whose consumption of food is chiefly seafood.

Pescetarians also partake in dairy, eggs, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and legumes, etc., but exclude the consumption of meat from their dietary lifestyle.

Raw/Live Foodist: A type of vegan whose standard of living embraces and promotes the consumption of uncooked, primarily organic, and unprocessed foods. Advocates of this dietary lifestyle promote the fact that all living things have enzymes—proteins that aid in the digestion and assimilation of vital minerals and nutrients. Raw/Live foodists maintain that the greater percentage of “live” or raw food consumption by an individual, the more optimal the health, thus slowing the aging process and preventing illness and dis-ease. The eating regime of this lifestyle includes mostly raw fruits and vegetables as well as sprouted: (1) nuts; (2) seeds; and (3) whole grains.

Reflexology: An alternative medicinal practice which applies pressure to the hands and feet of an individual by utilizing specific techniques without the use of emollients (i.e., oil, lotion, etc.). It is based on a system of corporeal regions that reflect an image of the human body with a premise that such work effects physical change in the body.

Reiki An alternative healing practice developed in Japan by Mikao Usui. This therapeutic technique principally administers therapy by the use of hands in order to bring the human body into harmony, eliminate imbalance and alleviate emotional and physical blockages. The term is derived from a Japanese word Adherents of this healing art form uphold that all individuals are born with Reiki, considered to be the energy of life itself, and it is this energy that emanates from the hands of the Reiki practitioner. Unlike how other forms of knowledge are taught, Reiki is unorthodox in the sense that it professes instruction is transmitted by touch and meditation of the Reiki master to the apprentice.

Therapeutics A branch of medicine concerned essentially with the curative treatment of illnesses and dis-eases.

Vegan	Individuals whose eating regime (i.e., dietary practice) excludes all red meat, poultry, pork, seafood, eggs, dairy products (e.g., cheese, animal milk) and animal byproducts. Strict vegans do not consume honey and avoid the use of non-food products derived from animals, such as leather, wool and fur as well as all products tested on animals.
Vegetarian	Individuals that do not consume meat (including seafood) but eat eggs, cheese, milk and other dairy products.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

When the core of a body is oppressed, destroyed, polluted, corrupted, or raped, be it biological, societal, institutional or national, the body that envelopes it is itself dead. The path that leads towards it...is also wiped out. People become helpless. They lose their self-healing power and their order-giver stimulus. In this situation the body cannot be healed unless the “primitive” state of the core is restored. To do so is a process of cleansing its core, i.e., “depolluting” it. In other words it is learning the techniques of the curative “garbology” [kinzudi kiandiakisina] which is a process of digging out the junk that prevents access to the core of the inner power.³⁰

Few contemporary African scholars have written about ancient Egyptian medicinal practices. As a result, research on this specific topic, from an African-Centered perspective, is minimal in scope. Still, among those written works produced by the African intelligentsia the most essential on the subject matter is the work of Congolese linguistic savant Théophile Obenga. Although a majority of Obenga’s prodigious intellectual output is published in a language other than English (i.e., French), some of his key texts have been translated and made available to English reading audiences.³¹

Once the protégé of the late iconoclast Cheikh Anta Diop, Obenga, a distinguished Egyptologist, historian and linguist, wrote in 1990, *La Philosophie africaine de la période pharaonique, 2780–330 avante notre ère*, which was later translated by Ayi Kwei Armah in 2004 with the English title, *African Philosophy*. In his

³⁰ Kimbwandende Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau, *African Cosmology of the Bantu-Kôngo: Principles of Life & Living* (Brooklyn, NY: Athelia Henrietta Press, 2000), 135.

³¹ See Theophile Obenga, *Ancient Egypt & Black Africa: A Student’s Handbook for the Study of Ancient Egypt in Philosophy, Linguistics & Gender Relations* (London: Karnak House, 1992), *Readings in Precolonial Central Africa: Texts and Documents* (London: Karnak House, 1995), and *African Philosophy in World History* (Princeton, NJ: Sungai, 1998).

seldom-referenced and influential tract, Obenga chronologically focuses on the pharaonic periods in Kemet and underscores various phenomena indistinguishably linked with the extensive history of African thought: (a) astronomy; (b) cosmology (i.e., study of the origin and development of the universe); (c) language; (d) mathematics; (e) morality; and (f) ontology (i.e., the study of the nature of being).

In chapter nine of text, entitled, “Medicine,” Obenga explores the ancient Egyptian practices of medicine and places emphasis on the circulatory system of the human body, through the examination of one of the oldest medical documents in world history: the *Papyrus Ebers*. Of the one hundred and ten page medical treatise, Obenga provides his own transliteration and translation of the Kemetite script. Notwithstanding its philological and lexicographical difficulties, Obenga’s thorough knowledge and command of the classical African language affords him the facility to decipher: 1) the section of ancient text that is physiological in nature which describes the action of the human heart (*ib* in Medew Netcher) and its relation to complementary blood vessels; and 2) ancient Egyptian medical terminology describing for the most part anatomical and symptomatic features. In adulation of his adeptness with language translation, Ayi Kwei Armah (2006) writes that Obenga has “a rare ability to identify practical areas in which the new knowledge could revolutionize African studies, and to state his information in clear, lucid language.”³²

Furthermore, Obenga purports that the *Papyrus Ebers*—particularly the segment on physiology—explains the foundational concept of holistic health in the sense that it

³² Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Eloquence of the Scribes: A Memoir on the Sources and Resources of African Literature* (Popenguine, Senegal: Per Ankh, 2006), 143.

illustrates the symbiotic relationship between the heart and the rest of the body. In this vein, he explains that the medical worldview of the Kemites “w[ere] the ‘anthropological’ aspect, that quality thanks to which the body and mind, illness and tradition, individual and society were all interconnected within a holistic healing context.”³³

In the same year as Obenga’s initial publication of the aforementioned text African (American) physician Charles S. Finch also recognizes the historical value of Kemetic medicine. In *African Background to Medical Science* (1990), Finch produced a compilation of seven essays, which span numerous areas of inquiry, to include: African historiography, religion and science. Among the expositions that comprise the text, three of them concentrate on ancient Egyptian medicine, with the author’s intent to express “the origin and evolution of healing as a special skill long antedates other important human interventions such as agriculture and animal domestication and might well deserve consideration as the oldest profession.”³⁴ The practice of medicine, according to Finch, was already a fully established science in the Nile Valley, which preceded the founding of the dynastic periods in Kemet. As a nation revered for its innumerable contributions to Western civilization, Finch values especially the approach to medicine in ancient Egypt, acknowledging it foundationally as “a mature, well-validated system of medicine, containing a systematic pathology, a completely-formulated pharmacopeia, a formal knowledge of anatomy and physiology, a large medical literature, a well-defined

³³ Théophile Obenga, *African Philosophy, The Pharaonic Period: 2780–330 BC* (Popenguine, Senegal: Per Ankh, 2004), 392.

³⁴ Charles S. Finch, *The African Background to Medical Science* (London: Karnak House, 1990), 71.

medical teaching curriculum, and a skill in surgery and trauma that is hardly unmatched outside Africa until our own time.”³⁵ Albeit his methodological pursuit to highlight the Classical African (i.e., Nile Valley) contribution to orthodox medicine Finch fails to mention, conceivably because of his own medical training in the Western academy, the extensive knowledge and expertise among Kemetic medical practitioners to utilize plant and herbal extracts as a therapeutic strategy to prevent illnesses and treat diseases.

In the third chapter of his tome, Finch, a physician in his own right, examines the life and accomplishments of Imhotep, considered by most to be the first African physician to stand out in antiquity. In short, Finch provides: 1) a brief biographical sketch of Imhotep’s life; 2) a detailed account of the various ways in which Imhotep is venerated (i.e., as a vizier, physician, architect, sage as well as his deification posthumously); and 3) an analysis regarding the social context in which Imhotep’s work was accomplished.

Other scholars whose research agendas are not sympathetic to the Africana intellectual project have too acknowledged the salient dynamics of medicinal practices in Classical Africa. One of the earliest commentaries and most widely-cited examples regarding the materia medica in Kemet was provided over eight decades ago. In *Ancient Egyptian Medicine: Papyrus Ebers*, Cyril P. Bryan provided the first English translation of the historic medical treatise—deemed the most ancient, lengthiest and most often-referenced and medical tract of African antiquity. For the ancient African medical document that bears the namesake of the German Egyptologist (i.e., Georg Ebers) who appropriated it in 1872, Bryan discloses that a lion’s share of the *Papyrus Ebers* is

³⁵ Ibid., 72.

primarily devoted to herbal, plant and mineral curative formulae established to address innumerable diseases. On the contrary, surgical inferences are scantily advocated throughout the ancient medical text, contends Bryan, lending credence that many of the therapeutic measures adopted in African antiquity were not simply drugs, in the modern sense of the word, but were the foundations of holistic health customs par excellence, wholeheartedly embraced in contemporary society. The theoretical limitation with Bryan's work is his explanation, based on a European worldview, of certain elements of ancient Egyptian medicine as "magic." In the Nile Valley, healing was accomplished through a combination of spiritual and physiological practices. To be sure, Classical African medical traditions were reinforced by the societal norms of harmony and the interconnectedness of the physical and spiritual world. The upshot: Kemetic medical papyri include both incantations, which highlights the power of the spoken word and tangible considered "scientific" remedies, with the understanding, as Diop puts it, that "in order for the magical formula to be effective, it had to be supplemented with a drug."³⁶ In a word, the coalescing of ritual (what the West deems as "magic") and "physical treatment was to become a persistent characteristic of African medical traditions."³⁷

In over a quarter century posterior to Bryan's work, John F. Nunn provides a similar but more well-developed and neoteric theoretical assessment of the therapeutic customs and medical canons produced within ancient Nile Valley culture. In his medical tome, *Ancient Egyptian Medicine* (2002), Nunn provides in detail the geographical

³⁶ Cheikh Anta Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology* (Brooklyn, NY: Lawrence Hill, 1991), 283.

³⁷ Clovis E. Semmes, *Racism, Health, and Post-Industrialism: A Theory of African-American Health* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1996), 68.

landscape of Kemet to convey the unique environment in which ancient Egyptian medicine evolved in the Nile Valley. Due to the “favorable climate and geography,” Nunn insists, “food production was never a major problem in [ancient] Egypt provided that the inundation of the Nile occurred each year and the population did not exceed the capacity of the available land.”³⁸ As a result, copious amounts of fruits, vegetables, spices and herbs (e.g., dates, figs, olives, melons, garlic, celery, onion, radishes, cinnamon, coriander, cumin, safflower, thyme, to name a few) were cultivated, most of which were used, excluding its sustenance value, for therapeutic purposes.

Unlike his European contemporaries’ discourse on a singular ancient Egyptian medical text, Nunn dedicates an entire chapter of his book to a detailed assessment, including the diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of not one, but ten noteworthy medical papyri: (1) the *Berlin Papyrus*; (2) the *Brooklyn Papyrus*; (3) the *Carlsberg VIII Papyrus*; (4) the *Chester Beatty papyri*; (5) the *Ebers Papyrus*; (6) the *Edwin Smith Papyrus*; (7) the *Hearst Papyrus*; (8) the *Kahun Gynecological Papyrus*; (9) the *London Medical Papyrus*; and (10) the *Ramesseum Papyrus*—all stolen and co-opted by Europeans but nevertheless indigenous to Kemet.³⁹

Also central to this work is the author’s recognition of both celebrated and less familiar Kemetic physicians (*swnw(t)*). In the chapter, entitled “The healers,” Nunn, in an effort to present “insight into the medical profession in pharaonic times...from different social strata,”⁴⁰ outlines various specialized branches of medicine practiced in

³⁸ John F. Nunn, *Ancient Egyptian Medicine* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 12-13.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 25-40.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 114.

dynastic Kemet as well as specialized hierarchal titles bestowed upon medical doctors of distinction, ranging chronologically from the Old Kingdom (Third to the Sixth Dynasty) to the Late Period (Twenty-Sixth to the Thirty-First Dynasty). Also vital within the text is Nunn's incorporation of a thorough appendix comprised of— a conventional chronology of pharaonic Egypt, a comprehensive tabulation of notable Kemetite physicians who practiced throughout the thirty-two Dynastic periods in the Nile Valley, and the alleviative attributes (e.g., antiseptic, diuretic, antibiotic, purgative, etc.) of an assortment of herbal extracts and spices.

Among the works produced by European scholars on classical African healing practices, the work of Paul Ghalioungui is inimitable and deserves notice. Originally published in 1963, Ghalioungui's groundbreaking treatise, *The House of Life, Per Ankh* provides an expansive assessment of the systemized ancient Egyptian medical system in ways that are uncharted in comparison to other works written in English on the subject matter. Ghalioungui's attention to detail to infrequent matters of discourse in ancient Egyptian medicine is commendable. His special attention paid to surgical instruments utilized by the Kemetite custodians of health and the specific clinical descriptions associated with the usage of such medical devices is too creditable. To unveil the intrinsic link in Kemet between governance and the practice of medicine, Ghalioungui cites the ceremonies of the "heb-sed," a royal jubilee, which in this instance is honoring both "per-uah" Aha (Narmer) and Djer of the First Dynasty.⁴¹ This observation by the author is critical, for in his analysis of the decipherment of two slabs, which narrate this

⁴¹ Paul Ghalioungui, *The House of Life, Per Ankh: Magical and Medical Science in Ancient Egypt* (Amsterdam: B.M. Israel, 1973), 91.

royal Kemetic celebration, it is posited by Ghalioungui that a tracheotomy is symbolically being performed on a suffocating captive to represent the need “to give a new lease of life to the old king and, by identification, to the country.”⁴² Simply put, the two tablets, which are iconographic representations to this splendid ritual of nationalism, reveals, “a magical ceremony destined to re-insufflate by tracheotomy a new breath of life to the old king, and through him to the sick land, represented by a suffocating man.”⁴³

Among the most relevant studies to this investigation are the works produced by Sociologist Clovis E. Semmes, Medical Anthropologist Eric J. Bailey and Naturopathic physician Llaila Olela Afrika. Semmes’ methodology for locating the genealogical strains of holistic health by using African culture as the interpretive framework is useful. In *Racism, Health, and Post-Industrialism* (1996), Semmes argues, as do I, that the uses of botanical substances—herbs, plants and spices—as therapeutic tools originated, not in Greece, but in the Nile Valley, and in spite of the numerous episodic and cultural disruptions (i.e., the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, chattel slavery, colonialism and social proscription) experienced by Africans, such a holistic tradition has up to this point remained intact, offering value to an unbroken transmillennial and intergenerational transmission of knowledge. According to Semmes, “African medical traditions have evolved with a tremendous continuity of structure despite extensive diffusion and a changing social context over time,” and equally important “[t]he centerpiece of this continuity of structure is the underlying persistence of a view of reality that links spiritual

⁴² Ibid., 92.

⁴³ Ibid.

and physical dimensions and a naturalistic orientation.”⁴⁴

As the title of his intriguing text suggests, Semmes observes that, presently, all elements of white supremacy (i.e., individual racism, cultural racism and institutional racism) adversely affect African American life, with health being no exception to the rule. Accordingly, Semmes opines that Blacks embrace alternative health measures to ameliorate the morbid health conditions prevalent in African communities; an emancipatory initiative the author sees as a viable and much-needed option to break away from the fetters and dominance of Western medicine. On this very idea, Semmes writes:

Alternative medicine typically maintains an expanded view regarding the basis of health, the etiology of disease, and the value of various therapeutic options. Moreover, within this category of health care, we find the roots of people-based movements to reform the limitations, harmful features, and cultural dominance of orthodox medicine. The reform of orthodox medicine has far-reaching social implications since the development of Western medical dominance carries with it connections to patterns of class, race, and gender exploitation.⁴⁵

In essence, Semmes considers African people’s mounting distrust of conventional medicine as normative thereby initiating a movement towards nonconforming holistic health practices in response to perceived deficiencies in medical treatments offered by mainstream medicine. Such a movement, argues Semmes, is grounded in what he considers the African “folk medicine” tradition of the antebellum period but later gained considerable momentum during the Black Liberation movements (e.g. Civil Rights, Black Arts and Black Power) of the late 1960s to the 1970s in America; a time period in which the author himself was intrigued by and introduced to alternative health care practices that attempted, through natural measures, to thwart all aspects of medical

⁴⁴ Clovis E. Semmes, *Racism, Health, and Post-Industrialism*, 67.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

oppression.

Semmes' earlier research, which is subsumed in *Racism, Health and Post-Industrial* as the entitled chapter, "An Extended Look at Alternative African-American Health Care Practices," is one of the first investigative studies to explore the foundations of and reasons as to why Africans in America have embraced holistic health practices.⁴⁶ After his own introduction to the therapeutic usages of alternative medicine, Semmes conducted a six-year study, spanning two decades—1970s and 1980s. In conducting this study, Semmes spent less literary energy exploring the dynamics of specific contemporary holistic health modalities and more on the intervals by which Africans use those holistic measures to treat illnesses. From the conclusive results of his study Semmes found that many of his interviewees remained consistent users of various natural health care remedies (i.e., herbs, vitamins, minerals, yoga, meditation, massage therapy, inter alia), however, only a small number became disillusioned with and/or displayed ambivalence toward alternative medicine due to a number of reasons: 1) the disciplined nature of food consumption required of a holistic health lifestyle; 2) the alternative medical costs were not covered by most health insurance companies; and 3) the application of holistic health care did not render the desired results swift enough.⁴⁷ Given that few studies have identified the foundations of this phenomenon in the Black community, Semmes' work is a step in the right direction to address this lacunae and

⁴⁶ See Clovis E. Semmes, "Nonmedical Illness Behavior: A Model of Patients Who Seek Alternatives to Allopathic Medicine," *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* (October 1990), 427-436; "When Medicine Fails: Making the Decision to Seek Natural Health Care," *National Journal of Sociology* (Fall 1990), 175-198; and "Developing Trust: Patient-Practitioner Encounters in Natural Health Care," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* (January 1991), 450-470.

⁴⁷ Semmes, *Racism, Health, and Post-Industrialism*, 90-93.

empirical void.

Akin to Semmes' ideological estimation of the holistic health tradition espoused by African descendants is the work Eric J. Bailey. His exceptional 2002 piece, *African American Alternative Medicine: Using Alternative Medicine to Prevent and Control Chronic Diseases* offers a historical perspective of the uses of alternative medicine within the Black community and illustrates how such usage is an intrinsic part of African culture. Given the evidence of a racial binary system (of Black and white) in the United States, Bailey explores the distinction between the alternative medical systems employed by mainstream America and the holistic health practices utilized most by African Americans. According to Bailey's research, the most frequently used alternative and complementary medical therapies among mainstream America are: Acupuncture, Ayurvedic medicine, Chiropractic therapy, Herbal medicine, Homeopathy and Naturopathy.⁴⁸ On the other hand, studies show that the self-care strategy of home remedies is the most frequently used natural therapeutics among Blacks, with a preference for herbs, particularly through the preparation of infused teas.⁴⁹

Based off the utilization of various case studies, Bailey reserves the fourth section of *African American Alternative Medicine* (i.e., chapters six to ten) to examining the diseases found most prevalent among African descendants as well as the alternative medical treatments used to alleviate such maladies in order to determine whether the latter was effective. Among them, cancer, cerebrovascular accident (stroke), diabetes and

⁴⁸ Eric J. Bailey, *African American Alternative Medicine: Using Alternative Medicine to Prevent and Control Chronic Diseases* (Wesport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2002), 22-28.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 34, 38.

hypertension (high blood pressure) were revealed as widespread physiological ailments in the African community, and while the nonconventional curative methods for each disease varied, the most common to reduce its ill-effects was a controlled dietary approach with a high intake of fruits and vegetables.⁵⁰ From a pedagogical standpoint, what is especially useful about Bailey's work is the inclusion of "Critical Thinking Questions" at the beginning of each chapter accompanied with "Post-Evaluation Questions" concluding each unit; an addition which provokes stimulating discourse about the often neglected topics of the contemporary uses of alternative medicine by African Americans.

Regarded as one of the most knowledgeable and unreticent African holistic practitioners to date, Llaila Afrika's unapologetic, African-centered approach is the most extensive discourse on holistic health and deserves mention. In his revolutionary tome, *Nutricide* (2000), Afrika offers intrepid sagacity into holistic health and trusts Africans could use nutrition as a liberation tool. For both the lay and professional of alternative medicine, the text provides: (a) the historical impact of nutritional deficiencies on the body and psyche of both Africans and Europeans; (b) an eye-opening and prodigious analysis of the economics of food manipulation; and (c) controversial particulars on how the United States benefit from African American's naiveté about nutritionally-deficient foods and poor nutrition and its debilitating impact on misdiagnosed emotional disturbances of African children, sexual deviancy and mental illness. With his expertise as a historical researcher, certified Naturopath, Acupuncturist, Medical Astrologist and Psychotherapist, Afrika also unveils in *Nutricide* the dissimilarities in traditional dietary

⁵⁰ Ibid., 94-95, 108, 116, 126-127.

habits between European and African cultures and the negative impact it has on Africans when they adopt an eating regime unsuitable and antagonistic to their physical anatomy.

Gleaning information from the landmark article “The Food Gap, Poverty and Malnutrition in the United States,”⁵¹ Afrika attests that the nutritional persecution of Africans Americans continues today by policies initiated by federal government. In this regard, he maintains: “Disease and death are a by product of poor nutrition and a Caucasian weapon designed to commit Nutricide against Africans. Allowing Africans ethno-nutritional natural foods diet is in no way a part of the government’s design or purpose for Africans.”⁵² In the same vein, Afrika feels it is illusionary for African people, regardless of their geographical location, to nutritionally rely upon denatured, highly refined foods and synthetically manufactured allopathic “medicines” to achieve optimal health. Forthrightly, Afrika is convinced that America, institutionally-driven by the foundations of European culture, is exploitative in nature and reinforces nutritional mis-education as a means to create undesirable conditions for Africans and maintain a hegemonic stance in society.

Afrika advances the discourse towards a more developed, inclusive understanding of the holistic health tradition in the African community with the publication of his magnum opus, the pioneering tract, *African Holistic Health* (2004). This extensively researched and monumental piece is encyclopedic in nature and is one of the first major treatises to comprehensively address health issues with exclusively African people in

⁵¹ See “The Food Gap: Poverty and Malnutrition in the United States; Interim Report Together with Supplemental, Additional, and Individual Views” (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1969).

⁵² Llaila O. Afrika, *Nutricide: The Nutritional Destruction of the Black Race* (Brooklyn, NY: A&B Publishers Group, 2000), 22.

mind. While *Nutricide* more sharply criticizes or indicts European culture, the content in *African Holistic Health* is more therapeutic and remedy-based. In a well-organized manner, Afrika offers an array of therapeutic solutions intended to naturally cure most diseases and undo the historic miscarriage of justice allopathic medicine has imposed on those in need of its services.

Especially informative in *African Holistic Health* is the section entitled, “What’s Eating You?” Afrika highlights, in this segment, the damaging effects, various beef (products), butter, cheese, chewing gum, cow’s milk, hot dogs, ice cream, peanut butter, poultry, pork, etc. has on the body due to the hazardous procedures by which they are manufactured by corporate-controlled food industries and surreptitiously authorized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In his investigation of how these foodstuffs are engineered, Afrika found that “[c]ommerical foods have an abundance of toxic, poisonous, synthetic chemicals, hormones, and antibiotics, steroids, terminator code (block nutrient absorption) additives, preservatives and coloring which destroy and deteriorate the human body and are addicting,” which in turn “makes the consumer a junk food addict that constantly spends money on food so that the junk food industry can constantly make money (profit).”⁵³ In all, *African Holistic Health* serves as a “how to” guide for the African world community and those Blacks who wish to alter their dependency of Western medicine and/to employ therapeutic techniques of self-healing, primarily based on the use of herbs, minerals, vitamins and a dietary lifestyle devoid of meat, dairy, eggs and refined foods.

⁵³ Llaila O. Afrika, *African Holistic Health* (Brooklyn, NY: A&B Publishers Group, 2004), 203.

Other than the tracts written about the holistic health practices, within the academy, there are numerous scholarly treatises from various disciplines that address the import of alternative medicinal practices. In 1996, Katherine Kemi Bankole's Temple University Department of African American Studies dissertation, entitled, "An Afrocentric Analysis of Enslavement and Medicine in the Southeastern Parishes of Antebellum Louisiana" provides an overview of the historical field of slavery and medicine. Through the means of cultural continuity affixed to a resolute African worldview, Bankole avows that, "[e]nslaved Africans in the southeastern parishes of antebellum Louisiana retained a significant Africanism in their medical universe which was the sustained pursuit of holistic healing."⁵⁴

With a geographical focus solely on one state in the Deep South, Bankole examines: (1) the brutalities of chattel slavery as an upshot for the constant need for enslaved Africans to receive medical care; (2) the various diseases attributed in a slipshod manner onto enslaved Africans by pseudo-scientific theories that emerged in the mid-19th Century, such as "Cachexia Africana," "Negro Consumption" (aka Struma Africana and/or Negro Poison), "Drapetomania," and "Dysaesthesia Aethopica,"⁵⁵ and (3) the historiography of medicine, paying particular attention to the agency of enslaved Africans with their cogent and driven participation in, and development of medicine in the United States. Bankole's study, simply put, is a repudiation of the dominant consensus and discourse among Eurocentric and hegemonic scholars that enslaved African's curative

⁵⁴ Katherine Kemi Bankole, "An Afrocentric Analysis of Enslavement and Medicine in the Southeastern Parishes of Antebellum Louisiana" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Temple University, 1996), iv-v.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 171-178.

efforts in the uses of botanical substances, during the antebellum period, were non-contributory to the field of medicine.

Albeit beyond the geographical scope of this study, there are treatises produced outside of the United States that are analogous to this research. In her graduate thesis, “Case Not Closed: Defending and Making Room for Holistic Medicine,” written in 1997, from the Department of Philosophy at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Ghanaian scholar Adwoa Konadu Buahene offers much insight as to the efficacy of holistic medicine in providing adequate healthcare to those in need as well as being a preventive measure to eradicate illnesses. Buahene’s study provides a comparative analysis of both holistic medicine and conventional medicine and juxtaposes the theoretical foundations upon which they both stand. With the prevalence of alternative medical services—that render compelling results and evidence—now available in contemporary society, Buahene questions the dominant claims made by medical regulatory bodies that orthodox medicine is the most effective method of addressing health concerns.

Buahene dedicates an entire chapter of her thesis to a particular holistic health practice – Homeopathy, perhaps the closest to conventional medicine than other alternative health practice. Throughout this section, Buahene explicates in detail: Homeopathy’s foundational implications, the value and inexpensiveness of its remedies compared to pharmaceutical drugs, and how Homeopathy varies from “scientific medicine” in its theory about the nature of health as well as its approach to treat and prevent dis-eases. Buahene does attest to the fact that homeopaths themselves concede

that homeopathy cannot stand alone as the only form of medicine offered but contends the holistic approach to healing should serve as a complementary element in the overall dominant health care system. Acknowledgement of the legitimacy of alternative medicine is a significant theme throughout this thesis, however, the recognition of other effective holistic health practices was given only slight attention and falls short in this regard.

Kristianne Dechant, in her 2005 graduate thesis, from the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta, took a more nuanced approach to holistic health. In “Linking Fitness and Holistic Medicine: Using Growth Models to Correlate Adult Canadians’ Individual Physical Activity and Use of Holistic Medicine” Dechant establishes a nexus between fitness culture and holistic medicine and argues that the usage of the latter encourages an individual to engage in physical activity beneficial to the body (e.g., weight training, cardio-vascular and low-impact exercises, calisthenics, inter alia) and vice versa. Notwithstanding the haphazard agglomeration of holistic health modalities by conventional medical authorities, Dechant provides several iconic categories of holistic medicine to exhibit its distinctiveness: 1) a modification of one’s lifestyle; 2) Bio-electromagnetics, or the study of the interaction between biological entities and electromagnetic energy fields; 3) Botanical medicine, or the use of herbs; 4) manipulative corporeal practices, such as acupuncture therapy, massage therapy and osteopathy; 5) cognitive-somatic techniques, such as meditation and hypnotherapy; and 6) various therapeutic systems, such as homeopathy, naturopathy, ayurveda, etc. The findings of her study reveal that the use of holistic medicine in Canada is in no way homogenous, in the sense that females and young adults disproportionately tend to

embrace alternative medicinal practices over males and the middle-aged. Contrary to Dechant's research, according to the study conducted by Eisenberg, et al (1993), in the United States, non-African persons with relatively more education and higher incomes have a predilection to more frequently use holistic health practices.⁵⁶ Overall, Dechant's quantitative research divulges that in Canada, patients employ conventional medicine and holistic health practices concomitantly rather than as surrogate health strategies, an integrative approach she anticipates to come to fruition in health care systems in the foreseeable future.

In echoing Dechant's ambition to see the integration of alternative medicine and biomedicine, Beatriz Miyar's research discloses that such practices were customary in Cuba as far back as the nineteenth century. In her 2002 Florida State University Department of Education dissertation, entitled, "Continuing Education in Cuban Healthcare: Holistic Medicine and Flower Essence Therapy" she writes that "natural and traditional medicine was present in Cuba since early times in the form of herbal medicine, hydro-mineral therapy, and traditional medicine," and subsequently, North Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese medical practitioners introduced herbal medicine into the Cuban healthcare system in the 1970s.⁵⁷ Similarly, in the midst of the U.S. trade embargo, Miyar affirms that in the 1990s numerous Cuban medical professionals became disillusioned with the ineptness of Western medicine, and by way of their association with holistic physicians from allied countries, they studied and incorporated homeopathy,

⁵⁶ David M. Eisenberg, Ronald C. Kessler, Cindy Foster, Frances E. Norlock, David R. Calkins, and Thomas L. Delbanco, "Unconventional Medicine in the United States: Prevalence, Costs, and Patterns of Use," *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (January 28, 1993), 249.

⁵⁷ Beatriz M. Miyar, "Continuing Education in Cuban Healthcare: Holistic Medicine and Flower Essence Therapy" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Florida State University, 2002), 111-112.

flower essence therapy, and other holistic health procedures into their therapeutic practices. As a result of this coalescing of allopathic and alternative medicine Miyar maintains that presently the entire medical system in Cuba is undergoing a major change to incorporate holistic health practices into mainstream medicine. Principally, the focus of her dissertation is twofold: 1) it traces the development of orthodox medicine and alternative medical practices within the historical context Cuba's unified national healthcare system; and 2) it examines the continuing education processes of Cuban medical professionals and the methods by which holistic medicine is infused into that form of instruction. All in all, Miyar's study highlights how Cuban physicians, previously trained in Western medicine, mustered the courage to overcome the conceptual obstacles inherited from their prior education to embrace the alternate comprehension of medical issues.

Kwasi Konadu's 2004 Howard University Department of African Studies dissertation, "Concepts of Medicine as Interpreted by Akan Healers and Indigenous Knowledge Archives among the Bono-Takyiman of Ghana, West Africa: A Case Study" comparatively investigates an assortment of Akan knowledge systems—adinkra symbolism, oral history, proverbs, etc.—amid the therapeutic philosophy of indigenous healers to ascertain how the latter envisions medicine and the etiology (the origin or cause) of diseases. The research approach of this dissertation is notable in the sense that it utilizes numerous investigative methods, (i.e., close readings, archival research, medicinal sampling, linguistic analysis and personal interviews) in order to gain a better understanding of the Bono-Takyiman therapeutic system and the healing practices

employed in Akan society. Konadu's study provides a cursory overview of the general characteristics of the Bono (the indigenous people of the Takyiman region of Ghana) but more thoroughly examines the inextricable link between the mundane and intangible by providing a conceptual framework for the cosmological worldview of the Bono. For Konadu, "it is necessary to delineate, in descriptive terms, the Bono (Akan) cosmology because this body of thought directly relates to the specialists of the Bono-Takyiman therapeutic system, who, by design, can also be considered specialists of the cultural and spiritual systems."⁵⁸

Konadu's treatise focuses primarily on three specific categories of healers within the Bono-Takyiman medical system: (1) the *odunsini*—individuals who use herbal medicines to combat illnesses or treat dis-eases; (2) the *okomfoo*— a gender-neutral role in which either a female or male practitioner is conversant in the arts of divination; and (3) the *obosomfoo*—a gender specific role (that also assumes the duties and responsibilities of an *odunsini* and an *okomfoo*) that is inherited matrilineally in which only a male can hold the position.

Derived from his in-depth interviews in Africa, Konadu discovered the various ways and diversified meanings indigenous healers of the Bono-Takyiman region classified the concept of medicine. Among the Bono, the universal term for medicine is *aduro*, a term derived from the Twi language. Moreover, Konadu proclaims that *aduro* is a multi-layered designation, more abstract in its expression and not ascribed solely to

⁵⁸ Kwasi Bodua Konadu, "Concepts of Medicine as Interpreted by Akan Healers and Indigenous Knowledge Archives among the Bono-Takyiman of Ghana, West Africa: A Case Study" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Howard University, 2004), 37.

medicinal herbs.⁵⁹ In this regard, the intricate definitions of *aduro* include: 1) root medicine; 2) *ahaban*, the Twi word for “herb” or “leaf;” 4) *bene*, meaning “cooked” or prepared medicinally in Twi; 5) medicinal plants; 6) an individual who is spiritually “cooked” or prepared to perform medicinal practices; and 7) anything that is used to avert or treat illnesses.⁶⁰

Contrary to substances that heal body, Konadu affirms, through his correspondence with an Bono *odunsini* (herbal practitioner), that there are four general classifications of diseases: 1) those that imperil the existence of life in the body; 2) those which disfigure the body; 3) those that cause adverse psychological affects; and 4) those that are transmittable.⁶¹ Also, within the Bono-Takyiman therapeutic system, Konadu acknowledges that there exists more wide-ranging and imbricating categories for diseases, to include: (a) *homhom*, or diseases evolved from unidentified spirits; (b) *oman yareε*, or diseases derived from delinquent acts; (c) *sumsum yareε*, or diseases at the spiritual level; (d) *bayie yareε*, or “withcraft” diseases; (e) *aduto*, or sexually-transmitted diseases; (f) *abode yareε*, diseases caused by the environment (e.g., insects, unclean water, etc.); (g) *nka no kwa yareε*, the presence of a disease without any perceivable cause; (h) profanity; (i) *mmoa*, bacteria or germs; and (j) *aduane yareε*, diseases that are derived from the consumption of alcohol or contaminated foods.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 99.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 99-100.

⁶¹ Ibid., 108.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH APPROACH

This dissertation will serve as a contribution to Africana Studies as it seeks to utilize an African-Centered perspective to examine holistic health practices and outline the methodological and conjectural basis of a research paradigm. Its aim is to develop a historical genealogy of an Africana holistic health and advance the notion that relatively specific natural health care practices, which date as far back as ancient Africa, were still in operation during chattel slavery and continues in existing communities in the United States in populations where Africans Americans are predominant. The writer is well aware that conducting research on Africana holistic health traditions are polemical, particularly within the academy, given the hegemonic posture of the teachings of “scientific” or conventional medicine as well as the fact that most of the alternative health care practitioners and advocates being examined in this study are non-academics who reside within predominately African communities in the United States. Just the same, there are some physicians of orthodox medicine who would rather see holistic health practices and alternative health care, especially those espoused by Blacks, be done away with, or to a lesser degree, be subsumed under the cannon of Western medicine. For these reasons, this dissertation will address these socio-historical lacunae and examine the

holistic health care practices of African people and the alternative health care they provide beyond the limited conceptual scope placed on it by academe and the governing regulatory professional bodies of mainstream medicine.

Representative scholars of Africana Studies have found value in explicating the distinction of Africana Studies from traditional academic disciplines in creating knowledge production. Given the inflexible nature the academy has “in opening space for research methodologies informed by African worldviews,”⁶² Greg Carr is convinced that dissertations produced in Africana Studies must both articulate and operationalize an African-centered paradigm in order to “meet the dual challenge of explaining the source of its techniques while simultaneously applying and adjusting that technique in the pursuit of a research question.”⁶³ In this regard, the following inquiry will serve as an exegetical lens by which this study will be conducted: Given their socioeconomic conditions and medical circumstances, in what ways have African people utilized naturalistic therapeutic techniques and dietary practices to address their health needs?

James B. Stewart, in his scholarly piece, “The Legacy of W.E.B. Du Bois for Contemporary Black Studies,” has identified a triumvirate of crucial determinants that make the paradigmatic process for Africana Studies more intricate and unmistakably different from other academic disciplines. They include the following: (1) the interdisciplinary essence of Africana Studies; (2) the nexus of scholarship and praxis to

⁶² Bagele Chilisa, *Indigenous Research Methodologies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2012), 55.

⁶³ Carr, “African Philosophy of History in the Contemporary Era,” 113.

bring about social change in the Black community; and (3) the inclination to assume that the origins of Africana Studies begins with its official institutionalization into the academy in the late 1960s rather than identify with its long view and/or genealogical memory (i.e., history) of African thought processes and intellectual work.⁶⁴

Terry Kershaw has avowed that knowledge produced in institutions of higher learning, regardless of the discipline, is usually culturally specific and is generated, first and foremost, to serve a particular ideological perspective or philosophical worldview.⁶⁵ This being the case, he persuasively argues that research being conducted within the discipline of Africana Studies should be inclusive of community and centered around the life experiences of African people. This analysis represents another scholarly perspective, and to further clarify, Kershaw has written:

The basis of any type of knowledge generated within the paradigm of Black Studies must be rooted in an interpretation of 'social' conditions by people of African descent which will direct the researcher to areas of study. Therefore, Afrocentric scholars must constantly engage in dialogue with the non-academic Black community because the focus of any research undertaken by Afrocentric scholars must be an extension of the group's understandings in order to help in the self-empowerment of the group.⁶⁶

For the purposes of this dissertation, Kershaw's articulation is instructive in the sense that the research being conducted on holistic or alternative health practices will rely heavily

⁶⁴ James B. Stewart, "The Legacy of W.E.B. Du Bois for Contemporary Black Studies" *The Journal of Negro Education* vol. 53, no. 3 (Summer, 1984), 296-297. See also Greg Carr, "What Black Studies is Not: Moving from Crisis to Liberation in Africana Intellectual Work" *Socialism and Democracy*, vol. 25, no. 1 (March 2011), 178-191, "Towards an Intellectual History of Africana Studies: Genealogy and Normative Theory" *The African American Studies Reader*, ed., Nathaniel Norment, Jr. (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 438-453, and "Inscribing African World History: Intergenerational Repetition and Improvisation of Ancestral Instructions" *African World History Project, Volume 1: African Historiography* eds. Asa G. Hilliard III, Greg E. Kimathi Carr and Mario Beatty (Atlanta: Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations, forthcoming), 10-32.

⁶⁵ Terry Kershaw, "Afrocentrism and the Afrocentric Method," *The Western Journal of Black Studies* vol. 16, no. 3 (Fall 1992), 160.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 163.

on the expertise, advocacy and experiences of African community members.

Within the field of medicine, there are numerous theories that attempt to explain the causation of dis-ease(s). Of the various theoretical views and methodological approaches in circulation, the triage theory of aging appears to be the most sensible, as it relates to this study. This medical ideological stance, advanced by Joyce McCann and Bruce Ames, is based on the concept that all physical maladies, illnesses and/or diseases that manifest in the body come primarily from the deficiency or absence of essential minerals.⁶⁷ As their latest article on the triage theory of aging explains:

when the dietary availability of a [vitamin and/or mineral] is moderately inadequate, nature ensures that [vitamin and/or mineral]-dependent functions that are essential from an evolutionary perspective (i.e., required for short-term survival and/or reproduction) are protected at the expense of those that are less essential (i.e., whose lack does not have acute short-term negative consequences but may have long-term insidious effects that increase risk of diseases associated with aging). The triage theory does not imply that any particular [vitamin and/or mineral] deficiency is the only cause of an age-related disease but rather that it is a contributing factor along with the sum of all contributing causal factors.⁶⁸

The authors suggest that if this particular theoretical model is accurate, then it is a matter of discourse that scientific medicine and public health officials should seriously consider and take into account its validity, since as McCann and Ames note, most people are modestly deficient in one or more minerals and/or vitamins, which comprise not only indigent nations but affluent populaces, particularly among the elderly, the obese and the poverty-stricken: such is the case with most Black communities within America and

⁶⁷ See Joyce C. McCann and Bruce N. Ames, “Adaptive dysfunction of selenoproteins from the perspective of the triage theory: why modest selenium deficiency may increase risk of diseases of aging” *Journal of Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology*, vol. 25, no. 6 (June 2011), 1793-1814.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1793.

abroad.⁶⁹ The extensive research conducted in this specific study, which provides for the reader of interest, nearly three hundred references (295 to be exact) to independently analyze, further substantiates the claim that minerals deficiency is a deciding factor and plays a key role in whether optimal health is obtained or lost.

In a similar but more nuanced approach, the same scholarly team, within a previously published a paper, also tests the validity of the theory of triage, but this time around, utilizing as an exemplar Vitamin K.⁷⁰ The glaring but disheartening fact is that in 2014 metabolic syndrome,⁷¹ particularly among Africans in America is on the rise at an epidemic rate and: (a) coronary heart disease; (b) cancer—be it brain, breast, lung,

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Joyce C. McCann and Bruce N. Ames, “Vitamin K, an example of triage theory: is micronutrient inadequacy linked to diseases of aging? *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, vol. 90, no. 4 (October 1990), 889-907. See also, Bruce N. Ames, “Low micronutrient intake may accelerate the degenerative diseases of aging through allocation of scarce micronutrients by triage” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, vol. 103, no. 47 (November 21, 2006), 17589-17594, and “Prevention of mutation, cancer, and other age-associated diseases by optimizing micronutrient intake. *Journal Nucleic Acids*, vol. 2010, Article ID 725071 (2010), 1-11.

⁷¹ Metabolic Syndrome is the medical term given for a group of risk factors that elevate the chance and make it more susceptible to suffer from an array of severe health disparities, to include heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes. According to the National Institute of Health, an individual must have at least three metabolic risk factors to be diagnosed with metabolic syndrome: a high blood sugar level; hypertension or high blood pressure; a low HDL (aka “good cholesterol”) level; a high triglyceride (i.e., fat found in the blood) level; and a protruding waistline. Interestingly, the National Institute of Health posits that metabolic syndrome has several elements that work in tandem to create the debilitating condition in humans. Some of these characteristics, the Institute maintains, like a sedentary lifestyle, insulin resistance and obesity, can be manipulated and positively controlled by the individual. However, the governing medical organization argues that: “[y]ou can’t control other factors that may play a role in causing metabolic syndrome,” such as “genetics (ethnicity and family history), which may play a role in causing the condition. For example, genetics can increase your risk for insulin resistance, which can lead to metabolic syndrome.” National Institute of Health, “What is Metabolic Syndrome?” *U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute*: <<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov>>, November 3, 2011. For a lack of better words, not enough credence has been given to the predominant influence of healthy life-style factors on metabolic syndrome to support this reductionist paradigmatic stance that dominates the discourse in scientific medicine. Health disparities such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer and heart disease actually do “run” in the family lineage of the writer; however, the writer is living proof that if you change your dietary lifestyle and mental outlook on life, genetics are a non-factor. In a word, descendants, for the most part, inherent poor eating habits and a negative, defeatist mental attitude that becomes the chief reason an intergenerational transmission of dis-eases are the upshot, which suggests that most diseases are not genetic but manifest through expressions of culture.

prostate, or uterine; (c) cerebral vascular accident (i.e., stroke); (d) diabetes; and (e) nephritis (inflammation of the kidneys) rank among the top ten leading causes of death in the United States; stark evidence that should attract mass attention to those most affected by these astronomical statistics.⁷²

The writer might add that from the depletion of minerals in the body and the development of excess mucus and acid within the bloodstream, the body's immune system becomes severely depressed, and as a result: (1) the alimentary canal, more specifically the stomach, loses its ability to create the potency of hydrochloric acid necessary for proper digestion; (2) the bile, which is produced by and in the liver, turns acidic in nature; (3) the friendly bacteria in the digestive tract mutates; and in turn (4) the internal organs in the cavities within the body (i.e., the viscera) become weakened and susceptible to the infiltration of yeast, fungus, parasites, harmful bacteria and viruses. For the writer, both the presence of minerals in the body and the harmonious feelings of joy and inner peace are essential to maintain the proper pH (potential Hydrogen) and metabolic balance in the body. Thus, this symbiotic relationship is necessary to maintain equilibrium in all facets of life.

The triage theory of aging has been alternatively coined, and aptly so, by African thinker and naturopathic doctor, who also holds a Ph.D., Keith Moreno as the "health theory." From his standpoint as a holistic health practitioner, the health theory suggests that "the body has the inherent ability to prevent sickness, if the body is well or in good health;" therefore, there will be no "mention of disease..if the body did not experience

⁷² The enumeration and rank of the abovementioned degenerative disease are based off the figures provided by the Center of Disease Control (CDC) January 1, 2014 statistics.

this misunderstood decline in health.”⁷³ Moreno’s perspective on health is culturally in continuum with and follows in the same holistic medical traditions practiced millennia ago on the banks of the Nile River by ancient African custodians of health. Moreover, the revolutionary-minded naturopathic physician castigates the health care delivery system and medical approaches employed by organized, mainstream or, conventional or “scientific” medicine. Moreno is firm in his stance that:

Modern medicine is based on killing or destroying something. The patient is given medications with the idea of killing cancer, killing disease, killing blood sugars, killing tumors, killing germs and killing time - while depleting the body’s natural ability to detoxify and/ or repair itself. Everything is approached in a military science method opposed to medical science. The disease industry is so determined to kill something that the idea of killing the host is nothing more than a notion of romanticized collateral damage. The presence of health and the absence of noticeable pain or illness do not mean that disease is not present. Furthermore, health is not the opposite of disease. However, when the body experiences dis-ease or discomfort, it is a sign that the body is attempting to eliminate some form of toxicity and make necessary repairs.⁷⁴

As a retired medical doctor with over twenty years of experience as an obstetrician and gynecologist, who currently specializes in holistic wellness and women’s health and emotional issues, Jewel Pookrum mimics the sentiments espoused by Moreno. In her well known, African-Centered, concise but innovation work, *Vitamins & Minerals from A to Z*, Pookrum explicates the vital necessity the body has for minerals; in the same way the “temple” requires essential nutrients and the “food for life”—water, to function properly. To solidify her position as a proponent for the health theory, Pookrum maintains that minerals “function as coenzymes, enabling the body to quickly and accurately perform its activities...needed for the proper composition of body fluids,

⁷³ Keith Moreno, *The Mistruths About Disease: Ethnomedicine As Applied to The Misconceptions of Health* (Seattle: CreateSpace, 2013), 9.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

formation of blood and bones, and the maintenance of healthy nerve function,” and “naturally occurring elements found in the earth [which] is the foundation for all life forms on the planet.”⁷⁵ Her extensive knowledge and overall understanding of the body’s vital need for these life-sustaining substances prompted Pookrum to dedicate an entire chapter of aforementioned book to minerals by which she lists the most essential minerals (i.e., calcium, iron, zinc, etc.) and provides the natural foods sources from which one can consume to receive them.

In addition to her conceptual advocacy of the “health theory” or “triage theory of aging,” the once credentialed and acclaimed medical physician, also with a doctor of philosophy, turned holistic health practitioner offers a revolutionary medical idea in *Vitamins & Minerals from A to Z*, which makes the case that humans with different genetic makeups (e.g., Africans vis-à-vis Europeans) should seek medical care to attend to their variant health needs—in the same manner that many Koreans or Chinese do in the establishment of their own respective “towns,” which are, at times, housed in the downtown areas of major metropolitan cities in America. To reify her medical position that Africans should consume an eating regime other than the feverishly marketed Standard American Diet (SAD), Pookrum cites a reputable source in the field of chemistry. To further her case that Africans do share the same cellular make-up with other groups, she writes: “Dr. Roger Williams was one of the scientific intellectuals who wrote an entire book entitled *Biochemical Individuality*. Within this treatise he identifies

⁷⁵ Jewel Pookrum, *Vitamins & Minerals from A to Z* (Brooklyn: A&B Books Publishers Group), 107. See also her most recent publication: Jewel Pookrum, *Straight From the Heart: A Physician’s Loving Message of Healing & Wellness* (Yelm, WA: J.E.W.E.L. Publications, 2010).

that chemically each individual is different. Each family differs from another family,”⁷⁶ Additionally, Pookrum provides a queried and contested theoretical idea by which “[p]revious reading has indicated there are obvious nutritional needs for the melanin-dominant race that are distinct from the Caucasian race.”⁷⁷ Europeans need, Pookrum upholds, “animal flesh as a major source of protein and minerals. By appearances, this has been an adequate source of these nutrients for this population. However, aging diseases and many other physical deformities still occur with the selection of flesh as a major source for meeting nutritional requirements.”⁷⁸ On the other hand, she maintains that “[m]an originated from the melanin dominated race, and examined skeletal structures indicate that the teeth of this early man were suited to eating plants,” and as a result “[t]his supports the idea that the genetic information in the melanin-dominant body is programmed for vegetable consumption as a source of protein and minerals, not flesh.”⁷⁹

To embellish on the therapeutic worldview upheld by Pookrum, the writer, a holistic health practitioner himself, intimates that the human body has the inherent ability to prevent sickness, that is if the “temple” is well or in good health and given the necessary sustenance to carry out such corporeal responsibilities. Notwithstanding the overall intentions of this theory of aging, the writer also contends that the appearance of most illnesses and dis-eases would be nonexistent if the body did not experience a deteriorated state of health with a suppressed immune system due to the quotidian consumption of a diet: (1) high in animal protein and animal by-products; and (2)

⁷⁶ Pookrum, *Vitamins and Minerals*, 1-2. Also, see Roger J. Williams, *Biochemical Individuality: The Basis for the Genetotrophic Concept* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1956), 8-17.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷⁸ Jewel Pookrum, *Vitamins and Minerals*, 13.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

refined, processed and de-natured carbohydrates. Medical researcher, naturopathic physician, nutritionist, iridologist and herbalist Richard Anderson, in his text *Cleanse and Purify Thyself*, reinforces the notion that an exclusive plant-based diet creates an invigorated state of being. As a solution, he offers a laconic yet daunting task for individuals to obtain optimal health and take matters into their own hands: stop eating foods and “foodstuffs” that are dead, processed and nutritionally deficient and toxic, “for they cause mucus, excess acid, more toxins and congestion (especially congestion of the intestinal tract).”⁸⁰

Research Methods

Academically, this dissertation has trekked in uncharted territory as it has established a much-needed discourse as an attempt to trace the development of a holistic health tradition found in ancient Nile Valley culture that is utilized and practiced by African people in the United States, with a resurgence from the period of 1967 to the present; a long-view history, which has up to this point been largely ignored or neglected in academic circles. The primary methods utilized in this study included: 1) close readings of selected primary and secondary sources to include books, medical and journal articles and newspaper articles; and 2) in-depth interviews with key figures who employ holistic health practices, to include an array of naturalistic curative methods, in order to provide a detailed and critical analysis of the tradition and era being studied and mentioned supra.

⁸⁰ Richard Anderson, *Cleanse and Purify Thyself, Book 1.5* (Mt. Shasta, CA: Triumph, 1998), Chapter 1, 1-22.

Procedures

Over a one-and-a-half-year period, which commenced in the Spring of 2012 and concluded in the Fall of 2013, extended, in-depth interviews were conducted with respondents at a location and time mutually agreeable to both parties, which included a number of diverse settings, to include: their domiciles, various public venues, and their owned and operated business establishments. Upon agreement to be interviewed consent was granted by each adult interviewee. A total of fourteen adults were interviewed, which included six current and former raw and vegan restaurant proprietors; two naturopathic store owners; two certified holistic health practitioners; two proponents of a raw food and dietary lifestyle; one acclaimed holistic health activist and advocate; and two African import and export business operators. All of the respondents were interviewed in the city of Philadelphia save one, who was interviewed in the District of Columbia. The duration of each particular interview lasted anywhere from a minimum of an hour and a half to a maximum time of over four hours. In each interview, I utilized the snowball sampling technique to discover unsung but significant contributory individuals who would have otherwise been overlooked in the research process. All of the interviews conducted were both audio and video recorded for data recording purposes. At the discretion and approval of each of the respondents, all of the interviews conducted were video recorded for the additional purpose to safe keep and establish a

digital historical archive, which will be, over time, comprised of an array of Africana holistic health practitioners and activists, from various geographical locations, with the overall intent of establishing a digital long-view genealogy of this vibrant but veiled tradition.

The most significant texts related to this research based on the representative nature of their content that begin to appear in 1967 include Elijah Muhammad's *How to Eat to Live*, Alvenia Fulton's *Radiant Health Through Nutrition*, Dick Gregory's *Natural Diet for Folks Who Eat* and *Political Primer*; Llaila O. Afrika's *African Holistic Health and Nutricide*, Queen Afua's *Heal Thyself for Health and Longevity* and *Sacred Woman*, Jewel Pookrum's *Vitamins and Minerals from A to Z*, Frederick Douglass Opie's *Hog & Hominy*, Clovis E. Semmes' *Racism, Health, and Post-Industrialism*, Baxter D. Montgomery's *The Food Prescription for Better Health*, Keith Moreno's *The Mistruths About Disease*, Nana Kwaku Opare's *The Rule Book and User Guide for Healthy Living*, Suzar's *Drugs Masquerading as Food* and contributory works from other significant figures in the field of the Africana holistic health.

Limitations of Study

In no way is the work carried out in this dissertation comprehensive. The only limitation to this study is geographical in nature, particularly with the forthcoming research enterprise of conducting numerous studies to flesh out the presence of Africana holistic health traditions in locales other than the one being studied in this dissertation. Demographically, the primary focus of this study is restricted to the Philadelphia

metropolitan area. To conduct research on Africana holistic health traditions and alternative medicinal practices in multifarious African communities throughout the United States and abroad would be a daunting task, and in essence, would extend beyond the scope of this scholarly treatise. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this doctoral dissertation is but a fraction of a larger genealogical study on the same subject matter that the writer intends to embark on in the foreseeable future as both an African holistic health practitioner and burgeoning university scholar.

CHAPTER 4: COME BACK FORWARD: THE ARCHETYPE OF CLASSICAL AFRICAN THERAPEUTIC CUSTOMS AND ITS CULTURAL ARTICULATION IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN NATURALISTIC HEALING PRACTICES

The essential thing, for [African] people, is to rediscover the thread that connects them to their most remote ancestral past. In the face of cultural aggression of all sorts, in the face of all disintegrating factors of the outside world, the most efficient cultural weapon with which a people can arm itself is this feeling of cultural continuity.⁸¹

Awareness of ourstory is the umbilical cord to our true selves. And the strength of this vital connection to our source and sanity is dependent on the depth and dynamism of our understanding of ourstory. If we want to find our way back home, and indeed we must if we are to gain and maintain an Afrikan sanity, we must not only know ourstory, but we must also live it, building the present and into the future upon the beneficial pattern of the past. Living in this place, this dead, whitewashed cultural wasteland, we know this is a task most Afrikans would easily fail. For we intimately know this as an alien's, anti-Afrikan cultural space and we recognize the innumerable crimes committed against our Afrikan minds. At the same time, we also know that to submit to this insanity, is to tear the only umbilical cord we have to be who we naturally are. Any other lifeline is nothing more than electrified razor wire.⁸²

The historical factor is the cultural cement that unifies the disparate elements of a people to make them into a whole, by the particular slant of the feeling of historical continuity lived by the totality of the collective. It is the historical conscience thus engendered that allows a people to distinguish itself from a population, whose [cultural] elements, by definition, are foreign, one from the other. The historical conscience, through the feeling of cohesion that it creates, constitutes the safest and most solid shield of cultural security of a people. This is why every people seeks only to know and to live their true history well, to transmit its memory to their descendants.⁸³

Nature is the source of all cures. But we have to be humble and willing to learn from it.⁸⁴

Don't let a lion tell the giraffe's story.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Cheikh Anta Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology*

⁸² Mwalimu K. Bomani Baruti, *Nyansasem: A Calendar of Revolutionary Daily Thoughts*

⁸³ Cheikh Anta Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology*

⁸⁴ Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *Wizard of the Crow*

⁸⁵ Nigerian Proverb

Introduction

This chapter will examine the Classical African foundations of holistic health, medical practices most evident in the medical system found in ancient Nile Valley culture. Those anterior expressions of healing individuals, which employed the plant and mineral kingdom as well as spiritual acknowledgement, have been handed down throughout the millennia to Africans throughout the Diaspora. In this regard, this section will also examine those posterior cultural expressions of classical medicine of an earlier time, which became prevalent in the Western Hemisphere. More specifically, this segment of the dissertation will highlight and consider the therapeutic significance of a holistic health tradition practiced by enslaved Africans in what is considered today the United States of America.

While in bondage Africans had a well-deserved deep distrust for Europeans as well as for the plantocratic regime from which the latter oppressed the former and benefitted most socially, economically and politically. Given the repressive conditions of chattel slavery, it should be noted that the constant twin pillar themes for enslaved Africans in slave-holding societies were: resistance and rebellion. Nonetheless, most historical narratives that address the resistance strategies of enslaved Africans in the Western Hemisphere or the Americas usually examine the modalities that lead enslaved Africans to either: 1) create overt and subversive insurgent enactments while in captivity within slaveholding societies;⁸⁶ or 2) flee from bondage, to establish autonomous

⁸⁶ In his designated chapter entitled, “Forms of Resistance to Slavery,” Michael Craton underlines the

“maroon” communities in which they were in control.⁸⁷ While these historical accounts of resistance offer insight into how much Africans actually detested their conscripted social status and went to whatever extremes to be liberated, the extant discourse leaves

multifarious forms in which enslaved Africans resisted, from “*grand maroonage*” (running away by a mass number of Africans), to “*petit maroonage*” (short term and short distance running away), to more covert activities, such as work procrastination and stoppage. From his standpoint, Craton acknowledges that: “Defining slave resistance merely to include plots and acts of overt rebellion is unduly limiting and misleading. Slave resistance shaped the initial form of plantation society and its evolution, determined the efficiency of slavery as an economic system, and speeded the eventual demise of formal chattel slavery as an institution. Yet to understand fully how this was so it is necessary to define slave resistance to include all forms of resistance short of actual (or proposed) overt action. This proposes a whole spectrum of activities of behavior, shading from covert sabotage, through manifestations of internal rejection and anomie, to forms of dissimulated acceptance and accommodation that were, perhaps, as subversive as other forms.” Michael Craton, “Forms of Resistance to Slavery,” *General History of the Caribbean: The Slave Societies of the Caribbean*, ed., Franklin W. Knight (London: UNESCO Publications, 1997), 222. Even though Craton’s work is centered on the aspects of African resistance within the Caribbean, there is much to garner from this work being that there is an undeniable cultural unity of how Africans resisted, regardless of their location of enslavement throughout the Western Hemisphere.

⁸⁷ In the writer’s estimation, no other contemporary African historical thinker has explored this phenomenon of intransigent behavior and action by enslaved African to the extent that Cedric Robinson has in written form. His protracted text, *Black Marxism* highlights a litany of resistance, rebellion and maroonage by Africans, dating back to the sixteenth century. See Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of a Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 121-174. Other noteworthy contemporary works within the historical profession on the subject of resistance include, but are not limited to: Herbert Aptheker, “Maroons Within the Present Limits of the United States” *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 24, no. 2 (April 1939), 167-184, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), and *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States: From Colonial Times Through the Civil War, Volume 1* (New York: Citadel Press, 1951); C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1963); John Henrik Clarke, ed. *William Styron’s Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968); John Oliver Killens, *The Trial of Denmark Vesey* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970); Robert S. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey: The Slave Conspiracy of 1822* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970); Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon, 1972); Sterling Stuckey, *The Ideological Origins of Black Nationalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1974); Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979); Herbert Aptheker, “Resistance and Afro-American History” *Resistance: Studies in African, Caribbean and Afro-American History*, Gary Y. Okihiro, ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986); Jacob Carruthers, *The Irritated Genie: An Essay on the Haitian Revolution* (Chicago: Kemetic Institute, 1986); Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory & The Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Gerald Horne, *Negro Comrades of the Crown: African Americans and the British Empire Fight the U.S. Before Emancipation* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), and *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), inter alia.

much to be desired in exploring other means by which African resisted. However, there is a lacuna in the research in the sense that there has yet to be written or taken into account how enslaved Africans resisted on many occasions the demands by slavers to abandon the indigenous medical approaches that originated in Africa and adopt the medical practices of that era most utilized by the dominant society. In this chapter, the writer will attempt to address this omission by examining intrinsic African medical approaches that utilized natural elements of the earth as curative agents.

To date, research conducted on Classical African medicinal practices, from an African-centered perspective is scant. There is paucity in the African intellectual contribution to the subject of Classical African medical practices, and few African thinkers have examined or written about the Kemetic modalities of health.⁸⁸ Interestingly, much of the discourse on ancient Egyptian medicine or the therapeutic customs established and performed by ancient Africans have come primarily from European scholars, who for the most part, reside outside of the United States and are not sympathetic to the African intellectual historical project. In this sense, this chapter examines ancient Egyptian aspects of natural medicine as the foundations of what is considered today as holistic health.

⁸⁸ The works of African intellectuals Clovis E. Semmes, Theophile Obenga, John T. Chissell, Ralph L. Crowder, Charles S. Finch, Frederick Newsome, stand out in this regard. See, Fredrick Newsome, "Black Contributions to the Early History of Western Medicine: Lack of Recognition as a Cause of Black Under Representation in US Medical Schools," *Journal of the National Medical Association*, vol. 71, no. 2 (1979); Ralph L. Crowder, "Blacks Physicians and the African Contribution to Medicine," *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1 (Spring 1980); Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 of Charles S. Finch's, *The African Background to Medical Science: Essays in African History, Science & Civilization* (London: Karnak House, 1990), 121-168; John T. Chissell, *Pyramids of Power: An Ancient African Centered Approach to Optimal Health* (Baltimore: Positive Perceptions Publications, 1993); Clovis E. Semmes, *Racism, Health, and Post-Industrialism: A Theory of African American Health* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1996), and Theophile Obenga's, *African Philosophy, The Pharaonic Period: 2780 - 330 BC* (Popenguine, Senegal: Per Ankh, 2004).

According to redoubtable scholar activist John Henrik Clarke, the “history of Africans in the Americas and in the Caribbean Islands is incomplete without an examination of the African past.”⁸⁹ “This background,” Clarke reassures us, “is indispensable to an intelligent approach to [Africana] history”⁹⁰ This observation is not without merit. Given the postulation by this visionary African thinker, it is compulsory for African thinkers to “come back forward,” or read backwards to think and act in a forward manner and embrace the intellectual task at hand. For nearly two hundred and twenty five years—revealed first with the 1789 publication of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*—African thinkers have looked to ancient Africa for both inspiration and as the premise of “African Deep Thought.”⁹¹

As a defender of African antiquity, which places him squarely in the apprenticed tradition of Clarke, Jacob H. Carruthers, who identifies with an intellectual genealogy of Africans who sought to write history from an African vantage point by writing proficiently and with historical accuracy about classical Africa, reminds us that, “Nile Valley civilizations of Kush (ancient Ethiopia) and Kemet (ancient Egypt) have been the

⁸⁹ John Henrik Clarke, *African People in World History* (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1993), 11.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ This catchphrase has been coined by Jacob Carruthers as a result of the Western misrepresentation of ancient and contemporary African thought processes. Due to Western arrogance and misconceptions of the deep thought of Africa, this type of thinking by the European intelligentsia has been justifiably dismissed by Théophile Obenga, who argues: “When discussing Ancient Egypt it is always ‘religion’ and never ‘philosophy’ which is mentioned. This fault can only be attributed to the interpreters of the Egyptian texts. African Egyptologists must react against this...tendency...Let us not reduce their important writings to a single dimension of the sacred, the religious.” Théophile Obenga, *African Philosophy: The Pharaonic Period: 2780-330 BC* (Popenguine, Senegal: Per Ankh, 2004), 307. For a more thorough discussion of the concept of “African Deep Thought,” see Jacob H. Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr, Divine Speech: A Historiographical Reflection of African Deep Thought from the Time of the Pharaohs to the Present* (London: Karnak House, 1995), xvii-xviii, 7-36.

foundation pillars of African-centered thought for over two centuries.”⁹² To date, this thrust by African scholars and activists, to acknowledge the cultural rhythm of Africa, with Classical African being the impetus, has stood the test of time, despite the various geographical locations Africans have found themselves.

Above all, Queen Afua reflects on the intellectual call to arms and thrust by contemporary African historical thinkers to culturally unite the historical roots of Africa with the birth of civilization in ancient Egypt:

African-Americans’ exploration of their ancestral wisdom teachings has been painfully restricted by the absence of written records. But thanks to the unconquerable and profound legacy of our rich oral tradition, and the extraordinary efforts of Afrikan and Afrikan American historians and scholars, such as [Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop, Theophile Obenga,] Dr. John Henrik Clarke, Dr. Yosef [b]en Jochannan, Dr. Shava Ali, and Jacob Carruthers – and spiritual leaders who apply ancient Maatian principles to live by today...we have at last been able to document the true origins of Nubian-Afrikan culture and its defining an indisputable influence on Khamitic (Egyptian) culture. Armed with this knowledge, we have been able to tap into the roots of this legacy and bring its fruits to vibrant life.⁹³

In this regard, this work is *foundationalist*⁹⁴ in nature and is premised on the foundations of Classical African culture. In a word, this dissertation is a small contribution to this intellectual enterprise and is a methodological reflection of the work laid out by our

⁹² Jacob Carruthers, “Kush and Kemet: The Pillars of African-centered Thought” *Contemporary Africana: Theory, Thought and Action: A Guide to Africana Studies*, ed. Clenora Hudson-Weems (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007), 43.

⁹³ Queen Afua, *Sacred Woman: A Guide to Healing the Feminine Body, Mind, and Spirit* (New York: The Ballantine Publishing Group, 2000), 5.

⁹⁴ A term coined by Jacob Carruthers, foundationalist thinkers are vindicationist in their scholarly approach and non-negotiable in their ideological stance, claiming ancient Nile Valley culture (particularly Kush and Kemet) as their epistemological operational premise, with the overall intent on restoring African history and culture. Accordingly, the overall objective of a foundationalist thinker, expressed so aptly by Greg Carr, is “to construct a narrative of African and world history in which the behavior of the actors involved at any particular moment can be placed in a larger framework of political interpretation commensurate nevertheless with the historical context of the moment under study.” Greg E. Kimathi Carr, “The African-Centered Philosophy of History: An Exploratory Essay on the Genealogy of Foundationalist Historical Thought and African Nationalist Identity Construction,” *The African World History Project: The Preliminary Challenge*, eds. Jacob H. Carruthers and Leon C. Harris (Los Angeles: ASCAC Foundation, 1997), 319.

African intellectual antecedents who saw African liberation as an uncompromising initiative. Due to the linguist contributions of contemporary African thinkers such as Theophile Obenga, Aboubacry Moussa Lam⁹⁵, Babacar Sall, Mfundishi Jhutymy Ka N Heru Hassan K. Salim, Mario Beatty, and Andreas Woods, to name a few, their mastery of Medew Netcher and other classical languages have not only answered the intellectual call to arms ushered in by Cheikh Anta Diop⁹⁶ and others that Queen Afua alluded to, but has ushered in a new generation of Africana scholars whose intent is to establish a cultural relationship between ancient Nile Valley culture and posterior cultures throughout the African Diaspora.⁹⁷

Foundations of Naturalistic Health Practices in Ancient Nile Valley Culture

Perhaps one of the greatest influences ancient Nile Valley culture has bestowed upon the Western world is its multifarious contributions to contemporary medicine and biomedical research. Being that ancient Egyptians preserved the written word—a

⁹⁵ See Aboubacry Moussa Lam, *Les Chemins du Nil: Les relations entre l’Egypte ancienne et l’Afrique Noire* (Paris: Présence Africaine and Khepera, 1997).

⁹⁶ Cheikh Anta Diop’s epistemological and methodological model stressed the learning of Medew Netcher (Hieroglyphs) as the necessary first step to re-connecting African history. Diop argued: “the study of languages, institutions, and so forth cannot be treated properly, in a word, it will be impossible to build African humanities, a body of African human sciences, so long as that relationship does not appear legitimate.” For him, “[t]he African historian who evades the problem of Egypt is neither modest nor objective; nor unruffled; he is ignorant, cowardly, and neurotic.” Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality?* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1974), xiv.

⁹⁷ With the recent appointments of two key faculty members in the Department of Afro-American Studies at Howard University: 1) Mario Beatty, protégé of Theophile Obenga; and 2) Andreas Woods, an intellectual apprentice of and now colleague of Beatty is the last African in the United States to have received a Ph.D. in Egyptology from Brown University, the initiative anticipated by Cheikh Anta Diop has come to fruition in the academy. The establishment and offering of Medew Netcher courses at Howard University is a clear indication that the forthcoming years will prove to be fruitful for the Africana intellectual project as a plethora of burgeoning Africana scholars will be trained in the fundamentals of this Classical African language as a means to approach, access and accentuate cultural memory and “let the ancestors speak for themselves.”

vocation carried by scribes (i.e., “sesh”)—of nearly every account of their human existence, the sources of their medical knowledge as well as their practice of medicine are evidenced and accessible today through the various medical papyri in which they left behind for subsequent generations. For several millennia, Kemites had made numerous contributions to the art of medicine and were thus acknowledged in the ancient world as inventors of medicine. Ancient Egypt, in this sense, generated the earliest forms of specialized medical personnel, medical knowledge as well as a compendium of medical treatises, which came to be considered the world’s first known extensive medical literature. As a result, “Egyptian herbal prescriptions and other specialized treatments spread throughout the Mediterrean world.”⁹⁸ Without question, ancient Nile Valley culture contributed to the development of medicine in ancient Greece and what became known as the Hippocratic tradition.

Of the many medical treatises that have yet to be unearthed in Kemet, a total of ten papyri are at the present extant, the most significant being the Ebers Papyrus and Edwin Smith Papyrus.⁹⁹ These medical texts, branded with non-indigenous and imperialist titles, include: (1) The Berlin Medical Papyrus, (2) The Carlsberg Papyrus; (3) The Chester Beatty Papyrus; (4) The Ebers papyrus; (5) The Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus; (6) The Heart Papyrus; (7) The Kahun Papyrus; (8) The London Medical papyrus; (9) The Ramesseum Papyri; (9); and (10) The Brooklyn Papyrus.¹⁰⁰ “These

⁹⁸ Lionel Casson, *Ancient Egypt* (New York: Time, Inc., 1965), 148.

⁹⁹ Paul Ghalioungui, *The House of Life, Per Ankh: Magic and Medical Science in Ancient Egypt* (Amsterdam: B.M. Israel, 1973), 30.

¹⁰⁰ Although there has been much contention concerning the chronology and dating of Nile Valley cultures during the pharaonic periods, these ancient African medical treatises, according to Gamel el Din Mokhtar, date between the third (3rd) and nineteenth (19th) dynastic periods. Gamel el Din Mokhtar, *The*

10,” Finch summons, “form the basis of most of what Egyptologist [today] know about Egyptian medicine [, understandably so, being] that much of the training and instruction of the healing priests must have been orally transmitted, as it is in the rest of Africa.”¹⁰¹

As the pharaoh (per-uah), who was considered both the political and spiritual leader, was ensconced in the wisdom of the nation, and the scribe—as an upholder of Kemetic identity—, so too were healers in the Nile Valley responsible for maintaining the well-being of its inhabitants. In Kemet, the custodians who were most responsible for providing health care were given specific titles to describe both their vocation as healers as well as “their status relative to the local, regional and national construction of identity.”¹⁰² For all intent and purposes, these ancient healers had to embody the aptitude necessary, the familiarity to identify healing properties of natural elements, and the awareness to identify various symptoms of dis-ease and illnesses. Moreover, the disciplined eating regiment of these healing priests/physicians ensured they had a bill of

UNESCO General History of Africa II: Ancient Civilizations of Africa, abridged edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990, 63-67. The established agenda-driven chronology of pharaonic Kemet that we see today, Carr notes: “has been assembled in “modern” times through the manipulation of two key documents: first and foremost, the testimony of Manetho, an Ptolemaic-era Heliopolitan priest [of the third century B.C.E.] of mixed ancestry who divided nearly 3000 years of rulers into 30 dynasties. Manetho’s actual text does not survive: instead, only discussions of it in the work of Josephus, Julius Africanus, Syncellus and Tarasius, later Jewish and Christian historians with clear ideological agendas, including the Jewish desire to prove their antiquity with reference to Egyptian history and chronology... Secondly, the recovery of a papyrus known as the “Royal Canon of Turin” which dates back to the 12th century b.c.e. provided lists of the days and years of many for pharaonic reigns, and, like the Palermo Stone, includes the reigns of ntrs as well as humans.” Greg E. Kimathi Carr, “African Philosophy of History in the Contemporary Era: Its Antecedents and Methodological Implications for the Contribution to World History” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Temple University, 1998), 160. See also, Stephen Quirke, *Who Were the Pharaohs? A History of Their Names With a List of Cartouches* (London: E.J. Quill Press, 1990); and Peter A. Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs: The Reign by Reign Record of the Rulers and Dynasties of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1004), 218, inter alia.

¹⁰¹ Finch, *The African Background to Medical Science*, 122.

¹⁰² Greg E. Kimathi Carr, “African Philosophy of History in the Contemporary Era: Its Antecedents and Methodological Implications for the Contribution to World History” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Temple University, 1998), 154.

health that mirrored the wellness they sought for its inhabitants. In this respect, ancient “Egyptian priests ate no pork, no mutton, no fish, no salt and, of course, no beans.”¹⁰³

Of the multifarious holistic practices and curative treatments provided by contemporary African practitioners—as well as adherents of these customs—in the present day, all putatively have their medicinal roots in Classical African traditions. Even more, to solidify the point of the transmission of medial knowledge onto subsequent cultures, those foreign and intergenerational, Clovis E. Semmes (aka Jabulani K. Makalani) adds:

The roots of the worldview that embodied African medical traditions were focused in ancient African civilizations that grew up in the Nile Valley...Ancient Kemet produced significant contributions to medical knowledge that were quite advanced. This knowledge had a significant impact on non-indigenous groups who visited the region and attended Kemetic institutions of higher learning and who later invaded and occupied the region. Ancient African traditions were spread to Europeans through the Greeks and through the influence of Islamic Africans call Moors.¹⁰⁴

From its most anterior expressions of Classical African culture, most evident in Khartoumian civilization, “a fixed habitat brought with it the use of pottery, the domestication and breeding of cattle, agriculture, and a host of tools to meet man's growing needs,”¹⁰⁵ which marked a decisive stage in the history of humanity. Along with these advances of African civilization came the need to provide a balanced health care system and administer health care to inhabitants of the Nile Valley reflective of the applied divine social order established in society—i.e., Maat. As Nile Valley

¹⁰³ Colin Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast: A History of Vegetarianism* (London: Fourth Estate, 1993), 58.

¹⁰⁴ Clovis E. Semmes, *Racism, Health, and Post-Industrialism: A Theory of African American Health* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1996), 67.

¹⁰⁵ F. Debono, “The Prehistory of the Nile Valley,” *UNESCO General History of Africa*, vol. 1 *Methodology and African Prehistory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 642.

civilizations progressed, individuals, through both curiosity and observation, discovered that some vegetation caused pain and/or sickness while others brought about strength or even an alleviation of illnesses. In time, inhabitants of this fertile land, which were enriched by the nutrient-rich waters of the Nile River “began to use vegetable products in the prevention and treatment of disease.”¹⁰⁶ More concretely, this advanced knowledge of plant life afforded ancient African healing practitioners in the Nile Valley to manipulate and utilize flora and minerals as remedial substances for those in need. On this very idea, Finch posits that classical “African physicians evolved effective—even sophisticated—diagnostic and therapeutic modalities in medicine which belie the notion that Africa was without a medical science.”¹⁰⁷ Without question, nature had provided and organically opened up the world’s first drugstore in which the Nile Valley played a significant part.

There are some scholars who ascribe to the fact that the plant kingdom first became systemized for therapeutic purposes in ancient Egypt. For example, in an attempt to ground the basis for such an argument, Esmat A. Hassan proclaims that the introducing and mastery of “folk medicine,”¹⁰⁸ as he deems it, by ancient Egyptians is indisputable,

¹⁰⁶ Stanley Krippner and Benjamin Colodzin, “Folk Medicine and Herbal Medicine: An Overview” *Folk Medicine and Healing* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1981), 13

¹⁰⁷ Finch, *The African Background to Medical Science*, 121.

¹⁰⁸ Hassan and other scholars’ usage of the phrase “folk medicine” in defining complex health systems utilized by African people is problematic, to say the least. The concept “folk medicine” is used pervasively in discourse as a racist blanket term, referring to the indigenous and self-sustaining health systems (practices and beliefs) of non-Europeans in which members of a particular cultural group identify and utilize various natural substances and metaphysical concepts for their medicinal purposes. Due to this hegemonic siphoning of terminology, nowhere is the phrase adequately defined to capture the totality of its meaning. For purposes of clarity, I consider a so-called “folk” medical system to be: 1) any medical system that is autonomous in its own right and independently caters to the physical and mental health needs of those individuals considered part of a particular community; 2) any system of health practice at variance with the protocols and guidelines of orthodox scientific (i.e., Western) medicine; and 3) any health system

given the plethora of natural medical remedies found in the renowned Ebers papyrus, which date back to approximately the sixteenth millennium before our common era (i.e., circa 1500 B.C.E.).¹⁰⁹ It is from the medical records of papyri such as the aforementioned that Hassan proclaims: “the plant kingdom appears to be the main origin for material(s) used in folk medicine. In this respect, Queen Hatshepsut was the first to cultivate plants for medicinal use in the Temple gardens of Karnak.”¹¹⁰ Similarly, Obenga informs us that with the use of natural elements of the earth, “the origins of medical incubation date back to ancient Egypt,” and equally significant “[i]t was also in ancient Egypt that aromatherapy, the use of plant essences for treating diseases was born.”¹¹¹ Being that ancient Africans, through observation, keenly studied nature and understood all energy—mundane and celestial—as the basis for everything in the universe, it is here that we are enlightened to the fact that the extraction of remedies from the plant and mineral kingdom played such a large part in the *materia medica* (i.e., the remedial substances employed in medicine) of the ancient Egyptian healing systems.

Without question, Kemetic societies were informed by the belief in a complex

that is characterized by a high degree of shared knowledge between the health practitioner and the public. Former Georgia State University professor of Anthropology, Carole E. Hill, in an attempt to make light of this overgeneralization states: “the term ‘folk’ in anthropology means the ‘inside point of view’ of the people under study, whether we are discussing folk medicine, folk science, folk history, or folklore.” Carol E. Hill, “Black Healing Practices in the Rural South” *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 6, no. 4, ed. Robert A. Barakat vol. 6, no. 4 (Spring 1973), 849. In my estimation, the term “folk,” as it relates to medicine fails to capture and describe the content mastery and professionalism of medical delivery skills of African holistic health practitioners as well as other Non-European naturalistic practitioners—skills recognized as such by their own peoples. For a discussion on the historical origins and intricacies of variant alternative medical systems, see Pamela I. Erickson, *Ethnomedicine* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc, 2008).

¹⁰⁹ Esmat A. Hassan, “Folk medicine in Egypt: Past and Present” *European Journal of Integrative Medicine*, vol. 3, no. 3 (September 2011), 127. See also, Theophile Obenga’s, *African Philosophy, The Pharaonic Period: 2780 - 330 BC* (Popenguine, Senegal: Per Ankh, 2004), 371-382, 392.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Obenga, *African Philosophy*, 392.

aggregate spiritual system by which celestial and terrestrial attributes were explicated and identified in anthropomorphic form as the “Netcheru.” The Netcheru were reflective of the harmonious relationship between humans and the universe and represented various aspects of the same creative force with distinct moral ideals and values. In this regard, Hassan K. Salim maintains that all netcheru, for all intent and purposes, “are expressions of cosmic energies, with each Ntchr or Ntchrt representing a principle of nature in the harmonic unfolding of Creation.”¹¹² In the Nile Valley, the Netcheru presided over all forms and functions, on several planes of reality, mental, physical and spiritual. With this understanding, the specific terms: “netchert” represented the female principle, while the appellation “netcher” represented the masculine principle, respectively.

In addition to the cosmological and ethical aspects in which they represented, certain Netcheru were intrinsically associated with physical manifestations of healing. As it relates to the subject matter, of the written works on ancient Egyptian medicine that are translated into English, none is as comprehensive as Paul Ghauliougui’s groundbreaking treatise, *Per Ankh: House of Life*. In this trailblazing piece, the late physician presents a rather unique view of the Netcheru who were venerated throughout the Nile Valley. The medicinal characteristics offered by Ghauliougui highlights the divinities’ attributes as it relates to health and wellness; an avant-garde stance from the more common, arbitrary agreements established in the field of Egyptology. Among the aggregate of deities in Kemet, the author maintains that it was with the female divine principle of Sekhmet in which: (1) a shrine was erected in her honor, which identified her

¹¹² Mfundishi Jhutym Ka N Heru Hassan K. Salim, *Spiritual Warriors are Healers* (New Brunswick, NJ: Kera Jhuty Heru Neb-Hu Publishing Co., 2003), 30.

predominance; and (2) ancient Egyptian healing practitioners called upon to perform curative practices.¹¹³ Depicted as a lioness-headed divinity, Sekhmet was the netchert and patroness of healing in which priests—ranging from the *wabw*¹¹⁴ (i.e., simple priests) to the *swnw* (i.e., lay physicians) to the Chief of the Priests—specialized in therapeutic practices.¹¹⁵ Considered a redoubtable warrior divinity that could inflict death and disease, Sekhmet’s vital force could be felt most by elements of the scorching sun during the summer heat in the Sahara desert. Her essence was most beneficial to ancient African healing practitioners as they invoked her healing powers, which manifested as but was not limited to the heat in fevers to rid dis-ease and purge impurities from the body.¹¹⁶

Although there was a particular privileged class in Kemet that developed and administered natural therapeutic remedies for the ill, Ghalioungui argues that in no way were these curative practices limited to the privileged sect in society. In fact, commoners too, played an integral part as healers in the Nile Valley. On this very point, the author asserts: “In Ancient Egypt, the practice of the healing art does not seem to have been restricted to a particular class of people for, owing to different ways of looking at disease and consequently different methods of combating it, there were various categories of

¹¹³ Built in honor of the Netcher Ptah (who is considered the great architect of the universe) by Pharaoh Thutmose III, in the eighteenth dynastic period, the Temple of Ptah at Karnak consists of three interconnecting sanctuaries devoted to the divine triumvirate who were revered at Mennefer (Memphis). Of the three shrines, one was devoted solely to the worship of Sekhmet. According to Margaret A. Murray, the Temple of Ptah was built on the site of an earlier temple of the twelfth dynasty during the Middle Kingdom, and interestingly, the shrine of Sekhmet was designed in such a way to “give a peculiar effect and to produce optical illusions” for all individuals entering the temple. Margaret A. Murray, *Egyptian Temples* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2002), 93.

¹¹⁴ Ghalioungui acknowledges that among those who performed healing practices in honor of Sekhmet, the *wabw* priests may not have received any medical training, per se, but acquired some medical knowledge (through association and practice) and performed medical functions that were nonetheless influential in the healing practices of that era. Ghalioungui, *The House of Life*, 14.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Queen Afua, *Sacred Woman*, 125.

healers to whom patients entrusted their ailing bodies.”¹¹⁷ In a word, the business of promoting spiritual and corporeal balance in ancient Egypt was a communal responsibility, for the nation promoted such allegiance.

Used quite effectively amongst holistic health practitioners today to ameliorate conditions directly associated with problems of the alimentary canal (which includes the mouth, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine and anus) or digestive tract, the practice of hydrotherapy—a division of therapeutics that deals with the curative uses of water – was too pervasively utilized in ancient Egypt as a means to heal various ailments. In highlighting the inclusiveness of such practice in Kemetic society, J. Worth Estes acknowledges:

Egyptian temples were designed not for congregational worship but as settings in which the priests carried out their rituals. However, some temples were also associated with healing. At those temples, the transference of magical healing powers via water was practiced on a large scale in buildings now called sanatoria, such as that at the temple of [Het-Heru] at Dendera...The sick could bathe in water that had been sanctified, perhaps in the temple’s sacred lake, so that they would be healed by being imbued with the same vital forces that had regenerated [Ausar] after [Auset] had restored his body.¹¹⁸

Essentially, water, considered by some as the “food for life,” was used just as prevalent, medicinally, in Nile Valley culture as the plant and mineral kingdom to ameliorate physical illnesses.

¹¹⁷ Paul Ghalioungui, *The Physicians of Pharaonic Egypt* (Cairo, Egypt: Al-Ahram Center for Scientific Translations, 1983), 1.

¹¹⁸ J. Worth Estes, *The Medical Skills of Ancient Egypt* (Canton, MA: Science History Publications, 1989), 17.

In the same vein, the Netcher Djehuti was associated with and deemed the creator of one of the primary practices and uses of colon hydrotherapy—the enema¹¹⁹. In citing the work of French Egyptologist Francois Joseph Chapas,¹²⁰ Ghalioungui argues that Kemetic tradition, “considered him the author of the enema,” although the Greeks lacked insight and misunderstood this abstract concept as a result of erroneous interpretation.¹²¹ The latter point of the aforementioned statement, on the other hand, is significant in the sense that it reveals that as foreigners, the Greeks were not as abstract in their thought processes and did not have a full grasp or understanding of Kemetic culture in general, particularly the indigenous language: Medew Netcher, in order to grasp the therapeutic concept—wholistically.

According to Kemetic cosmology, Djehuti is considered the archetype of knowledge and the personification of (Good) speech—what Jacob Carruthers considers “the container and preserver of African Deep Thought.”¹²² In this regard, the common attributes associated with Djehuti are intelligence, wisdom and writing. According to Carruthers, the import of spoken word was evident in all aspects of Nile Valley life and culture. In translating a passage in the Ebers Papyrus to support his claim, Carruthers maintains that, “the association between science and speech is even more explicit in the

¹¹⁹ For a more thorough examination of the health and purification benefits of taking enemas, see Richard Anderson, *Cleanse and Purify Thyself*, Book 1.5 (Mt. Shasta, CA: Triumph, 1998)11-248, 11-250, and Appendix III, A3-385-A3-396.

¹²⁰ See Francois Joseph Chapas, *Mélanges Égyptologiques* (Paris: Châlon, 1862), 66.

¹²¹ Ghalioungui, *The House of Life*, 15.

¹²² Jacob H. Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr, Divine Speech: A Historiographical Reflection of African Deep Thought From the Time of Pharaohs to the Present* (London: Karnak Housem 1995), xii. According to Carruthers, formalized speech (language) was used in the ancient African world as a conduit for both social change and “Deep Thought.” Moreover, See also Chapter 2 (pages 39-62) of the same text in which Carruthers provides thorough definitions and a critical analysis of the Kemetic concepts of Divine Speech (i.e., Medew Netcher) and Good Speech (i.e., Medew Nefer).

Kemetic discipline of medicine.” Nonetheless, the healing attributes of enemas convey the intrinsic link with the common attributes of Djehuti. A case in point: an enema removes impacted fecal matter and toxins from the colon and other internal organs, thus allowing the large intestine to carry out its intended function of feeding and providing essential nutrients to every cell, every tissue and every organ throughout the body, to include the brain, the primary organ of the central nervous system responsible for all thought processes.

Moving forward in time, this connection is most evident within contemporary holistic health circles, as certain organs of the alimentary canal (i.e, stomach and large intestine) in humans are referred to by practitioners as the “second brain.”¹²³ In this respect, the “taking of enemas,” therefore, “are fully constructive [in] lifting us to a higher level of existence through purification,” by relieving one of massive accumulation of toxic mucus, pus, and poisonous waste, various pains, constipation, flatulence, and headaches. As a result, the mind-body connection between the bowel, internal organs and the brain are maintained, placing the former in its “right mind,” if you will.

¹²³ Among contemporary holistic health and other alternative health practitioners, there is the notion that the digestive system is intimately connected to the rest of the body as well as to the mind. In essence, it can be said to have a kind of intelligence of its own. However, it is through the accumulation of putrefied waste in the colon that the normal mind-body connection is disrupted, and as a consequence, various diseases manifest. The rationale behind such an ideal is understandable when one takes into account how the digestive system exhibits certain characteristics that are connected to thoughts and the mind. A prime example of this is how the emotions of fear, anxiety, and stage fright manifest in the abdomen, thusly creating the sensation of “butterflies” in the stomach. For a more comprehensive examination of this psychosomatic (mind-body) phenomena, see Kenneth R. Pelletier, *Mind as Healer, Mind as Slayer* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1977), as this text explores the sources of stress and makes the connection between stress and four major types of illness: arthritis, cancer, respiratory disease and cardiovascular disease. See also, Kenneth R. Pelletier, *Holistic Medicine: From Stress to Optimal Health* (New York: Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence, 1979), and *Sound Mind, Sound Body: A New Model for Lifelong Health* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994).

Akin to Djehuti's association with the enema, other Netcheru have been identified by Ghalioungui to possess traits concomitant with alternative health practices utilized in the contemporary era. The Netcheru Amen, for example, considered the self-created and unseen creative force that is found in all things, provided comfort to those with complications associated with the eyes. Thus, Amen was seen as "the healers of the eyes without remedies...[one] who opens the eyes and cures squint."¹²⁴ The ability by Amen to access and ameliorate ocular conditions can be likened to the contemporary holistic medical practice of iridology.¹²⁵

Additionally, both female deities, Ta-Urt and Neith (Net), were associated with childbirth. The former presided over childbirth while the latter, who was originally worshipped as a patron of war,¹²⁶ "protected physicians and parturient women [, and as proof] she can be seen in several engravings assisting women in labour."¹²⁷ Subsequently, this practice of midwifery, during the antebellum period in the United States, was the sole responsibility of African women; that is until it became a male-dominated field in the nineteenth century as a result of a medical degree becoming the

¹²⁴ Ghalioungui, *The House of Life*, 15.

¹²⁵ Iridology is the art and science that uses the eyes—considered by some to be the windows to the soul—to detect abnormalities, disorders and variations within the body with the intent of establishing a homeostasis condition. It involves analyzing the structure of the iris, that portion of the eye that carries pigmentation, by which the physical, mental and spiritual conditions of individuals are revealed. African naturopathic physician Paul Goss has written a beneficial work, which provides numerous pictorials of the iris and displays the specific locations within the eye that is associated with various glands and organs as well as the chronic diseases (e.g., Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, hepatitis, high cholesterol, and renal failure, to name a few) that manifest as a result of an imbalanced and toxic system. See Paul Goss, *Forever Young* (Los Angeles: self-published, 1985). See also, Donald R. Banner, *Introduction to Iridology: The Beginners Guide to Iris Study* (Pleasant Grove, UT: Woodland Publishing, 1996).

¹²⁶ Mfundishi Jhutymy Ka N Heru Hassan K. Salim, *Spiritual Warriors are Healers*, 78.

¹²⁷ Ghalioungui, *The House of Life*, 16.

standard to assist in childbirth.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, as midwives during the period of enslavement, not only did African women deliver the offspring of the enslaved,—in much the same manner as the responsibilities bestowed upon Ta-Urt and Neith—but they also used a pharmacopeia of herbs to maintain balance in the lives of those they attended to during childbirth.

Comparable to all contemporary African medical traditions, the medical systems established by Ancient Egyptians, which incorporated spiritual, physical and what Western science deems “magical” elements has perplexed the mainstream medical community. “Mostly, this magico-spiritual aspect has been downplayed or belittled... [but,] even modern medicine concedes that as much as sixty percent of illness has a psychic base and indeed, the well-known placebo¹²⁹ effect of modern pharmaco-medicine arises from this,” argues Charles S. Finch, former Director of International Health at the Morehouse School of Medicine.”¹³⁰ Admittedly so, as a university-trained physician himself, Finch confesses: “We moderns like to deride this magico-spiritual medicine but

¹²⁸ Valerie Lee, *Granny Midwives and Black Women Writers* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 27.

¹²⁹ For a sense of how effective placebos are in medical clinical trials as well as its range of varied usage over time, see, Henry K. Beecher, “The Powerful Placebo,” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 159, no. 17 (December 24, 1955); Margaret Talbot, “The Placebo Prescription” *New York Times Magazine* (Jan. 9, 2000); Tamar Nordenberg, “The Placebo Effect: Belief and Healing” *Consumers’ Research*, vol. 83, issue 2 (Feb 2000); Mary Faith Marshall, “The Placebo Effect in Popular Culture,” *Science and Engineering Ethics*, vol. 10, issue 1 (Jan 2004); Janet Spencer King, “The Placebo Effect,” *Inside MS*, vol. 22, issue 4 (October-December 2004); Robert Burton, “Why ‘placebo’ is not a dirty word,” *Salon.com* (August 1, 2008) <<http://www.salon.com/env/mindreader/2008/08/01/placeboeffect/>>; and Harriet Hall, “The Placebo Effect,” *Skeptic*, vol. 15, issue. 1 (2009).

¹³⁰ Charles S. Finch’s, *The African Background to Medical Science: Essays in African History, Science & Civilization* (London: Karnak House, 1990), 122. Finch has experienced first-hand knowledge as to how effective placebos work on patients in West Africa. Between 1992-1995, on three different occasions, Finch, along with Robert R. Franklin and Erick Gbodossou lead traditional healer research projects in Senegal to examine among the Serer people the uses of African traditional medicine vis-à-vis modern medicine. The overall objective of the projects were to study the traditional healers of Senegal as well as the role they play in the delivery of health care in the country. See, Jeanine Stokes, “Traditonal Medicine: More Than A Cure,” *Tulane Medicine*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1993), 8-11.

it can and does produce startling results that we do not understand.”¹³¹ Still, at least one European intellectual, who also happens to be a physician, is sympathetic to the African intellect project (by default due to his honest and thorough research) and has conceded to the fact that healing, a complex physical and psychic process (i.e., involving mind, body and soul) may be amenable to an approach that touches that hidden area of the psyche beyond the reach of rational therapy.¹³²

Considering the medical terminology used in biomedicine, the term “placebo” describes a pharmaceutical drug that is inactive in terms of its effectiveness and is used in clinical trials in which patients are led to believe is active. In many cases in which the patient suffers from an illness, the mere act of believing in the efficacy of a treatment can produce results that are most beneficial. Tamara Nordenberg, in her article entitled, “The Placebo Effect: Belief and Healing,” estimates that: “For a given medical condition, it is not unusual for one-third of the patients to feel better in response to treatment with placebo.”¹³³ Contrarily, Finch argues that in using placebos on patients to produce a desired result, the percentage of efficacy is greater, producing “beneficial results in 40% or more of patients.”¹³⁴ This success rate of utilizing the placebo effect, which again highlights the power of the mind in healing ailments, lends Finch to assert: “Without this effect, faith healers would have gone out of business centuries ago.”¹³⁵

The idea of using a “placebo,” per se, for medical purposes to produce desired

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² See Ghalioungui, *House of Life*, 125.

¹³³ Tamar Nordenberg, “The Placebo Effect: Belief and Healing” *Consumers' Research Magazine*, vol. 83, no. 2 (February 2000), 16.

¹³⁴ Finch, *The African Background to Medical Science*, 206.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

results has an African foundation. To be sure, these practices can be traced back to ancient Nile Valley culture. In their treatise that attempts to establish a long narrative of placebo usage, authors Elaine and Arthur Shapiro trace the history of its efficacy back to what they consider “prescientific medicine.” For the M.D. and Ph.D. duo:

It is a mystery how a ubiquitous treatment used since antiquity was unknown, unnamed, and unidentified until recently. It is even more remarkable because this is the only treatment common to all societies and cultures. When we examine the long history of medicine, it is the only common denominator between the Egyptian physician who prescribed crocodile dung and the modern physician who prescribes penicillin. Moreover, its effectiveness has been attested to, without exception, for more than two millennia.¹³⁶

The history outlined in *The Powerful Placebo* provides sufficient enough of evidence to debunk the hypothesis that until recently the history of medical treatments was essentially the history of the placebo effect.

Being that Kemetic medicinal practices have influenced subsequent cultures, both African and otherwise, we should not be astonished that a substantial portion of those olden remedies that were associated with various the netcheru continue to be employed by both “professional” and nonprofessional healers in the contemporary era. Nonetheless, the problem, still, is that the tenets of intellectual racism and/or white supremacy continuously attempts on every front to disconnect present-day Africans from classical African ideas. To highlight this point, Crowder sums it up best:

Within the context of world history, the African civilization of Egypt represented the cradle of medical research and scientific achievement. It is a historical irony to witness the descendants of this impressive scientific legacy relegated to the fringes of the American medical community and deemed by so-called white academic authorities as intellectually incapable of pursuing careers in medicine.

¹³⁶ Arthur K. Shapiro and Elaine Shapiro, *The Powerful Placebo: from Ancient Priest to Modern Physician* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1997), 1.

This myth was a product of the larger distortion of black history to legitimate slavery, segregation, peonage, and eventually the ‘closed door policy’ of white medical associations.¹³⁷

Given this quandary, the writer opines there is an exigent need for Africans to embrace, in the words of George G.M. James, our “stolen legacy”¹³⁸ and to take matters of health into our hands, with the understanding that dire situations (i.e., amputation, injuries sustained motor vehicle accidents, etc.) may require the services of allopathic or conventional medicine. Nevertheless, for African-Centered thinkers, there is no need to debate, for the evidence our Ancestors left behind speaks for itself and settles any disputes: Ancient Egyptians, who were African in every sense of the word (i.e. phenotype, culture, etc.) produced the first medical vocabulary, the first known medical treatises, the first splints and bandages, the first surgical and natural drug therapies as well as the first written observation of human anatomy. In light of this, the sad reality, laments Newsome, is that contemporary presentations of medicine in African antiquity deny African descendants the reality of our ancestor’s contribution to medicine by establishing ahistorical narratives and ignoring the fact that the identity and cultural qualities of ancient Egyptians are analogous to the physical characteristics and cultural expressions found in African people (both continental and Diasporic) today.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Ralph L. Crowder, “Black Physicians and the African Contribution to Medicine” *The Western Journal of Black Studies* vol. 1, no. 13 (Spring 1980), 3.

¹³⁸ See George G.M. James, *Stolen Legacy* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1993).

¹³⁹ Fredrick Newsome, “Black Contributions to the Early History of Western Medicine: Lack of Recognition as a Cause of Black Under Representation in US Medical Schools,” *Journal of the National Medical Association*, vol. 71, no. 2 (1979), 189.

African Bodies Displaced, Anterior Concepts of Healing Re-Traced

Where you from fool? No, I wasn't born in Ghana but Africa's my Mama and I did not end up here from bad Karma. Or for B-ball, selling mad crack or rapping. Peter Tosh tried to tell us what happened. He was saying if you Black, then you African, so they had to kill him and make him a villain cause he was teaching the children. I feel him. Young was trying to drop us a real gem. That's why we busing holes in the ceiling when we hearing: I'm a African, I'm a African, and I know what's happening. You a African, you a African. Do you know what's happening?¹⁴⁰

Ignored, distorted, deliberately concealed or innocently omitted the fact remains that by and large most of the information about the Negro in medicine remain unknown.¹⁴¹

The aforementioned valuation by the Black Nationalist-oriented rap group *Dead Prez* is particularly apposite to the nature of this research. For several millennia African people have had to endure multifarious episodic disruptions at the hands of European and other foreign malefactors, to include: 1) the over dozen of invasions of the Nile Valley (particularly Kemet) had to endure in the ancient world; 2) the forceful capture, advent and sustainability of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, chiefly responsible for the underdevelopment of Africa;¹⁴² 3) the partitioning of the continent of Africa for imperialist gains in addition to the inter-group activity restriction (i.e., chattel slavery) of Africans in America, both during the colonial and antebellum eras; and 4) its upshot – a government-sanctioned apartheid system of social proscription for the so-called people of

¹⁴⁰ Dead Prez, "I'm a African" from the album, *Let's Get Free* (February 8, 2000).

¹⁴¹ Dr. John Lawrence Sullivan Holloman, Jr., President Emeritus, National Medical Association.

¹⁴² For a comprehensive examination on the deliberate exploitation and debilitating effects European colonialism had on the political, social and economic structures of the continent of Africa, see Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1981).

“color” in the United States. Given this quandary, Africans, regardless of the displaced locations from which they found themselves, have been able to hold onto and maintain their intrinsic cultural sensibilities. For this reason, we are especially concerned with the way in which African people utilized supernatural devices and natural elements of the earth to heal themselves and others while living under onerous and restrictive conditions in what is now consider the United States of America.

It is with the publication of African historian Michael Gomez’s groundbreaking treatise, *Exchanging Our Country Marks* that has given currency to this subject of scholarly inquiry. Commended for his methodological approach on the development of African identity in the Western hemisphere, Gomez, considered one of the pioneers in “Diasporic African Studies,” examines not only the processes by which native-born African captives endured the horrors of the slave trade and the “peculiar institution” but also how the transmutation from a conglomerate of heterogeneous African cultures to a unique identity grounded in colonial and antebellum experiences took shape; what Greg Carr refers to as “improvised collective identities.”¹⁴³

One of the more definitive elements highlighted in *Exchanging Our Country Marks* is explored in chapter two, entitled, “Time and Space.” It is in this section that Gomez explores what he likes to describe as the “multifaceted Atlantic slave trade.” Indicated by his extensive quantitative and qualitative research, the author maintains that the height of the slave trade (exports), in terms of total numbers, occurred from the

¹⁴³ See Greg E. Carr, “Towards an Intellectual History of Africana Studies: Genealogy and Normative Theory, *The African American Studies Reader*, second edition, ed. Nathaniel Norment, Jr. (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 450, f.n. 32.

eighteenth century through the first decade of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁴ As evidenced by the incorporation of various tables into the narrative, concrete statistics offer a better insight into the approximate percentages and the total numbers of Africans enslaved as well as the geographical source of capture on the continent of Africa.

In juxtaposing his data with the works of Curtin,¹⁴⁵ Inikori,¹⁴⁶ Lovejoy,¹⁴⁷ Jones and Johnson,¹⁴⁸ Richardson,¹⁴⁹ and Hall,¹⁵⁰ Gomez lists the collective regions from which continental Africans were forcefully captured, relocated, and as a result formed a sole yet inimitable identity from the intermixing of multi-ethnic trans-national groups: (1) the Bight of Benin – i.e., Togo, Benin and Southwest Nigeria; (2) The Bight of Biafra – i.e., Cameroon, Gabon and Southeastern Nigeria; (3) The Gold Coast – i.e., Ghana; (4) Mozambique-Madagascar – including Tanzania; (5) Senegambia; (6) Sierra Leone – including the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea; (7) West Central Africa – to include Angola and Congo.¹⁵¹ Still, Gomez makes the distinction that during the half millennia of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the largest percentage of Africans enslaved and relocated to North America came particularly from the regions of: West Central

¹⁴⁴ Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 19-27.

¹⁴⁵ See Phillip D. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 156-158.

¹⁴⁶ See Joseph E. Inikori, "Measuring the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Rejoinder" *Journal of African History*, vol. 17, no. 4 (1976), 607-627. See also, Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey To An Afro-Baptist Faith* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 22-31.

¹⁴⁷ See Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on Africa: A Review of the Literature" *Journal of African History*, vol. 30, no. 3 (1989), 365-394.

¹⁴⁸ See Adam Jones and Marion Johnson, "Slaves from the Windward Coast" *Journal of African History*, vol. 21, no. 1 (1980), 17-34.

¹⁴⁹ See David Richardson, "Slave Exports from West and West - Central Africa, 1700-1810: New Estimates of Volume and Distribution" *Journal of African History*, vol. 30, no. 1 (1989), 1-22.

¹⁵⁰ See Gwendolyn Mildo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), appendix C, table 2, 402-404.

¹⁵¹ Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 27-37.

Africa and the Bight of Biafra.¹⁵²

Enslaved African communities in America, nonetheless, fashioned societies, which incorporated collective elements of an African experience concomitant with the syncretization of influences acquired during enslavement in a homeland alien to their own. In his critical commentary, “Through the Prism of Folklore” African historical thinker Sterling Stuckey labeled this development of Africana culture, the “Black ethos of slavery.”¹⁵³ It is suffice to say, then, the transmission of African cultural survival in the Western world strongly influenced the initial years of alternative medical practices by Africans in America. Notwithstanding the “health-depressing effects of slavery...Africans proved to be exceptionally resilient and capable workers. The agricultural skills and bondage of diverse forms of crop production further contributed to the value of the European plantation system and served as an important dimension of their health-promoting survival skills.”¹⁵⁴

Throughout the short-lived indentured servitude era in the colonies and more extensive enslavement period in the nation that became the United States of America, white slavers, through the seasoning process and other divisive mechanisms attempted to eradicate any sense of African being, including the indigenous health practices inherent within enslaved Africans. According to historian Joseph Holloway, “[t]he cruel conditions of slavery, its adherence to a rigid working system, and its rules against any African tradition that threatened the slave system [prematurely] guaranteed the

¹⁵² Ibid., 28.

¹⁵³ Sterling Stuckey, “Through the Prism of Folklore: The Black Ethos in Slavery” *America’s Black Past*, ed. Eric Foner (New York: Harper and Row Publisher, 1970), 97-116.

¹⁵⁴ Sterling Stuckey, *Going Through the Storm: The Influence of African American Art in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 40-41.

destruction of many African political, social, and economic institutions among the slaves.”¹⁵⁵

To their dismay, Africans remained devout keepers of their indigenous cultural sensibilities, invoking those originating impulses from Africa; thereby relying on what Robert Farris Thompson calls that “flash of the spirit.”¹⁵⁶ While in captivity, particularly within the plantation system, various symbols¹⁵⁷ were utilized to differentiate and to define the relationship between the slaver and enslaved. For example, the whip was ostensibly representative of the so-called slave master. Similarly, the chain was ultimately emblematic of the bondage in which Africans found themselves subjected. On the contrary, the lore of herbs and the utilization of the plant and mineral kingdom to administer therapeutic modalities—among other strategies, became symbolic of the defiance Africans had against an incipient and underdeveloped dominant medical delivery system antithetical to their welfare. To attend to their medical needs, Africans, from their respective locales back home, brought with them their own *materia medica*, in other words, a keen understanding of how to make effective mineral, plant and herb concoctions to cure an array of illnesses—, therapeutic procedures they had learned and mastered while in Africa.

From the time of the first settlement by Europeans and the usurpation of Native

¹⁵⁵ Joseph E. Holloway, *Africanisms in American Culture*, second edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 146.

¹⁵⁶ See Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African & Afro-American Art & Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984).

¹⁵⁷ According to Marimba Ani, a symbol, or what she refers to as an “ikon” (a variant of the word icon) is a powerful image that becomes a forceful presentation of the national and/or cultural idea of a people, which ultimately causes individuals to internalize the values of the dominant a culture, or in this instance, reject it. See Marimba Ani, *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton, N.J.: African World Press, Inc., 1994), 201.

American land up to the Revolutionary War, the practice of medicine—in every sense of the word—by white colonists was based merely on conjecture. As a result, the medical practices of the day, employed by Europeans Americans—what John Duffy refers to as “heroic medicine—,” included the usage of pernicious and ineffective curative techniques as well as the administration of harsh and poisonous arsenicals, cathartics, diuretics, emetics, mercurials, purgatives and other harmful drugs.¹⁵⁸ Covey alludes to the fact that formally trained physicians during the colonial and enslavement era depended primarily on the dominant medical theory of that time, known as the theory of depletion.¹⁵⁹ The primary modalities, the author maintains, under this prevailing theoretical concept were: (1) bleeding; (2) blistering; (3) purging; (4) sweating; and (5) vomiting, with bleeding and purging being administered for almost any ailment, regardless of its symptoms.¹⁶⁰

To pinpoint the harsh effects these drugs had on African captives, Sharla Fett highlights that of all the fruitless medical treatments haphazardly administered by whites: “Most objectionable to enslaved sufferers were the harsh purgatives prescribed by physicians and planters, [and] anyone dosed with heroic medicines such as ipecac, jalap, or tartar emetic soon felt their strong affects.”¹⁶¹ Accordingly, the consequence was that “[f]or enslaved African[s]...purgative medicines took on the additional symbolism of

¹⁵⁸ John Duffy, *The Healers: A History of American Medicine* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 98-104; and William Dillon Pierson, *Black Legacy: America's Hidden Heritage* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 110.

¹⁵⁹ Herbert C. Covey, *African American Slave Medicine: Herbal and Non-Herbal Treatments* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 20.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Sharla M. Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 148.

plantar control and bodily objectification.”¹⁶² In recalling the reluctance and disdain Africans had for taking such harsh “medicines,” Benjamin Botkin offers the words of at least one dissatisfied African, elder Alabamian—Jenny Proctor, who lamented: “We had to take the worst stuff in the world for medicine, just so it was cheap. That old blue mass and bitter apple would keep us out all night.”¹⁶³ Without question, the African elder’s unfavorable antebellum memories associated the unpleasantness of supposedly antebellum remedial substances with the economic incentives of the slaveholder to impose onto the enslaved, medicine not costly.

In her seldomly-referenced dissertation, Judith Karst examines the pervasive interests and popular attitudes about sickness and health during the colonial period in America and posits that during the eighteenth century, the “lay” healer was as much revered as the so-called trained physician and thusly contributed to the well being of the ill much the same as the latter.¹⁶⁴ During this era, European American practitioners, who were mostly ignorant of the medical doctrines being taught, learned and accredited within European universities, could not afford to receive such training. They had limited or no knowledge on the etiology of diseases, and as a consequence, was in direct competition with their fellow common folk who, were too, well-versed in the feeble palliative methods of the day, argues Karst. In essence, whites allowed weak medical theories to

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Benjamin A. Botkin, *Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1994) (reprint, originally published in 1945 by University of Chicago Press), 103.

¹⁶⁴ See Judith Ward-Steinman Karst, “Newspaper Medicine: A Cultural Study of the Colonial South, 1730-1770” (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1971). For a discourse to extend the point Karst makes in her dissertation, see also Kay K. Moss *Southern Folk Medicine, 1750-1820* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2010); and John C. Gunn, *Gunn’s Domestic Medicine, or Poor Man’s Friend: In the Hours of Affliction, Pain, and Sickness* (reprint: originally published in 1830) (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1986).

drive their motives and determine the outcome, rather than drawing conclusions based on observation. With this in mind, a better part of them who attempted to “practice” medicine were either self-taught or apprentice-trained save those affluent enough to receive university medical training abroad. To put it mildly, the state of the medical system in America at that time was in disarray and was in no way yet a full-fledged operational body.

Nineteenth century physician Robert Beck recollects on the destitute state of medicine during 1700s in the colonial era and summed up best its medical mediocrity: “As may naturally be presumed, in a country circumstanced as the American colonies were for a long period after their original settlement [and conquest], the medical profession continued for a succession of years in a low and degraded condition. In point of respectability, it undoubtedly stood lower than either the legal or theological professions.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ John B. Beck, *Medicine in the American Colonies: An Historical Sketch of the State of Medicine in the American Colonies, From Their First Settlement to the Period of the Revolution* (reprint; originally published in 1850) (Albuquerque, NM: Horn & Wallace Publishers, Inc., 1966), 16. For a more comprehensive discourse on the state and uses of medicine during the colonial period in America, see, Robert Baker, *Before Bioethics: A History of American Medical Ethics from the Colonial Period to the Bioethics Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Rebecca Tannenbaum, *Health and Wellness in Colonial America: Health and Wellness in Daily Life* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2012); Louis H. Toledo-Pereyra, *A History of American Medicine from the Colonial Period to the Early Twentieth Century* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006); Sharon Cotner, Kris Dippre, David M Doody, Robin Kipps and Susan Pryor, eds., *Physick: The Professional Practice of Medicine in Williamsburg, Virginia, 1740-1775* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2003); *Colonial Medicine* (Williamsburg: Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, 1992); John H. Cassedy, *Medicine in America: A Short History* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991), particularly Chapter 2; Lester S. King, “The British Background for American Medicine” *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 248, no. 2 (July 9, 1982), and “Medical Education: The Early Phases, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 248, no. 6 (August 13, 1982); Raymond Phineas Stearns, *Science in the British Colonies of America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970); Leonard Everett Fisher, *The Doctors: Colonial Americans* (London: Franklin Watts, Ltd., 1968); Joseph Ioor Waring, *A History of Medicine in South Carolina, 1670-1825* (Charleston, S.C.: South Carolina Medical Association, 1964); Richard Harrison Shyrock, *Medicine and Society in America: 1660-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962); Thomas

As a consequence, the medical experience in America at the time, up until the mid-nineteenth century (when European Americans travelling to Europe for medical training vastly increased), had been one in which any white man who could read could freely be his own physician; a stark contrast of how Africans—prior to their arrival to the West—viewed the custodial responsibilities bestowed upon a select few to carry out the profession. Interestingly, physician Volney Steele maintains that during the same era “one could become a doctor in three ways: 1) attend a medical school; 2) apprentice himself to a practicing physician; or 3) simply purchase a diploma.”¹⁶⁶ Nonetheless, tending to one’s illness was done primarily on a one-to-one basis for established infirmaries had yet to be established in America until 1752.¹⁶⁷ In essence, medical guidance and/or formal instruction, based on European standards of competency was lacking due to the fact:

There were neither lectures nor hospitals which could be resorted to, while the great expense attending a foreign education put it out of the power of all, except a favored few, to avail themselves of the only means of becoming regularly instructed. Under such circumstances it was not to have been expected, for a long series of years after the first settlement of the country, that [the] profession would be at all distinguished for character or knowledge.¹⁶⁸

Proctor Hughes, *Medicine in Virginia, 1607-1699* (Williamsburg, VA: Virginia 350th Anniversary Celebration Corporation, 1957); Maurice Bear Gordon, *Aesculapius Comes to the Colonies: The Story of the Early Days of Medicine in the Thirteen Original Colonies* (Ventnor, NJ: Ventnor Publishers, Inc., 1949); Michael Kraus, “American and European Medicine in the Eighteenth Century” *Bulletin of History of the History of Medicine*, vol. 8 (January 1, 1940); and Wyndham B. Blanton, *Medicine in Eighteenth Century* (Richmond, VA: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1930), inter alia. For an examination on the Western foundations of medical practices conducted by European Americans, see the informative work of Guy Williams, *The Age of Agony: The Art of Healing, 1700-1800* (London: Constable, 1970).

¹⁶⁶ Volney Steele, *Bleed, Blister and Purge: A History of Medicine on the America Frontier* (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2005), 13.

¹⁶⁷ Frederic E. Sondern, “Brief History of Organized Medicine” *Bulletin of The New York Academy of Medicine*, vol. 12, no. 1, (January 1936), 7.

¹⁶⁸ Beck, *Medicine in the American Colonies*, 17.

Even university-sanctioned medical schools in America were nonexistent until the latter part of the first half of the eighteenth century. To be exact, there were only two university-established medical schools in operation during this era in the British colonies, both located in the more northeastern region area of the country: (1) the University of Pennsylvania, established in 1765; and (2) the University of Columbia, founded two years later in 1767.¹⁶⁹

In both colonial and antebellum America there was an unequivocal distinction between the medical practices of Europeans (i.e., white Americans) versus those of enslaved (and quasi-free) Africans. These alleviative customs, as diverse as they were, and still are, foundationally representative in their antecedent intellectual productions. On this very point, Carruthers asserts that the variance of such modern orientations between Africans and Europeans are rooted in antecedent thought processes, what he

¹⁶⁹ Harold E. Farmer, “An Account of the Earliest Colored Gentlemen in Medical Science in the United States” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. 8 (January 1, 1940), 600. For a more detailed discussion on the chronology of the establishment of conventional medicine in the United States, see Ira Rutkow, *Seeking the Cure: A History of Medicine in America* (New York: Scribner, 2010); Volney Steele, *Bleed, Blister and Purge: A History of Medicine on the America Frontier* (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2005); Judith W. Leavitt and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997); James S. Cassedy, *Medicine in America: A Short History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1991); Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine: The Rise of a Sovereign Profession and the Making of a Vast Industry* (New York: Basic Books, 1982); John Duffy, *The Healers: A History of American Medicine* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 98-104, and *The Healers: The Rise of the Medical Establishment* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976); Joseph F. Kett, *The Formation of The American Medical Profession: The Role of Institutions, 1780-1860* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968); Henry E. Sigerist, “Medical History in the United States: Past—Present—Future” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. 22 (January 1, 1948); Archibald Malloch, “Certain Old American Medical Workers” *Bulletin of The New York Academy of Medicine*, vol. 12, no. 10 (October, 1936); and Francis Randolph Packard, *History of Medicine in the United States, Volumes I and II* (New York: Paul B. Hoeber, Inc., 1931), inter alia. For an assessment on how American medicine transmogrified over a five-hundred year period—since the appearance of the Europeans to the Americas in the fifteenth century, under the edict of the Spanish crown, up to the first half of the twentieth century—, see David Dary, *Frontier Medicine: From the Atlantic to the Pacific, 1492-1941* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008).

refers to as “Tri-continental antiquity.”¹⁷⁰ For Carruthers, these more distant and “modern cultural perspectives are: modern science, which in some sense evolved from the ancient European thought, and the living tradition, which is a modern extension of the wisdom of ancient African thought.”¹⁷¹

In her useful and ethnographically centered work, *Secret Doctors*, Wanda Fontenot addresses the clandestine manner by which Africans disregarded the wishes of the “master” class to heal themselves. She writes that despite the “forced treatments, enslaved Africans maintained their own Afrocentric beliefs and practices associated with certain ailments, and they continued to engage the services of secret doctors [who]...hid their knowledge about medicine, they administered their own remedies (which included herbal medications and/or amulets), and carried out other healing rituals behind closed doors.¹⁷²” Moreover, as a means to counter the disastrous outcomes of remedies administered by white slavers, in an effort to exert some control over their lives, Africans tended to their own maladies, or if need be, sought medical counsel from other Africans they entrusted.

To this chagrin, **Africans preserved and maintained from an ancient African heritage a distinct brand of self-care, replete with an array of comprehensive remedies. The upshot was the existence of a dual system of health care in America that was invariably at odds with each other—one practiced by Africans that was in**

¹⁷⁰ For a more thorough discussion on the foundations of African/European ancient and modern thought production, see Jacob H. Carruthers, “Science and Oppression” (Chicago: Kemetic Institute, 1972), and *Western Civilization: Africa or Greece, whose legacy?* (Chicago: Chicago State University, College of Education, 1998).

¹⁷¹ Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr*, 5-6.

¹⁷² Wonda L. Fontenot, *Secret Doctors: Ethnomedicine of African Americans* (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1994), 30.

alignment with their worldview of complementarity, and the other, by their menacing adversaries. In the words of Clovis Semmes:

The struggle against European oppression and dehumanization deeply involved the struggle to preserve African medical traditions. After all, the battle for the bodies, minds, and spirits of African peoples literally challenged the foundation of [European American] traditional medical practices. Even though...Africans brought better preventive health measures, more diverse vegetable diets, better oral hygiene, better habits of cleanliness, and an array of effective herbal and physical treatments to the New World, chattel slavery eroded these practices over time...Nevertheless, the enslaved Africans made new adaptations, transmitted traditional medical knowledge informally [through the oral tradition], learned and practiced “white” medicine, learned about local herbal remedies from Native peoples, and explored and tested their new environments for effective medical remedies.¹⁷³

Furthermore, William Piersen and other scholars reveal that the content mastery of self-treatment by Africans held in thralldom inadvertently caused many Europeans, despite their detestation of African mores, to acknowledge the efficacy of remedies created from the plant kingdom, and as a result, sought their medicinal counsel.¹⁷⁴ To their dismay, Europeans routinely observed Africans having greater success attending to and treating; (1) various illnesses; (2) wounds that needed extra care in order to heal; and (3) tropical diseases particularly associated with Africans, such as yaws—a physical disorder in which the responsibility to cure was bestowed upon enslaved African

¹⁷³ Clovis E. Semmes, *Racism, Health, and Post-Industrialism*. 73.

¹⁷⁴ William Dillon Piersen, *Black Legacy: America's Hidden Heritage* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 102. See also, Todd L. Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 149; Richard B. Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves: A Medical and Demographic History of Slavery in the British West Indies, 1680-1834* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 75, 96; Kenneth F. Kiple and Virginia Hammelsteib King, *Another Dimension to the Black Diaspora: Diet, Disease and Racism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 169; and Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery To Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 63-64.

women.¹⁷⁵

Moreover, whites would often depend on the enslaved community to administer medical care to their own. In severe cases of illnesses among Africans, plantation owners would openly seek the assistance from the enslaved community, be it woman or man; however, Savitt does admit to the paranoia of white slavers that, “in regular illnesses among the majority of slaves, planters expected to be informed and involved in the treatment.”¹⁷⁶ On the contrary, without their (whites) knowledge, Africans ensured the continuation of a “living tradition” and resisted the demands of their white abductors. Hence, “black home remedies circulated secretly through the slave quarters and were passed down privately [and orally] from generation to generation,” [and m]ost of these cures were derived from local plants.....[by which] whites would learn of a particularly effective medicine and adopt it.”¹⁷⁷

A case in point: Physician, turned Confederate soldier (with the rank of Captain) Richard S. Cauthorn, who turned his 76 acre plantation in Essex County, Virginia into a Confederate camp, atypically publicized in the 1857 issue of the *Monthly Stethoscope and Medical Reporter* that a remedy, which had been used for years by enslaved Africans while in bondage, was equally as effective (if not more) as quinine in treating spasmodic

¹⁷⁵ Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, 82-83, 87; and Piersen, *Black Legacy*, 109-111. Yaws is a transmittable disease in which enslaved Africans and others indigenously from tropical climates (i.e., the Caribbean, Central and South America, the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia) had a proclivity to contract. This sickness is acquired by presence of a microorganism, called a spirochete, in the bloodstream. As the disease relates to enslavement in the U.S., Clovis Semmes reveals: “in the antebellum South yaws was at times mistaken for syphilis...[and] tended to protect against syphilis, but the disease died out by the Civil War. After this time, syphilis became more of a problem for African Americans.” Semmes, *Racism, Health, and Post-Industrialism*, 39.

¹⁷⁶ Todd L. Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 173.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

chills and fevers.¹⁷⁸ This admittance by Cauthor further reveals that during the chattel era enslaved Africans had their own unique medical system, which was further evidenced in recurrent references in the literary works by other whites. Some of these references include pieces written by William Byrd¹⁷⁹ and Francis P. Porter,¹⁸⁰ among others. In another example, but more nuanced, South Carolina plantation owner, Henry Reverend expressed how one of the Africans he had in bondage, “Old March,” had a such a keen facility with herb usage to cure ailments, that he “was commonly consulted by his fellow slaves that that white doctor who was called in to treat the slaves “complained that his prescription were thrown out the window, and March’s decoctions taken in their stead.”¹⁸¹

Africans’ wide-ranging lore of herbs and other plant life (i.e., organic elements of the natural world) was without question an awareness due to the intergenerational transference of classical African medicinal knowledge of anterior times. Hence, one cannot ignore how much enslaved Africans’ botanical expertise contributed to the materia medica of white America albeit in contrast with the latter’s traditional medical practices.

During the era in which slavery was the central mode of economy in America, Europeans customarily observed Africans having greater success in treating various

¹⁷⁸ Richard S. Cauthorn, “A New Anti-Periodic and a Substitute for Quinia,” *Monthly Stethoscope and Medical Reporter*, vol. II, no. 1, eds. Goodridge A. Wilson and Richmond A. Lewis (January 1857), 7-8.

¹⁷⁹ See Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling translated and edited version, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712* (Petersburg, VA: Dietz Press, 1941).

¹⁸⁰ See Francis P. Porter, “Report on the Indigenous Medical Plants of South Carolina.” in *Transactions of the American Medical Association*, vol. 2 (1849): 677-862.

¹⁸¹ Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 63-64.

diseases. In Peirsen's chapter, "Duh Root Doctuh Wuz All We Need," from his informative text, *Black Legacy*, the author asserts: "Africans had a broader, more psychologically sophisticated conception of disease causation and control than did early emigrants from Europe."¹⁸² In this respect, as Cauthorn recognized before him, Pierson postulates that Africans who were brought to the Americas against their will were most likely the innovators to the discovery of quinine (used to treat malaria) and sarsaparilla, by which the latter would be subsequently used as a diuretic to treat venereal diseases.¹⁸³ Similarly, Africans had brought with them from their ancestral homeland the applied knowledge on how to inoculate with the small pox virus (known as variolation) before the spread of this form of immunization became prominent in Europe and America," explains Sheridan.¹⁸⁴ In the same vein, Gwendolyn Mildred Hall explicates, in her groundbreaking treatise, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, how African ingenuity in the mastery of treating illnesses with herbs were significant in the Deep South. She writes that enslaved Africans were frequently commissioned as:

medical doctors and surgeons in eighteenth-century Louisiana. They were skilled in herbal medicine and were often better therapists than the French doctors, who were always described as surgeons. Du Pratz wrote that a slave doctor belonging to the plantation of the king in New Orleans had taught him to 'cure all illnesses to which women are subject, because these black women are no

¹⁸² Pierson, *Black Legacy*, 99.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 111. Through his own research, Pierson discovers that as early as 1551, in colonial Peru, African women, in the city of Lima, sold foodstuffs to its denizens and offered curative therapies using sarsaparilla to treat ailments that cause swelling of the lymph nodes in the axillae region (i.e., armpit and groin) of the body, more commonly known as buboes. See Pierson, *Black Legacy*, *ibid.* In citing Nicolas Bautista Monardes' written work as a source, Pierson maintains that "the first recognition of the medical properties of sarsaparilla in the English-speaking world would not be until a generation later in 1577," 223. See John Frampton, *Nicolas Monardes: Joyfull News out of the New Founde World, wherein is declared the rare and singular vertues of diuerse and sundrie hearbes, trees, oyles, plantes, and stones, with their applications, as well for phisicke as chirurgerie* (translated from the 1565 Spanish edition) (London, 1577), 79

¹⁸⁴ Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves*, 251.

more exempt than white women.’ This slave doctor had an effective cure for scurvy before 1734, the year Du Pratz left Louisiana. First he treated the pain. Then he made a paste from iron rust soaked in lemon juice and herbs, which he placed on the patient’s gums at all times except when the patient ate...Evidently, this cure was ignored in Louisiana, where it would have been easy to administer: there were so many oranges growing there that the [European] settlers allowed them to rot on the trees. As late as 1779, scurvy among the newly settled Canary Islanders was attributed to eating salt meat.”¹⁸⁵

Being from a tropical climate, Africans, even though enslaved, readily used more vegetables in their diets than their European foes. And even in a racist society where enslaved African’s dietary regimes were of least importance to white slavers, the nurturing and community-oriented spirit of those Africans in bondage even still “improved the nutritional habits of many of their [captors].”¹⁸⁶ Along the lines of sanitation and cleanliness, the “[p]reventive and public health measures” taken by enslaved Africans “included daily baths, wearing loose clothing and washing it daily, burning animal waste and rubbish, the use of fires to protect against insects and chills, variolation, and the use of toilets and latrines. Moreover, the Africans routinely practiced better oral hygiene than the Europeans, using certain groups and herbs to clean and brushed their teeth.”¹⁸⁷ Unfortunately, as Africans became more accustomed with the cultural influences of their white counterparts, as it relates to eating regimes (diet)—save the culinary concoctions created by enslaved Africans known today as “Soul Food”—, their lives became more Europeanized, and as a result, became less healthy.

The Eurocentric scholarship of white anthropologist Loudell Snow, whose body of scholarly research is centered and veiled in the investigation of naturalistic alternative

¹⁸⁵ Gwendolyn Mildo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 126.

¹⁸⁶ Piersen, *Black Legacy*, 111.

¹⁸⁷ Semmes, *Racism, Health, and Post-Industrialism*, 72-73.

methods of self-health care by contemporary Africans, attempts to minimize the significance of the indigenous African contribution to the contemporary medical health delivery system in the United States. Within her article, “Folk Medical Beliefs and their Implications for Care of Patients,” Snow indicates that “folk medicine” as a whole developed from an amalgamation of intercultural theoretical and practical medical approaches and practices, which she opines ultimately derived from modern scientific medicine.¹⁸⁸ To add insult to the discourse of a sustained and evident African holistic medical tradition, Snow, by way of her formal anthropological training, without hesitancy, regards one of the contributory elements as “African rare traits.”¹⁸⁹ In a word, her racist and minimalist definition of the African healing systems, which was most pervasive, functional and contributory during the colonial and antebellum eras in America, attempts to abate this fact as if Africans did not come to the West with indigenous and inherent cultural values. The research, however, exhibits that the African contribution to the American medical delivery system is more extensive than Snow expresses. Not only did Africans contribute to their own health care, but many of their medicinal points of views were incorporated into the larger enslavement system in the United States as well as the other slave holding societies in the Americas. **On this very point, William Grimé emphasizes:**

One of the natural consequences that followed the beginning of the exploration of the West African coast by the Portuguese...was their acceptance of slavery, soon to be followed by an active participation in...the lucrative slave trade between the coasts of western Africa and eastern South America. Indeed, the decade that followed 1492 is one of the most important periods for the documentation of the

¹⁸⁸ Loudell F. Snow, “Folk Medical Beliefs and their Implications for Care of Patients.” *Annals of Internal Medicine*, vol. 81, no. 1 (July 1974), 83.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

man-made dispersal of plant materials and products. There is hardly any questions that such staple food plants as the yam (*Dioscorea*), the cassava (*Manihot*), maize (*Zea*), the banana and its related plantain species (*Musa*), and sorghum (*Sorghum*), to mention a few, owe their existence on both sides of the Atlantic to the ever-sailing slave ships.¹⁹⁰

To add emphasis, in the entire chapter, entitled “Plants Introduced by the Slaves” Grimé provides an extended enumeration, with detailed descriptions and pictorials, of a total of seventeen plants that accompanied captured and soon to be enslaved Africans on their unwarranted journey into the unknown abyss of the West Atlantic.¹⁹¹ Additionally, in the section of the text, titled “Plants Employed by the Slaves,” the author provides an extensive list of plant flora Africans utilized to heal themselves and others while in bondage.¹⁹²

In similar fashion, authors Kenneth Kiple and Virginia King, whose written work, *Another Dimension to the Black Diaspora*, is a study of African disease susceptibilities and immunities in slave-holding societies throughout the United States, compiled an extensive list of herbal and plant remedies utilized by African healing practitioners during the antebellum era that included the following plant species: catnip, chinaberry tea, comfrey, dogwood, elephant tongue, garlic, Jerusalem oak, life everlasting (a.k.a. rabbit tobacco), mayapple, mustard weed, orange milkweed, peach tree leaves, Peter’s root, pine needles, poke root, raspberry leaves, red oak bark, sea myrtle, sage, snakeroot, sweet

¹⁹⁰ William Ed Grimé, *Ethno-botany of the Black Americans* (Algonac, MI: Reference Publications, Inc., 1979), 19. See also, Edward S. Ayensu, *Medicinal Plants of West Africa* (Algonac, MI:Reference Publications, 1978), 19; and Robert Voeks and John Rashford, eds., *African Ethnobotany in the Americas* (New York: Springer, 2012).

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 19-62.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 63-200.

William root, tansy leaves, and wintergreen tea (a.k.a. lion's tongue), to name a few.¹⁹³ Understandably so, African uses of the vegetation for curative purposes varied depending on the region from which they were held in bondage, primarily because of the multifarious strains within the plant kingdom. With this in mind: "Herbal practices, for example, changed with varying ecosystems," and specific regions, such as the South Carolina Sea Islands and coastal Georgia, which "offered more concentrated evidence of African cultural retentions."¹⁹⁴ In summation, Piersen advances the idea that:

African practitioners were, in fact, no less skillful than their European counterparts, and in many ways black medical practice was superior to that offered by the white practitioners who were typically recognized as the era's only legitimate doctors. The transference of African medical knowledge permitted black Americans not only to tend to their own medical needs but to contribute to the improvement of American health as a whole.¹⁹⁵

Even today, in the 21st Century, the allopathic medical healthcare system in the United States, as well as other industrialized European nations, rely heavily on herbs as biomedicine extrapolates the therapeutic essences of these flowering plants to mimic its ameliorative effects with the making of synthetic pharmaceutical drugs. Given the continued reliance on holistic health therapeutic techniques and other alternative health devices (e.g., the usage of herbs, a more nutritious low-protein, a non-animal-based eating regiment to eradicate degenerative diseases, etc.) in many African communities throughout America, individuals will continue to seek, use, and even become more reliant on alternative medical solutions that can be traced to, in the more immediate historical

¹⁹³ Kenneth F. Kiple and Virginia Himmelsteib King, *Another Dimension to the Black Diaspora: Diet, Disease, and Racism* (Cambridge: MA, Cambridge University Press, 1981), 170.

¹⁹⁴ Sharla Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 7.

¹⁹⁵ Piersen, *Black Legacy*, 99.

sense, self-care health customs of enslaved Africans in the antebellum South, and to an even more antecedent time of classical African medicinal practices.

CHAPTER 5:
THE PREDOMINANCE OF “SCIENTIFIC” MEDICINE UNVEILED

Introduction

While chapter four of this dissertation was more historical in nature, this section of the treatise is more instructive. Presently, there is a marked rise in the popularity of holistic or alternative medical practices in the United States, and given the poor state of health a substantial amount of Africans in America find themselves in, this chapter is a imploration to the African masses to consider the various effective holistic modalities available to them; make better food choices; and as an act of liberation, take matters of health into our own hands. In this regard, the overall intent of this section of the dissertation is to: (1) examine and differentiate between the therapeutic concepts of mainstream “scientific” medicine and holistic medicine as a means to highlight the different approaches each utilizes to address various health disparities and/or dis-eases; (2) highlight how, through the emergence of the philanthropic-sanctioned work of Abraham Flexner, the holistic or alternative health professions in the United States became ostracized and labeled by the medical governing bodies as “unconventional” from the beginning of the twentieth century onward. It is the expectation of the writer that the information provided would allow some of us to consider (or reconsider previously practiced medial beliefs) these alternative therapeutic measures as a substitute to combat ailments, those extant or forthcoming.

“Scientific” Medicine Unveiled, Holistic Medicine Upheld

What I discovered in my search to identify myself and why we failed to respond to a medical system in which I was taught had all the answers, was the simple fact that the standard of evaluating the health of the patient was never a standard based on the patient’s anatomy, physiology, growth and development curves. When I came into the awareness that the medical western standard of health chemically is based on the blood chemistry of the Caucasian male and female, and the physiology and anatomy of the Caucasian male and female, it was quite obvious that I could never experience optimal health care when measured by a standard that belongs to another race.¹⁹⁶

In a non-colonial society the attitude of a sick man in the presence of a medical practitioner is one of confidence. The patient trusts the doctor; he puts himself in his hands. He yields his body to him. He accepts the fact that pain may be awakened or exacerbated by the physician, for the patient realizes that the intensifying of suffering in the course of examination may pave the way to peace in his body. At no time in a non-colonial society, does the patient mistrust his doctor. On the level of technique, of knowledge, it is clear that a certain doubt can filter into the patient’s mind, but this may be due to a hesitation on the part of the doctor which modifies the original confidence.¹⁹⁷

Scientific medicine, as predominately practiced in nations that considered themselves “developed,” is heralded as being the most effective method of treating illnesses. However, there are a great number of myths and misconceptions upon which the success of scientific medicine is built. For instance, authors Michael Rachlis and Carol Kushner, whose written work critiques the bio-medical model of Canada, which is in many ways analogous to that of the United States, argue that present day medical practices operate in a manner that calls into question the “scientific-ness” of its scientific medical practices. In their estimation: “[t]here remains little doubt that the lack of

¹⁹⁶ Jewel Pookrum, *Vitamins and Minerals From A to Z*.

¹⁹⁷ Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*.

‘science’ in medicine leads directly to a lot of unwarranted intervention, which not only waste scarce resources but risks harming patients as well.¹⁹⁸ In the same vein, African-Centered physician Nana Kwaku opines that allopathic medicine “arrogantly and chauvinistically dismisses all that fails to toe the line of the medical industrial complex.”¹⁹⁹ This system,” adds Opare, “sucks up an obscene 17.4 percent of our [Gross Domestic Product] and gives us over 200,000 dead per year. Complications brought on by the doctor or hospital are the third leading cause of death in the United States.”²⁰⁰ In his piece, *Is Your Doctor’s Medicine Killing You?* Llaila Afrika mirrors the sentiments of Opare by highlighting the iatrogenic causes of death via the administration of pharmaceutical drugs and the encumbering burden they place on the human body. Afrika upholds:

The use of synthetic isolated concentrated chemicals (drugs) are harmful. When consumed they trigger the sympathetic nervous system (fight or flight action) to respond by fighting to rid the body of the invading chemical. The physiological reactions of the immune, digestive, lymphatic, nervous, hormonal reproductive, skeletal and circulatory systems is to fight the poisonous drug. The drug changed the normal biochemistry of the body and all the bodily systems alter their biochemical make up by contributing their biochemical to fight the invader. Once they give away their biochemical balance, they become altered and sick fighting against the drug.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Michael Rachlis and Carol Kushner, *Second Opinion: What’s Wrong with Canada’s Health-Care System* (Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1989), 47.

¹⁹⁹ Nana Kwaku Opare, *The Rule Book and User Guide For Healthy Living: Common Sense For Black Folks Who Are Sick and Tired Of Being Sick And Tired* (Atlanta: Opare Publishing, LLC, 2011), 6.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. In closely reading the article from which Opare obtained these statistics, the exact total number of deaths per year in America, due to iatrogenic (physician-caused) reasons were 225, 000 in 2000, the time in which the article was produced. Moreover, the breakdown of medical fatalities are as follows: 106,000 deaths per year from adverse effects of medication; 80,000 deaths per year due to infections contracted while hospitalized (i.e., nosocomial infections); 20, 000 deaths per year from multifactorial errors occurring in hospitals; 12, 0000 fatalities per year as a result of needles or superfluous surgeries; and 7, 000 deaths annually from erroneous or inadequate medication administration to patients. See Barbara Starfield, “Is US Health Really the Best in the World?” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 284, no. 4 (July 26, 2000), 483-484.

²⁰¹ Llaila O. Afrika, *Is Your Doctor’s Medicine Killing You?: Medical Drugs That Do Not Work* (Elmont, NY: Afrikan Holistic Health, 2012), 10.

Consequently, as prescriptions drugs are taken to “treat” certain symptoms, the root cause of the illness is masked and never addressed, thereby allowing the chemical makeup of pharmaceuticals to cause havoc, and in turn, destroy helpful bacteria (i.e. flora) in the intestinal tract, which can lead to an array of issues with the bowel system.

In both theory and practice, scientific medicine takes a reductionist approach to health and disease. This form of medical practice maintains that health and disease can be explained by organic functioning or dysfunction. Distinguished Nutritional Biochemist and Professor Emeritus of Cornell University T. Colin Campbell, whose significant work as a proponent of a whole foods plant-based diet and involvement with the groundbreaking China Study,²⁰² as well as the most recent documentary on health,

²⁰² The China Study, considered the most elaborate, comprehensive ecological study of health and nutrition conducted in the contemporary era, is a twenty-year study carried out through the triumvirate partnership and efforts of the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine, Cornell University and Oxford University, which revealed, through extensive research, that high consumption of animal-based foods is associated more with chronic diseases, while those individuals who consumed primarily a plant-based eating regimen were more healthier and free from such temporal ailments. See Junshi Chen, T. Colin Campbell, Li Junyao and Richard Peto, eds. *Diet, Lifestyle, and Mortality in China: A Study of the Characteristics of 65 Chinese Counties, Zhongguo de Shan Shi, Sheng Huo Fang Shi He Si Wang* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, and Beijing: People’s Medical Publishing House, 1990). Published some fifteen years later, a more recent rendition of the former medical treatise was written by T. Collin Campbell and his son, Thomas Campbell II, a medical physician. Offered within this posterior piece is over 750 primary sources as references, to include a majority of scholarly publications from the scientific community, which reveal: “Dietary change can enable diabetic patients to go off their medication; Heart disease can be reversed with the diet alone; Breast cancer is related to levels of female hormones in the blood, which are determined by the food we eat; Consuming dairy foods can increase the risk of prostate cancer; Antioxidants, found in fruits and vegetables, are linked to better mental performance in old age; Kidney stones can be prevented by a healthy diet; and Type 1 diabetes, one of the most devastating diseases that can befall a child, is convincingly linked to infant feeding practices.” T. Colin Campbell and Thomas M. Campbell II, *The China Study: The Most Comprehensive Study of Nutrition Ever Conducted and the Startling Implications for Diet, Weight Loss and Long-Term Health* (Dallas: BenBella Books, 2005), 2-3. In an interview with the *New York Times*, T. Collin Campbell verbalized his disdain for the myth established by scientific medicine that degenerative diseases are hereditary. In his own words: “The idea is that we should be consuming whole foods. We should not be relying on the idea that genes are determinants of our health. We should not be relying on the idea that nutrient supplementation is the way to get nutrition, because it’s not. I’m talking about whole, plant-based foods.” “Nutrition Advice from the China Study” *New York Times*, January 7, 2011.

Forks Over Knives,²⁰³ offers his expertise and explores the predominant scientific paradigmatic value of reductionism as it relates to allopathic or mainstream medicine. In his most recent publication, entitled *Whole*, Campbell juxtaposes the wholistic (the methodological premise from which holistic medicine operates) and reductionist approaches—the theoretical model on which organized or scientific medicine is based. Campbell insists that the former takes into account the whole as being greater than the sum of its parts, while proponents of the latter feel you get a better understanding of the world by focusing on the components or parts rather than the whole.²⁰⁴ As a result, the reductionist approach, which compartmentalizes the body’s dysfunction as it seeks out treatment, is the primary reason that allopathic medicine seeks, through the creation of an array of research grants, “medical solutions,” consequently spending millions of taxpayers dollars on medical research to “combat” individualized dis-eases (e.g., cancer research) that could otherwise be addressed from a comprehensive or holistic perspective, taking into account the synthesis of the corporeal and utilizing naturalistic, alternative means to eradicate illnesses.

Afrika acknowledges the intentional economic greed by the scientific medical

²⁰³ T. Colin Campbell, along with naturopathic physician, Pam Popper; African American physician Terry Mason, who serves as the commissioner for the Department of Public Health in Chicago; Chinese physician Junshi Chen; and European American physicians: Neal Barnard, Caldwell Esselstyn, John McDougal as well as husband and wife physician team, Matthew Lederman and Alona Pulde, who founded and currently operate *Exsalus Health and Wellness Center* in Los Angeles, California, a medical practice that focuses on preventing and reversing dis-ease without the use of pharmaceuticals but utilizes a comprehensive patient-centered approach, are among the main cast of this groundbreaking documentary, *Forks Over Knives*, which advances, through extensive medical research and successful human clinical trials, the concept that a whole foods plant-based diet can eradicate an array of degenerative diseases and/or metabolic syndromes (i.e., hypertension, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, arthritis, to name a few) without the use of invasive surgery and/or pharmaceutical drugs. See Lee Fulkerson (Director), *Forks Over Knives* (Los Angeles: Monica Beach Media, 2011).

²⁰⁴ T. Colin Campbell and Howard Jacobson, *Whole: Rethinking the Science of Nutrition* (Dallas: BenBella Books, 2013), 47.

community, which, in his estimation, have no regard for the human body or “temple” and offers his position on the matter: “Caucasians have an overabundance of research projects and institutions and devote large sums of money to them.”²⁰⁵ In the absence of “knowing,” Afrika feels that “[w]hen you research any subject it means that you lack knowledge about the subject. In this case, we have a civilization (European) that is ignorant.”²⁰⁶ In short, the author concludes that African lives (and others) are imperiled by avarice and medical ignorance. Haki Madhubuti echoes the sentimentalities shared by Afrika. For him, “Western technology and science is very destructive to individuals, the society and the environment.”²⁰⁷ “This is not to infer,” Madhubuti continues, “that there have not been any ‘advancements,’ but it is to suggest that most of the time and money invested in Western research and development have not made people healthier.”²⁰⁸ With obesity and other degenerative diseases reaching epidemic proportions worldwide²⁰⁹ today, the time has now come for the mainstream medical community to come to terms

²⁰⁵ Afrika, *African Holistic Health*, xxv.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Haki R. Madhubuti, *Black Men Obsolete, Single, Dangerous? The Afrikan American Family in Transition: Essays in Discovery, Solution and Hope* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1991), 201.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Now that obesity and other metabolic syndrome diseases are currently plaguing a majority of Europeans worldwide, there is a sense of all out global urgency, in the same way the United States and other European nations militarily took notice of the Third Reich, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, when Nazi Germany imposed its political and oppressive dominion onto other “whites,” namely European Ashkenazi Jews (as well as Africans and the Roma), who were persecuted in Nazi concentration camps. In reviewing data spanning 188 nations and over 1, 700 studies from 1980 to 2013, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington, in Seattle, found that a staggering 2.1 billion people worldwide are now considered overweight and obese. To no surprise, thirteen percent of world’s obesity epidemic problem, the largest share of any country, is home to the United States, even though America accounts for less than five percent of the planet’s population; China and India are close second and third, respectively. For Africans in America, due to disenfranchisement, socio-economic conditions and disproportionate distribution of resources in the United States, the rates of obesity for specific population are even more alarming. See, “Weight of the World: 2.1 Billion People Obese or Overweight” *Chicago Tribune* (June 18, 2014), 3. See also, Thomas H. Frazier and Stephen A. McClave, “Nutritional Therapy of the Obese Critically Ill Patient” *Clinical Nutrition Highlights*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2011), 2-8.

with the fact that other alternative naturalistic health practices should seriously not only be taken into account, but in some medical instances, should be the preferred method of treatment. Irwin Press offers an insightful juxtaposition between holistic medicine and scientific medicine and provides the value of the former, particularly as it relates to the community. For Press, alternative health medical systems are:

open systems, accepting substantive input from-and thus capable of functionally contributing to-economic, familial, ritual, moral, and other institutional sectors. Modern, scientific medicine, on the other hand, is a largely closed system, based on precisely defined knowledge, technique, and procedures, all of which are discontinuous from ordinary social process. Its governing paradigm isolates modern medicine from the social and cultural environment. Its concepts and methods have become universal in application and are not altered significantly by time and place of treatment or by [the] personality of [the] physician. An open system is an adaptive system. It is capable of incorporating new environmental elements and thus may change or elaborate its structure as a condition of survival or variability...As open systems, [holistic health] medical systems should thus be especially capable of adapting to novel environments or threats and of affording continuity of old functions while offering new ones to meet the needs of populations experiencing new pressures and opportunities. This capability of folk medicine appears to be a significant 'factor accounting for the low incidence of psychiatric disorders in societies undergoing considerable social change, where rates would be expected to be higher.²¹⁰

In all honesty, the writer understands that there are certain physical maladies or injurious circumstances that need to be treated by invasive measures (i.e., surgery or administration of certain anesthesia), and the reality is that such traumatic circumstances (e.g, an open fracture) cannot rely on herbal remedies for corrective action or satisfactory therapeutic results. This, one cannot deny. However, on the other hand, we also cannot repudiate the “fact that the disease industry wants to use a drug to cure every physical and mental condition without discovering why energy is being [wit]held, what caused an ailment or why the immune system is compromised, is every reason for holistic

²¹⁰ Irwin Press, “Urban Folk Medicine: A Functional Overview” *American Anthropologist*, vol. 80, no. 1 (March, 1978), 71-72.

practitioners to recognize Nature and listen to the body.”²¹¹ The aforementioned words by African naturopathic physician Keith Moreno in chapter three of this work resonates and ushers in a universal therapeutic call to arms for custodians and advocates of natural medical techniques alike to take heed and action.

Although Campbell’s critique is grounded in medicine, what his observation brings to light is the significance of culture as it relates to the variance between two worldviews: one that is linear (“scientific” in the Western/European sense) and one that is cyclic (holistic or cyclic in nature). On this very point, Daudi Ajani ya Azibo, in citing African psychologist Wade Nobles, maintains that the African worldview, as an inquiry of the empirical world or scientific construct, expresses itself at the primary level of culture, through the exploration of axiology (acknowledgement and practice of moral and governing principles), cosmology (an inquiry of the origin the universe), and ontology (an investigation of the nature of being).²¹² Such a worldview, contends Azibo, takes into account and truly understands all elements of the universe—including the biological makeup of humans—are intrinsically connected, interrelated and depend on a symbiotic

²¹¹ Keith Moreno, *The Mistrust About Disease: Ethnomedicine As Applied to the Misconceptions of Health* (Seattle: CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2013), 85. For an expanded discussion on how scientific medicine and multinational pharmaceutical corporations manipulate illness as a source of profit and control, see Howard B. Waitzkin and Barbara Waitzkin, *The Exploitation of Illness in Capitalist Society* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1974).

²¹² Daudi Ajani ya Azibo, “Articulating the Distinction Between Black Studies and the Study of Blacks: The Fundamental Role of Culture and the African-Centered Worldview” *The Afrocentric Scholar: The Journal of the National Council of Black Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (May 1, 1992), 68-70. In this written piece, Azibo is mindful and rightfully acknowledges that Wade Nobles’ differentiates between the theoretical concepts of worldview and cosmology (page 90, f.n. 2). See Wade Nobles, “The Reclamation of and the Right to Reconciliation: An Afro-centric Perspective on Developing and Implementing Programs for the Mentally Retarded Offender” *The Black Mentally Retarded Offender: A Wholistic Approach to Prevention and Habilitation*, eds., A. Harvey and T. Carr (New York: United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, 1982), 43-44; and Wade Nobles, L. Goddard and W. Cavil III, *The KM Ebit Husia* (Oakland: The Institute for Advanced Study of Black Family Life and Culture, 1985), 5-8.

and rhythmic connection to maintain a harmonious balance.²¹³

As this relates to the holistic model of medicine, a disease from which an individual suffers could very well be causal because of other contributory factors, thereby effecting the initial underlying physical disparity (e.g., an emotional imbalance, the occurrence of a psychologically-traumatic event, etc.) In a word, within this system of medicinal analysis, health and disease are contextualized within a broader spectrum that includes other factors seen as relevant to a person's health, and as a result, comprehensive therapeutic tactics are sought out to establish a homeostasis state within the body.

It would be slipshod reasoning to suggest or claim that “scientific” medical practices serve no purpose or have little value. Without question, the technological advances attained by this medical approach have, through acute intervention, saved many lives and continues to do so to this very day. Nevertheless, the misconceptions of the perceived success of scientific medicine have bolstered the high degree of confidence, to put it mildly, in scientific medicine as the correct treatment method for those in medical need. In summation, the predominate belief that mainstream medicine is the preeminent and perhaps the only medicinal strategy to remedy physical maladies and/or dis-eases is arrogant at best, and preposterous at worst.

To clarify, curative practices associated with scientific medicine follow the Western model and include all of those currently offered and taught in medical schools throughout the United States and abroad that are sanctioned by governing and self-regulating medical professional bodies such as the American Medical Association

²¹³ Azibo, “Articulating the Distinction Between Black Studies and the Study of Blacks,” 70.

(AMA), the American Colleges of Surgeons, and the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of the United States.²¹⁴ Self-regulating professional medical bodies such as the aforementioned establishes a foundation for custodians of conventional medical sciences (and the practice itself), and equally significant, provides an apparent justification for thinking that scientific medicine is the more suitable and only viable form of medical practice.

Revealing as it may be, the phrase “allopathic medicine” is commonly associated with and lies within the scope of scientific medicine. Even more, the term “allopathy” is used to indicate and encompasses all contemporary practices under conventional medicine. Surprisingly, the term allopathy was actually coined by Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of the alternative medicinal practice known as homeopathy, to depict a particular theory of treatment. The term itself, according to James Wharton, means “other than disease” and refers to a method of treating illnesses and symptoms in which the drugs have no similarity or “other set relation to the disease.”²¹⁵ To be clear, the definition is contrasted with the definition for “homeopathy,” which refers to its pharmacological principle, the “law of similars.” While allopathic remedies attack or act against the symptoms or illness, homeopathic remedies are matched to the symptoms

²¹⁴ The theoretical bedrock of Western medical institutions that follow the scientific model of medicine is the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons, which have four colleges housed in Ireland and the United Kingdom, to include: 1) the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh; 2) the Royal College of Surgeons of England; 3) the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow; and 4) the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. Satellites of the Royal College have been established in other European countries, such as Australia, Canada, the United States and Zealand as well as in non-European countries, namely Hong Kong, South Africa, and Thailand. For an editorial overview of the medical objectives outlined for the professional body housed in America, see the *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of the United States of America: Education, Research and Retraining*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1998-199).

²¹⁵ James C. Wharton, “The First Holistic Review: Alternative Medicine in the 19th Century” *Examining Holistic Medicine*, eds., Douglas Stalker and Clark Glymour (New York: Prometheus Books, 1985), 33.

experienced in an effort to treat “like with like.”²¹⁶ On another note, the catchphrase “scientific medicine,” like the idiom “holistic health” is an umbrella term in which a multitude of health practices have dissimilar approaches toward dealing with health and disease. A case in point: virologists are specialists that frame dis-ease as an infection from which it can be addressed by chemical means; immunologists hone in on dis-ease(s) within a particular immune system by assisting in its incapacity to defend itself against harmful bacteria; and epidemiologists are professionals who address the prevalence of dis-eases within a particular population.

The designation “holistic medicine,” on the other hand, is usually applied to any form of health care delivery system at variance from medical practices endorsed by medical regulatory bodies, such as those previously mentioned. In general, holistic or alternative medicine does not fall under the regulatory guidelines of medical organizations like the American Medical Association (AMA). As alluded to earlier, the label attached to these forms of therapeutic practices, like its counterpart (scientific medicine), include a broad range of alternative approaches to medicine, which are not offered in medical schools throughout America.²¹⁷ Exemplars of holistic medicinal practices include: Colon Hydrotherapy, Iridology, Naturopathy and Reflexology, to name a few.²¹⁸ In their article, “Unconventional Medicine in the United States,” authors Eisenberg, Kessler, Foster, Norlock, Calkins and Delbanco highlight that pejorative epithets, such as “unorthodox” or “unconventional” are intentionally attached to holistic

²¹⁶ Dana Ullman, *Homeopathy in the 21st Century* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1988), 33.

²¹⁷ Katherine Cotrell, “The Age of Alternatives” *Chatelaine*, vol. 68, no. 7 (July 1995), 29.

²¹⁸ For definitions of these various holistic health practices, see “Definition of Key Terms” in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

health practices by the dominant medical community, regardless of their proven efficacy in treating illnesses and/or diseases; with the more tolerant of the labels being “complimentary.”²¹⁹ The first two designations signify that, according to governing medical bodies, alternative health practices are not in conformity with its regulatory standards. Quite often these terms are used depreciatory for curative services that are not unlawful per se but are not endorsed as legitimate medical practices either by predominate medical organizations. On the other hand, “[n]ot all doctors, of course, are disdainful of the new trends.”²²⁰ Therefore, the latter appellation—complimentary medicine—is used more frequently by medical doctors sympathetic to holistic therapeutic practices, who view them as not in competition with scientific medicine but rather as having a symbiotic relationship in the eradication of dis-eases.

As the term implies, any treatment that is deemed “wholistic” or “holistic” is any treatment that takes into account the entire being of a person. Thus, a patient’s symptoms are considered in a multidimensional nature; that is, the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical makeup of an individual is under the scope of investigation and not just the physical component—as it is in scientific medicine. In a word, that which affects the mind, body and spirit of an individual is taken into account, critically examined and considered as agents towards one’s health or its antithesis—disease. Such a diagnosis takes into account the African worldview, as espoused by Azibo and other African thinkers. This frame of medical reasoning invokes the understanding: an individual

²¹⁹ David M. Eisenberg, Ronald C. Kessler, Cindy Foster, Frances E. Norlock, David R. Calkins and Thomas L. Delbanco, “Unconventional Medicine in the United States: Prevalence, Costs, and Patterns of Use” *New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 328, no. 4 (January 28, 1993), 246.

²²⁰ Kenneth R. Pelletier, *Holistic Medicine: From Stress to Optimum Health* (New York: Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence, 1979), xvii.

(indivisibility + duality) that is situated in her/his environment is part of a larger whole. Prior to the abatement of the consciousness of the African healer, Afrika advances that “the ancestral teachers of the African Healing Arts understood and taught its practitioners that: (1) All things in Nature were related; (2) All Matter in Nature originated from “The One Divine Source;” (3) All creation was related and similar, but each living organism was original and unique; and (4) All life and matter was created for a specific purpose and for a specific divine reason.”²²¹ Accordingly, a person exists, not isolated from the milieu from which she/he resides, and it is this context, which profoundly affects one’s health and well-being. In short, the methodological and theoretical frameworks of holistic health practices deem it compulsory to include and take into account all elements of a person’s existence, those corporeal and metaphysical.

Interestingly, several forms of alternative medicinal practices have, if you will, achieved a partial “mainstream” status in their own right, while other naturalistic therapeutic practices remain on the medical fringe of mainstream or conventional medicine. Acupuncture and chiropractic medical care are prime examples. These practices, argues Cotrell, have achieved professional recognition by scientific medicine due to the fact they have produced medical results backed by Western notions of scientific investigation.²²² Understandably so, still to this day, many of the medical practices considered holistic or alternative in nature remain on the periphery on medical acceptability. Up to the early part of the twentieth century this was not the case in America. Practitioners of the holistic health or alternative healing community practiced

²²¹ Afrika, *African Holisitc Health*, 2.

²²² Cotrell, “The Age of Alternatives,” 30.

somewhat freely in the United States, as did their fellow colleagues, university-trained medical physicians. However, with the publication of a monumental written work commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation for The Advancement of Teaching in 1910, medicine—how it would be practiced and taught in the university—would be transformed henceforth. In fact, the sweeping research on medical education in the United States, conducted by Abraham Flexner, fueled by the philanthropic auspices of Andrew Carnegie, and subsequently the John D. Rockefeller’s benefaction of scientific medical reform ensured that the holistic health and/or naturalistic alternative health tradition remain on the medical fringe well into the 21st Century.

Flexner, Philanthropy and the Medical Fringe of the Holistic Health Profession

Much of the reverence given to Abraham Flexner is on account of the extensive medical research he conducted in the early nineteenth century on behalf of organized professional medicine in the United States. In December, 1908 Flexner, an educator as opposed to as a physician, was formally hired by Henry Smith Pritchett, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, as a result of the attention the former garnered with the publication of his written work, *The American College*.²²³ In a

²²³ Published in 1908, *The American College* was written by Abraham Flexner while he was enrolled in graduate studies at the University of Berlin. The treatise was a critique of the system of higher education in America. Within the book, Flexner quotes Harvard University board member Charles Francis Adams, Jr., grandson of John Quincy Adams, as saying: “So far as I have been able to ascertain through twenty-five years of discussions of the Harvard board, of which I have been a member...the [college] authorities are as wide apart now as they ever were. There is no agreement; no unified effort to a given end.” Mimicking the sentiments of Adams, Jacob Gould Schurman, then President of Cornell University, in his 1906 presidential address to the university, lamented: “The college is without clear-cut notions of what a liberal education is

month's time Flexner began his fieldwork on an extensive medical research project.²²⁴ As a matriculated undergraduate of John Hopkins University, with also doing graduate work at both Harvard University and the University of Berlin—institutions from which he did complete his studies—, Flexner, in erudite fashion, began reading up on the history of medical education in both Europe and America, respectively. In referencing Flexner's stint on the higher education in the United States, Joshua Myers reveals: "As Abraham Flexner had seen...the American university was both unfettered and ungrounded in the extended traditions of the major European universities," and "[a]side from their strong religious moorings, American intellectuals, much like the Roman empire's invaders, the creators of modern Europe, would too have to appropriate their own classical heritage."²²⁵ For this reason, one of Flexner's objectives was to Germanize²²⁶ the American medical educational system. After consulting with then secretary of the American Medical Association and editor of its journal, George Simmons, Flexner also received council from secretary of the Council on Education, Arthur Dean Bevan.²²⁷ Even still, the alumni looked towards his alma mater—John Hopkins University—as the primary medical model for his subsequent research.²²⁸

and how it is to be secured,...and the pity of it is that it is not a local or special disability, but a paralysis affecting every college of arts in America." Abraham Flexner, *The American College* (New York: The Century Co., 1908), 6-7.

²²⁴ Abraham Flexner, *Henry S. Pritchett: A Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 218.

²²⁵ Joshua Maurice Myers, "Reconceptualizing Intellectual Histories of Africana Studies: A Review of the Literature" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Temple University, 2013), 241.

²²⁶ For a compelling and comprehensive discourse on how the major tenets and pedagogical structures of the Western contemporary research university are Germanic in origin, see William Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006).

²²⁷ E. Richard Brown, *Rockefeller Medicine: Medicine and Capitalism in American* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 145.

²²⁸ Ibid.

Accordingly, Flexner began his investigative undertaking of using as a benchmark the design of John Hopkins University medical school, which became the standard to assess the curricula of other medical institutions throughout the United States. In giving further reverence to the institution of higher learning that he so admired, Flexner admits without hesitancy the theoretical guiding light it provided: “Without this pattern in the back of my mind, I could have accomplished little.”²²⁹ So thought Flexner, all other medical schools in the United States were subordinate and paled in comparison to medical model taught and practiced at Hopkins. The acclaim of the university from which he received his baccalaureate are apparent in these words: “It possessed ideals and men who embodied them, and from it have emanated the influences that in a half-century have lifted American medical education from the lowest status to the highest in the civilized world.”²³⁰ Within an eighteen-month time span, Flexner had completed his study by which he investigated 155 medical institutions in the United States and issued his concluding results. The “Flexner Report,” as it was commonly referred to in scholarly circles, originally published under the title, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada*, would change the medical landscape in America for years to come.²³¹

The overall effectiveness behind the medical theory posited by Flexner’s extensive assessment (i.e., the “Report”), avows physician-sociologist Howard Waitzkin, was the “underlying assumption...that laboratory-based scientific medicine, oriented to

²²⁹ Abraham Flexner, *I Remember: The Autobiography Of Abraham Flexner* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940), 74.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 85.

²³¹ See Abraham Flexner, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada: A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*, Bulletin no. 4 (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1910).

the concepts and methods of European bacteriology, produced a higher quality and more effective medical practice;”²³² a notion today that is steadily but in chronic fashion being slowly diminished. Waitzkin goes on to expose the slipshod research practices conducted in the Flexner Report, in its attempt to minimize the proven utility of naturalistic medical practices in the beginning of the twentieth century: “Although the comparative effectiveness of various medical traditions (including homeopathy, traditional folk healing, chiropractic, etc.) had never been subjected to systematic test, the report argued that medical schools not oriented to scientific medicine fostered quackery and dangerous mistreatment of the public,” and as a consequence, the concluding results of the Flexner Report “called for the closure or restructuring of schools not equipped to teach laboratory-based medicine.”²³³

Being substandard in their quotidian medical practices was considered the principal criterion for why these medical institutions suffered closure, so proclaimed the results of the report. However, Scott Whitaker and José Fleming, authors of the rarely cited text, *Medisin* offer an appealing narrative. According to them, the decision of whether medical schools remained in operation (besides those Black medical schools that suffered closure due to academic racism) had more to do with their inclination to acquiesce and comply with the standards mandated in the report. Whitaker and Fleming argue that the determining factor was less about the medical schools exhibiting academic excellence, but rather the “determining test was integrity, the willingness of the school’s

²³² Howard Waitzkin, “Medical Philanthropies: The Band-Aid Treatment?” *The Sciences*, vol. 20, issue 6 (July/August, 1980), 25.

²³³ *Ibid.*

administration and faculty to accept a curricula supporting DRUG research. This is how the profiteering began in the medical industry”.²³⁴ To add validity to and support this claim, historian Joseph Goulden expresses: “Flexner had the ideas, Rockefeller and Carnegie had the money, and their marriage was spectacular. The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research and the General Education Board showered money on tolerably respectable schools and on professors who expressed an interest in research.”²³⁵

Unquestionably, this delivered a final blow to alternative medicine being able to practice freely in American society, consequently being placed on the medical fringe of the health care delivery system in the United States. Based on the estimates provided by Waitzkin, within an eleven-year time frame—from 1904 to 1915—the upshot of the Flexner Report, in addition to the medical directives implemented prior to Flexner’s research²³⁶, resulted in the cessation or conflation of ninety-two medical schools. More specifically, as it relates to the research conducted by Flexner, in five years time afterwards, a total of thirty five percent of medical schools in North America had closed their doors.²³⁷ The message was unequivocal: no longer would “unscientific” alternative health professions—which until then had been equally respected branches of medicine—

²³⁴ Scott Whitaker and José Fleming, *Medisin: The Causes & Solutions to Disease, Malnutrition and The Medical Sins that are Killing the World* (Hoover, AL: Divine Protection Publications, 2005), 18.

²³⁵ Joseph C. Goulden, *The Money Givers* (New York: Random House, 1971), 141.

²³⁶ In 1889, Baptist minister Frederick Taylor Gates attracted the attention of John D. Rockefeller as a result of the leadership skills he displayed as head of the American Baptist Education Society. Soon thereafter, Gates would become both the philanthropic and personal financial counselor for the Rockefeller fortune, respectively. Nearly a decade later, in 1897, Gates, who lamented over what he considered to be a lack of competent practitioners in the medical profession, would envision a need for science in medicine to strengthen the field as he saw fit. Thus, the research conducted by Abraham Flexner in 1909, posterior by over a decade, solidified the imperatives initiated by Gates in the latter part of the nineteenth century. See George W. Corner, *A History of the Rockefeller Institute, 1901-1953: Origins and Growth* (New York: The Rockefeller Institute Press, 1964), 18-29.

²³⁷ Lester S. King, “The Flexner Report of 1910,” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 251, no. 8 (February 24, 1984), 1085.

qualify for funding.²³⁸ Only those medical schools willing to acquiesce and adjust their curricula to correspond with the standards and medical model Flexner most admired (the Germanic university system) would be allowed to thrive. We should be mindful that prior to the usurpation of scientific medical reform in early twentieth century America, there were twice as many custodians of health practicing alternative medicine than those in conventional medicine. It would be negligent not to mention that mandates to enforce medical education, based on the foundation of Western “science,” occurred earlier than that of the 1910 publication of Flexner’s text *Medical Education in the United States and Canada*. On this point, Todd Savitt explains: “As historians have shown, Abraham Flexner did not inaugurate American medical education reform with his 1910 report; he stepped into the middle of such an era, put his imprint on it and, though his work with the [General Education Board] after 1912, influenced the way reforms were implemented.”²³⁹

This proved to be extremely problematic for the medical institutions that it most effected by the switch solely to “scientific” medical education, being that a lion’s share of them openly “taught clinical techniques of homeopathy, herbalism, midwifery and other

²³⁸ In no way was the “Flexner Report” an original research enterprise. The American Medical Association at that time was the professional organization for physicians who practiced allopathy, the sect of medicine characterized by administering drug therapy in large doses. The medical organization was eager to establish its type of medical practice as the only legitimate medical sect, which in fact at the time it was in the minority to medical approaches utilizing alternative therapeutic techniques. To that end, the American Medical Association had conducted its own review of medical education in 1906. The AMA understood in advance that their findings—based on their medical approach of drug therapy being in the minority to alternative health practices at the time—would be considered biased, and thusly approached the Carnegie Foundation to undertake a survey independent of their own, which subsequently culminated in 1910 into the “Flexner Report.” See Lester S. King, “The Founding of the American Medical Association” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 248, no.14 (October 8, 1982), 1749-1752.

²³⁹ Todd L. Savitt, “Abraham Flexner and the Black Medical Schools” *Journal of the National Medical Association*, vol. 98, no. 9, (September 2006), 1415. See also Kenneth M. Ludmerer, *Learning to Heal: The Development of American Medical Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); and Robert P. Hudson, “Abraham Flexner in Perspective: American Medical Education, 1865-1910” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. 46, no. 6 (November 1, 1972), 549-550.

forms of healing not grounded in Western European [medical] perspectives;” nonetheless, “[sc]ientific, laboratory-based medicine became the norm for education and practice”²⁴⁰ for the future. The completion of the “Flexner Report” was so successful in eliminating medical schools that endorsed and/or practiced holistic health, or what Walsh referred to as “sectarian” medical schools, that by the year 1932 the former head of the American Medical Association’s Council on Medical Education, Arthur Dean Bevan, boasted: “We were, of course, very grateful to Pritchett and to Flexner for enabling us to put out of business the homeopathic and eclectic schools surviving in 1910.”²⁴¹

Even though institutions whose medical practices were naturalistic in scope were deliberately placed on the medical fringe, Eliot Freidson leaves something to be desired in his offering of the definition of a profession. According to Freidson, any occupation is a profession to the degree that they are able to carve out, define, and control some aspect of work as their own special preserve. Thusly, he asserts: “It would appear that those occupations that deal with arcane information [i.e., holistic health practices] have a better chance of doing this than those whose information and skills may be relatively easily acquired and subjected to scrutiny and control by groups outside the occupation itself.”²⁴² Even still, medical schools that practiced curative methods outside of the methodological scope of scientific medicine, or not in alignment with the directives of scientific medical education, were considered non-compliant; thus, making it virtually impossible for these institutions to comply, even in a perfunctory manner, with statutory requirements.

²⁴⁰ Waitzkin, “Medical Philanthropies,” 25.

²⁴¹ Quoted in James J. Walsh, *History of the Medical Society of the State of New York* (New York: The Medical Society, 1970), 173.

²⁴² Eliot Friedson, *Profession of Medicine: A Study of the Sociology of Applied Knowledge* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 73.

To the writer, mainstream medicine still remains unimpressive with its utilization of the scientific method. In medical schools today, Preston embellishes on how so-called “knowledge is imparted to the medical student by pronouncement: first because the student is deluged with so much biological information to memorize he cannot stop to question what is being told, and second because the medical subculture use *ex cathedra* statements as a matter of course.”²⁴³ The irony of this is that the mere addition of “scientific facts” to the medical curriculum has done nothing to teach medical students about the “techniques of information gathering, the rules of evidence and inference from data, the need for controlled studies and epidemiological studies for assessing the real effects of therapies or the fundamental fact that human responses to therapies can be predicted at best only as probabilities.”²⁴⁴ Unfortunately, these failings of medical education, brought to light by Preston, have had little effect today on the majority of the public’s opinion of organized medicine.

To augment the predominance of scientific medicine, the American Medical Association (AMA), incorporated in 1897 but founded exactly a half a century earlier in 1847, just four years antecedent of the founding of the Rockefeller Institute, became the largest association of medical doctors and the most dominant medical professional body in the United States. During the beginning of the twentieth century onward, the AMA would thrive whilst professions of alternative health practitioners (homeopathy, naturopathy, etc) suffered drastically. Moreover, African American medical doctors, who

²⁴³ Thomas A. Preston, *The Clay Pedestal: A Re-Examination of the Doctor-Patient Relationship* (Seattle: Madrona Publishers, 1981), 95.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

were also professionally trained—or even those wishing to practice medicine—were marginalized by the domineering medical institution, exhibiting the most foundational of nations’ societal norms – white supremacy. And even with the appointment of Dr. Lonnie Bristow in 1994 as the first African American president of the American Medical Association, the quandary of outright racism in the medical field still persists to this day. Why, you might ask? Harriet A. Washington answers the inquiry with brevity yet clarity: “reminders of this rancorous history persist, and the A.M.A.’s apology remains pertinent, if long overdue. Consider the statistic: In 1910, when Abraham Flexner published his report on medical education, African-Americans made up 2.5 percent of the number of physicians in the United States. Today [in 2008], they make up 2.2 percent.”²⁴⁵ Washington raises a vital and accurate point on how the steady flow of racism in the medical profession has continued well into the twenty first century. The sad reality is that when the Flexner Report was first published, its effect reverberated and hurled a drastic blow to the professional aspirations of burgeoning African American medical students wishing to practice medicine as a vocation. To be exact, the report recommended that all save two predominately Black medical schools (i.e., Howard and Meharry universities) ceased operations.²⁴⁶ To the dismay of the Black medical profession, only these two institutions of higher learning survived the reform era of

²⁴⁵ Harriet A. Washington, “Apology Shines Light on Racial Schism in Medicine” *New York Times* (July 29, 2008).

²⁴⁶ See Todd L. Savitt, *Race and Medicine in Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth Century America* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2007), Chapters 11-18, (121-268), “Abraham Flexner and the Black Medical Schools” *Journal of the National Medical Association*, vol. 98, no. 9, (September 2006), 1415-1424, “Entering a White Profession: Black Physicians in the New South, 1880-1920” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, vol. 61, no. 4 (Winter, 1987), 507-540; and James L. Curtis, *Blacks, Medical Schools, and Society* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1971).

medical education in America.

Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is imperative to mention Africans who were university-trained in the field of medicine and used their acumen to combat racism. Like Martin Robison Delany (1812-1885) and James McCune Smith (1813-1865) before him, W. Montague Cobb (1904-1990) was a medical defender of the African way. His emancipatory efforts, in the twentieth-century, as both a licensed physician and a physical anthropologist, being the 1st African in the United States to earn a doctor of philosophy in the discipline from Case Western Reserve University in 1932—, diligently pioneered efforts to counteract the myths and unfounded pseudoscientific notions that had been concocted by white racist intellectuals, positing the supposed biological inferiority of African people. In fact, Cobb was among the first physical anthropologists to direct the resources of that discipline (anthropology), by utilizing his training as a medical doctor, toward the social problems deliberately created and experienced by Africans in America.²⁴⁷ For the purposes of medical unification, in 1957, Cobb established the Imhotep National Conference on Hospital Integration as an attempt to establish a coalition between the National Medical Association, comprised of a Black constituency and the American Medical Association, a white dominant medical institution. With the short-lived success of an alliance between the two professional medical bodies, racism continued to carve out its discriminatory landscape in America as

²⁴⁷ See William Montague Cobb, *Progress and Portents for The Negro in Medicine* (New York: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1948), *Medical Care and the Plight of the Negro* (New York: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1947), and “Race and Runners” *The Journal of Health and Physical Education*, vol. 7, no. 1 (January 1936), 52-56. See also, Melvin A. Douglass, “William Montague Cobb (1904-1990): The Principal Historian of Afro-Americans in Medicine” *Crisis*, vol. 98, no. 1 (January 1991), 30-31, 40.

“the two medial groups increasingly found themselves on the opposing sides of important antidiscrimination battles.”²⁴⁸ What is more, “the National Medical Association campaigned for Medicare and Medicaid on behalf of its members’ mostly [B]lack, often poor patients,...the A.M.A. censured both programs as ‘socialized medicine.’”²⁴⁹

For medical research to be carried out in an effective manner, it takes a great deal of capital to back its initiatives in order for it to be successful. In his own study, Abraham Flexner acknowledged that prior to his work being published in 1910, great strides had already been made in reforming medical education, making the “scientific” investigation of medicine, based off of the Western standard, the norm.²⁵⁰ More specifically, it was the philanthropy of steel mogul Andrew Carnegie that financed Abraham Flexner’s “Report” and oil magnate John D. Rockefeller’s patronage of medical reform that ushered into the first quarter of the twentieth century the predominance of scientific medical education in the United States. With Flexner’s research serving as the foundation for the medical educational standard in America, soon thereafter he “became the lens that brought the Rockefeller and Carnegie fortunes into focus on the unsuspecting and vulnerable medical profession.”²⁵¹

In the chapter, “Reforming Medical Education: Who Will Rule Medicine?” of the text, *Rockefeller Medicine Men*, author E. Richard Brown summarizes quite aptly the elite’s philanthropic scheme to usurp and transmogrify the medical care delivery system

²⁴⁸ Harriet A. Washington, “Apology Shines Light on Racial Schism in Medicine” *New York Times* (July 29, 2008).

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Abraham Flexner, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada: A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*, Bulletin no. 4 (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1910), 10-11.

²⁵¹ Whitaker and Fleming, *Medisin*, 17.

in America as they saw fit. However, in order to deal with the overcrowding of the medical profession, due to the 168 operating medical schools in the nation, which resulted in the relative poverty most physicians experienced, Brown writes:

To deal with these problems, the medical profession adopted an effective strategy of reform based on scientific medicine and the developing medical sciences. Their plan was to gain control over medical education for the organized profession representing practitioners in alliance with scientific medical faculty. Their measures involved large expenditures for medical education and required a major change in the financing of medical schools. Dependent on outside capital, the profession opened the door to outside influence. The corporate philanthropies that intervened turned the campaign to reform medical education into a struggle for control between private practitioners, on the one hand, and academic doctors and the corporate class, on the other. The conflict over who would rule medical education, to which we now turn, was fundamentally a question of whose interests the medical care system would serve.²⁵²

In his pivotal text, *Philanthropic Foundations and Higher Education*, E.V. Hollis maintains that over ninety percent of the financial contributions made to higher education—including medical education—, from 1902-1934, were made by just nine eleemosynary foundations.²⁵³ Even more striking, of those nine charitable institutions, the Rockefeller benevolent societies accounted for seventy three percent of the sum total given to higher education in the United States during this period, and the Carnegie foundations comprised less than a third of that, another twenty two percent.²⁵⁴ Hence, combined, these two philanthropic corporations, led by the two most notable business tycoons of its era, comprised ninety five percent of all charitable contributions endowed to higher education in the United States. Quite comparable to Hollis' written work, Howard Berliner, in his insightful scholarly treatise, outlines a tripartite of stages by

²⁵² E. Richard Brown, *Rockefeller Medicine Men: Medicine and Capitalism in American* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 135-136.

²⁵³ E.V. Hollis, *Philanthropic Foundations and Higher Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 2.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

which benevolent foundations were instrumentally involved in the development in scientific medicine in America: (1) 1890-1910, a time frame that can be best characterized by the funneling of monies for scientific medical research, which concluded with the publication of the Flexner Report; (2) 1910-1930, the period from which philanthropic aid was streamed to medical education; and (3) 1930 to the last quarter of the twentieth century, an era in which benevolent foundations buttressed primarily the policy studies of medical care.²⁵⁵ All three phases of charitable contributions toward the development of scientific medicine, largely by both Rockefeller and Carnegie, with the former dispensing the greater part of monies, laid the foundation for which organized medicine today firmly stands.

In their estimation, Whitaker and Fleming suggest that since the first decade of the twentieth century, the Carnegie and Rockefeller foundations, “have invested over a billion dollars into the medical schools of America to promote chemically oriented MediSin in America.”²⁵⁶ This funneling of monies to medical schools obedient to the pharmaceutical charge left no room for naturalistic health practitioners to prosper in society as their counterparts soon would. As a consequence, argue the authors, “Naturopathic, homeopathy, and chiropractic medicine was denied funding because its foundation was not based upon chemical drugs. That’s why medical doctors know NOTHING about nutrition after spending four years in these Rockefeller approved schools, because it is not part of the curriculum and is not profitable.”²⁵⁷ In short,

²⁵⁵ Howard S. Berliner, “Philanthropic Foundations and Scientific Medicine” (Ph.D. Dissertation, John Hopkins University, 1977), 60-61.

²⁵⁶ Whitaker and Fleming, *Medisin*, 18.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

scientific medicine had gained dominion over medical education and the health care delivery system in the United States from the beginning of the twentieth century up to the twenty first century but would not champion without causing some serious health challenges and a multitude of causalities to its denizens, who became most dependent on its pharmacological and invasive strategies (i.e., the administration of pharmaceutical drugs, invasive surgery, etc.) to remedy their physical and/or mental maladies.

CHAPTER 6:
DISMANTLING NORMATIVE THEORIES OF WESTERN
STANDARDS OF DIETARY NEEDS

Some of our top scholars are intellectual giants, but are dietary degenerates. And these ‘dietary degenerates’ are still drug addicts of white male domination. If our top scholars and intellectual giants are still drug addicts of white male domination how can we [totally] unplug ourselves, and liberate ourselves.²⁵⁸

We dig our own graves with our teeth.²⁵⁹

Live right, think right, eat right, and do right. You will not have to die to go to heaven to be like angels; you will be like them while you live.²⁶⁰

Spiritual Warriors must stress, that we as new Afrakans have to be as meticulous about our diet, and the foods and drinks that we consume, as we are about the clothes we wear and the education we feed our minds and our children’s minds.²⁶¹

²⁵⁸ Mfundishi Jhutyms Ka N Heru Hassan K. Salim, *Spiritual Warriors are Healers*

²⁵⁹ Elijah Muhammad, *How To Eat To Live*

²⁶⁰ Elijah Muhammad, *How To Eat To Live*

²⁶¹ Mfundishi Jhutyms Ka N Heru Hassan K. Salim, *Spiritual Warriors are Healers*

Oh how my people love to eat what's bad
Laughing all the while
Saying leave us alone
You rabbit head, wooly head black man
God will surely bless these germs

In tears I cry for the hurt of my people

Oh how the years did fly by
When I saw some of them again
Oh how they looked at me
Gazed at me
Is it really you?
It can't be

Oh how our backs ache and how our hands swell up
And our bowels run like the mighty Euphrates
In tears they cry
Son, could you please help us?

I cry for the hurt of my people
One old man said
Son don't you cry for us
Cuz you told us what would happen
If we ate that soul food
Macaroni and cheese
And pork chops
Saying it was finger licking good

But instead we laughed at you
And called you names
But good god have mercy today, son
We're bending over
In all our pain

But it's a miracle, son
God sure did bless you
Cuz you still look so young
Like the day you told us not to eat that soul food, as he walks away.²⁶²

²⁶² Poem by Jerome A. Smith (aka Gabriel), "Eat To Live – A Tribute to Elijah Muhammad"

Introduction

The year 1967 was a watershed for the revolutionary spirit of African people in the United States. Throughout the year, numerous rebellions were recorded throughout cities across the nation as a direct result of Blacks being discontent with their unjust conditions and the hypocritical notions of democracy. The first of these rebellions materialized in Cleveland, but the most conspicuous and devastating were in the cities of Detroit and Newark, signaling across the United States a commonality among Blacks demanding parity in the same manner given to other citizens.²⁶³ In an insightful piece, Kenneth B. Clark expresses incredulity in the fact that “it is one measure of the depth and insidiousness of American racism that the nation ignores the rage of the rejected...The wonder is that there have been so few riots, that Negroes generally are law-abiding in a world where the law itself has seemed an enemy.”²⁶⁴

Regarded as one of the most visible and notable advocates of civil disobedience through nonviolence resistance, Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) made an abrupt ideological transmogrification during this same year and thus turned his humanitarian efforts to indict the United States, who he considered was responsible for the disenfranchisement and killing of countless Africans and establishing, legislatively, a system of social proscription that specifically ostracized Blacks in America.²⁶⁵ It was

²⁶³ Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 152.

²⁶⁴ Kenneth B. Clark, “The Wonder Is There Have Been So Few Riots” *Black Protest in the Sixties: Articles from The New York Times*, eds. August Meier, Elliot Rudwick and John Bracey, Jr. (New York: Markus Wiener Publishing, Inc., 1991), 107.

²⁶⁵ The works written on Martin Luther King, Jr. are numerous; however, for a thorough, extended and comprehensive examination on the life and activism of King, it would be useful to explore Taylor Branch’s three-volume work, written over an eighteen-year period, on this iconic figure. See Taylor Branch, *Parting*

during this year in which the famed Baptist preacher activist, at the Riverside Baptist Church in New York City, gave what would be his first public speech of an outright revolutionary stance, “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence,”²⁶⁶ one in which he castigated the United States of America for its involvement in the Vietnam War and exposed the hypocrisy of the nation that proclaimed to be democratic but was in actuality its antithesis: a system of oppression and exploitation as African Americans vehemently suffered the disproportionate distribution of resources on all fronts of life in American society. Unlike before, while in the limelight, King could no longer hold his tongue in the public sphere, thus, in his own words, he uttered: “I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government...for the sake of hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent.”²⁶⁷ Consequently, it would be on this very day—April 4—in which King would live exactly 365 days more, only to meet his demise in 1968 by way of an assassination in Memphis, Tennessee, primarily due to his relentless outright critique of the undemocratic policies of racist America. Consequently, for many African Americans, King’s vision of universal love, which stood at the time as America’s primary hope of civil progress, diminished the very day he was slain.

In the same year that King delivered his monumental speech at Riverside, Elijah

the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963 (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-1965* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), and *At Canaan’s Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-1968* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

²⁶⁶ See James M. Washington, ed., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1986), 231-244.

²⁶⁷ Martin Luther King, Jr., “A Time to Break Silence” A Speech delivered at a Meeting of Clergy and Laity Concerned at the Riverside Baptist Church in New York City (April 4, 1967).

Muhammad (1897-1975), the venerated and prominent leader of the Nation of Islam, who gained legitimacy as its leader after being imprisoned for draft resistance during World War II,²⁶⁸ published, through the auspices of his religious organization, a monumental treatise on health, entitled *How to Eat to Live*. Essentially, this work implored Africans to reevaluate their eating regimes—which were based primarily on the Standard American Diet (SAD)²⁶⁹—and to take matters of health, as it relates to the choices and discipline of food consumption, into their own hands. Incontrovertibly, the surfacing of this text in 1967 was not happenstance.

The timely piece appeared at the height of when certain Black civil rights organizations, like King himself, became more revolutionary, in both rhetoric and action. For example, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), during its inception, was an activist organization that used non-violence maneuvers to address and combat racism in America, which was led by the younger Black vanguard of the civil rights movement. However, the thrust of the more radical and progressive—in the words of Cedric Robinson—Black movements in America²⁷⁰ (i.e., the Black Power and Black Arts Movements) gave way to and spurred SNCC to change its philosophical tune and evolve from non-violent tactics to adopt for its own a more revolutionary stance

²⁶⁸ Karl Evanzz, *The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1999), 4-8.

²⁶⁹ This is a common catchphrase that defines the eating regimen embraced mostly by communities in “developed” and burgeoning “developing” nations, namely the United States. The dietary customs of a Standard American Diet (SAD) include the quotidian high consumption of: meats; processed, refined carbohydrates and grains; meat by-products (e.g., eggs, milk, cheese, butter, cream, yogurt, etc.) and the plethora of foodstuffs made with high fructose corn syrup (i.e., beverages, candies, chips, breakfast cereals, etc.).

²⁷⁰ Cedric Robins has written a critical text that examines a much-neglected discourse in academe: the emergence of various movements of Black cultural resistance from the colonial period to the Civil Rights era in the United States, based primarily on the experiences and sensibilities of both enslaved and quasi-free Africans. See Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Movements in America* (New York: Routledge, 1997)

tantamount with the changing times.²⁷¹ From his standpoint as a young activist during this period, James Turner considers the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s signified the heyday of the Black Power movement in America.²⁷² In the same vein, notable Philadelphia activist and educator Muhammad Ahmad articulates in his informative tome, *We Will Return in the Whirlwind* that after 1966, numerous Black radical organizations, to include SNCC—e.g., the Black Panther Party (BPP), Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), League of Revolutionary Black Workers, etc.—“used as a form of what was termed, revolutionary nationalism (unity of lower class, African-Americans, poor) to galvanize the African-American mass radical movement...what Cedric Robinson calls [B]lack Marxism and what Rod Bush calls [B]lack nationalism and class struggle.”²⁷³ An exemplar of this momentum was witnessed with the establishment of The Republic of New Africa, an organization that publicly advocated for the establishment of an African state within the southern region of the United States as a means to materialize and bring

²⁷¹ The publication of *Black Power* in 1967, co-written by then SNCC chairman Stokely Carmichael (later named, Kwame Ture) exhibits, as a prime example, the pervasiveness of radicalism found throughout Black America and abroad in the 1960s. See Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967). For more posterior discourses on the Black Power movement in the U.S., see also, Samori Sekou Camara, *There are Some Bad Brothers and Sisters in New Orleans: The Black Power Movement in the Crescent City from 1964-1977* (New Orleans: Kamali Academy Press, 2014); Peniel E. Joseph, “Rethinking the Black Power Era” *The Journal of Southern History*, vol. 75, no. 3, (August 2009), 707-716, “The Black Power Movement: A State of the Field,” *Journal of American History*, vol. 96, no. 3 (December 2009), 751-776, *Waiting ‘Til The Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006) and *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Judson L. Jeffries, ed. *Black Power In the Belly of the Beast* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Jeffrey Ogbanna Green Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2004); and William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) *inter alia*.

²⁷² According to Turner, the Black Power movements in the United States reached its height during the timeframe of 1965 to 1975. See James E. Turner, “Africana Studies and Epistemology: A Discourse in the Sociology of Knowledge,” *The African American Studies Reader*, second edition, ed. Nathaniel Norment, Jr. (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 75.

²⁷³ Muhammad Ahmad, *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations, 1960-1975* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 2007), 312.

into existence, with the sovereign ownership of land in America, the anterior catchphrase articulated first by Martin Delany, then Marcus Garvey, and others after them—“A nation within a nation.”

These societal movements orchestrated and run by Blacks, maintains James Anderson, espoused nationalistic ideology and black pride amongst the African masses,²⁷⁴ and such camaraderie led to, amongst other things, the International and National Black Power Conferences of 1966, 1967 and 1968, which were held in the municipalities of Washington D.C., Newark, New Jersey and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, respectively. To the dismay of Blacks with nationalist and political sensibilities, the Third National Black Power Conference in Philadelphia which was held from August 29 to September 1, 1968, and whose objective was to engineer a unified program for the Black Power Movement, would also prove to be the last.²⁷⁵

Nonetheless, subsequently Black Nationalist ideology would gain prominence beyond the borders of America with the convening of the First Regional International Black Power conference, held in Bermuda in 1969.²⁷⁶ In spite of its tenets of self-reliance and feverish criticism of mainstream America, Dean Robinson recognizes that “[B]lack nationalists did offer certain conceptual innovations; and the rhetoric and activism of the Black Power era did influence politics during the mid-1960s to early

²⁷⁴ James D. Anderson, “Aunt Jemima in Dialectics: Genovese on Slave Culture” *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 61, no. 1 (January, 1976), 99.

²⁷⁵ Paul M. Washington with David Mcl. Gracie, “*Other Sheep I Have:*” *The Autobiography of Father Paul M. Washington* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 72-81; and Robert Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytic History* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1990), 160-164.

²⁷⁶ Kwasi Konadu, *A View from The East: Black Cultural Nationalism and Education in New York City* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 27. For a more extensive discussion on the 1969 Black Power Conference in Bermuda, see Quito Swan, *Black Power in Bermuda: The Struggle for Decolonization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 77-94.

1970s.”²⁷⁷ In a word, Africans began to address, through discourse and direct action, their own needs in ways other than to “fight against obvious mis-appropriations of power, whether with mass actions or through the use of ‘legal’ means.”²⁷⁸ Although it is beyond the scope of this study, it would be remiss not to highlight the community service work of the Black Panther Party of Self-Defense during the same era, who attempted to address health concerns of Black communities across America. In her illuminating text, Alondra Nelson informs us it was the establishment of the pioneering Free Breakfast for Children Program and the People’s Free Medical Clinics as a requirement for all chapters that “would be borne out by the strategic repertoire employed in the Party’s work around issues of medicine and well-being,” signifying the radical organization “was heir to a legacy of African American health advocacy.”²⁷⁹ In essence, the Black Panther Party promoted healthier eating as a form of liberation and determined the need for substantial healthcare for Blacks as paramount.

Akin to the emancipatory efforts of Blacks mandating the acknowledgement of their African humanity in the United States, there too was a campaign in the 1960s, generated by the masses to: 1) critique the drastic rise of the industrialization of the food industry; and 2) promote health and wellness via proper food consumption. In a word,

²⁷⁷ Dean E. Robinson, “To Forge a Nation, To Forge an Identity: Black Nationalism in the United States, 1957-1974, (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1995), ii.

²⁷⁸ Haki R. Madhubuti, *From Pan to Planet, Life Studies: The Need for Afrikan Minds and Institutions* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1973), 43.

²⁷⁹ Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 49, 90 and 112. See also, Mark Brody, “Panthers Map a People’s Health Plan” *Daily World* (June 25, 1969); “Black Panther Party Plans Health Clinics” *Los Angeles Times* (November 25, 1969), 24; and “Black Panthers Set Up Clinics” *Washington Post* (November 26, 1969); and Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), Chapter 7, entitled “Breakfast,” 179-198.

the role of food became synonymous with 1960s activism. According to Warren Belasco, the public began to take notice in what he deems the “counterculture cuisine” as early as 1966 in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, California.²⁸⁰ However, argues Belasco, a larger following of this counterculture of cuisine developed after the takeover of People’s Park in Berkeley by residents in April 1969, in which local residents “planted vegetable seeds, trees, and sod...[and] shared fruit.”²⁸¹ In consequence, the establishment of food cooperatives (i.e., co-ops) across America was a direct result of the conflict at People’s Park.²⁸² It is imperative to highlight that this progressive food movement that Belasco mentions was spear-headed and run largely by a white liberal populace, and in no way should it overshadow Blacks’ activist stance toward health and wellness during the same timeframe. In fact, there were organizations run by Africans in America that also advocated a naturals foods dietary lifestyle. Conceivably, the most notable group, given some disastrous events, was Philadelphia’s MOVE organization, which espoused a strict vegetarian and mostly raw foods eating regimen by the early 1970s. According to authors John Anderson and Hilary Hevenor, the inspiration behind the philosophical outlook on dietary practices was inspired first in 1965 when MOVE founder John Africa’s wife, Dorothy joined “the Kingdom of Yahweh, a religious sect whose members were required to maintain a vegetarian diet;” a regimen John Africa

²⁸⁰ Warren J. Belasco, *Appetite for Change: How The Counterculture Took On The Food Industry* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007, 17; and (Author unknown) “Grab Land,” *Good Times* (April 23, 1969), 7.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁸² Lois Wickstrom, *The Food Conspiracy Cookbook* (San Francisco: 101 Productions, 1974), 3.

would subsequently accept as his own and adopt as a way of life for MOVE.²⁸³

Elijah Muhammad's Nutritional Call to Arms

The countless atrocities inflicted upon African people, for several centuries, in a country that at best deemed them second class citizens, served as a historical marker for Elijah Muhammad to implement his own religious, political, and economic motives in the United States of America. As Howard University alum Louis Wright eloquently puts it in his 1987 doctoral dissertation, Muhammad's "political formulations provide impressive evidence that he recognized this situation in America to be not a contradiction but the logical consequences of a "grafted" people designed to destroy and corrupt freedom, justice, and equality in the world through deception."²⁸⁴ With the undeniable

²⁸³ John Anderson and Hilary Hevenor, *Burning Down The House: MOVE and the Tragedy of Philadelphia* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1987), 2. Of the MOVE's sixteen mandates, what they deemed "Beliefs and Practices," the one labeled "Raw Food and Distortions" reveals the organization's view on diet and respect for the environment: "The diet of JOHN AFRICA gave us consists of fresh raw food. We always keep plenty of wholesome raw food on hand and eat whenever our bodies tell us to, not according to artificial meal-time standards. We make sure no one around us goes hungry, because we know that good food is an essential requirement of life. We acknowledge that some of us were raised on the system's food, or 'distortion' as we call it. Doing the work we do can also put us under a lot of pressure when parent or child or husband and wife are separated by the system's oppression. So it is not uncommon to see some of us eating cooked food on occasion. However, you will never see a committed MOVE member use drugs, cigarettes or alcohol. The hundred of miles that the system has place between us and some of our brothers and sisters in distant prisons has also forced us to use cars to maintain the close contact our family is used to. But we look forward to the day when we can live together the way we want to, without a need for air-polluting technology." MOVE, *25 Years On The Move* (Philadelphia: Self-Published, 1997), 71.

²⁸⁴ Louis E. Wright, "The Political Thought of Elijah Muhammad: Innovation and Continuity in Western Tradition" (Ph.D. dissertation, Howard University, 1987), v. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to engage in an comprehensive examination of the positive influence Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam had on African communities throughout America, for the sake of scholarship, it is imperative to acknowledge that numerous academicians have written a plethora of theses/dissertations on Elijah Muhammad and/or the Nation of Islam (only two of which were trained in the discipline of Africana Studies and five, historians by training), which include the following: Hatim A. Sahib, "The Nation of Islam" (MA Thesis, University of Chicago, 1951); "Ibrahim Mahmmond Shalaby, "The Role of the School in Cultural Renewal and Identity Development in the Nation of Islam in America" (Ph.D. dissertation,

University of Arizona, 1967); Walter Abilla, "A Study of Black Muslims: An Analysis of Commitment" (Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1972); William A. Marshall, "Education in the Nation of Islam During the Leadership of Elijah Muhammad, 1925-1975" (Ed.D. dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago, 1976); Andrea D. Sullivan, "Politicization: The Effect of the Nation of Islam Upon the Prison Inmate" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1976); Audrea Hart Blanding, "Contact with The Nation of Islam As It Relates to Internal-External Control and Subjective Expected Utility of Membership in the Nation" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1977); Oliver Jones, Jr., "The Constitutional Politics of the Black Muslim Movement in America" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1978); E. Curtis Alexander, "Three Black Religious Educators: A Study of the Educational Perspectives of Richard Allen, Elijah Muhammad, and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr." (Ed.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1980); Raquel Ann Muhammad, "Black Muslim Movement After The Death of Elijah Muhammad" (Ph.D. dissertation, United States International University, 1980); Barbara Ann Norman, "The Black Muslims: A Rhetorical Analysis (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1985); Martha Frances Lee, "The Fall of America: The Nation of Islam and the Millennium" (M.A. Thesis, University of Calgary, 1987); Barbara Jeane Taylor Whiteside, "A Study of the Structure, Norms and Folkways of the Educational Institutions of the Nation of Islam in the United States from 1932 to 1975" (Ed.D. dissertation, Wayne State University, 1987); Louis E. Wright, "The Political Thought of Elijah Muhammad: Innovation and Continuity in Western Tradition" (Ph.D. dissertation, Howard University, 1987); Fared Z. Munir, "Islam in America: An African American Pilgrimage Toward Coherence" (Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1993); Cynthia S'thembile West, "Nation Builders: Female Activism in the Nation of Islam, 1960-1970" (Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1994); Claude Andrew Clegg III, "An Original Man: The Life and Time of Elijah Muhammad, 1897-1960" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1995); Carlos D. Morrison, "The Rhetoric of the Nation of Islam, 1930-1975: A Functional Approach" (Ph.D. dissertation, Howard University, 1996); Jeffrey Ogbonna Green Ogbar, "From The Bottom Up: Popular Reactions to the Nation of Islam and the Black Panther Party, 1955-1975" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1997); Samuel T. Livingston, "The Ideological and Philosophical Influence of the Nation of Islam on Hip-Hop Culture" (Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1998); Michael A. Barnett, "Rastafarianism and the Nation of Islam as Institutions for Group-Identity Formation Among Blacks in the United States: A Case Study Comparing Their Approaches" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida International University, 2000); Edward Earl Curtis, IV, "Toward An Historical Islam: Universalism and Particularism in African-American Islamic Thought" (D.Litt. et Phil dissertation, University of South Africa, 2000); Devissi Muhammad, "Let Us Make Man In Our Image and Our Likeness: Muhammad Ali and the Nation of Islam During the Civil Rights Era" (Ph.D. dissertation, Bowling Green State University, 2004); Sultana Rahim-Barakzoy, "Islam is the Blackman's Religion: Syncretizing Islam with Black Nationalist Thought to Fulfill the Religio-Political Agenda of the Nation of Islam" (M.A. Thesis, West Virginia University, 2005); Kathy Makeda Bennett Muhammad, "Humble Warrior: Women in the Nation of Islam, A Comparative Study 1930-1975 and 1978-2000" (Ph.D. dissertation, Union Institute and University, 2008); Stephen Carl Finley, "Re-imagining Race and Representation: The Black Body in the Nation of Islam" (Ph.D. dissertation, Rice University, 2009); Bayyinah Sharief Jeffries, "A Nation Can Rise No Higher Than Its Women: The Critical Role of Black Muslim Women in the Development and Purveyance of Black Consciousness, 1945-1975" (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 2009); Nathan Joseph Saunders, "White Devils and So-called Negroes: Jehovah's Witnesses, Southern Baptists, and the Early Nation of Islam in Detroit" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Carolina, 2012); and Patrick D. Bowen, "The African-American Islamic Renaissance and The Rise of the Nation of Islam" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Denver, 2013), inter alios.

For books written on Elijah Muhammad amid his educational and ideological stance, see Louis E. Lomax, *When The Word Is Given...A Report on Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, and The Black Muslim World*: (New York: Signet Books, 1963); E. Curtis Alexander, *Elijah Muhammad on African-American Education: A Guide for African and Black Studies Programs* (1981: reprint, New York: ECA Associates, 1989); Malu Halasa, *Elijah Muhammad* (New York: Chelsea House Publications, 1990); Paul Lawrence Guthrie, *Making of the Whiteman: History, Tradition and the Teachings of Elijah Muhammad* (Warwick, RI: Beacon Communications, 1992); Mattias Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan*

evidence that Africans were societally and institutionally disenfranchised in American society, Muhammad fashioned and utilized an altered rendition of orthodox Islam to take a proactive stance to ameliorate these repressive circumstances as he saw fit.²⁸⁵

As a religious leader, Muhammad was the head of, for over four decades, arguably the most pervasive, progressive and influential contemporary Black

and The Nation of Islam (Durham: Duke University Press), 1996; Claude Andrew Clegg III, *An Original Man: The Life and Time of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Karl Evanzz, *The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1999); Abul Pitre and Tynnetta Muhammad, *The Educational Philosophy of Elijah Muhammad: Education for a New World* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008); Hebert Berg, *Elijah Muhammad and Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 2009); Nasir Makr Hakim, *Is Elijah Muhammad The Offspring Of Noble Drew Ali And Marcus Garvey* (Phoenix: Secretarius MEMPS Publications, 2009); Abul Pitre, *An Introduction to Elijah Muhammad Studies: The New Educational Paradigm* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2009); The Department of Supreme Wisdom, *An Economic Blueprint For Black America by The Honorable Elijah Muhammad* (Seattle: Createspace Independent Publishing, 2009); Nasir Makr Hakim, *When Speaking of Elijah Muhammad* (Phoenix: Secretarius MEMPS Publications, 2011); Wesley Muhammad, *Take Another Look: The Quran, the Sunnah and the Islam of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad* (Atlanta: A-Team Publishing, 2011); Michael "Mikal" Saahir, *The Honorable Elijah Muhammad: The Man Behind the Men* (Indianapolis: Words Make People Publishing, Inc., 2011); Herbert Berg, *Elijah Muhammad* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2013); and Rashad A. Muhammad, *The Messiah Elijah Muhammad is Still Physically Alive!: How Strong is the Foundation?* (Atlanta: A-Team Publishing, 2014).

Interestingly, prior to 1952, the year that Malcolm X, arguably the most prolific adherent of the Nation of Islam, was paroled from prison and became a devout follower of Elijah Muhammad, there were but two scholarly treatments written on the religious organization. See Erdmann D. Beynon "The Voodoo Cult Among Negro Migrants in Detroit" *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 43, no. 6 (May, 1938), 894-907; and Hatim A. Sahib, "The Nation of Islam" (M.A. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1951). Books published in the 1960s onward that offer either a scholarly treatment, approbation or critique of Muhammad himself and/or the NOI, counting those written by former or current members of the organization, include, but are not limited to: C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America: The First Full Study of the Black Muslims - A Movement of 100,000 Negroes Who Preach Black Supremacy, Black Union Against The White Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961); E.U. Essiem-Udom, *Black Nationalism: A Search for Identity in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); Louis Lomax, *When the World Is Given* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1963); Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As Told to Alex Haley* (New York: Ballantine, 1964); Wallace D. Muhammad, *As The Light Shineth from the East* (Chicago: WDM Publishing Co., 1980); Clifton E. Marsh, *From Black Muslims to Muslims: The Transition from Separatism to Islam, 1930-1980* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1984); Martha E. Lee, *The Nation of Islam: An American Millenarian Movement* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellon Press, 1988); Jabril Muhammad, *This Is The One: The Most Honored Elijah Muhammad, We Need Not Look for Another!, Vol. 1* (Phoenix, Jabril Muhammad, 1993); Fahim A. Knight, *In Defense of the Defender: The Most Honorable Elijah* (Durham, N.C.: Fahim and Associates, 1994); and Adib Rashad, *Elijah Muhammad: The Ideological Foundation of the Nation of Islam* (Newport News, VA: U.B & U.S. Communications Systems, 1994), inter alia.

²⁸⁵ For a general discourse and examination of the differences between the Nation of Islam and orthodox Islam, see Mustafa El-Amin, *The Religion of Islam and the Nation of Islam: What is the Difference?* (Newark: El-Amin Productions, 1991).

organizations in America in the twentieth century, second only to the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL), founded by one Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Jr. (1887-1940). Save Garvey's organization, no other Black movement in the U.S. had such a unifying power and synergy to command such national attention than the Nation of Islam.

Although Muhammad is considered an enigma to most of white America, he was nevertheless considered one of the most active African American theologians of this past century, and to a greater extent, is often credited with opening the gates for millions of Blacks to convert to Islam. C.E. Lincoln, who wrote the first comprehensive examination on the Nation of Islam, contends that the majority of whites in the U.S. knew very little or nothing about the Black religious organization, and for "those who learn of the movement tend to consider it an extreme and dangerous social organization,"²⁸⁶ blindly comparing the NOI to the Klu Klux Klan. Even today, the Nation of Islam is still mostly understood among the general public whose familiarity of religious traditions is confined primarily to Judeo-Christianity. Aside from being a faith-based organization, the Nation of Islam offered a sense of racial pride to Africans in America that had not been experienced to such magnitude since the early days of Garvey and the UNIA-ACL.

Interestingly, the formation of the Nation of Islam occurred at a time in America when societal conditions for African Americans were, at the very least, dismal. In particular, the NOI was founded during the era of the Great Depression, a period when racial barriers averted progress. For some Blacks, the appearance of the Nation of Islam

²⁸⁶ C. Eric Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America*, reprint (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 172.

was timely as they felt the Black (Christian) church was not as effective and vigorous enough in its stance against racial inequality. During this time, a “New Deal” was enacted by the presidential (i.e., Franklin D. Roosevelt) administration in America to ameliorate the pitiable social and economic conditions of its citizens by which unemployed and poor whites benefitted most. On the contrary, for the descendants of enslaved Africans, these same federal domestic relief programs were more of “raw deal,” particularly due to the fact that the issuance of such programs were disproportionate among Blacks and did not provide the same efforts of relief as it did for white America, argues Joe William Trotter.²⁸⁷ Simply put, the intent by the United States government to provide economic relief for all of its citizens was more or less façade.

During Elijah Muhammad’s tenure as leader, the efficacy of the Nation of Islam to recruit African people—whom he considered the “Asiatic Black man/woman”—at the grassroots level paled in comparison to no other religious sect of its time. For Black communities throughout the United States, the proselytization of the Nation of Islam by Muhammad has been “regarded as the primary embodiment of the sect and the single most significant mover in the skyrocketing conversion of African Americans to Islam;”²⁸⁸ a fact comparable only to Muhammad’s redoubtable and most disciplined pupil—Malcolm X aka el-Haj Malik el-Shabazz (1925-1965). In addition to being one of most charismatic speakers and the Nation’s most prized ministers during the 1950s and 1960s, Malcolm, with an astute facility to express intricate theoretical concepts in a simplistic

²⁸⁷ Joe William Trotter, Jr., “From a Raw Deal to a New Deal?: 1929-1945” in *To Make Our World Anew, Volume II: A History of African Americans Since 1880*, eds. Robin D.G. Kelley and Earl Lewis (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 131-166.

²⁸⁸ Karl Evanzz, *The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1999), xi.

fashion, who also served as the national spokesperson for the NOI, was the billboard of optimal health for the Nation of Islam by abiding to a strict moral code and discipline.

Chicago writer and former editor of *Muhammad Speaks* Salim Muwakkil vouches for the inescapable magnetism Malcolm X had on the minds of Blacks during his heyday as a standout member of the Nation of Islam. Muwakkil elaborates on el-Haj Malik el-Shabazz's persona, intellectual savvy, content mastery and charisma, which can be attributed to how cared for his corporeal temple: "For us [Africans in America], Malcolm almost single-handedly removed the stigma of 'corniness' from intellectual achievement. He translated," Muwakkil continues, "his hip, urbane, street-life sensibility into a kind of intellectual style we admired immensely. We wanted to talk like Malcolm; his meticulous diction, vast vocabulary, and knowledge of history sent us to the dictionary and the library, willingly."²⁸⁹ To his credit, Malcolm preached tirelessly as he implored African people to refrain from foods deemed injurious and unhealthy. Malcolm's physical presence alone amply illustrated how he personified publicly the dietary discipline needed and required of NOI members to abide by the teachings of Muhammad regarding food and nutrition. Beginning in 1954, Temple # 7 in Harlem thrived—with Malcolm as its head minister—and served as the face of the Nation of Islam's message about health in New York City, further solidifying the overall affect the teachings of Muhammad had on and the edible mark it left in the minds of Blacks to

²⁸⁹ Salim Muwakkil, "The Nation of Islam and Me" *The Farrakhan Factor: African-American Writers on Leadership, Nationhood, and Minister Louis Farrakhan*, ed. Amy Alexander (New York: Grove Press, 1998), 194.

embrace and make change.²⁹⁰ To this end, author Karl Evanazz boasts that “the name Elijah Muhammad,” within the African American community, “had a ring as familiar as Big Ben’s to the British and connotations as unique to them as those of the pyramids to the [ancient] Egyptians.”²⁹¹

Somewhat perplexed but convinced of its effective ability to recruit African Americans to become part of its religious organization, the renowned novelist, playwright and poet James Arthur Baldwin (1924-1987) felt compelled to put into words the value of the Nation of Islam to Black America. In his notable essays in book-length form, *The Fire Next Time*, published the same year of the passing of the esteemed historian, activist, editor, poet, author, sociologist and Pan-Africanist William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868-1963) and the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Baldwin, albeit being raised in a Christian home, weighs in on Elijah Muhammad and the religious organization for which he was its doyen and head parishioner. In his own literary fashion, Baldwin writes at length:

I sometimes found myself in Harlem on Saturday nights, and I stood in the crowds, at 125th Street and Seventh Avenue, and listened to the Muslim speakers. But I had heard hundreds of such speakers—or so it seemed to me at first. Anyway, I have long had a very definite tendency to tune out the moment I come anywhere near either a pulpit or a soapbox... Then two things caused me to begin to listen to the speeches, and one was the behavior of the police. After all, I had seen men dragged from their platforms on this very corner for saying less virulent things, and I had seen many crowds dispersed by policemen, with clubs or on horseback. But the policemen were doing nothing now. Obviously, this was not because they had become more human but because they were under orders and because they were afraid. And indeed they were, and I was delighted to see it... The behavior of the crowd, its silent intensity, was the other thing that forced me to reassess the speakers and their message... the speakers had an air of utter dedication, and the people looked toward them with a kind of intelligence

²⁹⁰ Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As Told to Alex Haley* (New York: Ballantine, 1964), 217-224.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

of hope on their faces—not as though they were being jolted...They [Blacks] were merely glad to have, at last, divine corroboration of their experience, to hear—and it was a tremendous thing to hear—that they had been lied to for all these years and generations, and that their captivity was ending, for God was black. Why were they *hearing* it now, since this was not the first time it had been said?...now, suddenly, people who have never before been able to hear this message hear it, and believe it, and are changed. Elijah Muhammad has been able to do what generations of welfare workers and committees and resolutions and reports and housing projects and playgrounds have failed to do: to heal and redeem drunkards and junkies, to convert people who have come out of prison and to keep them out, to make men chaste and women virtuous, and to invest both the male and the female with a pride and a serenity that hang about them like an unfailing light. He has done all these things, which our Christian church has spectacularly failed to do.²⁹²

Baldwin's words, which revealed the capacity of the Nation of Islam to attract the Black masses should not be taken lightly; words we should take to heart being that Baldwin, like his contemporary Harold Cruse²⁹³ and George S. Schuyler²⁹⁴ before him, was among other things, a social critic that rarely, if ever, resisted the opportunity to place under the

²⁹² James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: The Dial Press, 1963), 61-65.

²⁹³ For an examination of the unconventional writer Harold Cruse's keen ability to critical analyze the ideological and political stances of various Black social movements in America, see Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: A Historical Analysis of the Failure of Black Leadership* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1967), *Rebellion or Revolution?* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1968), and *Plural but Equal: A Critical Study of Blacks and Minorities and America's Plural Society* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1987).

²⁹⁴ Considered one of the most contentious Black wordsmiths of his era, George Schuyler's iconoclastic style of writing received both praise and censure from the Black intellectual community. Notwithstanding his gift as a columnist and editor, Schuyler's ideological shift from leftist politics (i.e., Socialism) to conservative values sheds some light as to why he decided to write fiction or otherwise, in the manner he did. Nonetheless, in many respects, his scathing, impenitent, and unflinching literary style served as an antecedent example for later radical critics, such as Ishmael Reed and the inimitable writer Harold Cruse. In actuality, Schuyler's career as a literary critic and niche as a satirical writer began in 1922, with his collaborative efforts with socialist and labor leader Asa Phillip Randolph. By way of his monthly column in the *Messenger*—"Shafts and Darts: A Page of Calumny and Satire,"—Schuyler began his facetious vituperations of contemporary African American social leaders. After a two-year stint with the leading Black socialist organ, Schuyler continued to hone his irreverent craft with what would become a four-decade career (1924-1966) with the Black newspaper *Pittsburgh Courier*. In addition to his vocation as a columnist, Schuyler's reputation as a satirist would reach its apex in 1931 with the publication of the novel, *Black No More*. See George S. Schuyler, *Black No More* (New York: The Macaulay Company, 1931); George S. Schuyler, *Black and Conservative The Autobiography of George S. Schuyler* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House Publishers, 1966); Michael W. Peplow, *George S. Schuyler* (Woodbridge, CT: Twayne Publishers, 1980); Jeffrey B. Leak, ed., *Rac(e)Ing To The Right: Selected Essays George S. Schuyler* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001); and Oscar R. Williams, *George S. Schuyler: Portrait of a Black Conservative* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007).

proverbial magnifying glass ideologies for which he had an issue. In *Black Nationalism*, Essien-Udon paraphrases Elijah Muhammad to highlight his grassroots approach to enlist members and divulges: “The official policy of the Nation of Islam...is to recruit the ‘Negro in the mud’ into the movement and to ‘alienate him from giving support to middle-class Negro leadership.’”²⁹⁵ Understandably, in the context that it was the masses of Black America that was most affected by racial oppression and disenfranchisement, it should not be difficult to understand the relevance of the Nation to recruit the destitute. In Atlanta, Boston, Philadelphia and New York, all places Elijah Muhammad sent Malcolm X to organize new temples, the Nation of Islam sought out prospective converts by “fishing on those Harlem corners—on the fringes of [Black] Nationalist meetings.” In his recruitment for new members, Malcolm X recollected that “everyone who was listening was interested in the revolution of the [B]lack race.” In order to ensure maximum conversion to the Nation of Islam, Malcolm and his assistants also probed “little evangelical storefront churches...[because] the congregations were usually Southern migrant people, usually older, who would go anywhere to hear what they called ‘good preaching.’”²⁹⁶

It is vital to acknowledge and bring to light the Nation of Islam’s insistence on self-reliance, a precept that can be best defined by borrowing the once popular acronym “FUBU” to stress the “For Us, By Us” principle that guides the Nation of Islam to obtain economic sovereignty outright. Without question, the NOI set forth a model of economic

²⁹⁵ E.U. Essien-Udon, *Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America* (New York: Dell, 1962), 201.

²⁹⁶ Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 215-225, particularly 219.

self-sufficiency for Africans as demonstrated by the considerable business empire acquired by Muhammad and his followers. For the refractory and contumacious religious organization, food played “a part of a larger ideology of Black Nationalism, in which self-reliance and the achievements of blacks are linked to the ‘black community’ at large.”²⁹⁷ By the time Elijah Muhammad transitioned, the Nation of Islam had acquired numerous business enterprises, to include dry cleaners, farmland, and restaurants throughout the country. Priscilla McCutcheon lends credibility to these acquisitions and maintains: “the most widespread effort of the NOI to promote self-reliance among blacks is the purchase of Muhammad Farms in Bronwood, Georgia to grow a variety of fruits and vegetables...to ‘develop a sustainable agriculture system that would provide at least one meal per day...[for] 40 million black people.’”²⁹⁸ Put simply, the teachings of sustenance by the Nation of Islam as well as the publication of *How to Eat to Live* provided an ideal starting point at the height of Black Power era for using food not only as a means to address hunger and nutrient deficient diets but also as a tool of empowerment for African Americans.

In addition to the self-governing entrepreneurial aspirations, disciplined behavior and devout worship conducted by its devotees, adherence to certain dietary laws were equally imperative to the Nation of Islam. One of the requirements, for both new converts and existing members, aside from abstaining from drugs and alcohol, was to radically alter their eating habits from the traditional diet of soul food, and “by all means

²⁹⁷ Priscilla McCutcheon, “Community Food Security ‘For Us, By Us:’ The Nation of Islam and the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church,” eds., Alison Hope Alkon and Julian Agyeman, *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 178.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.; and Ridgely Abdul Mu’min Muhammad, “The Farm Is The Engine of Our National Life” *The Farmer*, vol. 8, no. 5 (February 28, 2005), <<http://www.muhammadfarms.com/Farmer-Feb28-2005.htm>>

necessary,” refrain from consuming pork. The latter point is what set the Nation apart from their fellow Black religious counterpart, namely the Black Church. Overall, Muhammad’s goal was to raise African descendants from a dietary and mental death in the same manner as the biblical narrative posits Jesus raised Lazarus from a physical one. The dietary sanction of a pork-free diet espoused by Muhammad, differentiated for him, the dietary practices of NOI members from that of Black Christians. In the chapter entitled, “Why They Urge You to Eat the Swine,” Muhammad, who was well aware that swine occupied a large space on the dinner table of countless Black Christian homes, articulates such distinction:

The taking of the prohibited flesh of the swine as food is beyond righteous imagination...They [Christians] are so fond of swine flesh that they sacrifice it in the church, and then ask divine blessings upon it. They barbeque and cook it, and hold a feast in their places of worship and eat this slow-death poisonous animal—which God has forbidden—as though they had an option with God...Preachers and priests are working along with the enemy, or adversary, of God, teaching the people that it is all right to eat swine—their bellies stretched with the hog in them and saturated with the whiskey and wine. This is the type of religion under which you have been brought—Christianity and its preachers and priests. None of them have tried to prevent you from breaking this divine law by teaching you the consequences of such an act.²⁹⁹

Having gone through the same experience as a one-time lover of pork, the writer understands too well how Christians (or anyone) rationalize its consumption, but if devout followers of the faith heeded to scripture (e.g., Leviticus, chapter 11 verse 7-8), bacon, chitterlings, pepperoni, pork chops, ham, ribs, sausage and so forth would be nonexistent in the household.

²⁹⁹ Elijah Muhammad, *How to Eat to Live* (Chicago: Muhammad Mosque of Islam No. 2, 1967), 13. See also, Shahrazad Ali, *How Not to Eat Pork (or Life Without the Pig)* (Philadelphia: Civilized Publications, 1985).

In *Hog & Hominy*, a historical piece that primarily explores the foundation, evolution, and meaning of soul food within the context of the West Atlantic, Frederick Douglass Opie recognizes the significance of three entities during the late 1960s and 1970s within the African American community that argued against the poor eating habits of Blacks: (1) the Nation of Islam, (2) institutionally-trained African intellectuals; and (3) proponents of a natural food and/or plant-based eating lifestyle.³⁰⁰ The author makes the case that of the three groups he identified, the Nation of Islam served as the foundation and vanguard during this period in offering more nutritious and alternative options to eating soul food. In his examination of the health tradition of the NOI, Opie discloses that the all-Black religious organizations were well aware of how food could be an indicator of social position, and through the solicitation of remedial information, the main objective was to prevent Blacks from the mental deception of a dietary death. For the Nation, this was crucial because prior to the 1970s, the author reveals that, “most medical associations did not talk at any length about the health effects of the traditional American diet,” and [even now] “the medical profession as a whole has not done very well at teaching doctors and medical students in training about nutrition.”³⁰¹ Given this conundrum, matters of making the right food choices to remain healthy fell primarily onto the responsibility of the individual; a duty the Nation gladly accepted due to their devotion and love for Black people. In all, Opie does acknowledge the influence of natural food advocates and scholars of the same era in raising awareness for Blacks to eat

³⁰⁰ Frederick Douglass Opie, *Hog & Hominy: Soul Food from Africa to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 155.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 156.

healthier; however, prior to “the 1980s, the Nation of Islam, more than any other African American organization, raised the food consciousness of black people in the United States.”³⁰²

The appearance of *How to Eat to Live* in 1967 was a supplication and nutritional call to arms to not only Nation of Islam members but to the larger African community: an appeal that beseeched Blacks to take matters of health into their own hands by being conscious of what foods they consume. Without question, this dogmatic yet influential and enlightening body of work on health prognosticated the astronomical rate by which the health and well-being of Africans in America would be adversely affected in the 21st Century with the production and sale of industrialized and highly processed foods. On the other hand, the message embodied in *How to Eat to Live* posited that Blacks could obtain optimal health by monitoring their food intake with sustenance that promoted a state of equilibrium within the body; a premise which antedates the 2012 release of the documentary on health, *Forks Over Knives*³⁰³ by four and a half decades. In contrast to *Forks Over Knives*, the 2015 release of the documentary *Urban Kryptonite* provides chiefly an African-Centered and holistic approach to health. The film includes various leading African holistic health practitioners and natural food advocates such as Llaila O.

³⁰² Ibid., 171.

³⁰³ Due to the exorbitant rate by which the United States has surpassed other nations in obesity rates and degenerative diseases, the release of *Forks Over Knives* is timely. Supported by the modalities of Western scientific research as well as numerous leading physicians in the field of medicine, the documentary introduces a radical yet convincing case that modern diseases can be prevented, halted, and often reversed by adopting a whole-food, plant-based diet. Nonetheless, according to the writer, the ameliorative theme expressed in this documentary has its foundation in African healing practices, which date back to the cultural practices of classical African civilizations. In a word, *Forks Over Knives* is a contemporary, rehashed and multi-cultural plea for “all Americans” to embrace a more healthy dietary lifestyle to address the burgeoning epidemic rise of corpulence and other degenerative diseases so prevalent in the United States—an endemic situation that could have, and should have been addressed and prevented some time ago by the governing bodies and “licensed” custodians of health (i.e., physicians) of Western medicine.

Afrika, Djehuty Ma'at-Ra and Aris LaTham, to name a few, who examine in detail the issues of disease among Africans, both continental and Diasporic, and addresses the propaganda associated with sickness within the Black community.³⁰⁴

The dietary laws outlined in *How to Eat to Live* served as a print medium to: (1) regulate the types of foods that NOI members and others should consume and refrain from; (2) provide ways of how to prepare such fare; and (3) when and how often they are to be eaten. As an addendum, in order to assist in this radical transformation and ensure they were well-versed in the dietary regulations espoused by Muhammad, the Nation of Islam implemented a nutritional training program in the 1960s in Westchester County at its Mount Vernon temple to further educate the catechumen on the essentials of “how to eat to live.”³⁰⁵ While a eating a proper diet was a fundamental tenet within the organization, not all NOI devotees were as disciplined as Muhammad would have desired. Ironically, as Curtis points out, in a chapter of his book, entitled “Rituals of Control and Liberation” members of the Nation adhered differently to such appetite ritual control, thusly deciding which edicts to ignore and which to follow.³⁰⁶ In this respect, one can argue that Muhammad’s naiveté superseded his determination to enforce such food restrictions. Nonetheless, outside of the non-secular organization, some African Americans, who were not religiously affiliated with the Nation of Islam, and who did not

³⁰⁴ See *Urban Kryptonite: African Roots, Foreign Diseases* (Detroit: Urban Kryptonite Films, 2015); and Damien McSwine, *Urban Kryptonite: The Formidable Health Decline of African Diaspora Descendants Located in America* (Detroit: P.I. Health Group LLC, 2013).

³⁰⁵ Opie, *Hog & Hominy*, 159.

³⁰⁶ Edward E. Curtis, IV. *Black Muslim Religion in the Nation of Islam, 1960-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 169.

meet the teachings about food with contempt—like that of soul food devotees—became acquainted with and received the instructions on “how to eat to live” with open arms.

At the onset of the *How to Eat to Live*, Muhammad is forthright in his position about appropriate eating habits and summons the reader to be cognizant of their food choices and the temporality from which they consume them. He urged contemporary Africans in America to take notice that they are surfeit in one of the most frequent habits humans have next to breathing—eating. Muhammad’s point was as clear-cut as the titles of chapters fourteen and fifteen signify: “Overindulgences” is “the enemy,” and “Our Big Problem Is Eating Too Much And Too Often.” In this respect, for Muhammad, discipline was a crucial element with eating, for if exercised properly, he assured balance and harmony within the body would be the upshot. “There is no way,” argued Muhammad, “of prolonging the life of human beings—or any other life—unless it begins with restrictions of the foods which sustain life; the right kinds of food and the proper time when it should be taken into our bodies.”³⁰⁷ As the book reveals, the most common and recurring theme articulated by Muhammad throughout *How to Eat to Live* is for Black people to limit their number of meals to one per day³⁰⁸ and take drastic notice that “one of the gravest wrongs is to eat when you do not want to.”³⁰⁹ “Brothers and sisters,” Muhammad continued to persuade, “let you’re your stomachs rest...[and] stop trying to eat three meals a day and all in between...[because] that is enough to kill chickens and hogs.”³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ Muhammad, *How to Eat to Live*, 1.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 16, 23, 25-28, 32, 36, 45, 47, 58, 63-66, 67-68, 83, 85-86, 95, 97, 110, 113 and 126.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 47.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

Regrettably, most individuals are oblivious to the fact of the “proper time” to eat that Muhammad mentioned by which the body has a biological clock in which it needs to stay in rhythm in order to maintain homeostasis or a balanced state. This circadian rhythmic flow is especially important when it comes to the consumption of food, its digestion, and the elimination of its waste products. As the sun rises, the morning is a vital time of the day for cleansing being that it is the period in which a person has been without food the longest while asleep. If we take into account the linguistic breakdown of the term that describes the first meal of the day, it offers evidence to the significance of this fact. For example, the term “breakfast,” when separated into two syllables becomes: break + fast, which lends credence that a person’s first meal of the day should be to ingest foods that assist in “breaking the fast,” a fast that takes place during the hours of rest. As an eliminative aid, nourishment that is cleansing in nature, which assists in this process include—water, herbal teas, vegetable and fruit juices and fresh fruit. In their tome on the finer points of food combining, *Fit for Life*, Harvey and Marilyn Diamond add to this by asserting:

the basis of the human’s ability to deal with food relies on the effective functioning of three regular daily cycles. These cycles are based on rather obvious functions of the body. To put it in its simplest terms, on a daily basis we take in food (appropriation), we absorb and use some of that food (assimilation), and we get rid of what we don’t use (elimination). Although each of these three functions is always going on to some extent, each is more intense during certain hours of the day. noon to 8 p.m. — Appropriation (eating and digestion); 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. — Assimilation (absorption and use); and 4 a.m. to noon — Elimination (of body wastes and food debris).³¹¹

³¹¹ Harvey Diamond and Marilyn Diamond, *Fit for Life: The Natural Body Cycle, Permanent Weight-Loss Plan Proves That It’s Not What You Eat, But When and How* (New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1985), 21; Paul Pitchford, *Healing with Whole Foods: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition* (Berkeley: North

According to the tenets of the Nation of Islam in which food and health were central to their teachings, the Standard American Diet (SAD)³¹² was chiefly responsible for the various diseases suffered by Africans in America and was conspiratorially designed to physically annihilate them. To this end, what troubled and concerned Muhammad most was the mimicry of Blacks in adopting this dietary regime. He warned his brethren of the ill effects of overindulgence and the eating of food and drinks he deemed “poisonous.” For Muhammad, such a lifestyle originated with whites, and if continued, he argued, would equate to an untimely demise, one meal at a time, for the African race. As a means to divulge and enlighten the Black community, Muhammad writes: “This is the secret knowledge of the death that they caused us to suffer through foods.”³¹³ Some thirty plus years after the initial publication of *How to Eat to Live*, African-Centered naturopathic physician Suzar expresses similar sentiments offered by Muhammad and is wholeheartedly convinced that as “long as People of Color around the world continue eating the drugfoods of their colonizers and ‘refining’ their food like their colonizers, they will continue to suffer the chronic poor health and epidemic killer-diseases of the same.”³¹⁴

Atlantic Books, 2002), 254-260; Michael Smolensky and Lynne Lamberg, *The Body Clock Guide to Better Health: How to Use Your Body's Natural Clock to Fight Illness and Achieve Maximum Health* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000); and Gay Gaer-Luce, *Biological Rhythms in Human and Animal Physiology* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1971).

³¹² For an unapologetic and African-centered critique on the American Diet, see Llaila O. Afrika, *Nutricide: The Nutritional Destruction of the Black Race* (Beaufort, SC: Golden Seal, 1994); and Suzar, *Drugs Masquerading As Foods: Deliciously Killing American-AFRIKANS and All Peoples*, vol. 1 of 3 (Oak View, CA: A-Kar Productions, 1999), inter alia.

³¹³ Muhammad, *How to Eat to Live*, 52.

³¹⁴ Suzar, *Drugs Masquerading As Foods: Deliciously Killing American-AFRIKANS and All Peoples*, vol. 1 of 3 (Oak View, CA: A-Kar Productions, 1999), 10.

Prior to the rapid advances of the industrialization of foodstuffs in the United States in the 1970s, Muhammad strongly urged that Blacks be mindful of the: (2) consumption of the diet of mainstream America; (2) economic motives of multinational corporations; and (3) conciliatory attitudes of consumer protective agencies (e.g., the Food and Drug Administration) at the expense of human health. The “messenger” implored: “We must not be confused...with the various advice offered to us from the modern-day food and medical scientists. If you take their advice and try to eat all of the different kinds of foods, cooked in their many different ways, at their many different time of day, and their many different suggestions on how much you should eat, you will most certainly die. Brothers and sisters, I repeat: it will most certainly kill you.”³¹⁵ Likewise, Elijah Muhammad urged Blacks to be mindful of non-animal products too and the industrialization process that most foodstuffs have undergone. As a result, he suggested one should consume only whole grains and refrain from products that have gone through a bleaching process. Forthrightly, because they have been stripped of their original nutritional value, Muhammad mandated: “never [eat] white flour, which has been robbed of all its natural vitamins and proteins sold separately as cereals.”³¹⁶ Similarly, but by marked contrast, Muhammad spurned cornmeal and its byproduct—cornmeal—as he considered it to be “too rough for the stomach,” which eventually “wears out the stomach like sand grinds away a delicate rug on your floor.”³¹⁷ To bring awareness to Blacks of a white-owned and controlled food industry, Muhammad conveyed how the profits of

³¹⁵ Ibid., 53.

³¹⁶ Elijah Muhammad, *Message to the Blackman in America* (Chicago: Muslim Mosque of Islam No. 2, 1965), 7.

³¹⁷ Elijah Muhammad, *How to Eat to Live*, Book No. 2 (Chicago: Muhammad’s Temple of Islam No. 2, 1972), 66.

capitalism via the industrialization and the creation of foodstuffs supersede the concerns for one's health, which ultimately affects Black lives. On this very point, he offered: "You know as well as I that the white race is a commercializing people and they do not worry about the lives they jeopardize so long as the dollar is safe. You might find yourself eating death if you follow them."³¹⁸ On the contrary, Muhammad maintained that Blacks should listen more to their bodies and have a firm grasp of the dietary needs that would prolong life. Such familiarity, he opined, would be indispensable in improving the health of Africans in America. Given the societal constraints Black found (and continue to find) themselves, Muhammad felt they should consider the autonomy of their own being and be mindful that, "the most significant laws begin with the physical body as a means of breaking social control previously exerted over black bodies through white domination and as a means of asserting his own ritual authority over such bodies."³¹⁹

With his understanding of the ill-effects chattel slavery had on the psyche of enslaved Africans and their descendants as well as the psychological and physical baggage that accompanied it, Muhammad unabashedly articulated his disdain about foods introduced to Africans during the enslavement process. And even though he never referred directly to "soul food" in his writings, **Muhammad nonetheless intensified his condemnation of southern traditional dietary practices.** According to Doris Witt, it is imperative "to recognize, therefore, that the foods associated with soul were stigmatized by Muhammad at least in part because they operated through, and

³¹⁸ Muhammad, *Message to the Blackman in America*, 7.

³¹⁹ Stephen Carl Finley, "Re-Imagining Race and Representation: The Black Body in the Nation of Islam" (Ph.D. dissertation, Rice University, 2009), 150-151.

perhaps even contributed to, the cultural dominance of his nemesis, Black Christianity.”³²⁰

In truth, the only meat banned in the Qur’an was pork; nevertheless, Muhammad substantiated his prohibition of or aversion to other foods mostly associated with cuisine mostly associated with the southern diet. As proof, Muhammad declared: “The slave masters taught us to eat the rough foods, such as field peas,³²¹ and today, being accustomed to eating them, we still eat them along with sweet potatoes (which are not good for anyone but hogs) and white potatoes³²² (which, since they are so starchy and fattening, are not good for anyone unless they are in a zone where they cannot secure better food.”³²³ To solidify his point on the continuance of contemporary Blacks eating foods once forced upon them, Muhammad upholds: “America continues to give the so-called Negroes the same bad food and drink that her (America’s) fathers did in the days of slavery.”³²⁴ Despite the popularity of soul food in the 1960s and 1970s, Elijah Muhammad, with his openness and candor, had an effective impact throughout Black

³²⁰ Doris Witt, *Black Hunger: Food and the Politics of U.S. Identity* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 107.

³²¹ Elijah Muhammad was correct in this respect that field peas (e.g., Black-eyed Peas) and beans, in their original state, are irritants to the gastrointestinal system of humans. While beans are rich in protein, they are nonetheless, along with peas, acidic in nature, and therefore are irritants to the digestive system. Evidence of this results in flatulence or gas, which is caused by the absence of a digestive enzyme, which breaks down the trisaccharides (a triple sugar) found in beans. To avoid the discomfort many people have in digesting beans, African American vegan chef Juanita Prince provides an effective “Bean Treatment” in which legumes can be prepared in such a way to avoid gastric discomfort and eliminate flatulence. Juanita Prince, *Ethnic Pride in Vegetarian Cooking* (Oxnard, CA: Prince Press, 1997), 15.

³²² According to Jewel Pookrum, the consumption of potatoes and tomatoes “interfere with mid-brain activity,” and “both are in the ‘nightshade’ family. They contain a common chemical known as ‘solanine.’ As members of the solanaceae species of plants, they are poisonous! ‘Cancer apple’ was a common name for the tomato in many areas in Europe during the early 1900s. It was used only for ornamentation and seldom eaten because of its toxic effects. Potatoes were not eaten until after the rye famine and rye grain blight that occurred in Ireland in the 1700s. Because the rye plants were destroyed by blight, the tuberous potato plant was eaten as a temporary survival food. However, it remained and was brought to the United States during the migration period [of the 1840s] and has now become a mainstay in many households and in fast food restaurants across the country.” Jewel Pookrum, *Vitamins and Minerals from A to Z* (Brooklyn: A&B Publishers Group, 1999), 80-81.

³²³ Muhammad, *How to Eat to Live*, 27.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

communities in America.

In the same manner as Muhammad articulated his concern for Blacks' consumption of what he considered a "slave diet," Ralph Johnson and Patricia Reed, in their 1980 article, "What's Wrong with Soul Food?" made the claim that it was European slave traders who introduced inferior foods to African captives. The authors insisted that white slavers only provided the shoddiest sustenance to the enslaved, such as "white refined rice, cornmeal, [white] potatoes, pig fat [i.e., lard], salt pork, [and] grits..."³²⁵ These foods, Johnson and Reed argued, were problematic to the proper functioning of the body and was "nothing more than slave food. Add to this slave food the chemicalized, refined sugary, fast, convenience foods of our modern society and you have quite a deadly combination."³²⁶

Like Jazz, "soul food" is a cuisine unique to the North American experience, which is a direct result of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. To be clear, what is referred to as soul food has an enduring long and deep legacy within the population of Africans in the U.S. that dates back to chattel slavery. During this episodic disruption, African ancestral mothers and daughters, as a result of their repressive and prohibitive conditions, had to utilize their inherent African genius to make a culinary masterpieces out of scraps they were given, making due with what was at hand, and using vegetables to balance out the toxicity of the ware (pig entrails, pig feet, pig snout, pig tails, and ham hocks, etc.) given them by the slaver. In turn, spices and foods from the earth, some of which

³²⁵ Ralph Johnson and Patricia Reed, "What's Wrong with Soul Food?" *Black Collegian* (December 1980/January 1981) 21.

³²⁶ Ibid.

originated from Africa and reminded African descendants of their ancestral homeland, were used to prepare meals and accentuate that most important aspect of food preparation for all African people—taste.³²⁷ Delicacies for enslaved African families were the end result from animal remains that was considered otherwise unfit for European enslavers.

In a paper presented at the 2004 Mpambo Multiversity Conference in Jinja, Uganda, Ron G. and Emile J. Lewis mirror the same sentiments as Muhammad and weigh in on the debilitating effects soul food, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and denatured refined foods have on African people:

Using the principles of genetic engineering, they [Western European cultures] promote the genetic modifications of crops, food and animals, leading to patents on plants and other living things...[and] Blacks living in Western cultures are suffering from a variety of chronic endocrine problems and degenerative diseases directly attributable to diet such as: insulin resistance, excessive intake of refined carbohydrates and processed foods, reduced intake of raw vegetables and fruits, lack of proper fat in the diet, and lack of exercise. We indulge in high carbohydrate foods that have been processed, refined, synthesized, artificially-flavoured, and loaded with chemical preservatives...One of the leading culprits is the poisonous foods eaten by Blacks called “soul food”: ham, potato salad, French fries, macaroni and cheese, white rice, pork chops, chitterlings, pig feet, and hog maws. All of these foods are cooked in or laced with pork fat, lard, milk, eggs, butter, salt, spices, and lots of refined white flour and white sugar.³²⁸

To dismiss soul food outright without regard to its rich history and temporal relevance would be culturally insensitive to say the least. Nonetheless, in the provocative piece, *The Hood Health Handbook*, Denis Lopez reminds us: “As captured Africans had to adjust to the Western diet, adaptations of food preparation and the incorporation of

³²⁷ For an extensive and descriptive list of the plant flora introduced and utilized by enslaved Africans while in bondage in the West Atlantic, see, Grimé, *Ethno-botany of the Black Americans*, the chapters entitled, “Plants Introduced by the Slaves” and “Plants Employed by the Slaves,” 19-62; and 63-200; and Robert Voeks and John Rashford, eds., *African Ethnobotany in the Americas* (New York: Springer, 2012).

³²⁸ Ronald G. and Emile J. Lewis, “Black Survival in Crisis: The Plight of Afrikans in the Globalisation of Western (European) Culture,” A Paper Presented at the Mpambo Multiversity Conference on “We Are One People: Multiple Dreams of a Different World” Transformative Thought, Learning and Action in Jinja, Uganda (June 8-11, 2004).

meat became more and more prevalent and thus unhealthy for Blacks in America.”³²⁹ To this day, the fact remains that the epidemic of diseases that Blacks are confronted with today is primarily the consequence of consuming such a diet in addition to a meat-eating diet laden with salt, sugar and grease as well as denatured foods that are oftentimes contaminated with a spectrum of industrial chemicals. In a word, these eating habits are addictive and most damaging to the health, vitality and mental capacity of African people. Even still, “[I]ike cornbread, sweet potatoes, and yams, pork became part of the southern African American’s diet during infancy. This made it very difficult for many African Americans in their adult years to imagine a life without it.”³³⁰ Intriguingly, C’BS Alife Allah presents an insightful point as to the nature of foods enslaved Africans ate as a means to sustain themselves during tireless hours of labor on the plantation. Moreover, he juxtaposes a professional runner eating a meal high in carbohydrates prior to a race to maintain energy to that of the suppressive lifestyle of African laborers in bondage. Allah articulates:

Before a marathon runner gets ready for a marathon he will eat a meal the night before of heavy pasta. The reason why is that pasta releases its sugar/energy on a slow release. Thus when they are getting tired down the line in the run their body will release energy. The runner eats for his profession. During slavery they were working from sun up to sun down often time in humidity and heat. The foods were heavy in fat and calories to compensate for this heavy labor. Nearly no one nowadays is working like the slaves worked, so eating like they did does nothing except push us into obesity and disease.³³¹

³²⁹ Denise Lopez, “Back to Life: Black Health in America” *The Hood Healthbook: A Practical Guide to Health and Wellness in the Urban Community*, Volume One, eds. Supreme Understanding and C’BS Alife Allah (Atlanta: Supreme Design Publishing, 2010), 67.

³³⁰ Opie, *Hogs & Hominy*, 43.

³³¹ C’BS Alife Allah, “The History of Soul Food: Big Mama had a Big Heart Attack and You’re Still Ignoring Why” *The Hood Healthbook: A Practical Guide to Health and Wellness in the Urban Community*, Volume One, eds. Supreme Understanding and C’BS Alife Allah (Atlanta: Supreme Design Publishing, 2010), 65.

Without question, everything has its time and space under the sun, and the necessity for enslaved Africans to partake in such foods for subsistence and survival is one matter, but to eat in that manner in the 21st Century and neglect the wide range of data and information that reveals the health consequences of such behavior without concern is outright negligent and indicates apathy on the part of those most affected. Making more appropriate food choices will carve out a better course towards a future in which African families and communities are not burdened by eating regimes detrimental to their well-being.

Since the publications of *How to Eat to Live* in 1967 and 1972, respectively, Black advocates of vegetarian and vegan cuisine have provided healthier food options for aficionados of the dietary practices particularly associated with slavery. Rather than being directly influenced from the teachings of the Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad, the religious conversion to the Seven Day-Adventist faith was the principal motivation behind Mary Keyes Burgess' reformed eating habits. Born a Louisianan, later in life Burgess adopted a lacto-ovo vegetarian diet, which ultimately led to the creation of numerous vegetarian soul food recipes. As an adult, Burgess migrated to California and served as the primary cook for the Family Education Center, located in a largely Black and Hispanic section of San Bernardino where "she aptly proved that soul food was no less soulful in vegetarian."³³²

The literary upshot to her wizardry in the kitchen was the publication *Soul to Soul* in 1976, considered one of the first vegetarian soul food cookbooks written, in the

³³² Mary Keyes Burgess, *Soul To Soul: A New Vegetarian Cookbook* (Santa Barbara: Woodbridge Press Publishing Company, 1976), 14.

contemporary era, by an African American. In a chapter entitled, “Good Things In Place of Meat” Burgess understood taste and texture as appealing factors in the creation of alternative soul food cuisine. On this very point, she writes: “Soul food can be more appealing than ever without meat—if you know what to use in its place...But the taste and texture of meat are important in many soul food recipes. Fortunately, modern food research has given us delicious and wholesome substitutes for meat and this book will help you to use them in making real soul food with that authentic taste.”³³³

Posterior to Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam’s efforts to enlighten and ameliorate the physical ills of Blacks, there is one contemporary Black religious sect that has heeded the nutritional call to arms espoused by Muhammad and stand out in this regard: the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem. Established in 1966 by former Chicago bus driver Ben Ammi, who led a total of some three hundred and fifty African Americans of the same city, first to Liberia and then Israel, to establish “The Kingdom” as it is commonly known by its adherents.³³⁴ The African Hebrew Israelites are a predominately African American religious organization in which the members’ dietary regime consists of either vegan and/or raw foods. Popular in Black communities across the globe, their main culinary enterprise, named *Soul Vegetarian*, is the largest chain of

³³³ Ibid., 19.

³³⁴ For the most comprehensive examination of the religious sojourn of Ben Ammi and his followers to Liberia, and subsequently to Dimona, Israel, see Prince Gavriel HaGadol and Odeyah B. Israel, *The Impregnable People: An Exodus of African Americans Back to Africa* (Washington D.C.: Communicators Press, 1993). For an extensive discourse of the religious and ideological worldview of the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem, see Ben Ammi, *Physical Immortality: Conquering Death* (Dimona, Israel: Communicators Press, 2010), *An Imitation of Life: Redefining What Constitutes True Life and Living in The New World* (Washington D.C.: Communicators Press, 1999), *Everlasting Life: From Thought to Reality* (Washington D.C.: Communicators Press, 1994), *The Black Man and Truth* (Washington D.C.: Communicators Press, 1982); and Shamiyah E. Elyahkeem, *The Ramle Seven: Seven Men and The Destiny of A Nation* (Dimona, Israel: Communicators Press, 2007).

Black-owned vegan restaurants worldwide, with locations in Atlanta (the first of its kind), Chicago, Israel, Maryland, Tallahassee, and Accra and Cape Coast, Ghana. The menu of the Soul Vegetarian restaurants consists primarily of vegan versions of soul food dishes such as collard greens, macaroni and cheese, corn bread and BBQ tofu, but they also offer vegan specialty items like BBQ cauliflower, kale salad, carrot tuna, parsley salad, Jerusalem bakes (seasoned potato wedges baked instead of fried), gyros, meatloaf, mash potatoes and gravy as well as a vegan version of the popular Chinese dish egg foo young, to name a few. With names of dishes that carry sentiments of Black Nationalism (e.g., the Garvey Burger), “Soul Veg,” as it is affectionately called by its patrons, meshes Africana culture with cuisine. In addition to the delectable cooked and raw options available at the restaurants, those with a penchant for sweets will also be delighted to find cinnamon rolls, various cakes and the African Hebrew Israelites’ own line of nondairy ice cream, *Dream Kream*, with an assortment of flavors to include: Butter Pecan, Chocolate, Coffee, Mint Chocolate Chunk and Vanilla. Other than their own establishments, most of the ice cream flavors can be found at selected health food stores like *Whole Foods Market*, making it only the second Black-owned and produced frozen dessert to be sold in *Whole Foods* stores’ southeast region of the U.S.³³⁵

To promote a healthier eating lifestyle even further and make available the various dishes sold at Soul Vegetarian restaurants, the African Hebrew Israelites have

³³⁵ African American Ashiki Taylor is the founder of *ICE Supreme*, which is a nut-based (i.e., almond and cashew), gluten-free frozen dessert available in six different flavors that is also animal, dairy, rice and soy-free. *The Urban Business Roundtable* featured the entrepreneur and acknowledged: “Taylor has successfully brought a healthy frozen treat to market at a time when fitness and health are a major focus of both individual Americans and our national economy.” Alfred Edmond, Jr., “UBR Morning Post: ICE Supreme’s Ashiki Taylor; Fitness Entrepreneur Saran Dunmore” *Black Enterprise: Wealth for Life* (April 20, 2011).

self-published several vegan cookbooks and/or raw “un-cook” books. The first of their written works, entitled *Soul Vegetarian Cookbook* was published in 1992. The overall intent behind this culinary offering, the Hebrew Israelites explain:

is to direct you toward a totally new way of eating. Diet is a very important factor for the survival of a people. A good diet is based upon the organic elements that give and sustain life. Many people take the human body and its functions lightly. They do not consider what they consume as having a direct and permanent effect on the quality of their health. That is why we take the time to present a consciousness and seriousness about the diet-related diseases that our destroying our people by the thousands each year. Cancer, hypertension, arteriosclerosis, sugar diabetes and strokes are just a few diseases that we can lessen the effects of, or even eradicated, by adopting a proper diet.³³⁶

Thirteen years later, the Hebrew Israelites offered in 2005 an enhanced rendition of their initial publication with improved recipes, again with the health of Blacks in mind, under a similar name—*The New Soul Vegetarian Cookbook*.³³⁷ In addition to providing supporters of their cuisine vegan, cooked versions of soul food, The “Kingdom,” as they refer to their religious community, published in the same year, *The Joy of Living Live*, a raw and living foods book for enthusiasts of raw foods.³³⁸ Zakhah, author of the

³³⁶ Kitchens of Soul Vegetarians, *Soul Vegetarian Cookbook* (Washington D.C.: Communications Press, 1992), 1.

³³⁷ Yafah Asiel, *The New Soul Vegetarian Cookbook* (Atlanta: Divine Universal Sisterhood, 2005). Another prominent vegan and raw food chef and member of the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem is Queen Vida M. Amuah. “Queen Vida,” born and raised in the central region in Ghana, offers an array of delightful fresh juices, and vegan and raw dishes to the African community in West End section of Southwest Atlanta out of her own domicile; a culinary practice that is purely truly African, communal and grassroots. See Vida M. Amuah, *Queen Vida’s International Vegan Cuisine* (Charleston, SC: CreateSpace, 2015).

³³⁸ Zakhah, *The Joy of Living Live: A Raw Food Journey* (Washington D.C; Communication Press, 2005). For other publications written by Africans that dedicate their food feature to raw, living foods and drinks, see Imar Hutchins, *30 Days @ Delights of the Garden: Learning How to Eat Right and Live Well in a Stressed-Out World* (New York: Four Winds Press, 1997); Jasmine (Teorah Shaleahk Simòn, *Juice Power: For the Thirsty Soul, Nourishing Juices that Taste Great!* (Summertown, TN: Book Publishing Company, 2005); Lillian R. Butler and Eddie D. Robinson, *Healthy Journey: Your Personal Road Map for Vibrant Living and Youthful Aging* (New York: Labor of Love Productions, LLC, 2008); High Priest Kwatamani, *Raw and Living Foods: The First Divine Act and Requirement of a Holistic Living Way of Life, Raw & Living Fruits, Vegetables, Seeds & Nuts. The Natural Foods for Man, He and She, in the Divine Consumption Plan* (Ellenwood, GA: Kwantamani Holistic Institute of Brain Body & Spiritual Research &

abovementioned text, who is currently one of the leading chefs in Dimona, Israel headed in July 2014 a free twenty-one day virtual food extravaganza/video series via the world wide web, titled *Soul Vegan Summit* in which leading chefs of the African Hebrew Israelite community in Israel demonstrated, through live presentations, how to prepare an array of healthy dishes primarily associated with the organization.³³⁹

Like Elijah Muhammad before her, Mary Burgess and the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem, holistic health counselor Afya Ibomu has heeded the call to educate the Black masses on the importance of nutrition and provide them a platform for which they can catapult and adopt a healthier eating routine. Should an individual consider making the transition to a plant-based diet devoid of animal protein and animal byproducts, the major concern usually is how to convert extant eating habits to one they aspire. In her salubrious text, *The Vegan Soulfood Guide To the Galaxy*, Ibomu answers the grand tour questions that countless people ask when attempting to become vegan or just want to just explore with the dietary regime: 1) Which do I actually eat;? and 2) How do I shop to eat nutritionally to sustain a vegan lifestyle? These inquiries the book answers in a comprehensive fashion. Surely, mouth-watering recipes included in this piece, like Al Greens, Garvey Salad, Mac-N-Cheez, My Mama's Potato Salad, Southern

Dev., Inc., 2008); Nwenna Kai, *The Goddess of Raw Foods* (Pasadena, CA: Awaken Media, 2009); Hiawatha Corner, *Eating Raw, Living Well* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2012); Tassili Maat, *Raw Recipes on the Go: Quick and Easy Raw Food in 15 minutes or Less* (Atlanta: Self-Published, 2012); Chef 7 Star, *It's Salad Time: Dairy, Meat and Gluten Free Salad Recipes* (Louisville, KY: CreateSpace, 2013), and *Wow! That's Raw?: Raw Vegan Comfort Food Recipes* (Louisville, KY: CreateSpace, 2014); Ama T. Opare, *Food For The Soul from Ama's Kitchen, Soulful Vegan and Raw Vegan Recipes: 46 Easy Gourmet Recipes Even Your Non-Vegan Friends and Family Will Eat* (Atlanta: Opare Publishing, LLC, 2014); Chef Ahki, *Electric: A Modern Guide to Non-Hybrid & Wild Foods* (self-published), 2016, inter alia.

³³⁹ Shortly after the conclusion of the Soul Vegan Summit, the recipe video presentations were no longer available free charge, so in order to reap the benefits of the series, one now has to pay a nominal monthly fee to gain access. See <http://soulvegansummit.com>.

Fried Tofu, Satisfy My Soul Grits, and Sweet Baked Beans represent southern cuisine and Black culture are certain to delight.

As a holistic health consultant, the writer can attest to how extremely difficult it can be for someone to make the transition from a meat-based diet to becoming a vegan without the proper guidance. Moreover, equally challenging is to be able to effectively maintain the dietary habits, appreciate the conversion and enjoys it during the process. Consequently, this is the exact predicament most individuals find themselves. Given the circumstance, it is vital to be properly educated, so the outcome will not result in abandonment of a healthier eating regiment. It for this reason Afya Ibomu's enlightening work is valuable to the African community. In the chapter aptly titled "Where to Begin," Ibomu provides seven efficacious steps on how to transition into veganism, which includes the following: 1) Be an avid reader and take the time to research the subject matter of alternative dietary lifestyles and nutrition that peak your interest most; 2) Remove one type of food from your eating regiment bi-weekly; 3) Limit or eliminate processed foods; 4) Each week, include at least one staple to your diet to enhance your taste buds; 5) Consume foods that range in color to ensure you get a nutrient-balanced diet; 6) Regardless of the psychological and physical challenges you may encounter, be steadfast and patient; and 7) Ensure that you consume fresh fruits and fresh vegetables on a quotidian basis as part of your eating regiment.³⁴⁰

One of the most significant aspects of *The Vegan Soulfood Guide To the Galaxy*

³⁴⁰ Afya Ibomu, *The Vegan Soulfood Guide To the Galaxy: Your All-In-One Guide For Soulful Vegan Recipes, Grocery Shopping, Dining-Out, Nutrition and More!* (Atlanta: Natral Unlimited, LLC, 2008), 36-37.

that is most appealing and extremely essential to the African community, given the constrained socio-economic conditions most of our people find themselves, Afya Ibomu reveals how to shop economically and holistically. In the essence of complementarity, Ibomu has teamed up with her husband, Stic (Khunum Ibomu)—the other half of the renowned Black Nationalist-oriented and revolutionary hip hop duo, *Dead Prez*—in the creation of two websites that promote fitness and healthy eating with African people particularly in mind. To assist those interested in preparing healthy dishes, Ibomu provides vegan recipes with accompanying videos on both her website, *Natral.com*³⁴¹ and Stic’s *RBGfitclub.com*³⁴²

The fourth section of *The Vegan Soulfood Guide To the Galaxy*, excitingly titled “Let’s Go Shopping” offers various places to shop for nutritional fare such as farmers markets, organ farms located within and service the Black community, health food stores, food cooperatives (co-ops), Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and gardens cultivated at home, which Ibomu cites as the most cost-effective for the consumer.³⁴³ “With larger companies gaining more control over the [food] industry,” writes Ibomu

³⁴¹ As the CEO of *natral.com*, Ibomu established an alliance with Malawi to provide drinkable water for African communities throughout the country. In addition to the global initiative, her website provides viewers not only nutritious recipes but offers: a blog; healthy tips; the ability to purchase written works of her own and others as well as other accessories that promote a healthy vegan lifestyle. See <http://www.natral.com>.

³⁴² In his own words, Stic founded RBG (Revolutionary But Gangsta) fitclub, as a means to “recognize the urgency in our communities in general to revolutionize our priorities as it relates to health.” For him, RBGfitclub upholds the ideals mostly associated with “fitness, nutrition, sobriety, meditation, alternative healing, [and] social justice around health issues.” In a word, this undertaking represents a “holistic lifestyle and fitness movement,” grounded in five principles: “Knowledge, Nutrition, Exercise Rest and Consistency.” The benefits of the RBGfitclub website is that one can: 1) become a member of the “Millions Miles Movement,” an initiative to inspire runners, cyclists, and walkers to complete a total of one million miles collectively; 2) purchase Stic’s motivational training rap album, *The Workout*, attire and other paraphernalia that reflect a movement centered in hip hop culture with an African-Centered approach to fitness. See <http://www.rbgfitclub.com>. See also, Stic, *Eat Plants Lift Iron: A Plant Based Weightlifting Experiment* (Atlanta: Boss Up, Inc., 2015).

³⁴³ Ibomu, *The Vegan Soulfood Guide To the Galaxy*, 48-49.

“organic farming is becoming more about paper work than actual love for pure food.”³⁴⁴ Thusly, her agricultural solution and advice is to plant sustenance “that you purchase [which] not only makes sure that your food is organic; it also helps saves money. Planting vegetables or herbs in large tubs on your balcony or having a full garden in your yard all helps you to increase your nutrient intake and save money.”³⁴⁵

Equally noteworthy in book is the informative DVD that accompanies the written work, entitled “Pimp My Tofu.” Given the vast industrialization of soybeans into genetically modified organisms (GMOs), Ibomu provides a way to alleviate its consumption and illustrates a simple way on how to make tofu (bean curd) from organic soybeans in the pleasure of your own kitchen. In like manner, especially helpful and informative in this healthy treatise is the segment that provides readers with how to make healthier, vegan selections when choosing to eat out. In the chapter, entitled “Dining Out & Menu Guide,” the author provides: 1) pointers on which types of foods to avoid to maintain a healthy vegan lifestyle; 2) types of restaurants (i.e., Caribbean, Chinese, Indian, Italian, Japanese, Mediterranean, Mexican, Thai, etc.) in which one can eat and specific menu options to enjoy and still stay true to veganism; and 3) travel tips to make trips more comfortable.³⁴⁶

Unquestionably, *The Vegan Soulfood Guide To the Galaxy*, with its plethora of well-thought out and instructive material on how to effectively practice a vegan lifestyle, provides for the African reading audience and others interested, a road map on how to

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 50

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ 74-77.

transmogrify into veganism in a thrifty manner and take matters of health into one's own hands. As an added pleasure for those enticed by the healthy, delicious fare from the abovementioned text, Afya Ibomu has subsequently published in 2015 *The Vegan Remix!* which offers over ninety palatable recipes—accompanied with several music playlists (i.e., Ball So Hard, Grown Folks, Old Skool, Positive Vibes, Ride Out, Sunday Morning and Turnt Up)—that span international flavors like Asian, Ethiopian, Italian, and Mexican cuisines.³⁴⁷

The most recent textual enterprise of providing the essence of soul food with a vegan twist is offered by progressive chef Bryant Terry. Unlike any other Black author of vegan soul food, Terry incorporates into his culinary written works various elements of Africana culture. Raised in Memphis but now residing in Oakland, Bryant Terry utilizes, as a culinary artisan, the agricultural inspiration and knowledge he gained from the farms his family owned in rural Mississippi. In his first solo written project,³⁴⁸ *Vegan Soul Kitchen*, Terry includes not only savory vegan recipes (e.g., Uncle Don's Double Mustard Greens and Roasted Yam Soup, Watermelon-Basil Vinaigrette, Black-eyed Pea Fritters, Banana-Maple Pecan Cornbread Muffins, Spicy Smothered Green Cabbage, Johnny Blaze Cakes, Soul on Ice Pops, and Maple Yam-Ginger Pie, etc.) but also chronicles his upbringing enmeshed with elements of Africana artistic expression, a culinary panache he describes as “Afro-Diasporic cuisine.” Bryant, who considers himself a food justice

³⁴⁷ See Afya Ibomu, *The Vegan Remix!: A Soulful Spin on World Cuisine* (Atlanta: Natrall Unlimited, LLC, 2015).

³⁴⁸ Several years prior to his own initial publication, Terry Bryant co-authored an innovative text that: 1) promotes the purchasing of organic foods; 2) supports it advocacy by divulging how government regulations on agricultural are intrinsically linked to the influence of the pesticide industry; and 3) the debilitating effects pesticides has on our bodies and environment. See Anna Lappé and Bryant Terry, *Grub: Ideas for an Urban Organic Kitchen* (New York: Penguin Group, 2006).

activist, is inspired to create for African Americans flavorful yet healthy recipes because, as he puts it forthrightly, “more and more studies are proving that properly executed vegan diets are highly beneficial for cleansing and detoxing as well as lowering the risk for and ameliorating some chronic illnesses.”³⁴⁹

As a melodious compliment, in the same fashion as Ibomu’s latest work, each southern-inspired recipe in *Vegan Soul Kitchen* is paired with a song (or songs) by music artists such as: Aaliyah, Fela Kuti’s lead percussionist Tony Allen, Alice and John Coltrane, Mile Davis, Herbie Hancock, Hypnotic Brass Ensemble, KRS-ONE, Nina Simone, Sarah Vaughn, and Stevie Wonder, to name a few, to instill the aspects of Africana culture into cuisine and agriculture. Within his culinary style, Bryant invokes the upshot of African artistic creativity due to the episodic disruption of chattel slavery. To express the amalgam of that experience in the Western hemisphere as it relates to his appetizing creations, Bryant reveals: “I have imagined new recipes through the prism of the African diaspora—cutting, pasting, reworking, and remixing African, Caribbean, African American, Native American, and European staples, cooking techniques, and distinctive dishes to come up with something all my own. Like the DJ being moved by the energy of the crowd to guide selections, I let the spirits of my ancestors and progeny move me to conjure up these edible treats.”³⁵⁰

In an April 20, 2012 interview with *Ebony* magazine, Bryant reemphasizes his sincere concerns about the chronic dis-eases Blacks suffer from today and posits that an

³⁴⁹ Bryant Terry, *Vegan Soul Kitchen: Fresh, Healthy, and Creative African-American Cuisine* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2009), xxi.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, xxii.

animal protein-free diet is remedial to combat such maladies. He offers:

It is important to realize that African-Americans are suffering from some of the highest rates of obesity, and other diet-related illnesses, such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, certain cancers, I think it's important for me to present plant-based diets or vegan diets as a tool for addressing this public health crisis that our people are suffering. Its not just the friend out here in Berkeley who are saying that a vegan diet can be a healing diet; it can address chronic illnesses or alleviate a lot of the health problems that people are dealing with. Mainstream medical institutions that are saying plant-based diets are actually a powerful tool for helping to heal our bodies when people are dealing with chronic illnesses and for preventing any of the chronic illnesses affecting our people.³⁵¹

The uniqueness of Bryant's healthy culinary creations coupled with expressions of Africana culture has set him apart so much that *Ebony* featured him again in 2014. As one of a triumvirate of African American health personalities highlighted, Terry was heralded especially for his activism as an advocate of a healthy dietary lifestyle.³⁵² In his latest publication, *Afro-Vegan*,³⁵³ Bryant expresses his familiarity with the African custom of having respect for the elders. Rather than provide a "Foreword" for the cookbook, Bryant instead includes an introductory section, entitled "Permission to Speak," in which rightfully chooses elder culinary historian and educator Jessica B.

³⁵¹ "Bryant Terry: The 'Inspired' Chef Urges Black Folks to Eat (and Live) Better" *Ebony* (April 20, 2012), 1-2. The inspiration behind the magazine interviewing Terry Bryant was the publication of his text in 2012. See Bryant Terry, *The Inspired Vegan: Seasonal Ingredients, Creative Recipes, Mouthwatering Menus* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2012).

³⁵² "3 Black Vegan Chefs You Should Know" *Ebony* (April 17, 2014). This particular piece ran by *Ebony* magazine acknowledges the curative activist work of Tracey McQuirter, author of *By Any Greens Necessary*, Latham Thomas, author of *Mama Glow*) and Bryant Terry. However, the publication neglected to mention another key African American chef, author and health advocate of a plant-based diet, Del Sroufe, who has been thrust into the mainstream due to his contributory efforts in the celebrated and lucrative *Forks Over Knives* plant-based foods project. See Del Sroufe and Glen Merzer, *Better Than Vegan: 101 Favorite Low-Fat, Plant-Based Recipes That Helped Me Lose Over 200 Pounds* (Dallas: BanBella Books, Inc., 2013); Pamela A. Popper, Glen Merzer and Del Sroufe, *Food Over Medicine: The Conversation That Could Save Your Life* (Dallas: BanBella Books, Inc., 2013); and Del Sroufe and Isa Chandra Moskowitz, *Forks Over Knives - The Cookbook: Over 300 Recipes for Plant-Based Eating All Through the Year* (New York: The Experiment, LLC, 2012).

³⁵³ Bryant Terry, *Afro-Vegan: Farm-Fresh African, Caribbean, and Southern Flavors Remixed* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2014).

Harris to do the honors of writing the literary libations. Without question, the culinary works created by Terry Bryant reveal that Africana culture is expressed through various mediums but to meld them as one continuous stream is equally significant.

Through the mass media outlets of television and film, two African Americans most recently have extended the discourse of soul food that deserves mention. Cartoonist and writer Aaron McGruder's 2006 provocative cartoon series, *Boondocks* examine the phenomenon of soul food. In the Season 1 episode, fittingly titled "The Itis," McGruder castigates, through satire, the obsession and satiation most African Americans have with soul food.³⁵⁴ In sardonic fashion, he critically analyzes and presents an animated rendition of the movie *Soul Food* to underscore and address the culinary culture of African Americans as well as the ambivalence and addictive behavior by which they consume fare that was once fashioned to sustain enslaved Africans during enslavement era in the United States. As the animated narrative continues, McGruder expresses how even when the matriarch in the film, Big Mama died of diabetes, the family continued with the same dietary habits—the consumption of soul food—as a means to bring the family closer but was nonetheless primarily responsible for the elders' eventual demise in the first place. For certain, the intent of Aaron McGruder, in covering director George Tillman's 1997 film was to highlight the contemporary dietary habits of Blacks, which are now largely responsible, along with the consumption of refined processed foods, for the decline in health and the proliferation of degenerative diseases found among African Americans.

³⁵⁴ Aaron McGruder and Rodney Barnes (writers), "The Itis" *Boondocks: Season 1* (aired: January 22, 2006; available on DVD July 25, 2006).

With the release of his 2013 documentary, *Soul Food Junkies*, director Byron Hurt embarks on a culinary journey and examines the cultural significance and debilitating effects the soul food tradition has on the health of African Americans and its applicability to Black identity.³⁵⁵ Through the lens of candid interviews with activists, community members, food justice advocates, political officials, scholars, physicians and cooks of the cuisine mentioned above, the documentary places the culinary tradition under the proverbial magnifying glass, highlighting its negative consequences (i.e., degradation of health) and positive aspects (i.e., communal gathering of friends and family). To address the need for agricultural sustainability, the film also provides a cursory examination of lower income African communities in the United States, which are out of the geographical proximity of viable grocery stores or local supermarkets that offer an abundance of produce and other foods with nutritional value; an ecological phenomenon referred in scholarly circles as “food deserts.”³⁵⁶ Due to the deprived

³⁵⁵ Byron Hurt, *Soul Food Junkies: A Film About Family, Food & Tradition* (Plainfield, NJ: God Bless the Child Productions, LLC, 2013).

³⁵⁶ For an examination and assessment on the prevalence of “food deserts” in both African American and continental African communities and the need for agricultural sustainability in these locales, see Robert Gottlieb and Anupama Joshi, *Food Justice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 39-58 and 151-176; Sharon L. Florentine, “Community Gardens Can Fight Urban Blight—And So Can You” *Temple University Magazine* (Spring 2013), 17-21; Tamara Warren, “Urban Famine” *Jet*, vol. 122, no. 2 (June 10, 2013); LaVonna Blair Lewis; Lark Galloway-Gilliam; Gwendolyn Flynn; Jonathan Nomachi; LaTonya Chavis Keener; and David C. Sloane, “Transforming the Urban Food Desert From the Grassroots Up A Model for Community Change” *Family & Community Health*, vol. 34, Supplement S1, (January/March 2011), S92-S101; and Jane Battersby and Jonathan Crush, “Africa’s Urban Food Deserts” *Urban Forum*, vol. 25, no. 2 (June 2014), inter alia. The 1973 written work by Authors Esther and Birdina Lewin is considerably one of the earliest treatments that urge sustainable agricultural initiatives in Black communities throughout the United States. In their intergenerational treatise, *Growing Food, Growing Up*, the Lewins take into account how the conditions in Black communities—particularly in major cities—and mass media have both contributed to the confusion in the minds of Black youth about food and nutrition. As a remedy, this text, in the tradition of Black self-reliance, instructs children on how to start a garden, grow their own sprouts, and prepare certain food from scratch, such as wheat germ, carococa, fudge sauce, crunchy granola and carob brownies, to name a few. See Esther Lewin and Birdina Lewin, *Growing Food, Growing Up: A Child’s Natural Food Book* (Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1973). For the most

conditions of these areas, it is challenging at best to find healthy food options due to scarcity and the predominance of fast food chains; a socioeconomic circumstance that cannot be minimized or overlooked as a strong correlation with the poor health status of many African Americans.

While Elijah Muhammad provided, in both his teachings and writings, the groundwork for Blacks on “how to eat to live,” the “messenger” did not take into account, either through his own ignorance or penchant for meat and its byproducts, the devitalizing effects the consumption of them have on the human body—given its acidic nature and the havoc it causes on the body. Even Muhammad himself admitted to his shortcomings in his own diet, particularly a habit he attributed to his time in incarceration. Muhammad confessed: “When we were eating the right food in the right way, we had no doctor bills and no medical bills...However, as soon as we changed and began to call on the doctor and his drugs—and it brought about one complaint after another. I would never have suffered today from bronchial asthma if I had not disobeyed the law of the right foods to eat. Now I am on the way back to try and adjust my life according to the way Allah (God) taught me.”³⁵⁷

recent discourse on sustainable agriculture, from both an African-Centered and grassroots perspective, see, Jeffrey L. Jordan, Edward Pennick, Walter A. Hill and Robert Zabawa, *Land & Power: Sustainable Agriculture and African Americans* (Waldorf, MD: Sustainable Agriculture Publications, 2009); and Tanya Denckla Cobb, *Reclaiming Our Food: How the Grassroots Food Movement Is Changing the Way We Eat* (North Adams, MA: Storey Publishing, 2011). One of the most recent visible and leading advocates of agricultural sustainability in communities’ predominately African American in America is Los Angeles-based Ron Finley, aptly labeled “The Guerilla Gardener.” In a 2014 interview entitled after his appellation, Finley maintains: “Gardening is the new gangsta,” simply because “[w]e’re in a war, under siege, and everybody’s asleep an the wheel. Fast food companies are the terrorist—food terrorists.” Carmella Monk Crawford, “The Guerilla Gardener” *Message* (March/April 2014), 9-10. His endearing and indefatigable work as an agricultural activist has caught the attention of mainstream America so much that Ron Finley is exclusively featured in the 2015 documentary, *Urban Fruit*.

³⁵⁷ Muhammad, *How to Eat to Live*, 60.

Just like all of the Africans living in America, followers of the Nation of Islam are not exempt from arthritic conditions, constipation, complications of the skin, diabetes, hypertension, impotence, infertility, menstrual abnormalities, migraines, obesity and other dis-eases individuals commonly suffer from in the United States. Without question, membership into the Nation of Islam is no indemnification against the plethora of diseases that affect African Americans collectively and the American population in general. Regrettably, the current leader of the NOI, Louis Farrakhan is a prime example. Over the years, he has battled with prostate cancer since as early as 1991.³⁵⁸ Even his spiritual father, Elijah Muhammad himself suffered from multifarious illnesses at the time of his death, to include: congestive hear failure, diabetes and an ongoing battle with chronic bronchitis, which prompted him at times to reside in Phoenix for relief.³⁵⁹

Although Elijah Muhammad condoned the eating of meat amongst his parishioners, he equally affirmed that a diet free of animal protein was ideal. Most likely, Muhammad was conceivably empathetic of the fact that the consumption of animal flesh has an enduring history that is a traditional, economic, habitual and gluttonous custom. In his own savvy way, the minister implied to his reading audience, in both volumes of *How to Eat to Live*, that a vegetarian lifestyle—devoid of animal flesh and its byproducts—is sufficient enough to maintain good health. He avowed, “if you can do without eating any kind of flesh, that is fine,”³⁶⁰ and a half decade later, in *Book Two* of

³⁵⁸ In his most recent and last battle with protest cancer, minister Farrakhan was admitted and treated effectively at Howard University Hospital in March 1999. See, “Nation Of Islam Leader Minister Louis Farrakhan Takes Four-Month Sabbatical For Health Reasons” *Jet* (April 5, 1999), 10; and Steve Kloehn and Mike Dorming, “Farrakhan Prognosis Called ‘Excellent’” *Chicago Tribune* (April 1, 1999), 4.

³⁵⁹ Evanzz, *The Messenger*, 304.

³⁶⁰ Muhammad, *How to Eat to Live*, 54.

the text with the same title, he did not waiver as he stated: “As I have said time and again, that no meat is good for us.”³⁶¹ Even more, Muhammad expressed the benefits of longevity one can obtain from adopting a natural diet. “Natural food,” he urged, “will give to us natural health and beauty and prolong our lives, if the poison hand of the commercializer does not touch it.”³⁶² While Muhammad makes a strong argument, he neglected to expound and clarify as to what “natural food” actually entails, which would prove helpful for those who consider making a dietary change. For the reader; however, who might be interested in altering their eating regime to a natural foods lifestyle, this poses a problem being that Muhammad offered only a generalized term without exemplars for one to investigate or abide by.

To address the theoretical wavering of his dietary teachings, Elijah Muhammad’s philosophy of dietary habits, in both volumes of *How to Eat to Live* and *Message to the Blackman in America* seem to have no logical development and little consistency in its instructions, and as a result, its composition may easily frustrate any efforts to understand and accept his overall purpose. The quandary, according to the writer, is that meat consumption plays a major and pivotal role in the development of cancers and other maladies amongst African Americans. To this end, Muhammad allowed too much room for interpretation in *How to Eat to Live* and his teachings for members of the Nation of Islam and other believers to embrace a carnivorous diet.

Diametrically opposite to the normative school of thought that one needs to consume meat for health reasons—a model Muhammad himself espoused—, Western

³⁶¹ Elijah Muhammad, *How to Eat to Live, Book No. 2*, 128.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 87.

scientific research that has been conducted thus far reveals a diet that consists primarily of meat and its derivatives begets a slew of diseases that could otherwise be prevented with making more nutritional decisions. Paradoxically, at one point in time, Western medicine wholeheartedly supported the consumption of meat for its nutrition purposes. However, due to the plethora of information exposing its consequences, its advocacy is no longer unanimous in the medical field that once heralded the theoretical concept. Indeed, the facts are overwhelming, which indicates that the eating of animal flesh in all forms is the primary cause of massive epidemics, such as cancer, heart diseases and many other diseases. Something to consider: A year prior to the publication of Muhammad's first volume of *How to Eat to Live*, the Journal of the American Medical Association, operated by the most influential governing and self-regulating professional body of organized medicine in the U.S., published an article that reported a vegetarian diet can prevent the preponderance (90-97%) of all heart diseases; a detail quite illuminating given that the number one cause of death today in the United States is heart disease.³⁶³

During the 1970s, there were a few Black licensed physicians who called for food reform and spoke out against a soul food diet. The African American publications *Jet* and *Ebony* served as those mediums of discourse. The November 2, 1972 issue of *Jet* published an article entitled, "Medic Links Soul Food With High Blood Pressure." The chief cardiologist of Provident Hospital in Baltimore, Dr. Elijah Saunders expressed his medical concern for African Americans' dietary habits. In essence, the leading African

³⁶³ Donald E. Pickering, Delbert A. Fisher, Anne Perley, Glaydis M. Basinger and Henry D. Moon, "Influence of Dietary Fatty Acids on Serum Lipids" *Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics*, vol. 102, no. 1 (July 1, 1961).

American heart specialist expressed “that the high salt content of soul food may be a contribution factor in the high incidence of hypertension among Blacks,” therefore “if you are Black, you should limit the amount of highly-salted soul foods in your diet.”³⁶⁴

Another example of the concern for the destructive eating habits of Blacks is Dr. Therman E. Evans, who at the time was president of the Board of Education of the District of Columbia and National Health Director of Operation PUSH. Unquestionably, Evans was forward thinking in the medical field with his understanding of the fundamental relationship between food and health. In the March 1977 issue of *Ebony*, Evans revealed the alarming health statistics of Africans in America, which in truth was:

twice the incidence of iron deficiency anemia; a higher incidence of arthritis, a very serious disabling disease; nearly twice the incidence of diabetes; a significantly greater incidence of heart conditions (heart disease is the number one medical killer of all people in this country); two to three times the incidence of high blood pressure; and a strikingly high incidence of cancer (the number two medical killer).³⁶⁵

Given the arrested state of corporeal incidences for Blacks, Evans articulated that African Americans can no longer “continue to disregard what we eat as if our diet has no effect our health status. In fact, what we eat is both directly and indirectly related to every major illness we know of, including hearth disease, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, and infectious disease. We must, individually, take care of our bodies...”³⁶⁶

One Black independent publication, which was more nationalist and grassroots in its delivery also dedicated written space during the 1970s to critically analyze and address the ameliorative needs of African people and provide solutions. With

³⁶⁴ “Medic Links Soul Food With High Blood Pressure” *Jet*, vol. XLIII, no. 6 (November 2, 1972), 5.

³⁶⁵ Therman E. Evans, “On the Health of Black Americans” *Ebony* (March 1977), 112.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

understanding the significance of the health of Africans Americans as priority number one, *Blacks Books Bulletin* dedicated an entire volume in 1975, appropriately titled “Health and Black Survival, ” based on the sign of the times for the African people in America. Within the issue, various articles included: 1) “Spinal Manipulation” as a key to health; 2) A one-on-one interview with Dick Gregory; 3) A critical analysis of hypertension, a major health problem even now amongst Blacks; and 4) An assessment by editor Haki Mahubuti on how the industrialization of foodstuffs are used against Blacks as a form of agricultural warfare.³⁶⁷

Two months after the *Ebony* feature of Therman Evans, the leading mainstream African American periodical published an article in May 1977 entitled, “Good Health is a Family Affair.” The physician primarily interviewed for the piece, Dr. Keith W. Sehnert opined that Blacks should increase the consumption of “raw fruits and vegetables because they added necessary vitamins and minerals and valuable bulk to your diet.”³⁶⁸ As for the intake of protein for nutritional purposes, Sehnert maintained, “beans, nuts and new soya-meat extenders and substitutes are other good sources of protein,” particularly because they are more wholesome and lower in calories than that of “beef, lamb or pork.”³⁶⁹ In essence, with slightly nuanced medical approaches, African American medical doctors were calling for at the time radical food reforms to address the state of health amongst Blacks collectively and the need for them to make sovereign decisions to improve their

³⁶⁷ See “Health and Survival” *Black Books Bulletin*, vol. 3, no. 2 (Summer 1975).

³⁶⁸ Interview with Dr. Keith W. Sehnert, “Good Health Is a Family Affair: Good Nutrition, Exercise, Sleep, Physical Examinations, Etc.” *Ebony* (May 1977), 110.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 112.

well-being.³⁷⁰

Similarly, as a result of numerous studies conducted over the last three decades—by both healthcare professionals and licensed medical physicians—, Western medicine has obdurately began to reveal the undeniable link between the consumption of meat and its derivatives to the increase of deaths, various metabolic syndromes and various diseases. To be exact, in 2009, the National Cancer Institute released the largest study ever conducted to date on the correlation between meat consumption and health. The conclusive findings of the study, of a cohort of a half million individuals, over a ten-year period, revealed “red and processed meat intakes were associated with modest increases in total mortality, cancer mortality, and cardiovascular disease mortality.”³⁷¹

³⁷⁰ Bill Rhoden, “The Ten Worst Things You Can Do to Your Health: Seven Medical School Professors Discuss the Prime Areas of Concern” *Ebony* (January 1978), 30-35.

³⁷¹ Morgan E. Levine, Jorge A. Suarez, Sebastian Brandhorst, Priya Balasubramanian, Chia-Wei Cheng, Rashmi Sinha, Amanda J. Cross, Barry I. Graubard, Michael F. Leitzmann, and Arthur Schatzkin, “Meat Intake and Mortality: A Prospective Study of Over Half a Million People” *Archives of Internal Medicine*, vol. 169, no. 6 (March 23, 2009), 562. Dean Ornish, founder of the Preventive Medicine Research Institute and clinical professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco reveals that even though “people have been told for decades to eat less meat and fat, Americans actually consumed 67 percent more added fat, 39 percent more sugar, and 41 percent more meat in 2000 than they had in 1950 and 24.5 percent more calories than they had in 1970, according to the Agriculture Department. Not surprisingly, we are fatter and unhealthier.” Dean Ornish, “The Myth of High-Protein Diets” *The New York Times* (March 23, 2015); and United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Communications: Agriculture Fact Book “Profiling Food Consumption in America,” (2001-2002), 15. For a more expanded examination on how the consumption of animal protein by humans is unquestionably linked to the chronic illnesses they incur, See also, David A. Snowdon, Roland L. Phillips and Gary E. Fraser, Snowdon “Meat Consumption and Fatal Ischemic Heart Disease.” *Preventive Medicine*, vol. 13, no. 5 (September 1984), 490-500; Benjamin J. Abelow, Theodore R. Holford and Karl L. Insogna, “Cross-Cultural Association Between Dietary Animal Protein and Hip Fracture: A Hypothesis” *Calcified Tissue International*, vol. 50, no. 1 (January 1992), 14-18; Margaret Thorogood, Jim Mann, Paul Appleby and Klim McPherson, “Risk of Death from Cancer and Ischaemic Heart Disease in Meat and Non-Meat Eaters” *British Medical Journal*, vol. 308, no. 6945 (June 25, 1994), 1667-1670; Margaret Thorogood M. “The Epidemiology of Vegetarianism and Health” *Nutrition Research Reviews*, vol. 8, no. 1 (January 1995), 179-192; Timothy J. Key, Gary E. Fraser, Margaret Thorogood, Paul N. Appleby, Valerie Beral, Gillian Reeves, Michael L. Burr, Jenny Chang-Claude, Rainer Frentzel-Beyme, Jan W. Kuzma, Jim Mann and Klim McPherson, “Mortality in vegetarians and non-vegetarians: a collaborative analysis of 8300 deaths among 76,000 men and women in five prospective studies.” *Public Health Nutrition*, vol. 1, no. 1 (March 1998), 33-41; Timothy J. Key, Gary E. Fraser, Margaret Thorogood, Paul N. Appleby, Valerie Beral, Gillian Reeves, Michael L. Burr, Jenny Chang-Claude, Rainer Frentzel-Beyme, Jan W. Kuzma, Jim Mann and Klim McPherson, “Mortality in

Unquestionably, its eye-opening results should convince even the most enthusiastic meat eaters to at least take notice or even refrain from such dietary practices. Additionally, it has been proven, as many scientific studies have shown, that diets consumed in geographical areas with high incidences of colon cancer are due high in animal and fat content. Thus, eating regimens that are high in animal protein result in a high fecal concentration of bile acids, thus providing more substrate for conversions to carcinogens,

vegetarians and non-vegetarians: detailed findings from a collaborative analysis of 5 prospective studies” *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, vol. 70, no. 3 (September 1999), 516S-524S. Amanda J. Cross and Rashmi Sinha, “Meat-related Mutagens/Carcinogens in the Etiology of Colorectal Cancer” *Environmental and Molecular Mutagenesis*, vol. 44, no. 1 (June 4, 2004), 44-55; Luigi Fontana, Samuel Klein and John O. Holloszy, “Long-term Low-Protein, Low-Calorie Diet and Endurance Exercise Modulate Metabolic Factors Associated with Cancer Risk” *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, vol. 84, no. 6 (December 2006), 1456-1462; Anne C. M. Thiébaud, Victor Kipnis, Shih-Chen Chang, Amy F. Subar, Frances E. Thompson, Philip S. Rosenberg, Albert R. Hollenbeck, Michael Leitzmann and Arthur Schatzkin, “Dietary Fat and Postmenopausal Invasive Breast Cancer in the National Institutes of Health–AARP Diet and Health Study Cohort” *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, vol. 99, no. 6 (March 21, 2007), 451-462; Dean Ornish, Mark Jesus M. Magbanua, Gerdi Weidner, Vivian Weinberg, Colleen Kemp, Christopher Green, Michael D. Mattie, Ruth Marlin, Jeff Simko, Katsuto Shinohara, Christopher M. Hagg and Peter R. Carroll, “Changes in Prostate Gene Expression in Men Undergoing an Intensive Nutrition and Lifestyle Intervention” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, vol. 105, no. 24 (June 17, 2008), 8369-8374; Rick Fox, “Eating Meat May Increase Risk of Early Death, Study Finds” *The New York Times* (March 24, 2009); An Pan, Qi Sun, Adam M. Bernstein, Matthias B. Schulze, JoAnn E. Manson, Meir J. Stampfer, Walter C. Willet and Frank B. Hu, “Red Meat Consumption and Mortality: Results from Two Prospective Cohort Studies” *The Journal of American Medical Association Internal Medicine*, vol. 172, no. 7 (April 9, 2012), 555-563; Federica Madia, Luigi Fontana, Mario G. Mirisola, Jaime Guevara-Aguirre, Junxiang Wan, Giuseppe Pasarino, Brian K. Kennedy, Pinchas Cohen, Eileen M. Crimmins and Walter D. Longo, “Low Protein Intake is Associated with a Major Reduction in IGF-1, Cancer, and Overall Mortality in the 65 and Younger but Not Older Population” *Cell Metabolism*, vol. 19, no. 3 (March 4, 2014), 407-417; Yoona Kim, Jennifer Keogh and Peter Clifton, “A Review of Potential Metabolic Etiologies of the Observed Association Between Red Meat Consumption and Development of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus” *Metabolism*, vol. 64, no. 7 (July 2015), 768-779, inter alia. Quite interesting, even as early as 1907, a two-year exhaustive study of cancer was conducted in Chicago in association with the Department of Health by one Dr. G. Cooke Adams, who “proved conclusively that diet is a most important factor in the increase of the disease and its death rate.” As a result of the research findings, Dr. Adams concluded: “There cannot be the slightest question that the greatest increase in cancer...is due to the increased consumption in animal foods...” “Cancer Increasing Among Meat Eaters” *The New York Times* (September 24, 1907). It should also be noted that along with animal protein and dairy products, research studies have shown that eggs too increase the risk for heart disease in humans. See Yuni Choi, Chang Yoosoo, Jung Eun Lee, Sohyun Chun, Juhee Cho, Eunju Sung, Byung-Seong Suh, Sanjay Rampal, Di Zhao, Yiyi Zhang, Roberto Pastor-Barriuso, Joao A.C. Lima, Hocheol Shin, Seungho Ryu and Eliseo Guallar “Egg Consumption and Coronary Artery Calcification in Asymptomatic Men and Women” *Atherosclerosis*, vol. 241, no. 2 (May 22, 2015), 305-312.

agents that tend to cause cancer.³⁷² From an anatomical standpoint, there is a distinction between the digestive tract of humans, which are structured much differently than that of inherent carnivores. More specifically, the colon of a carnivore is much shorter in length, which allows for digested animal flesh (raw flesh I might add) to pass and be expelled in a shorter period of time. On the other hand; however, the large intestine of a human being is much longer and more convoluted than a carnivorous animal, and a consequence, when humans consume animal protein, the ability to eliminate waste properly in a timely manner is retarded, thusly causing constipation, the buildup of mucoid plague and ultimately autointoxication of the blood stream.³⁷³

Notwithstanding their formal medical training, there is a small cadre of university-trained but least contained African American physicians that confront head on the orthodoxy of Western medicine. In the same demeanor as former sharecropper and renowned Civil Rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer articulated, African-Centered physician Nana Kwaku Opare (who uses Hamer's famous adage as the subtitle of this book) exhibits no tact in writing about his independent stance as a healer and the discontent about the fabricated narrative and current state of Western medicine. In his

³⁷² See Sydney M. Finegold, Howard P. Attenbery and Vera L. Sutter, "Effect of Diet on Human Fecal Flora: Comparison of Japanese and American Diets" *The Journal of American Nutrition* (December 1974), 1456-1469.

³⁷³ For discourse on the anatomical variances between humans and natural carnivorous animals, see Llaila O. Afrika, *African Holistic Health* (Brooklyn, NY: A&B Publishers Group, 2004), 89-90; and Jane Brody, *Jane Brody's Nutrition Book: A Lifetime Guide to Good Eating for Better Health and Weight Control* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 436. The term "mucoid plague" was coined by naturopathic physician Richard Anderson. For a comprehensive discussion on how mucoid plaque is formed in the large intestine of humans, and how autointoxication occurs as a result, due primarily to the consumption of animal protein and its derivatives, see Richard Anderson, *Cleanse & Purify Thyself, Book One: The Cleanse* (Medford, OR: Christobe Publishing, 2000), *Cleanse and Purify Thyself, Book Two: Secrets of Radiant Health and Energy* (Medford, OR: Christobe Publishing, 2000), and *Cleanse and Purify Thyself, Book 1.5* (Mt. Shasta, CA: Triumph, 1998), 3-48 to 3-94; 5-115; and 7-162 to 7-164.

own words, Opare laments:

When we new doctors graduated from UCSF, we were led in reciting not the Hippocratic oath, but a hypocritical oath instead. I alone in my class refused to stand during graduation and recite this oath, knowing it to be a lie that almost none of us would abide by. I vowed instead to do my part to change this system that kills as many as it helps. Since then, I have found the road to truth in medicine to be as lonely as my graduation was. I have found, until recently, a precious few doctors willing or able to question the rotten core of allopathic medicine. It is a form of medicine that arrogantly and chauvinistically dismisses all that fails to toe the line of the medical industrial complex.³⁷⁴

With the founding of Opare Institute in the predominately Black section of Southwest Atlanta, Nana Opare has brought into fruition his prior aspirations to address the medical needs of Africans in America in ways more foundational, ameliorative and alternative to that of mainstream medicine. In addition to his pedigree as a licensed physician, he is trained in the fields of and offers to his clients: nutrition medicine, acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine, and osteopathic manual medicine. The need to provide alternative means of medical assistance with the cultural sensibilities of African people in mind are critical to Opare, so much that he offers a Kilombo Care Program to clients, which includes, amongst other services, personalized physician care via house calls and personal coaching in the kitchen on the essentials of natural foods preparation. Nana Opare's holistic health aspirations are in collaboration with his business partner and wife, Ama T. Opare, who serves as the Chief Executive Officer and Education Director of the Opare Institute. In addition to her posts at the Institute, Ama Opare is also a gourmet raw vegan chef whose culinary skills and knowledge she makes available for Africans globally. For example, in 2013, she established the online website, *Food for the Soul* as a means to provide an array of information and resources relating to vegetarianism,

³⁷⁴ Opare, *The Rule Book and User Guide For Healthy Living*, 6.

veganism, and raw and living foods, particularly with African people solely in mind. Established to create a sense of community amongst Blacks who live or aspire to this dietary lifestyle, Opare shares her intent behind the creation of the website:

You may wonder why this site is for BLACK vegetarians and not all vegetarians and who qualifies as a black vegetarian. Let me explain. Many black folks experience a feeling of aloneness that can be different and more isolating than what other vegetarians may experience. The cultural norm in many communities is linked to chicken wings, macaroni and cheese and a highly meat based diet. To provide a place where we can find others like us. To connect us together across the miles. To share recipes, to share ideas, to make friends, to support each other. It is a site for folks who are vegetarian or who are interested in learning more about veganism, raw and living foods and vegetarianism. It is for people of African descent Only. It is intended to be a safe space where we can speak our mind and not worry about offending anyone or being called out by someone who doesn't and can't understand our perspective as black people. There are many other places where anyone is welcome. Food For The Soul isn't one of them.³⁷⁵

In ideological concurrence with Nana Opare's position as an emancipative physician, but from a more nuanced approach, Houston-based African American physician, Baxter D. Montgomery has established a successful independent, self-governing medical treatment facility in the Southwest. The publication of his text, *Food Prescription for Better Health* proves to be innovative in its own right. In the chapter entitled, "A New Approach to Health Care" Montgomery articulates that a great majority of "medical interventions involve treating patients and their symptoms to bring about relief, rather than spending time diagnosing the root cause of disease states to treat," and "[d]espite mounting evidence that the vise-grip [i.e., cause] of our chronic illnesses is our poor nutrition and lifestyle choices, we continue to apply more pills and procedures to

³⁷⁵ Ama T. Opare, "Why This Site Is For Black Vegetarians" *Food for the Soul: The Online Home for Black Vegetarians*, www.foodforthesoul.opare.net (April 14, 2013). See also, Ama T. Opare, *Food for the Soul: From Ama's Kitchen, Soulful Vegan and Raw Vegan Recipes, 46 Easy Gourmet Recipes Even Your Non-Vegan Friends and Family Will Eat* (Atlanta: Opare Publishing, LLC), 2014.

suppress superficially the outward manifestations of the these conditions.”³⁷⁶ As a licensed physician himself, Montgomery is certain: “American medicine needs to change its focus. Medical practice has become a process of prescribing medicines and procedures to treat the side effects of the bad foods we eat. The key issue for true health is a healthy lifestyle, and the core of that lifestyle is optimal nutrition. That needs to be the focus of our practice.”³⁷⁷ Montgomery’s words resonant and his medical training as a seasoned cardiologist support his medical opinion and worldview. For example, in his private practice located in Houston, Texas, Baxter Montgomery currently manages patients with coronary heart disease cardiac arrhythmias, as well as chronic illnesses such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, diabetes and other inflammatory conditions, utilizing naturalistic health techniques quite contrary to the Western medical training he received to become a licensed doctor. Additionally, Baxter Montgomery pioneering contributions to the field of medicine include his establishment as founder and holds posts as the executive director and medical director of: 1) the Johnsie and Aubary Montgomery Institute of Medical Education and Research; and 2) two Houston Cardiac Association and the Montgomery Heart and Wellness centers. Likewise, the twin pillar of Baxter’s profound facility as a physician is marked by his dual appointments as a: 1) Fellow of the American College of Cardiology; and 2) Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of Cardiology at the University of Texas Health Science Center, also in Houston. Clearly, the efficacy of the therapeutic work by which both Drs. Nana Opare

³⁷⁶ Baxter D. Montgomery, *The Food Prescription for Better Health: A Cardiologist’s Proven Method to Reverse Heart Disease, Diabetes, Obesity, and Other Chronic Illnesses, Naturally!* (Houston: Delworth Publishing, 2011), 71.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 142-143.

and Baxter Montgomery operate with holistic health practices as licensed medical professionals without being enmeshed in the underpinnings of Western medicine is without question commendable and deserves merit.

With respect to the dietary beliefs of Elijah Muhammad, in no way does the writer suggest he meant any harm to African people as his religious proselytization, community service and economic initiatives in Black communities across America suggest otherwise. However, due to the contradictory nature of his instructions regarding food and nutrition in *How to Eat live*, it seems that Muhammad was most likely ill-advised in his methodology towards diet, or certain aspects of it. One could suffice this was mostly due to the fact that Muhammad's teachings about dietary food restrictions to Muslim adherents and others was primarily shrouded and largely dependent upon dogma, rhetoric and hearsay. Nevertheless, the eating regiment that Elijah Muhammad advocated for African Americans during the 1960s and 1970s was unmistakably healthier than the diet primarily informed by the experiences of chattel slavery that many Blacks were accustomed to eating. In sum, the teachings of Elijah Muhammad regarding food and nutrition were fundamentally responsible for making thousands of Africans more aware of their health conditions, which in turn influenced future generations to make the necessary advancements up the dietary ladder to a more health conscious lifestyle.

Anterior to Elijah Muhammad's teachings about food and nutrition, the advocacy of a natural foods dietary lifestyle for Blacks had already been undertaken. The most influential advocate of change in this regard was none other than Alvenia Moody Fulton (1906-1999). Fulton would acquaint African Americans with dietary habits more

wholesome than what the publications of *How to Eat to Live* subsequently had to offer. Unlike Elijah Muhammad, fo promoted outright total abstinence from animal protein and its byproducts. Before Muhammad’s treatises hit the shelves, Alvenia Fulton was already educating the African community about nutrition and healthful dietary practices as early as the 1950s. In fact, in January 1957, she founded the Better Living Health Club in her own dwelling, and in order for individuals to become a member, the compulsory requirement was for them to take her therapeutic creation: a five-day formula that cleansed the body and initiated weight loss.³⁷⁸ Fulton eventually earned a doctorate in naturopathy (N.D.) from the Lincoln College of Naturopathic Physicians and Surgeons in Indianapolis, Indiana, and to add to her credentials as a naturalistic healer, she also obtained certifications as a Biochemical Therapist (a craft she would use when concocting herbal remedies for clients in her home) and a Nutritional Counselor in 1958 from the American Institute of Science, also in Indianapolis.³⁷⁹ Before delving into the field of alternative medicine, Alvenia Fulton was active in the ministry, as she became the first woman to matriculate from the Greater Payne Theological Seminary in Birmingham, Alabama. Subsequently, Fulton served as pastor in three churches of the first Black denomination of the Christian faith in the U.S.: 1) St. Johns African Methodist Episcopal in Manhattan, Kansas; 2) St. Stephens African Methodist Episcopal in Birmingham, Alabama; and 3) St. Johns in Louisville, Kentucky.³⁸⁰

The turnaround for Fulton as a healer and pioneer in the benefit of better nutrition

³⁷⁸ “Meet the Diet Columnist” *Chicago Defender* (May 1, 1971), 1, column 1.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ “Dr. Alvenia Fulton, 92, Famed Nutritionist, Dies in Chicago” *Jet*, vol. 95, no. 16 (March 22, 1999), 18.

occurred in 1954. In her therapeutic treatise, *Radiant Health Through Nutrition*, Fulton expressed the trajectory from which she went from a sickly woman to a beacon of health. Born on a farm in Pulaski, Tennessee, Fulton recollected about being raised on a heavily starched southern diet, and by her own admission, her “greatest problem concerning food, in my particular case, was that I more than often, overate.”³⁸¹ Due to the overindulgence of denatured foods lacking fiber, Fulton expressed how her mucus-ridden body yielded to repetitive occurrences of sore throats and colds, which resulted in a tonsillectomy, and subsequently in life, a rectal surgical operation as a result of constipation and hemorrhoids.³⁸² To add insult to bodily injury, after her migration to Chicago, she fell ill with bleeding duodenal ulcers, a malady that was an eye-opening experience for Fulton. After discovering a natural cure for ulcers involving the consumption of raw cabbage juice, Fulton decided to execute the holistic treatment for nearly two weeks and successfully eradicated her ulcerous condition. It was at this very moment Alvenia Fulton was introduced to and became aware of the efficacy of a natural foods dietary lifestyle. In her own words, Fulton explains natural progression: “It came, then, as a matter of course, that I became a health food, health store devotee and enthusiast. I had to curb my zeal and desire to influence and convert others, for each must develop his own desire to investigate the new.”³⁸³

Under the guidance and supervision of naturopath M.O. Garten,³⁸⁴ Fulton would

³⁸¹ Alvenia M. Fulton, *Radiant Health Through Nutrition* (Chicago: Life Line, 1980), 11.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁸⁴ See M.O. Garten, *The Cycle of Health* (Self-published, 1944), *Tomorrow's Health* (Self-published, 1944), *The Dynamics of Vibrant Health and Neuropractic* (Self-published, 1958), *Aches and Pains—Their Cause and Removal* (Self-published, 1965), *The Health Secrets of a Naturopathic Doctor* (West Nyack,

go on an extended fast and make the most drastic transmogrification into the realm of naturalistic health practices as a way of life. The upshot, according to Opie, was the “elimination of long-term problems in her body such as arthritis, upper respiratory congestion, and swelling in her ankles; the fast also reduced the size of a tumor in her body.”³⁸⁵ With astonishment, Fulton recalled the value of the cleansing, realized the beneficial results and noticed: “The tumor was smaller. When I consulted Dr. Garten again, he suggested that I eat raw foods from six to nine months and start another fast. This is how I learned about raw food and became a vegetarian.”³⁸⁶ To continue and further the bodily catharsis, Fulton followed the eating regiment laid out by the one who inspired her detoxify initially. The no frills and non-negotiable diet suggested by Garten included:

Only fruits, nuts, and vegetables and whole grain from one month to a year. Do not cook anything that can be eaten raw. (Natural Organic Foods, fruits, vegetables, nuts and unheated and untreated honey). No white sugar or anything containing white sugar. Nothing made with white flour, no meats of any kind, no salt (use kelp instead), no cow's milk. Use goat's milk or coconut milk or almond milk made fresh daily and drink plenty of fruit and vegetable juices. Drink plenty of mint and alfalfa tea.³⁸⁷

From that point onward, Alvenia Fulton would lead a plethora of individuals on the path of purification, not only from the knowledge she possessed as an autodidact and trained naturopath but also as a gleaming example of good health in the flesh.

Miraculously, in just a four-year timeframe, Fulton healed herself completely and

NY: Parker Publishing Company, Inc., 1967), and *The Natural and Drugless Way for Better Health* (West Nyack, NY: Parker Publishing Company, Inc., 1969)

³⁸⁵ Frederick Douglass Opie, “Spotlight: Alvenia Fulton” in “Women’s Leadership in the Development of Medicine” ed., Karen O’Connor, *Gender and Women's Leadership: A Reference Handbook* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2010), 729.

³⁸⁶ Fulton, *Radiant Health Through Nutrition*, 14.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

established in 1958 the Fultonia Health and Fasting Institute at 1953 W. 63rd Street in the Englewood neighborhood of the South Side of Chicago.³⁸⁸ The analeptic establishment of Fulton served a tripartite function, as a: 1) locale that distributed an assortment of herbs for remedial purposes in the same manner a pharmacy issues synthetic drugs to their patients; 2); a health food store that sold alternative health products; and 3) a restaurant that offered an array of vegetarian dishes, raw foods in addition to fresh fruit and vegetable juices.³⁸⁹ In an interview with *Sepia* magazine, Fulton described her cuisine as “soul food with a mission, and the mission is good health.”³⁹⁰ To amplify her teachings of a natural foods lifestyle to African Americans and others who would listen, Fulton hosted a Saturday morning hour-long radio show program in 1963, aptly entitled, *The Joy of Living*.³⁹¹

To augment the knowledge she already acquired in naturalistic health techniques and practices through self-tuition, Fulton received her doctorate in naturopathic medicine from Lincoln College of Naturopathy in Indianapolis. Along with her with accreditation in alternative medicine came a bevy of censure from those who were either: ill-informed of her alleviative methods; or just grounded in the faith of allopathic medicine. To no avail, Fulton was not deterred to provide natural therapeutic methods to a community of her own that was without question in desperate need. In addition to her ameliorative and tireless efforts as a naturopathic physician, Fulton authored several treatises of alternative

³⁸⁸ Dianne Struzzi, “Natural Healer Alvenia Fulton” *Chicago Tribune* (March 20, 1999).

³⁸⁹ Opie, *Hogs & Hominy*, 166.

³⁹⁰ Alfred Duckett, “How to Eat and Love” *Sepia*, vol. 22, no. 5 (May 1973), 80.

³⁹¹ Opie, “Spotlight: Alvenia Fulton,” 730.

health in addition to *Radiant Health Through Nutrition: Vegetarianism: Fact or Myth*;³⁹² *The Fasting Primer*;³⁹³ and *Fasting Made Simple*.³⁹⁴

Alvenia Fulton's adeptness and content mastery in naturopathic medicinal techniques attracted not only members of the Black community but her clientele included African American notables from the sports, religious, and entertainment realm such as Muhammad Ali, Godfrey Cambridge, Roberta Flack, Red Foxx, Mahalia Jackson, Eartha Kitt, and Gale Sayers.³⁹⁵ Additionally, Fulton's expertise with a whole foods plant-centered dietary pattern attracted the likes of the accomplished thespians of the stage, film and television that were sympathetic to the political and cultural sensibilities of Black Nationalism—wife and husband duo Ruby Dee (1922-2014) and Ossie Davis (1917-2005). In their acclaimed autobiography *With Ossie & Ruby*, Ruby Dee recalls her and Ossie Davis' initial encounter with Alvenia Fulton in Chicago while performing in the latter's theatrical production, *Purlie Victorious*.

One of the reasons I will always cherish the city of Chicago is that there I met Dr. Alvenia Fulton, a naturopath and holistic practitioner...when the entire cast was invited to visit her store and have dinner in her home. She prepared an unusual, most tasteful meal. It wasn't until it was over that we realized that no meat had been served. The meat substitutes were delicious, fulfilling, and only a small part of the vegetables feast, topped off with a marvelous dessert and a truly believable coffee substitute. That dinner was the beginning of a long relationship in which she changed my way of thinking about food. She not only showed me better ways to prepare and enjoy it, but also introduced me to the concept of food as medicine. She gave me a new respect for the miracle that is the human body and how better to care for it.³⁹⁶

³⁹² See Alvenia M. Fulton, *Vegetarianism: Fact or myth*. (Chicago: C.A.M.S. Binding, 1974).

³⁹³ See Alvenia M. Fulton, *The Fasting Primer: The Book That Tells You What You always Wanted To Know About Fasting* (Chicago: B.C.A. Publishing Corporation, 1978).

³⁹⁴ See Alvenia M. Fulton, *Fasting Made Simple*. (Chicago: Fultonia Press, 1979).

³⁹⁵ Duckett, "How to Eat and Love," 80.

³⁹⁶ Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, *With Ossie & Ruby: In This Life Together* (New York: William and Morrow and Company, 1998), 328.

The irony in the concluding sentence is that even though Ruby Dee nearly eradicated uterine fibroids under the holistic medical direction of Fulton previously, in 1967 she ill-advisedly, due to the suggestion of her husband and the persuasiveness of Western medicine, took the path of allopathic medicine and begrudgingly capitulated to the knife, resulting in a mastectomy.³⁹⁷ In remorse, the legendary actress expressed: “Too many times over the years, I’ve regretted not having first consulted Dr. Alvenia Fulton, a black woman who carried with her age-old alternative solutions to modern problems.”³⁹⁸ Even more, Ruby Dee articulated her indecisiveness between the disparate medicinal philosophies: I’m still wobbling on the fence, reluctant to jump down on one side or the other, waiting to commit to a medical system that embraces the best of all known disciplines.”³⁹⁹

Similar reverence to Alvenia Fulton was provided by the accomplished editor, essayist, poet and publisher of *Third World Press*—Haki Madhubuti. In his thought-provoking text, *Black Men Obsolete, Single, Dangerous?* Madhubuti is highly reminiscent of the influences he received as inspiration to adopt a dietary lifestyle holistic in nature. In the chapter—which is a play on singer Tina Turner’s famous song—“What’s Food Got To Do With It,” he acknowledges the emancipatory dietary efforts of Alvenia Fulton, Elijah Muhammad and Dick Gregory. Madhubuti expresses his admiration:

At that time, the late sixties, health was not the “in” thing...during that period, with the exception of Dr. Alvenia Fulton and Dr. Roland Sydney, the proximity of Chicago’s Black Community to ‘natural’ health was extremely limited. Both

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 329-330.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 331.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

Dr. Fulton and Dr. Sydney have been untiring in their advocacy of a natural, drug-free way of life. Their example and commitment have been sources of inspiration to me. And, of course, one must also include the extraordinary efforts of Dick Gregory. However, I first encountered an alternative way of eating by reading Elijah Muhammad's *How to Eat to Live*. By that time (1967), I have excluded pork from my diet. Mr. Muhammad's basic message to me was 1) people eat too much food in this country, 2) people are eating the wrong 'foods, and 3) there is need for self-discipline.⁴⁰⁰

Unequivocally, the aforementioned veneration provided Madhubuti captures a clear picture of the positive triumvirate effect Alvenia Fulton, Elijah Muhammad and Dick Gregory had on many African people's lives.

While Alvenia Fulton was a female pioneer amongst Blacks to promote fasting as a mechanism to detoxify the body, and her apprentice, Dick Gregory, a front runner and most visible of a natural foods diet, Paul Goss can easily be enthroned with the title of elder male statesman in the tradition of Africana holistic health. A native Georgian from the rural community of Canton, Paul Goss is the oldest of ten siblings. As a youth, Goss gained the passion for and derived most of his knowledge of herbs from neighborhood elders Ms. Bellamy and Mitchell—known affectionately throughout the community as “The Herb Lady” and the “Root Doctor,” respectively.⁴⁰¹ An alumni of the historic HBCU Stillman College—located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama—by 1965, Goss, through intensive self-study, became an autodidact naturopathic physician and herbalist, or in the words of Earl Thorpe, a holistic health practitioner “without portfolio” and began taking on clients as a profession. Thirteen years later, in 1977, Goss founded and continues to serve as the president of *New Body Products* in Compton, California, a business that sells various herbs, essential oils, teas, and other health products. Known particularly for his

⁴⁰⁰ Haki R. Madhubuti, *Black Men Obsolete, Single, Dangerous,*? 199.

⁴⁰¹ “Dr. Goss,” <http://www.newbodyproducts.net>, accessed May 4, 2015.

content mastery of iridology (i.e., the study of the iris), Goss used this alternative medicinal practice along with a strict vegan eating regiment and herbal remedies for his clients to treat various illnesses. In addition to his successful career as a naturopath and businessman, Paul Goss adds to his accolades being the key developer of two holistic health ranches in White Oak, North Carolina and Douglas, Arizona entitled, *Eden*. Among his other accolades as a health practitioner, Goss is also the author of several noteworthy holistic health treatises.⁴⁰²

Aside from Paul Goss' invaluable contribution in the tradition of health, the naturalistic therapeutic work of Dr. Sebi (1933-2016) deserves mention. A Honduran by birth, Dr. Sebi feverishly proselytized his holistic campaign, which implored Africans in America and abroad to adopt a dietary regiment devoid of foods he considered "hybrid." What set Sebi apart from other African holistic health practitioners was that his provocative dietary restrictions were stricter and went beyond that of a vegan or raw food lifestyle. From his estimation, hybrid foods do not provide the electric catalyst needed for proper cell growth and functioning, and for this reason, foods such as soy, carrots, nectarines, lemons, cauliflower, broccoli, etc. fell into the aforementioned category and were not fit for human food consumption. Aside from his austere dietary recommendations, Sebi was an adept healer who successfully cured his clients of innumerable diseases, to include Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). His efficacy and innate ability to naturally remedy corporeal maladies was enshrined in 1988

⁴⁰² See Paul Goss, *The Natural Way* (Compton, CA: Self-Published, 1970), *Forever Young* (Compton, CA: Self-Published, 1985), *The Rebirth of Gods* (Compton, CA: Self-Published, 1995), and *The Eyes of Forever Young* (Compton, CA: Self-Published, 2006).

when Dr. Sebi was acquitted all of charges by New York Attorney General Robert Abrams of falsely claiming to rid individuals of all diseases through natural means.

Given all of Alvenia Fulton's accolades and contributory efforts in the tradition of alternative medicine, one can easily contend that her most visible and enduring accomplishment as a Jegna in the holistic health and natural foods movement was her assistance of Dick Gregory on the path of health and wellness. Fueled by the overt racism and social proscription Blacks had to endure, Dick Gregory spent most of his time throughout the 1960s and 1970s as an activist addressing social and humanitarian issues. At times his activist work and dalliances in electoral politics intertwined as he once: 1) marched with Martin Luther King, Jr.; 2) ran unsuccessfully as a mayoral candidate in Chicago; and 3) ran for the presidency of the United States in 1968 as a write-in candidate during the eventual election of Richard Nixon.⁴⁰³ Dick Gregory attributes the launch of his career as a comedian to *Playboy* mogul Hugh Hefner, who saw him perform at Herman Roberts Show Bar in Chicago, and on the spot, hired him to display his comedic genius at the Playboy Club in the same city.⁴⁰⁴ Ironically, his initial comedic performance at Hefner's establishment in January 1961 was before a "convention of frozen food executives from the South," a racial circumstance if which Gregory was nearly denied work due to the color of his skin.⁴⁰⁵

It would be the national acclaim that Gregory received as a comedian that would

⁴⁰³ For a brief discussion of Dick Gregory's rationale on running for president of the United States, See Dick Gregory, *Write Me In!* (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1968), 15-22 and 23-30.

⁴⁰⁴ Phillip Lutz, "A Bit Slower, but Still Throwing Lethal Punch Lines" *The New York Times* (February 19, 2010).

⁴⁰⁵ Dick Gregory, with Robert Lipsyte, *Nigger: An Autobiography* (New York: Pocket-Simon, 1964), 142.

prepare him for a sociopolitical agenda he linked to the advocacy of a natural foods movement. His ascent into the realm of health activism began the same year as the publication of *How to Eat to Live*, during his mayoral campaign in Chicago against incumbent Richard Daley, Sr.; a tenacious political figure that Gregory says “Julius Caesar could have taken lesson from him.”⁴⁰⁶ During an era when a lion’s share of African American cookbooks were devoted to celebrating soul food, Dick Gregory became arguably the most conspicuous promoter of vegetarianism, and a raw foods and fruitarian diet.

Prior to his holistic encounter with and eventual tutelage under nutritional innovator Alevina Fulton in 1967, Gregory actually refrained from eating meat as part of his nonviolent dietary approach to protest the oppression and injustices Blacks experienced in segregated, racist America. However, the manner in which Dick Gregory became a vegetarian is unconventional. Unlike most individuals that make the dietary transition, Gregory did not become a vegetarian for health reasons. Rather, the change in his eating regimen came about as a result of his wife, who was nine-months pregnant at the time, being physically assaulted by a police official in Mississippi. In a personal interview conducted by the writer, Gregory shared: When I became a vegetarian it had nothing to do with health. I became a vegetarian because I just didn’t believe that a person should be killed. Then I looked at a Mississippi Sheriff kick my old lady in the belly when she was nine months pregnant.”⁴⁰⁷ In order to psychologically accept without recourse the traumatic experience of what actually happened to his life partner, Gregory

⁴⁰⁶ Dick Gregory, Personal interview with Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, April 7, 2012.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

told himself: “Man, I got to trick myself and make myself believe that the only reason I didn’t jump on that sheriff is because I don’t believe that anything should be killed, including animals.” That’s what I did. That night I decided I wouldn’t eat anything that had to be killed...I didn’t even know how to spell vegetarian.” However, due to his ignorance or not being well-informed of a vegetarian lifestyle, Gregory ate in an gluttonous manner, a dietary habit Elijah Muhammad expressed most African Americans were guilty. As a result, due to his fear of not receiving enough protein, Gregory’s weight steadily rose from 130 pounds to over 365 pounds because, as he puts it, “I thought I had to it.”⁴⁰⁸

It is a wonder how Elijah Muhammad’s teachings and influence about health never made it into the discourse of Gregory’s written words. In her telling, feminist treatise *Black Hunger*, Doris Witt’s subtitle of chapter five, “Dick Gregory’s Cloacal Continuum” lends credence to Gregory’s oversight in his writings. Witt explains it is quite interesting “Gregory himself has little to say in his writings from this period about the Nation of Islam or its controversial leader [and] it seems possible that Gregory’s indebtedness to Muhammad’s dietary fixations is greater than he has been willing to admit. If his secular, integrationist politics are incompatible with Elijah Muhammad’s advocacy of theistic [B]lack [N]ationalism, their dietary concerns share a number of striking similarities.”⁴⁰⁹ Paradoxically, for whatever the reason—be it his preceding theological and ideological variances—, later in life Dick Gregory acknowledges the ameliorative work of Elijah Muhammad in the same customary fashion as his naturalistic

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Doris Witt, *Black Hunger*, 134.

heroine Alvenia Fulton. For example, in the foreword to *The Hood Health Handbook*, Gregory, in reflection, reminisces about the “Messenger’s” nutritional call to arms to Blacks in the United States in a venerated manner: “I can’t help but think back to the great Elijah Muhammad, who talked about how diet is just as important as liberation.”⁴¹⁰ In the same vein, in a one-on-one interview with Byron Hurt, the director of *Soul Food Junkies*, Gregory expresses the drastic impact Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam had on the eating habits of many African Americans. Unapologetically, Gregory acknowledges to Hurt: “The Biggest shock to me was what Elijah Muhammad was able to do with non-believers. My mother ain’t gone be nothing but a Christian all her life, and would go to war if you told her...but she stop eating pork.” “Why was that?,” asked Hurt. Gregory’s simple reply, without hesitation: “Elijah Muhammad!”⁴¹¹ According to Gregory, no other theological organization had such a lasting impression and effect on the dietary ethics of African Americans like that of Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. Convincingly, Gregory upholds: “I don’t know anybody or a group of religious people that will never stop being anything but their religion but he got millions of black folks to stop eating pork. He wasn’t our leader. He was their leader and we read the book and felt so comfortable with that we stopped eating pork.”⁴¹²

Dick Gregory became so enthralled in the practices of a natural foods dietary lifestyle that he, as inspiration for others, led by example and practiced what he preached. As a result, it afforded him by 1972 the aerobic prowess he once enjoyed as a high school

⁴¹⁰ Supreme Understanding and C’BS Alife Allahm, eds., *The Hood Healthbook: A Practical Guide to Health and Wellness in the Urban Community*, Volume One, (Atlanta: Supreme Design Publishing, 2010), v.

⁴¹¹ Dick Gregory, interview with Byron Hurt from the documentary, *Soul Food Junkies*, 2013.

⁴¹² Gregory, Personal interview with Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, April 7, 2012.

and college track star to partake in rigorous exercises like a quotidian regiment that consisted of running ten miles a day.⁴¹³ His physical tiptop conditioning at nearly forty years of age allowed him to perform long distance runs for humanitarian reasons. Even more, in using the tactics of nonviolence civil disobedience but in a more nuanced fashion, Gregory would go on extended fasts—a holistic remedial technique taught to him by Fulton in 1967—as a tactic in a humanitarian effort to bring awareness to and protest both international and domestic injustices. In his literary homage to the health activist work of Dick Gregory, Clovis Semmes provides a succinct synopsis of how the former began to use fasting a tool of protest:

Gregory's first protest fast was a decisive change that reflected his broader concern for world peace, the elimination of world hunger, and improving the human condition generally. Gregory clearly wanted to show others the good they could do if they had self-discipline and followed certain principles on how to live. This first fast extended from Thanksgiving Day 1967 to New Year's Day 1968 and was the beginning of Gregory's use of fasting as a form of social protest and his journey toward becoming an entrepreneur of health. Gregory consumed only distilled water at this time. [Alvenia] Fulton joined Gregory on the fast and helped to prepare him for the challenge. In preparation, Fulton directed Gregory to take 7 days of fruit juice prior to switching to distilled water on Thanksgiving Day. She instructed Gregory to cleanse his colon with enemas and to continue with this process after the fast began. Reportedly, Gregory went from 280 pounds to 97 pounds during his approximately 40-day fast. Gregory claimed to have remained active throughout the fast, traveling to 57 cities and delivering 63 lectures.⁴¹⁴

From 1967 onward, Gregory incorporated fasting into his activist stratagem in the same manner as his Civil Rights contemporaries engaged in marching and sit-ins as an act of non-violent civil disobedience. In a 1972 interview with *Chicago Tribune* writer Clarence Petersen, Gregory fervidly expressed:

⁴¹³ Clarence Petersen, "Gregory: No Lightweight He" *Chicago Tribune* (May 5, 1972), B1.

⁴¹⁴ Clovis E. Semmes, "Entrepreneur of Health: Dick Gregory, Black Consciousness, and the Human Potential Movement" *Journal of African American Studies*, vol. 16, no. 3 (September 2012), 542.

I was on water of for 81 days against the drug traffic in this country...A lot of people said you can't stop the drug traffic. But you can create an awareness. While I was on the fast I was nationwide television, and they asked me what I thought about the drugs. I said 'I find it pretty hard to believe that a 9-year-old kid can find a heroine peddler and the FBI can't,' and across the country a whole lot of people started saying, 'Wow, man!'...You do not fast to change the minds of tyrants...You do not fast to make bad people good. You fast to create a moral force, an honest, ethical force that all the honest, ethical people can rally behind and make changes."⁴¹⁵

The sweeping and transformative affect that a dietary lifestyle, which was introduced to Gregory by Fulton, had done so in just five years' time, and such is evident in the dedication to the 1972 publication of his text, *Political Primer*. In admiration, Gregory's gratitude went out to, save Fulton, renowned African American Chicago naprapathy specialist Roland Sidney, naturopathic practitioners, individuals who promoted cleansing the body, and chiropractors. From the guidance he received from his personal health adviser, Gregory implores devotees of the Standard American Diet (SAD) to observe the eating habits of animals in their natural habitat." In referencing Alevnia Fulton, Gregory writes: "Wild animals are never fat or overweight. They have no heart ailments, indigestion, high blood pressure, or artery trouble, constipation, piles, etc. They have no colds or fevers in epidemic, mass scales that humanity has fought through the centuries. Animals adhere to a strict diet, even to fasting, as the Creator and Nature intended. You cannot force a sick animal to eat."⁴¹⁶

In the chapter titled "Lesson Fourteen A Turnip in Every Pot," Gregory communicates his quandary with human beings consuming cow's milk for nutritional value. In order to convince individuals of its nonsensical rationalization, the natural foods

⁴¹⁵ Petersen, "Gregory: No Lightweight He."

⁴¹⁶ Dick Gregory, *Dick Gregory's Political Primer* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 258.

advocate presents a persuasive analogy. Gregory asserts:

if you feed a young calf its own mother's milk after the milk has been pasteurized, the calf will die. Yet mothers of America lovingly fed their own children the 'purified' product, not knowing its harmful effects. Traditional American dietary mythology holds that calcium is the vital ingredient in cow's milk and that it helps children to develop strong bones and teeth. It is really casein, rather than calcium, which builds bone structure. The only catch is that the casein in cow's milk is intended to develop the bone structure of a calf [and not a human]. Thus the casein content is designed to develop a bone structure some three hundred times greater than that which would be provided by a child consuming his own mother's milk.⁴¹⁷

While Gregory suggests that casein strengthen bones, he overlooked the fact that casein is the main protein found in cow's milk, which he argues himself is harmful to humans. On the other hand, calcium does strengthen bones; however, when it is derived from the milk of another species for nutritional purposes, the results are anything but beneficial and instead weaken the bones of humans and cause a slew of chronic illnesses and/or diseases.⁴¹⁸ In actuality, the most nutritious form of calcium that is bio-available (can be

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 259.

⁴¹⁸ For wide-ranging treatments on the inimical consequences the consumption of dairy products has on the human body, see Theodore M. Bayless, Benjamin Rothfeld, Carol Massa, Ladymarie Wis, David Paige, and Marshall S. Bedine, "Lactose and Milk Intolerance: Clinical Implications" *The New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 292, no. 22 (May 29, 1975); Robert Cohen, *Milk: The Deadly Poison* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Argus Publishing, Inc., 1998); Giuseppe Iacono, Francesca Cavataio, Giuseppe Montallo, Ada Florena, Mario Tumminello, Maurizio Soresi, Alberto Notarbartolo and Antonio Carroccio, "Intolerance of Cow's Milk and Chronic Constipation in Children" *New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 339, no. 16 (October 15, 1998); Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, "Understanding Lactose Intolerance" (January 14, 2002), "Health Concerns About Dairy Products" (April 2007), "Dairy Fact Sheet (December 9, 2013) and "Protecting Your Bones" (April 30, 2014); Diane Feskanich, Walter C Willett, and Graham A Colditz, "Calcium, Vitamin D, Milk Consumption, and Hip Fractures: A Prospective Study Among Postmenopausal Women" *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, vol. 77, no. 2 (February 2003); Amy Joy Lanou, Susan E. Berkow and Neal D. Barnard, "Calcium, Dairy Products, and Bone Health in Children and Young Adults: A Reevaluation of the Evidence." *Pediatrics*, vol. 115, no. 3 (March 2005); Keith Woodford, *Devil in the Milk: Illness, Health and the Politics of A1 and A2 Milk* (Nelson, New Zealand: Craig Potton Publishing, 2007); Li-Qiang Qin, Jia-Ying Xu, Pei-Yu Wang, Jian Tong and Kazuhiko Hoshi, "Milk Consumption is a Risk Factor for Prostate Cancer in Western Countries: Evidence from Cohort Studies" *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, vol. 16, no. 3 (September 2007); Ron Schmid, *The Untold Story of Milk, Revised and Updated: The History, Politics and Science of Nature's Perfect Food: Raw Milk from Pasture-Fed Cows* (Washington, D.C.: NewTrends Publishing, Inc., 2009); Joseph Keon, *Whitewash: The Disturbing Truth About Cow's Milk and Your Health* (Gabriola, British Columbia, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2010); and Kendrin R. Sonneville, Catherine M. Gordon, Mininder S. Kocher, Laura M. Pierce,

digested by the human body) can be found in microalgae and/or sea vegetables (e.g., chlorella dulse, hijiki, kelp, marine phytoplankton, nori, spirulina, wakame, etc.) as well as dark, green leafy vegetables (collards, kale, romaine, spinach, etc.), rendering no reason for humans to consume milk but from a lactating woman. Simply put, the milk of cows is for calves in the same way a mother's milk is solely for infants. Humans have no more need of cow's milk than they do for horse milk, giraffe's milk or the milk of a rat. Speaking from the experience of his own transformation, Gregory portends the health issues of 21st Century America will become a vital concern and foretells: "I have experienced personally over the past few years how a purity of diet and thought are interrelated. And when Americans become truly concerned with the purity of food that enters their own personal systems, when they learn to eat properly, we can expect to see profound changes effected in the social and political system of this nation. The systems are inseparable."⁴¹⁹

Arguably Dick Gregory's most profound written contribution to the holistic health movement was the penned collaborative effort with Alvenia Fulton—*Dick Gregory's Natural Diet for Folks Who Eat*, which was written in 1973. Undoubtedly, this treatise "is the most compelling evidence that Fulton's was an important influence on Gregory."⁴²⁰ It just seven years, as chapter two of the text discloses, Gregory went from being: 1) a person who ate all foods indiscriminately; 2) a staunch consumer of alcohol; and 3) a chain smoker of cigarettes, to wholeheartedly embracing a dietary lifestyle of

Arun Ramappa and Alison E. Field, "Vitamin D, Calcium, and Dairy Intakes and Stress Fractures Among Female Adolescents" *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, vol. 166, no. 7 (July 2012), inter alia.

⁴¹⁹ Dick Gregory, *Dick Gregory's Political Primer*, 262.

⁴²⁰ Opie, *Hogs & Hominy*, 167.

raw nuts, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Particularly informative in this section are not just Gregory's explanation of his own gastronomical transformation (from "omnivore to fruitarian") but the definitions of various dietary practices that he provides—i.e., fruitarianism, omnivorism, veganism, vegetarianism, and vitarianism.⁴²¹

A nutritional gem that is unfortunately not taught to our children in school when they are being (mis)educated on the fundamentals of the basic food groups via the "food pyramid" is how to properly combine foods so that there is an ease of operation from the ingestion of meals to the expulsion of waste. Gregory elaborates on this often ignored principle of consumption and food combination: "When the foods are eaten haphazardly and in the wrong combinations, like meat and potatoes, bread and butter and perhaps jam, fruit and sugar, ice cream, pie or cake, coffee and sugar, the incompatible mixture cause a great deal of fermentation. Belching is a consequence of the consumption of canned, cooked and processed foods."⁴²²

With the same methodological intent as Jewel Pookrum had in her subsequent work, *Vitamins and Minerals from A to Z*, in this anterior publication, Dick Gregory provides a similar compendium of natural food sources which consist of vital nutrients. Sub-titled, "The Dick Gregory Shopping List," the comedian turned health advocate, in chapter five of *Natural Diet* (i.e., "Food or Somethin' to Eat?"), presents a useful list of multifarious examples of fruits, vegetables and nuts that contain calcium, chlorine, fluorine, iodine, iron, manganese, magnesium, phosphorous, potassium, silicon,

⁴²¹ For the detailed description and/or definitions of the aforementioned terms, see Dick Gregory, *Dick Gregory's Natural Diet for Folks Who Eat: Cookin' with Mother Nature*, eds. James R. McGraw with Alvenia M. Fulton (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 7-11.

⁴²² Dick Gregory, *Dick Gregory's Natural Diet for Folks Who Eat: Cookin' with Mother Nature*, James R. McGraw with Alvenia M. Fulton, eds. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1973), 44.

sodium and sulfur.⁴²³ The intent here is to make those unaware of the nutritional value of an array of foods that come from the earth and are at our disposal, be it from the market or gardens established at home.

If liberation is the objective for African Americans, Gregory maintains we must have a thorough and critical analysis of and scrutinize all aspects of the Black experience in the United States, including dietary practices. To make his point, Gregory provides a homology of the Africana experience to awaken Blacks from a dietary slumber. He avers the following correlation:

When it comes to diet and nutrition, I see an analogy in the experience of [B]lack Americans which would benefit all Americans. It can be summed up in the admonition, 'Give up the 'process' and go 'natural.'" Let me explain. There was a day in the [B]lack community not too very long ago, when the way to be 'cool' and 'hip' was to go through the painful baking process of straightening out your nappy hair. The straightened hair was called a process. Then came along the civil rights movement of the 1960s and with it Dr. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown, telling [B]lack folks to take pride in their [B]lackness and be as Black and as Beautiful as Mother Nature intended them to be. All of a sudden, the 'process' hair style gave way to the Afro, or 'natural' hairstyle. Black folks gave up the 'process' to go 'natural.' The same advice applies to diet and nutrition. Give up the processed food and start eating natural foods. Unfortunately, most [B]lack folks decided to go 'natural' in every phase of their life except diet. They cling to that 'soul food.'⁴²⁴

The exemplar provided by Gregory has merit. Being that Africans were, in the words of John Henrik Clarke, the only individuals brought to America under special invitation (i.e., involuntary, forced labor), we owe it to ourselves, to examine every part of our lives that has been (or still is) adversely affected, directly or indirectly, from direct contact with Europeans in the West Atlantic; the dietary habits we have been accustomed to are no exception to the rule. While Gregory makes a strong argument, particularly his

⁴²³ Ibid., 56-59.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 64.

emphasis on the concluding statement—which the writer alluded to earlier in the chapter—one should be mindful nonetheless of the enduring connection with and gastronomical preoccupation most Africans in America have with both the taste and identification with cuisines directly linked to experiences associated with slavery that may not necessarily be the most healthy of food choices. Given the circumstances, it is the responsibility of those Africans who have acquired and applied the information necessary to bring about a dietary change, and thusly provide useful information and nutritious, succulent yet healthy alternatives to Blacks collectively in order to promote health and wellness. So that his new lifestyle as a natural foods connoisseur would not be contradictory in any aspect of his life, the audacious comedian abandoned the artistic trade that brought him the financial accolades and acclaim nationwide in the same year that *Dick Gregory's Natural Diet for Folks Who Eat* was published. In an hour-long interview with African American *Chicago Tribune* writer, Vernon Jarrett, Gregory explained that while concluding his comedic performance one night, he “announces to two full houses...that he was giving up the nightlife side of his career as of September, 1973, because he can’t cut the long hours any longer.”⁴²⁵ But the truth of the matter, divulges Jarrett: “Dick told me that he had a problem in doing anything that would encourage people to consume alcohol or do anything that might be damaging to one’s personal health.”⁴²⁶

As the Vietnam War was on the threshold of concluding, Gregory shifted his activist energy to the international pandemic of world hunger and utilized his fascination

⁴²⁵ Vernon Jarrett, “Dick Gregory’s Health Advocacy” *Chicago Tribune* (May 23, 1973), Section 1, 18.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

with long distance running and combined it with a fasting regiment as a means to publicize the humanitarian cause. A prime example is when Gregory completed a 900 mile from Chicago to Washington D.C. in 1974 to sensationalize the life-threatening food shortages in African and Asia. Astonishingly, Fulton, who was sixty-eight years old at the time, ran alongside Gregory for the first mile and a half of his regional trek.⁴²⁷ Basically, Gregory's aim was to advocate and bring awareness to the health advantages of being a vegetarian and its relevance to world hunger. To him, the consumption of meat was not an efficient way to address the global issue or to feed people in general. In this way, Gregory highlighted the wastefulness of resources in the production of animals for human consumption and expressed how it takes one hundred pounds of grain to produce just one pound of meat and ten pounds of animal protein to add one pound to your own weight.⁴²⁸ The alarming reality that Gregory raised is ultimately one thousand pounds of grain is used to produce a mere ten pounds of meat for consumption as opposed to appropriating that surplus of grain to feed a plethora of the needy.

By 1976, the finalization process of production of a dietary and nutritional supplement that Gregory created was complete, a formula he clandestinely mentioned to *Blacks Book Bulletin* in an interview a year earlier.⁴²⁹ Named by Gregory as *Formula 4*

⁴²⁷ In a photo taken by photographer Floyd Rawlings, Alvenia Fulton is show running alongside Dick Gregory as they departed the renowned DuSable Museum in Chicago on July 4, 1974. "Black Books Bulletin Interview Dick Gregory," *Black Books Bulletin*, vol. 3, no. 2, (Summer 1975), 29.

⁴²⁸ S.A. Young, "Dick Gregory Runs 900 miles to Protest Food Shortages." *Los Angeles Sentinel* (1974), A1, column 2.

⁴²⁹ The major concern Dick Gregory had was a major corporation would financially capitalize on the creation of his dietary supplement should he reveal it prematurely. Therefore, he decided to be "tight-lipped" about the product as best he could until its unveiling. In a 1975 interview with *Black Books Bulletin*, Gregory elaborated on this very point: "I've invented a food. I can't talk about it too much but anybody wanting to get it I can say ninety-eight percent of the food is Kelp. It's a seaweed. The reason I don't get into it much now is because if one of the big companies rips it off, they will do a twenty million

X, he assured it “could provide the body with all the nutrition it needed to perform at optimal levels,” and as proof he “consumed this formula and fruit juices when he made his cross-country run against hunger and starvation in the world, running from Los Angeles, beginning April 21, 1976, to New York, ending July 4, 1976.”⁴³⁰ The popularity of *Formula 4 X* amplified; particularly when outspoken activist and boxing great champion Muhammad Ali attributed the endurance he exhibited for fifteen rounds to regain the heavyweight title against twenty-five year old titleholder Leon Spinks to Gregory’s nutritional creation. In his own candid manner, Ali professed,

He [Gregory] mixed the vitamins every day in fruit juice...He would give the formula to me before and after dinner, and a little before I went to bed. This went on for one month. During the fight I showed no fatigued. I was actually not tired in the last round. I did the impossible, danced 15 rounds at age 36, and the idea is, if this can do for me, what will do for the starving man in Africa, Bangladesh, India or wherever it might be.⁴³¹

With such a sports icon like Ali vouching for *Formula 4 X*, which consisted of “93 vitamins, herbs and minerals,”⁴³² its reputation skyrocketed as it attracted other prominent sports figures. In his 2000 memoir, *Callus On My Soul* Gregory explicates when Major League Baseball hall of famer Willies Stargell reached out for nutritional support in 1979, without hesitation he answered the call. Upon Stargell’s request, Gregory assisted him and other teammates during the regular season and playoffs by continually administering to them the nutritional formula. The upshot: the Pittsburgh

dollar advertisement campaign and it will sell so high poor folks can’t get it.” “Black Books Bulletin Interview Dick Gregory,” *Black Books Bulletin*, vol. 3, no. 2, (Summer 1975), 29.

⁴³⁰ Semmes, “Entrepreneur of Health,” 545-546.

⁴³¹ “Ali Credits Dick Gregory Formula for His Energy” *Jet*, vol. 55, no.4 (October 12, 1978), 23.

⁴³² *Ibid.*

Pirates won the World Series that same year.⁴³³ A year later, Dick Gregory came to the aid of Randy Jackson, the youngest of the famed Jackson brothers. He remembers the day of the most unfortunate incident: “In 1980, I got a call from Randy Jackson’s father, Joe. Randy...had a near-fatal car accident. The doctors were hours away from amputating his right leg when his father called. We immediately started treating him with Formula Four X...[and] his condition improved dramatically. He went from almost losing his leg to walking within three months.”⁴³⁴ To substantiate Gregory’s claim, in the June 19, 1980 issue of *Jet*, several months after the horrific vehicular occurrence, Randy Jackson himself “credited Dick Gregory, social activist and author of *Cookin’ with Mother Nature*, with speeding up his process. ‘I was taking these pills, this certain formula he (Gregory) had given me...and the doctor couldn’t believe how strong my bones started to heal,’” avowed the recovered member of the *Jackson Five*.⁴³⁵

So successful and effective was Gregory’s restorative formula that in 1984, a food supplement firm in Ohio, Cernitin America, Inc. paid him one million dollars for multi-level distributing rights while Gregory retained mail order rights to his product.⁴³⁶ Equally momentous, Gregory extended his humanitarian efforts internationally in 1985 into Nile Valley culture as he administered his formula to a number of starving and malnourished African children at the University of Ethiopia Medical School.⁴³⁷ As a

⁴³³ Dick Gregory, *Callus On My Soul: A Memoir* (New York: Kensington Publishing Corporation, 2000), 189.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 198

⁴³⁵ “Randy Jackson Walks Again, Talks About His Future” *Jet*, vol. 54, no. 14, (June 19, 1980), 56-57.

⁴³⁶ Kenneth M. Jones, “A Natural Wonder” *Black Enterprise* (May 1, 1985), 20.

⁴³⁷ “Dick Gregory Delivers His Nutritional Formula To Starving Ethiopians” *Jet*, vol. 68, no. 9 (May 13, 2015), 11; and “Dick Gregory’s Formula To Be Used All Over Ethiopia Following Successful Tests” *Jet*, vol. 68, no. 11 (May 27, 1985), 13.

result of this business venture, Formula 4X would be marketed as a weight loss product under the new brand name, *Dick Gregory's Slim-Safe Bahamian Diet*. However, in a vow for self-reliance, within three years, Gregory severed business ties with Cernitin in 1987 and decided sell his formula through his own newly-formed company—Correction Connection, Inc.—, which was based in Philadelphia and became the first major African American multi-level marketing company in the United States. The twin pillar of the executive echelon included Dick Gregory, who served as the chairman and former vice president of business affairs for Philadelphia International Records, Larry Depte as president.⁴³⁸ Unfortunately for Gregory the sovereign business venture he established lasted only two years. After returning from a business trip in Japan in 1989, the business relationship between he and president of the company had dissolved, and as a result, the nature of Correction Connection, Inc. and its royalties were tied up in federal court until a federal judge ruled in favor of Gregory in October 1991. In the aftermath, the company was now bankrupt and Gregory lost his home of nineteen years in the process.⁴³⁹ To sum up the circumstance from which Dick Gregory found himself, Clovis Semmes puts it best: “The transformation of Gregory’s venture from purely a humanitarian venture to a commercial product is indicative of a commodification process that often tends to distort and co-opt progressive social change in American society [and] the possibility for cooptation is always present, but cultural transformation or cultural revolution, a concept whose full theoretical elaboration is not possible here, remains central to meaningful

⁴³⁸ “Dick Gregory Launches New Enterprise with Slim-Safe Bahamian Diet” *Jet* (March 30, 1987), 16.

⁴³⁹ Gregory, *Callus On My Soul*, 228, 233.

social change.”⁴⁴⁰

Even still, since 1967, Dick Gregory has been on the unwavering path of health and wellness for nearly a half of a century, and if you have had the opportunity to engage in an extended dialogue with him, as have the writer on several occasions, in no way is vibrancy of Dick Gregory waning anytime soon. It is suffice to say then that his stringent dietary regiment is key in his ability to engage for an extended amount of time, even well into his eighties. As his track record on the advocacy of naturalistic health practices reveals, Dick Gregory is nothing less than a long-distance runner in the tradition of the holistic health movement, and his stamina alone and “do as I say and as I do” approach to healthy eating has paved the way, inspired and ushered in others Africans his junior to follow in his proverbial shoes to embrace a dietary lifestyle of raw foods in a manner as devout as him—Aris LaTham’s preeminence in the gastronomical world of gourmet raw cuisine deserves mention.

A Panamanian by birth, Aris LaTham has become an innovator of the raw and living foods tradition, and without question, he is a visionary with culinary wizardry of raw food creations. LaTham’s proclivity for fresh fare was ingrained in him during childhood in Central America. According to the raw foodist extraordinaire, it was his grandmother, the matriarch of the family, “who supervised all the cooking” and “molded his curiosity and affinity for fresh fruits and vegetables.”⁴⁴¹ In his adolescent years, while living in Panama, school did not interest young Aris, and as a result, he recollects: “I

⁴⁴⁰ Semmes, “Entrepreneur of Health,” 547-548.

⁴⁴¹ Carole Sugarman, “Fruitful and Mulitplying: African-American Vegetarians Serve Up Good-for-the-Soul Food” *The Washington Post* (May 18, 1994), E1.

dropped out of the seventh grade so I was out in the bush. I couldn't figure how to work this thing called school so my buddy and me dropped out and went to the bush. That is when I started my first food venture. We used to go get sacks of mango and sit right in front of the school and go into the business."⁴⁴² On his sojourn from Central America to the United States, LaTham expresses that "It was 1964...by the time I got to Brooklyn [and] they had to stick me in the ninth grade because of my age. I graduated from there and went on to college."⁴⁴³ For LaTham, 1967 was a pivotal year. After just being in the United States for three years, he noticed, "in the hood there was Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam and all kind of other stuff going. We were shifting from not eating pork and eating only once a day. Also, we had independent institutions, black schools, food co-ops and those kinds of things," and as consequence of those cultural impetuses, "by 1970, I became a complete clean vegetarian. When I use the word vegetarian that does not include any animal by-products."⁴⁴⁴

Like in the late 1960s to mid-1970s, there was subsequently a concomitant revival of African American interests in the alternative health and natural foods movement. In fact, by the late 1980s and early 1990s, written works devoted to vegetarianism and holistic health in general began to surface again—in the same manner it did with the works by Elijah Muhammad, Dick Gregory, Alvenia Fulton, Mary Burgess and others in the previous two decades)—, as evidenced by the writings of Nia and Zak Kondo,⁴⁴⁵ and

⁴⁴² Aris LaTham, Personal interview with Heru Setepenra, May 19, 2013.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ See Nia and Zak Kondo, *Vegetarianism Made Simple and Easy: A Primer for Black People* (Washington D.C.: Nubia Press, 1989). Four years after the publication of this treatise on vegetarianism by the husband/wife duo, Kondo wrote, with the assistance of Malcolm X scholar Paul Lee, one of the most

Keith Wright.⁴⁴⁶ Given this, staff writer of the *The Washington Post*, Carole Sugarman, in her article entitled “Fruitful and Multiplying,” highlights the resurgence of natural foods activism in the Washington D.C metropolitan area, which profiles: 1) Aris LaTham, who at the time co-owned *Green City Market & Café* with nutritionist and former researcher at the United States Department of Agriculture Ed Huling; 2) El Rahm Ben Israel, then manager of *Soul Vegetarian Café & Exodus Carryout* – a defunct establishment formally located directly across the street from Howard University; 3) *After The Harvest* café owner Yokemi Ali; and 4) raw food restaurateurs and co-owners of *Delights of the Garden*—Anu KMT and Philadelphia native Imar Hutchins⁴⁴⁷, both graduates of Morehouse College and culinary apprentices of LaTham. Also within the piece, African-owned health-inspired establishments that received honorable mention were: Attorney and engineer Coy Dunston’s *Yours Naturally* stores; Garrison’s *Natural Foods* in Northeast D.C., *Hetep* and *Seneb* health food stores, both located in Northwest D.C. on Georgia avenue.

While Carole Sugarman never directly refers to Dick Gregory in the article as an

extensive examinations on the assassination of Malcolm X. See Baba Zak A. Kondo, *Conspiracys: Unraveling the Assassination of Malcolm X* (Washington, D.C.: Nubia Press, 1993).

⁴⁴⁶ See Keith T. Wright, *A Healthy Foods and Spiritual Nutrition Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Good Food and a Healthy Lifestyle* (Self-published, 1989). Just like many African Americans felt about the heart felt written words of *How to Eat to Live* and *Natural Diet for Folks Who Eat* during the liberation movement era of the 1960s and 1970s in the U.S., certified nutrition counselor, herbalist, iridologist, reflexologist and author Keith Wright, who graduated with an Bachelor’s degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a graduate degree from Temple University, dedicated his written work on holistic health to both Dick Gregory and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad—bestowing upon the late minister the title of “the first renown propagator of nutrition,” amongst Blacks in the United States. See the “Dedication” section of this text for the reverence given to Elijah Muhammad by the author. See also, Keith T. Wright, *The Sweetest Fetish: Sugar and Its Affect On You, Your Emotions and Your Health* (Philadelphia: Health Masters, 1991), and *Kick the Sugar Kraving Before It Kicks You: Sugar and Its Effects on Your Body and Mind* (Brooklyn: A&B Publishers Group, 2001).

⁴⁴⁷ See Hutchins, *30 Days @ Delights of the Garden*, mentioned supra.

impetus for the resurgence of Black interest in the culture of natural foods, she does, however, indicate that Aris LaTham, was “influenced by the teachings of Dick Gregory” in making the decision to transition from a cooked, meatless diet to a largely raw food and fruitarian eating regimen.⁴⁴⁸ Furthermore, Sugarman informs us: “It was in 1976... that La Tham...starting eating raw foods...Soon La Tham would use his familiarity with tropical foods to invent to his ‘sun-fired cuisine,’ imaginative combinations of fresh, raw foods such as pâtés made from Brazilian nuts; savory pies filled with cashew ‘cheese’ or sun-dried tomatoes, and salads made from sea plants, jackfruit or lotus roots.”⁴⁴⁹ After being on a meat-free diet for over half a decade, LaTham became inspired, as Sugarman mentions above, by Dick Gregory to adopt a raw foods eating regiment. When asked by the writer how he specifically came to know about the dietary habits of a raw foodist, without hesitation, LaTham replied:

I stopped eating all animal products in 1970. After 6 years on that journey and not going on to the fake, imitation-texturized-vegetable protein and all of these types of things. I basically used my home-style cooking, but I tried to make it easier. Rather than fry the plantain, I just baked it and got out of the kitchen. That opened up the door for me to consider raw food. I started to read about it. The big spark back in those days was Dick Gregory and his mentor Dr. Alvenia Fulton out of Chicago at the Fultonia Institute. She put my brother [Gregory] on a huge fast and knocked him down from 300 pounds to 98 pounds... In living flesh, Dick Gregory, Dr. Alvenia Fulton, and also Dr. Ann Wigmore were a big inspiration, but reading and finding out about this, applying it and seeing the difference in my life, stamina, energy...I locked into it.⁴⁵⁰

To complement his vast knowledge of food and nutrition through self-tuition, institutions of higher learning have also credentialed Aris LaTham, including him receiving an honorary doctorate for his foundational culinary wizardry of raw food

⁴⁴⁸ Sugarman, “Fruitful and Multiplying,” E1.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ LaTham, personal interview, May 19, 2013

cuisine. LaTham lays out the genealogy of his academic pedigrees:

I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of New York in Spanish and Education because around that time I was planning on going to Vietnam so I had to stay in school and study something to go under my belt. I got a B.A. in Spanish just for bragging. I did all of that: stayed in school, got my B.A., and of course from then a whole different window opened. I ended up studying for my master's degree at California State University, Fulton in Linguistics - Bilingual Education. Ultimately, I was honored with an honorary doctorate degree from the City University of Los Angeles of Sunfired Food Science, having developed what I had developed. I was very privileged to be honored alongside one of great, brilliant minds of the twentieth century, a man by the name of Nathaniel Bronner who started the Bronner Brother's empire. The elder who started that and I were both honored together. He got his Ph.D. for having developed the whole Bronner Brothers system, and I got one for having developed the Sunfired Food system.⁴⁵¹

To make it plain, LaTham's comestible formations of rather unique and ambrosial raw food dishes gained the attention and notoriety of both mainstream America and the academy. Even more, his improvisational culinary genius in the healing laboratory (i.e., the kitchen) urged African people to, at best and/or as frequent as they could, live on a diet of unfired fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds—cooked from the sun rather than from the stove or oven—to experience and obtain optimum health. To this end, Joel Alexander, in referencing O.L.M. Abramowski, affirms that the taste of cooked food, once acquired, has proved the curse and the bane of mankind ever since. With the help of fire, man has enabled to render edible things altogether foreign to his digestive apparatus.”⁴⁵²

Like Afro-Caribbean linchpin thinker Hubert Henry Harrison,⁴⁵³ LaTham too is

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Joel Alexander, *Blatant Raw Foodist Propaganda! Or Sell Your Stove to the Junkman and Feel Great or Consider Your True Nature* (Nevada City, CA: Blue Dolphin Publishing, 1990), 79.

⁴⁵³ See Hubert Henry Harrison, *When Africa Awakes* reprint (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1996) reprint (first published in 1920); John G. Jackson, *Hubert Henry Harrison: The Black Socrates* (Austin, TX: American Atheist Press, 1987); Hubert Henry Harrison, *A Hubert Harrison Reader*, ed., Jeffrey B.

an autodidact, especially in the field of his profession. His immense knowledge on health, food and nutrition are primarily due to LaTham's close readings of written works on subject matters closely related to his culinary trade. According to him, education through self-tuition is the result of his personal "master library of 10,000 books."⁴⁵⁴ LaTham elaborates on the education he gained through his own personal, independent research: "My official title is food scientist. All the work that you hear me expounding on today is all work that I have directed myself. I didn't sit in a classroom or study with anybody. This is work that I studied on my own...I couldn't find what I was looking for in the school systems so I had to teach myself, and I went with this, and this is what has become of it."⁴⁵⁵ To add to his accolades as a raw food chef, in 2004 *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* included LaTham in their piece on "Vegetarianism" and bestowed upon him the title, "father of gourmet ethical vegetarian raw food cuisine."⁴⁵⁶ Recognizing the epistemological operational premise of the article was chronologically centered on Western underpinnings, LaTham highlights its revisionist historical nature and omission of Classical African foundations of holistic health. On this particular topic, he explains:

Perry (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001); and Jeffrey B. Perry, *Hubert Harrison: The Voice of Harlem Radicalism, 1883-1918* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

⁴⁵⁴ LaTham, Personal interview, May 19, 2013.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ In its honor and acknowledgement of his contribution to the culinary world, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* had this to say about Aria LaTham's contribution to the raw and living foods movement: "Another immigrant to whom the raw foods movement owes much is Aris LaTham. A native of Panama, he is considered to be the father of gourmet ethical vegetarian raw food cuisine in America. He debuted his raw food creations in 1979, when he started Sunfired Foods, a live-foods company in New York City. In the years since, he has trained thousands of raw food chefs and added innumerable gourmet raw food recipes to his repertoire." "Vegetarianism: Raw Food Movement" *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* ed., Andrew F. Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

The article was an exposé on the history of vegetarianism based on their time. They started with Pythagoras who studied on the banks of the Nile with our ancestors and elders. The article went from Pythagoras to the Ben Franklin period up to modern day raw food where they just mentioned Dr. Ann Wigmore for having brought wheatgrass and the whole sprouting culture...However, in looking at all the people [mentioned] in the encyclopedia, everyone else is dead, but me.⁴⁵⁷

At age sixty-seven, confidently, with combined elements of vainglory and truth about his mental and physical well-being, Aris LaTham claims: “I am walking as a legend, but what is more important to me is walking upright, healthy, bright and strong with my mind clear and sharp not sick and vegetating, waiting in some hospice on death row for the last stroke to hit me. Our responsibility as individuals is to take ownership whatever that means. You have to figure how to do it and how not to kill yourself.”⁴⁵⁸

From the inception of his inclination to create live foods, Aris LaTham has made it a point to be accessible for the African masses globally to educate and teach his culinary craft. In a word, his pedagogical approach to cuisine is at the grassroots level in a way that mirrors the Nation of Islam’s approach to attract new converts. When asked how his works contributes to the African community, LaTham affirms: “I have always kept myself accessible to the community. I also have a huge global community... I am always accessible whether I am in Belize, Jamaica, Panama, Nigeria, Ghana, or Tanzania. Everywhere I’ve gone to share this energy.”⁴⁵⁹ In his modus operandi as a health activist, LaTham is selfless and makes much of his body of work available pro bono. He

⁴⁵⁷ LaTham, Personal interview, May 19, 2013.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

articulates the indebtedness he feels to provide his work to those willing to listen:

I've done quite a bit of work that you can find on *You Tube*. I've put a lot of stuff out there without any charge. I had a lecture at Clark Atlanta a few years back...Many of our practitioners sell all of their work. You have to buy it to access it. It is their business, but I see the value of being in a position where I can share without having to charge people because a lot of us don't get this information. It is lifesaving information. We need to access it not only for us, but other children that have gone astray. As practitioners, people out there on the forefront, a lot of us maintain our work strictly within the confines of our community...This is where my work is and I like to always be able to make sure that our people can access it on any level. If you can't afford it, I can give it to you free. It's really not mine. I am just a vessel. I am just a channel to make sure the work of our ancestors goes on...Lets keep it tight, open, available, accessible to all of us and that is what I urge all of our leaders and healers to do and not merchandize our knowledge so much.⁴⁶⁰

After four decades of fashioning extravagant culinary raw food creations, Aris LaTham has produced but one penned contribution.⁴⁶¹ For him, the one-on-one aspect of enlightening individuals across internationally and exposing them to creative ways to enjoy a raw food dietary lifestyle is equally, if not, more important. Rather than publishing treatises of his craft, LaTham aligns himself within the customs—culinary that is—of a dieli and considers his work, in the words of Amadou Hampaté Bâ, a “living tradition.” To this, LaTham explains:

My books are living books...So a lot of my work you can find online at no charge, workshops, lecture, seminars that I have been doing, but other than that, you are not going to find me wrapped up, packaged up out there in the mass media world. To me, this is more important, having this living book, having this direct interaction with you in person because really, words can't replace this. I just want your taste buds. When I can smack that, I got your mind and colon too.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁶¹ See Aris LaTham, *Sunfired Foods: Sunfired Food Recipes by Aris LaTham* (Bethesda, MD: Sunfired Foods, 1994).

It's more important to have this in a living form and it's always going to be with you for the rest of your life because really what I am sharing with you is just foundation.⁴⁶²

After nearly forty years of living solely on a raw foods diet, LaTham is a firm believer, based on his own transformation and extant optimal health, that chronic illnesses and/or diseases are not inherited and do not have to pass on from generation to generation. The culprit, he argues, are improper food choices. Based on his own familial circumstances, LaTham shares:

Now it has been 37 years of not eating any cook food whatsoever and I know the difference. My siblings: one brother 8 years younger than me died of a massive heart attack a couple of years ago. The other, one year older than me died of two forms of cancer. My oldest brother is 68 and he has everything. My sister is 69 and she has everything. Between the both of them they have the whole pharmacopeia sitting in the house. They have big drugstores in their house. I go to my brother's house and he's like, 'why you bringing all that stuff in my fridge: all those fruits and vegetables filling up the fridge. I have fruit juice up in the cabinet.' I tried to show them the light and they bring me all of that other stuff so I said, 'you go ahead if you want to be living dead.'⁴⁶³

While living in New York City, LaTham owned and operated two wholesome eatery establishments. The first, *House of Life*, was established in 1979 in the heart of Harlem. It was also the same year he started his live foods company, *Sunfired Foods*. LaTham paints a proverbial picture of the healthy eatery's atmosphere in Uptown:

The first place we started off with was in Harlem. What I did with that place we had an herb shop...one herb for every day. We had a produce stand outside and inside we had all the other stuff. But in 1979 in Harlem, there was no raw food in sight, and folks were looking for the herbs to heal themselves. They'd come in for herbs, and what do they see back there: all of these paradise pies and all of

⁴⁶² LaTham, Personal interview, May 19, 2013.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

this stuff. And this is how we got Harlem eating live back then. We'd do like a sun burger and folks would come in and eat that, and it just looked like what they wanted and next thing you know they would come back later and ask, "Brother, what kind meat was that?" We don't come in knowing them on the head beating them, saying health food is good for you and all of that. They were coming because they are looking for health. So they are coming in for the herbs and we hooked them once they get in there.⁴⁶⁴

Aris LaTham's second salubrious enterprise in New York City was the *Sun-Fired Juice Club* on Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn. The healthy oasis served a combination of both cooked and raw food (all of which was animal-free cuisine) in addition to having an outdoor fruit and vegetable stand in front of the establishment available for patrons. The juice bar consisted of "ninety-nine flavors of juices freshly made," and the establishment also "had fruits, vegetable juice, nut milk, milk shakes...a smoothie bar [and] another case with about thirty raw food dishes, called *Eden's Paradise*...People would come in maybe just to buy a cooked dish and they would come in a see all of this raw food. That is how we got the [Park Slope] community on raw food."⁴⁶⁵ *Sun-Fired Juice Club* was LaTham's last business operation in the United States before his relocation to Jamaica, a tropical environment where an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables could be acquired year round for the raw and living foods aficionado.

Of all his business ventures as a promoter of raw and living foods, LaTham considers *Green City Market and Café*, which was situated in the affluent area of Bethesda, Maryland, to be his most rewarding establishment. For nearly five years—from 1990 to 1994—the 10,000 square foot natural foods supermarket had an array of produce, other health products as well as a restaurant housed inside that served its well-to-do patrons until a larger corporate health food store moved in, and as a result, business

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

declined. LaTham expounds on the competitive overhaul: “We were before *Wholefoods*,” nonetheless “[they] came in and put two stores within short distances of us, and because we were doing the retail they crushed us because this is how they do...So they...crushed the co-ops, the community stores and everything. We had to shrink back, and I went back to just preparing food.”⁴⁶⁶

Due to LaTham’s extensive knowledge and facility in the creation of inimitable, colorful and appetizing raw food dishes, mainstream corporations have sought out his culinary expertise. As a result, LaTham has trained countless chefs, in both the private and public sector, on the intricacies of his own culinary development—Sunfired food cuisine. The virtuoso of raw foods elaborates on the demand of his professional culinary services: “I have done a lot of consulting work, setting up restaurants for people all over the world, cleaning up restaurants. Not only in our community, but I have done work with *Hilton Hotels*, major resorts in South America, here in the U.S., [and] down in the Caribbean.”⁴⁶⁷

As the scope of this study posits, Aris LaTham sees a vegetarian (i.e., meatless and dairy-free) lifestyle as a dietary practice that dates back to Classical Africa. Thusly, he implores contemporary Africans, in the spirit of cultural continuity, to tap into their ancestral memory banks and palates and strongly consider such dietary habits. In the spirit of his nutritional antecedents, LaTham proclaims:

The main thing is that there is nothing new under the sun. This is our ancestral work. We just bringing it back to life, reigniting the flame, because we know in studying our history that even to get into the mystery school to study with Imhotep and all our great masters you had to do 40 days and 40 nights of fasting

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

before you could even get to the door. And then once you got in, you could not eat any cooked food...This is nothing new. This is all old time tradition...That has been our tradition coming from the south. We are not into this processed, packaged culture. This is not our vibration, but convenience and all of these other things, we got caught and now we need to break the shackles because this really has become really enslavement when we start eating this kind of food. That's why they are taking it to this other level to enslave us even further that you got to see them in order to eat.⁴⁶⁸

With all his world travels, Aris LaTham oftentimes frequented the city of Philadelphia in the 1980s when he resided in New York City. The rationale for his visits: LaTham took notice of the holistic vibrancy within the city and co-taught a class on natural cures of the body every Wednesday evening in the PASCEP⁴⁶⁹ at Temple University alongside Ausar Auset Society founder Ra Un Nefer Amen. LaTham shares about his frequent travels to the so-called “city of brotherly love:” He embellishes about his temporary sojourn in Philadelphia: “I was in Philly back in the 1980’s. I was here for a couple of years. It wasn’t permanent. I was in New York so I would go back and forth. I taught a class at Temple University in the evenings. I alternated teaching Wednesday night with Shekem Shekem [Ra Un Nefer Amen] of the Ausar Aset Society. The class was on natural cures for the body. There were a couple of other brothers and sisters that did it as well.”⁴⁷⁰ Clearly, based on his familial ties and the Black revolutionary spirit that radiates from within the city of Philadelphia—since the times of Richard Allen in the

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ The Pan-African Studies Community Education Program (PASCEP) began in 1975 as a means to provide scholarly instruction on a volunteer basis, offering an array of courses from various cultural interests and fields of study (e.g., African American literature, astrology, financial planning, genealogy, line dancing, meditation, nonprofit start-up, organic gardening, Spanish, etc.) to the neighboring Black communities throughout the Philadelphia Metropolitan area. For a comprehensive examination on the institutionalization of PASCEP at Temple University, see Jamal Benin, “Pan-African Studies Community Education Program: The Institutionalization of a Community Education Program” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Temple University, 2013).

⁴⁷⁰ LaTham, Personal interview, May 19, 2013.

late eighteenth century—Aris LaTham recognizes, acknowledges and appreciates the enduring activist life force exemplified in contemporary Black Philadelphia.

CHAPTER 7:
THE INVOCATION TO GET WELL IN “ILLADEL”

There is nothing mystical about the reasons why one group of people can easily become physically and mentally alert. An abundance of nutritious food and pure drinking water may spell the difference between advance and decay. The number of death-dealing diseases developing from malnutrition alone is alarming. But what should be stressed above everything else is that millions of babies may become both physically and mentally retarded by disease while in their mother’s womb— which is another way of saying that a people wholly ignorant or indifferent to basic health can themselves become inferior in fact...⁴⁷¹

Introduction

Within the United States, there are a multitude of contemporary Africana holistic health practitioners, advocates of a natural foods diet and activists that are unequivocally aware of the disparaging health conditions ever so present in Black communities throughout the country. As a result, these promoters of health and wellness have been duty bound to offer a plethora of alternative medical solutions to ameliorate and address numerous ailments that plague melanin-dominated people. Given this, Africans in America have the opportunity to make an independent decision to heal themselves through natural—as opposed to chemically-induced—measures, first and foremost by being educated on the abundance of naturalistic health information at their disposal, and

⁴⁷¹ Chancellor Williams, *Destruction of Black Civilization: Great Issues of a Race From 4500 B.C to 2000 A.D.*

second, by applying such curative practices without the use of allopathic prescribed synthetic pharmaceutical drugs that, in the writer's estimation, masks the symptoms of illnesses without addressing the foundation or overall causes of the dis-ease(s). For those individuals who may choose to, out of blind faith and/or sheer comfort and habit, continue to seek the medical advice and services from mainstream medicine can, at a minimum, utilize the information provided in this chapter to assist in any extant maladies or illnesses that may arise. As it pertains to this study, the curative and activist work carried out by Black holistic health practitioners, raw and/or vegan restaurant proprietors, storeowners that provide naturopathic therapeutic products, and proponents of other naturalistic health practices in the city of Philadelphia serves as an exemplar in this regard. With this in mind, the therapeutic activism on the part of a cadre of African healers and health activists who reside in this nation's first capital will be highlighted within this section.

Since the latter part of the eighteenth century Black Philadelphians have been, as seen through the self-emancipatory efforts like that of Richard Allen (1760-1831), Absalom Jones (1746-1818) and others via mutual aid societies,⁴⁷² on the forefront in: 1) exposing the societal inequalities evident in their municipalities and 2) mandating or initiating self-help efforts despite the glaring disenfranchisement. In a metropolis that has been anything but a "city of brotherly love" for its Black residents, the revolutionary thrust by the African masses in Philadelphia over time have not waivered one bit.

⁴⁷² See Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People During the Late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia in the Year 1793 and A Refutation of Some Censures Thrown Upon Them in Some Late Publications* (Philadelphia: Independence National Historical Park, 1993); and Charles H. Wesley, *Richard Allen: Apostle of Freedom* (Washington D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1935).

As it relates to this study, the year 1967 proved to be a watershed in more ways than one: 1) the path-breaking treatise on health, *How to Eat to Live* was published, establishing a stimulus for African Americans to take notice of the foods they consume; and 2) the ideology of the Black Power movement's vow to establish community-based leadership drastically impacted subsequent Black political leadership in the city of Philadelphia. In his innovative piece *Up South*, which broadens the chronological parameters of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements in Philadelphia, Matthew Countryman affirms that, "Black student organizing and other forms of community-based activism in Philadelphia served to the center the structure of black leadership in the city," which in effect, "[t]he leadership of future Black movement organizations in campaigns in Philadelphia would include significant and substantial representation of working-class activists from the city's poor black neighborhoods."⁴⁷³

Interestingly enough, the two turning points would intertwine as some enlightened and progressive thinking members of the Black community felt compelled to address by alternative means the health needs of fellow residents and assist in any way they could. Unquestionably, the ideology of self-determination during this era would have Blacks closely examine all areas of life, with health, food consumption and nutrition being equal concerns as well. With the cultural continuity of African descendants ever flowing like a river, the manifestations of self-reliance and dominion over Black lives, which was the philosophical basis during the Black Power era, can be clearly seen in Philadelphia today in how Black vindicators of naturalistic health practices (i.e., more mindful dietary habits

⁴⁷³ Matthew J. Countryman, *Civil Rights and the Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 220.

and an array of holistic health ameliorative methods) promote healthier dietary habits in this vibrant but veiled tradition of holistic health.

The Healing Arts of Black Philadelphia “Make it Plain”

In a city that prides itself on food staples native to its locale such as pretzels and cheesesteaks, there are some Black eatery establishments that offer healthier dietary options and understand the value of eating to live. As a result, these vegan and/or raw food restaurants serve the Black community in Philadelphia with fare more nutrient-rich that nourishes the body contrary to that of processed, refined fast food. Located in the heart of the section of the city known as Germantown on 6108 Germantown Avenue, *All the Way Live* is the healthful dining establishment of North Philadelphia native Beverly Medley and daughter Neisha, co-owners of the restaurant. As a business that has been in existence since 2008 (which used to serve its patrons restaurant style out of Medley’s domicile) *All the Way Live* serves both vegan and raw food cuisine to its patrons. Medley, who manages the establishment, purchases the food and oversees the preparation of the dishes served to customers and expresses in detail the overall intent of the business:

So what we do at *All the Way Live*” is basically what they call raw, live, vegan food, which is the no cooking or if I do cook... we do cook certain things really discriminate on what we put heat to...So we don’t use everything, because basically the whole idea of “all the way live” is to keep the body mucus-less. So when you have less mucus, which is the cause of disease you’re gonna feel

better, mentally, physically, spiritually. So we don't want to over tax the system, but at the same time we want you to enjoy your dining here so then that is where the art comes in. The question then becomes: 'How can you give this to our community where they can thrive, but they still enjoy?'⁴⁷⁴

One of Medley's concerns with eating regimen of African Americans is that there is far too much consumption of foods that are low in water content; a dietary circumstance in which blood cells, tissues, glands, organs and so on are not hydrated and replenished properly, leading to dehydration of essential body parts. However, the remedy, Mrs. Medley opines, is when you intake foods that are high in fiber, vitamins and minerals and "once the blood starts to becoming cleaner and thinner and more like water like it is supposed to be, instead of putrid and thick, it's going to feed all the organs and start to heal the organs better...It's called getting clean because if you continue to do this, your health is going to automatically improve."⁴⁷⁵ At age sixty-three, Beverly, who is now a raw foodist has been on a journey of her own to obtain a standard of health that is optimal. In fact, her thoughts about diet would forever change nearly four decades ago. With the city of Philadelphia being one of the Black Muslim populations in America, Beverly's trajectory towards health and wellness began while she was in her twenties as a direct result of her association with a neighbor who was an adherent of the Islamic faith. In her own words, Medley conveys:

I actually began the journey with a young Muslim sister that lived across the street from me who would tell me about not eating pork, and I remember thinking she was crazy. I was like: 'you got to be kidding me.' And all the while I was thinking about eating at my mother-in-law's house and all she used was pork and lard and fried the best chicken in the world. So she would give me material concerning not eating pork...She was talking to me and trying to help

⁴⁷⁴ Beverly Medley, Personal interview with Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, June 6, 2013.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

me, but I couldn't hear her. I'd look at her, saying to myself in my head 'something's wrong with her, and ain't nothing wrong with me.' But that is the extent of disease in your mind. You can't even see that you are injuring yourself.⁴⁷⁶

Clearly, the proverbial seeds were planted; however, cognitive dissonance accompanied with denial had inundated Medley's feelings of her extant meat-eating diet, which contradicted what was being revealed to her.

The nutritional "game changer;" however, Medley remembers, happened during a routine visit to the home of her Muslim colleague, who had a vast library. While perusing her extended book collection, Medley reminisces that, "it was one little paperback book that was on her shelf and it was called *Cooking with Mother Nature* by Dick Gregory. That book changed my life...And I'm going to tell you why his book led me to do that. In a nutshell, in his book, it's holistic because he didn't just talk about the physical. He talked about the spiritual and the mental, and I felt that I needed help in that area."⁴⁷⁷ The nutritional teachings of *Dick Gregory's Natural Diet for Folks Who Eat* was so influential to the neophyte of a holistic lifestyle that the younger Medley "fasted like he said in his book, which is to fast for 30 days," and as a result, her dietary regiment "went from vegetables to fruits to juices and then I ended up on water...and after that I felt so good that I never really looked back. I had some setbacks, maybe a year into it, but after that year I never looked back ever again."⁴⁷⁸ In the same way the health advocacy of Dick Gregory inspired Medley, the teachings of Elijah Muhammad were equally motivating. Interestingly, her close reading of *How to Eat to Live* is dissimilar

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

from other as she admits: I found that people have different interpretations of that [book] because my interpretation of *How to Eat to Live* was that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was saying that you shouldn't eat meat, and if you do," be mindful of what you consume.⁴⁷⁹

While Elijah Muhammad and Dick Gregory were without question catalysts for Medley's newfound approach to food and nutrition, Beverly shares that it was Philadelphia-based grassroots raw foodist Winfred Postell who gave her gastronomical words to live by. Postell, Medley inform us "worked with Aris LaTham back in the 70's" and gave me a lot of support back in the 80's when I really was going strong"⁴⁸⁰ as a proponent of a vegan dietary lifestyle. Akin to the artistic fashion that Aris LaTham mustered up gourmet raw food cuisine, so too did Win Postell—a shortened epithet he was referred to by those closest to him. Ensuring that an intergenerational transmission of dietary knowledge be passed down to future generations, Postell constantly encouraged Medley to stay on the path to eat to live and reinforced to her that "food is a tool and use your tool," particularly with your "children to keep them on this diet." These heart-felt and lasting words Medley would use henceforth as her methodological impetus to heal African people within the Philadelphia Metropolitan area through vegan and raw food preparation and service.

In heart of the University City District of West Philadelphia, another health conscious food operation is *Atiya Ola's Spirit First Foods*. Located at 4505 Baltimore Avenue, this frequently visited diminutive restaurant, the brainchild of restaurateur Atiya

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

Ola Sankofa, has been in operation since September 2008 and is open six days of the week with Monday being the only day of cessation. Prior to that, the establishment was under different management and was a café that specialized in offering the standard American breakfast entrees as well as the most common morning staple—coffee. Nowadays, Atiya Ola oversees the business operations of *Spirit First Foods*, and conversely, the target market is vegan and raw food aficionados. With several chefs employed to execute the preparation of food for the establishment, Sankofa supervises the way in which dishes are made, presented and served in a way that is appealing to customers. Analogous to the culinary sentiments of *All the Way Live*, the menu options available to Philadelphians at *Spirit First Foods* are primarily vegan and raw food dishes that are made on a daily basis. Ironically, the differentiation, however, is they also cater to pescatarian and lacto-vegetarian customers in which they offer dishes like salmon, tuna, and goat cheese salad.

Born and raised in nearby Wilmington, Delaware, Atiya Ola is the second eldest of eight children. In the same vein as her parents, she too has eight offspring. Atiya Ola’s gravitation towards and a penchant for fresh sustenance stemmed from her exposure as a child from which her mother and older sister—fifteen years her senior—“cooked mostly with fresh foods from scratch.”⁴⁸¹ Eventually, Sankofa began to make masterful, creative raw dishes by way of informal instruction, through methods of self-tuition rather than through any specialized training or credentials per se. From her own estimation:

⁴⁸¹ Atiya Ola Sankofa, Personal interview with Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, June 5, 2013.

I guess I am an autodidact. I didn't go get any certificates. I actually just have a truth pill. My girlfriend, Zuhairah and I were always threatening to be vegetarians and then a moment came where we could be vegetarians. We started moving in that direction when a group called DICC, with Reverend James Bevel as the head, brought that organization to Philadelphia. At that time I was making clothes and...Sister Erica Henry was leaning toward raw food, so as we moved into that atmosphere, raw food rung my truth bell. [Thus,] I started leaning in that direction and started creating raw dishes. It just grew out of that. That is how I got to where I am today.⁴⁸²

As a restaurant owner whose sole responsibility is to feed its patrons, Atiya Ola takes pride in providing fare that is complementary and beneficial to a healthy dietary lifestyle and is equally assistive in the digestive process. In a word, a majority of the options available at *Spirit First Foods* are “primarily uncooked that allows you to have the enzymes you need which are the catalyst for regeneration and healing.”⁴⁸³ Due to the appealing presentation and appetizing nature of the raw food dishes available at the restaurant, such as the “World Famous Couscous,” *Spirit First Foods* has widespread popularity throughout the city. With easy accessibility to the restaurant via public transportation, Sanfoka affirms that patrons throughout the metropolitan area are able to reap the benefits of the wholesome food:

We have lots of people that come from all over to get the food. We have people that have gone to the doctor and the doctor says that you have to change your diet and then one of their friends brings them to the café for them to get the food. We also have people who have been eating the food who come back to testify how much better they are feeling. In fact, we have a young girl right now that's been consistently coming to the café, learning how to eat the foods, studying how to eat the foods and is feeling much better.⁴⁸⁴

When queried about the definition of holistic health, Sanfoka's understanding comprehensively captures the triumvirate nature of the phrase. She replies: That is a

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

great question because most of the time that we get ill it's always addressed from the physical and never from the spiritual or the emotional body, but the truth is you get ill in the emotional body. That is where you get ill first. Things upset you emotionally and the energy gets stored in the body.”⁴⁸⁵ As a result, Atiya Ola stresses that African people should take matters of health seriously to improve physical health and additionally release any deeply-imbedded emotional issues. Given the enduring ordeal Africans experienced while forcefully transplanted as a result of the episodic disruptions of the Middle Passage, chattel slavery and the subsequent social proscription in the Western Hemisphere, the psychological repercussions are evident today, opines Sankofa; an enduring circumstance that Joy DeGruy Leary describes as Post Traumatic Slave Disorder.⁴⁸⁶ On this idea, Sanfoka expounds:

as a people [we] have been in major trauma from the day that we left our shores so we have been suffering for generations. We have suffered major trauma, depression, inter-generational depression, and it continues on. And so what you see when you see that our community can be heavily drug-addicted is really people that are depressed, self-medicating. When you look at the level of unemployment, teenage pregnancies, diabetes and you decode that. It all decodes out to an upset and an emotional body. And since we never had therapy, it still continues and lingers. All of that is criminal. Since they [Europeans] brought a people here and disenfranchised them and continue to disenfranchise, we are constantly borderline, if not over the top depressed.⁴⁸⁷

From both a spiritual and cultural uplifting aspect, the teachings of Elijah Muhammad regarding food and nutrition had a lasting effect on Atiya Ola. In her own words: “Definitely...Elijah Muhammad was a great impetus in the direction of urging us

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Joy DeGruy Leary, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing* (Portlant: Uptone Press, 2005). See also, Omar G. Reid, *Post Traumatic Slavery Disorder: Definition, Diagnosis, and Treatment* (Charlotte: Conquering Books, 2005).

⁴⁸⁷ Sankofa, Personal interview, June 5, 2013.

to release some of the foods we were eating.”⁴⁸⁸ Moreover, at twenty-one years old, Sankofa had an associate named Dawud Arasul that asked her to:

come go with me to the mosque. I went with him...and that day the lecture was on not eating pork. My family ate pork and at that time my pleasure was in eating pork chops, ham and bacon...[A]fter the lecture I went to get my pork chops. I cook them, and then I could not eat them...It just became an education of release...which became more of an impetus for me to let go of pork. I would say that that was a key factor in releasing [because] the Muslims were on it.⁴⁸⁹

The move to Philadelphia for Atiya Ola in 1969 from neighboring Wilmington was in no way happenstance. The notable geographical move came as a result of the shift in Black consciousness in the United States. According to Sankofa, her and a number of other individuals from her hometown came to the nation’s first capital as artisans. In detail, she explains: “We came to participate in the African culture movement. It was like thirteen of us that came to Philadelphia, and we lived in a commune. When we came, we came to manufacture art and clothing. For over ten years I made African clothing: the red, black and green flag, kufis, pouches, and bottles. I am an artist at heart so I did different paintings...and we sold all these things in our African culture store.”⁴⁹⁰

In understanding the challenges that come with making a dietary change, especially with the pervasive marketing schemes of fast food establishment and other major food corporations in America, Sankofa provides some insight. For individuals attempting to convert from a meat-eating regimen to a dietary lifestyle free from animal protein, Atiya Ola offers as sustainable solutions several recommendations she feels will make the transition more smooth: 1) become an avid reader and study all facets of holistic health

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

and dietary lifestyles alternative to the Standard American Diet; 2) pay close attention and make a mental note of how your body reacts to the new dietary change; 3) learn how to forgive and be upfront when communicating with others; and 4) incorporate some form of creativity into your routine as it is a healing mechanism in itself.⁴⁹¹

According to Atiya Ola, the importance for Black women in Philadelphia to convene space in order to heal in a communal setting was vital during the latter part of the twentieth century. As evidenced, in 1998, Philadelphia-based emotional therapist Pearl Jackson—who Sankofa served as her chef at a healing retreat at Drexel University—sponsored and brought former obstetrician and gynecologist (OB/GYN) and uterine fibroid expert Jewel Pookrum to Philadelphia; the organizers of the event were fellow community members. The intent of the conference was to promote balance and harmony among the interested cadre of Black women from a holistic standpoint, attending to any spiritual, physical and mental issues. Put simply, Atiya Ola maintains, “we were all..trying to get in alignment,” and “Jewel Pookrum came with the universal principles and the spiritual laws, so...we endeavored to study and be our own therapist in a sense.”⁴⁹²

Atiya Ola was of the impression that by Jewel Pookrum’s presence, instruction, guidance, and expertise in Black women health and emotional issues: “we [could] start applying the laws to [our] life and behavior; then it allows you to examine certain things that may have already happened. A key word is re-perception, to re-perceive events. That was the basis of it [the conference]: to get a core of women to get well and facilitate

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

to other woman.”⁴⁹³ As a result of Pookrum’s first visit, there was a holistic appeal by the Philadelphia group who intended the initial symposium to establish a continuous healing circle with Dr. Pookrum as the central figure. The upshot: the Philadelphia Principal Women’s Universal Support Group was formed with a membership of approximately ten individuals with the central focus being to offer alternative solutions to eradicate uterine fibroids, a reproductive malady disproportionately evident among African American women. The frequency of the meetings, Sanfoka reveals, were on a weekly basis and the tenure of the PPWUSG lasted approximately five years in which both Pearl Jackson’s residence and member Legiri’s home on 18th and Diamond in North Philadelphia were central locations for the meetings.⁴⁹⁴

Offering wholesome food to the Black community in Philadelphia is of utmost importance to Atiya Ola Sankofa. Equally important to her, she opines we must be vigilant in the self-assessment and reflection of our own lives so that any unattended emotional issues be addressed and confronted. To assist in this self-exploration, that which helped Sankofa in her own healing process, Blacks must, she testifies, examine the relationship dynamics of the most enduring and significant institution among African people—the family.

According to Beverly Medley, Yahimba Uhuru, also a native of Philadelphia, was one of the first people in the city to offer animal-free and dairy-free food as a dietary option to the African community. In contrast, according to Aris LaTham, High Priest Kwatamani was the first individual to offer raw food cuisine to the African community in

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

Philadelphia in the 1970s.⁴⁹⁵ The name of the salubrious food establishment in Philadelphia was entitled *First Inncourse* and it offered to its customers dishes named in reverence of ancient Nile Valley culture such as: “the King’s and Queen’s Loaf, the Nile Valley, Kush-Hi Supreme, the Royal Kemetic Salad, the Pharoah’s Loaf, among others.⁴⁹⁶ Nonetheless, Medley proudly admits that “Mama Yahimba,” an epithet of reverence given to her by associates, “was doing it all before, preparing food. Before me, Atiya Ola, everybody there was Yahimba...She was doing the vegetarian cooking.”⁴⁹⁷ Born in 1953, Yahimba Uhuru too is a native of Philadelphia and is the youngest of seven siblings. In addition to her currently working as a cashier at the Whole Foods Market in Philadelphia, Uhuru has obtained her bachelor’s degree in Health and Wellness from Kaplan University, and her subsequent academic endeavor is to pursue a Master’s degree in the same field of study. Her passion to educate the African masses on healthy eating over the years inspired Uhuru to become a columnist writer, for the past twenty-five years, for the provincial Philadelphia newspaper—*Westside Weekly* where her written contributions, “concentrate on natural healing, alternative medicine, herbology, and going back to basics as far as healing is concerned.”⁴⁹⁸ Exemplars of her literary input for the local periodical is revealed in both the November 2009 and October 2010 articles,

⁴⁹⁵ LaTham, Personal interview, May 19, 2013.

⁴⁹⁶ High Priest Kwatamani, e-mail correspondence with Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, June 11, 2014. Also, see High Priest Kwatamani, *Raw and Living Foods, The First Divine Act and Requirement of a Holistic Living Way of Life: Raw & Living Fruits, Vegetables, Seeds & Nuts. The Natural Foods for Man, He and She, in the Divine Consumption Plan* (Ellenwood, GA: Kwantamani Holistic Institute of Brain Body & Spiritual Research & Dev., Inc., 2008), and *The Prophetic 12,594 year Benu Cycle: Encoding the Consciousness of Higher Peace through the Divine Union of Masculine and Feminine Energy: Spiritual Analysis of Western Culture and Re-Awakening Naga Consciousness* (Ellenwood, GA: Kwantamani Holistic Institute of Brain Body & Spiritual Research & Dev., Inc., 2011).

⁴⁹⁷ Medley, Personal interview, June 6, 2013.

⁴⁹⁸ Yahimba Uhuru, Personal interview with Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, September 18, 2013.

entitled “Spice It Up” and “A Delightful Fall Fruit Salad” in which Uhuru provides readers with: 1) a short compendium of spices as well as the therapeutic properties of the following: thyme, tarragon, sage, paprika, oregano, nutmeg, mint and marjoram;⁴⁹⁹ and 2) a delicious autumn recipe and the medicinal properties of each ingredient, to include— Apples, Bananas, Currants, Dates, Pears and Non-dairy Yogurt.⁵⁰⁰ Clearly, the physical well-being of Black communities throughout Philadelphia is a pressing matter for Uhuru as she uses the *Westside Weekly* as a forum to educate the masses through the written word.

In addition to her penned endeavors with the local paper of West Philadelphia, the edification on holistic health that Yahimba Uhuru administers to the Black youth is indispensable. A prime example is how she used to instruct a class on nutrition at an African-Centered school named *Academy of the Way*, an institution located in West Philadelphia that was headed by the late Mama Alomisha Alewa but is now not in operation. The pedagogical stance and technique utilized by Uhuru in teaching that specific course was extremely effective, as she divulges: “some of those students are now in their thirties, and they still remember things that I said,” which causes Mama Yahimba to feel that “as long as I reach one person, at least one person, I feel as though I have succeeded.”⁵⁰¹

For Uhuru, the locution holistic health in itself necessitates an individual use natural elements of the earth to provide sustenance and curative assistance if need be.

⁴⁹⁹ Yahimba Uhuru, “Spice It Up” *Westside Weekly*, vol. 21, no. 35 (November 13-19, 2009), 6.

⁵⁰⁰ Yahimba Uhuru, “A Delightful Fall Fruit Salad” *Westside Weekly*, vol. 22, no. 31 (October 1-7, 2010), 8.

⁵⁰¹ Uhuru, Personal interview, September 18, 2013.

Rather than use grafted substances (e.g., pharmaceuticals) and non-vibrational (i.e., dead) matter to treat symptoms and/or seek nutritional value, one should instead consider “[h]ealing the body through God’s pharmacy—through the earth,” an initiative “we were supposed to do in the first place,” by not introducing toxins into the body, and instead utilize natural herbs and spices to “work with the body,” argues Uhuru.⁵⁰² Her own designation of the phrase holistic health was formulated back in 1976 when she fell ill and came across and read one of the leading treatises on holistic health at the time. In seeking alternative ways to treat her malady, Uhuru came across and read one of the leading treatises on holistic health at the time. In her own words, Yahimba recalls: “I remember being tired of being sick, and I just felt as though there had to be another way. And at the time I think I was about twenty-three, and I picked up Jethro Kloss’s *Back to Eden* book, and I was really intrigued by it. It taught [me] how to heal the body...then I decided to purchase some herbs and see how I felt. And you know, that was it. I will tell you that Jethro Kloss started me in the direction.”⁵⁰³ Subsequently, Mama Yahimba was introduced to the raw and living food, sustenance Dick Gregory refers to as “natural” approximately two years later by her first husband when she belonged to the *Ecology Food Co-op* on 36th and Lancaster Avenue in West Philadelphia. From that point onward, Uhuru considered all plant-based foods to be the natural remedy for all ills. Put simply, Uhuru opines: “food is our medicine,” and “[i]t’s important to eat healthy.”⁵⁰⁴ With an analogy, she continues: “you can’t put the wrong fuel in a car and expect it to

⁵⁰² Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

operate at optimal performance. It's the same thing with the body. The wrong food in the body is going to create disharmony and disorder...and creates diseases;" therefore, "[i]t's very important to eat the way we were meant to eat."⁵⁰⁵

Due to her endearing passion to feed people, something that makes her "feel really, really good,"⁵⁰⁶ in 1989 Yahimba opened up *Uhuru's Place*, a vegetarian restaurant (that did not use any animal products whatsoever), in West Philadelphia on 49th and Chestnut Street. Her content mastery in the culinary arena, a craft Medley mentioned in her interview with the writer, was exemplified with the opening this healthy eating establishment. The business was operated intergenerationally, family-owned, and in the essence of communalism, its doors were open to Philadelphia residents to display their talents. As proof, Uhuru discloses:

I taught my daughters how to cook when they were six, so they became my chefs. My son Immanuel; he was my dishwasher. My husband at the time; he did the business aspect of it, and my son had his own group, the *African Griots*. So we used to have entertainment in the restaurant also...It was a family structured business. The children were the dishwashers. They were the cooks. They were the people that kept the restaurant clean. People really flocked there. They used to hang out and play some nice music. We used to have a street fair there where local artists would come...[and] we would bring in musicians like Shakare Ensemble, Nani Ka, and Baba Crowder...as far as entertainment is concerned.⁵⁰⁷

To satisfy the appetite of its patrons, the restaurant offered creative menu options such as: almond roti with cashew gravy; mock steak sandwich; eggplant zucchini stew; okra, corn and tomato; mixed vegetables with brown rice; and the following baked goods prepared by Yahimba's daughters—cornbread; brownies and carrot cake, to name a few.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

In all things holistic, Yahimba Uhuru feels that Africans must, given our socio-economic circumstances in America, take responsibility of independently maintaining our health the best we can, given that all institutions in this nation, including the healthcare industry are governed by racist standards. With this in mind, the health and wellness scholar beseeches to African people that “[w]e can self-medicate. Not self-stupicate, but self-medicate. It’s easier to take the easy way out and not take responsibility.” All in all, Yahimba Uhuru is for certain that in inspiring Blacks to be healthier and make better food choices, she is carrying out her divine purpose on earth. In her estimation: “I feel as though my goal in life is to get out here and empower my people. If that means living from penny to penny, so be it because I know in my heart the Creator will take care of me.”⁵⁰⁸

With regards to providing sustenance and healing to the African community in Philadelphia through natural foods, Zakiyyah Ali proverbially wears two hats. The title of her business, *Ali’s F.A.C.E.S.*, an acronym for: Foods, Agribusiness, Consulting Environmental Services, lends credence to the dual foci of her overall objectives as an agricultural and food activist in the city of Philadelphia. Since December 2012, Ali has successfully run an itinerant raw food business, which she currently operates out of the North Philadelphia Black-owned bookstore, *Black and Nobel*; a providential situation in which patrons get to be fed both intellectually and gastronomically. Second, Ali is a prize winning professional gardener and farmer who is, in the same vein as the Lewin

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

sisters,⁵⁰⁹ instrumental in teaching sustainable agriculture and environmental sciences to the Black youth in Philadelphia.⁵¹⁰ Although a Philadelphian by birth, her penchant for farming, explains Ali, was stemmed from her grandparent's and parent's roots in South Carolina; the Myrtle Beach area of Mullin Nichols. Ali expounds on the agrarian lifestyle from both her maternal and paternal side that influenced her as a youth:

it was too factions: my mother's mother was a sharecropper...but then on my father's side, my grandfather owned over a hundred acres of land, so he was the man. White folks rented from him, and you know it was a whole different side on grandpops' side, but again it was my exposure to all types of gardening and farming...down there, they were farmers. You know they farmed professionally. Being able to go into a field as big as this block was amazing and there was nothing but melons there. One field had honeydews and another field had muskmelons. I never knew blueberries grew on trees. There were all these types of fruits.⁵¹¹

With this foundation and connection to fresh fruits and vegetables, Ali eventually began to see the possibilities of and utilize the curative properties of food. After graduating from The Restaurant School at Walnut College in 1982, Ali was employed as a Food Service Supervisor at one of the independent Black schools in Philadelphia—the Mitchell Education Center in Germantown, which was located on the exact site where Germantown High School now resides. Unquestionably, this position proved to be a fruitful experience for both Ali and the children. With her involvement of establishing gardens in other locations throughout the city, Ali, with permission from the principal of the school, “started...composting and gardening, and with that [she] created [the] first

⁵⁰⁹ See Esther Lewin and Birdina Lewin, *Growing Food, Growing Up: A Child's Natural Food Book* (Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1973).

⁵¹⁰ Zakiyyah Ali, Personal interview with Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, June 19, 2013.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

children’s environmental program.”⁵¹² This agricultural experience for the students was enlightening as they got a distinctive understanding of food. From the cultivation of the seeds of various fruits and vegetables, to the observation of their growth, then being able to eat the harvested products gave the Black youth a respect for agriculture as well as a newfound love for fresh food. Even more, due to the transformative process of gardening the children witnessed firsthand, Ali was “able to devise up a lesson out of whatever the plant was doing. And then the final crescendo comes when you actually produce a fruit.”⁵¹³ The efficacy by which Ali was able to effectively teach the students gardening was primarily due to the her apprenticeship with her Jegna of sustainable agriculture, Blanche Epps, who cultivated a vast garden in which she “grew everything [mentioned] in the Bible and the Qur’an...an amazing space...just stellar.”⁵¹⁴ In addition to the tutelage she received from Blanche Epps, Ali too was deeply inspired about food and nutrition from the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. Zakiyyah Ali informs us that “[f]ood and food service in the African American community,” is something that needs to be talked about more frequently; however, in detail, she expounds that her:

true understanding that cultures or peoples have food, that came from the Nation of Islam, Honorable Elijah Muhammad peace unto to him. His book, *How to Eat to Live* talked about a diet for a people and a diet that wasn’t for a people. I remember some things and some other things that I didn’t like, so when I got exposed to the Nation of Islam and what the messenger was teaching, it resonated with me. Here is somebody [Muhammad] that is telling us what we should and what we shouldn’t eat... What we are being told by the media was something different. That started me on the food quest...so I decided then that food was going to be the vocation or profession that I was going to pursue. Now I could

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

see my place in it because of the Nation. In MGT [Muslim Girls Training], the sisters were supposed to do food, make dinners, and I always would sell my dinners... This is what the females did in the mosque... There were a lot of things in terms of training... but culinary food, how to take care of your husband and children, were taught in the mosque. That is how my food service started there... Sometimes I just created smell in the kitchen and everybody was at the door, “Sis. Zakiyyah what you making?” I thought that there was something to this.⁵¹⁵

Like other activists and inhabitants of Black Philadelphia, Ali too was affiliated with the Pan African Studies Community Extension Program (PASCEP) at Temple University. After taking classes in addition to vending food at PASCEP, she formed a culinary alliance with Sunfired Food founder and proprietor Aris LaTham. The coalition between the two resulted in Ali’s relocation from Philadelphia to New York City in the late 1970s, where she was an instrumentalist in offering her culinary expertise and services to LaTham’s natural foods restaurant in Harlem—*House of Life*. On this very point, Ali maintains that, “by the time I met Aris I was already in that vegetarian mode, and he was the extension in terms of talking about a live food diet.”⁵¹⁶ Thusly, she adds: “I started my raw food journey with my culinary background already [so] it was really kind of easy to gravitate, pick up, share, exchange ideas, concepts and make food. So that is how the live food became my diet and my occupation.”⁵¹⁷

Based on the research conducted in this study, there were no holistic health practitioners serving the Black community in Philadelphia seemingly interested primarily in making money than they were concerned in providing natural cures and positively effecting the African community. Simply put, the neighborhood reputation of these

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

practitioners were not commercially motivated. On the contrary, they earned the respect and trust of their neighbors and were thought of as contributing to the uplift of the Black community. That is, while providing natural health care services they additionally tended to be conscientious with respect to political consciousness, working with the youth and extolling positive aspects of Africana culture. These exemplars, in the words of Semmes, “not only...illustrate an existing vehicle for community self-development, but also...emphasize the need for African Americans to look within their midst and select, support, and legitimate their progressive artists, teachers, and leaders who have rejected commercial co-optation in behalf of community development.”⁵¹⁸

Unlike most white contemporary holistic health establishments located throughout America, Ethel Wilson’s establishment is situated in the heart of the Black community in North Philadelphia. In her interview, Wilson tells of growing up in rural Faraday, West Virginia as a coalminer’s daughter and the eldest of nine siblings. Her fondest memories stem from learning from elders, particularly her grandmother, some of nature’s secrets concerning ways and methods of restoring a condition of health to the human body. Contrarily, as a youth, Wilson remembers regrettably having to “drink castor oil on the weekends,” but to alleviate the atrocious aftertaste her “grandmother would make a hole in the orange and heat it and pour it in the orange.”⁵¹⁹ Although she was refrained from doing so, Wilson recollects that her grandmother used to take wheat germ as a nutritional supplement. Rather than succumbing to pharmaceutical drugs, the terrain of rural West

⁵¹⁸ Clovis E. Semmes, “The Dialectics of Cultural Survival and the Community Artist: Phil Cohran and the Affro-Arts Theater,” *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 24, no. 4 (June, 1994), 449.

⁵¹⁹ Ethel Wilson, Personal interview with Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, May 24, 2013.

was therapeutically utilized in the Wilson family, so “[i]f something happened to you then they would go out and get a weed...it was burdock,”⁵²⁰ an herb primarily used for its curative properties in treating stomach ailments, colds, liver issues and other gastrointestinal ailments. Undeniably, these recollections of her childhood shaped the very foundation of Wilson’s sensibilities towards holistic health as an adult.

In regards to her formal training in natural medicine, Wilson attended Trinity School of Natural Health where she obtained credentials as both a Certified Natural Health Professional (CNHP) and a Doctor of Naturopathy (N.D.) in 1992 and 1994, respectively. To augment her training as a holistic health professional, and more importantly meet the needs of the surrounding African American community in Philadelphia, Wilson apprenticed and trained with seasoned non-conciliatory naturopath Llaila O. Afrika for over five years to receive an African-centered perspective in the field of holistic health.

Bringing truth to the adage that you are never too old to learn, Ethel Wilson entered into the business aspect of holistic health at an advanced age. In fact, after a thirty-three year career and retirement as a lab technician at the Container Corporation of America in Manayunk, PA (in which she simultaneously sold herbs to both co-workers and supervisors while on the job), Wilson founded her own holistic health establishment, *To Your Health* in 2005. The advantage for Blacks in Philadelphia seeking alternative means of healing was the strategic locality of Wilson’s therapeutic enterprise—conveniently situated on 2715 W. Allegheny Avenue in the heart of North Philadelphia.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

The curative objectives of *To Your Health*, Wilson affirms is that “[w]e detox everything...in here...We do the foot detox and of course the consultations are done out of here, but we do the foot detox and that pulls the toxins out of your body.”⁵²¹ In a word, Ethel Wilson’s overall objective is to serve and heal the African community by holistic means of any ailments, foodborne or otherwise.

As alluded to earlier, the well-being of the African community rather than economical gain is the primary concern for Wilson as a holistic health practitioner. On this very point, she imparts: “I’ve had people come in here and tell me, ‘herbs are high and this and that,’ and I tell them that I have to sell them according to the manufacturer, which I don’t do. However, for them, I go down on them. I figured I did get free shipping...I’m trying to help them.”⁵²² Additionally, in order to convince her clientele of her charitable sentiments, Wilson would reassure them: “You know if you need an herb just let me know you can have it.”⁵²³ Moreover, Wilson willfully admits: “My foot detox was fifteen dollars, and I would have people waiting for me in the mornings when I came. On Saturday whole families would come because they had never seen anything like that. And it was really awesome. I wish that I was charging fifty dollars like one of my friends was, and I would have been able to put some money aside, but I was just able to pay for the water and the salt.”⁵²⁴ Unequivocally, Ethel Wilson's generosity with her products and health services lends credence to her own economic sacrifice and awareness of the socio-economic conditions of most of the denizens in the surrounding community of her

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

holistic health business in North Philadelphia.

Due to the dominance of Western medicine the practice of herbalism continues but is not as pervasive in this country as it was in the past. The preservation of the tradition; however, due to alternative modes of healing being placed on the periphery of professionalization in the field of medicine in the early 20th Century,⁵²⁵ has been more or less individualistic but has in some instances been preserved through family tradition. As alluded to earlier in the study, the use of herbal remedies has never disappeared in the African American community but was probably re-stimulated by a heightened interest in naturalistic health care techniques associated with a surge of Black consciousness during the Black Power movement of the mid-1960s through the 1970s.

Aside from the salubrious culinary and other holistic practitioner services offered to Black Philadelphians, a prime example of the mastery in the healing arts of medicinal herbs is Ron Norwood. Other noteworthy herbalists within the Philadelphia Metropolitan area that currently serve the African community deserve mention. They include the likes of: Tony Moore, Merriam House, and Ron Gaines—the proprietor of the establishment *Earth Mother Herbs* located on 2504 W. Lehigh Avenue in North Philadelphia.

Throughout the city, Ron Norwood has established a respectable reputation amongst his colleagues and patrons in Philadelphia as an erudite professional herbalist. In 1987, Norwood embarked on a triumvirate partnership with other herbalists; the upshot was a Philadelphia establishment entitled *University Herbs*, which lasted for

⁵²⁵ See Chapter 5 of this dissertation, entitled “The Predominance of ‘Scientific’ Medicine Unveiled.”

several years.⁵²⁶ Currently, Norwood is the founder and sole proprietor of the *Herb Nook Wellness Center*, a quaint establishment located on 4742 Spruce Street in West Philadelphia that has been in operation since 1992. In addition to an in-depth collection of books and pamphlets on all aspects of herbal remedies at reasonable prices, the *Herb Nook Wellness Center* makes available a wide variety of herbal formulas. As a retail establishment, the *Herb Nook* also has on hand for customers an array of spices, vitamins, supplements as well as organic and natural skin care products. Even more, personal consultations, classes, and seminars are offered at his establishment to many local residents; and it is not uncommon for clients to come seek his services from other states.

For Norwood, the intra/intergenerational transmission of knowledge is paramount. Thusly, he attests: “From all of the information that I have accrued over the years, I then pass it on to the community within the scope of seminars or across the counter information sessions.”⁵²⁷ Simply put, his extensive travel across and outside of the United States (studying abroad the different forms of healing and how indigenous cultures take care of themselves via what they consume) has presented Norwood the opportunity to amass a great deal of valuable and useful information to impart onto others.

Of all the respondents interviewed in this study, Ron Norwood exhibited particularly a strong sense of pragmatism regarding his herbal practice. Accordingly, his many instances of herbal remedies are concocted in a similar but more nuanced fashion and is as equally effective as those offered by white practitioners in the same field of

⁵²⁶ Ron Norwood, Personal interview with Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, May 26, 2013.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

alternative medicine. For example, the herbal charts and lists utilized and incorporated into Norwood's practice is just as effective and analogous to the herbal descriptions found in Jethro Kloss' (a noteworthy early twentieth century herbalist and one of this country's earliest soy food pioneers) magnum opus *Back to Eden*.⁵²⁸ As a sagacious herbalist, Norwood deems it is imperative for his clients to recognize and understand the symbiotic relationship between herbs and the corporeal as it relates to health and wellness. Thus, when he educates on the therapeutic aspects of herbs, Norwood's primary focus is on: "The nutritional aspect of it. I really make it a point to explain to people that these are plants; they are from the same source that we are from. They are from the earth. You have your minerals; you have your vitamins. All you have to do is give them to your body you will get the benefit of it."⁵²⁹

A North Carolinian by birth, Norwood was born in Durham in 1951. As the second oldest of five, both Ron and his siblings were greatly influenced by their grandmother, an experienced farmhand who was considered one of many working women healers of the south. Norwood elaborates on his vivid childhood memories of his grandmother's expertise with the healing properties of plant life:

My eyes were opened by my grandmother. It's a funny thing that she grew plants. She was a country girl. She was very intelligent but not an educated woman, but if you put her out in the woods you wouldn't have to worry about her being able to survive. I can remember an instance with my older brother and I. Whenever we would have breakfast or a meal my grandmother would always go out and come back with these plants and put them in a cup and pour hot water over them. Many years later, I found out it was an herb called catnip.

⁵²⁸ See Jethro Kloss, *Back to Eden: The Classic Guide to Herbal Medicine, Natural Foods and Home Remedies* (Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Press, 2005 (Reprint: originally published in 1939).

⁵²⁹ Norwood, Personal interview, May 26, 2013.

Afterwards, I found out that catnip was used as a digestive aid. So we had these little stomachs at seven and eight year olds, but we had all this food on the table and grandma knew we were going to stuff ourselves, so she thought ‘let’s just have them drink this catnip’...she was intelligent enough to look at it from a nutritional standpoint so afterwards I looked at it from that position and moved on from there.⁵³⁰

Years before becoming an advocate and practitioner of holistic health, Norwood attended and graduated from West Chester University as a voice major in the Music Department. Interestingly enough, it was a brief discussion with his English professor that established for Norwood a link between the overall health of the body with what one consumes. Being on a typical on-the-go collegiate diet as an undergraduate, Norwood admits that he “ate everything that could walk,”⁵³¹ but also struggled with concentrating in his classes. After sharing such with the professor, his advice was: “why don’t you try to leave that alone for a couple of weeks. It was difficult,” confesses Norwood “but fortunately enough I was open to it and it made a difference. My energy level increased drastically,” and from that point onward “[i]t didn’t take long for me to realize that there was something to what he said.”⁵³² It was epiphanies such as the aforementioned in addition to what he previously learned from grandmother as a child that indubitably served as the foundation of Ron Norwood’s trajectory into the healing arts.

Later in life, to add to his alternative healing repertoire, Norwood became a longtime member of the accredited National Iridology Research Association (NIRA) later changed to the International Iridology Practitioners Association (IIPA) based off of its global recognition by naturopathic physicians worldwide. Additionally, during the

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² Ibid.

1980s, he attended the renowned *The School of Natural Healing* in Springville, Utah, founded by autodidact holistic practitioner and master herbalist “Dr.” John Raymond Christopher. In the same timeframe as well as the subsequent decade, Norwood enrolled himself into the pioneering Bastyr University in Seattle, Washington—the first naturopathic school to be accredited in the United States—to hone his previous training in and fascination with Iridology. More specifically, Norwood affirms: “I went there in the 1980’s for two summers, and I went there in 1994 and 1995 and the primary focus was to study different nutritional factors as it relates to Iridology.”⁵³³

Just as Aris LaTham, Ra Un Nefer Ament and Zakiyyah Ali provided their voluntary instructional services to community learners, Norwood too taught at the Pan African Studies Community Extension Program (PASCEP) at Temple University for over sixteen years. In fact, for the first nine years—since 1993—, Norwood discloses, “I was involved in teaching herbalism and iridology...However, in 2001 when 911 hit” the interest of his students at PASCEP changed, and as a result, he “stopped teaching that [herbalism and iridology] and went in to teaching metaphysics”⁵³⁴ for the next seven years until his tenure at Temple concluded in 2008.

Contemporaneously, in the 1990s, in addition to his curative activism as an herbalist and iridologist, Norwood wrote a weekly editorial for nearly six years for the organ, *The Philadelphia Tribune*. In the same vein, to date, he has produced several unpublished written works; however, Norwood expresses with confidence that these texts will be forthcoming in the near future. These pieces, Norwood has informed the writer,

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

are titled: (1) *I'm Tired of Brown Rice*—a tome that entails an array of dishes using this healthier grain and how to eat food that your cellular structure would recognize; (2) *As It Was*— a book structured in a genealogical and annotated bibliography format that enumerates all of the written works Norwood has read thus far on alternative healing; and (3) *Spiritual Insights as Awesome Soundbites*—a written work that primarily deals with metaphysics.

Throughout the city, there are an abundant of licensed colon hydrotherapy businesses that offer their services to individuals with gastrointestinal issues or for those who patronize solely for purposes of weight loss. Of them, the Infinity Health and Wellness Center is an establishment that takes into consideration the costly nature of alternative health care and thusly it offers an array of services to its clients at a reasonable price.⁵³⁵ Located in Sherman Mills at 3502 Scott Lane, *Infinity Health and Wellness* is the brainchild of its founder and proprietor, Cheryl Tyler, a native of north Philadelphia. Tyler obtained a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Accounting from Regis University, which allowed her the administrative acumen to run a successful business in alternative medicine. After a nine-year stint with the United States Army, Tyler subsequently practiced in the field of holistic health for over fifteen years, with ample time being spent in the south. Under the tutelage of Michael Imani of the Nile Wellness Center in Atlanta, Tyler received her colon hydrotherapy training at the Awareness Institute for Wellness & Education in Marietta, Georgia.⁵³⁶ To add to her

⁵³⁵ The Infinity Health and Wellness Center takes into account how individuals overindulge, particularly during major holidays, and for this reason the establishment offers promotions and sizeable discounts throughout the year. See <http://www.infinityhealthwellness.com>.

⁵³⁶ Cheryl Tyler, Telephone interview with Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, February 20, 2014.

credentials as an alternative health practitioner, Tyler received a certificate in Plant-Based Nutrition from Cornell University; a course headed by Colin T. Campbell, a major contributor of the *Fork Over Knives* enterprise.⁵³⁷

Aside from the individual efforts to promote and offer Blacks naturalistic health modalities or alternative medicinal approaches, there too exists in the city of Philadelphia organizational efforts to encourage African Americans to be more self-conscious in choices of food consumption and take matters of health into their own hands. The Ausar Auset Society⁵³⁸ of Pennsylvania, which opened its doors in Philadelphia in 1975, is an exemplar of such community involvement. Centrally-located in Germantown on 6008 Germantown Avenue, the spiritual organization is adjacent to several Black businesses and is in close proximity to Beverly Medley's raw food restaurant, *All The Way Live*.

Comprehensively, the holistic philosophy of the Ausar Auset Society incorporates an epistemological operational premise based on Kemetic culture accompanied with elements of Eastern philosophical and theoretical concepts, wellness therapy and techniques, and an advocacy of a raw food and/or vegan lifestyle that spans over a four-decade period. In addition to housing a store that sells alkaline water as well as its flourishing vegan restaurant—*The Nile Café*, the locale also offers numerous training sessions centered around both Kemetic spiritual and eastern philosophical health care systems. The classes they provide include: (1) Ausarian Initiation courses given in a

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

⁵³⁸ The Ausar Auset Society is a spiritual organization with African-Centered sentiments that was originally established in Brooklyn, New York in 1973 by its founder and leader, Ra Un Nefer Amen, with a foundational basis rooted in ancient Egyptian culture and spiritual systems. With the New York location serving as the headquarters for the organization, there also exists numerous chapters nationwide in Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, Milwaukee, Oakland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Washington D.C., in aliis locis as well as international branches in Bermuda, London and Toronto.

four-part series; (2) Paut Neteru Meditations; (3) weekly Metu Neter Oracle Divination workshops; and (4) 5 Element Qi-Gong classes spiritual center.

Of the collective membership within the Ausar Auset Society, the one individual interviewed for this study is the spiritual leader of the Philadelphia branch, Tehuti Khamu. Born and raised in the Bronx borough of New York City, Khamu is the youngest of three siblings. Akin to Wilson and Norwood's childhood experiences, Khamu's inspiration and foundation of a healthy lifestyle too was influenced by his grandmother.

In his own words, he reminisces:

My earliest memories are of my grandmother who is from Jamaica. It was interesting because she was the first person that I ever experienced that would drink bottled water and back in those days it wasn't like today with Spring water; you know bottled water is very popular. She actually had it delivered. It was in a glass green bottle, and I definitely noticed when I had water in her house. It was a different taste and she always kept fresh fruit in the house. I just remember the fruit at her house being so delicious. She had...[in] her top drawer full of vitamins. Every time we went over there she would give us the acerola and vitamin C to suck on instead of candy.⁵³⁹

In similar fashion, Khamu's parents encouraged he and his siblings to eat healthy and feverishly promoted physical fitness via athletics to promote in the household a philosophy of health and wellness. On his memories as a youth, Khamu recollects: "My parents also didn't buy a lot of soda or snacks in the house. It was more like we had juices and whole wheat bread. My sandwiches were only with whole wheat bread. It was a good foundation. My father was also a track man...so we were always into fitness and exercise. He encouraged us into sports so being one of three brothers we all participated

⁵³⁹ Tehuti Khamu, Personal interview with Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, September 15, 2016.

in sports.”⁵⁴⁰ Particularly being attracted to the cohesion of the spiritual discipline and physical demands, Khamu, in his teenage years, became a student of the martial arts to include the Angolan side of Capoeira, admitting in retrospect that it all stemmed from getting “hit with the Bruce Lee thing.”⁵⁴¹ In all, it was the tutelage from his grandmother and the inspiration from his immediate family that provided for Khamu the proverbial compass to navigate him on the trajectory that would eventually prove useful in his later years as a steadfast advocate of healthy living and key member of the Ausar Auset Society.

Based off of the philological tenets established and orchestrated within the Ausar Auset Society by Ra Un Nefer Amen⁵⁴²—which is in direct contrast and variance with the arbitrary agreements established in the field of Egyptology⁵⁴³—, the organization have created a nuanced version of Medu Netcher to fit their own institutional needs. Moreover, the Ausar Auset Society considers the usage of language imperative and deems it a vehicle to linguistically promote and sustain African culture. With its paradigmatic basis being ancient Nile Valley culture, the Ausar Auset Society incorporates into its organizational lexicon the indigenous language of Kemet to: bestow

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² See Hehi Metu Ra Enkamit, *African Names: The Ancient Egyptian Keys to Unlocking Your Power and Destiny* (Washington, D.C.: Ser Ap-uat Publishers, 1993).

⁵⁴³ See Raymond O Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 1996); James P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 2001). See also, Ankh Mi Ra, *Let the Ancestors Speak: Removing the Veil of Mysticism from Medu Netcher* (Washington D.C.: JOM International, Inc., 1995); Théophile Obenga, *African Philosophy, The Pharaonic Period: 2780–330 BC* (Popenguine, Senegal: Per Ankh, 2004); Rkhty Amen, *The Writing System of Medu Neter: Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs* (Self-Published: The Institute of Kemetic Philology, 2010), and *Mejat Wefa: Conversation Book, English to Medu Neter* (Self-Published: The Institute of Kemetic Philology, 2013).

honorific titles upon members of the organization; and establish a hierarchy within the organization. According to Khamu, the hierarchical structure established within the Ausar Auset Society is modeled after African kingship. In this regard, the specific entitlements that are bestowed on esteemed members of the organization, Khamu informs us, are as follows: (1) “Shekem Ur Shekem,” which denotes Kings of Kings, an appellation established solely for Ra Un Nefer Amen; (2) The “Seratu,” the esteemed elders of the organization; (3) “Nesewtu,” a term of plurality that signifies “Queen Mothers”—of which there are three positions responsible for leadership in the London, Philadelphia and Washington D.C. chapters; (4) the “Watu”—a pluralistic title designated for the six queen mothers who provide leadership in various chapters of the Ausar Auset Society through the United States; (5) the title “Ur Aua” which represents the phrase of nobility, “Paramount Kings”—the masculine equivalent to the Nesewtu with the same number of leaders and Tehuti Khamu holds one of the positions with residency in Philadelphia; and (6) numerous national rulers in positioned in New York headquarters.⁵⁴⁴

To further promote ancient Nile Valley culture, the Ausar Auset Society has an annual celebration they identify as *Kemet Fest*. Depending on the location the event is held each year, the duration of *Kemet Fest* may vary, not to exceed a three-day interval. In 2013, however, the annual celebration was held at the independent, private school Lotus Academy in Philadelphia while Ausar Auset Society simultaneously celebrated its

⁵⁴⁴ Khamu, Personal interview, September 15, 2016.

forty year anniversary of being in existence as an organization.⁵⁴⁵ Khamu offered details of extravaganza and expressed it was: “[a three-day Kemet Fest...and we had a bunch of workshops on different topics—meditation, Kemetic history, philosophy, Qi Gong, etc. Then we had a night of entertainment. We had spoken word, drumming, and conscious musicians performed...[at Kemet Fest] we have a festive environment and its very uplifting for people to realize that they can be spiritual, be healthy and have a real good time as opposed to giving up partying.”⁵⁴⁶ In summation, the articulation of Ausar Auset Society's seminal celebration by Tehuti Khamu echoes the sentiments of the triumvirate mission evidenced within the organization: spiritual commitment; the promotion and embodiment of health and wellness; and the assurance of celebratory expressions and undertakings—the last, an attribute inherent in all African people.

While the vegan restaurant operated by the Ausar Auset Society of Pennsylvania offers an array of savory “mock” meat dishes to customers—as a means to provide healthy alternatives to animal protein—, Khamu willfully discloses that members of the organization are strongly encouraged to adopt an eating regiment that is based more on a raw food diet that consists of fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, fresh juices and minimal non-meat protein intake. Nonetheless, Khamu is assuredly cognizant of the health consequences that manifests due to the overconsumption of animal protein in one’s diet, thusly *The Nile Cafe* provides an array of menu options devoid of meat. Other health activists have weighed in on this subject and present non-assuaging arguments that is

⁵⁴⁵ Arlene Edmonds, “Ausar Auset Society Celebrates 40 years” *The Philadelphia Tribune* (March 22, 2013).

⁵⁴⁶ Khamu, Personal interview, September 15, 2016.

worth examination.

Using as inspiration Malcolm X's well-known catchphrase that is most often taken out of context, Tracye Lynn McQuirter's forthright and down to earth treatise on health, *By Any Greens Necessary* awakens and urges Black woman to attend to their bodies, eat healthy, look great and feel even better in doing so. Quite poignantly, McQuirter addresses, critiques and deconstructs the "sacred cow" of the protein myths established by agricultural multinational corporations (and endorsed by lobbyists) with marketing schemes and upheld by the acquiescence of the federal government. The eating of meat by humans, McQuirter argues, is a choice but one that is misguided without knowing all of the nutritional facts. The author highlights, in referencing the recommended daily allowance (RDA) from the Institute of Medicine, that on an "average, we need to get about 10 to 15 percent of our calories from protein, or about fifty to seventy grams a day."⁵⁴⁷ This can be accomplished without much effort, claims McQuirter, with the consumption of plant-based foods rather with animal protein. The public health nutrition authority assures us that "[o]nce you understand the high amounts of protein contained in plant foods, you can see why it's easy to get more than enough protein from a healthy vegan diet."⁵⁴⁸

What McQuirter addresses bring to light what nutritionists have known for some time now. One must consider if large amounts of protein-rich animal products are the bulk of daily meals for an individual, which is the typical occurrence with the Standard

⁵⁴⁷ Tracye Lynn McQuirter, *By Any Green Necessary: A Revolutionary Guide for Black Women Who Want to Eat Great, Get Healthy, Lose Weight, and Look Phat* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2010), 15.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

American Diet, the body falls victim to the physiological equation: the consumption of copious amounts of animal protein will necessitate even larger amounts of carbohydrates, particularly because both carbohydrates and proteins must be equally balanced in a diet in order for health to be ascertainable. Paul Pitchford, in his landmark piece, *Healing with Whole Foods*, adds validity to the discourse and weighs in on the matter:

when protein is grossly overstated in the diet, one will crave concentrated carbohydrates in the form of refined sugar, sweets, pastries, polished [white] rice, and the white-flour breads and pastas. Alcohol also enters into the equation, as it is essentially liquid sugar...By eating too much protein one ends up in a pathologic state. To find temporary balance, unfortunately most succumb to another pathologic extreme by over-indulging in refined carbohydrates and/or alcohol for balance (Many alcoholics have told me they never crave sweets. They don't need sweets—they drink their sugar.)...The solution to the excess-protein dilemma is quite simple: Eating moderate amounts of protein balanced by carbohydrates, such as those from whole grains, legumes, starchy vegetables,, and fruits.⁵⁴⁹

In accord with the nutritional sensibilities of Pitchford, McQuirter postulates that the essential amino acids (nine in total) that we, as humans, need to be nutritionally sound can be derived from fruits, vegetables, legumes and grains. In the same vein, she raises an incontrovertible point about how we receive the essential building blocks via consumption: “The amino acids in meat come from the grains that the cow or pig or chicken or turkey ate or from the seaweed that the fish ate. When you eat an animal for protein, you are getting your essential amino acids secondhand from plants, rather than getting them firsthand by eating the plants themselves.”⁵⁵⁰ Again, McQuirter is certain a much healthier option to obtain dietary protein comes from plant foods as opposed to the flesh of dead animals. John McCabe, author of *Vegan Myth, Vegan Truth* shares the

⁵⁴⁹ Paul Pitchford, *Healing with Whole Foods: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2002), 28

⁵⁵⁰ McQuirter, *By Any Green Necessary*, 15-16.

same nutritional philosophy as McQuirter. He, too maintains,

it is not necessary to eat animal protein to get the essential amino acids of the protein molecule. The amino acids needed to make protein in a human can easily be obtained by eating a variety of fruits and vegetables. All fruits and vegetables contain all of the essential amino acids. It is **not** [bold type *emphasized*] necessary to combine rice with beans to get protein. All fruits, vegetables, sprouts, nuts, beans, and seeds contain protein. The protein found in meat, dairy, and eggs is much more concentrated than the protein found in plants. A diet that contains a lot of concentrated protein is a burden on the body, especially on the bones, joints, liver, blood stream, digestive tract, brain, and kidneys.⁵⁵¹

In other words, based on the articulation of both Tracye McQuirter and John McCabe, an individual can go directly to the original source to obtain protein—which should only be a small percentage of your daily caloric intake anyhow—to meet the nutritional need for optimal health, and because of that there is absolutely no need to consume animal protein or its byproducts to obtain protein.

In providing a clear-cut narrative, McQuirter reminisces about wisdom she received from Dick Gregory, and as a result, traces the industrial process of hamburger meat from the “cow to a heart attack,” and even further “to global warming.”⁵⁵² By calling to the forefront the guilt many meat-eaters might feel when thoughts arise of how the most prevalent food staple is made, McQuirter conveys:

Most everyone knows that hamburgers comes from cows. However, most folks would rather not talk about how it gets from a cow to a hamburger. You already know,” stresses McQuirter, “deep down that the process is disgusting, but you’d rather not think about it—just as long as you can keep enjoying your hamburgers in peace. It’s understandable, because hamburgers come with such cruelty, suffering, and filth that you have to be in complete denial to eat them.”⁵⁵³

The point McQuirter raises begs the writer to ask the question: If individuals cognitively

⁵⁵¹ John McCabe, *Vegan Myth, Vegan Truth: Obliterating Rumors and Lies About the Earth-Saving Diet that Can Save Your Life* (Santa Monica, CA: Carmania Books, 2013), 43.

⁵⁵² McQuirter, *By Any Green Necessary*, 16.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*

addressed the inhumane and chemicalized process by which hamburgers, or other processed meats for the matter, are made, will such an awareness make them duty-bound to consciously consider other healthier dietary options? As one critic graphically put it in Eric Schollosser's muckracking text *Fast Food Nation*: "The hamburger habit is just about as safe as getting your meat out of a garbage can."⁵⁵⁴

As a consequence, the gastronomical catastrophe of which the processed hamburger becomes makes its way to the lunch counters of many public schools throughout the United States which happen to be enrolled in the federal government-sanctioned National School Lunch Program. Not surprisingly, the student populace of these primary schools consist predominately of Black and/or Brown children. In the *Philadelphia Tribune* March 2012 article, "'Pink Slime' on Philly Lunch Menus" staff writer Damon C. Williams underlines how the finalized toxic beef product, in the form of hamburger meat, is ultimately fed to students in the Philadelphia public school system. Even more, Williams particularizes the nature by which "Pink Slime," a dysphemism for a noxious food additive, is added to ground beef during the industrialization process: "It is an ingredient used to clean your stove, bathroom and patio. Now, in a controversial purchase by the United States Department of Agriculture, ammonium hydroxide has found its way into the meals of thousands of children in the School District of Philadelphia who are currently enrolled in the National School Lunch Program [NSLP]."⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵⁴ Eric Schollosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2005), 197.

⁵⁵⁵ Damon C. Williams, "'Pink Slime' on Philly Lunch Menus" *Philadelphia Tribune* (March 1, 2012).

Admittedly, continues Williams, “The USDA has recently acknowledged the purchase of 7 million pounds of ‘Pink Slime’—the stomach-churning moniker given to the low-quality scraps of beef that have been treated with ammonium hydroxide—and sold to other beef processors and fast-food and frozen-food suppliers.”⁵⁵⁶ In the customary back pedaling manner the federal government is known for in addressing critical issues such as this, the justification and rationale of both the USDA and *Beef Product, Incorporated* is: “Meat processors use ammonium hydroxide to sterilize the meat and kill off E. Coli, salmonella and other pathogens.” Even if there was some validity in how it effectively sanitizes harmful bacteria, there is no justification or consideration by the USDA and the beef industry as to the debilitating effects ammonium hydroxide has on the gastrointestinal system of humans, namely our children. The unfortunate circumstance of it all, Williams admits, is that the Philadelphia School District of Philadelphia, when questioned, acknowledged the purchase by the USDA and admits to their enrollment into the National School Lunch Program, assuring it has “a long-standing arrangement and there’s no need for parents or the community to fret; [because] the district has been enrolled in the NSLP since the early ‘90s.”⁵⁵⁷

In the same vein that the Kemet Fest celebrated by the Ausar Auset Society encourages ancient Nile Valley culture, the Heal Thyself Garden Party was established to inform and educate Philadelphians about the availability and benefits of non-traditional or alternative health care choices. After receiving inspiration from reading Queen Afua’s seminal text *Heal Thyself for Health and Longevity* a year earlier amid amalgamating

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

lessons learned from his own self-healing, the Heal Thyself Garden Party was founded in the summer of 1998 by physician and attorney David Harmon. The upshot was a healing affair that was held in Germantown and resulted in over three hundred attendees “from every social, political and economic background, and every spiritual path, and level of consciousness.”⁵⁵⁸ Due to the success of the celebration of wellness that year, the Heal Thyself Garden Party became an annual event in Philadelphia and was met with equal success in the subsequent years. However, in 2003 there was a change of vanguard. When Harmon accepted the invitation from Alhaji Alihu Mahama, the vice president of Ghana at the time, to serve as a medical doctor in the West African nation, the leadership of the Heal Thyself Garden Party was handed to Paul Bodhise.⁵⁵⁹

Licensed as a doctor of chiropractic medicine,⁵⁶⁰ Bodhise is also an herbalist, massage therapist and a naturopathic practitioner.⁵⁶¹ With these professional tools under his proverbial belt, he recognizes the upkeep of optimal health is also a holistic enterprise. In his holistic treatise, *The Urban Sage*, Bodhise writes there are seven natural healing forces individuals should engage in order to maintain a salubrious lifestyle: (1) proper diet; (2) exercise; (3) proper breathing; (4) positive thoughts; (5)

⁵⁵⁸ Queen Afua, *The City of Wellness: Restoring Your Health Through The Seven Kitchens of Consciousness* (Brooklyn: Health Thyself Publishing, 2008), 165.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁵⁶⁰ A chiropractor, by definition, focuses on the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of spine disorders in which the primary chiropractic technique involves manual therapy to manipulate the spine as well as soft tissues and other joints. As an alternative health care practitioner, these health professionals place an emphasis on enhancing the health and well-being of patients without pharmaceuticals or invasive surgery. Akin to what aspiring medical doctors undergo, chiropractors too, are subjected to extensive training in order to become a doctor of chiropractic. The primary chiropractic technique involves manual therapy to manipulate the spine in addition to soft tissues and other joints.

⁵⁶¹ Before his departure of Philadelphia, Paul Bodhise was the proprietor of his former healing establishment, *Heal Yourself The Natural Way*, which was located on 609 South 11th Street in South Philadelphia.

adequate rest; (6) ample time in the sun; and (7) the intake of a sufficient amount of water.⁵⁶²

Currently, the administration and leadership of the Heal Thyself Garden Party is in the healing hands of Zeola Brown; a responsibility handed down to her by Paul Bodhise, one in which she considers an utmost honor. Continuing in the tradition of the foundational ideas established by Harmon and congealed by Bodhise, Brown maintains that the overall objective of the Heal Thyself Garden Party remains intact. In this regard, she avows that their continuous ambition is to simply “offer healthy alternatives to combat the devastating impact of health conditions plaguing our community such as diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, obesity, worker and sport-related injuries, etc. in order to effect positive changes in overall physical health and mental well-being [and] foster a higher social consciousness in regards to living and working together harmoniously.”⁵⁶³ Just as it did in the inaugural festivity in 1998, the annual event continues, Brown assures us, to have as presenters a multitude of adroit holistic health practitioners “who are the foremost authorities on a wide variety of alternative healthcare subjects such as: yoga, chiropractic, acupuncture, aromatherapy, chelation therapy, exercise, proper eating, breathing, and food consumption,” and circumstantially, the Heal Thyself Garden Party “brings together individuals and presenters from diverse cultural groups to promote healthy living in an entertaining atmosphere.”⁵⁶⁴ Included in the annual celebratory event is a sizeable market place to add cultural flare and promote

⁵⁶² Paul Brown Bodhise, *The Urban Sage: A Holistic Survival Kit for The New Millennium Truth Seeker* (Philadelphia: Bodhise Holistic Healing Group, 1999), 64-65.

⁵⁶³ Zeola Brown, Telephone interview with Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, October 16, 2013.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

within the African community cooperative economics.

For certain, the activism in alternative healthcare in the city of Philadelphia predates the Heal Thyself Garden Party. As proof, a year antecedent to the inauguration of the occasion, Queen Afua along with an array of holistic health specialists, civil servants, physicians, and health activists convened in Philadelphia to provide various educational and health services distinct from traditional medicine practices to the Black community. In the publication, *City of Wellness*, Afua recalls those momentous undertakings during the solstice of the latter years of the twentieth century:

In the summer of 1997, all across this beloved city, natural living practitioners, medical professionals, and government officials came together to answer the cry for healing among its citizens. We came together to plant seeds of wellness through natural living. I joined hands with the gifted healer Dr. Paul Bodhise and other holistic practitioners...Through the leadership and organizational skills of Brother Bodhise and the efforts of other notables in the community, we set up a citywide schedule of wellness seminars, fitness training programs, weekly weigh-ins, vegetarian food preparation classes, and numerous other healing opportunities for the community. The mayor of Philadelphia fully endorsed and supported this wellness charge, as the city took on the banner of wellness to promote a health citizenry.⁵⁶⁵

Afua continues to express, in admiration, through heartfelt words, the indefatigable efforts of Philadelphian health activists and holistic practitioners to provide the Black community with health solutions via an array of medicinal alternatives—work that amounts to what she considers the burgeoning of a present-day curative Weheme Mesu.⁵⁶⁶

The City of Wellness concept was fortified by the extraordinary healing that took place—and continues to unfold—in Philadelphia, the ‘City of Brotherly Love.’

⁵⁶⁵ Afua, *The City of Wellness*, 162.

⁵⁶⁶ See Chapter 1 of this dissertation, 16, f.n. 28. For a more thorough examination of the Kemetic concept of Weheme Mesu, see Jacob H. Carruthers, *African World History Project: The Preliminary Challenge* (Los Angeles: Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations, 1997), 47-72, and 338.

Despite the severe health challenges faced by the people of this city, Philadelphia has demonstrated that it holds amazing possibilities for a healing renaissance. It was in this city that I became part of an unprecedented birthing of wellness, and saw firsthand the healing power that our people can call forth in the spirit of unity and common purpose.⁵⁶⁷

Another notable event in Philadelphia that promotes health and wellness which is also held on an annually basis is the International Locks Conference. Founded by Sharon Cynthia Ellawesia Leornard Goodman in 1994, the Locks Conference is a preeminent forum that promotes the symbiotic relationship of and intrinsic link—through seminars, hair demonstrations, live music, workshops, vegan cuisine, spoken word, dance classes, panel discussions, and guest speakers—between family, culture, optimal health and natural hair care. As an ancillary component to the two-day event, the conference provides for its patrons: (1) an ornate fashion show that displays the savvy of its models and artistic genius of local designers; and (2) a sizeable cultural marketplace with multifarious products offered for purchase.

Considered a frontrunner of the holistic health and African cultural movement in Philadelphia for the past several decades, Akosua Ali-Sabree is the program director of this yearly extravaganza. Known affectionately in community circles as “Mama Akosua,” Sabree has been at the forefront and is an instrumental figure in promoting African culture, spiritual balance, prosperity and well-being, economic empowerment, and community service amongst Blacks in Philadelphia.⁵⁶⁸ In addition to her

⁵⁶⁷ Afua, *The City of Wellness*, 162.

⁵⁶⁸ To no avail, the writer found no fortune in securing an interview with Akosua Ali-Sabree as a contribution to this Africana intellectual project. In no way is this expressed as a critique but as a notice to the reader that any shortcoming in providing a comprehensive narrative of the health activism of such a stellar figure in the African community in the city of Philadelphia is the fault of the writer alone.

administrative responsibilities with the Locks Conference, Sabree also serves as the executive director of the Amadi Wellnes Connection. As the name suggests (Amadi signifies “general rejoicing” in the Igbo language), the pioneering institution, which has been in existence since 1985, celebrates the lives of African people and with the assistance of proficient consultants and specialists, and through a multitude of assistive and holistic practices (e.g., life coaching, spiritual counseling, meditation workshops, neuro-linguistic psychotherapy, virtual gastric band hypnosis, etc.) the Amadi Wellness Connection provides for those in need a more culturally relevant and subtle approach to health and wellness.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

This dissertation is a small contribution to the contemporary Africana intellectual project, duty bound to “the rescue and reconstruction of African history and culture premised upon a reclamation of classical Africa as an operational epistemological concept”⁵⁶⁹ with the ultimate intent on “retrieving the memory and *Sebayt* of the African deep well, to inscribing it in a renewed fashion, and to connecting it to new vistas of research and interpretation.”⁵⁷⁰ Thusly, the stimulus behind this study is to establish and highlight a historical genealogy of an Africana holistic health tradition, inaugurated in the medical system of ancient Nile Valley culture, by which natural health care techniques were used and are still in operation by Africans descendants throughout the diaspora, namely Africans in America.

In posterior times, particularly in the United States today, Chapter one examines that there is an alarming epidemic of heart disease, various cancers, diabetes, hypertension and other diseases whereby Africans in America, which make up a mere thirteen percent of the nation’s population, are disproportionately atop the statistical list of these physical maladies. Even more, the current obesity rate throughout the world has

⁵⁶⁹ “Appendix 1: Inaugural Meeting of the African World History Project,” *African World History Project: The Preliminary Challenge*, eds. Jacob H. Carruthers and Leon C. Harris (Los Angeles: Association for the Study of Classical African Civilization, 1997), 336.

⁵⁷⁰ Greg Kimathi Carr, “Notes from the Editor” *The Compass: Journal of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilization*, volume 1, issue (Washington D.C.: Association for the Study of Classical African Civilization, 2016) 1, 5.

reached an alarming number—over 2 billion⁵⁷¹ to be exact—, and again, Africans are disproportionately affected. This study argues such epidemics are impacted by a combination of factors: a destitute life style; a lack of knowledge of how certain dietary habits create corporeal complications; poor food choices; and overindulgence. Aside from this fact, a majority of Africans, due to the combination of—disenfranchisement, socioeconomic conditions, residing in areas considered “food deserts,” and the adoption of the Standard American Diet—, suffer more from the leading causes of diseases than other groups in this country.

In the interest and tradition of capitalism and competitive marketing strategies, there are a plethora of health products on the market, some legitimate and others not, attempting to attract buyers from all walks of life. Moreover, these marketing strategies cater primarily to those individuals who have the necessary funds or income levels to purchase such items. But the harsh reality is that a large majority of Africans in America, due to their lowly income status do not have, or have yet acquired the cash surplus to purchase health products, which are, to say the least, costly. In this respect, a corner store Bodega or a diminutive privately-owned local grocery store is shelved mostly with denatured foods and drinks high in calories but low in nutritional value, which consequently becomes the dietary norm for Africans residing in these communities. On

⁵⁷¹ “Weight of the World: 2.1 Billion People Obese or Overweight,” *Chicago Tribune* (June 18, 2014), 3. As African bodies are concerned, these statistics can be misleading as one must take into account that the Western standards of medicine as well as the Body Mass Index (BMI) is primarily based on the blood chemistry and bodily measurements of a European male and female. According to Jewel Pookrum, M.D., “at the present time, the needs and distinctions of the Caucasian race have dominated the world and set the standards for health. This has created much misinformation in the races as to what is best for them health-wise to maintain balance.” Jewel Pookrum, *Vitamins and Minerals from A to Z* (Brooklyn: A&B Publishers Group, 1999), 7-8.

the other hand, chains of expansive supermarkets, natural food stores (e.g., Whole Foods Market, Inc., Sprouts Farmers Market, Earth Fare, etc.), specialty grocery stores (e.g., Trader Joe's) or co-op natural foods establishment that offer an array of nutritional foods and goods more beneficial to one's health are usually located in “sub-urban” areas out of the vicinity for Africans without transportation measures to conveniently shop. The key issue here is proximity.⁵⁷² Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the fact that now social programs like SNAP/Food Stamps are now acceptable currency in such establishments, with transportation to these business being the only caveat.

Chapter two divulges the uniqueness of this work and its endorsement with the relevant literature of African medical traditions that utilize as therapeutic tools natural elements of the earth. The works of African-Centered thinkers and those conversant in natural medicinal practices explore the foundational aspects of ancient Egyptian remedial techniques as well as the historical perspective of the uses of alternative medical modalities by African descendants.

Chapter three necessitates the need for an African-Centered perspective to examine the cultural and theoretical distinction between conventional medicine and holistic health practices. Given this, the theoretical health model (i.e., health theory) upheld by African-Centered naturopathic practitioners and physicians postulate that when the body is deprived of the essential vitamins, minerals and proper nutrients from

⁵⁷² In his second feature documentary, director Byron Hurt's *Soul Food Junkies*, in addition to examining the cultural significance of and debilitating effects “Soul Food” has on African American's health, the film also provides a cursory examination of how most predominately African communities in the United States are out of the geographical proximity of grocery stores that offer produce and other foods with nutritional value; aptly referring to these communities as “food desserts.” See, Byron Hurt, *Soul Food Junkies: A Film About Family, Food & Tradition* (Plainfield, NJ: God Bless the Child Productions, LLC, 2013).

denatured and overly processed foods, the upshot is a dis-eased state. Rather than let the body be self-corrective with the consumption of nutrient-rich foods, African advocates of natural health care argue that mainstream medicine, in contrast, justify and promote pharmaceuticals as the primary means to address health issues—without the acknowledgement of its debilitating after effects and how it depletes the body’s natural ability to detoxify and repair itself.

Chapter four explores the intricacies of the medical practices of ancient Egyptian society and reveal its foundational aspects of what we call today holistic health or alternative medicine. In addition, the chapter considers how enslaved Africans embraced alternative health measures transmitted from anterior generations to treat an array of morbid health conditions, for themselves and the enslaver; an emancipatory health initiative given the alternative was the therapeutic modalities of a burgeoning, ineffective medical system in America.

The shift in the United States just over a century ago by which orthodox medicine became the dominant model of health care and surpassed holistic health practices, with the assistance of philanthropic contributions and research funding of big trusts, is reconsidered in Chapter 5. As a result, pharmaceutical usage was imbedded into the curriculum of university medical training and became the primary mode of therapy in the American health care system while natural health care establishments were placed on the periphery of professionalization. However, due to current iatrogenic circumstances and pharmaceuticals drugs being the number three killer in the United States, there is a gradual shift by individuals to seek other alternative means of health care to address their

health needs. And given the increased prevalence of existing “nontraditional” medical establishments available throughout the United States today, Africans now have an array of remedial options from alternative health care systems rather than the sole dependence of Western medicine for therapeutic services.

Chapter six explicates the significance of the publication of the health treatise *How to Eat to Live* by Elijah Muhammad in 1967, and as a result of its surfacing, the study examines the subsequent resurgence in the United States of naturalistic health care techniques utilized amongst a coterie of African holistic health practitioners, advocates of natural health care and health activists. Chapter seven reveals the posterior influence of Muhammad’s health activism with a particular exploration of the various elements of holistic health practiced by and for Black Philadelphians. As a result, in cities across America, Africans are more and more turning to nontraditional or alternative means to address their ailments, becoming fed up with the side effects and the toll that pharmaceuticals take on the body. In this regard, Africans are beginning to take heed to Muhammad’s nutritional call to arms and take matters of health into our own hands. More than ever, today, as this study has attempted to reveal, there are plethora of proficient holistic health practitioners and multifarious sources on health and wellness (e.g., publications, audiovisuals, conferences, seminars, healthy eating establishments, etc.) at our disposal to become cognizant, more knowledgeable, and assist us to obtain and maintain optimal health.

The tireless work of our elder African holistic health practitioners and natural health advocates should be not go unnoticed by the African masses. Rather, like with all

aspects of Africana culture, there is a need for the continual intergenerational transmission of knowledge to ensure the preservation of this olden Africana holistic health tradition continues.

In all, this study posits African thinkers take into account the extended genealogy unequivocally expressed in Kemetic culture of a tradition that has, and continues to enmesh and not distinguish between the dynamics of mind, body, and spirit (i.e., holistic) with the intake of natural elements to maintain a sound body and mind. Our ancestors along the Nile left elements of this tradition, which requires workers to become proficient in the translation and transliteration of Medew Netcher, unearth additional ancient African healing practices and link its findings with contemporary Africana expressions of holistic health concepts; an arduous intellectual enterprise the writer intends to employ.

The examination of the Africana holistic health tradition in the city of Philadelphia is but a preliminary glimpse into the health activism and advocacy of natural health care that currently takes place in Black communities across America. The long term goal of the writer is to examine numerous municipalities predominately African in America for evidence of a movement centered around holistic health and the presence of alternate health care services made available to members of its community.

A close examination of this long narrative of the usage of complimentary and naturalistic health techniques in Africana culture to address corporeal dis-eases therefore lends credence for foundationalists—whose epistemological operational premise is Nile Valley culture—to explore this enduring and vibrant Africana holistic health tradition and

incorporate it into and undergird our own nationalist intellectual work

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APPENDIX A:

EXEMPT REQUEST STATUS FOR IRB PROTOCOL



Office for Human Subjects Protections
Institutional Review Board
Medical Intervention Committees A1 & A2
Social and Behavioral Committee B

Student Faculty Conference Center
3340 N Broad Street - Suite 304
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19140
Phone: 215.707.3390 Fax: 215.707.9100
e-mail: irb@temple.edu

To: **NORMENT, NATHANIEL**

MEMORANDUM

CLA: AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES (18310)
From: Institutional Review Board
Date: 10 May-2012

Re: Exempt Request Status for IRB Protocol:
20602: "Ankh, Udjat, Seneb: 'Let Food Be Thy Medicine:' An Epistemic Examination on the Genealogy of the Africana Holistic Health Tradition with Preliminary Considerations In the City of Philadelphia, 1967 to the Present"

It has been determined by Expedited Review that this study qualifies for

exemption status as follows: 45 CFR 46 Protection of Human Subjects

Section 101 (b): Unless otherwise required by department or agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

Exemption 2: Anonymous Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Observations. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observations of public, unless (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subject's responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Nothing further is required from you at this time; however, if anything in your research design should change, you must notify the Institutional Review Board immediately.

Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact IRB at 215-707-3390.

APPENDIX B:
CONSENT FORM

**RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM
For Non-Recorded or Recorded Participation Options**

TITLE

“Ankh, Udjat, Seneb: “Let Food Be Thy Medicine:’ An Epistemic Examination on the Genealogy of the Africana Holistic Health Tradition with Preliminary Considerations in the City of Philadelphia, 1967 to the Present”

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Dr. Nathaniel Norment
Chair, African American Studies Department
Temple University

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR/ CONTACT:

Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta
Doctoral Student, African American Studies, Temple University
heru.heq-m-ta@temple.edu, 215-204-2769

ABOUT INTERVIEW

A consent form gives you information about the study and seeks your agreement to participate in a study. I will read the form aloud to you as you follow along. Please ask me to explain any words or information that you do not clearly understand. If you prefer to take this consent form home before signing to think about or discuss with family or friends before making your decision you may do so. After a week’s time, I will contact you to find out your decision, and if necessary, set up an interview. If you prefer to sign the consent form now, you will take with you a copy of this consent form.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

One of the critical issues that African Americans face today is the subject of health—there is a gap in understanding the distinction between conventional medicine and alternative medicine. A majority of African Americans seek conventional medicine to attend to their specific illnesses and/or disease(s) and do not take into consideration the plethora of options available that also address health concerns. The purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of the holistic health tradition, address its distinction from conventional medicine and highlight the availability of the multifarious holistic health practitioners and organizations available to African American families and the alternative medical services they offer to promote health and wellness. Heeding the call for social responsibility and community engagement, an initiative embraced by the Department of

African American Studies, I feel an obligation to help improve the quality of life for African Americans by providing alternative means of wellness that would otherwise be overlooked in mainstream medicine. I seek to meet these goals by interviewing adults who have been and are currently involved in holistic health as (a) certified holistic practitioners; (b) authors of holistic health and alternative cuisine; (c) natural food and/or naturopathic store owners, and (d) raw/vegan/vegetarian restaurant proprietors.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked a series of questions about your observation of and/or involvement in the tradition of holistic health and alternative medicine. As a participant in this study, you may choose to have your interview written, tape-recorded, or video-taped. In later pages of this consent form, you will be told in detail about those options.

The interview for this study will be very much like a conversation in that after we ask a few opening questions, you will get to tell your story on your own terms without a lot of interruption except for a clarifying questions we may ask now and then. We expect that most interviews will last about an hour; however, the length of the interview will depend upon how much you want to share. The estimated duration of the study is twelve (12) months. If the interview ends and you have additional items to add or questions to ask, subsequent interviews can be scheduled as your time permits.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty. You may discontinue your participation at any time by telling me you will not participate in an email, by phone or face-to-face within two (2) months of your original interview by contacting by any of the contact means listed on the front page of the consent form, and requesting that your interview no longer be used.

BENEFITS & COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

There are no direct material benefits or payments for your participation in this study. However, in giving your testimony, you will be adding to the historical record of African people in America as well as their practices of holistic health in assisting the African American community. I, the researcher, plan to show my gratitude by providing each participant with a copy of the completed doctoral dissertation as well as a small gift of appreciation.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

I do not anticipate any risk, however, for some people; it is possible that discomforts may directly result from remembering and recounting events that occurred. If you feel uncomfortable talking during the interview about a certain subject or that your recounting a particular incident or event may be putting yourself, your family and/or loved ones in

danger, you may elect not to answer. You may also skip questions, and come back to them later, or not at all, if you wish. You may take breaks or even terminate your participation at your will. Should you want to participate in this historical project without giving your name, that option is available to you and will be discussed further on later pages.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Temple University Institutional Review Board. Please contact them at (215) 707-3390 or e-mail them at: irb@temple.edu for any of the following: questions, concerns, or complaints about the research; questions about your rights; to obtain information; or to offer input.

SELECTING YOUR AUDIO, VIDEO, OR WRITTEN INTERVIEW AGREEMENT OPTIONS

Before starting your interview, I want to tell you about your various options. You may choose whichever option you are most comfortable. You can choose to have your interview video-taped, audio recorded, or handwritten.

If you permit me to interview you, you may tell me if your name may or may not be used. If you choose not to reveal your name, I will use a false name that you may choose from a list.

If you choose not to be identified by name, I ask that you try not to use real names in reference to yourself or others, and I will do the same. If you should happen to use your name or the name of someone else who you do not want to have included in the study, I can dub it out of the final presentation.

If you wish to tell your story in your video or voice but do not wish to have your video or voice played in public, I can also use technology to distort your voice or write out your story, and then use someone else's voice to narrate your story and your video or voice would not be used at any point in the documentary.

I will now go over what each type of interview involves. If you have any questions, please feel free to stop me and I will answer them before moving forward.

1. Video-Taped Interview

This option means that in public presentations of this study both your face and your voice will be captured on film and viewed by the public—just like on television. However, with this option you can also choose to:

- A. _____ be filmed facing the camera without concealing my true name, face and distorting my voice.

- B. _____ be filmed facing the camera with my face revealed using a false name.
- C. _____ be filmed facing the camera, but I want to have the researcher use computer technology during the tape editing stage to conceal my voice, with my identity concealed using a false name.

2. Tape Recorded Interview

The second option you may choose is the tape-recorded option. Even if I tape-record your interview, you get to decide how I use that tape and whether it is ever heard in public beyond the interview. However, with this option you can also choose to:

- A. _____ be audio- recorded without concealing my true name or distorting my voice.
- B. _____ be audio-recorded, using a false name.
- C. _____ be audio-recorded interview in public presentations of this study; but I want to have the researcher use computer technology during the tape editing stage to conceal my voice, with my identity concealed using a false name.
- D. _____ be audio-recorded, however, the researcher may not play the audiotape of my voice in public. The researcher may obtain actors to read my interview information for the study.

3. Written Interview

The third option is that you can tell me your story and I can write it with pen or paper and/or type it into a laptop computer. With this option neither your face nor voice will be recorded. Although this option may require more time, it is the best way of completely concealing your identity if you feel the need to do so.

- A. _____ written interview without concealing my true name.
- B. _____ written interview, using a false name.

Do you have any questions about the interview options?

Now have heard the three interviewing options, please place a check mark in the space next to the option you prefer.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All documents and information pertaining to this research study will be kept confidential in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Because this project is aimed at contributing to the history and legacy of African educational traditional and alternative movements, this researcher, like all historical research, plans to use participants' names in recording their stories. However, should you wish to not have your name used, you may elect this option. This would mean that when the results of this study are presented publicly or published, the researcher would not identify you by name. The results may also be kept confidential in that, when the results of this study are presented publicly or published, the researcher would not give your name, or any other information that would allow anyone to associate that information with you—if you wish.

Signature Block for Capable Adult

Your signature documents your permission to take part in this research.

DO NOT SIGN THIS FORM AFTER THIS DATE →

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Signature of subject

Date

Printed name of subject

Signature of person obtaining consent

Date

Printed name of person obtaining consent

**APPENDIX C:
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

RESEARCH PROTOCOL

I. Abstract of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of the holistic health tradition, address its distinction from conventional medicine and highlight the availability of the multifarious holistic health practitioners and organizations available to African American families and the alternative medical services they offer to promote health and wellness. Heeding the call for social responsibility and community engagement, an initiative embraced by the discipline of African American Studies, I feel an obligation to help improve the quality of life for African Americans by providing alternative means of wellness that would otherwise be overlooked in mainstream medicine. I seek to meet these goals by interviewing adults who have been and are currently involved in holistic health as (a) certified holistic practitioners; (b) authors of holistic health and alternative cuisine; (c) natural food and/or naturopathic store owners, and (d) raw/vegan/vegetarian restaurant proprietors.

II. Protocol Title

“Ankh, Udjat, Seneb: ‘Let Food Be Thy Medicine.’ An Epistemic Examination on the Genealogy of the Africana Holistic Health Tradition with Preliminary Considerations in the City of Philadelphia, 1967 to the Present”

III. Investigators

A. Principal Investigator

Nathaniel Norment, Ph.D.
Department Chair, African American Studies, Temple University
Nnorme01@Temple.edu, 215-204-5073

B. Student Investigator

Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta
Doctoral Student, African American Studies, Temple University
heru.heq-m-ta@temple.edu, 215-204-2769

IV. Objectives

A. Describe the objectives and/or goals of your research.

One of the critical issues that African Americans face today is the subject of health—there is a gap in understanding the distinction between conventional medicine and alternative medicine. A majority of African Americans seek conventional medicine to attend to their specific illnesses and/or disease(s) and do not take into consideration the plethora of options available that also address health concerns. The purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of the holistic health tradition, address its distinction from conventional medicine and highlight the availability of the multifarious holistic health practitioners and organizations available to African American families and the alternative medical services they offer to promote health and wellness. Heeding the call for social responsibility and community engagement, an initiative embraced by the discipline of African American Studies, I feel an obligation to help improve the quality of life for African Americans by providing alternative means of wellness that would otherwise be overlooked in mainstream medicine. I seek to meet these goals by interviewing adults who have been and are currently involved in holistic health as (a) certified holistic practitioners; (b) authors of holistic health and alternative cuisine; (c) natural food and/or naturopathic store owners, and (d) raw/vegan/vegetarian restaurant proprietors.

V. Rationale and Significance

A. Describe the relevant prior experience and gaps in current knowledge.

Currently there is minimal literature on the theoretical ideas and effectiveness of holistic health and alternative medicine in juxtaposition to conventional medicine's efficacy in treating illnesses and/or diseases of African Americans. This research will fill in the gap of scholarly discourse surrounding health, by highlighting alternative medicinal practices utilized by holistic health practitioners and proprietors to better serve African American communities.

B. Describe any relevant preliminary data.

According to the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) National Vital Statistics Report the top three (3) leading causes of death for African Americans suffer are: (1) Heart disease; (2) Cancer; and 3) Cerebrovascular Disease (i.e., Stroke). In the same vein, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reported that the number of Americans uninsured are at an all-time high, with the African-

American population comprising 20 percent of the uninsured. Given the influx of obesity and life-threatening diseases that plague the U.S., and disproportionately African Americans, as well as the lack of insurance coverage available, holistic health practices could serve as another option to address the growing concern of disease in American society.

C. Provide the scientific or scholarly background, rationale, and significance of the Human Research based on the existing literature and how will it add to existing knowledge.

Most of the structural educational research on the health of African Americans has focused primarily on conventional medicine as the viable option to identify symptoms, diagnose illnesses and treat diseases. With the alarming rates of poor health among African American women, men and children in areas such as Philadelphia, more research should be invested in exploring the efficacy of holistic health and alternative medicinal practices in comparison to standard medical procedures. With the information on holistic health being so limited, human research, through in-depth interviews with holistic health practitioners, natural food and naturopathic store owners, authors on holistic health and alternative medicine, and restaurant proprietors of raw, vegan and vegetarian cuisine will add to the existing knowledge of ways to make available information on holistic health practices, with the intent to improve the health of African Americans.

VI. Resources and Setting

A. Describe the number and qualifications of your staff, their experience in conducting research, their knowledge of the local study sites, culture, and society.

Staff - Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, Student Investigator

Qualifications

Doctoral Student, Department of African American Studies

Experience in conducting research

Two-time Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Research Fellow, 2006 and 2007

Research Methods, Spring 2008

Research Theory and Methods, Fall 2009

Ethnography, Spring 2010

Knowledge of the local study sites, culture, and society

Professional and Leadership Memberships:

Holistic Health Practitioner with sixteen (16) years experience

Member of the African Holistic Health Chapter NY

Member of the Association of Study Classical African Civilizations Mid-Atlantic Region

B. Describe the sites at which your research team will conduct the research. If applicable, describe:

The site at which the research will be conducted is Temple University’s main. All interview data will be stored and analyzed on a password-protected computer in my office, located in Gladfelter Hall, Room 621. As well, the data will be stored on an external hard-drive, which will be locked in a file cabinet. Original transcripts will also be locked in the same file cabinet. Only the Student Investigator will have access.

VII. Prior Approvals

A. Describe any approvals that will be obtained prior to commencing the research. (e.g., school, external site, funding agency, laboratory, radiation safety, or biosafety approval.)

Not Applicable

VIII. Study Design

A. Recruitment Methods

i. About how many subjects will you need

I will need a total of twenty six (26) participants distributed as listed below.

Certified Holistic Health Practitioners:	n = 10
Authors of Holistic Health and/or Alternative Cuisine:	n = 6
Natural Food and/or Naturopathic Store Owners:	n = 6
Raw/Vegan/Vegetarian Restaurant Proprietors:	n = 5
<hr/>	
Total:	27

Currently I have access to ten (11) potential subjects.

ii. Describe when, where, and how potential subjects will be recruited.

During the summer, when school is not in session, and at the beginning of the fall semester potential subjects will be recruited. To provide a diverse sample, subjects will be recruited from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the surrounding metropolitan area, and other geographical locations in need be.

iii. Describe the source of subjects.

In the Philadelphia region; I have contacts with three (3) Certified Holistic Health Practitioners; one (2) Naturopathic Store Owners; and two (3) Raw/Vegan/Vegetarian Restaurant Proprietors.

In the Washington D.C. region; I have contacts with one (1) Certified Holistic Health Practitioners; one (1) Author of Alternative Cuisine; one (2) Natural Food and Naturopathic Store Owners; and two (2) Raw/Vegan/Vegetarian Restaurant Proprietors.

In the New York City metropolitan area; I have contacts with six (6) Certified Holistic Health Practitioners; five (5) Authors of Holistic Health and Alternative Cuisine; and three (3) Natural Food and Naturopathic Store Owners.

iv. Describe the methods that will be used to identify potential subjects.

Participants will be obtained through:

1. **Personal References and Literature Review:** Interviewer will contact subjects based on personal references and literature review findings, as well as those who fit the various respondents' categories.
2. **Snowballing:** The researcher will ask interviewees to give my contact information to their associates who fit my selection criteria. If any of those associates who fit the criteria contact me, I will invite them to participate in the study.

v. Describe materials that will be used to recruit subjects. Include copies of these documents with the application.

All subjects will be recruited verbally (by phone or face-to-face) or in writing by email. A sample email is below.

Greetings _____:

One of the critical issues that African Americans face today is the subject of health—there is a gap in understanding the distinction between conventional medicine and alternative medicine. A majority of African Americans seek conventional medicine to attend to their specific illnesses and/or disease(s) and do not take into consideration the plethora of options available that also address health concerns. The purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of the holistic health tradition, address its distinction from conventional medicine and highlight the availability of the multifarious holistic health practitioners and organizations available to African American families and the alternative medical services they offer to promote health and wellness. Heeding the call for social responsibility and community engagement, an initiative embraced by the Department of African American Studies, I feel an obligation to help improve the quality of life for African Americans by providing alternative means of wellness that would otherwise be overlooked in mainstream medicine. I seek to meet these goals by interviewing adults who have been and are currently involved in holistic health as (a) certified holistic practitioners; (b) authors of holistic health and alternative cuisine; (c) natural food and/or naturopathic store owners, and (d) Raw/Vegan/Vegetarian restaurant proprietors.

Based upon (my research/ by recommendation by _____) I would like to schedule a time to sit down and interview you for this study because of your expertise and knowledge on this subject. If you are interested, please reply by email or phone (215) 204 - 2769.

*Thank you,
Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta
Student Investigator
Department of African American Studies
Temple University*

- vi. ***Describe any payments to subjects, including the amount, timing (at the end of the study or pro-rated for partial study participation), method (e.g., cash, check, gift card), and whether subjects will experience a delay in receiving the payment.***

No compensation will be provided to participants. I expect that most interviews will last about an hour; however, the length of the interview will depend upon how much you want to share.

B. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

- i. Describe the criteria that define who will be included or excluded in your final study sample.*

Respondents who fit the above-listed criteria and want to participate will be eligible to participate in the study. However, we will not interview individuals who are minors and adults with special health problems.

C. Study Timelines

The duration of a subject's participation in the study is three (3) months.

The duration anticipated to enroll all study subjects is five (5) months.

The estimated date for the investigators to complete this study including primary analyses is one year.

D. Study Procedures and Data Analysis

- i. Describe and explain the study design.*

I will conduct face-to-face interviews with participants at a location and time mutually agreeable to both parties.

- ii. Describe the time that you will devote to conducting and completing the trial within the agreed trial period.*

I will devote three (3) months to conduct and complete the interviews, upon approval of the study by IRB.

- iii. Describe your process to ensure that all persons assisting with the trial are adequately informed about the protocol, the investigational product(s), and their trial-related duties and functions.*

Upon meeting with the subject:

The researcher will read the Statement of Informed Consent aloud with the respondent. The general consent form as well as the audio

consent form—located on _____ will be read aloud by the researcher and then signed by the subject.

The research will ask the participant if they have any questions.

After the participant has had the opportunity to ask questions, they will then sign the Statement of Informed Consent.

The interview will then begin the interview with based upon the list of interview questions. (See attached document on page____) Please note that depending upon participants' responses; interviewers may have to create follow-up questions to gain clarity.

iv. Provide a description of all procedures being performed and when they are performed, including procedures being performed to monitor subjects for safety or minimize risks.

1. *The following script will be read to potential subjects prior to their agreeing to be interviewed.*

Hello, I am Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, a graduate student conducting research for my dissertation at Temple University. As an educator and African American Studies graduate student, it is my intention to examine the tradition of African holistic health as practiced and promoted by African Americans as an alternative to conventional medicine. With that being said, I am contacting you because you have been mentioned as a key holistic health practitioner/author of holistic health or alternative cuisine/natural food or naturopathic store owner/restaurant proprietor, and/or participant involved in the holistic health tradition.

I would like to schedule a time to sit down and interview you for this study because of your expertise and knowledge on this subject. Would you be willing to be interviewed and audio and/or video-recorded?

2. *If the subject does not want to be interviewed:*

Thank you for your time and have a nice day.

3. *If the subject agrees to be interviewed:*

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this study. What date and time will you be available to meet?

Wait for response.

May we meet at a central location to conduct your interview?

Wait for a response.

Thank you (subject's name). I look forward to our meeting on (date) at (time).

4. *Upon meeting with the subject:*

The researcher will read the Statement of Informed Consent aloud with the respondent. The general consent form as well as the audio consent form—located on _____ will be read aloud by the researcher and then signed by the subject.

The research will ask the participant if they have any questions.

After the participant has had the opportunity to ask questions, they will then sign the Statement of Informed Consent.

The interview will then begin the interview based upon the list of interview questions. (See attached document on page____) Please note that depending upon participants' responses, interviewers may have to create follow-up questions to gain clarity.

v. ***Describe procedures taken to lessen the probability or magnitude of risks.***

I do not anticipate any risks, however I will avoid topic, which may trigger an emotional response such as personal issues.

vi. ***Describe the source records that will be used to collect data about subjects. Attach all surveys, scripts, and data collection forms.***

The respondents will be asked the following questions:

What is the official title and description of the line of work that you are currently you in?

How do you feel the work that you do contributes to the health and wellness of the African American community?

If you were to explain it to an individual who is not familiar with alternative forms of medicine, what would be your basic definition of holistic health?

What are your definitions of holistic health and alternative medicine?

How did you come to know what you know about holistic health or alternative medicine?

When exactly (the year) did you come about this new insight towards alternative medicine and a holistic way of life and healing?

What compelled you to get into and/or embrace holistic health or alternative modes of healing?

In which decade would you say the holistic health movement began in: (1) America; and (2) in the African American community?

Which decade would you say the holistic health movement reached its height in: (1) America; and (2) the African American community?

Was there a specific name attached to the holistic health movement during this era? If so, what was the name of that movement?

Who were the instrumental figures and significant organizations of the holistic health movement during its inception and its heyday?

Currently, who would you say are the prominent individuals and noteworthy organizations practicing holistic health in your area or abroad in the United States?

Do you think eating healthy is necessary for African Americans to feel better? If so, can you elaborate?

What suggestions would you make to meat-eaters in order to get them to consider to eat to live or embrace a healthy lifestyle?

If any, what other suggestions to promote optimal health and healing could you offer individuals that ingest flesh as part of their diet and have poor eating habits?

Have you written any articles or books on holistic health or alternative medicine? If so, what is the title(s), publisher's name(s) and year of publication(s)?

Are there any audio or audiovisual media on holistic health that you have produced (or has been produced on your behalf by someone else)? If so, what is the title(s) and specific year of their publication(s)?

Is there anything I have not asked or that we have not talked about that you feel is imperative for me to know as it relates to holistic health and/or alternative medicine?

vii. *Describe the data that will be collected, including long-term follow-up.*

Face-to-face interview data will be collected. If required I may conduct a single follow-up interview with participants in a three (3) month window from the time of their original interview.

E. Withdrawal of Subjects

i. *Describe anticipated circumstances under which subjects will be withdrawn from the research without their consent.*

Within three (3) months from the original interview, participants will have the opportunity to withdraw their interview from the research study. These stipulations will be indicated in the consent form.

ii. *Describe any procedures for orderly termination.*

Participants may terminate from the research study by email or phone correspondence to the Student Investigator. These stipulations will be indicated in the consent form.

iii. *Describe procedures that will be followed when subjects withdraw from the research, including partial withdrawal from procedures with continued data collection.*

Upon withdraw from the research study the participant's interview data will be destroyed within a week.

F. Privacy & Confidentiality

i. *Describe whether the study will use or disclose subjects' Protected Health Information (PHI).*

Not Applicable

- ii. ***Describe the steps that will be taken to secure the data (e.g., training, authorization of access, password protection, encryption, physical controls, certificates of confidentiality, and separation of identifiers and data) during storage, use, and transmission.***

All interview data will be stored and analyzed on a password-protected computer in my office, located in Gladfelter Hall, Room 621. As well, the data will be stored on an external hard-drive, which will be locked in a file cabinet. Original transcripts will also be locked in the same file cabinet. Only the Student Investigator will have access to, be responsible for and transmit the data. All file names will be identified by a location, position and number. For example, “Philadelphia – Holistic Health Practitioner – 1.”

The original interview data will be destroyed within six months of the interview or upon the completion of the dissertation.

Upon completion of all interviews during travel, recorded data will be transported by Heru Setepenra Heq-m-Ta, Student Investigator, on a password-protected laptop and then transferred to the password-protected computer upon arrival to Temple University.

Describe the steps that will be taken to protect subjects’ privacy interests. “Privacy interest” refers to a person’s desire to place limits on whom they interact or whom they provide personal information.

Should the subjects wish to remain anonymous, they will be allowed to do so. In the attached consent forms are different options they may choose from regarding the type of interview that can be conducted. They may wish to have their faces and names disassociated with the information given during their interviews. In cases such as these, the researcher will oblige the subject and will not disclose their identities.

Anonymity

Individuals who wish to remain anonymous will receive from the researcher a list of pseudonyms from which they will select a name that I will use for them throughout the interview and in the research report. I will ask them to avoid using their real names or other identifying information throughout their contact

with me. Should I come to know a participant's name or if a participant accidentally provides this information while being interviewed, I will not attach this information to interviews and will erase this information should it be recorded.

If participants choose to not use their voice, we will offer a voice over option to distort their voice. If they choose to not use their face we will just use an audio recorder.

iii. Describe what steps you will take to make the subjects feel at ease with the research situation in terms of the questions being asked and the procedures being performed. "At ease" does not refer to physical discomfort, but the sense of intrusiveness a subject might experience in response to questions, examinations, and procedures.

Participants will have the ability to select the time and place of the meeting to conduct the interview.

Within the consent form, participants in this study will also have the right to:

1. not answer any question that they do not wish to answer;
2. quit the study;
3. change their mind about allowing the interviewer to keep their original interview.

IX. Risks to Subjects

A. List the reasonably foreseeable risks, discomforts, hazards, or inconveniences to the subjects related the subjects' participation in the research. Include the probability, magnitude, duration, and reversibility of the risks. Consider physical, psychological, social, legal, and economic risks.

I do not anticipate any serious risks; however, some topics may elicit some minimal discomfort.

B. If applicable, indicate which procedures may have risks to the subjects that are currently unforeseeable.

If participants happen to feel any discomfort, I will allow them some time to regroup.

C. If applicable, indicate which procedures may have risks to an embryo or fetus if the subject is or becomes pregnant.

Not applicable.

D. If applicable, describe risks to others who are not subjects.

Not applicable.

X. Potential Benefits to Subjects

A. Describe the potential benefits that individual subjects may experience from taking part in the research. Include the probability, magnitude, and duration of the potential benefits.

Individuals interested in holistic health will benefit from the study because the research will provide essential information on alternative ways to diagnose illnesses, treat diseases and make available to African Americans a plethora of holistic health practitioners, numerous written works on alternative medicine and cuisine that promote a healthy lifestyle.

I will disseminate the results of this study to selected individuals and families, and selected holistic health practitioners and organizations. I will also make specific recommendations as to how various entities can use my results to improve the quality of health for African American women, men and children.

B. Indicate if there is no direct benefit. Do not include benefits to society or others.

No subject will monetarily benefit from participating in this study.

XI. Costs to Subjects

A. Describe any costs that subjects may be financially responsible for due to study participation.

No compensation will be provided to participants.

XII. Informed Consent

The consent process will take place at the time of the interview.

The maximum waiting period available between informing the prospective subject and obtaining the consent will be one (1) week.

Upon a follow-up interview, the consent form will be read again to ensure clarity and ongoing consent.

Attached you will find a copy of the consent form to be used.

XIII. Vulnerable Populations

The research study will not involve individuals who are vulnerable to coercion or undue influence.

APPENDIX D:
TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEWS

Interview with Dick Gregory

DG: Now if you could imagine ninety years ago the assumption of being gay in the black community...and you know King James was such a strange homosexual. He had it so bad that he killed his momma. His lover was Lord Buckingham who Buckingham Palace is named after. That shows you how ignorant black folks are when they get away from the spirit and get into the other bullshit. He would rather for you to believe that he was gay than tell you what really happened to him. These white folks that adopted him. They castrated him so he couldn't fuck with one of their daughters. This shit didn't just start its been here. We want to believe shit is bad. No it's already happened. I tell people go ask the Indian.

If I could write down 100 people who ever lived in the history of the planet Buddha, Muhammad, Jesus number one would be John Brown. John Brown was an abolitionist. Ain't no warriors been like the abolitionists in the history. They were willing to kill whites and be killed to free me. Here is the scary part: Fredrick Douglass horror in life was he couldn't be part of the abolitionist. These are decent white folks who kill white folks for us say "you black folks is too child-like." John Brown led the march on Harper's Ferry. I grew up not even knowing what Harper's Ferry was. That was the

United States government ammunition center. They made rifle's, guns and ammunition. They had four divisions over regions to guard. John Brown, October 16th decided that he was going to raid it, 100 million guns. I'll show you how the universal vibe works and how fear works. He asked Fredrick Douglass to go. When Harriet Tubman died on her deathbed she said, "my only regret is I wasn't apart of Harper's Ferry to die with John Brown. That's why I say now; these niggas in America don't know the real stories. It's like Dr. King's mom and dad were conservative republicans. His grandmother and granddad were conservative, right wing republicans that would make Clarence Thomas look like the NAACP.

HSH: On his mother side?

DG: Yes. So then you see there is a force, because King didn't learn none of that shit at home. You must remember back then, them Negroes weren't talking about liberation. They were talking about picture nice Ph.D.'s. "You need education to prove to these white folks that we aren't ignorant." There is no word in none of the bible called smart or intelligence. The word is wisdom. The white boy changed it to smart and intelligence, something that he could grade you on and give you a test on. If he could grade wisdom he'd build a pyramid. All this stuff about going to school and...that is a violation of God. If you had seventy people here today of all ages, all kinds of sicknesses, all kinds of health, we could all leave here now and run or walk to California. But, you got to do it at your own pace. If your running in the women's marathon, brother. Then my momma,

sisters and daughter's would be stupid trying to keep up with you. The problem is when I get to California I'm going to kick your ass. As long as I am doing it at my own pace, you know I'll be in California. You need to get ready for a good ass kicking or kick some ass. Violation is a violation of the universal god. We were never meant to run. Running is ungodly and unspiritual and heathenism just like reading and writing is ungodly and unspiritual and heathenism. We are so locked into this bullshit. "If you don't know your history..." shit I'm born. My history is already recorded. I went to a conference, Budapest and they paid me \$40,000. I get there the woman say, "how did you know reading is a violation of god?" I said, "how did you now I know?" She said, "why you ask me that?" "Because you have to know that I know and I know that's right." I said, "mine was simple. When I get off the plane in Tokyo I can't read the Japanese paper." The universal god that I pray to has never made anything that changes when you cross a border. There is no American way to laugh. There is no Japanese way to have a child. That is how you know. You just...measure the deductions. It's this guy here, Tessler. If you sit and look under the six you will see in very small print...you see Tessler? There was no scientist on the planet that we know of in modern times when he was nine years old in Budapest he said, "If I could just get to New York and see the Niagara Falls, I could change the world." He was nine years old. Before he got there Thomas Edison had come up with direct current. If you don't understand this you wont understand this white boy. Direct current was a marvel, "lights!," but you didn't know when your house would blow up. Everybody burned to death. These white people then said it is worth it to have this. When Tessler got here he invented alternate current. That doesn't happen so when

they put the first electric streetcar with direct current in it. Sometime you could hear it and everyone jumps off, because direct current blows up. They knew they were going to blow up and they started running and that electric looked for a warm body to ground itself. That is why they named the Brooklyn baseball team the Brooklyn Dodgers. They dodging and they hit your body. That current has to ground itself. He had to fight the folks that had backed Edison to get his thoughts through. Harps? He invented that accidentally. They sold it right after he died and took all of his stuff. He was sitting and the building started...an earthquake was created. Ever hear people talking about the dust bowl? Before we were born it was made. The dust bowl isn't real. One day we will stop dealing with Egypt. The white boy pumped that into them, because they are the lightest African on the continent of Africa. That is what that shit is about. 6,000 before the Nubians that is where the real shit is. We are locked in, because we are looking for something to hold onto. The Egyptians? Please. The Egyptians took it and made stuff out of it like Egyptians who fitted the police. They are called Conscience On Patrol (C.O.P.). The color of your conscience is blue. They call men in England. You go all over the world and all city cops uniforms have to be blue. You look here or any city. State trooper and sheriffs can be any color. Men in blue. Now when the British came in changed it to Constable On Patrol. On this highway, you see the police officer over there? That is your conscience, they weren't suppose to shoot anybody that is what conscience do. That is why it was called conscience on patrol, They took this (brain) and gave us this (restraint). That is why you didn't rob anybody. That's why it was called Conscience on Patrol. The British changed it to Constable on Patrol, but why don't the

British carry guns? If you had children in this house then the ceilings and walls were painted with lead paint would they get lead poisoning. If a child can get lead poisoning from paint on the walls what if that happened to a cop if they wear lead bullets around their belly? That's why the cowboys were called gun slingers, because the gun swung away from their body and they could only "dead eye" because they could only have seven shots. America's cops carry guns. Now you take it back in the universe and when you tie it back in with the universe more American cops die from suicide than they do in the line of duty. 90% of cops are killed with their own gun. The number one divorce occupation is cops and their second wives are whores. If you don't understand that then you don't understand why they put additives in food. If I got lead pipes for my water then they have already watered me down. George Washington Carver came through and he goes up there to Tuskege and him and Henry Ford was like this. The Ford boys did not invent a car. The Duryea brothers invented the car in Massachusetts. The boys told him, but all over the world Ford is not accredited with inventing a car. He is credited in mass production. Ford goes up to see George Washington Carver in Tuskegee. I don't know how Ford could love him, because he had his hate for Jews. Ford boys sided with Hitler.

HSH: He has a book called the *International Jew*.

DG: And he felt that way about Jews who looked like you how do you feel...so I never understood that relationship. But he told Ford, he said, "Mr. Ford if you go back to Detroit and take this research I got on plants (they were building one car at a time) you

will produce more than one car at a time.” That is why all over the world mass production is called the plant. That nigga did that. We go all around the world talking that bullshit and all the stuff that happened right here we don’t even know it. All over the world mass production is called the plant. The reason I’m bringin you this is because they castrated him. The universe doesn’t give a damn. You violate the laws and the laws will violate you. We hear about the 1930 depression that was caused by George Washington Carver, but he don’t it. If I got 31 people in here making this here and another 100 people making those t-shirts you gave and then you come in and show us a system that we can mass produce him then 90% of these people get laid off. Whatever you have mass production you get people laid off and your system will fall if you can’t find a way to find mass consumption. Roosevelt figured it out that is why he came in with the WPA. I bring a white to work that digs a whole that doesn’t need to be dug and then his cousin comes that evening to fill it up and they get a check every two weeks that says I work for my money. People said if that depression hadn’t ended we’d have a whole all the way to China. Hear me now. That is the whole system would have collapsed. You listen to his fire-side chats he never told anybody about how poor and rough at times. He guaranteed you’d have two chickens and a pot of corn, rice... He didn’t say that he would put them there, but that is how you deal with people that are scared. Consequently, what happened is...now the second time we had this happen it was the Internet. How many people you don’t need now. You could have written down everything in your life since you was a child and you could put it on a disk smaller than this. I had a Chinese man say we have something that we would love for you to be apart

of. It was I-Cloud, the information is stored in the clouds. Its why that shit works now. Its not here. It is in the clouds out there handing in the ether. What happens is all these people are laid off. Fuck a middle class. They were the most ignorant white folk. Niggas ain't middle class. People talking about we live in a community. We don't live in no damn community! If we lived in a community, you control your cops, you control the schools, finance etc. People, "black folks need to get together." I remember Jesse Jackson's wife was trying to buy a buildings all around Howard theatre. They knew 40 years ago what they were going to do with this They just told here that the people didn't want to sell it and we blame ourself, "well black folk need to get in business." Or "black athletes need to do this." All them niggas know how to do is play football. They don't know how to do nothing else. You never heard of a jew talking about athletes should be doing this. They have business people. How long did it take to get where yall are? You looked in the book and knew it was a trick. Consequently, when you look at Obama come in and ...you know an ol' white boy told me something a long time ago. I trusted him so I didn't have to figure it out. He said, "man, the most evil, nasty people on the planet is the left not the right. Let me explain to you. If the right decide they will kills you they hire an assassin to blow your brains out. If the left decide they will kills you and we go to a football game every Saturday let the bomb stay with your mom. All of these white folks that ran it aint hard for you to like me when Im not around you. It ain't hard for you to like me when you don't have to come in contact with me. They live in the suburbs and a couple of ya'll live out there with them. Obama will take care of it. That nigga is brilliant. Then here Herman Cain comes down, a brother smarter than Obama,

but they bought him a buckwheat script so they embraced him. “We have room for two niggas. This brilliant nigga and buckwheat.” They loved him. The tea party just embraced him. The tea party ain’t racist. They were racist before they were tea party. They are scared. We don’t understand how scared white folks are. This country will not last another five years. They are scared. You don’t understand fear. They are freighted to death. We don’t see that. IF you look at the number one seller of dog food, is Alpo. On your way back go and get a can of Alpo. They’re taking the dogs picture off of Alpo. None of its products have dog food in it. White folks are eating dog food. You don’t know that, because they don’t run around yelling and screaming. I;m doing it on a show and guy says, “well. Do you black folks eat it?” “Yeah. They eat dog food.” I got research papers from Chicago. In the early 60s, Lorraine Landers, a brilliant man from the University of Chicago, I said, “man, I need you to do me a favor. I need you to go in Cook county where the dogs are.” He comes back. In Cook county which Chicago is in Cook county 85% of all dogs were in the white suburbs. Take a rest and come back two weeks and what to do time and motion study and show me where the dog food is being sold. 62% of all dog food was being sold in Chicago so niggas been eating dog food for a long time. Unbeknownst to most folks is more rigid law for producing dog food than hamburger meat. I say ok here is what we need to do now, I need to find somebody who eats dog food and will let me come and eat some with them. He finds me a good guy. I want to eat some with him so I go buy...on the weekend there is a sale on dog food. You can get 12 cans for like 4 cents a can. I go to the pantry and they have all the labels off of it. My dignity is destroyed I don’t even want to look up there and see the dogs picture

and everything. They make it like corned beef hash. I say that to say this is what white folks...a friend of mine has a meat packing company. His wife is a vegetarian. They make 99% of the Spam. 6 months ago I called and it looked like 100%. I've been calling him for three years. They put 8 more factories together. 7 days a week around the clock white folks are eating Spam. We don't know this. We are so busy concentrating on this ignorant white boy. We don't need to worry about him. The weakest gun can take him out. These families that is embarrassed and ashamed. Hateful. It ain't too hard to nigga like it ain't too hard for me to hate a white person when I'm scared. As long as there is middle class have good jobs that they can send their children to good schools. They don't even know all the Ivy League, all Ivy League schools was created slave owners, because they had dumb white boys. That is why Europeans the filthy rich ones are selling dog to those schools. We with all our bullshit... I was the first negro to give a commencement address at Harvard. They didn't want me so I saw that little letter and I said, "don't answer back." You are going to write me a letter that the answer be in the letter, because you are not going to hear from me. Some white students came by, "Mr. Gregory. Um, in two weeks we have graduation and they keep saying you will be our speaker." "Should I be? Why?" Well, this is the first time they ever let the students pick the commencement speaker. And the reason is that this is 1975. 50 years ago the class of 1925 that class produced more billionaires than any other Harvard class. They want to soak them out of their money and they want to impress them and graduation students they leave before graduation. They don't care anything about that. They already got their degree. They are trying to find somebody that will keep the students there so that's why they got the

students to pick the speaker. “And we pick you.” I said, “well, you go back and tell your Dean under one condition I do not want that \$10,000.” Honorarium and lord knows I don’t want nothing in my house with their name on it. They agreed. I was telling them, “I didn’t come here to speak to you older folks just to the younger folks. If you can change I don’t think you can, but Harvard and MIT have more suicides in one year than all the Big Ten schools have in twenty. So that they got you believing that this is the citadel of intellectuality, but from the God I pray to this is called a ‘bowl of filth.’” That is not counting the one with problems of drug, alcohol and loose their mind. When you look at how them white folks said to George Washington Carver, “we’d like for you to create something for us that out of we could get ink, paint, glue, plastic, and nylon wear.” The soybean. You are not supposed to eat that. That is why we sit here now the fastest growing cancer group in America. In the old days when they came out with the soy burger it was the hottest thing. Then they started making these little report. Then they started doing veggie burgers with soy. I’ll tell you how the universe works. He created the system when you can mass-produce and look how many of ya’ll died. Now, 99% of vegetarians in America is white folks and are getting cancer from eating soy. That is how the universe works. I don’t work this way. Consequently, when you look at where the universe comes from and the way it works. Africa is a continent. Europe is a continent, but when it come my turn white folks and black folks can be ignorant. We think Africa we don’t see it as a continent. We see it as a country. Africa! Africa! When you break down Africa, the continent is larger than India, China and Europe put together. Here is what happened. You are Igbo. I hate you. You are Asian. I will jump on your ass.

Fucking your boys in the ass. That is one country on the continent so everybody that is producing something good... If I take two hundred candy bars I will bring my scientist in and we will pick the best thing out of each one of these candy bars. It ain't that much, but you have to find one thing in it that is good. Over here we have two hundred items that came out of two hundred candy bars that is the best. Now we make a candy bar out of that. That is who we are. I ain't nothing like you in Africa. Nigga you from this country and I was way up here. He brought us over here and wouldn't our hate for each other so I'm fucking the Igbo and now he has created a super nigga on it's ass, an African American. He went over there and took this whole continent. Its like me going to Europe and force them on each other and there is no such thing as Paris and France and Germany he has made one super fucking race man. Out of them measley years, we were just hating one another, because "you ain't apart of my tribe. I don't give a damn about you. Put some shit on your face, bitch!" That is who is laying in the cut. They don't need you niggas. "Fuck ya'll!" Where you get your money? Every time I go and get on a plane and go to a peace rally they take my tax money after I buy a loaf a bread to drop bombs on women and children. So when they fall on my ass and kill mine, "hey! I wonder what took your ass so long." This what this shit is about, because once you accept injustice; and we have, we become injustice. Once you live in filth, you become filthy. We are just filthy. Unbeknownst, if I read a lot of black books and a lot about Africa...if you live in filth you are filthy. The best way to prove that is go by a paper mill. You ever been by a paper mill? Nothing stinks, but the people don't smell it. Niggas in America! This filthy, stinky bitch stinks so bad, but we've been here so long we don't smell it. Don't

care how many Ph.D.'s you got, how many billions when you get so fucked up with God's intelligence can't smell how you stink than you don't belong to that party no more. When you sit and look at this spook, they don't even know who they are. Part of that thing I gave you on the indigo children. They waited long enough for our help. They don't need us. Revolution is nothing but an extension of evolution. Evolution is a gradual natural change that when it gets to revolution there is quick change. We take this woman here. She can't read, can't write, never had nothing and she's pregnant and you can't bring all the scientist and all the military in here and then when that water breaks you can't keep that baby in her. All the bombs...universe says when you are 9 months pregnant when my evolution leads into revolution I will drop that baby. That is what we are. When I said I would list out of the 100 people that have ever lived in the history, Jesus, Buddha, Muhammad number one would be John Brown. John Brown did something he didn't have to do. It's like I tell people about King. Vegetarians don't know anything about this. "You know Hitler was a vegetarian?" Them white folks don't know this so they just go off. They think when they stop eating meat I paid my debt. I ain't paid no debt. Martin Luther King was my good friend. I said, "we vegetarians think all it is to be a vegetarian. I know Martin he is one of the kindest, nicest, sweetest humans on the planet. He threw booty out the car. So one day I might consider that diet might not be the answer by itself." I met vegetarians yelling and screaming at their children. I met vegetarians don't give a damn. Consequently, King...I'm with him. I know him. He is just as kind and peaceful. And so when you stop and thing about here is John Brown said "I'm going to lead a march on Harper's Ferry." He has 26 people, 5

black and on October 16th. My birthday is October 12th. For the last 15 years on October 12, I go to Harper's Ferry just to hug the spirit. Fuck niggas! Kiss my ass. I'm taking in order, because had it not been for him we wouldn't have been here. The world wouldn't have been the same. Ya'll would walk around talking about some, "fucking pyramids" and shit and don't know what this man did. That is the universe saying, "Fuck ya'll! I don't take no shit from ya'll." Every 100 niggas out here into the African shit most of them don't smile. I can go around the world and recognize a hoe by her demeanor— the way she walks and the way she talks. My grandmother don't tell me she's a Christian and I don't know she one something is wrong with that. I can recognize a hoe by her demeanor, but I can't recognize a Christian by they Christian principles. These African niggas walking around here and their head is all fucked up, twisted neck and all that bullshit. I never saw King like that. Regardless of how tired or how scared he was. So that is this new piece that is coming. I look at this man here, "wow! Man he had two children." I would never take my children to battle. He did—took two sons to Harper's Ferry. They died. He was wounded. What is worse than a father lived long enough to see his two sons killed? He didn't die. Every birthday that is where you find me. October 16 where he laid to rest that is where you find me. They hanged him on December 2nd in now what is known as Charleston, West Virginia. Every December 2 I am there hugging the tree. The tree is still there. He changed the whole fucking world. Now lets look and see where fear gets us. [There were] 1,000 guns and bullets at Harper's Ferry 157 years ago this year. They didn't have automobiles and trucks. How you gone take 26 people to still 1,000 rifles. What are you going to put them in? See

how fear works. Just like King, he didn't learn that shit at home. Something came out when we were marching in Alabama and one of the state troopers was a brother, but they up under white. He was married to a black woman. But they would tell me everything just they were one of the boys. He came back and tell me, because we drink together. I'm not married to the movement. He came to me and says "hey man. I just left a horrible meeting." He says, "tomorrow while ya'll are marching when ya'll get to cookoo street the state troopers, the sheriff, and the police will corner off the northern press. They are not going to let them walk through and cross the street. When ya'll move the next block there will be 600 folk with axes and guns. I just want you to go tell your folks. I say, "come on! Let's have a little taste." He said, "when are you going to tell them." I said, "I'm not." I had 7 children. "I was in the United States army and we will take that here tomorrow and chances are, but we got to hold em' up for five days when the real shit get here. Let's go! I feel the same way about this. I feel this way about the liberation of myself as I do about the liberation of America." The next day we are marching and don't nobody know this but me.

HSH: What year was this?

DG: I don't know man. I don't know about all that shit. We marching and I am in the line and see the brother and he has this horrible look on his face that I'm letting these niggas march into this shit. And then we get closer to the corner and I see them crackers across the street in the next block. Sisters were just a singing. I see them courting off the

white northern press. I know if we step across that street we are walking in “death arms.” We will cross into the next block and I see them crackers coming with that smirk on their face. And the sisters and the brothers see it and they just keep singing. I’m ready. I see them at the curb with this horrible look on their face. Whew! I see them dropping their shit and they are tripping over one another to get back over across the street. I couldn’t figure it out until that night. When you are not worried and you are full of love and not afraid them mother-fuckers saw the spirit of God. (laughter) I witnessed that. They didn’t know what it was. They saw the spirit of god coming out of me, out of them and they ran apologetic, because what they say they thought was going to kill me. They saw their shit above us coming out of us, because if you can swing up pass the universe and look down it look just like you. We are the universe. We don’t need no goddam book. I need to read a book to tell me to get back into it not to know who them mother fucker’s was. What about me? If you are the greatest brain surgeon in the world and I happened to have a big brain how you can you tell me about all of these great mother fucker’s. Fuck them man! You are the one. You don’t care nothing about no history of niggas. I’m fighting for my fucking life and they told me you was the man. That is why I am here. I told the man please take me somewhere I know I can live. When John Brown walked out the courtroom, “I’m going to die.” “What you got to say boy?” I just say what I was doing was in defense of powerful rich white men I would be ya’ll hero.” I go on the second right to the courthouse. I go down get in the street and make that left turn. Walk two blocks where they made him walk. Make a right and there is the tree. When he gets up there he says, “You know I talked to God last night and god told me to tell you

all that you missed the last chance to free the negroes.” There was no blood. If you god told me that the Negro would be free it would have been the biggest blood bath in the history of this planet. 18 months till the day the civil war starts. Here is all you need to know when the Union was marching they were singing, “John Brown’s body is molding in the grave!” They weren’t talking about their ammunition. They singing, “John Brown’s body is molding in the grave!” That was their mantra. One man. Now here is what Coles did? We all good white folks. We would never have a slave. They was thinking about 100,000 green acres, because white folks... I don’t know what a good white person looks like, but they scared the shit out of them. And they found the marines, 26 people, 4 divisions for three days so something else was in that room with him. And had it not been for him the whole planet would have been different. He would be number one. Nobody putting nothing on the line. He didn’t have to do it. See! Jesus had to do it, but at the end, what did he say, “father! Father! Why has though forsaken me?” Don’t that sound like a nigga trying to get away? This man— why was it such a blood bath? It’s the first time in the history of the planet there was a war when your top echelon on both sides went to the same school. I went to Westpoint. They knew each other strategy. Blood bath over me. I think what Abraham Lincoln said once he got his head straight, because you know Abraham Lincoln was gay and his nigga lover. That is why the ol’ lady went crazy and when the brother died they say it was his handy man. See white supremacy was damn near as we know it was invented in Southern Illinois where he came from. That’s why Abraham Lincoln and his perverted...see I love Christianity man, but white folks, because they are so fucked up. Two people: Abraham Lincoln was a

Christian, and Robert E. Lee was a Christian: Abraham Lincoln believed everything they said about black folks, but his Christian believed that no man should be a slave. His Christian bullshit believed that no man should work for free. Thank you Jesus! So he said to the Southerners, "I'll buy them back." Remember that? And send them niggas to South America. Well did you check with South America? Now, that is that white arrogance, but before he died I guess that nigga got to it man. He said, America is no longer a southern problem because we up north those industrial plants have more money off of slavery than the slave owners. The New York garment industries were shipping that raw product to Europe. Then he said something else. He said, "every nickel is a penny that we made off the black free labor it would be taken from us ten thousand fold." It was September 8 when the shit crashed. Then he said something else, "every nick that we hit them to work will come back to us a 1,000 times." Lincoln said that. Robert E. Lee had a mind equal to Hannibals except the Christian stuff. He went into battle that he knew he could win, but he thought God was with him to protect the white man and got his dick dirty ever time he went in. He would take his soldiers when they would figure it out on piece of paper. "Hey Greg, can you spell this word." "Fuck you man!" "Well I'm not going to..." Boom! Killed him right on the battle field. His good soldiers, because they saw you can't hit this one, lets go back and..." Pow! Because he was in to Jesus and they wasn't. Then Lincoln got weary and tired and "I cant do this no more." He sent his man to Richmond to tell Robert E. Lee that if he signed this document here is what the document says that if slavery will be kept and it is going just the way it is you won't extend to the west then you can win this war. By the time he got there, he had already

surrendered. That is how close we were. When you get to where we are here, fear. We are scared of a white racist system and those that is not is crazy. Fear. The universe never loses. Tomboys are tough girls. Tomcats are tough cats. So why when it comes my turn its get weak? We are looking at pyramids, but can't figure out if he says its weak it must not be weak. If he says so. When I go to Iran and fasted, because I know the whole house stinking it was a CIA trick. They would be killed and Khamenei sent for me and said this, "Monday we are going to be hit by a surprise attack by Iraq soldiers. We ask you to leave this weekend." He sent me a letter and said that you are a beautiful Uncle Tom. I always felt like something was wrong with that word, but now I know. I asked his main secretary, I say, "Uncle Tom? They are shape shifters. You can turn into a frog, or pig or anything. When Napoleon was defeated in Haiti they sent their scientist in and saw that shit and coined the word, "voodoo" and make you think it is something negative. Voodoo means "spiritual atom." You can't see spirit and you can't see atom. That is who we are. Consequently, when you stop and think about the phases. Now King comes along and changes things and before then woman didn't stand a chance. Woman could not be on the police department. Most folks don't know that. King came through and with these dirty white folks. When civil rights legislation come through it didn't say for negroes only. He freed everybody so the white woman could get free. My daughters got free. They want to get back to the good ol' days, "America the beautiful!" That is because we had the woman tied up. If you had a sister back then you could go, but she couldn't be doing this and now the negative part that is going to affect us. It's only worse, ain't no woman that is home. She is working. Every time you check a hotel and

see white folks standing there or a black woman standing there, pull out their credit card that is how its white part black part job they got. Ain't nobody home to tell you and me that we can't do that. "You mother fucker you!" "Mom ain't there man we can have us a ball." Where did you hear that? I heard it on the t.v. Boy you can't say that. Nobody there to tell us that you can't do it. That was Steve Jobs. Nobody told him that he can't do that shit! Nobody told him that he can't do that shit! But they didn't tell me about how to eat! He had three-hundred billion dollars in his personal checking account and he couldn't make 57. That trifling uncle in St. Louis who drank cheap wine and cuss out everybody, laugh to hisself all-day long, he is 92 years old. Steve Jobs. So when we sit down and see where we are...I was going to say, I used to go and look at the 10 commandments, man. Charlton Heston and the Romans was feeding him to the lions and tiger and I would sit in the movie man. I wish I could have been born there with Jesus and let the tigers eat me. That is who Dick Gregory was. I walk through the back alley's because I didn't want people seeing me crying. I'm making comedy and now I decide for mayor out of Chicago. Mayor Daley back in 1967 Julius Caesar could have taken lesson from him. Even white folks that didn't like him, they know I'm not a bad person. They'll kill you. Obviously the dear god I pray to can't protect me against filth. First one, I'll help him and pull the trigger. Till one day someone say this black woman came by and bought salads for all of us. Anybody bringing food write their name down, because I go and thank them. The humanity. The humility of going back thanking her. You don't know nothing about no good health or bad health. I meant good health was when every you was eating dinner run out and till you got enough. I go over there,

talking to her and said, "I feel her spirit. Ya know." She had respect for me enough not to run the whole game down. Drink your grass and drink X amount of water. Little by little. I find myself drifting there. If you yesterday I told you that I saw the pimps and the hustlers hardcore pimps; kill Jesus come to her place everyday for lunch. Fix them a big salad and give them a little cup of salad dressing. They would drink the salad dressing, wouldn't touch the salad, because it make they dick hard. They lined up there. If anybody touched her they would kill them. They didn't give a damn that she was giving them something that they couldn't control. It was me listening to her, she taught me how to fast.

HSH: What is her name?

DG: Dr. Alvenia Fulton. People from all over would come. I felt sorry for her when she'd go to the hair conventions with the white folks. Nobody gave her proper respect. The people who knew her that someone sent her here special. When I met her I was smoking for packs of cigarettes a day. I was drinking a fifth of scotch a day. I weighed 365 pounds. This woman was more than a nutritionist. She was a minister. She knew how to talk to you and understand you and didn't violate you because you was eating a pork chop in front of her. I wondered what's wrong with Christians that they so void that if someone said, "I'm atheist." They would jump on you. How is me being an atheist

going to upset you. You ain't no missionary to turn me around. This is where we are. This is where we've evolved. And now the next step is what you are doing. How many peoples out there. New York Times didn't tell me what you was doing. New York Times never told me about Dr. Fulton. The ones that working for...you see I learned a long time ago that when the universe picks you it leaves no footprints. You don't have to be validated by New York Times and Washington Post, but it lead back to something insignificant. We ate right at one time, but if you go a vegetarian and tell them "cooked food is bad. You shouldn't eat nothing cooked." "Fruit is the only thing that you are suppose to eat." Quit trying to tell them that. You and wife get together and try to have a baby the babies can have babies, but anytime you plant a cucumber or a carrot or lettuce and you got to go back and make you've plant it again that is god telling you that you aint suppose to eat it. Anytime what I gave you to eat one time it will keep going just like you. Try and explain that. The best thing that ever happened for me. I read an article on a plane of this white dude was going to the American Association Convention in Miami. And he told me for his research all the nations that had haircuts in the culture the women outlived the men. What is it that when I violate the universe 5 o'clock shadows. God push it back and tell me to stop that. Then I find out "your hair is to body what a leaf is to a tree." That whole process of photosynthesis. When you stop and think about where we are now and where we are going, you sit and look and to your next step somewhere you'll be ready to wipe out all the bullshit that has been slipping into the consciousness as real. There will be people waiting for you. I'm ready for your questions.

HSH: Based on what I wanted to talk about I am actually doing the dissertation to make it available in a timely manner. I want to do a case study and the case study that I am actually going to do is looking at the tradition of alternative or wholistic health, how it is practiced by individuals in the black community, be it institutions or individuals. So you can actually enlighten me. What era in the 20th century would you say I should focus on in terms of looking reaching this apex where could really see brothers and sisters grasping wholistic health?

DG: Well since you don't have enough money and enough time I would say look at the National of Islam, Elijah Muhammad. The reason is, they stand on the corner selling newspapers with suits and bowties on in the heat of the summer and they don't sweat. 119 degrees they are on the corner. You can trace that back. See the great thing about them is that they didn't leave the neighborhood. They stayed here with us so I can't say that they left and went to Arizona where there is a different type of heat. They stayed right here. What is it that made them not want drugs or cigarettes? Because if you know if they was doing it the white folks would tell us. How is it they don't erect bumps on they face. What is that? That is a good piece of it, but anytime you go and treat woman a certain way then you didn't get it off. You got. I can walk up here and light my cigar from your candle with that same light can light the whole forest. That's the way we using it I can just start there. And let me tell you why. The universal law is as bad as eating anything that was alive is wrong for you the closer it comes to your body weight the

lesser destruction it will do. If you eat a pigeon and I eat a sparrow I will have less damage done. If you eat a steak that comes from a cow and I eat a steak that comes from a gorilla, you'll have lesser damage. The muslims didn't eat pork. Pork is less than destructive than beef, but it fixed black folks because that was our main staple. We only had beef on Sunday and all kinda pork through the week- sandwiches, sausages, bologna. So he said "how to eat to live." If you hadn't read the book, run and get because there is something in that. I don't know anybody a group of religious people that will never stop being anything but their religion because he got millions of black folks to stop eating pork. He wasn't our leader. He was they leader and we read the book and felt so comfortable with that we stopped eating pork. Because the pork he was talking about was the wild boar. That is not what they have now. At least grandma and them. Nobody has been able to do that. The closest they came was the Vatican when the catholic wouldn't eat fish on Friday, but if you told them to give it up everyday they would have. I would say if I had your same assignment, I would start there. And then you would go back and find folks, but they were small. We too big for the little small stuff. Michael Vick didn't get a 100 million dollar contract because he could play football real good. He got a 100 million dollar contract because the world knew he could do it and that would bring more people in to the stands. Its not something that hidden under a basket. So that's what I would do I would go and find out his book that has an affect. When you read the book don't read as having an affect on muslims, but having an affect on the black community. What is it about them? They don't have to have drugs, alcohol. What is it? Can we trace this back to the dieing? I notice I don't see no bumps

on the face. And the main thing I notice that they don't sweat in the summertime. They don't have to have a birthday party get with the boys as we have to have us drink—a taste. They don't have to have that. Where does that come from? Can one man be that strong to transfer that to other folks that would transfer it to other folks and then we live long enough to see that it works. That is where I would start.

HSH: With the establishment of the NOI era are we saying pre-Malcolm like the 30's?

DG: He was out there way before Malcolm. He brought Malcom in.

HSH: You shared a little bit about Dr. Fulton, but what is really important for me to piece this thing together with the NOI. How did you come about to know what you know about alternative health?

DG: Just traveling. I was wealthy.

HSH: Can you elaborate?

DG: You see I never had to do this. I never had to sit here. You asking me to give you something in a minute. I never had to. I'm looking at this and then you go. I didn't know at the time that I had ten children and all of them was a violation. I never had a child. Creating another life you are creating another god. The real universal god. Any

god ask you what color? How much money do you make? Can you read and write? God ten times gave me the right to create another god and at no time did I have to fair with my wife to create. I was just getting me some pussy. So when I stop and think that I never owned a car. I didn't know year, the make, the model, the down payment, the monthly notes, the insurance to trade it. I had to look at the mirror at me and realize that put more research in owning a car than creating god's new life. I'm the fucking problem just like this white boy. I'm worse than him. He know what he done. I didn't. There are people on this planet that would never have sex. Create life that mean you procreate life today. This what the real world is. Little by little I find this out. Little by little by little just... traveling. I mean, if I was to sit still I probably could of found it out. We sit the worlds record I was the third fastest half-mile in the nation. When I go to a track meet I win the mile, half-mile and two-mile relay. When I go to a white college they ask me about transcripts. I didn't have no transcripts. I came here to run white boy. What transcripts? "Greg you messing up in history." Messing up in history? No put a track in history. I came here to run. I didn't come here to do all this bullshit ya'll doing. I come here to run. And every meet yall go to yall got some brilliant folks on the track team, but just my points alone. I got along with white folks in highschool until they denied me my record. If I had knew then god just so Dick Gregory couldn't make it. I drink me a case of pepsi cola a day, candy, everything and if I knew then what I know now so they denied me my record because I was a negro. Went to NAACP and we organized a march with the board of education and them white folks went crazy. They knew something that I didn't know that coming to talk about integrating the schools. I was really embarrassed because my

mother was such a... when she hear em talking about a guy named Dick Gregory she says to me "I really felt bad the other day I stole another woman's son." My mother was so into her blackness and whiteness. A sports announcer, Bart Barnes. She called him Mr. Barnes. She says, "I heard Mr. Barnes talking about a Dick Gregory down there at the school that you going I wondered did you know him." For a split second I made like it was awful thing to do to steal another woman's son. I just let the bitch die without knowing that I was trying to keep peace that's tired man, thinking she had stolen another fucking woman's...for a split minute I thought how honest she was and how soft she was. It was a violation, but I did it anyway. I said all you motherfucker gone get even for this. Some folks run as fast as they can, I ran as fast as I wanted to. Where you want to run, a mile back to negro. He couldn't run nothing. Like we were born genetically for the short races. White folks born for the long races. I wasn't running against any white boys. I went to all black meets. The way I got my training, practicing I had brother's get out and I trip and fall and let them niggas get two laps ahead of me and go catch em, but I was lucky because if im chasing you and I'm trying to catch you, you just pull away, because your mom and dad is up there, but If I catch a tree a tree cant move, man. I eat your ass up until the next tree. I would run until a motherfucker could not outrun me and I catch that one and next thing you know I'm all up on your ass. I'm hollering, "where you going motherfucker. Goddam boy." They tell you to be polite and nice and I'm thinking, "we cant go to school with them. They just integrated the track to get me off they ass. I ran that ghetto game down. "Alright we come off this hill motherfucker let's I'm a lay off and let them white folks. Catch my breath." When I came back I went...

HSH: This is in high school?

DG: Then we go to Jefferson City that's where the negro meet was. Where'd you grow up?

HSH: 63rd and Inglewood.

HSH: Did you have segregated schools?

DG: In St Louis we had three black high schools and hundred schools was white. We couldn't have sports. St. Louis only had two other black schools. Ran against you and played football against you who else? They paid. Everyone of them cities paid for us to come and play against them. We were coming to Washington, D.C., going to West Virginia. So now were going to Jeffersons. We are going to University of Colombia in Missouri. So we're there a 144 miles away from St. Louis. We drive up on Friday, but what nobody tells us is we cant stay on campus. Negroes are not permitted. We can't stay in a hotel, because negroes are not permitted. High school punks we had to go up...first let me tell you the highschool I went to about 82% of the teachers had Ph.D's.

HSH: What was the name?

DG: Sumner High School. At that time, Harvard didn't have that percentage. Why? Because you had a Ph.D. and you had a Ph.D. where were ya'll gone work? You ain't working at no white school and the black schools had already had their system put together. So where else were you going to work. Dr. Warren St. James, my track coach for cross-country he had two Ph.D's, one in physical education from the real physical education school in Springfield where they invented basketball and economics. He became chairman of a major white school in the Economic department until integration. So we were getting all that stuff locked in there with us and so we umm...No we're up in Jefferson city qualified. I qualified for the mile, half mile two mile relay. So now we just drive back to St. Louis, because we can't stay in a hotel. We drive a 144 miles up, 144 miles back, come back that morning 144 miles, I won the mile, two mile...with just my points alone I won the State Meet not counting all the other niggas. They saw something that they always feared, but they never saw it. Never saw it, because we wasn't with them. They never saw that and said, "my god!" Before the spring they integrated cross-country. I never ran against a white boy. You think I run against this white boy. I know he ain't planning on winning. He ain't never ran this fast. I notice something when I hit them trees, he rush into them. They hurt me. I said wait a minute, bold niggas been doing this for years and caught back up with him and said, "you ol' tricky motherfucker! Imma show you how to do. You see up hill up there, follow me up it." Just talk shit to em and so that what I came out of. Nothing wasn't nutritional, with diet, I wasn't listening to nothing. Them niggas standing on the corner they ain't been schooled. "My brother. Hey man! You dogged them." And so it was that piece not eating. When I got

through this is what I ate in the Baptist church on Sunday they served their dinners would “kill you.” It was that whole piece, but what your looking for you can’t get this quick and with no money. The reason A.J. Roger shit was so good he walked all the way over Africa. He wasn’t taking what somebody had said, but that was already tricked. When you get through doing this, your going to be doing this for a long time hockey was created by Africans. Slaves that had ran away and went to Canada that’s where hockey was invented, ice hockey. There is no way that you can find that except a white boy wrote a book that is the only way I knew about it. A white boy wrote a book that talked about hockey. I don’t know the white boy’s name, but pull it up. White boys didn’t know nothing about it, saying “Dem niggas out there.” And so mine was that I didn’t get it at home and if you think about you sitting at home well I couldn’t have done this when I was a little boy. When I became a vegetarian it had nothing to do with health.

I became a vegetarian because I just didn’t believe that a person should be killed. Then I looked at a Mississippi Sheriff kick my old lady in the belly when she was nine months pregnant. To be stupid enough to do anything I’d got everybody else killed. I wasn’t going to do anything anyway. “How come you didn’t hit him back?” It is called fear. I understood niggas when they sit on these shows and talked about all the brilliance came form Africa, but four white folks was born and they asked us how did we loose it. It’s a simple as its called gun powder, motherfucker! That is how we lost it. Don’t go through no bullshit. It’s called gunpowder, motherfucker and the example I use is Cortez. When that motherfucker got over there in Mexico and saw them buildings them white folks start

praying. They thought it was god. And they start praying and six weeks later they were hauling all their riches to take back to Spain. Its called fucking gun powder that's all that simple. Gun powder is a bitch. They didn't have to wait and do that...gun powder. Consequently, when I saw this white sheriff kick my old lady in the belly she looked at me. I said, "don't look at me bitch. Don't get me killed." You fucking serious! You jumped on his ass. You're the one that got the baby. Maybe I run and get you some help. I drunk a 1/5 of scotch a day. I get back to California and I'm drunk and I;m telling my two writer, one white, one black I say, "Man, I got to trick myself and make myself believe that the only reason I didn't jump on that sheriff is because I don't believe that everything should be killed, including animals." That's what I did. That night I decided I wouldn't eat anything that had to be killed. I didn't know anything about no...I didn't even know how to spell vegetarian.

HSH: How long ago was that?

DG: 1963. Then I had to start on how I am going to survive. I'm scared to death. How will I survive? Where you get your proteins from? Gelatin. Jello. Then I found out that fucking horses hoofs. I had to give that up. Back then I never weighed over a 130 pounds. Once I become a vegetarian I went up to 365 pounds, because I thought I had to eat. Then black folks, out of love, they just be mad, because they love you. Niggas, "I heard white folks say that you don't eat no meat. How you gone live? What you gone do for protein?" I knew how to deal with an ignorant and black, because I been ignorant and

black my whole life. I said, “My brother, you know that there is a lot of protein in a steak?” “Yeah, nigga how come you don’t eat em?” “Well cows don’t eat steak and their fucking bell rings.” And you see they whole head lighter and then he comes, “Wow! Man, say that again.” As a matter a fact the meat you eat don’t eat meat.” You don’t have to eat hair to grown hair. You don’t have to eat ears to grow ears.” Right there everything... and that is how it happened. I didn’t stop drinking or smoking. I smoked four packs a cigarettes a day. One day, I decided I would fast with Dr. Fulton. Nobody on this planet knew fasting like she did.

HSH: This is the same time she taught you how to fast in 1963?

DG: No!

HSH: When did she?

DG: 1967. I ran for mayor in 1967.

HSH: Then you ran for president. I remember when you ran for president.

DG: Then you start meeting folks. Great thing is that other people come to you. She introduced me to a woman named Mother Gibson. Had her a taste every now and then. You know them old sister’s ate. If you want to go see skinny women go around the world

and check out some hoes. You don't see no fat hoe. You wont see fat women come to America and go to a Baptist Church and sit next to a different choir. Maybe they need to follow them hoes around, because the Jesus shit ain't working for them. I have never seen a fat hoe in my life. You go to a black church and you see a skinny woman and she look like she out of place. Man, you feel sorry for her. Maybe that bitch is sick or something. You know Jesus can't here you baby. It's that whole thing and then I got to thinking about why was I vegetarian, for health reasons? So I used to have to prove to white folk, real vegetarians. I wrote the book that changed everything.

HSH: Which book?

DG: *Dick Gregory's Natural Diet for Folks that Eat*. Natural diet is nothing that can be cooked. If you took one hand and put in the deep freezer and another hand in boiling hot water, none of those hands are any good anymore. That is what obesity is about, not getting nothing out of the food. Then we start eating for taste and not for nutrition. They start talking about the 7 pyramids. The only pyramid that I know when I heard niggas talking about Egypt. I didn't know nothing about the food chain. When I went on a four day fast, she taught me.

HSH: Dr. Fulton?

DG: Taught me everyday. I don't know what would have happened on the 19th day

when I started feeling this power I thought I was going to die, but she taught me at every step. Probably the thing that I felt embarrassed me as much as my mother not knowing that Dick Gregory was Richard Gregory on my 34th day of the fast... that first fast I went to 57 cities and did 63 speeches just on water. I'm standing in La Guardia airport and standing at the counter and I see these white little rings, looking back at me and whispering. They looking and whispering and so I'm just so tired and the line is so long. I said, "oh god help me. Help me." Everything is drained out of me and I saw them as they heading back to me that's when I said, "fuck it! I ain't taking no shit off nobody!" I found out so when you tell that tree to move it'll move. I got ready to deal with them and I could feel it running through my body. Somebody opened up my head and poured hot water and I could feel it and go into this stance. "Come on motherfucker!" I would have killed them all and then they walked up to me and said, "We just want to thank you brother for working on behalf of saving our life." And I said, "God please let me be this stupid again. Never let me judge." And I learned two things: there is a power in your body and when you call on it "whew!", you can fly you can knock down every one of these buildings down. She introduced me to mother Gibson. Beat the booty out of a cow or a pig. The first day I went over to meet her was a ten block fire on the southside of Chicago and traffic was all (hand gesture). I get there and Mother Gibson told me to come out and talk with you and this ol red-neck fire commander. Old Chicago Irish that was part of their click, the Irish, cops and firemen Irish. He ran in there, "Mother Gibson" and fell on his knees and kissed her feet. I said, I bet a fire-fighter Chicago for 35 years and we felt bad because all those black children and everybody was going to die cuz we

know fire and we couldn't do nothing with that. They call it "knock it down." Until I saw that fire get knocked down and everybody over there said, Mother Gibson did that. He said, "the only reason I listened because I knew something happened we couldn't explain. I come over here to tell you thanks and like to ask you who are you?" That fucked up all my shit with religion, because right now she was alive and you wasn't. To the Hilton Hotel and killed everybody in there and called Mother Gibson before the police got there and say you never do a day in jail. All that bullshit went out the window. I know this. That was after I had fasted and things opened up. The only way you explain that. The other day, the lottery was a half a billion dollars. Had you won that in 24 hours people would be calling you all over the world that didn't know you existed. It is the same thing as fasting through the body, the universe sends people to you. Then I had to sit and deal with the fact all this bullshit that I don't think animals should be killed. "Come on son! That is bullshit." When I got that thought, I'm sitting with her \$6700 paid of boots on and I asked the motherfucker with me, "Have you heard of a \$6700 pair of steaks?" They don't make money off the meat. They make money off the hide. You stop being stupid, if you didn't buy the meat they'd give you that shit. The money is made in the hide. I mean 80 years old. My wife is 75. We got a prescription between the two of us and I trace that back to two things: not getting hair-cuts and dropping all my evenings that I thought meant something. Evil is to niggas is just like the Rolls Royce that they can't have. So I'm going to get that and caste up the liver and the kidneys. Ties up the eyes. It was that evolution and like I said what you have no one's had. You get the money or hit the lottery and tie em off and go and find it. There is people our there that

know when they know you coming. They do things and say this is my website and this is my number. You see website don't mean nothing because you missed the real nigga. You got a telephone. Put it there and give it to em slow they can't hear that fast. All kinds of information. Anything I have to buy, I have to be clear about the graciousness of white folks. All the black stuff you got you can catch it down at the mall. There is a child in there and say they bought drugs. Ya'll got to turn on the real information come from when somebody comes to you. What your on is really is bigger than what you think it is. They are out here. There's Africans...a white boy told me something one day, I didn't know what he was talking about. He said, "Man listen." Oh no my granddaddy. He said, "there is some places in Africa I white boy ain't never been and he ain't never going." Them niggas make money. When I found out a little white boy used to be the editor of *Esquire* magazine when *Esquire* was the number one magazine in the world. We went to the Himilayans and we're sitting there. They have plateaus. We're sitting there the guy was talking about who is your best person you love in the Christian bibles? Art said, "John the Baptist." They guy said, "yeah John the Baptist." He was a nice just hardheaded. Goddam was he hardheaded. If he weren't hardheaded he would be us just now. That was the first time in my life I was talking to folks from back then. When we get ready to leave to go to another plateau and Art reached to get his wallet to pay the, I said, "I got this." Put the bill in the hand and it manifest whatever it is. That's who we are, paid the bill.

HSH: What made you become the powerhouse in the holistic lifestyle?

DG: If you could feel your hair grow you'd go crazy. It's same thing about evolution its just there.

HSH: Can you speak to that?

DG: You are over-looking what I just said, if you could feel your hair grow you would go crazy. It's the same thing about my evolution. I didn't feel it coming.

HSH: Can you speak to the next step on how it became the way that it is?

DG: There are no steps. What the next step in running and so I get the word from Dr. Hoover they asked to kill me in Chicago. I white boy brings it to me. That is a step. I'm not in control of that step. I look at it and take it to Mother Gibson. And she said one simple thing, "there is a lot of water out there in that ocean, but it can't sink no ship until it gets inside." Keep it out of your head. Once you put it in there, they got you. She just said simple, "there is a lot of water out there in that ocean, but it can't sink yo ship until it gets inside." It's that simple. I told my wife don't let nobody in this house. "You understand?" "Yes." Then I come home one day and I'm at a march and the first negro that I got had NewYork Life Insurance so he is life a celebrity. The first nigga that I met got me a policy told him I'd be back in so and so, but I didn't get back then. He said, "I thank your wife for signing these papers for me." I go home...I kept me a pistol 357

magnum and got off on the elevator on the eighth floor and I dare they'd be waiting there in the hall. A body guard ain't nothing, but bullshit. If he was my bodyguard you got to be willing to kill for me. Anybody that is willing to kill for me there is an odor that come to hide the real so if you willing to kill for me that gas come off. I get to the point I'm smelling that gas around you that when the real assassins come up I don't even smell them. It smells like the same shit that I smell. If you really want me all you got to do is, I got nine bodyguards all you have to do is show up with 10 people. I go home, I cannot wait to get there. Old shit came out of me man and she opened the door and I slapped her upside her head, "Bitch I'll kill you. I told you don't let no motherfucker in here" and I saw a look on her face man that scared me, saying "please don't! please don't!" "Bitch, I'll blow your motherfucking brains out. You crazy?" She say, "please don't! Please don't!" I hit her and knocked her down on her and it wasn't nothing that she could do to stop it because I wasn't saying don't do it no more. Why did you? I know who these dogs are. She was down on her back and I say, "Bitch, I'll kill your fucking ass and she put both her hands like this and got up off the fucking floor." That is impossible. Think about that. I'm down on the floor and you're on top of me and I put both hands here and I can't do this. That bitch lifted up and I could feel life come out of me. I knew it was somebody that wasn't from this fucking planet. I felt it like steal she say, "kill me nigga." I slept in the car all night for three days to come up until this day. She ain't mention, I ain't mention it. I tell the children be careful with your mother, because she got a dark side. They say, "we know." Little by little by little by little steps

HSH: What compelled you to write the book on natural health?

DG: They was paying me. Everything out there has already been written I just put it through my head and brought it out of *Nigga*. There was a time I went to Jack Boy show. I'm doing this. I'm doing that. White folks started reading the shit and it changed the whole movement around it. (William) Dufty, *Sugar Blues* you know? Do you know he was Billie Holiday's manager. If anybody knows about heroin he knows. He compared it to sugar. Scientifically heroin didn't stand a chance. I have been out here. I go to health conferences with celebrities.

HSH: Are there any other books?

DG: Every book I wrote I talked about health. I talked about fasting.

HSH: How many have you written that have had health primarily in it?

DG: All of them. After *Nigga*, the last fourteen. The last book I got out here now. In the back I got a whole thing in there about fasting. I learned about fasting which I didn't know. We see Jesus and Buddha, Ghandi was getting so much press he fasted nineteen days. Fast means to abstain from when I went 40 days on water I was on a water fast. Me and my wife was going 8 days, I was going 12 days. I wound up going 8 days. Its like a club. Everyday you fast, let say you have nine billion people here and everyday

you fast you take one-step out and those are the one-steppers. You keep on and keep on until you get to the 40 steps and that's a whole nother piece. You start seeing things. You saw em, but you didn't see em. I married to this woman over here and say, "Bay, how much do I love you." I say, "I just finished fucking a bitch and I'm trying to salvage shit love ain't in a degree." How can you rape me in a degree? How can you steal from me in a degree?" In the words that you say and even Mother Gibson she talks she is another medium, because I brought John Lennon...me and John Lennon was like this. As matter of fact, they are bringing me and Paul Mooney for \$20,000 a day a peace for one day for that new book that came out on John. They say, "where did you get the idea to do Imagine?" "Dick Gregory talked to me all the time. Shared prayers with me that's how I did it." It's the biggest thing in London now. And then you see it and feel it. Its there. Shit if my mother was here and heard me call Jesus a motherfucker she'd go in the back and prayed and wanted to kill herself and do some nigga like me. It ain't what you grew up with its what you come out of and its her saving grace she was just a kind, nice lady, but two thing happened to me that changed my life. She said, "boy your just like your daddy." I was only 7 years old and some ignorant shit my mom and black folks, they was some conspiracy folks. My mother said, "Imma take you out of school next Tuesday." My Mother Pew want to see you. Come home and I'll clean you up and we'll go see Mother Pew." I go home and put my little suit on. I there and she look at me and say, "you don't like me do you?" "No ma'am." "Why?" "Because my mama believe in all this stuff and I think it's stupid." She say, "Son, Imma tell you something. You won't understand it right now, but I see a star in the center of your head." One day, you'll be

one of the most important people on the planet. And you'll have so much money its almost like you were government." 7 years old what the fuck does that mean? I'm trying to get enough money to buy me some penny corn rolls. And she said, "they're all going to come after you, but they won't be able to get you." 7 years old. She says, "right before this happens I see you with this brand new leather suitcase." This woman ain't never seen a suitcase before. She'd seen a briefcase. Where a nigga gone see a suitcase way back then? So I did something, because no nigga was to stand flat footed and talk to white folks at a comedy club until Heffner brought me in. She said right before it happens I see you with this brown briefcase. So I did this thing when civil rights was just getting hot and ABC did this thing called, "Walk in My Shoes." It felt safe now, but then too many white folks was hip to us. The average white person looks at us they way they do their dog. They die for and go back in the house in fire, but if you ever came home one day and found that dog unlock that refrigerator and take your fucking stakes out and do everything to him and bring that fucking bitch dog from across the street over here and then you'd walk in here, you'd kill that motherfucker. That's the way they feel about us. That is what we are going through now. So now I do this thing and that's when I realize the power of t.v. three seconds and thousands of letter came in. A little while later they called me down in ABC and said, "Thank you. We never had this kind of response. The people just love you." It was a gift. I went home with a brown briefcase and I said to my wife, "It won't be long." She said, "what you mean?" I say, "you'll understand." I bring John Lennon to Mother Gibson. The government won't let him in the country. He bring marijauana that was his peace. And here is what she said, "oh yeah. Mother can take

care of that. You're a friend of Dick's you're a friend of mine. Mother can take care of that, but you better make sure you want to be here, because when you come you never want to leave." We just thought he would love it that much. We didn't know she was saying, "you ass would die." They killed him the next day at 12 noon. They set a press conference announce that he had given 10% of his wealth to the Peace Movement.

HSH: He got killed the next day?

DG: That night. That's why I can't answer your question because... (hand gesture-"little by little.") It comes from the whole ether.

HSH: Are there any other individuals that were writing on health around the same time frame?

DG: There were no black people. Who would they get to publish it? I was the celebrity for no other reason. The reason they can't get me. I'm 80 years, never fucked a white woman. I'm scared of them bitches. And never smoked reefer in my life. Anything that white folks say was illegal I didn't touch that's where this head goes. Now, they can't trap me. If they tried to trap me with a sister, they're too emotional. If a bitch want to give me some pussy and ain't got no smile I know she mad. Come in acting like she mad at me and don't even know me. Get on the plane and them black stewardess know more about the political shit than I know.

He worked for *Annheuser-Bush* and Jack Arden King teaching white folks. He said, “all you got to do is just keep your mouth shut. These folk go to work at the office around 10 o’ clock and after that they got books that even white folks can’t read. Come there and shut-up, I’ll let you sit in there and read them. I thought, “what she talking about?” I go to work with her one day on the law-mower and they leave and these two books that changed my life forever. One is the book *Dr. Sumi Wise*. See back in the old days of medicine, medicine was to this planet what politics are now. It controlled everything.

HSH: What was the title?

DG: I don’t know. It was about this doctor, Dr. Sumi Wise. Back then the way you became a great doctor is you do a lot of cadavers. It’s kind of interesting because organs now, hospitals couldn’t survive without cadavers. If you’re not dieing fast enough I just turn myself and little van to bring the cadavers in and that was the body snatcher. They would snatch bodies. If you was skinny then they had no problem with it. Him and his partner was working in the lab in Budapest and the rich white women would come in the hospital and have children. 98% of all the children that was in the hospital was death to the mother and the child. Now back then nobody knew anything about germs. So they would be ove in this room and then dissecting and then we hear the baby hollering and then we would go an just wipe our hands. It was germs that was killing the mother and baby. Him and his partner would do wild shit. They came in and would paint the

maternity ward with lime and so they threw them out of school. “When ya’ll come back again don’t be doing this crazy stuff.” So one day he is going to the opera and he has a gold chain and he took a short cut and so this woman is squatting down having a baby. He went home and cried. He could go to the opera he felt so bad. This also answers another question for you. He went in the next day and his partner was man “where were you, man? How come you didn’t come to the opera?” He says, “Let me tell you what I witnessed. I know if these rich women come in here 90-97% of them child birth is fatal to the mother them folks in the ghetto don’t stand a chance.” 6 months later he had to take a short cut home. Had it not been for that the rest of the story would not be. He saw this same woman rocking the baby. He got to ask her the question to find out that most of them babies survived and they knew they were doing something wrong at the hospital. He went and tried to explain that with his partners, what they had to do and them ol’ hardcore put him in the mental hospital. He is in the mental hospital. His partner used to come and see him everyday.

HSH: Can you say his name again?

Summingwise. You hear the end of the story you realize how tricky the system is. Then he went to the mental hospital. He was happy there. His partner come by and then he found out his partner was going to marry the head doctor’s daughter. They got married and he says, “Summingwise, I made a deal. If you write a letter of apology and admit that all of this stuff you were doing was in you mind they will let you out the hospital and

you can come to work.” He goes back and he says “under one condition I have to speak to all the doctors ‘in the round’.” They taugt in the round. That was the only condition. He goes and they all come in. And he says, “I’m sorry I tricked you all here today, but I have a piece of paper that I am signing to commit myself to the mental hospital for the rest of my life.” And they clapped, but one condition that ya’ll have to give me a team of three people that will change shifts every eight hours and sit here round the clock for two weeks.” He signed it. He took off his scalpel and cut his pants and stuck it in a dead corpse. The finger kept getting redder and redder until he was dead. That is why we are fucking here. Not Summingwise. This motherfucker put his life to convince something we can’t see. You never think about if America went to war and they had to draft people, how would they do it?

HSH: Via mail?

DG: Go back to Napoleon’s age there was no mail. The guy that is famous just as Napoleon was his recruiter would go through the wilderness, in between wars. There was no age. If you were 90 years old and fit you were picked. In Napoleon’s army, if you were 19 years old and punky you were going. This great recruiter, captain was going through the wilderness and saw these lumberjacks. He foamed at the mouth. He had never in his days of picking specimens he’d never seen anything like this. He walked over and introduced hisself. They say, “oh yeah. I know you. You are the great one.” He says, “I just want to say its an honor to go through here and see someone like you.

How old are you?" "98." He says, "well I want you know you now have the pleasure of serving in Napoleon's army." He said, "I have a problem. I don't do any killing. I chop my timber and I pay my taxes. I'm a citizen of France and I do not care." The first guy thought he was just playing. He is the most popular thing on the planet second to Napoleon. When he found out he wasn't playing it turned to anger. He is embarrassed in front of his men. He says, "Well, if you deny your service with Napoleon then the penalty is death by fire." Now he just getting angry and so embarrassed. He says, "Ready to fire." They tie his hands. "Ready! Aim!" He looked into this old man's eyes and saw a human being more beautiful than a killer. It fucked him up so bad. He said, "Cancel the order. Heat the branding irons." This is his bullshit now. He told the old man, "whether you like it or not, fuck you god! You belong to Napoleon." He took his right, took that branding iron and ran it in the palm of his hand. He said, "whether you like it or not you belong to Napoleon." He got ready to walk away and grabbed him and said, "Come here boy. I told you I chop my timber and pay my taxes. I belong to no man, but God." He put his hand on the tree stump and took his axe and chopped his hand off. He said, "I belong to no man." The captain went crazy and left Napoleon because of one fucking man. When that story got out the word say, "never let the executionist see the executer." That is when the blindfold came, because of one man. I read that and my life changed. One man. I said, "I can do that. I don't need no money. Guided my life from that day on.

HSH: When did you see writing about health happening on a more prevalent stage?

DG: I didn't. You just look up one day and the whole black thing changed. There was a point there was a book that I could buy at your store that I couldn't buy at Barnes and Noble. Except them ones that they didn't want white folks to see.

HSH: What time period would you say?

DG: Not just the health on everything.

HSH: What about the health?

DG: See that went along with it. We started seeing Elijah Muhammad's book, How to Eat to Live. Then you started seeing others and other people that knew. Before that there was no market for it. Black folks sure didn't want it. When I became a vegetarian man, you go any major restaurant in America and vegetables was the side order. You didn't even pay for that. The main order was the meat and after that the rest was the side. They give that shit away. I went in restaurants and I ask, "what kind of vegetables do you have? I'd like some mashed potatoes. I'd like some green beans and some broccoli." "What do you want for your meat?" "That is all I want." "You can't buy that here." "Ok give me fried chicken with those same vegetables and on the way out throw the chicken in the garbage can." That is how I had to do it.

DG: Did you ever get interview for Black Books Bulletin?

HSH: If I did, I don't remember. You see, I never wrote a book in my life. Every book I got out there I put it on tape and then I bring the researchers. Like you said, "what day did that happen?" I can tell you Kennedy was killed on Friday, but if I didn't know that I just take the date and the researchers would have to tell me the day and time. I had to find a white boy, because black folks didn't need to hear what I had to say and white folks would understand the ghetto tone. I brought in white sports writer from the New York Times. He put it out there where it sound likes me to them. You ever listen to your voice on tape?

DG: Eating bananas like that is a violation. You hear people say, bananas upset my stomach. It is the starch. It doesn't become potassium until it browns. I used to get bananas like that couldn't believe it. They make all this money on rotten bananas.

DG: Elijah Muhammad was talking about the navy beans, but you didn't know the secret of navy beans. Then I started looking at it and I had a friend, the richest white dude in congress Congressman Fred Richmond a longtime billionaire. We became real close. I go to have lunch with him at Congress and on the menu it says by the act of congress we must have navy bean soup everyday. And I said, "Fred, why is this a law?" He said, "its not a law." "Fred, what does that say?" "Yeah, but..." "Let's go over to the Senate dial." Same thing. I said, "this is a fucking law." He said, "well let me check it." Two

days later that came off of there. You can't go there now. I said, "wooo." Then Fred is really upset. I said lets get some research here and find out. Navy beans is called navy beans is the great white lord of beans and that is because it's the only food you can put on the ship that a rat can't eat or a mouse can't eat. That's why is called navy beans. He says, "what does that mean?" I say, "Well. A rat and a mouse teeth grow everyday like your hair so they get to keep gnawing down while they will choke to death. There jaws is stronger than an elephant, hippopotamus, or rhinosaurus." They can eat through anything, but a navy bean. The navy beans have twenty of the twenty-one amino acids and one you get twenty, the body will manufacture the twenty-first one. Now all this shit that's fixing to happen. Could be next week or the week after. If you ain't got navy bean you can prepare yourself for death. And you bet not cook em, because people ain't eating em. They smell your food, forty blocks away take a hammer and...but that's all you need. If you never drank water like you should your body starting that day will void 22 pints a day. That's what I got out of this whole trip. Otherwise, I would be sitting here not knowing. The deep freezer will go out. All of the electric will go out and everything would be over. Hospitals will shut down. Your medicine...you see this planet as much as it's polluted if all us dies tonight in 24 hours the planet would be as clean as it was on day one. It's the Universal Law. That's the motion. I used to tell people. Do you know who ya'll are? Every washing machine its not that it gets it cleans it is the agitator. That's what niggas have to be, the agitator. If you took the agitator out of the washing machine all you would have would be some wet, dirty clothes.

HSH: Who did you publish you article with?

DG: I don't remember all that shit. I have no idea. I had Viktoras Kulvinskas, *Survival of the 21st Century*. *Lover Your Body* he is the raw food man. He would come by the house and they would say, "the devil! The devil! Frankenstein!" because good health had nothing to do with good looks. Good looks is glamour. Victor came by my farm one day and we were talking and Victor was one of the old original guys with the Manhattan program. We were talking about something and I thought he knew it. I say, "It took me a long time before I realized Administration is a violation of god." Now what's cool about people like him they go crazy inside hearing you say that, but they have enough integrity and an enough wisdom to go check it out and then come back. Then it's not a confrontation. I was telling him when I was in high school, grade school, I worked at this drug store and I was the delivery boy, 25 cents a night. I noticed 98% of the stuff was sanitary napkins, Kotex. The women would come to the door and they wouldn't open up the door all the way and when you see em, they would say, "How much?" And when you tell them that would give you the biggest tips. I realized something with menstruation. They were ashamed of it. I said to my partner, "lets do this here. Let's go to Dr. Greene." He made good money. He would bond us, negroes. If you was the white person and the maid came she was bonded you didn't have to trust if anything was missing, the bonding company would pay it. I went over there and said, "would you bond me and Bo." He bond us. And I said, "lets go out to the junkyard and pick us enough junk to put 12 bikes together." We went to Fred Losher was the guys names. "We're

going to pick twelve drugstores and be delivery boys for free. Just make money from our tips and use our bonding card.” We go and pick 10 other dudes and “will give you 25 cents a night, what the white folks would give you.” There were no black drugstores. And we’ll give you 25% of the tips. We cleaned up and I didn’t realize until...I know Administration is a violation. Just like you buy a tea kettle and add water for tea, but in case you get in a conversation and forget they have that [whistle]. It wasn’t made for that, but in case you mess up. Well Administration is the same thing. In case you mess up. He sends me a letter and says...Neal says, “I need to talk to you, because this white boy ain’t got no business playing with you like this.” I say, “you’re right.” “He write a 30 page letter, saying he gone be your share-cropper.” I called Victor, I say, “Victor, I don’t like the idea of...I thought it would be one white boy...fucking with niggas.” Neal read that fucking letter to me and told me that...” He apologized. He was explaining to me that, “Administration is a violation of god. I felt so sorry for you, but I have enough respect. The next day I went to Harvard Medical School Library everything he said they have it documented, but they don’t teach it.” Administration start when you get old enough to create life and then when you get to where you can’t have no more babies Administration leave. The hot flashes is that god been flushing all that stuff out you and now if you want to get rid of germs you heat the water. That’s why the woman body has hot flashes. He heats it up, burns that shit up to stop it. Now with women with freedom and women running marathons and playing basketball they don’t have no periods and them fucking doctors is operating on them. They don’t need no period, because you sweating all that shit out. The whole universe is changing. The hot flashes is heating the

body up. And when that happens you suppose to get blankets to put on to help heat it up.

The people who are right the history about the... they haven't been born yet. They'll write it with no hidden agenda. The whole white racist agenda, white supremacy it ain't these rednecks. They don't care nothing about it, but most white folks don't understand white supremacy. That's what got Bill Cosby in trouble. When he said that he wanted to buy NBC when it was for sale. Then those white supremacists got together. I remember before he said that he was white America's daddy. He had jello. He had white children on his back in the commercials. He had tapioca up to his ears. Nobody asked the simple question how did Bill Cosby son get killed and he can't do no more jello commercials. What happened is the woman out there we had a flat...nobody waits to rob you on the highway. We had a flat so we called this white woman and she showed up in a mini skirt and mink coat. How was she suppose to change a flat? Bill knows that the Mercedes he had is he had a flat it changed its own tire. Then he said, the one robbing him had \$6,000 cash.

DG: He headed the North Vietnamese army, He wrote this book 35 years before we went in there. He said, "give me an army that is willing to die and I will destroy any army that is willing to kill." He wrote 35 years before. He wrote this and we didn't even read it.

HSH: Who is this?

DG: General Diop, the North Vietnamese army. "Give me an army that is willing to die and I will destroy any army that is willing to kill." And he did just that. American soldiers leave. They kiss their girlfriends and say, "I'll be home for Christmas on your birthday." And we'll over there trying to get back and they're over there this is a lifetime. They wanted to die and save their country. But we see all that change. I believe... I was sitting with a friend of mind when I was like 12 years old. I say, "Man, you know what I was just thinking we are born with a brain, but no mind. We are born with guns, but no teeth. And I say teeth come in individual. That's 32 teeth and the last one come in is wisdom teeth." I don't know nothing about computers. I said, "they'll have a machine that they'll be able to program grade school, high school and college in 15 minutes through your teeth." And here we are. Somebody hasn't invented the teeth thing yet and here we are. I was twelve years old. 32 bits these are connected. Its like how many people got out of jail, because of DNA. DNA didn't just get invented. DNA was here before we got here. We just got here. Are you hip to breathatarians? Fruitarians? But you can't wear clothes you have to just breath. Dr. Hutima, *The Breath of Life*. I started looking at all of that. I mean just in one step leading to another. The highest level is breathatarian. The second highest level is fruitarian.

Interview with Queen Afua

QA: I was born in Brooklyn, NY. My father was the founder of a church with two other members in Brooklyn and he also was an entrepreneur. He was a dental technician —his own business and he had real estate. My mother, she was a housewife for about 17 years and then she studied and became a dietician. I went to school here with my two older brothers and we lived in the house where I am now. This is our family home. I went to Brooklyn College for two years and at the same time that I was in college I was extremely sick. I remember being sick from age 7 to age 17 and it was ever so many years another disease would crop up, but when it really shut me down is when the asthma kicked in with a vengeance. But, it wasn't just the asthma—I had other things going on. I had chronic headaches that would last for hours. I also had chronic PMS. I was chronically constipated. I had arthritis and I was an artist. I was a singer and a dancer and I had a dance company. And, I remember performing at the Metropolitan Opera House in Aida. So that is where I was going in the arts. And, so in that same time it was around 1969 that I had a wake up to wellness, but that was also the Cultural Revolution. And, it was the beginning the Black Panther Party opened up their storefront two blocks from here. And my brother became a Black Panther at that time. And it was in that time that I was still sick. I was sick. I was an artist. I didn't know anything about healing, but I remember sitting in front of my mother's kitchen table and I was eating the classical corn out of a can, frozen peas and fried fish and white bread and I heard the drum in the kitchen and I never heard the drum in the kitchen. And, I never heard the drum before. I

don't even remember where, but I jumped up and I ran out to the park up the block and I saw two drummers and I just stood there transfixed. And, it must've been the ancestors calling my spirit. And from that point on I started to study African dance. Because that's when...there were two that really brought dance to America that I was aware of that was Baba Olatunji who I ended dancing for his company for a little while and also Baba Kwame Ishangi. They both brought so much of culture to America back in the 60's. So both of them became my mentors in dance and culture on that level of art. So from that point on I went on a Healing Retreat and I met...I am trying to remember his name, he is now an ancestor, but he did so much work in media. He would gather us together, pretty much how you are working on your dissertation. He gathered us together, the different healers back then and we would go on the radio and we became known. John Harris. John Harris. He was like our hero in holistic health. He opened up a restaurant—a juice bar on 125th street on 6th or 7th avenue and that was the first time I had ever saw any of us do such a thing. So in that whole process, I was invited on a retreat that he was hosting—him and his wife at the time, Ruth. And I met one of the greatest healers of my time and that was Dr. Johnnie Moore. I got off the bus and he's a master herbalist for over 50 years at that time and I also did not bring my medication. But I heard in this room that I am in room now, I heard—I was by the piano and I heard the spirit tell me that I am going to be on a hill. I didn't know how, I didn't know where, I didn't know what, I didn't know who I was going to meet, but somehow it felt so unnatural to be so sick and the doctor's told my mother that I should've been in a glass house. I was getting sicker and sicker and there was no more medication for me and we were getting a stronger form of

medication. So at 17 I was walking around with a respirator and so I come on that retreat, I got off the bus, the medication wasn't there, the asthma kicked in. The trees and the grass were like an enemy to my body. It shouldn't be, but I was so toxic which I didn't realize. I was so toxic I was out of harmony with nature so nature was actually detoxing me and I didn't know how to relate to that, but the asthma was there, then weezing— couldn't hardly breathe and then eczema kicked in and I was scratching. It was like a junky and I was scratching as quietly as I was bleeding because I was scratching my arms and my legs and weezing was there and then the fear kicked in. "Ok, I don't have any medication. I don't know these people. It was like a whole new world. What am I going to do out here?" I heard the inner voice, spirit told me to eat grapefruits, lemons and oranges. That was my first formula and they had all the fruits there. They had vegetables and fruits. And I told my friend that "I can't go on this retreat with you. Do they have chicken?" And no chicken, then why would I go on this retreat, but I went anyway. And then, in the state that I was in, because I was just drinking and cutting oranges, I was still weezing and I was still scratching. I was still going through it mentally. I heard this loud strong voice and it was Dr. Moore that, "the healing is in the plants." Talking about the healing is in the plants and that we could heal ourselves and we did not have to suffer. He started talking about these testimonies and I was spellbound. He would talk about women who could not conceive and they were able to conceive through plants. He would talk about the diabetes and high blood pressure and he had some of the barks and the roots there and he was educating us. But, that whole day I only heard him and I sat in front of a fire place and propped myself in front of the fire place, because you have an

attack of asthma if you lie down your lungs will collapse. So everyone could sleep the heat was going in my lungs and the next morning I woke up and all this mucous started to drain out of my body. I realized years later that that fire place was my first sweat lodge and when I was on grapefruit, lemons, oranges and water that that was my first fast. And I realized later on that morning when the mucous came out of my nose, my mouth and my eyes that that was my first detox. And then when I realized listening to Dr. Moore that that was my first really state of enlightenment. And that whole day I listened to all these strange people to me, but they seemed like they had so much wisdom and I latched on to everything that they said. They talked about Buddhist medicine. They talked about how to prepare foods holistically, naturally—how to heal your body. They talked about using movement as a for of healing. I was dancing then so I could relate. They talked about breathology and herbology and all that. I picked up one book. I picked up many books, but I picked up one book that I could identify with and that was Dick Gregory's, *Cooking With Mother Nature*. He was another one that gave that enlightenment. I went home with what I gathered from that weekend, from that mountain and I changed my diet—I became an immediate vegetarian. *And what year would you say that was?* I was 17. You could do the math. I was 17. Its now...I don't remember the year. and it was around 69. That was the year ya know and so from that point on, I came home...I did not do a transition like I tell everyone else to do one because its hard to make the shift, but I know why I was so sick. It was necessary for me to be self-inflicted, because it took me two 21 day cycles. I wasn't counting the numbers, but as I reflected years later I started analyzing, I said "wait a minute, how long did it take me to get rid of that asthma

completely and the eczema and the PMS, and the arthritis, and the headaches. And I was an introvert at the same time I was an artist, but how are you going to do that? But I was very quiet, extremely quiet and it healed every part of me. So now those 21 day cycles — so I now teach people 21 days cleansing that’s my foundational work and from there I opened up my home. People would visit me- I wasn’t trying to open up my home- people kept visiting me and I would give them a tonic. And, I would give them what was in my kitchen and I would tell them “you can’t bring any junk into the house because I’m not living like that.” I refused. And since I healed myself I was very strict, so all my friends wanted to visit me and we’ d dance, we’ d drum at my house [and] we’ d play music and they loved being there, but they had to heal in order to be there. So, I’ d run them a healing bath- everybody got a healing bath that came to visit me. Everybody got herbal tonics [as] that were a part of my conversation. Everybody got a powerful green salad. So within all of that, they would stay for ten to twelve days and get healed. I then would see one person after the next, and they would come and visit me to get healed. Someone called me; my father had another house, a brownstone he had tenants in and someone called and said “I heard about you and I’m in the hospital and they want to take my kids from me and maybe you could help me.” And I said, “well I don’t know if I can help you,” but before I could say anything else he hung up the phone and within an hour was in front of my door with his gown on. He looked like he had escaped from prison— from the hospital. He said, “you have to help me” and I went into my kitchen and started creating a care package. I had a brown bag and put apple cider vinegar in it and I put some goldenseal in it and I put two lemons in there and then I put maybe some spirulina.

I started packing little things for him and I said “You do this. You do that and help me and maybe this can help you.” And he took that care package and 10 years later he said “I never had to remove my kidney. I’m so thankful. Thank you.” And what happened is I started to have people get caught up in a spiritual path. That was my spiritual path — wellness, healing. So no matter what spiritual path you are bounded, if you heal yourself you will connect to the source of creation and you will get all your answers. In that quest, my mother told me “You need to study this.” My mother wasn’t interested in this, at all, but she said, “you don’t seem like you are interested in school, but you need to study this because you call my friends up about it, people and strangers. I became an evangelist of wellness. I remember I made a flier up in the neighborhood and I walked around the neighborhood with this flier saying, “Come to my home. I am going to show you how to heal yourself.” I laid out a little banquet and one brother came and we talked for eight hours and I was so happy to have that one brother to talk to, because those people on the mountain I never saw them again. Years later, I saw them as I started going deeper into holistic health, they started showing up. I said, “Oh! That’s Dr. Moore. That’s Bro. Kanye from 125th Street who instructed on metaphysical teachings. I met all the others from that place, Daiya on 125th that actually became colon hydrotherapist. I think she was a massage therapist, but she did different forms of healing medicine. So all the people started to show up in my life as kept on the path. I didn’t know anyone then, but I knew I’d heal myself. That I did know and then from that point I became a holistic health practitioner and became certified in that. And then I became certified as a Hatha Yoga instructor. I was certified by Mark Becker and so I have know him from way back when

my children were really small. I used to take yoga practice at his center. And then I became a clarity practitioner. I realized that I had adopted— I opened up a center on Flatbush Ave over Fish Market. I had two children and one on the way . And I had a grand opening when I was eight months pregnant. And I was also a colon therapist so I opened up colonic space as well as fasting space and people would come in the neighborhood. I remember having the baby in the carriage and the other two hanging onto the stroller and I walked around Flatbush Ave giving out my brochures on my place of practice and saying “I can help you to heal. I had my first three people came to the fast and I saw thousands and thousands people began to fast with me. I did colonic irrigation and hydrotherapy and healing baths and all of that. So that was my quest and then it went from there to opening a Norstrand Ave store front and then a spiritualist came into my life and that was Kwame Ishangi who is also , represented United nations they honored him for his art that he brought African culture to America (something) five years. And he believed in this work he had wife to study with me in colon therapy and he would come to my center and do spiritual readings and then at that point he taught me how to do spiritual baths and I was his apprentice. It just went on. The whole story I feel like writing a story in this conversation on my life, but it was everyday forty something years 7 days a week. And the people that I meet. The book came out of the people. Everything that I have done has come out of people. It has been there request. There were things that I wanted to do which was dance— I wanted to dance, I wanted to sing, I had a doo wop group, I was in a whole another path. I was in a company called the Demi-Gods with Joseph Walker. He is our ancestor now. He had a play on Broadway, I

forget the name of the play, but it was love (well) received and he took a company together of young artists that auditioned and he said that I had raw talent so he took me in and he taught us everything—all forms of dance, writing plays, creating sets and one of the major performers out of that circle her name is Lizz White she's in all the Broadway plays out there. I was in her company. We were in a company together. So that is really what I wanted to do, but where the most high placed me, where people placed me was to be a healer, but what did I get out of that. Personally, I was able to heal myself and that has been my theme that I was able to heal myself. And, I was able to stay on the path, because if you stop healing yourself then you get sick it's in the blood and in the bloodline. My family had asthma, heart condition, diabetes so I was set-up for those issues and so I knew that if I did not continue to live this life-style and if I would stay will this All-American toxic diet then I would be casualty and I probably been out of my body now. I had just one and it was one that I prayed for for years and there was one that I had before that, his name was Ronald Davidson. We came up together, he became a doctor and I became a holistic practitioner. And he just passed in his 50s. May his soul rest in peace, but he was the one that whole community loved and he was the one would sign us off if we needed medical documentation. He just took care of us. He was also an acupuncturist and a herbalist. And he was the one I would send people to and he would send a few people to me and so since he has been gone there has been a gap in the community. Later on, I met Dr. Jewel Pookrum and I remember giving her the feather of my eye to pray us together. She took on the Ancient Kemetic legacy at the time and we bonded and we bonded in wellness. And so, I acknowledged her in the book, Sacred

Woman: A Guide to Healing the Body Mind and Spirit. I put her in the opening of the book. She was a surgeon and she put down her surgical instruments and took up the mantle at that time of wellness. She had a calling at her own crisis and she was at her crossroads and would tell her own story and from that she found her healing in wholistic health and from that point on she went through a lot of challenges being a surgeon and then not doing surgery and in her circle they thought something was wrong with her, but she steered the path and that had a great influence in my consciousness. I was very moved by that commitment and so called her one of the elders of womb-wellness which is my primary work. Women come to me for womb-wellness so I acknowledged also Nakulako up in Harlem who has at this point delivered 500,000 babies. I don't know she just has been working for so many years and she also a mid-wife and she just blesses the community with the birthing. Currently, I have a professional relationship with one physician for five years. We've gone the deepest than the previous relationships. We partner quite a bit. She has endorsed *Overcoming An Angry Vagina* as a holistic alternative book for hysterectomy prevention and her endorsing it and then we did a play— I created a play that went up in London. It was a one-woman play based on if your vagina could speak what would she say—so much pain, because I have so many women who have suffered from rape and incest and abusive relationships and hysterectomies and also pain and struggle, intercourse disaster and young women looking for love in all the wrong places. (In this play), I answer a lot of questions inside that book. So I did the play here in speaking for the voices for the wombs. I was invited to see *Vagina Monologues* so I came out and saw the play and I saw the women crying.

Mainly, the European women were speaking for all the women in the world, but I didn't hear the solutions or rather the second part of the solution. I heard the pain. And you have to reach the pain that is the first level in healing. Speak it out, call it out, cry it out, scream it out and begin to build, restore, renew, forgive, love again and using nature as a healing make for recovery. So she cosigned that book. She also cosigned my son, Super Nova Slom's book, Hip Hop Medicine Man and his back is for the remedy and he put a DVD out discussing wholistic medicine for the hip hop generation which Erykah Badu was in that DVD and Dead Prez and a few luminaries. And so that went out in the world and he walks in my footsteps in terms of that. We have a lot of kitchen talks me and my sons about wellness. Since they were little to adult and now they have their own children.

HSH: Did you have any affiliation with NASA?

QA: I did a presentation there and I had no idea that it was going to be anything. I came in to talk to a few people and when I came in it was all the scientists all over the world and it was produced to go global and I didn't know that. I'm thinking a little lecture to a few people who might be interested in wellness and I walked into a whole world. And I was grateful that I liberation to purification. That was a wonderful opportunity. Dr. Sheridan answered the question that I was trying to start with Dr. Davidson. I asked Dr. Davidson "I need to quantify my work. I need to prove it." He said, "Well. You need hundreds of thousands of people, but that would cost about \$15,000 to \$30,000 and I said, "Ok, I don't have that, selling a jar of clay and a book and a workshop." So I held onto

the vision and when Dr. Sheridan and I connected, she was speaking to one of my clients who was her patient and he mentioned that his wife was with me and he was being examined by her and she said “my wife is with Queen Afua” and Dr. Sheridan said “this Queen Afua keeps coming up. A lot of my patients have seen her and they have done a lot of healing through her wellness work so I would like to meet her.” When he told me that I was so excited because I said “this might be it that I am gonna meet her too.” So, I got off the elevator to her clinic, Grace Family Practice and Wellness Center and I walked to her and she walked to me and we walked right into a hug. We didn’t even shake hands or ask “how are you doing?” It was informal. We hugged each other and what I felt at that moment was holistic and allopathic life merge and we then held hands like girlfriends from little children growing up and we went and sat in her office with her stethoscope and lab jacket and she see about 10,000 patients a year. She is extremely busy. I sat down and her patients sat there to bring us together and we just talked about story. She talked about that she was looking for someone wholistic who can help the people, educate her patients, begin to bring wholistic work into her practice and I was looking for someone to quantify the work. Now all during that time I would come and work in her clinic for one year and every month she asked me a question to answer at a seminar that I was to give every Wednesday. I was there for 12 months every month and she would just tell me the topic and I would give the presentation and she would say this month could you talk about 5 elements. And I would talk about the five elements. The next month it was high blood pressure. The next month was fibroid tumors. The next month it was obesity. The next month it was diabetes. After the twelve months were over I didn’t know what, but I

just said that I had to do some other things and she said, “well do you want to do the detest. So she gathered 5 nurses and we worked for 12 weeks and we gathered They came and got their blood work done. They had their health insurance and they went through the program. And they were so pleased to have a medical doctor and a wholistic practitioner who have been working on this for over three decades. And to have us merge together was like they were in heaven. I know its not that deep, but it felt like....and she then would take them off of their medication, because they were healed. And she said that I am the scientist, I am not giving them the herbs, food preparation, workshops and exercises. You do all of that.” This is your program, but what I am gonna do is scientifically support it and I am bringing in five other nurses who are willing to volunteer as well. Another nurse who has her Ph.D. joined in on that. So we have to complete that. One little capsule of the possibility, but together we created a proposal and we did submit it so that we could get more funding, but there was no funding. We both put in to get funding to do this research and to prove that it would save the economy. And as soon as we started our research project that’s when our current president, Barack Obama was coming in and I said that this is so important for us to do it now and to let him know what we are doing. We didn’t complete the process of letting him know, but we did complete the process of putting the document together. We just have to and we sent it to the medical AMA it wasn’t received and it was sent back. It should still go to him and I am sure that he’s got himself so saturated. So we have plenty of opportunities and we kinda missed some of them to continue on the journey so When Man Heal Thyself came out she was also there to talk to the men statistically why it is important that

we get into practicing wellness.

HSH: What is your official title in the line of work that you do?

QA: I am wholistic health practitioner. I am also polarity practitioner, colon therapist and hatha yoga instructor. That's official. Then I am a priestess of the Kemetic legacy based on the teachings of Ptah of the ancient Nile Valley legacy and that's my primary title.

I am not active in it (polarity practice), but when I studied wholistic health some decades ago I studied that as energy system working and moving energy with touch and so I do the touch through now my tongue. I talk people into wellness. I pour into their heart and I have been able to take the teachings of Sacred Woman, because I had to research and one of the things that I found is that every practice that I was doing, everything doing with wholistic health is actually an African naturalized style of health from the Nile Valley and everytime that I would study further when writing the book it was called therapy, astrology, aromatherapy, raki. I met the raki masters his eyes they work with energy in reference to resurrecting Ausar, the king and so I see colonic irrigation or all forms of hydrotherapy, healing baths, the colon therapy, vegetarian lifestyle, internal hygiene— all that would bring us back to the ancient Nile Valley legacy, but we didn't get credit for it and so that's becomes an issue. It's like the honoring your mother and your father and everything is out of balance. Then I realized that everything is based on Maat. And I

understand why a whole civilization was based on Maat. In the United States heart attacks are the number 1 killer. That means that everyone is suffering from a broken heart and our civilization was based on a scale of balance and one side of the scale is the heart and the other side of the scale is the feather. So they are telling us that our heart have to be light as a feather. Well then how does your heart become as light as a feather. Well, when you realize that you are on the seat of power you create the world. Your consciousness creates your body, creates your relationships, and creates your world so if you elevate your thinking your consciousness which is taught in Ancient practice and your heart become light and you begin to realize I created all of this and that means that I can create something different and the power to heal is within.

HSH: How does your work contribute to the health and wellness of the African community?

QA: Give me a hospital and give me six months of dedicated practitioners of wellness and we would go into that hospital and intergrate. We don't even have to stop anything that is going on there, but we need to intergrate wholistic practice in the hospital. I know that if we were able to integrate the work that I am doing with other practitioners doing. One of the primary pieces to me is that food is medicine and I say that just like a surgeon uses their scalpel and a doctor may use medication, I used food as medicine the same way based on the five elements (air, fire, water, air, consciousness). When my clients come they come in a state of emergency—beyond emergency. They come to me only because

they have tried everything and they don't find that there is any other way out and they don't want another surgery and they have been on medication for five to ten years and they have side effects. And the side effects are more deadly than the start of their disease. So I know that because of that working in emergency I figured that anyone that works in the emergency ward long enough they have a lot of knowledge. I have been working in the emergency ward. We only go to the emergency ward when we know something has burst to the point of almost no return. So if that's my clients, my clients would call me up after getting diagnosed they are gonna have surgery—a lot of women say that the doctors told me that I have to have a hysterectomy. And it critical because they are on their way to their car. You know when someone calls you on the way to the car not when they get home. I have had many calls they are on their way crying, scared to death, petrified and they remember 2 to 1 heal and they say “I have had your book for years. I didn't know that I had to change. I think that I am ready now. If I have another choice I would like to try” and so I am able to take whatever the case is and no matter what they case is to take them to higher ground so I have a lil one-room school back in the day of our mothers, and grandmothers and great-grandmothers that in this one room with all the levels that was in the one room and they learned the second grade, third-grade , fifth grade and so on and there was one teacher and she taught everybody at one time. I have that one-room school and I teach woman and man heal-thyself and I teach the Emerald Green Wholistic practitioner training in it. So I am training others, it's a legacy and I want the legacy and I want people to be able to teach you have to write the books, you have to do the dvds, you have to have the institution to teach so that it doesn't die with

you, because I have buried ten healers in their forties and fifties and a few in their early sixties. I understood too what had happened to them, but in that I mentioned Dr. J(37:00) in all of my books and I also saw Johnny Moore and I read his book and I said that it was wonderful, but Dr. Johnny Moore had left a document we would have those 50 years of knowledge and what makes a people powerful is knowledge. We suffer for lack of knowledge and that is the whole point of the ancestors and being on their shoulders it means that we are now a step higher. We have all of what they have and all of our enthusiasm and that we are able to take all that generational work and pass to other generation and the generations become stronger and stronger. It's like starting all over. And so that is my father's teachings. My father is a Garveyite, he was also an entrepreneur and I followed that was like his kitchen conversation. He would talk about African people and what we needed to do to settle ourselves and so I took it on from a wholistic place to continue the work uplifting my people to accomplish what we want.

HSH: What is your definition of the phrase wholistic health?

QA: Wholistic health is taking account of wholeness. Your body creates a level of wellness has to merge with your mental body (mental wellness), has to merge with your spiritual body has to merge with your social body has to merge with your material (physical). That all has to work together- synergy, because some might even want to be physically healed, but they don't have the finance and that becomes an issue because we do have health insurance—some of us. Millions of us do not have health insurance, but if

we had health insurance we would have health insurance to have surgery so that we don't have many choices when we have health insurance and that is an issue. And many of us would have health insurance to have medication and medication—you can have it, but it has a life sentence and if you were to have health insurance for alternative medicine natural healing then you would have more choices and that would create the balance. A lot of my clients would like to see me or people like me but their health insurance won't cover. The doctor that I was working with tried to integrate me into her practice and they said that she could not do that and she said, "I take responsibility for her", collected my whole system of work and I worked from her office. Everything would shift if that happened and we would be healthier people.

When I connected with the philosophy and principle around Maat that is when I realized its really Maat its wholistic health What is the whole point of getting massage and Raki and colon therapy and nutrition it is to get into Maat. So you can put in one word it balance, harmony all these aspects and it goes right into our heart, which is our relationships. We are eating ourselves to death because our relationships our out of balance. With our mothers we are holding animosity with our fathers, with our mates. As we go into the heart of it and connect our heart to our body, mind and spirit , our economics and all relations then we can begin to heal using natural elements Air, the breath; fire, the sun and foods; water, saturated in the body; earth, the very foundation of the soil. Bring all the elements together with meditation and prayer creates a whole being, a radiant vibrant being that now the whole planet changes for.

HSH: In which era did the wholistic movement begin in America and in the African community?

QA: 1969 that is when I work up and the whole nation shifted. Power to the people started permeating and I remember saying "I'm black and I'm proud." One of the brothers who opened up a sports space there everybody came to his shop and he had all the cultural images of great, a mural of us and during that time there was a particular place that I believe was one of the first places that opened up a new era I think they opened up a year before I started to take my journey and that's. They opened up Indian and European integrate yoga. I don't know the gurus, but one of the gurus was there and had a European name, the person that does the Yoga Fest was one of his teachers and so for the wholistic realm the Indian teaching came in. and the Indian teachings were an offshoot of African teachings so you can date back yoga practice, meditation bases back to African culture and with that vegetarian lifestyle came in and brought yoga practice came in and meditation came in. while that was going on African culture the ground swell and African studies started to come through and African dance and drumming and studying languages and schools. I remember one of the cultural centers in New York was on a claver place called The East. And I remember going there and hearing. I missed him, but I would come in during that era. And New York was a heart spring of culture and wholistic healing and then the panthers were coming in. Everything was an explosion and the hippies came in fighting the war. All of this happened at the same time and people

were fighting for righteousness. They were fighting to not be swallowed up by what we call the beast, willie lynch we wanted to end that and break those chains. And so we all found our way during that time. The Afros came I looked the imagery of women and what women should be like and we based it on African culture so women started to wear Afro's, natural hair. We took out the dye, the lye of the hair and we started to wear the dress, the long dresses. And during that time I was 16 then and I remember I went over to it was like the same omonth that Malcolm x came into the community at the time and he presented and I was moved by that and I was also moved by How to Eat to Live cuz I was also seeking a way and I went to the Mosque to find out more about what was happening there, because they were like the man was so upright at the time and so respectful to the women and then they started opening up restaurants. At this point, I didn't believe what they were eating necessarily, but they had their own businesses and they were building farms and factories and that was power to the people. The whole realm was power to the people. In the middle of that I became vegetarian and I was teaching African dance, I'm going to the nation I am doing some of everything to try to figure it out. Then when I met Baba Shangi and opened up the Wellness Center. It was in 1969 that everything opening up in America to me.

HSH: Was there a name for the wholistic health movement in the African community?

QA: Really, we didn't relate to that. I was talking ot myself for a long time and its really just— it's gone viral now, everyone is doing it. But when I was coming up, my family

thought I was strange and anyone that tried to make a shift to this would go to their families with total trauma. Their families did not embrace it. Food was the centerpiece of the household. You change your food, you might lose your family and that is what people were doing. They were getting upset. They were sick and now that they were getting better and were trying to bring it to their families, but the families were not having it. And sometimes the family would spike the food and I would hear a lot of that. “well it was and so they put it in the greens.” And they would ostracize those that would come into wholistic health lifestyle. So people would embrace African culture faster, the dance, language and the art, but when it came to changing what you would put in your mouth and would confuse my young son at the time who was maybe 13 or 14. He thought that everyone that had African clothes on was vegetarian. He was like wow I thought they were in the culture and culture was synonymous with wellness. It blew him away. He became militant about wholistic wellness that we have to raise our frequency and heal our bodies and that is apart of taking this responsibility on and healing your community. It was not welcome in the early days, but what I did with that is the book, City of Wellness, I figured people are always asking a question Faracan (50:20) kicked in head when I was 17 he said, “The creator has a master plan.” And he would always speak at what they would call the black shops and there was a black shop in this neighborhood. A black shop was a place where a man usually would be there—an African brother and he would have his cowries shells and he would have his posters on Angela Davis, Malcolm and he would have the dashikis and the lappas and the incense and this was all connected to African culture and us getting into our culture and becoming

righteous and outside of his shop he would always play “the create has a master plan.” And I would say ok and I am overcoming this asthma at the same time and hearing this plan and I would always talk about this plan. I learned that the plan came through me through the books because I was always asking the question of about the plan: how are we gonna heal ourselves? How are we gonna overcome? Are people are dieing like flies. We have the highest incident of disease out of all forms of disease, but there are also answers for all those forms of disease and how do I get to the people so that can understand. So one of the things that happened is that I wrote the book through a brother out from Atlanta (I forget his name), but he became a supporter of me and he said “You have to write a book.” I wrote this book and I wrote the Seven Kitchens of Consiousness in the City of Wellness and that I started to see a shift when that happened. That was the international soul food kitchen came through, because it was about the food of your culture so I gathered like a museum the southern soul food recipes that fols are familiar with the classical one that can bury you if you do not have alternatives and the southern fried chicken and the turkey and the stuffing – all of what happens in that. And started to look at vegetarian alternatives and we had a few restaurants open up I know in DC there were two soul food vegetarian restaurants and that was powerful, but what happens is that we went about this Caribbean soul food. So I got recipes from the Caribbean community or my clients and their families, classical ones and then I would create alternative so that they would not get sick from the foods. And when I looked at Hispanic foods and got some recipes and so I started to doctor some of those up wholistically. And then I got some foods from South African and some from Ghana and so I went into the foods and I

said that this is the common ground we are all gonna eat, but what are we eating how are we eating, how are we preparing it and can we incorporate cleansing, rejuvenating so I found a way to create this international soul food kitchen one that we could share together and it would not divide familie, because what happens when you divide families people who are vegetarians are afraid to bring the children to the grandparents and so they need the grandparents to help raise them, but the grandparents are fighting to say that this is the way that you should eat, but then they learn, because they don't know and if you do not create a bridge everyone brings their food to holidays and the festivals of the family and the family reunions and the family stay undivided. And I watched some of that healing begin to take place. I have a drama that opened me up to work at Omega institute. Omega Institute is suppose to be the top institute in the world of alternative medicine in the New York European circle so I was invited by a small group that was being supported and they asked me could I come and do a presentation so I said ok. They got me there and I did this presentation and got the attention of those that rain that institute. The people that ran that Oprah her wellness Sundays she brings different minds advanced in wholistic practice so she studied from there and they look at her as their god mother. 400 European women, 5% us and they all look at her as their god mother. She helps and supports them and she studied there from my observation Iyanla Vanzant spends time there and she say's "girl you gotta get over there and let them know what you are doing so overtime so when I went there I did one thing interested me I did a family drama. And whenever I do it everybody connects because this is what happens I take one person out of the audience and I said you are gonna be the one who finally found your way to

wellness and was able to heal yourself and is so excited about your new found level of healing and you have gotten rid of your obesity and your diabetes and you have gotten rid of your depression all of that and you know the challenge is that family that you come out of they have the same issues and now your gonna go to the family reunion and your gonna go speak to your mother about it and your new found black religion, new found path and you speak to your father about it and speak to your best friend , speak to your aunt your cousin, you uncle bubba your gonna to speak to all these family members and tell them all about this excitement and what is gonna happen they are gonna slap you down and they are gonna tell you that this is how we eat. I don't know what you are doing and they are not going to relate to you through food and so it happens the drama and as you are going to each one they are not co-signing it they are not supporting it and it breaks your spirit. And sometimes they go hard and say that this is how we should do and this is how our family do it and this is how we survived and so and so is 80 years old and how come and bring this. This is going to distract the family. This is how we love. This is how we commune and so that's how they feel as a threat so that person that comes for wellness ends up falling to the waste side. They come back five years later saying I fell off and I ask what happened and they talk about the family and they talk about the husband or the children or the wife the wont come along. So its always the family which is the heart of society. Its about Maat and so I had to keep figuring this out. In writing about the food and how we could link into transforming the family through the food where the pain of the family can now be resolved, where the families being divided can now be resolved from the food. Food is important, food is the fuel without it you will die

away. You will be incapacitated. You will fight. You will be sick. And the soul food. Go into what soul food can be then because the foundation of soul food is plantation eating, the scraps on the table, but we made it a delicacy. But the delicacy is still not good enough, because we are still sick so we have to overcome so in the soul food is a heart of heart soul to soul. We go into the garden and we take from the garden and we heal ourselves.

Once the family realized that a child or that adult, but usually it's a young child coming in with this new found way and this is an old pattern of the family on one way and once that child's spirit of that young adult or that older person whoever comes to their family with this information is then challenged, their broken and then they start to go back. Now, what happens sometimes the family and this drama, I create the family starting to recognize the wisdom because times goes on they actually recognize the wisdom they start studying themselves. They start hearing about this wellness and it is so out there now people are starting to talk about it more and they realize the wisdom of that young person or that person coming with new information and they go back to that person. Now at that time that person is sick again, the person now has the same sickness' that the family has. It was why the person even changed so then they start to say baby what... a father will come and ask "what should I do for my knees?" And she'll say, "Well dad I have the clay." And the mother will say, "You know I have been having hot flashes." And she'll say "You can take the green juice and that will cool down the body." So they are coming to her with different things and she starts to help them and they start to lift her

up and they lifting her up, she or he is lifted up and now the family sits down and have dinner together and then that same person their enthusiasm starts to show them the way and now you have a whole family. And I physically have seen that with my clients. I encourage circles of wellness and when you come to sit with me on one on one, you are connected to a family. So you have to get yourself into a alignment after 21 days. Be alifving example. Then go to your family members, the ones who will first hear you and get a few of you healing and then it will begin to spread. Like a disease that spread in our community. I saw it happen in 1980's when drugs were pouring out and I remember having the center and the people that were drug addicts was in front of my center on Kingston Ave. Wellness also can spread and that's what this is about. This is to me powerful to the people. I am still on the same walk, "power to the people" 1969. I'm still walking it that I am saying when one person at time, with one family at a time we are gonna come back to ourselves and become whole. So that drama, I call it *The Family Drama Back to Resurrection* that there is death, but there is also hope. There is resurrection in this process and I feel that the system that I have can change the fiber of the world. I don't even say to a block or to one family. I know that this work, working from a capsule we can do the same thing over and over again. Marketing is being put into being sick. A lot of dollars are being put into fast food industry. We are addicted and we are using foods as a crutch and I can put my pharmacy together to break that addiction. I recognize that we are addicted and we cannot break the cycle by ourselves. It comes back to the plants the power in the plants. And if we take the plants we can have a formula called the master herbal formula, 13 herbs that detox all the systems and detox the

memory of the poisons out of the blood stream where disease dwells. We can take the memory purify all of your organs and then the cravings are no longer there and that is how you break addiction. Then they say “How do you get them off of meat?” So I have another formula and that’s the green-life formula and that’s just vegetable protein. Give them vegetable protein. Keep giving them vegetable protein three times a day right before each meal and what will happen over time is that they will come off of meat which will lower the blood pressure which mean will get rid of constipation which mean will help decrease cancerous cells in your body. The government had a cheese line at the same time and we lined up. And I remember lining up in front of the black panther party institute building and it was not from the panthers, because they were having their breakfast program for the children. We were so happy to get in that line as a people. I said something is wrong with that line. At that time I didn’t know that cheese was so deadly and that is what contributed to my asthma and my allergies and all that. But that cheese—and it was the worse possible cheese and so many of us are left because it is now in our DNA’s. Once you get it in your system you want to keep it going and you keep it happening and you conceive babies in the sperm and ovaries. It is in the conception that we come onto this world of disease.

HSH: Can you reiterate just based on your recollection those instrumental figures during those moments in terms advocates of health or even those practitioners during the time at which it emerged?

QA: Dr. Johnny Moore, Brother Kanya you might have to google him. Brother Kanya was pivotal because he brought the work in, in terms of the metaphysical work. When he brought the physical and spiritual of the conditions that we're in and so in that he had the books of our ancestors. He had books on herbs, ancient practices and so it was on 125th St that many of us piled up in that little store front. It wasn't a little store front, but it was a store front where the Hogshead Office building is pretty much on the same block and everyone came to study there. And it was John Harris was another one. He was the one through media that got many of us exposed through the media and one of the first health food stores that I could remember and then it was also Babi Shangi, because he was a culturalist who was a vegetarian, because we thought that it was automatic, but he was one of the culturalist, artist who was also a vegetarian. So he became an advocate of my work and studied with me, because that was apart of it. Dr. Alvenia Fulton. Everytime I went to Chicago I would visit her. I would go to her three times when I was there. I had family there and I would have a sojourn to her place, because I would have the North Side of Chicago. Dr. Alvenia Fulton was Dick Gregory's mentor/teacher and it came to her..he was an obese comedian that needed knowledge so she invited me by the third visit she let me come into her basement and when I think about it I am there and she had these giant refrigerators and in there she had cork size bottles for every disease. She had the diabetic formula, blood pressure formula, obesity formula, I don't know if she called it, but she had women's formula. She had All these formulas and she had her team her staff, her practitioners in their white jackets and they were down there with the formulas and they would bring them up, but she brought me down there into her inner work place. She

would tell me that if they ever come for you, she would never say who “they” were, but she said if they ever come for you tell them that you are making food for the people and that’s it, because she had medicine in her basement. She was a naturopath and she was and she traveled to different parts of the world. I remember one time when I came the second visit she was in China. She traveled and bring back knowledge so she had a little shop and probably that effected me and inspired me, because I have a little shop like hers on Nostrand Ave when I moved to my second location. And even here in this house, this house different people came. Stevie Wonder came and played on this piano and it was interesting that he came to get healing and I was colon therapist at that time and I was giving colonics and one of my clients came and she didn’t know- nobody knew that he was here, because it would be too much, but she started playing “Isn’t She Lovely” and our intuitive nature as a people is too deep and she starts playing his music and he ask’s “does somebody know that I am here?” I say, “no she must have just picked up.” And he really wanted me to stay. I was on my way to Africa. Joe Mensah was a client of mine. Joe Mensah came and worked with him for one year and he was a world renowned African artist. If you mentioned him in Ghana everyone knew Joe Mensah. He was the most prominent artist in Ghana. And he was just a lovely small frame man and I gave him colonic. I gave him healing baths. I gave him tonics. I gave him consultations. And he wanted to open up a healing village in Ghana and so he brought me there and it took me a few years to leaves. I finally packed things and sent things and I prepared my children. I didn’t happen. Other things happened. I had to come back here and understood why. I wanted to go there to live and work and I didn’t plan on coming back,

but I had to write *Heal Thyself* and I had to write it here. I had to write *Sacred Woman* and I had to write all the books that I wrote I had to write them here. I am on my way back to Ghana 25 years later this August (2012). I coming to teach what I know, coming to share what I know and that will be the next chapter in my life. That was my vision quest cuz I always wanted to do what Marcus Garvey said “Go back to Africa.” Go back home. No matter where you can be in a bubble and think that everything is perfect anywhere, but when I did get a change to go it grounded me. It really gave me a deep sense of myself and my own power. The atmosphere did it. The ocean—the Atlantic ocean, and the air and the soil. I was in a family that...I went to the slave castles by myself. He wasn’t interested. He was a Christian. I went to his Church one time and they couldn’t understand...I wanted culture. At the time I went expecting that I would experience my culture. I did not. So I did a lot of reflection, but when I came back my love for my people it grew so vast. I never realized that in my village and all that we have been through we can look at eachother and understand. We can just glance and say no what we are feeling and what we are thinking. There is language that we have so I had to come back and help my village and I thought I’ve done that. And if I don’t have my body I still feel like my work has been done. So if I do get a chance to go back and do whatever I am going to do in the next chapter of my life then I would have fulfilled my mandate my obligation to my village here.

HSH: How long were you in Ghana?

QA: It was about 6 or 7 weeks. I got a chance to go to the slave castle by myself. He actually drove me to the g() islands and dropped me off into a hotel there. I could hear the ocean and thought it was going to take over the hotel. And then I went into the slave castles. And we always hear the stories about how people responded. I didn't have anyone go with me so it was my soul. A sole personal spirit. I didn't break down and cry like I thought would happen, but what happened is that I felt empowered and I said how in the world, "how are we even surviving? How are we functioning now at all?" To have us three months, four months there. They dropped us there. We had babies there. We defecated there. We were thrown slop. How did we even survive on food? It was in the dark. We couldn't see each other. We were speaking different languages. They threw us in this pinhole at one time and then we would come out of it some months later once the ship came. Then they dropped us down in the bottom of the ship and how did we survive that. And then come and 400 years of chattel slavery, generation of generation of generation. If we can even think talk walk It's a miracle. That's where my compassion for the people came into being. So it just...we are amazing. WE are amazing people.

HSH: Today, who would you say the prominent individuals are in terms of those who are practicing health? Or organization(s)in the United States?

QA: I would name Ausar Aset. Why would I name Ausar Aset? Because, when I was looking for a cultural school...I was always looking for cultural schools, because I felt if

you put your children in institutions it is going to destroy their self image, their state of being, the very core of who they are and not give them lives from the fourth /former dimension of who they are. You would help destroy the child even if they had a healthy vegetarian lifestyle, but I was looking for a cultural school that was also a vegetarian school so that is a unique school. You don't find them everywhere. It was that institute that had a school. And they still have school, educational schools for young children. I put all three of my children in that school when I was there for some years I had them in the school. I was not apart of the society, but my children and I was forever grateful that I had a place for children where I thought they could grow strong. So that was for the institute that I formerly...my association with Dr. Afrika and his wives, he's almost a one-man show. (Laughter) I am on his bandwagon. When I had a center, I shared a center with my previous husband (Baba Heru) and I would invite Dr. Afrika so he came to the center quite a few times and I would host him and he would come to the feet of the master and study. I love his work and his way. He has such an undying love for his people. I traveled through the years with Lady Prima. She brought crystal healing, stone healing and music as a form of healing. When I first heard her work I was joining forces with Dr. Love and his wife at the time, Elsa Benal. We worked together for quite sometime. I still recommend her work. She was with all of my centers. She says "I don't care where you set-up." She was always with me. I went to her center and we have the largest group there. So Dr. Love had a foundation space around 23rd street where I did work until Valentine came who was a husband and he did work. So we had 96 people did a fast. IT was the largest fast that was ever done. So he had a hub— a place where we

could come to. And I want to say Dr. Ronald Davidson. Dr. Ronald Davidson, he was way back. He was like 35 years back when I was looking for a place to see clients. He just let us come in. If he felt that we had something strong to say he would open up his doors as a medical doctor. He was very grassroots and he was about food as medicine and taking responsibility for your wellness. He would open up his doors. He had a loft and he would have events. I didn't know about his events. I found out two years later that he would have events, but I was really going there to share my practice and he let me come in. He had great influence in my life. Culturally speaking, Empress Akwekwe—she is now an ancestor. I was teaching dance at age 17 to her daughters and we bonded around that time. I went to her house around 17 or 18 and I actually saw the merging of culture, African beauty and vegetarianism and tonic and herbs. I saw all that come together in one woman and I said “Oh my gosh. Who is this woman?” That was the empress. And I came into the house and I saw her books on health and I saw her herbs upside down drying in the kitchen. She came out of the kitchen with her locks and her gold head-wrap and her lappa on and I am looking at an image. I am looking at an image of African culture in America. She's in our community and she has this coconut in her hand with some sesame milk. I am just becoming vegetarian and I am like “Oh my goodness.” She took me on as her god-child. I didn't ask to be it. She said “you are mine” and that's it. (Laughter) She actually prepared me for Ghana. She was like my personal rites of passage. And she defended me— she defended my work. She said, “you are to bring holistic art to our community.” So she says, “I want you to do a piece on holistic art.” My community has been telling what I am doing and what I am to do

and I am like, “really?” (Laughter) Bob Law told me. Bob Law had a great impact in my work. He’s the one who had me write *Heal Thyself*. I came on his show through his wife we bonded and support her and his transformation through her and so I said “I want to get on his show one-time.” And, he came to see me for a colonic irrigation and then by the way as hes walking out of the door he says, “ok. You’re gonna come on my show. Ok. You just made it so simple.” I came on his show and I started talking about liberation through purification, healing naturally, holistically. He sent his mother for me to give her a colonic and she came with another pastor to check me out first and they both checked me out thoroughly and I passed the bill. And I got the chance to come into his family on that level, but what he did was he helped me to get into people’s homes, because people really respected and honored him. He said, “she’s gonna help us. She’s the one so pay attention.” He say, “Queen write a book.” I would just agree, but I didn’t know how. The second time that I came onto his show, he say “Queen you need to write a book.” I agreed again. And the third time he said “Queen Afua is writing a book.” So he announced to everybody on the air that I was writing a book. I didn’t know how to begin. I didn’t know the first thing. I got books and I said “this is chapter, this is a subtitle, this is a title. You gotta have the facts. You gotta have the footnotes. So it’s like self-help. Therefore, because of him that is what started and people have started to say “oh well. You can write another one. Bob Law was a huge influence. He called me up one morning when we had the Million Man March. We were in the room with Honorable Minister Louis Farakan having a meeting for the Million Man March and Diana Fargh who is a spiritualist. We have been friends for 30 something years. She

mentioned to Bob Law, “Queen Afua should put a fast together for the Million Man March. He spoke with Minister Louis Farakan and he said that it would be fine. Bob called me up and he said “you are now the” he gave me a title. I created a fast for them. One sister thought a medical doctor should do this. No medical doctor should do this during a fast and I have been thinking about this for 20 something years and I already knew exactly what...I came and downloaded it (26.44) did my fast and I knew that I could do three levels so it didn’t matter the level that you were on, you could fast from negativity, cursing and violence, and fast from alcohol and drugs and fast from flesh food. I laid out this fast so that everyone could join in— they could fast for 21 days up to that point. For those who were really ready there would be a fast for that day and it would go out globally. And I knew that that would raise a frequency of our people. That that would be the chain reaction that would actually have global attention. We would not be talking about health on this level. We would be talking about helping us and how we have just been plungering. It didn’t happen, but it is still happening through Heal Thyself Institute on another level, —a smaller level, but that was like what got the attention. So these windows come— these windows of opportunity come and we just keep moving forward, making efforts to get the word out.

HSH: How would Aris fit into your narrative? Can you elaborate on your relationships?

QA: Aris! I said Aris “when are you going to write your book?” I’m on him about “when are you going to write your book?” I [finally] said don’t worry about it, I’ll put

you in my book so at least they know where stuff comes from. I know that if you don't put stuff down, everyone will start saying, "well I did that and I did that and I created that." And he [Aris says] Well, I'm the first one that came into the community and started giving live pies. So I put him into...In the "Seven Kingdoms of Consciousness" he's in the live food kitchen as the Godfather. I coined him that— of live foods. It was Dr. Afrika in the picture with myself, with Semaj and other healers and students when we went to Jamaica. And, he had this program and we had a healing retreat and it was maybe 7 or 9 day retreat. He did his food preparation classes there. How I met him? It must be now over 30 years ago and when he first came with his wife and they had small apartment on Flatbush and we all piled up in his apartment. He taught us about live foods. He taught us exquisite dishes and live recipes and live desserts and live sandwiches and main dishes. And we did a barter. I said " you teach me live food recipes and I'll do some massage work." And he did. It was just wonderful. Then he opened a place on Flatbush Ave., which was to be the place of places, but then the construction came in for a year or longer and that affected his business. I remember going pass his place one night, hoping that he still might be there as I was coming from a dance class, it was Spring. And I saw him in the window — it was dark and he was just pondering. I said "let's stop the car. Let's pray." Because I knew he was going through some struggles with keeping that place alive. It was expensive real estate. This is wheat grass and green juices, and people still couldn't get through because of the way the city was working on the ground. Then shortly after, sometime later, I found out he was in Jamaica. When he was there, I would have Sacred Woman trainings and I would take

groups of women.

HSH: Was this Per Ankh? Do you remember the name of it?

QA: I don't think it was Per Ankh. I don't remember the name of it. I would come there and line everybody up and have an entrepreneurial day and I would go into our community and I would show the women all of the entrepreneurs to spark birthing your sacred work, because that's how we are gonna build up our community. I felt was to have our own businesses and then you can hire people. You can hire your community. You can hire your family. You can hire some of the brothers who are coming out of prison and some of the sisters that have not way of getting work so we have to be able to take care of our home. So I would take them on a day of entrepreneurialship and I would say have extra money so you can have your week grass and green drink and purchase order from him. You know black dollars (cooperative economics).

HSH: What are your suggestions to meat eaters to embrace this lifestyle?

QA: I would show them my pyramids. I have seven pyramids. Now the symbol of the pyramid is resurrection and that shows them the symbol is telling you that you can grow. You can raise up. You can resurrect. You can overcome. And within that pyramid. One of the pyramids is the meat eating or the protein choices. So when one sees that there is a bridge. You have to take a bridge if you want someone to climb on to the next level. So

when I show them that everything is energy, everything is frequency. The higher the energy the greater the healing. The lower the energy the more disease in the body. So I place the most dense of the proteins on the bottom of the pyramid. The most dense, the most constipating, the most chemicals with the most just toxicity of the protein. So I lay on the bottom, they see it: the beef, the pork and they say ok that's on the bottom. Then I show them one step up. It is still low frequency, but it is a step up. So I say, "can you make a step? Can you climb just a step up? Cut back and now increase one step—chicken and fish." They see that ok. Then I say, "now when you regulate your iron level then you go up." They see it all in one pyramid. So now they see the connection, they see the bridge. If you do it separately like if you tell them "this is not what you should eat," but you don't show them clearly how it connects "that this what you can eat as an alternative," then you lose them right there at the bridge. So they don't walk over. So now when they see "oh beans or the bean family. Oh yeah we have beans. Back in the day it was called poor man's diet." Well actually if you want rich health, you would take the poor man's diet. It is not a poor man's diet it is the rich man's wealth, because you are able to process the food. You are able to digest the food. It is plant based protein that is going to bring the body to wellness and then you go into the lentils and you can sprout the beans which takes it to the highest frequency of the protein. The next level up they start to see poor health which is the base the bottom to good health choices. Frequency is going up. Your body is able to process more and then you go into optimal and that's when you go into your sea vegetables which [are] sea proteins and go into your sprouts and you have your walnuts and seeds in moderation unless you have algae. They see the

full spectrum. Now from there they now begin—I always make an agreement with them can they begin to cut back and if they say yes, but they have these issues. I say, “these issues have led to what you eat. You are what you eat.” They say, “my high blood pressure, hypertension, constipation?” All the issues, I show them how that relates to the food on the low level. And they say, “oh really?” And I say, “do you want to overcome this?” And they say, “yes.” “Now what you do is take (35:40) and I give them alternative of beef, pork. If you don’t know them then your not gonna get your grandmother, uncle bubba. Your not gonna get your family in this. You have to show them—bridge them. Then I bridge them all the way to the top and they can come in out of that until they stabilize. Then, I have a formula that they would take in the powder form and that helps their blood stream, clear that craving out. So they get their protein. When you get your protein you don’t have a craving for low frequency. You eat what you body needs. So bridging that is what helps them climb to higher levels.

HSH: What are the books or articles that you have written?

QA: *Heal Thyself for Health and Longevity*, *Sacred Woman: A Guide to Healing Body Mind and Spirit*. That was considered the mainstream book. That mainstream book brought *Heal Thyself* into the mainstream, because people started to ask for the other book. They say, “what else did she write?” And then back to self-publishing, the *City of Wellness*, *Seven Kitchens of Consciousness*. Now being the publishing how is African World Books who also now publishes *Overcoming an Angry Vagina*, *Journey to*

Wellness. It all was done in London by another small company and then from there went to...The current book, which is *Man Heal Thyself*, which is published by African World Books so there are the books. Well, I got a Blackboard Award. They just told me I had it when the book went from paper copy to hard back. And when I was in *Essence* for best-selling books for five times. If you want to research you may be able to find me in *Essence* during Susan Taylor's Run about 15 times in different articles. I was in *Body and Soul*. We had different things that happened along the journey so a lot of things got away from me.

HSH: The arts and health are all connected. So can you tell me about the *Sacred Woman* CD?

QA: I had what you call a hey day. I've had two hey days. I pray that the next hey day is upsurging, but that was when it was able to come out, because it had to be financed. And the only reason why it is not our now, because it is not financed. That is why. People come and say, "I need that." "I know that you need it." That was really over seven years, I gathered six voices and these were from all the classes. I would hear a voice and it would () and I would say whoo." That's a nice voice. After graduation we would have the Sacred Drama from death to resurrection and that would be at the National Black Theatre and that was basically where we did most of them. During that time I would hear the music and the voices. I then did what was called a jam session. I gathered those six voices from those seven years or so and we came together. I put a

candle in the middle of the floor. We had frankincense and myrrh'd the space. I invited Baba Shangi to come in and play the percussion. I invited Nati Nadi from up in Harlem. I always said that he was the Golden Flowertist. He would come. And then I had Entified, god of sound he would come with the keyboard. And Supernova becomes an inspiration, because Supernova was a clear channel. So, these six voices came together and I took out the prayers from the book. Each gateway was a prayer and I gave each them the prayers. I said now we're gonna do a jam session. And the musicians are gonna come on in and do what they do and were going to take the prayers and put melody to them. And so we did a prayer and we went from gateway zero which is nut to gateway nine. We started at four 'o clock that afternoon and we finished at five o' clock that next morning. We laid the entire album down.

HSH: Do you remember what year that was?

QA: I'll let you see the album. I have another one that has to come out. I'm working on a small little book. I just have to finish it. And it's a CD that I organized it and I asked Supernova to do with me. This is his work, but I organized it with Grandmaster Cam who is also a Master Martial Artist. They gave me an honorary status of a Grandmaster of Wellness. So you have all of these Grandmasters of forty years in their art and also different disciplines and they honored me in my position as well. I am grateful for that. So he was on the album and this other album which is called the *Indwelling Healing*. If you loved that then you love this much more. And I had Oragee who is my z(?46.15)

teacher. Noragee was also with Sacred Voices. So what happened is Erykah Badu gave us some funding to get us in the top quality studio and so we was able to go to a studio in Manhattan and lay everything down. Then I had to raise funds for the musicians and bartered with the voices and we came in this room and rehearsed it. That is how it came to be.

HSH: For *Sacred Woman*?

QA: What happened is it was so grass roots. There wasn't really any audit to it. The work was in the book and we had our base here in Smai Twai Wi Heal Thyself. So women would read the book and it was written so that one could and begin to form circles. So it was saying that you can form a circle. And so that's what they took they took it on face value that I could form a circle with our without Queen Afua's involvement without asking questions. So they would call me up and I never fought it and said that "you have to do it this exact way." But when they call with questions and I would answer their question and sometimes they would come together and I would ask them to say a few words to sisters and they would follow it that way. So there was the grassroots. The grassroots chapters would just start springing up and women would start forming with their girlfriends and their sister groups and their book clubs. It was all over. But, formally I taught Abutu and those were the priestesses of this work of Sacred Woman and they studied with me for about a year and a half and two of those women (well it became three), Dr. Bamuk Shanti and Dr. Amut Maat. I did a fundraiser, raised

\$6,000 and opened up a formal space in DC next to Howard. Dr. Bamuk had also a health food restaurant through his spiritual order. We would always go there and eat. We would support each other. [The name of the restaurant it] Everlasting Life. After our meetings, we would always go there. They loved our energy. They would feed us. It was just a beautiful space. We kept that going for some years. And I could afford to go up and down and I was also my daughter was going to Howard University. I had both of my children were going there so I had to go school there. I had to decide whether I was going back and forth to make sure they were secure. I can take care of everthing at one time. I take care of my children going to school and I can take care of the institute. I was no longer able to do that because his part was finance. I had to stop so that and they started not to be able to be as strong. But the chapters did happen and then I had to go through a shift in my work and my relationship—marriage, business—everything had to change. Change is magnificent. Change is growth. It can be. It has been. I see what has happened after the change and so in that change one could consider to go underground, but I don't consider it underground. People might look at that just because you are not doing something that people are used to you doing and you move to a place that was very much the people coming into it to a private space people don't have the connection as much. I always tell people that “the power to heal is within you.” And I was teaching you to have your own center. If you find your center which is Ma'at then in your home, because I was teaching on how to set up your home—that you could have this work in your home. That is why the products, the books, charts, cd, teaching—I have lived this life and not relying on a building, structure necessarily but we do need institutions, but

not necessarily. You are your own institution in your family as well And everybody goes to work.

HSH: When was the formal institute was established?

QA: During the time he (Ali) was in school. (Between 2002 and 2006). One day I will push to write an autobiography.

HSH: It's already written. This is it right here. Your gonna get a copy of it. You are gonna be able to write it. This is the Ntchru at work right now.

QA: I'm telling you, when they spoke to me, "I said it is too much going on." It is too much going on.

HSH: I have one last question and then we will go ahead and tie this thing together. One thing that I wanted to ask. In the Smai Tawi, Heal Thyself Know Thyself Cultural Center, Baba Heru explained to me the Ankh Sacred Kingdom and the whole aspect that he had. I was just wondering did you have level of programs and if so I just wanted you to be able to elaborate what the name of those were and were the whole processes one of your contributing factors?

QA: Ok. While inside that cultural center I developed the Ambassadors of Purification. When I say that I developed them, because inside I would write. I would write what it is

and what I would do from that ground. I would then go out and I would go to 8-9 different cities. I would teach people in that city who were ready to go to wellness. I would be able to come and teach you just like that. I would teach us how to do the 21 day detox, how to have private consultations and how to use food as medicine. That was the teaching so I went out to create ambassadors. Inside of the space I taught Sacred Woman. That was the primary place that I was teaching Sacred Woman, and before it was called Sacred Woman it was The Goddess Woman and then when I met with Senora. Senora said “it’s not the Goddesses. We did not believe in gods and goddesses. It was guardians. They were indwelling guardians- indwelling principles” so from that came the space for Sacred Woman. While inside for 14 years we went—we had a hitch to go to Kemet. I went three times total. It was apart of the writing of the text. The primary in that space was that, but I was writing the book before I got to Smai Tawi. When I started to talk about the book it was through another building and we had another place. It was a brownstone in Parkslope and I had gotten that building based on Heal Thyself Book. We had raised the funding to get that space so it was a community center and living space at the same time. It was a four-story building. When something travels you navigate it so I just took it and picked it up. I went to Saint Thomas for 6 months to live. During that time I did a lot of healing and I did writing and I was reading the Purging Room. Senora introduced me to the Purging Room and one of the questions I had, because he would teach and I sent my children to take the training before we were a couple. I asked him, “inside our ancient teaching where is yoga?” Because I was a yogean and he said “well” and he showed me in the book. I said, “these are actually the chakras. I saw them as

chakras.” What I ended up doing is I just took that apart and I created a chart that is not out, but is something that I am working on. I started to see how the seven sounds, seven tones with the daykeeper and the watcher and the Heru how they all take part in bringing you in self-actualization. This was the teachings of our ancestors. I also saw the 21 surgeons in the book and these are the effeminate guardians who cut away destructible matter. I started seeing how that work related to how I had been working and functioning. It just continued to migrate from Brooklyn and then to Saint Thomas. I was there coming back at least once a month and we had the brownstone and then he asked me to come back to New York to stay and he would get a space for me. I was trying to get to Africa. I wouldn’t have to do anything else, but come in and draw it how I wanted it to be. I’d like the store to be here and the colonic room to be here. And I am drawing this on the floor and then he put up the funding and made it a reality. And then I was the centerpiece of the institute and I didn’t know. I was the full centerpiece. And he worked. Out of that I taught 21-day fasting programs. That never stopped from the time of the conception of my work. I continued on that work. I was doing colonics and taught practitioners on irrigation. I continued teaching Sacred Woman maybe twice a year for a season. We would have a season off we would charge and revitalize through the teachers. They were wonderful teachers. One of them would have a Moon (?) memorial at Botanic Gardens. This is one of the places we went this weekend and we would go by the Wellness Garden and we would meditate and pray, because that was symbolic for where we were going as women to blossom from the struggle. As a plant we grow out of water and then we would blossom open which is our national, global plant that would depict the

people. The Lotus Men and the Lotus Women. And so we were going to have a quiet meditation over there she is one of their supreme teachers and I have there about 9 very steady teachers and they stay in the temple. They didn't go outside of the temple. They didn't go and want to start one on their own. I said, "You get this and go out and sweat it." And they refused. They stayed right with me, and they brought these women beautifully and they used dance, drumming and drama, and food, crystals and prayer and meditation. And it was the most extraordinary, but all these women were from other tribes. It was in the book that way and I gave it to them clearly. And before the book was almost finished I heard it "make sure that you bring them all together." And then I had this wheel that said "ase- sacred working women, hotep- Kemetic sacred women, (sacumla?)- sacred Muslim women, hari Krishna hari boa- sacred Buddhist women, aho- sacred native women. The women would think it was an invitation because that's how we opened up. I would consider that the United Nations of Sacred Women— calling all the women to come together on their root and the group was the Ancient wise from the Nile Valley and so not to be afraid of yourself to embrace yourself even if your in different houses. So the different houses would come.

HSH: I remember when I came there in 2003. Was there a Lotus training going on then? Was that a preface to the sacred woman training?

QA: It was the children. We did it for two semesters it was a venture that we wanted to have because mothers had their daughters and they brung their babies. There wasn't

enough children to keep it going, but we did have it and we had another— (?-1:01:48) I was in all the classes with her and we were cultivating it. Then a sister took it who was muslim and she took it and she tried to bring it into Islam. She didn't call it by the guardian's name, but she called it Sacred Woman, Sacred Intuition, Sacred Food. She used the English translation. It was moving— different things happened. Its now going through another dimension even to the movement. Yesterday, was a resurgence of how it is to move now.

QA: I also did some indwelling healing work there. I did it, because that's how I put the album out. And it was a very small group of Kemetic yogis that would do some of the prayers with me and so I would teach a way to the priestesses and we would do the 42 laws of Maat and then we go into the sound, toning of the vibration of Arits. These things called chakras that our ancestors called Arits. The indwelling healing was done very quietly. Then I developed a system that sparked there out of Sacred Woman and I developed a 108 poses for Abunkaat-Net. We are bringing Seshat and the Phallic together, masculine and feminine principles together and regenerating ourselves through these 108 poses. 108 represents the number for transformation. We are transforming ourselves, but we are also transforming planet earth vibrationally.

It becomes a system and a method how I see this document it becomes like Chinese medicine. Afrikan medicine from our perspective becomes our system. That helps our people that you cannot buck it. You cannot buck Chinese medicine and because it's a

whole nation behind it a whole people behind and there are such a people that gravitate to it and then people can study that and people get there degrees in Chinese medicine. But because we are not unified that people run to this one for that and kind of all over, but this document is a beginning together that synergy that will be respected and honored as strong medicine, because we are trying to build a people up and if you don't bring wholistic health to this equation there will be a whole people dying. To Ntr I give thanks and praise. Ase!!!

Interview with Divine Mother

BM: As of today, I am Divine Mother. Spirit gave me that, I would say about 4 or 5 years ago. Divine Mother really is an energy that is all it really is, because every womb is a divine mother. Its just about bringing in the energy and moving forward in the energy of that as Divine Mother.

HSH: What is your date of birth?

HSH: Where were you born and raised?

HSH: How many siblings do you have?

DM: I was born in Philadelphia. Born and raised in West Philadelphia and my brother he is on the other side. My mother was from the West Indies. My father was from down south in Tennessee. I was born in 1946.

HSH: Where was your mother from specifically?

DM: Jamaica

HSH: What part of Tennessee was your father from?

DM: Nashville

HSH: As it pertains to holistic health or alternative medicine do you hold any credentials?

DM: I smile at that, because I remember sometime ago, because I had been doing this for 26 years at least and I remember on time a client came in and we were sitting in my office. We were talking and he asked me about the credentials and what not and my reply to him, I chuckled. I said, "Yes. I could probably plaster this wall with all kinds of certificates and thing soft heat nature, but didn't you just come from someone who had this huge piece of paper, lambskin that was given to him by another man and your now here with me. So, is it the paper that your coming to see or is it me. Now, for me I have been truly, divinely blessed because when anyone ask me I just have to look up. All of my information, all that I do know really is coming from the dictates of the universe. When I go to prepare a formula or when I go to prepare..I'm in the back maybe making up a tonic or formula for someone and spirit will say something that we never discussed so I put this in. So I put it in and then I go around and I will say, "you know I did something for let's say female." She say, "you know I forgot to tell you." I have been very fortunate that way. I have been around the world in terms of engaging in different subjects. When we talk about wholistic we're really talking about the whole part of you. Not part of you. That has been the problem with this health issue if you will. The

wholistic is the whole body. Its not just the physical body. It is the emotional body, the mental body and the spiritual body. Now, the irony of it is the spiritual body which should be first is the last that is being dealt with. The emotional and mental body those are the ones that create for the physical. The allopaths only deal with the physical. You can't be anywhere, you can't be totally healed. Unless you deal with the entire person. The same thing that they do— united we stand right, divided we fall. That goes with everything that is going on in your life. This is one body. This is the church. This is the temple. This is the synagogue. This is it right here. You don't have to go anywhere.

HSH: Please describe the line of work you are in. What is your business?

DM: Initially when I started it was called the natural healing center. About 10 years ago we incorporated all of that, because I was moving from place to place and it brought about To Perfect Health, A Natural Healing Center. What I do is as I said when anyone comes to me, tell them that we are not just dealing with the physical body, because that is easy. I can give you this that and the other and you can feel great, but that is for that moment. When you go back into that thought or that emotion, it pops up again. So we have to deal with that and they have to really be clear. I use the word overstand as opposed to understand. The basic reason is because we have been spelled. We have been taught to cast spells negatively on ourselves. First of all people have to understand that. I am this. They go to a doctor to find out did you have when you. How did you have this or how did you know? You went to someone and they said, "you." I said that is a spell.

That's a casting of a spell. We have been through the teaching system. We have been inundated with thoughts that we must always say as it is as we are feeling it as oppose to what we really want. When you are feeling whatever is that it is spirit trying to talk to you. If you have heart it is trying to tell you that your not loving enough. If you have the pressure its telling you that there is no joy in your life. If you have diabetes it talks about saying yes and meaning no. There is no sweetness in your life. The kidney, the kid that needs. So these are different that if you overstand what really is going on the healing begins immediately, because that is the first word not what comes out of your mouth. The thought, because that is what the universe is interacting with. If you say, "I have..." whatever they told you, guess what.... Because that is a spell. You have to overstand when we were in school they were teaching us...We are a people of melanin. We learn differently. They have us in a system that is micro oriented. We are macro. You look at the larger picture. That is where overstanding comes from. If you are always understanding, you are under something. I want the bigger picture then I can come down. That is the wholeness.

HSH: Where is your business located? Can you elaborate on what you offer the African community?

DM: I've been known in the area, but my product go throughout the world. I have not advertised at all. It is because I have a path that is one, two and three. It doesn't just clean, it cleans out the entire body. It starts to clean at different levels. It's interesting

even how I got path three. Many, many years ago when I first started I didn't have paths one, two and three. I was in the process of putting herbs together and encapsulating them. My first client that had multiple sclerosis. I said "ok. What are we going to do for you?" This formula came about. It goes deep. It's a deep, deep cleaner. I mean it goes down, because that particular imbalance talks about somebody that's very rigid and everything is on lockdown so you have to go real, real deep. For the most, the part they really don't let go easily. She did extremely well, but what happened I would find that these people would come out with these imbalances and the other people that I dealt with they would come out of it and they would feel great. All of a sudden they would say I don't want to do it anymore. I would think so that's when then my journey went to dealing with the emotional. It was so on point that the emotional body does create that physical aspect. Unless you deal with that it will never be complete. The healing will never be complete. That's why when people have the breast cancer...well first of all I'm not going to accept the fact that it is. I'm not going to accept that this is a word, because spirit had to remind me, I will share that at one point some years ago maybe twenty years ago when someone presented to me that I alleged to have what they call leukemia. My first reaction was, I just laughed and said that I have dirty blood. I never gave it another thought. Spirit had to remind me to tell the person..., because I never accepted it. It was like, "oh. Ok. I have dirty blood." I'm still here. I haven't been to a doctor. Everything is wonderful. It is by the tongue the first thought that we get caught up. We must teach to all is that you have to come away from man's law and deal with your cosmic energy and the universal law. Those are the laws that will get you through everything.

HSH: In connecting with the African spiritual systems. What would be the differences between the paths?

DM: The first one goes to the first level of garbage. This is in your system and goes throughout. Everybody loves that. The body is getting introduced to herbs. They say “Wow! I can’t believe it.” You get all this energy and what not. The second level goes deeper of the imbalances, garbage that’s in the body. The third one goes to where the parasites live. Then I do special formulas and special tonics. The alkaline water which is really I really prayed to have a water to go along with my program. First, I was doing spring, because I didn’t know any better. Then I did distilled, but when they brought alkaline it was like divine. Together its beyond, but again it’s only the physical. I had a gentleman come in and he came in with pain in his stomach and three days he was back up and he says, “You will not believe this. I have been going to the doctors for years and in three days I don’t have anything. I don’t understand it.” We go on. He comes in Friday and he says, “I went into the doctor’s and they say that I have a spot somewhere.” I say, “Really. Let me ask you a question. How do you feel?” “I feel great. Well, I’m hearing in your voice something different, but you feel great and you allow somebody else to come in and tell you about a spot. If you are telling me and I get [frightened] and I tell my family, look at the energy that you have around you. How do you even...It’s best not to say one word and deal with it. What I want to say is, “you don’t think I look in everyone’s eye and don’t I see cancer everywhere.” It’s just a word, but they have made

it a law. They have made you...Some where it says you should fear nothing, but the most high. So what are we talking about somebody telling you. In that case then return it to the sender. I return it to the sender. Its as simple as that. Say, "I'm not accepting that." And that's not kind.

HSH: Can you give me the exact address o your business?

DM: I'm at 110 South 52nd Street.

HSH: And that is in West Philly?

DM: Yes. It is in W. Philadelphia.

HSH: How do you feel the work that you do contributes to the health and wellness of the African community?

DM: I don't know how to elaborate on that. I would have to have people...when people come in they would have to elaborate. When they come in and tell me...case in point. I had another woman who came and they gave her...this is ridiculous some of the stuff people come in and tell me that the people tell them. She says, "I have a spot on my lung and the doctor says it was four stages." I don't even know what that means. I said, "what are you going to do?" She says, "I'm not going to do chemo." We started on a basic

program. She came in there was no coughing none of that and I say, “really to be honest with you I wouldn’t tell anybody. I would leave it alone.” Anyway this person called her and when they called, she asked, “what are you going to do?” And she said, “where are you going to go, because I have just the perfect person for you if you are going to go wholistic.” She says a woman in W. Philly. It was me she was talking about. She says, “10 years ago she healed.” So I hear stories and like I’m saying when someone calls me from Kuwait, Paris, London, South Africa and asks for the product, I ask, “really?” “Ok. No problem.” I send it. It’s not that...you know give my all—my love with what I am doing. It is all from the divine in what I do. It just an energy and I share the energy. And once you share the energy it just magnifies and magnifies. To get back to the guy, he comes to me, because I give him that energy that when he leaves the door he casts out and deal with his family. That is what I think Spirit really wants me to go and do larger formats to start really pushing the energy, because it is real. I’m talking about regeneration. This is not in my head. This is real. I was on my way here and spirit know..I don’t have t.v. They know that I look at DVD’s that’s how I break things down. I had gone last weekend to target, because they had told me to Target and I had gone last weekend and I said, “the ?? I want the ??” They say, “you know it was on sale last weekend.” I said, “ok. I’m not going to pay that.” Because again I am on my way here and spirit said go now to Target. Now your specific. Imma go. You know I have people waiting. So I went and I’m looking and looking and it was such a low price and I said, “oh yeah.” I listened. You listen to spirit, your life is so easy. It really does. Even when people say, “oh you eat raw?” What do you think got the word, change the energy. We

can do that. You have to understand one of the reasons why they really want to keep the melanites down you can't imagine the power. We are the people of water. Each group has an element. The fire element is the Caucasian—all consuming. “I have to consume everything.” Then we have the Orientals, the Asians. They are the air. Meditation, incense...Then we have the Indians, the earth energy. There are six horses coming, one needs a shoe on. They are the earth, but the most powerful energy is water. You cannot contain water. Water is apart of the feminine energy. It's compassion. That's why they have doped us up and destroyed our communities. I know that they're looking kind of goofy and looking kind of strange, but we don't make the drugs, but yet they are in our community. And so you don't give them a job. Then you going to call them drug...You see. This really works on the health. Look at the food that they have in our community. Its an abomination. I'm looking at children and their scolarisis has black in it. That tells me that their blood is dirty already. They know that they are doing. Mother's what is wrong with you? Hello! Can we get real with this? Mother's what do you think. You can steam some stuff and it would be done faster than you standing in that line for poison. But that too could have been done for good, but it has become the evil dark force. It has been programmed. The nagging programs of our children and the parents aren't are not even parenting their children. How do you ask a 2 or 3 year old what they want to eat in the morning? Aren't responsible for their eating habits. Don't take a break at McDonalds. I'll never forget that commercial. “Take a break today at McDonald's.” Everybody went crazy for fast food. Life is fast. It's a decline, but they know that the indigo children came in from 80 on and they are really pumping up.

HSH: What children?

DM: The indigo.

HSH: Please elaborate.

DM: These are children that come in that are highly spiritually charged and what not from off center are drugs. That's when the ADD and all that crap. First of all they don't have recess anymore and if you do its something that it...Then they are dealing with the fluorescent lights. That's not good for children of melanin. I'm saying, "mom's lets go back..." First of all yall should have never stopped home schooling. Home school. Outside that is your teacher. Watching nature in and of itself is magnificent. That's wholeness there.

HSH: If you were to explain to an individual who is no way familiar with alternative forms of healing what would be your basic definition of wholistic health to that person?

DM: Well number 1 the word is whole. Whole is the complete. The all. When the wholistic movement deals with the entire body, at least, this is the way I do it. I've written a small pamphlet called the pimps. It's talking about the physical body, the emotional body, the mental body and the spiritual body. It is very important that we deal

with the those aspects of ourselves we can go far. A lot of times we get caught up in the past and the future and not dealing in this moment. It is very important, but our society has us dealing with the past and the future. Nothing is guaranteed in the future, because they always change. When you keep going their way, you become frustrated when things don't happen in a certain way, because you are not in spirit. Spirit might may not want you to do that right now. Or whatever. But is very important that we overstand that when we're talking about wholistic we are talking about the whole me and that encompasses everything. You cannot say, "I'm going to church. I'm going to the doctor's here. I going to the psychiatrist here. All of this separation. It's all one.

HSH: How did you come to know what you know about wholistic health or the form of alternative medicine that you practice today?

Initially, how it started I was really in the clothing business and I had just come back from Italy, because I had designed children's clothing line.

HSH: Which year?

DM: Maybe 82 or 83. When I came back, my husband asked me to go to California, because he was not able to get beautiful clothes for the full size woman comprable to what we were carrying. So that's what I did and a friend of mine met me there and she said that she had to go see her herbalist, because she had breast cancer and she was using

herbs. I was like “ok. Well. As long as I get to where I need to go.” I went and time was of an essence and he was not there and we were waiting and Spirit said, “be still.” I’m like, “oh ok.” So he came and she got her herbs and I talked to him for a few minutes and I bought some herbs from him. Well, I took the herbs that night. I was already high energy anyway well I couldn’t believe how I felt. I woke up, “what!?!” And it was just like from that moment on, I’m telling you in one month I started selling. I was selling Nature Sunshine and I made manager. Out of the clear blue, I made manager in one month and then it became burdensome, because it was very expensive to do that. That is when Spirit started giving me formulas and stuff like that. My father in fact he died on his birthday and there was some money in his box in the bank. It was money for to put down on this place, because Spirit said I want you to open up an establishment. You’ve got to be separate, because I was at the Y[MCA] and I was doing my iridology. That’s where Spirit had me go and do iridology, but the irony of it is I took a class of iridology and learned absolutely nothing, only because everybody was asking him so many questions, but I had the basic form of the loop and what are you looking for...So then I said “Creator, it would be nice if I had a camera. That way I could do this.” And a camera came about and then I could explain to people. I’d take their pictures and when they came back I could say, “this is how you have improved.” So forth and so on.

HSH: Which year?

DM: I don’t remember.

HSH: Was it in the 90's?

DM: No it was in the 80's. This is even more ironic. I moved across the street and I had a few products. I think I only had Path 1...there were two paths that time and spirit would say, "I want you to go close down and take this course in Lancaster." "Uh. What?" It was iridology. Close the store down? I was thinking where is the money. I got rent. I got this. So I left the message that I had to close and I had to go so and so. It was unbelievable. I came back in...I stepped in the door so many people started walking behind me. I was like, "what the heck?" People started calling me saying that they heard about me. I'm like, "how could you hear about me I was just...it was just six months. How could you hear about me? Who is this?" But I knew it was Spirit trying to keep it going. Someone called me from Connecticut so and then when I went to the school of iridology that's when the emotional piece came in. So I was like, "wow!" And then I went to the...I thought I was taking up ralfing. I went to New York and I thought it was reiki. I thought this is so beautiful and I became a Reiki Master. It's been a delightful journey just getting into... I deal with the elements. I do rituals and I deal with all of the elements, the planets and we communicate. That's what I am saying just being in tune with these elements and these...they are here for you to communicate. But this world here with religion keeps you away from who you really are.

HSH: This school of sclerology? It's the study of the white part of the eye?

DM: Yes.

HSH: Is that a subset of iridology?

DM: Most people don't put it together, but it is. It's very important, because that's where someone was able to see, 'oh yeah. This is leukemia.'"

HSH: Can you tell me specifically in California where you went and had the clothing business?

DM: See they have a fashion industry like in New York.

HSH: Is this L.A.?

DM: Yes. This is L.A.

HSH: The fashion district in L.A.

DM: Yes. The interesting thing was they usually close Saturday and Sunday. I was not able to get there and I said I've come this distance and that week they opened that Saturday.

HSH: What compelled you to do what you do was strictly spirit driven, putting you in the right place at the right time and it came into divine order?

DM: That's it. That's all that is.

HSH: In your own estimation, what decade would you say that the holistic health movement gained momentum in the Philadelphian African community?

DM: I would say in the 90's. It's a piece that has just been going. People are tired of being sick and tired and...one of the things that you must really overstand is that they have put stuff like in the water. They've put fluoride. Fluoride makes you docile. You go along to get along. That is a problem. That's why people are so complacent. And I know this so you have to change. Once you change that you are going to see a difference.

HSH: From your recollection can you give me some names or organizations that were apart of that wholistic health movement in Philadelphia?

DM: When I'm dealing with spirit that was all that I dealt with. I mean I would actually leave, close down and go to Jersey and they would have people waiting for me at Jersey at different homes, doing the iridology and stuff. I would be up... so I didn't have time to go to different places to be... a very dear friend of mine, Ntome, the musician.

HSH: Roy Ayers son?

DM: No. Jimmy Heath. MJQ he's from that. And I remember him saying, "your in a clothing line." He said, "nah. I see you working with the community." That was some time ago. Sure enough I laughed. I said, "I'm very comfortable" and really in life you should play so I go to play everyday. When you love what you do it is very easy and simple. And what I gind with the people of melanin what they have been inundated with is not around to be free, be who they really are. Even when I am looking at videos or even comedians or what not and they are always giving what one race would do you know the Caucasian. Their fire so you know...when we hear something spooky we're going to go, but with them it's like "what?." Some of that is ok, but it also implies that we don't have any...To be honest with you when something is crazy I don't run to foolishness. I don't because my spirit will tell me. Make it so that there is a reason why we go not because we are fearful of it. What has been shown you know is degrading. You know do you think I really want to see *Madea*? That doesn't help the community. So and what they are putting out it is so demonic and so dark.

HSH: If you were able to drop some name for me in terms of other individuals in Philadelphia that are doing this similar type of work, alternative wholistic medicine, can you drop some names for me on who you would recommend?

DM: I know Ron.

HSH: What is his last name?

DM: Ron Norwood.

HSH: Is he is an herbalist?

DM: Yes. And there's Dr. Wyatt. He is no longer with us.

HSH: What is his name?

DM: Dr Wyatt.

HSH: Did you and Ron have a relationship? How do you know each other?

DM: We went to Hawaii when we did the piece where we were studying the emotional body. I told Ron that they were doing this piece in Hawaii why don't we come together, because at that time we were actually doing and really disseminating the emotional body. You are really bringing me back to some things that we were really doing. It was called bioelectronics. We turn it trauma release at this point because we have added some things to it. But anywhere in the body where there is discomfort is a word pattern a

thought pattern or a dark demon. And you can press down on that point—hold that point and [snaps fingers] and it will come out. Ron had an experience that was it was magnificent. When he was a child or when he was a teenager he was playing football he was catching the football. You know how they pile up on you. He leg was broken. He has a wonderful allopath. They set his leg. He was only 14 years old. You don't set it. So it atrophied. So he had this thing on it. And I'll never forget that day we were in Hawaii and Ron was on the table and the guy was working it and everybody is going to lunch so I say nah I'll wait for you Ron and all of a sudden the thing became like a trap. This is a whole another segment. That demon was trapped and a lot people had to come and start holding points because when that demon is moving around you want to stop it and send it to the light. That night, because Ron and I would take walks. That night when we walked his pants, because his pants had always adjusted them so that they would be— all of sudden one leg is long than the other, because his leg had grown.

HSH: Do you remember the year?

DM: Later 1980's. Early 1990's.

HSH: Do you think that eating healthy is necessary for African Americans? Please elaborate.

DM: Well that is obviously and absolutely yes. That's a question that is of course what

goes inside of you. If you are eating a lot of sugar then...if you are eating a lot of mucousY food then you are going to do all of that— What I do find is that people really don't overstand even the healing process, because cold and the flu is a healing process. The allergy is a healing process, but because they have been inundated with this is a sickness they don't even realize so that is what I explain. What is coming out of you? Something is coming out of you and it's slime. Don't you remember that yogurt. Don't you remember that ice cream? You remember that cheese. It's coming out of you. The children they want to label them. "Oh I got this thing from the child." No. The child is trying to throw off that inoculation and they then tell you to take Tylenol to stop it. Guess what. They are better off and you're worse off. The longer I keep this in your body the worse it becomes. I give you more medication. So how do you put toxins on top of toxins and expect it to work?

HSH: What suggestions do you have for meat-eaters?

DM: Well number one you have to overstand that we were never made we don't even have the teething for it nor do we have the digestive system for meat. The pig was brought here as a toxic animal and it consumes anything that the farm so it doesn't even have a lipitor system except this little whole and something oozes out. It is a very toxic animal, but again because of slavery you know these things happen. Beef, they're vegetarians. They are no longer vegetarians, because they are putting poison into that. Really, it really hard to digest meat. The body and particularly people of melanin we are

vegetarians, fruititarians. That is really what it is all about. The body receives and let's go. When you start holding on to it that's when you start having all of these imbalances and what not. And then they are injecting them with everything.

HSH: What suggesting would you give a novice who would like changes in their health?

DM: The very first thing if someone would come to me and say, "I have to change my eating habits." It would be great if you did, but if you begin to just clean up. Once you begin to clean up your taste buds are going to start changing, because they are going to start being strict and when you add the alkaline water people will find that's all that the body wants. If they drink sodas then they are not drinking sodas anymore. If they drink juice. That water is so magnificent and it just saturates the walls and tears down the homes and the condominiums of the parasites.

HSH: What do you mean by clean out?

DM: Just begin to cleanse out then the body... Its just like when I'm looking in a person's eye that say's I am a vegetarian I've been a vegetarian for 15 years and there 35. I'm looking in their eye and I am saying that there is a lot of crap up in there. Let me sell you this. Those 20 years prior to his vegetarianism they never got rid of that. So what you are doing is that you putting all of this good stuff on rot so you are not getting the true benefit of it, because I am looking at your... So you gotta still clean even though

you've changed you still gotta clean so that you can renew. We have cell power. You got to renew cells. Renew everything. To get to a point of being you can be just at youthful now as before just by cleaning and still the wisdom that will impart through time, because you can reflect on those times on the changes on the times that you have made these changes and how you really feel. It's very important. You don't have to die of something, but again the programming is and that is what we have to stop.

DM: And I am gonna say this, because Spirit has imparted this, because we are water people we should drink a lot of water. I don't mean that faucet water. When I say water I'm talking about alkaline water. It will change our life. The first thing in the morning is not breakfast. See they mess with words break + fast. You were sleeping now you are up. You are breaking a fast. Take that jug of whatever and (gulp sounds) and watch it ignite that system – electrify, “boom, boom, boom, boom” and you deliver and let go. It's a very important not to laden it down with garbage. People are not even doing three meals a day. What is that? Is that insane? Nobody is in the field. One [meal] is sufficient. Break fast with the water. Maybe have some fresh juice. Then between 12 and 5 whatever you have let it be good and after that then it is over with. The water is very important. Even the food is not important. The water is very important, because when they were going through that 2012 that was hoax that they have all of the time. I said, “as long as I have my alkaline. I'll do my alkaline water and I'll have some green food and so you can come and knock me, but I would come with some green tea and I would say “come on in.” They would say “what the heck?” “No there is no can food

here. There is just water and greens. That's it, because you can live.”

HSH: Other than the pamphlet that you wrote, have you written any other articles or books about alternative medicine and if so can you elaborate?

DM: I was writing for the *Black Star* and there are others I really just...I do so many things. I can't remember. I remember the things that are more recent. I have done videos and I have done T.V. shows as well. Channel 12. I was on Vernon Odom doing the iridology piece. There was another cable show that I was on in fact there were two T.V. shows that I was on with this information.

HSH: And these are local T.V. stations in Philadelphia?

DM: Yes. In fact there was something in Jersey I was somewhere and someone came to me and said, “you are the lady that was on television.” I said, “I was.” I didn't even see it.

HSH: And when you say you wrote for the Black Star, was this with Henry DeBanardo's paper?

DM: Yes.

HSH: You've been writing for him since then? When did you start writing for the *Black Star*?

DM: I would say about 8 years.

HSH: Have you made any tapes of audio?

DM: Yes. That was some time ago. Again, when I was suppose to close down and wait that's what I was suppose to be doing. So I am writing. I am doing a lot of writing now. I wake and I'll say "write that down." So I write it down. During meditation, "don't write it down now, but I won't remember." Write it down and I'll say "what was that?" But I say this whenever anything come it always the right time. So the message is clear and you should be able to receive it, because the stuff I'm talking is really for people. People say, "can you tone it down." "Tone it down? What do you mean?" What am I toning down.

HSH: Have you been a part of any lectures or conferences here in Philadelphia?

DM: Well that's the interesting part about when the tea party, Heal Thyself Garden Party. I can't remember the guys name, but he moved to California.

HSH: Dr. Bohdise?

QM: Bohdise! I remember it was in the year 2000 and there was gathering somewhere and spirit said, “well go out.” He called on me. I normally just go and I sit and observe and I listen. And I say, “oh well.” He says, “what do you have to say.” I said, “well. It’s a spiritual warfare and at the time these people really think I’m gaffe now.” But that’s what it is. Not fire with fire. This is not a time of trying to come in and do a make-over you have to dig deep into spirit, because you can make a simple thing. People that have programmed you, everybody what five years ago about this five dollar gas. And so when it got to \$3.79 that’s all I’m hearing. I said, “wait. Don’t say that. Say that it is going down. It’s now at \$3.49. So I tell people you have the power, you can stop it. So then another thing that I hear is that people of melanin we just ain’t nothing and we’ll never be. I say, “hey man. Don’t do that.” My mantra is that we are united and we are one with the divine force and we work magnificently together. I’ll let the universe work that out. I’m just making the claim and let’s move forward in that light, because you see the dark side knows that if you keep repeating it here we are “I pledge allegiance to a freaking flag.” Do you know what we were doing? They had casted a spell and we were pledging our allegiance to it. Pledge allegiance to yourself, to the almighty, the oneness. But they have you so far off. “Oh. That’s blasphemy.” And these Christians, they’ll have a fit. They’ll come and ask me, “Well what faith?” It’s beyond that baby. It’s way beyond faith. “I want to pray for you. You’re doing that iridology.” I say, “Really.” What I am doing is because of so you go don’t waste it on me baby. Don’t waste that

prayer on me, because I know what I am doing.

HSH: So, we are looking at about thirty three years that you have been called to do this work?

DM: Right. To be honest with you I don't even know when I was in sixth grade you were asked what you wanted to do. I remember this legal pad I wrote that I wanted to be a psycho-analysis. One, because my father he was a musician and played the piano and stuff, but he was in Bibery so I guess my heart strings was like, but me in school was like (sigh). What is even more...like I told you have a lot of library books, but I don't read. I can have a book next to me that is read and I can absorb the energy from it. So in my bedroom I am all around books so information is constantly. So I get to do and be a psycho analysis without the school, because when I am dealing with people that is what it is about. They can talk to me and their spirit comes to me and tells me...and I just get right back to them. It's beautiful. It's just beautiful. The dance is magnificent. So I get a chance to be what I want and I get the degree from the most high. I have to have a degree from them. Melanites and Caucasians ask me "where is your business in your home?" I wouldn't want to have it in my home. My home is my home. All that energy popping. I don't think I could do all of that. "You have a real business? Yes. Umm Hmm. "You have any competition." Well. No. Because that is not the purpose of it. I'm not in fear. The most high is doing...Their the one...and the reason why spirit has moved me to where I am now, because they are getting ready to come down on us. The

spirit always has me ahead of the game. Always ahead of the game. I don't want anybody. (Laughs) Don't say anything....You know the dark side, "We don't want this information out to anybody." I'm an underground person and that's what it's about bringing this energy, because Spirit gave me a place down in North Carolina. 15 acres. How it came about, because I did a ritual down in North Carolina, January 12, 2012. It was pouring down raining. I'm a fire sign that was a sign "oh gosh. It's raining." I'm dragging myself and I'm setting it up. It's a lengthy, because I have to open up. I have to seal. I have to call on the elements. I have to call. I say, "(sigh)." It's pouring down raining." All of a sudden, this feeling and somebody said the word bliss and maybe that's what it was. I was just "(sigh)." I can't...It was just so magnificent. It didn't matter. I just took my time and they had me bring out the heart crystal ball and the water is coming down and I look up and it looks the rain is separating. So its over and I go in...grab my stuff and I go in. I was bone-dry. My clothing was dry and I said, "ok. I love it." You telling me the universe don't answer you.

HSH: I appreciate you going back and forward and speaking about when you were six years old this divine thought of being a psychoanalyst was in there and the universe brought that to you.

DM: That's the truth. We have to overstand that the dark is about ...that's why you cannot listen to man and his foolishness, because the dark has already come down when I

look at the T.V. I go to somebody's house and I look at their T.V. all of these medications. When they first came out they didn't have the side effects, but wait a minute I couldn't believe it. I was sitting there in North Carolina. I was going to do a lecture down in North Carolina. I'm sitting there and they give me this beautiful robe and I notice. Humana oh lovely name. Humana. What? Side effect leukemia and what and other serious cancers. Excuse me? This is a side effect. I say, "Creator can you show me that one again, because I want to write that down in my journal." It came on again. I couldn't believe it. I said, "this is insane." And people will tell you, "lipitor." Are you crazy? Your taking this stuff? And then I have a book that gives you even more side effects and it will tell you the organ that it's damaging. But you have to overstand this the ones that call themselves. They are very dark on who they pray to and all that is very dark. And they are like children. "I gotta have my way." And you are going to inflict this on people then you are going to say how many people should live and how many people shouldn't. The way you are going to do it is through this. I got a real problem with that.

HSH: You mentioned a powerful essence, you spoke about a book that you have. Is this book that you use in your practice or is it one that you sell about you can say that it identifies what these drugs do and how they attack each organ?

DM: Wait a minute. I was in Borders waiting for something or somebody to come. Spirit say look...why don't you go over there. "Wow! John Hopkins. What? It's a big

thick book. It's John Hopkins and they talk about the medications. Spirit say "well I want you to get this." When people come in you can look it up and tell them. And you'll know what systems you have. See I work on systems. When I'm doing my tonics and things, I work on systems. If I'm dealing with science, it's not just the science it's everything that goes around it. The lymph nodes and everything that goes around it. So that is why it is a good drain, because I deal with systems.

HSH: You have this book in your business?

DM: Yes. The systems work together. If one is out of line then everything is out of line. So when they tell you that you have this what about 180 degrees what is that. That is the culprit. Its showing over here, but the culprit is here. So they're going to give you... Ignorant. They are ignorant. That's what I call it.

DM: The most important thing is to love yourself. Forgive yourself. Love yourself. Then you can love someone else. What this society looking for love outside themselves when you love yourself it will exude. Even we're brining in children that if the mother does not love herself she must know...Claim it and let the universe work it out. Claim only what you want. Claim only abundance and you will have it. Simple as that. It's a done deal. Whatever you want you can have. The universe will do it. Hopefully it's a divine side of you. Wait a minute. You bring in all of the other stuff. "Every time I save up something comes along and takes the money." Well the universe says well how much

did she save up lets get this catastrophe, because you are hung by the tongue. Let's never say that. Let's never say that "I'm going to budget. What is that? I don't know what it means. Claim it. That's the Universe's way. Oh my baby. You have much more to offer. They're taking your stuff and putting their name on it. I don't know Tessler. I know Tessler was working with somebody else. And the rest of them. They have 14 year old body that in this day in age 14 year old. Can ya'll just keep a light around him, because they are going to swoop him up. He invented a gynecological instrument. 14 years old. You didn't hear too much about it know did you?

Interview with Shareef and Rasheed Samad

HSH: What was your upbringing like?

SRS: We were born in Pennsville, NJ in 1941 and 43 and raised in a small town— 5,000 people in South Jersey, which was a plantation of two parts.

HSH: How were your eating habits growing up?

SRS: Mainly, you know our people were from Alabama so we ate the standard food and everybody else maintained. As we became more conscious our habits changed and the more we know we can do more and we have been in Philadelphia since 1969. We went to New York in 1960 and I think our cousin became there because that's when we first started seeing you know like um the idea—you know meeting people that were actually African Nationalist. We embraced African nationalism because it was getting to our nature and then we came to Philadelphia. We went to Delaware first in 1964 and we was in Delaware during the times of the riots and came to Philadelphia in 69. Matter of fact, we came to Philadelphia from what was happening— there was so much pressure in Delaware. Matter of fact, they had a house for civilians with the National Guard when we left from there to come up here. We came up here, because it was more African

Americans than down there you really stand out. And up here we could blend in and Philadelphia embraced us. Philadelphia when they say Philadelphia is brotherly love and sisterly love—when we came to Philly, Philly embraced us, because we came with out African Nationalist concept and Philly really just took care of us and gave us a whole lot of knowledge, because they allowed us to prosper in the city.

HSH: What part of Alabama is your family from?

SRS: On the other side of Birmingham.

HSH How long were you in New York?

SRS: Roughly, four years. 1960-64.

HSH: Then from Delaware to here in Philadelphia?

SRS: From Delaware here to Philadelphia.

HSH: How do you feel the work that you do or have done contributes to the health and wellness of the African American community?

SRS: Well I think one of things that has happened to us is when become in the conscious is the political consciousness of course the health consciousness came as well and we actually started doing some farming. What year? We farmed—came in 1969 so that would have been around 1971-72. We started the farming and we had about an acre and a half of land.

HSH: What about farming?

SRS: Well what happened is we were a commune, a small group that came to Philadelphia together and then the conversation in the 1960's people kept talking about lets go to the land which is the same conversation that we are having now. So the land you know like we couldn't see that it was such a challenge to go to the land because the land was in New Jersey. So we decided to go over there and find some land. Of course it was more difficult than what we thought, because you know you see open land and we were going up to farmer's houses asking could we get a piece of land and these white farmers thought we were crazy. I guess, but finally we find a sister that rented us about an acre and a half of land so we started raising food, because we were already making our own clothes. You know what I mean. So we started raising food and canning food and freezing food and what not, maintaining our own community. We did that for a couple of

years. Then the group voted that out as being too much so we gave up farming, but often I really thought that that was one of our best plus and we should've maintained that. By now we would have been well organized or knew more about it. Because the land gave us so much food we was giving away food in Philadelphia.

HSH: The land was in Delaware?

SRS: It was in New Jersey.

HSH: Where about?

SRS: Willingsborough? Not Willingsborough. Williamstown.

HSH: What was the name of the group/collective here in Philadelphia?

SRS: They called us the ACAP tribe. That's what people in Philly gave us that kind of name and Atyaola and Sister Zaharah and Sister Nia. All of these different groups. All these different people that now are culturally declined. Most of them came—all of them—not most the, came from the ACAF tribe and we still call ourselves the ACAF

tribe, because we have grandchildren and children all of this. So the tribe is so big we really don't know each other. Somebody say, "well look. I'm somebody's daughter and I'm part of the tribe." Matter fact, the brother called me from Florida the other day and he said, "I'm part of the tribe. You know me?" And a brother in Norfolk, VA he called this morning. You know what I mean? So this whole concept came form that understanding. You know what I mean? Because one thing about culture. Culture is a thing that grows itself, because you they gave us the tribe name. We were ACAF, but they gave us ACAF tribe so that's what continues.

HSH: What does ACAF mean?

SRS: African Culture Art Form. The brother by the name of Danny Bishop gave us that from Chester, PA. He was the one that came up with the name African Cultural Art Form. And we've had that since, 67 seem like.

HSH: Tell me the nature of your business?

SRS: We started in 1967 trying to really gap at the time all people had on their walls at the time were picture of Europeans so at the time there was a great thrust in the 1970 and

60s to change over to a more Afrocentric environment. So we started producing the artwork. We started producing artwork that people could substitute on their walls and that started us in the business. We also used to vend. The first vendors in center city other than the pretzel vendors and we were selling African cultural goods, trying to expose people's minds in thinking about African, African American culture. These are some of the products that we started producing in back in that time.

HSH: What time was this?

SRH: This was 1969 when we first came. We were some of the first...we were the first vendors other than the pretzel vendors down there. After that of course things opened up and so we just used to go any place we could; Penn relays, schools, homecomings, family get togethers— anything to expose the work. We got involved with the business that we are in now. So eventually we started selling incense as a matter of fact when we came to Philadelphia there were only two people making incense in Philadelphia. It just wasn't like that. So any way, we started making incense. We started manufacturing incense because it was a consumption item and had been manufacturing these other products and we ran off the concept that Malcolm had talked about that we need to producers of the consumers. So adapted that as a reality and we can produce...the concept that we tried to maintain is like if we can produce products and be able to live off in our own community. So that is the idea that we still try to serve the community with is like we can produce

products, make all living, make an honest living and be able...we used to teach a course on how do you go into a store and get money without a gun. You got to have something to trade. So we started trading in Haiti and in different places that's how got all of the art work. We went to Haiti...he went to Jamaica and I went to Haiti.

HSH What year?

SRS: I went to Haiti in 1975. In 1972 in Washington, D.C. and we were manufacturing red, black and green flags during that time so we had a hundred dozen red, black and green flags down in Washington, D.C. and we sold out hours before the thing was over with. And one of the things that came out of that was the idea that we was gone be one African people. That's our efforts. So since then we strive to be that. I had a guy in Haiti told me this, "he said one thing African Americans have spent more money than other people convincing everyone that we African." You know what I mean? I thought that that was a great statement, because we have spent more money than anybody convincing everybody that we African. Because we have to be one African people in the world that's what came out of the convention in 1972 in Washington, D.C.

HSH: What would your basic definition of wholistic health be?

SRS: First, the main thing you know that you have to give up different meats. You know? And you have to...Well, you know in our society you have so much processed meat so basically trying...the farther you can go back to natural foods than that would be the answer. And I think all of us have this history of having relatives, ancestors that maybe lived long and they were strong and people grew up on farms and stuff so we can relate to that idea of people on farms and they was getting more nutritious food. Even the farmers they used to change the food—woulda, shoulda, not yet. This wheat brought all the way from Africa we really had that science you know of eating well coming all the way over here. So that came up from the south and usually people who...the older people are look like the closer they were to that idea and now the younger they are the more they are into “where does food even come from?” But back then everybody lived closer to the land. So I think living that closer to the land is the idea that everybody in general relates to. I think there has a lot of work been done the more ref

The women are the door, almost like the door of you coming into the world. Women are the door of you coming into the world. In other words so when you start talking about coming into the world then you are talking about a spiritual thing. Your talking about everything that the creator deals with is natural. His creation. Those two are synonymous really. You understand what I am saying. I don't see how you can get around that. Because as you go back...as you get closer to the creator, the closer to natural as you are going to get, but I think the main thing is trying to understand bringing

the creator into your life, making it a living in your life. As a living part of your life, then you can find different things, because you can look as different things. The society teaches you... they don't even use the terminology of spirit so I mean you know without the terminology in it its like...how old did you say you are?

It just like you, you've had a great an experience to come to the way you are. You know what I mean and you are an example of that reality so you know the answer to that spirit part as well as that other natural part, because that spirit part came to you first. You know what I mean? Because the spirit...matter a sister was explaining spirit to me the other day and she was saying the physical is going to go, but the spirit is what is left. You we were talking about daoud, because that's how the character is amongst your brotherhood will always last that's the character. That's who we know you as, because the physical...we might even forget a lot of things that you look like, but that spirit doing this work that your doing. Your setting the stage for a whole another life.

HSH: What was the year you came into this insight? And what compelled you?

SRS: Well this is a deep story, because you know we were like...I'll tell you this when were 7 and 8 year old we talked about this business because you know we've been together all our life so we talked about this idea of ding business in Africa and dealin in

Africa. Matter fact, my mother used to beat us to make us go to sleep, because we stayed up talking about his so after that the creator just brought it. I mean you know like when you think about we left home with...when I left home I had \$150 and a little suitcase about this big and he came...we came to New York then all this sense stuff just came. The creator kept brining us culture and this here African stuff. I mean that's what put us into this understanding. That is the only way that we can describe it, because there is no way that you can say that you had a plan to become who you are. All you know is that the creator give you this now you are responsible for it and you got to deal with it. That's the only thing that you can deal with. What is amazing...it's always like ask you a question seems to be synonymous, the spiritual and the dealing with the food and stuff. Look like its very synonymous, because it's all the same thing, because it's all dealing with the pleasure of the all might creator. You understand what I am saying? And what his order is. Whatever the creator's order is, that's what you know is good. The air, the water everything that he created you know is a good thing and that is the same thing with as far as your diet and everything else. The more you can conceive that, the wiser you are, because that is wisdom. Knowing how God has it is the wisdom. You get closer to that and we start way down here, explaining about your history you know you was way out there somewhere. And so to come all the way back here is such a blessing, because all of us can look back and say wow I was that wild. (laughter) See you can really count your blessings to say that I brought you back into now and dealing with what you are dealing with which is so much different.

HSH: What compelled you to start eating better?

SRS: One thing...I think as you become a responsible person you know you do more responsible things and your responsible for more and more people. So in order for you to be a responsible person you have to develop responsible habits. Habits come to you , because knowledge comes to you. What you should do and what you shouldn't do and you work on that, because you know like I don't know...we may not be the perfect people to ask this question about whether you have an absolute diet, but your striving for that understanding. They had a brother that used to be with us...you know I mentioned the Chief, the chief that passed. He used to say, "wy do you strive to be perfect. You strive to be perfect, because your creator is perfect." So that meant when we were working, doing stuff put that in our minds to say "you do the best you can" which is to strive to be perfect in it. You know like, that's a respect for everybody that your working with. Plus, I think when you ask that question, I was thinking about the spirit of the times in the 60's and I think that what happened stopped at 25.56 (on 3.32)

The gentleman that taught us how to make incense back in 69/70, he had an organization called Habibi. He had a large family and his name was Abdul Karim Akmed and he was very instrumental in business in this city. He was in the forefront in making cosmetic products, incense and stuff like that. Then Sister Yahimba, I name her...one thing

another brother that comes to my mind Brother Hasakur was very instrumental in my venture to go to Haiti. He encouraged me and he was Tupac Shakur's grandfather. You know what I mean? So he was a great brother. He had been into Africa. As a matter of fact, when he was in Africa during that time he was coming back and forth and he had some kind of business over there which he had hooked up with a brother named Oshobo, but umm... Hasakur was a very good you know like he encouraged me to stay into Haiti and do business in Haiti. Anytime we are up against our opposition he would say "you just keep going. Keeping working at it."

HSH: What part of Haiti?

SRS: I was all over Haiti. I was in Port au Prince. I lived in Cathalferry. I lived in Cafu, but Haiti was very instrumental. It was very educational. Haiti is a strong nationalist country.

The Sister that you mentioned that was into the health, can you repeat her name and whatever you can share with me about the type of work that she did.

She had a restaurant and it was very famous, Yahimba. Her whole family used to run the restaurant. She was very strong.

Some of the merchants that were very influential was Merchants of Oyo, a brother from

New York city and he used to travel up and down the coast and he had a very organized group. He had a family of about three wives...four wives and hisself and they all put their money together and invested their money in his business and they used to manufacture jewelry and all types of things. They had the first shops in the village in New York City. They were very influential and as far as the food and everything else go. One thing was that they were independent they were very progressive with a lot of ideas. IF you think about polygamy then, I mean now it was even an issue, but then it was really an issue. They were way out there being able to see that it was a positive thing and they ate together. We manufacture together. Plus, the brother across the street, Hurricane's Bookstore, that's one of the oldest bookstores on the coast. You can go on an on when you start talking about these names.

HSH: Is there any other work that you do outside of the importing and exporting of goods that connect us with the African continent?

SRS: We don't do any publications or things like that what happens is we are trying to work with some youth to try to bring in this more modern understanding, because we're not on the internet. We're not doing too much we just don't know a lot about that world. You know what I mean? This is a whole new world. Like I tell people, when we first came into the culture movement, people was almost doing memograms. I mean you know like, we ran into the brother in New York, Bashan Bookstore and like he had pictures and posters of Marcus Garvey and everything on the roof of his store. I mean it

was so many book and things and that store had been old when we got there. We got there when were 20/21 something like that. That store was so full of knowledge I mean, but we used to get the fliers and stuff coming out of the New York for the events. Compared to what it is know, it's two different worlds. I mean the fliers was almost handwritten for black events talking about cultural events, but even though I don't whether because we were apart of the culture it looked like everything was cultural. It was so much culture going around. I mean it was so much entertainment, but like now I'm not sure whether it's much or less, but we are not involved the same way. Whether it's less or no, because it's a whole nother young atmosphere now, because you have to realize we were like 20 something year's old and now we are in our 70's, because that's a whole lotta change went down from then to now. It's very inspirational to see brother's like yourself with the technology, because like everybody always said, "Garvey did all that he could do with that technology." Today we got some much to work with. I guess its being used. I can't say that it's not, because the youth is the power. They've always been the power.

HSH: It's just you two brother's or do you have other siblings?

SRS: Are oldest brother just had a birthday yesterday. He's 95. He used to drive a cab up until about two years ago in New York city. Just turned 95 on the 16th. That's our oldest brother. Then we have two older brother's and one sister.

HSH: How many years apart?

SRS: He's 70 and I'm 72, but we've always been in this. Even matter fact, our family always say...They got a saying in Haiti, "that in every family how they maintain the voodoo in the country in every family because of the African spirit, the African spirit what gets put in one person in the family that's how we maintain culture. And in every family that's where it is. I know your family everybody is not like you are so that's how we maintain the culture, because the spirits came to one person in each family so that the spirit can be carried on.

HSH: What names would you suggest for me to go after?

SRS: Atiya Ola she more connected to the food thing than anybody that we know so whatever name she gives you. She's more connected.

On the food thing we would not have anybody to give.

HSH: What about the culture?

SRS: This new group I think would be good for you to meet, because they are the new say for Philadelphia, they are the new cultural arm this group called Black and Nobel.

You know what I mean they seem to be attracting all of the youth and that's who you want to tie into, because they have another thought of what's going on and you want to know what's going on in Philly. That's where you are now. I think we Reclaim Printers are on 49th and Baltimore Ave. Russell Shultz he has a great history. You hear his history; he has a great history.

Interview with Atiya Ola Sankofa

HSH: Good Afternoon! Can you tell me your date of birth and some information about your upbringing?

AOS: July 10, 1945 is my date of birth. I am the second oldest of eight children. My mother and father were semi-country and city folks. My senior sister is fifteen years older than I am, which is important. She helped raise us. As far as food, which is what the topic is about, we had what I considered after getting totally grown, a well-rounded diet. My mother and my sister cooked mostly fresh foods from scratch. We definitely went through the government-era of surplus food so we had surplus spam, beef and powdered milk, which they created meals out of that too. My mother and my sister actually cooked like you open a magazine and you see that food. That is basically how they cooked. Our holidays were loaded with homemade cookies, cakes, pies, oatmeal cookies, lemon cookies, and date-nut bars. I can't even name all of the cookies my mother and sister made for us, including homemade fruitcake, and miss-meat pie.

We ate a nice selection of meat. We had rabbit, mush rats, turkey, chicken and fish. We had a variety of fish. My mother worked for some Asians at one time so we had Chinese food brought into our diet; fried rice, egg rolls etc. We grew up having those things and knowing how to make those things. After I had my children, I made some of those same things for them.

Food never seemed scarce. We always had, periodically, company in the house. Beans, rice, biscuits, homemade rolls, ham, potato salad, greens, collard greens, kale, mustard greens, and beets— all of those things were in our diet. As a grown-up that's when I could realize how good we had it.

HSH: Geographically, where were you raised?

AOS: I was raised in Wilmington, Delaware, but my father and mother were from Lauwer, Delaware too. Their people are from middle town, Smirner.

HSH: In terms of holistic health, do you have any credentials?

AOS: I guess I am an autodidact. I didn't go get any certificates. I actually just have a truth pill. My girlfriend, Zuhairah and I were always threatening to be vegetarians and then a moment came where we could be vegetarians. We started moving in that direction and then a group called DICC, and Reverend James Bevle who was the head brought that organization to Philadelphia. At that time I was making clothes and my sister, Zola Armenata and Yatama came to us for us to move our operation to 52nd and Allegheny. There we met Reverend James Bevle, Marselus Brooks, and Dwayne Qwima. Marsalus Brooks, Dr. Rev. James Bevle had already raised food in a large amount and sold food. They were connected to farming. Also, Sis Erica Henry was leaning toward raw food so

as we moved into that atmosphere, raw food rung my truth bell. I started leaning in that direction and started creating raw dishes. It just grew out of that. That is how I got to where I am.

HSH: What time frame did you-all make that connection?

AOS: I should give you that, but I have to look in my journal.

HSH: Please tell me your official title and the line of work that you are currently in today?

AOS; I don't actually have an official title. I am just a person that does what I am doing. I don't call myself a chef although when people are handling food they usually take the title chef and periodically when I step in certain arenas they call me chef. I just show up.

HSH: What is it that you actually do for the community?

AOS; I oversee Atiya Ola's Spirit-First Foods, which is a café whose target market is vegan and raw food. I oversee the recipes, the food processing (how we are going to process it, how we are going to present and how we are going to serve it). I have chefs that fix food, but I am the one that is assisting them with what we are going to do with the food and to the food.

HSH: In this business that you have is it safe to say that this is a restaurant and/or do you provide your food services to the African community?

AOS: My food has always been provided for the community in that I have always fixed food for us. Originally, coming to Philadelphia we lived in a commune house and it was two females so we took turns fixing food. I have always fixed food. I have eight children so I have always fixed food. It's eight of us and six children are under me. Fixing food goes with being. In just easing into fixing raw foods, and fixing food period, I was always fixing food and it started growing. Two of my friends got married and one of the dishes at their wedding was couscous and sometimes called kush which was named by a black chef. His pleasure in that started me to say, "I'm gonna learn how to make that." I started making it and my sister who became vegetarian was constantly critiquing whatever I was cooking. She kept telling me what it wasn't until I finally got it to what it is. That is how I've gotten to where I am. As far as credentials, I just didn't see a school that I wanted to go to.

HSH: When did your establishment open? How long have you been in business?

AOS: We have been in business four years. We are working our fifth year now.

HSH: How do you feel the work you do contributes to the health and wellness of the

African community?

AOS: We are eating real food. It's primarily uncooked that allows you to have the enzymes you need which are the catalyst for regeneration and healing. We have lots of people that come from all over to get the food. We have people have gone to the doctor and the doctor say that you have to change your diet and then one of their friends brings them to the café for them to get the food. We have people who have been eating the food who come back to testify how much better they are feeling. In fact, we have a young girl right now that's been consistently coming to the café, learning how to eat the foods, studying how to eat the foods and is feeling better. She is making testimonials to me. She said, "I think what you said is right" in terms of eating and what have you.

HSH: If you were to explain what the alternative forms of healing what would be your basic definition of the term wholistic health?

AOS: That is a great question, because most of the time that we get ill it's always addressed from the physical never from the spiritual or the emotional body, but the truth is you get ill in the emotional body. That is where you get ill first. Things upset you emotionally and the energy gets stored in the body. In the news was a man who committed a murder twenty-three years ago. He killed a young boy that was fifteen years old and he came forward to confess. This was not a case that the police solved—he gave himself up which is to say that that weighed heavily on his spirit and his emotions. They

showed him saying, “I am confessing to this crime. I don’t need a lawyer or anything. I am confessing to this crime.” Which will give him a large relief in his emotional body and his spiritual body. No matter what the outcome of the charges are, be they even the death penalty. He is in relief.

We as a people have been in major trauma from the day that we left our shores, so we have been suffering for generations. We have suffered major trauma, depression, inter-generational depression and it continues on and so what you see when you see that our community can be heavily drug-addicted is really people that are depressed, self-medicating. When you look at the level of unemployment, teenage pregnancies, diabetes and you decode that out. It all decodes out to an upset and an emotional body. And since we never had therapy, it still continues and lingers. Also, we don’t really see the invisible forces that keep these pressures on, but they do exist. Even to talk about the large amount of males and females that are locked up in the prisons. All of that is criminal. Since they [Europeans] brought a people here and disenfranchised them and continue to disenfranchise, we are constantly borderline if not over the top depressed.

HSH: What about the idea of holistic health has other elements other than the physical.

AOS: One of the things that I was paying attention to one day is what other people are working towards. Some people are working toward this, but when you ask great black thinkers they are working for freedom. This is 2013 we are still working for freedom.

What is your dream? “Freedom.” Oh please! Doctor, Father Nelson Mandela, a whole lifetime wasted in prison. When I look out over the total spectrum of what is happening not to just us, but to all the people of hue, I don’t feel that we are talking about the right thing which is the other people’s insanity. I don’t think that we call it the right word. We call it white supremacy, racism or something like that, but I think that it should be really called insanity. I think that we should call their psychiatrists on the carpet, because they have not dealt with that. That is my argument.

HSH: In addition to the association with Reverend Bevel and others was there something else that compelled you to embrace this lifestyle of holistic health?

AOS: First off, my mother fed me well. It’s innate. Then, paying attention and having eight children and wanting them to eat the best with what I could provide for them. I was definitely in a co-op, Ujama Co-op, which allowed us to have brown rice as opposed to white rice. There were a whole lot of other good things like real oatmeal as opposed to instant oatmeal. That is really my impetus having eaten well growing up. Having eight children and wanting us all to be well.

HSH: Which decade would you say this holistic health movement gained momentum in the African community?

AOS: Definitely, Dr. Reverent Elijah Muhammad was a great impetus in the direction of urging us to release some of the food that we were eating. I had a friend, his name was Dawood Arasul and I guess I might have been about twenty no more than twenty-one and he said, “come go with me to the mosque.” I went with him to the mosque and that day the lecture was on not eating pork. My family ate pork and at that time my pleasure was in eating pork chops and ham and bacon. I went to the lecture and afterwards I would go to get my pork chops. I cooked them but I could eat them. It became an education of release. As you get educated and you do your own investigation, you start releasing. Somewhere during that period my father passed and I had cooked a pork loin and so my question to myself: “Was that done?” What triggered the question? Nothing was in it, but a bell rang, which became more of an impetus for me to let go of pork. I would say that that was a key factor in releasing, but still recognizing that my mother and father fed us well. We had hand-shelled lima beans, corn off the cob scraped, plucked string beans. I know how to do these things, because I was there when it was being done.

HSH: When would you say including the mosque that this conversation of eating right was at its height in the black community? What decade?

AOS: Probably before the mid to late sixties, because the Muslims were on it. I can't pinpoint how long they were on it. I just know that that is when it came into my world.

HSH: The Ujamaa Co-op, what time was that?

AOS: That had to be like 1969-1970. Definitely, 1970 more than 1969, because in 1969 we came to Philadelphia. Going into 1970's.

HSH: When you arrived here when did the impetus started?

AOS: Well for being in that co-op. Not for eating good, we always ate good in my world. My family fed us well.

That notable shift, but I also came to Philadelphia to help participate in the shift of consciousness. We came to participate in the African culture movement. It was like 13 of us that came to Philadelphia and lived in a commune. You are going to go talk to those brothers about that. When we came, we came to manufacture art and clothing. For over ten years I made African clothing, the red, black and green flag, Kufi, pouches, bottles. I am an artist at heart so I did different paintings and things and we sold all these things in our African culture store.

HSH: Did you all call this "eating to live" or did you call it holistic health?

I don't have that on board, put Lisa Ra's name down, because she was in the co-op.

HSH: Can you name who were the instrumental figures and/or institutions in the holistic health movement in the heyday that you know it to be?

AOS: Ujamaa Co-op.

HSH: What about the individuals who were the movers and the shakers. Do you have any names?

Nisa Ra, Kosuwa Sabri, Tom, president of Komi Sankofa was there. When you speak with Mama Akousua she can probably give you more names than I am giving you.

HSH: Do you think eating better is healthier for African Americans and if so can you elaborate?

Spiritually and scientifically, the body is a solar band. The sun is the solar energy. One of the main vitamins that they say go out in the sun and get is Vitamin D. I can't think of the word that they use when the energy is absorbed in the greens where all the vegetables that you eat are absorbed into you body as energy.

Yes. Photosynthesis. If you are working on that theory and that's the one I am working on then it is important to eat those foods. Uncontaminated and cooked as little as possible and they have scientifically validating all of this information. Not only are we moving in

this direction, but also science is kicking it with us.

HSH: With that said, what suggestions would you make to meat eaters to embrace a healthier lifestyle?

AOS: Study. Information is what changes thought patterns so if you start studying you recognize what they are doing to the meat industry and what meat does to the body and you can start releasing it. I say wean yourself. Sometimes we are not prepared to just give it up abruptly, but we can give it up a little at a time until one day we look up and it's been years since we've had that. Also, start paying attention to how your body feels. How are your bowels moving? A lot of us are getting sick with cancer of the colon, because the waste stays there too long. Also, always work on your emotional issues. Forgiveness. Speaking up. Practicing having an open heart. Working on our creativity. A lot of us do not realize that not being creative you will get ill. There is an illness that comes with not being creative. Yes, we have been oppressed where our creativity has suffered in so many ways, but still it must be released from our thought patterns and bodies to the universe.

HSH: Is there anything that I have not asked or that we have not talked about that you feel is imperative for me to know as it relates to African Holistic health?

AOS: The only thing that we must be aware of is our family—we need to self examine

our family. That's really what helped me a lot. When I looked back on how my family had suffered through racism it is disheartening. If you have seniors in your family that are living ask them questions to interview them. Ask your siblings questions. Although parents are parenting, each sibling perceives the parent differently. We remember things differently. Everyone has different experiences with the parents. Get in touch with as much of your family as possible. Like right now I'm on a program of spending sometime with my children, because I don't really see them. Even though we are right here in Philly. Work seems to capture all of us, just making it from day to day. We have to discipline ourselves to put in some family time. That's where I am at this point. Taking time to spend sometime with the different families. All my children are grown. We spend time with my youngest daughter and then to hear her say, "You spent a whole day with me." She appreciated it. I would recommend that we start looking at each other with love as oppose to the angers of the past. Love and forgiveness or forgiveness and love as opposed to angers of the past.

These are the people that are bringing, Jewel Pookrum to Philly Dr. Pearl Jackson and Marva. They were bringing her to Philly.

HSH: What year was this?

AOS: I don't know if it was before 1998, but I do know that I went to the lecture and the following Sunday, I showed up to be in class.

Dr Pearline Jackson, Marva and Dr. Jewel Pookrum were here and what was the intent?

Dr. Pearline Jackson was an emotional therapist so she did therapy work. I was her chef at her healing retreat at Drexel. I can't think of that lady, but you know there was a Drexel Nun and they have a nunnery so I was the chef there. That was the type of work Pearline was doing. Marva was just working on promoting and getting in alignment. That's what we were all doing, trying to get in alignment. Jewel came with the universal principles and the spiritual laws so that is what we endeavored to study and be our own therapist in the sense.

If we start applying the laws to your life and behavior then it allows you to examine certain things that may have already happened. A key word is re-perception, to re-perceive events. That was the basis of it to actually get a core of women to get well and facilitate to other women.

HSH: How often did you ladies meet?

AOS: We met once a week. I think it might have gone on five years or better. It went a long time.

HSH: Was there a central location in which Dr. Jewel Pookrum came?

At that time Pearlina Jackson owned a property out on Thomas Ave. I think or we had class there. We also had class on 18th and Diamond at a sister's house name Legiri who is in California now. Also, around the corner from that was a sister named Ugi, who was traveling right now too.

HSH: Was there a name to this?

AOS: Philadelphia Principal Women's Universal Support Group. It was definitely for fibroids. Fibroids were major, because she brought diet information and it was a core of women that had fibroids. They actually had others facilitating for them.

HSH: How many would you say in the womb circle consistently?

AOS: It could be ten. And also there was a revolving door so you had people who stayed the distance like Ugi, my sister, a few others and myself. Then you had people that got what they needed and moved. Ugi and these other people could give you the numbers.

AOS: Did I give you her number?

HSH: No Ma'am, you did not?

AOS: It is: (215) XXX-XXXX

Interview with Aris LaTham

AL: It was 1964 when I landed in Brooklyn and I had dropped out of school back down the way in Panama. I think I dropped out of the 7th grade so I was out in the bush. I couldn't figure how to work this thing called school so my buddy and me dropped out and went to the bush. That is when I started my first food venture. We used to go get sacks of mango and sit right in front of the school and 'go into the business.' By the time I got to Brooklyn they had to stick me in the ninth grade because of my age. I graduated from there and went on to college. I went to community college in Bayside, New York. A pivot happened in 1997, landing in Bayside [Queens], New York out of the hood, because in the hood there was Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam and all kind of other stuff going. We were shifting from not eating pork and eating only once a day. Also, we had independent institutions, black schools, food co-ops and those kinds of things. On the college campus in a suburban area I ran into hippies with all the facts of the land. Of course, the Vietnam War and the Black Power Movement were also going on. In the Black Power Movement they said the food they were serving us was a weapon. We have to deal with this thing on another level.

AL: I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of New York in Spanish and Education, because around that time I was planning on going to Vietnam so I had to stay

in school and study something to go under my belt. I got a B.A. in Spanish just for bragging. I did all of that: stayed in school, got my B.A., and of course from then a whole different window opened. I ended up studying for my master's degree at California State University, Fulton in Linguistics - Bilingual Education. Ultimately, I was honored with an honorary doctorate degree from the City University of Los Angeles on Sun-Fired Food Science, having developed what I had developed. I was very privileged to be honored alongside one of great, brilliant minds of the twentieth century, a man by the name of Nathaniel Bronner who started the Bronner Brother's empire. The elder who started that and I were both honored together. He got his Ph.D. for having developed the whole Bronner Brother system and I got one for having developed the Sun-Fired Food system.

HSH: Official title and the line of work you are currently in?

AL: Based on all the work that I have done my official title is food scientist. All the work that you hear me expounding on today is all work that I have directed myself. I didn't sit in a classroom or study with anybody. This is work that I studied on my own. I have a master library of 10,000 books. I couldn't find what I was looking for in the school systems so I had to teach myself and I went with this and this is what has become of it. I am a doctor of Food Science. I specialize in Sun-Fired Cuisine. I've also been acclaimed in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* in the 2004 edition.

The second edition came out last year. They claimed me as the “Father of Ethical Gourmet Raw Cuisine” for having developed this cuisine in a gourmet style. When I came on the scene raw food was for sick people so pretty much what we gave it was spice. It was quite an honor to be in that type of media and see that the article was an exposé on the history of vegetarianism based on their time. They started with Pythagoras who studied on the banks of the Nile with our ancestors and elders. The article went from Pythagoras to the Ben Franklin period up to modern day raw food where they just mentioned Dr. Ann Ray Moore for having brought wheatgrass and the whole sprouting culture. Definite, distinctive contributions from the raw food movement weren’t cuisine for having developed this on a gourmet level. However, in looking at all the people in the encyclopedia, everyone else is dead, but me. I am walking as a legend, but what is more important to me is walking upright, healthy, bright and strong with my mind clear and sharp not sick and vegetating, waiting in some hospice on death row for the last stroke to hit me. Our responsibility as individuals is to take ownership whatever that means. You have to figure how to do it and how not to kill yourself.

HSH: How does the work you do contribute to the African community?

AL: It’s right here right now as we gather like this, looking at the crisis that we are in. In the 1960’s, they used food as a weapon. It’s a weapon. You can look at the food in the local supermarkets around here and go in the same supermarket uptown in their neighborhood and the selection ain’t dried, old and looking freaky. What I have done is

to bring or open up the awareness in our community on how to deal with our options. What I have done to contribute to the health and wellness of our community besides exposing that you don't have to eat to kill yourself, I live what I share. We may find that there are certain individuals that may come into our community and take certain knowledge, but they are not vibrating what they are sharing to be an example. If you want to look like me then this it, but if you want to look tired, worn out, dried skin and all this other stuff going on then that's another thing. Once we really look at what this food does for us compared to what the other food does for us, we are going to see that you can't fool Mother Nature. Beyond all of that, I have always kept myself accessible to the community. I also have a huge global community. I was in Philly back in the 1980's. I was here for a couple of years. It wasn't permanent. I was in New York so I would go back and forth. I taught a class at Temple University in the evenings. I alternated teaching Wednesday night with Shekem Shekem of the *Ausar Aset Society*. The class was on natural cures for the body. There were a couple of other brothers and sisters that did it as well. I am always accessible whether I am in Belize, Jamaica, Panama, Nigeria, Ghana, or Tanzania; everywhere I've gone to share this energy.

I've done quite a bit of work that you can find on Youtube. I've put a lot of stuff out there without any charge. I had a lecture at Clark Atlanta a few years back. The entire lecture is there whether than trying to sell these things. Many of our practitioners sell all of their work. You have to buy it to access it. It is their business, but I see the value of being in a position where I can share without having to charge people, because a lot of us

don't get this information. It is life saving information. We need to access it not only for us, but other children that have gone astray. As practitioners, people out there on the forefront, a lot of us maintain our work strictly within the confines of our community. If we truly live what we preach of being the original people and the first people we have to accept that the other ones are our children too. No matter what we want to call them, we have to check ourselves for us to create those kinds of monsters. We are responsible on a certain level. We put this information out there so they all can access it. If we don't allow our children that have gone astray to be healed, we will build our temples and empire and they will come again and Romanize it. We got to really leave a little back door open for them if they want to come back home and be as they might say accepted in the community of nations again as civilized people. This is where my work is and I like to always be able to make sure that our people can access it on any level. If you can't afford it, I can give it to you free. It's really not mines. I am just a vessel. I am just a channel to make sure the work of our ancestors goes on. What I am sharing here with you today is just a griot's job. Much of this I got from my grandmother. They didn't know how to read and write so they just came right through the grapevine. We got to keep it moving this way, because we really we have generations to come and if you don't set this foundation right we are going to keep creating worse offspring's than we already have. Lets keep it tight, open, available, accessible to all of us and that is what I urge all of our leaders and healers to do and not merchandize our knowledge so much.

HSH: How did you come to know what you know about raw food and holistic health?

AL: I came about getting it by living it. In 1967, I came out of high school enjoying the standard American diet. My consciousness was exposed to basically bringing me back home that I learned from my grandmother and my mother. By 1970, I became a complete clean vegetarian. When I use the word vegetarian that does not include any animal by-products. I don't use the word vegan at all. What is that word? It is a word that was coined by some Englishman based on the animal rights movement and it has left a door open for people who eat dairy and stuff like to also call themselves lacto-ovo vegetarian. What the heck is a lacto-ovo vegetarian? For that matter the other folks can call themselves a penguin-vegetarian or beef-vegetarian. Lacto-ovo? Why can't you have a chicken vegetarian? They have those heh? Well those things don't vegetate so we're going let them be the vegans, the villians. They can be the vegans and we are the vegetarians. We're going to lose that word. They have co-opted the word health, natural, food or meat! The original meaning of the word meat is food! We do eat meat. We do eat nutmeats. Of course! We are meat-eaters. We are not going to let the flesh eaters rip us off of all of this stuff. It's all about brining it back to where we are.

I stopped eating all animal products in 1970. I read it— being on the college campus your reading now. You are looking for information. Your brain is ripe and spongy so getting all of this information is resonating, because this is where I came from growing up

at my Grandmother's place. It all started to make sense. After 6 years on that journey and not going on to the fake, imitation-texturized-vegetable protein and all of these types of things. I basically used my home-style cooking, but try to make it easier: rather than fry the plantain, I just baked it and get out of the kitchen. That opened up the door for me to consider raw food. I started to read about it. The big spark back in those days was Dick Gregory and his mentor Dr. Alveania Fulton out of Chicago at the Fultonian Institute. She put my brother on a huge fast and knocked him down from 300 pounds to 98 pounds. I was reading about it, but I saw this in flesh and blood that I could touch. There were many living food masters that came about in 1930's and 1940's and like Hilton Hotep. If you want to get a deep science of this you'll need to read Hilton Hotep. The man wrote over a hundred books. He breaks down the fatal process of cooking. The raw food books you read today that these newbie's are putting out is just regurgitation. They plagiarize. Look at David Wolfe's book. What is the name of the first book he did? *Nature's First Law!* David Wolfe's people are Iranian. They came from Iran. In the library, his father had a book by an Iranian. I think it was *Eat to Live* or *Eat Live* or something like that. He plagiarized the book pretty much word for word. He can't reproduce that book, but it gave him a good start. That's what all of them do: go into all of these old books and get information so you really need to go to the old school to find raw food information.

AL: The Health Research Institute has republished all the out of print and rare books not only on raw food, but a lot of other subjects that you are going to find interesting, but

Hilton Hotep put the greatest body of work out there. This man was raw over forty years, living out in Seabridge, Florida. Guess who was mining his orange grove? Charlie Smith. Charlie Smith lived longer than Hilton Hotep. Hilton Hotep died at about 94 or 96. Charlie Smith lived to 115. He smoked tobacco and drank liquor and everything, but Hilton had him out in the orange field so he ate a whole bunch of oranges. He was out there detoxing and sweating. Hilton was in the house so he wasn't sweating like Charlie Smith. He has pictures of Charlie Smith in his book. He started writing things about Kemet, but his work on living foods is the most solid out there. There are quite a few others so go to the Health Research Institute and get some of those rare out of print books on raw food. You are going to see an arising.

AL: In living flesh, Dick Gregory, Dr. Alvenia Fulton, and also Dr. Ann Wigmore were a big inspiration, but reading and finding out about this, applying it and seeing the difference in my life, stamina, energy and everything I locked into it. Now it has been 37 years of not eating any cook food whatsoever and I know the difference. My siblings: one brother 8 years younger than me died of a massive heart attack a couple of years ago. The other, one year older than me died of two forms of cancer. My oldest brother is 68 and he has everything. My sister, is 69 and she has everything. Between the both of them they have the whole pharmacopeia sitting in the house. They have big drugstores in their house. I go to my brother's house and he's like, "why you bringing all that stuff in my fridge: all those fruits and vegetables filling up the fridge. I have fruit juice up in the cabinet." I tried to show them the light and they bring me all of that other stuff so I said,

“you go ahead if you want to be living-dead. I have folks looking for me. I’m going to go to Philly hang out with Sister and be around the ones that want me near.” This is how it works for me to be able to be into this on this level and it was all strictly self-profess. That is why I got into it, because I saw the food. I was killing my people not only in my house, but on the block and I had to step up and not be another victim and this is what I bring to share with all of us here is that all in your hands. Don’t blame it on the man or the boy or whatever. Your hands picked it up and stuffed it in your mouth. They did not spoon-feed you. You went and spent your money on it. One big ol sister asked Dick Gregory, “Dick, can I get some of that Miami diet? I’m so big and fat. I need to lose some weight, but I can’t afford it.” Dick said, “what?! All that fat you got on you that is expensive. You spent a lot of money to get sick and you want me to give you this thing.” Anyway that is how where that is at.

HSH: What was the name of your restaurant in Flatbush, Brooklyn?

AL: That was Sun-Fired Juice club and this is how we come into the neighborhood. We didn’t come into the neighborhood raw food, health food, vegetarian this or nothing like that. We come in mainstream, because we are looking to deal with these other people out there. And so Sun-Fired Juice Club and the way we have it set up we have a big produce market sitting outside on the sidewalk. All day exciting fruits. All sitting out there. We were selling that out there. I had a little triangle, I was sitting on a whole block by

myself. The triangle and you couldn't miss us. We were on Flatbush Ave in Park Slope.

AL: Besides that we had some cooked food as well. We had a nice baked carrot cake, we had soup, rice dish. We had a bridge in there, but then once you come in there now. We had about 5 or 6 cooked dishes. It was a juice club so we had 99 flavors of juices fresh made. We had fruits, vegetable juice, nut milk, milk shake and a smoothie bar. We had ice cream we made frozen fruit ice cream. We had about 8 flavors. We had butter pecan and all kinds of stuff. It was set up with all of that. You could make your own smoothie from a selection of 20 fruits always available. We had the ice cream, earth milks and you just come and put what ever in your cup whatever juice you want and we would blend it. We had another case with about 30 raw food dishes Eden's paradise. People would come in maybe just to buy a cooked dish and they would come in a see all of this raw food. That is how we get the community to raw food. That was the second place I had. The first place we started off with was in Harlem. What I did with that place we had an herb shop, 365 herbs. Savannah Herbs, 365 herbs, one herb for every day. We had a produce stand outside and inside we had all the other stuff. But the herbs in Harlem, 1979 no raw food in sight and folks looking for the herbs to heal themselves. They come in for the herb and what do they see back there all of these paradise pies and all of this stuff. And this is how we got Harlem eating live back then. We'd do like a sun burger and folks would come in eat that and it just looked like what they want and next thing you know they would come back later and ask, "Brother, what kind meat was that?" We don't come in knowing them on the head beating them, saying health food is good for

you and all of that. They are coming, because they are looking for health. So they are coming in for the herbs and we hook once they get in there, but the best place I had was the one I had in Bethesda, Maryland. If you know anything about Bethesda, Maryland today you have to have about \$150,000 income to live anywhere in Bethesda, Maryland. One of the fourth or fifth wealthiest city in America, but we had a natural food supermarket not a health food store, but a supermarket, 10,000 sq ft., Green City Market and Cafe and we had everything in there. We had a restaurant in there, and huge produce. WE were before Wholefoods. Wholefoods came in and put two shops within short distance of us, and because we were doing the retail they crushed us, because this is how they do. They come in the top one-hundred in the industry they sell it and you can buy it from the distributor. So they came in and crushed the co-ops the community stores and everything. We have to shrink back and I went back to just preparing food, but anyway a lot of that you can find. It's all in the media that you can see a lot of that. I have done a lot of consulting work, setting up restaurants for people all over the world, cleaning up restaurants. Not only in our community, but I have done work with Hilton Hotels, major resorts in South America, here in the US, down in the Caribbean and the word just continues, but right now for me it is very important that we keep this information flowing. We keep this information flowing as much as possible. We had Queen Afua, we had a lot of our healers this is where they would come to eat. This is the place that they would trust is Sun-Fired Foods.

HSH: What year was Brooklyn and Bethesda?

AL: Well Bethesda came in before Brooklyn. Bethesda was 1990 to 1994. The president of the discovery channel was my partner, Aruth Ark. We sat it right next door to the Discovery Channel and we was rocking. We raised quite a bit of eyebrows. We got a lot of attention and people trying to buy us out and stuff and then the one in Brooklyn was from 1996 to 2000 and that was my last operation in the US when I moved from the US to Jamaica.

HSH: Which decade did the wholistic movement gain momentum in the African community?

AL: I would say the 80's. That was the decade that it really moved. As we saw here in Philadelphia not only Brother Kofi Kwatamani with the First Intercourse, first raw food restaurant in this area, but also we had ? Baba (39:00) of Akebulan Academy going on right here in Philadelphia. It was all over the country, but a lot of these seeds were planted in the 70's and mostly through the independent schools. One of the major ones was in Chicago with Haki Malabuti he wrote that book, *From Plan to Planet*. In that book that stimulated a lot of us.

HSH: Are there any other individuals that you would consider instrumental?

AL: Well there has always been of course Dr. Goss. He has been on the frontline. Of

course, Dr. Llaila Afrika. He has always been there and still is moving strong today. Queen Afua, she came into it in the 80's. I remember when Queen Afua took her first massage class. She used to come in and experiment on us and give us free massages. Dr. John Moore out of the Tree of Life in Harlem. UCLA, and herbalist one of the big movers back then. Of course you have always had Shekem Shekem Ra Un Nefer Amen from the Ausar Aset Society. There has been quite a few. I know many of them I am not going to be able to name right now. Jewel Pookrum and she is still around here with us. I think the big thing was Dick Gregory he really took all of us open a lot of gates for a lot of us.

HSH: What can you tell me about Win Postell?

AL: Me and Win Postell go back quite a ways. When I broke out of New York when I sold my bag herbs out of Harlem and hit the road in 1983 we went crisscrossing the whole country going to all the major health food conventions. By the time we left Harlem our first stop in L.A. brother that was very close to me that was at my side, brother Usudinki out of Los Angeles. You know he said, "there is a brother from Philly that is coming in. He says that he just wants to volunteer. Connect with us, because he loves to travel and like what we're doing he wants to rock with it." So that was Win Postel. Win came and for 5 years he ran with us, Usudiki, myself and brother Apshemol out of Chicago. Brother Apshemol was a great chef he kept the vegetarian movement alive in Chicago and he has passed on as well as Win Postel. Win and I had a very

profound spiritual connection. We would move on a certain level where everything was already synchronized for us, but it was amazing what we would do. We would land say in L.A. Thursday night and by 12 noon on Friday we got food on the table to serve 5,000 people. That is the way we used to move. We would get to L.A. with our network, we already recruited 25 workers and in 12 hours we have loads of food coming. And we would come into a situation at a big expo and we are making food in the booth all day long. We go to places and there might be 500 vegetarian food stalls and we would look like we were catering the joint. Win came back to Philly and kept it burning here for a number of years and also he has kept on the traveling. He kept up in traveling and moving around. Win is a very instrumental person in our communities not just here, but many other places, because he went on a touched a lot of communities throughout the world, Honduras, Belize and many other places that I have not been to as well.

HSH: Which year?

AL: 1983 to 1988

HSH: Are there any other works that you have produced?

AL: I have not written or published anything other than what you see here. My books are living books like what you are getting here with you today. So a lot of my work you can find online at no charge, workshops, lecture, seminars that I have been doing, but other than that you are not going to find me wrapped up, packaged up out there in the

mass world. To me this is more important, having this living book, having this direct interaction with you in person, because really words cant replace this. I just want your tastebuds. When I can smack that, I got your mind and colon too. Its more important to have this in a living form and it's always going to be with you for the rest, because really what I am sharing with you is just foundation. Open up your creativity and see the way we do it so you can do it with no problem. We'll be coming back. We'll be here in September and see Sis Beverly. You see what she did and we just put this together probably about a month ago and she got so many people in here. I am greatly surprised to see this on such a short notice. I know what will happen when September come. It is going to be the certification workshop that I will be doing in the entire U.S. so we are going to have other people come in from other places. Secure your spot as soon as possible if you plan on being here.

HSH: More to share?

AL: The main thing is that there is nothing new under the sun. This is our ancestral work. We just bringing it back to life, reigniting the flame, because we know in studying our history that even to get into the mystery school to study with Imhotep and all our great masters you had to do 40 days and 40 nights of fasting before you could even get to the door and then once you got in you could not eat any cooked food. This is where we are. This is nothing new. This is all old time tradition. Fresh food and we know better. That has been our tradition coming from the south. We are not into this processed, packaged

culture. This is not our vibration, but convenience and all of these other things we got caught and now we want to break the shackles, because this has become really enslavement when we start eating this kind of food. That's why they are taking it to this other level to enslave us even further that you got to see them in order to eat. Otherwise you can't eat if you don't see them.

Interview with Ethel Wilson

HSH: Can you share with men any information about your upbringing?

EW: I was born in West Virginia. It's called Faraday, West Virginia. Its not there anymore. My father was a coal miner so if you know about the coal mining industry you know that it went away. It came back. I was born April 22, 1937 so what happened then my grandmother was attending my birth and on birth certificate it has the 22nd and 23rd. So now when I get retirement age I have to put the 23rd down. 22nd, 23rd whatever. You know. All the housewives stayed home, husbands went to the mine and we always had a little garden. Children had gardens. I guess it was something like Africa, because that's what—you know the children always had something to do. They had those little jobs. We went to pick berries as a child. My mother had nine children. I am the eldest. My grandmother stayed with her a lot and then my mother came up here nad that is how I came to Philadelphia. My upbringing, I thought it was really cool. You know you got in trouble for what you did and you had to drink castor oil on the weekends. I guess it was once a month, but you know I ran around because I had to drink that castor oil. Then my grandmother would make a hole in the orange and heat it and pour it in the orange. It still didn't taste good. Then I took it and had to take the orange later. I think I had a good upbringing. School was right there, right across from us and we just walked to school barefooted. Went to church barefooted. It was just awesome.

HSH: Was this a rural community?

EW: Yes. It's rural. There was no stores or anything like that, but we went up the rode, winding around. There's houses here and there and when we left it was all houses. It must have been about maybe thirty houses and that's all. Backyard was the mountains. And there were people living up on the mountains, but that's the type of upbringing I had.

HSH: As it pertains to holistic health or alternative medicine have you obtained any credential, such as academic degrees, licenses, certifications, consultations, alliances or what have you. Can you share with me those credentials you have and when you obtained them?

At first I was in nature sunshine and we did a lot of training through Nature Sunshine and it was a wonderful company and they do train people and had plenty of help. You'd always had to help. You'd always have to help and be able to help other people. I guess that's my middle name is help, because my husband says, "Well you always giving stuff." I went to Trinity and I encouraged a lot of my friends to go and they would pass with the class and I said aww I'm not interested and I'll get it. Then finally, I had to just go ahead on and finish, but first I was a natural certified professional. I did that. I went all over the United states to get that. Then I studied to be a doctor of naturopathic. Then after that, I did a lot of different training.

HSH: Do you know when you received your doctorate of naturopathy?

EW: I think it was in 1992.

HSH: What is trinity?

EW: Trinity is a natural health college and then you can do ministry there and what you do you study out of the book and then at the end then you have a lot of other studies you can do and I did them all. We had about 22 books I think. We learned about iridology, learned about death and dieting and that one was very important you know to learn about death and dieting. During all of that time I used to be afraid of dieting. You know people say “cancer” that big thing and then I would hold my ears. I couldn’t think about it, but after all of this training. After all the training I did with Dr. Afrika, sitting under him for maybe 5 years. Its not an issue anymore because you can either be healed or you cant be healed and the religious aspect whenever your time your going to go. It’s a better place over there. I found that out through this training.

HSH: When you were done at Trinity did you get certifications?

EW: Yes. We have a diploma for all of that. And then the doctor of naturopathy everything encompasses that, but it was interesting and then I had help with my friends.

We'd all get together and talk about this and stuff and even people now that is taking that class they still come to me and talk to me about it. And a lot of people go, because they see my diplomas.

HSH: When would you say you went to Trinity prior to you receiving your doctorate?

EW: It was roughly about four years until 1994.

HSH: So about 1994?

EW: Yes.

HSH: Subsequently right after that you went for the doctorate of naturopathy?

EW: Yes.

HSH: Whom did you get your ND with?

EW: That was with Trinity as well.

HSH: Can you share with me the name of your business, when it opened, and the description of all the services?

EW: The name of my business is *To Your Health*. We do consultations naturally. I'll start with the front. We do the foot detox and of the course the consultations are done out here, but we do the foot detox and that pull that pulls the toxins out of your body. There are two thousand pores in your foot or your hands, because if somebody come and they have one foot I'll put both hands in the water, because you have all of the stuff that will come out. I've had people come in with canes and then what they will do they will end up leaving the cane, forgetting the canes all of that kind of stuff. Some people say "Oh man I can breathe now. I don't know what this is." So it pulls from a lot of organs in your body and that is a very good detox. Its actually a medical device that I use. And then we can give you a massage and I have something called the Chi machine and that makes your body go swimming like a fish and when you finish you can feel the oxygen coming up to your head and you just lay there and enjoy the oxygen. Some people see their gods. Some people see a lot of different things with that oxygen while you are laying there. That is a very nice machine to have and people have bought them, going to thrift stores after they've seen mines and then they have them. I have to teach people about everything that they are doing here. And then we have the sauna, the infrared sauna that is another medical device, because people can go there and burn up cancer. I mean you just get rid of that and a lot people go in there when they're feeling bad they sweat. It goes like an inch and a half maybe three inches down in your body so your arm just gets completely engulfed with the heat and it pulls the toxins out through the sweat and your sweating profusely. Sometimes you see people come out, the ones that can get

rosy cheeks they looked like they just came off the plane. They all rosy coming out and looking good and they say that they feel very, very good. And we also have the colonic machine and that device is an open system and I like it very much and everybody can use the open system. I'm not talking that we have the best system, but it's not good for everybody. But the closed system is good too for people who don't have that muscle to hold the tube in their rectum so it is a really good device to use. The water is constantly running and you can constantly let out all the fecal matter that you need to let out.

HSH: What year did you open up?

EW: I opened up 8 years ago. I guess that was 2005.

HSH: Can you give a visual of the Chi machine and what does it do for the patient?

EW: It's not a patient. It's a client. I'm sorry. It's a little box like this. I mean it is no bigger than that and you put your ankles in and you are lying on the table. On the floor is better and then it goes like a fish. Your body just goes like this and it helps the lymphatic system. The lymphatic system don't move if you don't move. So that helps the lymphatic system. If you do five minutes that is great and a lot of people have gotten on that with cancer. There are other things that you can do with that. There is a lot that you can put over that. I don't have it, but a friend of mine has it. And that helps your tremendously. 5 minutes is a long time for people that are sick. You can do five minutes.

You can do 30 minutes. You can do it several times a day. I loaned it to a friend of mine who I wish was still here, but he is no longer here. He used to live upstairs and I just let him take, because he was sick and he said that he felt so much better. It helps the lymphatic system and you know that that's where the disease is running in and out at. He really felt a lot better. I wish that he was still here.

HSH: So, would you say that *To Your Health* is truly a holistic center?

EW: Yes. We detox everything it seems like in here.

HSH: How do you feel the work that you do contributes to the health and wellness of the African community?

EW: I think it contributes, because I have a lot of people come back and tell that I should let people start writing testimonies because they say that you have helped me so much. I've had people call and I don't even know who they are they say "you started me on my way and I feel so good. The disease I had, after going here stopped. If I know that you are doing something to help that person out I send her to them. I don't just keep people in here. This is what we have to do. We have to heal people. Anybody can heal them, so I will send em to them. If it's another colonic place I'll send them there and I think that we should do that. I talked to people and train them here. People come here and sometimes you may have 8 or 10 people sitting here talking because they just happened to stop by

and I think that helps the community. That lets me know that people in the community will come.

HSH: If you were to explain to an individual who is not familiar with alternative forms of healing what would be your basic definition of holistic health in your own words?

Alternative forms of healing?

HSH: If an individual does not know anything about any of this and they asked you, “what is holistic health to you?” What would be your definition Dr. Wilson?

EW: I think that I would tell it’s a form of mind body and spirit. You’ve got to eat right. You’ve got to think right. And you’ve got to have the right mind and then I can tell them about the food. I can do the food and I know about the herbs. Different things I would tell them. Your body has to be in homeostasis and they’ll say what is that and I’ll say, “that means your body’s got to be so that you’ll be able to go to the bathroom right.” You’ll be able to sleep good. You’ll be able reflect with your family. All of that. I mean, its just so vast I think I can even... You know they’ll ask you more questions, because I see people everyday, “Why should I do this?” “Why should I do that?” When I tell them that you need more than one colonic, they want to know why. I say that this is not a show and tell. This is a place where your gonna come and heal your body. Your body will be healed. You’ll get up in the morning and be able to go. And a lot of times

its what your have in your body. Some people say good morning. Some people ask what's so god about it. Your negative. You be a positive person and that to me is some of the holistic things that I would say what would be holistic to a person. Right off the top of my head I should have looked at the questions...

HSH: I heard that you were an elder in the community. How did you come to know what you know about holistic health or more importantly, what year did you come into this new insight? Can you elaborate?

EW: The insight was already there many years ago when my grandmother used to take wheat germ. She used to have that and olive oil and it was and it was another brand. I can't think of the brand, but it was kind of terrible. It was medicinal. It wasn't for drinking, but she was drinking it too. If something happened to you then they would go out and get a weed. It was burdock, because my mother had an ear that would always get inflamed. And she used go get this root and put on it and it was burdock. I think it was burdock leaf. I think maybe this all came about then. Then my aunt was sick. She had Alzheimer's and she couldn't go to the bathroom and I saw the nurse hit her in the back and then she was able to go. And I said, "wow that's interesting. I was older then, but I think all of my life its been there.

HSH: How did you come into the holistic health at a mature age?

EW: I always saw something. Then I got in with the herbs and then I was selling herbs at work and then when I retired that's when I finally opened my business. My brother said, "I have a house. You can have it rent free." It didn't happen that way, but anyway. I got came here and started this, but after seeing people on my job and you read up on things and then I go and get my Nature's Sunshine manager to help me and then those are some of the things that I did in order to this a long time a go. I always had a bag full of all kinds of stuff. I sold to managers on my job. I sold to people that I worked with.

HSH: What year did you retire, because that will tell me when you started the training?

EW: I was training before I retired.

HSH: So what year would you say?

EW: I was selling herbs I think back in the 1980's because back in one time I had a spur and I could not walk. Every step I took it hurt so bad and I would just pray every step and started going. I don't know what year that was. It was maybe in the 1980's and then I working and I would talk to people and I got light headed. I didn't have any oxygen. And then that's one of the times that I started learning. I was going to Merriam then. I started fasting. That might have been in the 1980's. It was.

HSH: Bill Cosby era? Early eighties? Mid eighties?

EW: I think it was mid eighties.

HSH: What compelled you to study it? Would you say it was around the time your Aunt was ill?

EW: My aunt did die, but I took her with me. My cousin didn't like it, but I wanted to look out for her and she finally expired. But that kind of made me want to do it.

HSH: Which decade would you say the holistic health movement gained momentum in the African community in the United States?

EW: I worked on my job— this particular job I retired on 33 years and I had swing shift. So you know I wasn't in the community. I didn't know what was going on I was like by myself. I really I don't know, because I went to Penn Herbs when I was younger. I guess maybe in 1970. At that time I was reading *Back to Eden*. That was the only book I knew about and I was getting something for varicose veins. So that was maybe 1973, 74 something like. I dropped it. I didn't have anybody to tell me because if I got a day off after that I had to go work so I never did see people. I never socialized a lot and I kind of didn't like that. But you gotta make the money. That is why I don't know a lot about it, but when I got out here and saw so many beautiful people into their foods and their health. Its awesome...although you were visible to the community, you were working,

and yet it was flourishing.

HSH: From the time that you started the work, who were those instrumental figures or prominent individuals that you heard about?

EW: I knew Tim Morel personally. He was my honorary grandfather at *Nature Sunshine*. He sold *Nature Sunshine* many, many years ago.

HSH: Who is Tim Morel?

EW: He's in California. He's one of the nicest men I know. He cured himself of cancer. He has his own testimony. After that, there are other people through *Nature Sunshine* I just can't think of their name.

HSH: What about when you opened your business, *To You Health*? Can you name some names that you found after you opened your business?

EW: For food, Iris did such a beautiful job. I saw his DVD and then I did meet Beverly who I thought made the best food in town. I think it is one of the better foods in town. What's the sister of Baltimore Ave? I met her because they were always in the community. What's her name in West Philly?

HSH: Atiya Ola?

EW: Yes. Her food is good. They were the only two that I actually knew, because like I said I was really stifled with behind my work and when I came here I just had this room and then my brother kept giving me a room, a room and a room and then I finally had the whole apartment, but when I came here I just had a few herbs and I just started up like that and a lot of people came. My foot detox was \$15 and I would have people waiting for me in the mornings when I came. On Saturday whole families would come because they had never seen anything like that. And it was really awesome. I wish that I was charging \$50 like one of my friends was and I would have been able to put some money aside, but I was just able to pay for the water and the salt I guess. Those were the ones that I could remember.

HSH: And you named the people in Philadelphia. You talked about bringing someone here in August. Who are those prominent individuals outside Philadelphia?

EW: Dr. Afrika has always been...when I got his book it was awesome and then Susan Taylor brought him in and then we was at the meeting and he says, "Ethel is going to bring me in in October" and I said what. We looking at each other and I said "now I got to be a promoter to bring Dr. Afrika and I don't know what to do. So then they helped. They taught me what to do and I started, but after that bringing Dr. Afrika in and it has

been a really big learning curve for me, because he was telling me about what the African's do. The sexology and all of this stuff like and we couldn't believe it. A lot people was blushing in the class and everything from what he was talking about. Then we learned about the pH. That was something that we went over, but it seemed just like him you wanted to learn what he was saying. Just awesome. We had heard about the pH and *Nature Sunshine*, but when he brought it was really really great. He was the only one and I said I knew Tim. I though Tim was the godfather of everybody, because he just knew so much. It was the two of them and then we...I heard about Dr. Burton. I had gone to him and he is a teacher. He teaches you about some holistic stuff although he is a medical doctor.

HSH: Do you think eating healthy is necessary for African Americans to feel better and if so can you elaborate in your own way?

EW: I know it is. We need to eat better. I know we need to. I know for sure that it's about eating the fruits and vegetables. The meat is dead. It has the parasites in it. It's got stuff in it that we don't really need. And its acidic. Even the vegetables, once you cook them to death that is acid. And we do have to eat right. And I think if you are going to eat some meat let it be cut real tiny and put in with something else if you have to feel like you got to eat it. After studying with a lot of people and going all over with the food I know that we have to eat the fruits and vegetables.

HSH: Do you think fruits and vegetables are very important?

EW: It is and I am doing juicing now. I am gonna juice forever and eat fruits and vegetables and hope that I will be thirty pounds smaller when you see me.

HSH: Do you have any other suggestions for meat eaters?

EW: A lot of people mention tofu and tofu is not really good now. I know at one time it was, but what I do and I hate to tell people this because they want to take what you say and leave out a few words. I said if you want to get off there is a lot of tofu things that are made from tofu and stuff like that. So eat that until you want to have some meat until you can get off because once you learn about it you don't want to eat it. So I don't know if I am right or wrong to tell people that if that is what is going to help you get off the meat to that with your vegetables. If you want to make a sandwich because that is the only way that I did it. That's how I did it. Until I cut down, cut down and I said I didn't like it. It's nothing but old rubber anyway. And that's how I would stop. and then I'd say, I'd tell people to go to fish if they want to. Now you said ocean fish, wild caught fish you don't know whether its good or not. I was thinking so hard I was going on across the ocean and I'm saying now all of these people on this plane and their gone everyday, every hour, what is down in that water. The wild caught fish, I don't know whether its any good or not. And then the farm raised fish, I don't know whether that's good. Unless you actually know the farm its coming from. So I cant say eat some fish,

but if they want to do it and they “can I have fish?” I say, “pick the best ones that you know about. That’s all I can do, because I don’t know whether any of it is good, but if you trying to get off you got to cut back. Just start cutting back on all of the things that you know is not good. It’s about transition. And Dr. Afrika talks about the diet where you mix it together. And the finally get the one that you like. Like the regular ice cream and then you got soy ice cream and then you got made from other things and mix it together and you will finally go to the one that you need. They can do that. So there is a lot things you can talk to people about and some are more willing than others. So you got to struggle with some and some are the ones who will say well what can I do and its hardly anything. We say it to each other. You know my good friend....You know I don’t know.

HSH: Have you written articles or books on holistic health?

EW: I’ve never written anything and I am about to because somebody just told me...I don’t know too much about the computer. I got about four of them. And I didn’t know that I could talk on it like I’m doing now and it would print out. I am about to write come things and I would probably write about colonics that would be my first one. And then I want to write about food. I did have a DVD I made with a friend about food so I would like to talk about food and the juicing and the sprouting that’s the kind of thing that we made. I might write something about that.

HSH: When did you do the DVD?

EW: It was on my birthday 10 years ago.

HSH: Do you have it for sale?

EW: Yes. I have it for sale.

HSH: Is there anything that I have not asked that you feel is imperative to Afrikan holistic health?

EW: I think as Africans what we need to do is love one another and help each other. I've had people come in here and tell me, "herbs are high and this and that" and I tell them that I have to sell them according to the manufacturer, which I don't do. However, for them, I go down on them. I figured I did get free shipping. If I got free shipping it'll be cheaper. I'm trying to help them and they're coming in here not trying to go along with me. You know if you need an herb just let me know you can have it. I'm not trying to...you know. I love people and I like to help people and everybody that knows will tell you that. I think they need to clean their bodies. I think they need to stop abusing their children with what they have at the corner stores. All of that stuff in the boxes and bags and frozen all of that, don't do it. They are not trying to learn. When you try to tell them they say that you don't know what you are talking about. All of this fiber people are

putting in their bodies is not good. They think that they should dilute because its all fiber and I'm getting up on fiber. You can get too much fiber and you come in here and lay on my table and I have to work like hell to get the fiber out, because you got lumps of it in there. You got to clean your body however your going to clean it. If you want to go get some center. You want to do a colonic. You want to do enemas. I got enema bags, enema buckets so you can do it at home. You don't have to come and I get rich off of you, because that's how we think. Something that they want, they wont ask for it they'd rather talk about you. I think we need to love each other and we need to try to embrace the young kids. We need to teach the young kids what's going on. Hopefully, we'll get it together. We did start having a luncheon here once a month and we had quite of few young women and somehow it dropped off some things got missing. I said ok I need a place where we can go in and meet and do this and I think all establishments should have something for the community. I think we need to have a movie night. I'm going to start that. Baby girl asked me, "are we going to have movie night." Yes we are going to have movie night again. And then talk to the people about the children. We got to teach these children, because look at them. And they are all sick. And I think we need to try to stay away from the medicines because there are things that you can do without it. And some people is only thinking about their doctor. He is not your doctor. He don't care about you. You think the Doctor care, they don't. And they aren't saying "My patient." Their just saying, "the patient." I think we need to love one another.

Interview with Ron Norwood

HSH: Any information concerning your upbringing?

RN: I have four other siblings none of whom are involved in the work that I do. I was born and raised in Durham, NC. My primary and initial interests came from my grandmother. I was greatly influenced by working-women healers of the south. She was a farm girl not a very literate woman, but you put her out in the woods and she would be able to find her way around.

HSH: What year were you born?

RN: July 19, 1951.

HSH: Have you obtained any credentials, academic degrees, licenses and if so can you expound on those?

RN: The ones that I have at this point have expired, but I was a member for many years with the NIRA which at that time was the National Iridology Research Association. I was also a member of the that was a foundation that was founded by Dr. Price who was a dentist, a brother. They traveled the world studying different forms of healing— how indigenous cultures took care of themselves what they ate—that type of thing.

HSH: You are known around Philadelphia as an herbalist, have you happened to obtain any certifications in herbalism or is it self-tuition?

RN: No. Partly self, but I went to Dr. Christopher School of herbalism and Dr. Clayton School— this is back in the 1980's and I went to Bastyr University in Seattle, Washington, which is a naturopathic school. I took a couple of courses there. Bastyr is the first naturopathy college certified in the United States.

HSH: And you went there in the 1980's?

RN: I went there in the 1980's for two summers, and I went there in 1994 and 1995 and the primary focus was to study different nutritional factors as it relates to Iridology.

HSH: What is your official title and the name of your business? Your business has been established since when?

RN: My business has been established since 1992. It's two parts to Ron Norwood. There is a store, the herbal, holistic water center. Then there is Ron Norwood the holistic practitioner. Ron Norwood the holistic practitioner started way before the school started.

HSH: How far back would you say you were studying?

RN: 1982.

HSH: Can you give me a detailed description of the line work that you are currently in as to what it is that you offer to the community?

RN: Classes, consultations, seminars, I offer the framework within the store. Of course, the store is a retail outlet, but within the parameters of teaching is where I channel. Of all the information that I have accrued over the years, I then pass it on to the community within the scope of seminars or across the counter information sessions.

HSH: Can you give me a detailed description of what the *Herb Nook Wellness Center* actually offers?

RN: As a retail establishment we offer herbs and spices, vitamins, supplements, organic and natural skin care. We use the space as also a teaching space.

HSH: Can you elaborate on your tenure in the PASCEP program?

RN: The first nine years at PASCEP I was involved in teaching herbalism and iridology— hundreds of students. However, in 2001 when 911 hit I was surprised at the students that I taught were walking around with glazed eyes and very disoriented as to what was going on. At that point, I realized, I thought in teaching them herbalism they would understand the whole natural sequence of what this was about and I stopped

teaching that and went in to teaching metaphysics.

HSH: And you starting teaching Metaphysics after 911?

RN: Right.

HSH: And you taught that for how long?

RN: I taught that for 7 years.

HSH: Defining metaphysics this term to you would mean?

RN: Beyond the physical. We are enamored and en-captured in the physical, but it is what is behind the physical that brings everything to the forward.

HSH: How do you feel that what you contribute in terms of the herbs contributes to the health and wellness of the African community?

RN: The nutritional aspect of it. I really make it a point to explain to people that these are plants, these are from the same source that we are from. They are from the earth. You have your minerals, you have your vitamins. All you have to do is give them to your body you get the benefit of it.

HSH: What would your basic definition of holistic health be?

RN: The definition would involve explaining the two different aspects of healing. There are two sides to the profession. There is the allopathic. This is the pharmaceutical, this is the doctor side of it. And then there is the naturopathic. The naturopathic demands that you take responsibility. It involves using natural products and I almost hate to use the word natural, because it is such a bastardized word, to be more specific organic products that the cellular structure of the body could identify and assimilate. It is a wholistic approach from mind body and spirit probably the best way.

HSH: How did you come to know what you know about holistic health?

RN: My eyes were opened by my grandmother. It's a funny thing that she grew plants. She was a country girl. She was very intelligent but not an educated woman, but if you put her out in the woods you wouldn't have to worry about her being able to survive. I can remember an instance with my older brother and I. Whenever we would have breakfast or a meal my grandmother would always go out and come back with these plants and put them in a cup and pour hot water over them. Many years later, I found out it was an herb called catnip. Afterwards, I found out that catnip was used as a digestive

aid. So we had these little stomachs at seven and eight year olds, but we had all this food on the table and grandma knew we were going to stuff themselves, so she thought 'let's just have them drink this catnip. And that was years later when I recalled that, and I said "you know what she was intelligent enough to look at it from a nutritional standpoint so afterwards I looked at it from that position and moved on from there.

HSH: You had an unfortunate accident as an athlete. Can you elaborate on that?

RN: I loved to play football in high school and I played one day and I was tackled the wrong way if it be such a thing. And then you could hear this crack for a few hundred feet around. I spent nine months in tractions on my back and I had a lot of time to think as I laid there. Later on when I healed when they could show me the realization of me being a sprinter or playing football or baseball it was a hard rock. And I started studying how to be sure that I didn't suffer with that. There was a moment in time that when the weather changed I would feel my leg tingle at the heel. In subsequent studies I found that if you have that kind of injury you become as what I like to refer to as the weatherman. You can tell when it's gonna rain. So I said no. I'm gonna find other ways of dealing with this instead of pharmaceuticals.

HSH: You met a professor and he enlightened you?

RN: That was my English professor. I had a problem with my finals for a couple of

years and he had asked me if I was a meat eater. I said, “definitely.” A typical child from the ghetto I ate everything that could walk. He said, “why don’t you try to leave that alone for a couple of weeks.” It was difficult, but fortunately enough I was open to it and it made a difference. My energy level increased drastically. It didn’t take long for me to realize that there was something to what he said. He was a European. I went to a school where there were over 5,000 students and there was only a dozen of us.

HSH: What university or college?

RN: I was at West Chester University and the program I was in, there was 832 music majors. I was a voice major and there were only four Blacks in there. And we were all blocked out. We all went to the same classes together. The other three were seniors, so I was basically left there on my own. There were professors there that were very sympathetic, Dr. Cole was one of them.

HSH: You started selling products? What was the name of that company?

RN: That was the *V Company*. The Vitchtocks products very cleansing products. Doctor Iron wasn’t a doctor, but Mr. Iron was a very intelligent person. He was one of those people back in the 1940’s that was a hell-raiser. He was just not a person that would take the normal “this is the way it’s done” approach to living in this country and he revitalized food. He developed a lot of products that were very high in nutrition. I dealt with that for

the last 20-25 years.

HSH: Which decade would say that the holistic health movement gained momentum in the African community and within the United States?

RN: Momentum is a funny word, but I would have to say if it is going to be anything it looks like it would be the 1960's. In my estimate, it would be because of Malcolm raising the consciousness across the board and his mentor Elijah Muhammad; Dick Gregory and his progression from who he was to who he is now and writing about and making it available.

HSH: Do you feel African people are where they are suppose to be in terms of this wholistic health?

RN: No. We are very much in a reactive mode and we are reacting to people who are proactive mode and who are in what I like to call a desperado mode, because they see us going around in the world they understand what's going on with the devitalization of the soil and their of the mind now to produce their own food and we're like most situations we are far...when we should be leading we are following we are all going in the same direction. We are agrarian people that may be happening down south its not happening up north we are following those who are understanding the whole concept of nutrition.

HSH: Can you elaborate your relationship with Dr. Bernard Jensen?

RN: That was a mentor of mine who was nice enough to share a lot of good information and he was a kinda person that allowed me to call him whenever I had a question whether it was with iridology or nutrition. Now that I am reflecting back on it he said something to me that had an indelible mark on my psyche. He said, “people whose ancestry is from warmer climates are healed by things that come from the earth.” And that opened up my eyes to a lot of overstanding. This is a man who had a sanitarium who traveled the world who was very revered in his profession, but for him to share that, “people’s ancestry from warm climates heal by these that come from the earth.”

HSH: Did he have nickname for you?

RN: He used to call me sunny boy.

HSH: What area of wholistic health did Dr. Bernard Jensen encourage you to study?

RN: It would be iridology. Iridology being the study of the iris of the eye and him having been the forbearer and the person that held the torch in iridology. Iridology was a science that came from Germany and during the second world war the communication was shut down. He made sure that the lines of communication when it came to iridology were still open. In talking to him he allowed me to ask him questions that I was very

befuddled about. “How come the brown iris or what we refer to as the hematogenic iris was not studied?” He would say to me, “back then we thought all iris’ should be blue and that if you had a brown eye you were sick. There was some kind of toxic overlay that if you move that brown aside you’d get blue.” And in studies and I shared with him that that wasn’t the case. He admitted that “we just thought that we didn’t have the opportunity to study brown eyes—you know that whole slavery approach—brown iris’ weren’t studied back then. Then he also along with the NRA opened my eyes to a lot of books that were written in the 1800’s that dealt with iridology and why the idea of everybody should have blues eyes came to be.

HSH: Can you speak to me about your interaction with Alvenia Fulton?

RN: The ultimate girly girl. I opened up a place with some partners back in October 6, 1986 and sometime in 1987 a brother his name is Herman Bingham brought her into the store. The store was called University Herbs. Even though I was 1/3 in a partnership she viewed it as mine because of what we carried in the store, because the walls were lined with herbs and some of the things she shared with me how to take certain herbs and make certain items that had medicinal value I really appreciated it. She was very calm. very serene. She was a very spiritual woman and I think one of the reasons we hit it off in those moments that we shared was I had southern, very obvious, southern roots. She had very obvious southern roots and even though we were communicating using the language there was an essence that she felt and I saw in her and sharing at that level. People that

were coming into the store knew this is a woman who wore Gallia, very majestic woman, but when she spoke they took it to their head first. She remind me very much of my grandmother which is why the channel of communication was so good. She would say something about an herbs and how it would be used and I would immediately feel the efficacy, the reality of what she was saying and I wouldn't just let it sit at the bring of it.

HSH: When did she visit you establishment?

RN: It would be 1987.

HSH: Who would you say are the most practitioners in Philadelphia?

RN: The torch bearer would be someone who I spend time with - Akosua. Tony Moore, Merriam House, Kimizia, there is a brother on 25th and Lehigh who was very generous in sharing information with me back in 86, Ron Gaines who has an establishment called Mother Earth Herbs on Allegheny.

HSH: Who are some prominent individuals outside of Philadelphia who are doing the work?

RN: Dr. Sebi, Dick Gregory, Llaila Afrika, Dr. Paul Goss. I have never met Dr. Paul Goss—I have done seminars with Llaila and its funny because the three seminars that we

did together I was always impressed with his intensity in bringing forth information but looking at the audience and realizing there was a disconnect. And I would mention it to him, but he does what he does and I remember probably at the second seminar there was a sister selling foods, Zakiyyah Ali and I was saying to her, “You know they are not getting what he’s talking about. Does he understand that he is talking at people as opposed to talking to people.” I did it and I felt bad that I did, but that is the disconnect.

HSH: Who dealt with mental health patients that are currently incarcerated?

RN: That would be Dr. York. Dr. York opened up my eyes tremendously as it pertains to how we think. Our spiritual nature. Malachi, I spent a lot of time with him. As a matter of fact I was introduced to him when he was up in Brooklyn the community he had up there, because I was involved in the music industry at that time and I was work with an act called Blue Magic. That was an act that he had taken under his umbrella, because he was tremendously appreciative of some of the things that he had done and when Dr. York talked he spoke from a place that very few people could understand. I couldn’t understand %100 of it, but it resonated with some of my experiences of being born and bred.

HSH: Do you think that eating healthy is necessary for African people? And if so can you elaborate on that?

RN: Yeah. Without a doubt. You there are organizations in this country who have done clinical studies and know that one reason why crime is prominent, dominant in our community is because we are malnourished. There is a seminar a couple weeks ago at University of Pennsylvania and the lady that put the seminar together, a customer of mine. She shared with me the new keyword for the ghetto and the word is food desserts. I did a seminar a couple of days ago Botsford Hospital and people were surprised. What goes on in our community is direct result of the fact that we don't get nutrition according to what our ancestry demands. We get a sterilized form of nutrition. Its like Dr. Bernard Jensing would say, "we are healed by things that come form the earth." What is perpetrated as nutrition is actually more devitalized food, but it falls within the parameters of what they determine as nutrition.

HSH: What strategies would you recommend to someone who wants to eat better?

First, I would try to fill out where they were. Was this just a question out of curiosity or were they really serious about making that adjustment. I get a lot of people that say I am vegan or I'm vegetarian or I'm octo this or I'm octo that. Everybody that walks through my door I do a quick MRI. If they have on leather then I make them aware of the fact that if you are going to eat a certain way you can't do a 50% thing you have to do 100% thing, because anything that you wear whether its your buttons are of pork or the leather on you back or on you shoes. Anything that you wear comes in contact with you skin at some point that is going to bleed into your blood system so your being intellectual

vegetarian or an intellectual vegan. I have a lot of people who seriously want to make that change then I try to rather than lecture to them I try to give them little snippet, little sound bites things that I know that when I instill it into their spirit, the spirit will deposit it into the brain and they'll remember. I have a little sound bite that I use called Mrs. I surprise them taking them to another place and tell them that a woman who is unmarried she is referred to as Miss and when she marries that changes to Mrs. And I had there attention at that moment. I explain to them the Mrs. in my estimate can be used as eat food that will either old, rot or spoil. And they can walk away remembering that. Mrs. doesn't dictate or demand that the food have a shelf life. It must mold, rot or spoil.

HSH: Any publications from newspaper publications pertaining to wholistic health?

My experience with that was with the Tribune for 6 years. Back in the 90's I wrote thanks to Mr. Boogle for giving me a call and asking me would I do that. I did that weekly for about 5-6 years. I realized like in most situations it was a dim light Ill say it back then. This man had tremendous foresight and he had goals and he opens some doors for people. I realized it wasn't the best use of time after the 5 or 6 years.

HSH: What about your books?

RN: I have three. It's funny because I wrote one many years ago. It wasn't published. It was entitled *I'm Tired of Brown Rice*. It was only about 50 pages, but the whole idea

about writing the book—this about the same time as the tribune—was when we made the move to eating more nutritionally what we would do was eat more brown rice. At some point, we got tired of brown rice. I wrote this book. It was a book that had a lot of recipes in it on how you have brown rice and vegetables, how to steam you vegetables and eat food that your cellular structure could recognize and I was doing that the same time that I was doing the tribune.

HSH: We have three books forthcoming?

RN: They are on disk. One is a book on a computer; it's a book entitled, *As It Was*. It's a book that goes back and reflects on all the books I've read from the 1800's. The other two are metaphysical books. One is entitled—the book that I am spending a lot of time with now which means it should be out— is called *Spiritual Insights as Awesome Soundbites*. That will be out in the next couple of months.

HSH: Do you have any documentation of any lectures?

RN: I have a brother who is very nice about tapping a lot of my classes at PASCEP. I have about 35 things on disk. When I really understand technology I'll get them up on Youtube.

HSH: Is there anything that I have not asked or that we've discussed that you feel is

imperative for me to know as it relates to African wholistic health?

RN: We could not allow the court to be in front of the course. We have to really get into the heads and the minds of our community. When I taught at PASCEP I used to tell the class—I can't think of the organization, but their motto is "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." I used to tell the students, "that's a good motto, but you know you don't waste mind, because if your not using it someone is else is using it and they are usually using it against you." We have to be taught how to rethink who we are in the total scheme of things. We are a mighty people. As Earth Wind Fire would say "we are people of the mighty. Mighty people of the sun." In our heart lie all the answers to the truths we can't run from. And we have been running for a long time. It's time to stop and realize. It's unfortunate in saying that I have to say this. I have to say we are becoming the shell of the people we once were. So we have to reslaim the reality—everybody on the face of the planet want to be us. So we have to be taught how to rethink go back to our center and realize that we are a powerful people.

HSH: Do you think thinking on a higher level is imperative for us as well?

RN: Yes. It is absolutely necessary and think about our religious affiliations, our spiritual affiliations, but I'll tell people in a heat-beat we have to go to the upper room and dogonit we hav to stay there. We have to commune with the higher authority. We have to realize that there and only there is our power. We have to become like that in all

of our thoughts, worries and deeds. We have to learn how to relearn how to love ourselves. We have to make a frame of reference with the loving of ourselves, because then and only then will we have a frame of reference for our community. Its right there, but we resist it, because we are a people—unfortunately who don't want to take responsibility. When we reach a realization that we are responsible for ourselves things will begin to change.

HSH: Do you see having this notion of love being able to combat our social or economic situations of not having enough money if we eat right?

RN: Without a doubt. And the challenge is not allowing ourselves to become desensitized. They gave it a word. It's called love. It's a timeless reality, but it wasn't always called love. It didn't really have a name. It was just something that we did, because we are children of the sun, but we've been pulled. We've allowed ourselves to be pulled away from it. We've allowed it to be diluted like a cup of coffee. The best cup of coffee is a black cup of coffee, but you dilute it by putting in milk and sugar in it. We are a felling person that makes us powerful. You can place us in a room and we can feel things. The unfortunate part of it is we feel it we have the inability to articulate which in my frame of reference it's not all that important. As long as you feel it, you are feeling that love, but we're allowing people to tell us what it is, but they don't really know. Like George Clinton said in Atomic Dog, "a dog that chases its tail gets dizzy." And that's where we are we are getting dizzy. We need to stop revolving and evolve out of where

we are and become the leaders especially in the spiritual reality that we righteously are.

RN: I could put forth another sound bite. Once we are brought back to the position then we need to understand the value. Right now one of the biggest challenges is that we don't understand the value and I tell a lot of people that "nothing has a value until you give it one that's in all thoughts," words and deeds. "Nothing has a value until you give it one." Our biggest challenge is that we are being force fed in what we should have a value in while the people who are force feeding us know that what they are force feeding us with is more than malnutrition at a spiritual level. Ase!

Interview with Beverly Medley

HSH: Can you share with me any information in regards to your upbringing?

BM: I was born here—Philadelphia and I was raised in North Philadelphia down on the Dauphin and Susquehanna; the York area as they call the hood. I am one next to the oldest of five. I was raised by parents that came from Virginia—the South, and so that's basically where I started my journey.

HSH: What part of Virginia were your parents from?

BM: Roanoke and Danville.

HSH: What year were you born in?

BM: 1952

HSH: As it pertains to holistic health have you attained any certifications?

RM: That hasn't been my journey that the Most High gave me to go and get any credentials. I've had teachers actually life is my credential. I've lived this world for 61 years so life is my credential and I have no need to get another one.

HSH: If you could share with me the name of your business, your official title and how long has this business been operating?

BM: The name of the business is *All the Way Live* and it has been in existence since 2008 and within the business I am co-owner with my daughter.

HSH: And your daughter's name is?

BM: Niesha

HSH: Can you give me detailed description as to the line of work that you are currently in terms of the business?

BM: Well I do everything. Well basically I am the buyer because it's very important buying and I have to see everything look at it taste it. I have to be at the helm of that because that is important for what the end product is going to be for me and then you go from the purchasing and then one of the preparers for the food that we serve here and I may have to do all of the jobs it depends on what's going on. I'll serve. I'll clean the business. My main hat that I wear is to manage it and to purchase the produce and the preparation of the food.

HSH: What is “All the Way Live?” What do you offer the community?

BM: Basically, “all the way live” is wanting the community to know that you can go more at the going more toward the top of the line which means less cooking or no cooking, trying to get as much as you can out of the foods. The food today is very compromising anyway because they are grown different things that have happened since your parents or my parents. So what we do at *All the Way Live* is basically what they call raw, live, vegan food which is the no cooking or if I do cook... we do cook certain things really discriminate on what we put heat to. We discriminate. So we don't use everything, because basically the whole idea of “all the way live” is to keep the body mucusless. So when you have less mucus, which is the cause of disease you're gonna feel better, mentally, physically, spiritually. So we don't want to over tax the system, but at the same time we want you to enjoy your dining here so then that is where the art comes in. The question then becomes: How can you give this to our community where they can thrive, but they still enjoy?

HSH: How do you feel that the work that you do within here in terms of the food that you offer contributes to the health and wellness of the African community?

BM: One of my main concerns has been the fact that as a community we suffer more that

other races of people, because of who we are—descendants of the original people and our health suffers because of what we eat. With me going through different things myself and changing what I ate when I first started I see what you can do with just changing with what you put in your mouth. I was in awe of the whole thing so that is what started me to branch out in what I finally saw was my purpose. My sole purpose is to share this with others, because you don't have to suffer. You don't have to suffer and we're suffering in our communities. They're building more dialysis centers; they have more mental drugs for you to because people are depressed, people's hearts are bad, their feet are bad. Their ankles are swollen. Their knees are arthritic, okay. All of this is because one of the main things is we don't know what to put in our mouth. We don't know what to put in our mouth. Who's designing what to put in our mouth is not in our best interest. I've tried to prepare the food with me and my daughter coming up with certain things; trying to prepare the food in a certain way that people will want to eat it, because to compete with these drugs masquerading as foods is very difficult.

HSH: What would your basic definition of holistic health be?

BM: My basic definition would be your want to deal with foods and information to uplift your body mind and your spirit; that is holistic health. Food is the tool for that food is not the epitome, food is a food. Because with food; food is going to go and clean up the blood. So once the blood starts to becoming cleaner and thinner and more like water like it is suppose to be instead of putrid and thick, it's going to feed all the organs and start to

heal the organs better and then of course the brain being one of those organs so when you start eating foods that have more water, because your water base and foods that are more not of this world, but of nature. It's called getting clean, because if you continue to do this, your health is going to automatically improve. Automatically. But we have a lot going on to distant us from that— on purpose. And this now is nothing not just for our community. It's for humanity stretched out all over the place. So to reign yourself in we have to... it's a task.

HSH: How did you come to know what you know in terms of holistic health?

BM: I actually began the journey with a young Muslim sister that lived across the street from me who would tell me about not eating pork and I remember thinking she was crazy. It was like you got to be kidding me. And all the while I was thinking about eating at my mother-in-law's house and all she used was pork and lard and fried the best chicken in the world. So she would give me material concerning not eating pork so was basically...see I could hear her, because I couldn't pick up the vibration. She was talking to me and trying to help me, but I couldn't hear her. I'd look at her like saying to myself in my head "something's wrong with her ain't nothing wrong with me." But that is the extent of disease in your mind. You can't even see that you are injuring yourself. So she would talk to me constantly and then one day I was at her house and then she said...well she had books. She had a lot of books. And it was one little paperback book that was on her shelf and it was called *Cooking with Mother Nature* by Dick Gregory. That book

changed my life. Along with...then I was able to pick up the information that she was giving me so I read this book in one day and I came out and I said to my husband; I didn't have any children at the time it was just me and him. And I said, "I'm going to change the way I eat." And I'm going to tell you why his book led me to do that. In a nutshell, in his book, its holistic because he didn't just talk about the physical. He talked about the spiritual and the mental and I felt that I needed help in that area. I felt that I needed help in that area. So as I was reading it wasn't so much that my physical was jacked up. I had some issues. Well, I had one big issue. But I didn't know about my issue at the time. It was masked. It was incubating and it finally came to a head later, but he said that this will help our attitude. This will help everything once you clean yourself up. And that's what I did. I fasted like he said in his book, which is to fast for 30 days. I went from vegetables to fruits to juices and then I ended up on water. So I did that you know and after that I felt so good that I never really looked back. I had some set-backs, maybe a year into it, but after that year I never looked back ever again.

HSH: What year was that you met the Muslim sister?

BM: That was about 19...the seed was planted in 1977.

BM: Also, he is the one who inspired me to do live Raw Food.

HSH: It was Dick Gregory?

BM: Yes.

BM: Alvenia Fulton is who got him started.

BM: But before that there was just little pieces here and there.

HSH: What about *How to Eat to Live*?

BM: I read that too, and I found that people have different interpretations of that because my interpretation of “How to Eat to Live” was that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was saying that you shouldn’t eat meat and if you do, eat this.

HSH: Do you consider the year 1967 as the height of holistic health tradition in the Black community?

BM: No! Can I tell you why it wasn’t the height? If the height was 1967 bringing it up to where we are now; if that is the case, diabetes wouldn’t be where it is today. Kidney disease would not be where it is today. Autism would not be where it is today. Depression would not be where it is today. Kidney dialysis would not be where it is today.

BM: We have been walking in that path and I think maybe in that year were more involved in racial liberation than our health. We were more involved with the Black Power Movement than our health. The health of our people was suffering, but at that time they felt it more important to deal with that issue. So the health movement didn't get the light back then in the 1960s. Well not for our community. It was more like the Black Power Movement.

HSH: Who were those instrumental figures and/or significant health organizations of the movement?

BM: There was...oh let me think of his name. There was a...its leaving me, but one doesn't leave me and I am going to say that name. And actually he worked with Aris Latham back in the 70's when they were going around with the live food because Aris Latham was in the 70's and he may have you know because of his profile. He was doing the food back then. I didn't have much a linkage with him, but he was one of the frontrunners in health. And the person that worked with him who I had become acquainted with because he was Philly-based is when I...his name is Winfred Postell. Win Postell gave me a lot of support back in the 80's when I really was going strong in what I was doing in the late 70's early 80's. I met him, and through him I learned a lot about Aris LaTham, because he gave me...I mean you saw what Aris did right. Well, then you would get an idea of what Win did—artistry with the food and then what Win

gave me was to let me know...which I didn't understand at that time that it's not really about the food. The food is a tool for you to grow, but at the time I thought that food was everything. I didn't know what he meant. And he said that food is a tool and use your tool and he encouraged me with my children to keep them on this diet and you will have given them something that they will be able to use for the rest of there lives and so he was the one who would call me periodically just to say how is everything going cuz when I was did that back then especially with the live raw food, it was very difficult for me, because my children and my husband he was supportive of it, but I was the one who had to kind of like be in charge of it and see to it that their health stayed up because any little thing they would blame it on the food. Any little thing that went wrong its because they are not eating me and hamburgers and soda. If they ate soda and hamburgers they wouldn't be sick. You feeding them all their fruits and vegetables that is why they are sick. Then there was the Honorable Dr. Sebi. I came in contact with him later on; in the early 2000s, and he brought another dimension to everything.

HSH: His name was Winfred?

BM: Yes.

HSH: And he was from Philly?

BM: Yes and he brought us on the electric food. He taught us a lot here in Philly, but it

wasn't his thing to be out—out in the front. If you got to know him behind the scenes you can get the skinny of it all and more of a spiritual thing with food. That's where he was going and would tell me. I hope somebody picks this up and starts doing something here. So some of us did pick it up and start.

HSH: How would I go about getting information on brother Postell?

BM: He was a sage.

BM: Steven Haas was the name. H-A-A-S.

BM: He was someone who had cured himself of cancer and he brought selling raw food to Philadelphia. That was in the early 80's. Early to mid eighties. Mid eighties.

HSH: He brought live food to Philly?

BM: Yes! And Aris had been through Philly before that.

HSH: Who else would you mention? I'll start of with Dr. Llaila Afrika. Who would you mention in his company.

QM: I would mention Queen Afua has done a lot of work and of course my good friend

Dr. Honorable Dr. Sebi, and Aris.

HSH: What about in the Philadelphia community?

BM: You have people that are preparing the food. You have Atiya Ola, Mama Kadijah...

HSH: Is that Mama K?

BM: Yes.

HSH: What could you tell me about Sis Yahimba?

BM: Yahimba was one of the first ones. She was doing it all before, preparing the food. Before me, Atiya Ola, everybody—there was Yahimba. That is a beautiful sister. She was doing the vegetarian cooking. Yes she was in Philadelphia.

HSH: Do you think eating healthy is necessary for Africans to feel better and if so can elaborate in your own fashion?

BM: It's actually the missing key right now. If that's the piece see because that is what

spring boards everything else. If you don't feel good you can't do your best work. It starts by cleaning yourself up from all of the goo; the sugar and the bread and the rice in our community. We eat too much rice and beans and things like that and not enough water based. See we need more water based to clean the blood up so the blood can move more freely. And we have done a lot of...we've done work where we have like a lot of time put the meat aside but we haven't raised the bar enough with the water based foods. Things like the squashes like the zucchini, yellow squashes, cucumbers which is the queen, the melons, the berries, the mangoes the papayas. The salad greens. Things that will help clean the blood and we lay more heavily that food that fills us up. We are going too heavy on the rice, beans, on those things, which actually which if you move into those heavy those foods, it can actually cause diabetes because the starch is burning into sugar. So that's the piece that we need to balance out to go more back to nature just with the live food to eat foods more in their natural state which we're spoiled. When you're spoiled that ain't that appetizing anymore. When your palate has been destructed, it destroyed things like that aren't so comely anymore, but those are the things to revitalize you. Also, you can see Ron Norwood, because he has been in the community. Also, Tony Moore. And also the health food store that has been on Broad St like forever

HSH: Ausar Aset?

BM: No, the health food store on Broad Street.

HSH: Teach!!

BM: I am gonna teach. I am going to bring Makeba out here in a minute and I am going to go back here because I'm little...I'm not the best with names.

BM: You have to have the water-based food. First you have to have water, drinking ample amounts of water. Then you also we've been turn against salt, but the problem is not salt it's the wrong kind of salt. We haven't known how to use salt like to medicine that it is. Like the ocean is salt water.

HSH: Organic sodium.

BM: Yes. Water and water-based food is going to clean up the blood. The blood is going to revitalize the organ and revitalize the brain so we can think more alkaline and be better to each other.

HSH: What suggestions would you make to someone to choose a better lifestyle?

BM: Frying changes the molecular structure of the oil, and it's going to go in and destroy the blood and make it like heavy and sludge. That grease changes the blood into sludge. That is the first thing that I would tell them. You know if you don't want to come off meat right away just refrain from frying the meat, and eat more things like black rice. Dr.

Sebi has taught us more about quinoa...more of things that are easy on the system, but it gives you that little bit of weight in your belly that your used to, but it doesn't give you the poison, the starch. That is the difference. That's what I would say to them— don't fry and then try to change over some of them starches and eat some more fruits and some more salad just to start. Don't be too hard.

BM: Can I say one more thing? I would say to them to think about the fact of eating death that they want to promote life. Really sit back and meditate on that: you are eating death, but you want life. You are eating dead animals, but you want life. Frying legs and arms and all of that. When baking different parts of animals, really it wouldn't be known if they were eating humans. You wouldn't know the difference once they put salt, pepper and ketchup on it. You could be eating somebody else. It doesn't have to be an animal it could be a human being. You could be eating human beings and you would even know it.

HSH: It is reminiscent of the "I ate the bones" KFC commercial.

BM: That's in line with where you can eat the fruit, but you don't have to bother with the seeds. There's no seeds anymore. It's the same thing. No bones with the meat, no seeds with the fruit and soon people growing up today they won't even think that meat has bones as they wont think fruit has seeds. They do already think its normal. The children think its normal to eat seedless and I think adults like it seedless fruits. It's less tasking. I was just talking to a sister and she was asking me about health. I was telling her about

eating a lot of watermelon and she said “I couldn’t eat it at work, because I had no place to spit the seeds.” I said swallow them. They’re ruffage. You don’t have to spit them out. She said, “I never thought of that.” I thought I had to eat it at a certain place where I had to spit seeds. “ I said wow, she didn’t know that its ok— that the seeds are not going to hurt her. So that commercial and these things are so subtle that they get you ready for the next stage. See you...we’re sleeping and they get you ready for the next stage. There’s no bones if you eat the chicken with no bones. At one time the only meat, because I remember when I left home and I ate meat that I didn’t have to see veins because I was destined to be vegan, because I would hate when I was coming up seeing the little black veins and a little blood so I said now I am on my own I can buy breasts, but even then before they went to the breasts had a bone, one bone. Then they went into the boneless breasts, but that was it. All other meat had bones. I didn’t know that they didn’t have the bones at all.

HSH: That has been going on for the last three months.

HSH: Do you have any books or audiovisual or things that you’ve done specifically for yourself?

BM: You could say that because there may be a few things, audiovisual floating around, but I actually am going to start putting out my audiovisuals because I do have them. This is what I did when the audiovisual was done on a lecture or something. I would do this,

but I have to look at it and I didn't look at them yet. Whatever it is I am going to put it out. So, I have a few of those that people are going to get from the restaurant; however or maybe on my website or wherever.

HSH: So they are forthcoming?

BM: Yes.

HSH: Is there anything that I have not asked you or that we have not talked about thus far that you think is imperative to for me to know as it relates to African holistic health, eating right or what have you.

BM: This food piece I cannot say enough how big it is, Heru for us to embrace it, because when I think of the food piece and eating more natural I think first of all that we're not of this world we're in this world. We're made from the Most High, the Creator. Nobody knows how we got here. All they know is a sperm and an egg. They don't know that something magnificent happened where these two things come together and then here you come, here I come. Nobody can you give you another eyelash, another eyebrow, another finger, because your not of this world and those are the things that we need to get back to. Those foods tha are free. Like in this city we have mulberry trees, blueberry trees in different parts of Pennsylvania and different parts of the city. Raspberries that just grow on their own. We have Lambs Quarters. We have Plantago.

We have different greens that grow that once we educate ourselves that we can use that are free. They're just like us so they match our DNA. Say for instance you have a dandelion green. Dandelion green has a DNA that's going to match ours because its not of this world. It comes on its on and it leaves on its own. And it appears again on its own, it doesn't need you to water it. It doesn't need you to do anything. Don't need you to plant it. It doesn't need you to tend to it. Its there with a certain type of energy which is for the liver, gallbladder and if you notice it comes in the spring. The first thing you see those yellow flowers all over the place and its telling you something—to clean up something. Spring cleaning time. My point is that I want to make is that its so important of what you put in your temple because that is all you have. You don't have nothing else that's all you came here with. You're not leaving with your car, clothes—your not leaving with anything. You came here with what was bestowed - the gift to you. Your body whatever that was and your mind and even a person that came here with one leg. If he came here with that and that is what he knows he can make it with that one leg. So whatever you came here with is all you have and taking care of that which is what we have not been taught what to do. We have been taught to make money, buy cars and clothes and houses and mess around with bull crap. We haven't been taught how important we are, what to look at, how to look at everything about ourselves to see if our health is good. My thing for our community is to have a love affair with yourself. Have a need to have a love affair with yourself. Once you have that love affair with self, you're going to know how to treat others. Once your not so material-minded—your like, “I don't know these things, but I am going to ask for these things to be brought to me

because I want to learn and cure myself. And hope that...because sometimes it's like your so far gone we don't want help anymore. We are so spoiled. We want everything quick and fast that's why we are suffering. We don't have patience. We don't have patience. We don't have patience to go get the food, patience to make the food, patience to juice the food and then its like "that take too much time." Where I am at I see that I know with certain things with myself, things that have been corrected not by me, but by the universal grace of the Most High, that is all. I'm just saying that I am going to embrace these things. That's all. I'm going to embrace these things that are more like me. **At one time, I** had the poorest diet ever, the poorest diet—sugar, fast food and pork. And I can look at myself back then and love myself for all that it brought because it brought some problems with it. It brought problems with it. And that is why I give thanks. And you should give thanks for wanting to share with others. See, you are a messenger, like you are compiling information. I am trying to get more into the computer. I am not there. I am not that type of person, but I see how that could be helpful to others if I would get somewhat into that or like you said, "putting things out there." But you are a messenger and your soul's mission is that you're going in your find this information to do what you need to teach. This is very powerful. Your health is all you have. If you don't have your health you don't have anything. I am going to end on that: if you don't have your health you don't have anything. If your hobbling along, guess what that means that's acid, something on that leg that you can wash out. You go to nature and that will wash it out. She's gone wash it out. Stick with me, stick with god, stick with the mother, she will wash it out. That is what she is going to do for you and

then she is going to sit back and she will smile— that’s your reward. “You see how you’re walking now because you were obedient. Now look at how you were walking. You were acting crazy now look at how you have calmed down. You got that sugar and starch off of your brain. Now you can sit quietly and listen. Obedience to god, to nature to the mother of this earth will bring you peace. That is what you want. That’s where the tool is leading you, the food, peace. That’s why my good friend Win Postel said ,“it ain’t about the food.” I finally got it. That’s the tool. He said, “use it well.” So the tool brings you to peace and to the love. Thank you Heru.

Interview with Zakiyyah Ali

HSH: What is your name?

ZA: Zakiyyah Ali

HSH: Can you share with me anything about your upbringing?

ZA: I was born and raised in Philadelphia, PA. I was born September 26, 1953. I am the youngest of two children. I have an older brother who is now deceased. He died two years ago. And so I remember vibrant Philadelphia as a child with plenty of fruit trees and orchards and things that were just accessible. And my grandmother was living with us at that time and I was her ward. So I remember going to the chicken store and getting live chickens and always fresh vegetables.

HSH: The name of your business and how long?

ZA: The name of my business is *Ali's F.A.C.E.S*, which stands for Foods Agribusiness, Consulting Environmental Services. I guess I came up with that acronym because I was looking at what I was doing and I was doing foods. I'm a gardener a prize winning professional gardener/farmer. I do consulting work on various area and so the

environmental peace, because I deal with children's gardens teaching them environmental sciences. So it all fit very nicely together.

HSH: When did farming start for you?

ZA: Well, let me start at the genesis. As a child of two southern parents both my parents came from the same town in South Carolina. So it was a tradition from the time I was about really before I could remember how old I was. We always went down South to see my family. And when I got older, I guess four or five, my mother used to take me to 30 Street Station and I would get tagged and travelers aid like a piece of luggage and I would put it on the train. And I traveled by myself with the aid of the people and the train or whatever because I was all tagged up. But I went down South every summer.

HSH: What part of South Carolina are your people from?

ZA: They are around Myrtle, Beach, Mullin Nichols you know, real backwoods area. And so I would be transferred from the city to the Flintstone age because my grandmother had no toilet. There was no running water. You know we had a well. We had to slaughter the pigs...And so even though I hated it as a kid as I grew up... and I did that, let me see, about four or five times until I was about 19 before I got married I went down South. Not all summer anymore, but for a large portion of it. And with that agrarian lifestyle it was too factions: my mother's mother were sharecroppers that side, but then on

my father's side, my grandfather owned over a hundred acres of land and so he was the man. So white folks rented from him and you know it was a whole different side on Grand Pops' side, but again the exposure to all types of gardening and farming. Well down there they were farmers. You know you farmed professionally. Being able to go into a field as big as this block and there is nothing but watermelons in there. One field got honeydews and another field got muskmelons. I never knew blueberries grew on trees. There were all these things that I did that when I got old enough I didn't go anymore and I'm here in the city and I was looking at the change, the difference as from where I grew up. There were no abandoned blocks. There were no abandoned blocks and if there were people immediately claimed them and there was somebody on there gardening or doing something. So I kind of started getting a little small positions of consulting jobs doing community beautification, working with the streets people, horticulture you know and my venue was always ok, "I will take some of the youth in the summer and we would take a lot and go through it." And that started me on my journey in terms of education about the differences in other words. Now we are being confronted with needles and trojans where years before these weren't things that were left on community lots and so it changes the dynamics and how to handle it and what you have to do. The dangers. Now a kid is walking across the lot and he may step on a needle. That didn't happen when I was a kid. Not to say that there was no drug use, but it wasn't at this level. So with all of that then I began a food curer through food. I looked at growing food to defray some of my cost in my business as well as the beautiful product, healthier alternative. It just did so many things and so I continued and continued to have

written several programs on nutrition gardening and a CD. Channel 12 did something on me when I was with the Food Bank in relationship to the program I have with the children. It's become an intricate piece of who I am and what I do.

HSH: When did you start your work in terms of gardening in Philadelphia? What year?

HSH: We have to say it started probably like mid-eighties because I am a graduate of the Restaurant School and one of the jobs I got soon after the Restaurant School was Food Service Supervisor for an Independent Black School. In that capacity I population when from 35 children to over 200 before I finished. But what I found in that experience was that the children were very loving to eat fresh food. Like tomatoes and cucumbers you know just salad in general. With that because the school was located on larger parts of land and I was already gardening in other places of the city. I asked the then principal whether or not I could garden and she said sure. So I started actually composting gardening and with that created my first children's environmental program. So that the children then got a different understanding of food, because now they were able to see a seed and seeds come in all shapes, colors and sizes, textures feel. So that was part of the lesson. And then we went out and planted the seeds. Seedlings are the same thing that you need. What do you need? You need sun, water and light. Oh! The seeds need the same thing, sun, water and light. So you know to make those similarities to make those references and then as the children watched things grow how many leaves does it have. What shape does it have? How tall? How short? I always able to devise up a lesson out

of whatever the plant was doing. And then the final crescendo comes when you actually produce a fruit. The plant actually bears fruit. So whether that's looking being under the leaves of the cucumber as it binds and leaves to find out where the cucumber is. Or to see that all tomatoes don't come out...they don't come out red, but they start green and then all of them don't turn red. You can have a yellow, or orange tomato. So this then became excitement for the children. I was able to take them places so then I was able to produce a fruit and then we did taste testing. You see? You know it wasn't like we had to eat a whole plate of this thing. You know cut it up and then put toothpicks in it and then we went around and now we're talking about comparisons. Now what does it taste like. What does it sound like? What does it feel like? In your mouth, what does it smell like? So I was able to get them to own those kinds of sensory things with the youth and then they did eat it. So mission was accomplished. So when I served something they didn't just turn up their nose now they had some other point of reference and that they had tasted a small quantity of it. And so then that was the beginning of school for me and I went to...I was an apprentice for a garden school out of the Pennsylvania Council of the Art Philadelphia Folklore something...

HSH: When?

ZA: The early eighties that I did this program and my teacher for that was Blanche Epps who was a sage in terms of gardening. Blanche is still around and her garden was called the Garden of Grisimonate and she grew everything in the bible toward the Koran. It was

an amazing, amazing space and the information, skilled that I learned there I have continued to add on to it, but it was just stellar.

HSH: What year did you graduate from the Restaurant School?

ZA: The Restaurant School would have been 81-82 maybe. It was a two year program.

HSH: Did you go right in to the program with Blanche Epps?

ZA: Somewhere close. Your taking me back, but somewhere right along the same thing. I never had to put it in chronological order like this, but I think that I had gone to the Restaurant School because I see I started at community college they had a hotel management course and that was in 76. And then between children and marriage I ended up in the restaurant school and yes it was Blanche after the Restaurant School.

HSH: What was the name of the school you started the children's program with?

ZA: It was called the Mitchell Education Center. It's no longer there anymore, but its on site where Germantown School is and so in the back of there it was an area longer than this. I had a huge garden out there and different gardens that I was associated with I would bring pieces. They had raspberries, blueberries, strawberries a host of all kinds of things and we were constantly growing.

HSH: What was the name of the program?

ZA: I probably did have some names for it over the time and I probably go over some old stuff that actually, because I continued to evolve and name the program throughout my time of doing this. I have done many programs since then. The program with the children we started going to what was then...the Horticulture Center had a junior flower show. We were probably one of the only exclusively African American black school that was involved and for three years straight we won most blue ribbons. We just won almost everything that was possibly given, because I flooded the show. I went in with a couple hundred exhibits and I refused to be told no that I could not show all my exhibits and we had them at every venue. Ever arts and crafts, garden flowers...I had a whole spectrum. The other things that I think is important about that is that our children need to know that there are things that they can excel in and get recognition in that aren't basketball, football, baseball. You know what I'm saying? That there are other things that they can do and also our kids need to feel non-competitive. So in this situation it wasn't about whether you won or didn't win, because I made sure everybody won. Everybody may not have gotten a red ribbon or blue ribbon, but everybody was able to say I got a ribbon and it was for what I did. And I think that is something that is really beautiful.

HSH: How did you begin making raw food?

ZA: Before I get to that I need to add another piece. Food and food service in the African American community is something that need to be talked about, because my understanding of food came of course from my family. But then true understanding that cultures or peoples have food that came from the Nation of Islam, Honorable Elijah Muhammad peace unto to him. His book, *How to Eat to Live* talked about a diet for a people and a diet that wasn't for a people. Prior to understanding Islam and the messenger was teaching, I had only heard of Jews and their Passover and Hannukah and how specific dietary requirements or dietary laws for whatever reason that was interesting to me. My mother worked for a lot of Jews and we would from time to time be invited to these things. I remember my first experience with an artichoke that you don't eat the whole thing and you peel it down to leaves and you dip it in something that made the unleavened bread, the matza. I remember some things and some other things that I didn't like so when I got exposed to the Nation of Islam and the messenger was teaching it resonated with me, "here is somebody that is telling us what we should and what we shouldn't. My teenage years I used to eczema real bad and I spent a lot of time reading labels and reading stuff about what to use and what to do. I always had this thought as a teenager that everybody was gorgeous, diviner when they were young, but then I watched them age and something happened people didn't look the same anymore. I always had something in my mind somewhere that I didn't want to do that. I wanted to stay young beautiful and strong. I wanted to be vibrant. I didn't want to get fat and when I got exposed to the message of the messenger in reading the book again it resonated with me

that there is a difference. What we are being told out here the media is something different. That started me on the food quest. At that time, we had restaurants, we had farms, the steak and takes, bakeries so I decided then that food was going to be the vocation or profession that I was going to pursue. Now I could see my place in it, because of the Nation. In the MGT we the sisters were suppose to do food, make dinners and I always would sell my dinners. Sometimes I just created smell in the kitchen and everybody was at the door, “Sis. Zakiyyah what you making?” I thought that there was something to this. You can make... Oh! Although it was all turned into the Nation. It was still, I could see. Then I just grew and so I was taking a class at PASCEP. PASCEP of Africana studies community education program created by Mrs. Annie Hyman and facilitated through Temple University. I started taking class down there as well I was a vendor and I met Aris Latham who is the Sun-Fired Foods. You know. I met Aris and listened to what he was saying. At that time too, I was just finishing high school, but Dick Gregory was talking about the Vietnam war and we as humans shouldn’t kill anything. There was a lot of things moving and it all came to this. I was already in my transition in not eating pork, stopped eating beef even when I was in the Mosque and people were saying, “the messenger doesn’t say you should do that.” I said, “he does say that.” I took that leap of faith and became a vegetarian so by the time I met Aris I was already in that vegetarian mold and he was the extension in terms of talking about a live food diet.

HSH: MGT?

HSH: Muslim Girls Training. That's how the divisions were. This is what the females did in the mosque and this is what the brother's did. There were a lot of things in terms of training and marching, but culinary food, how to take care of your husband, children were taught in the mosque. That is how my food service started there when I met Aris I left Philadelphia went to New York. We had a restaurant up there, House of Life. And I started my raw food journey with my culinary background already it was really kind of easy to gravitate, pick up, share, exchange idea, concept and make food. So that is how the live food became my diet and my occupation.

ZA: When did you meet Aris and when did you move to New York?

ZA: This had to be right after some school program I had just finished. Maybe in the late 70's or early 80's.

HSH: And you moved to New York when?

ZA: At the same time.

HSH: How were your children's acceptance to the work that you do?

ZA: It's exciting. I've met a lot of people so my children at one point didn't have a

choice. This is what I did. This is what I have to go do. This is what pays the bills. Yes, the gravitated in terms of their social, but again diet is one of those things that is very social thing for people and when kids. You do keep them under control to a certain extent by what you do and how you do it, but at they get older and other family members think that you are abstract, odd, strange, weird whatever everybody doesn't always embrace that and hold to that. I never made them. I tried to give them some option and choices. They enjoyed the food, but nobody is where I am in the diet. Over the years..my oldest is 40 and my youngest is 30. I have grandchildren. You know it's one of those things, its hard work. Its work you have to go shopping. You have to prep. They have helped themselves to some of my money at certain times and different events. Its profit of course. They're mixed about it. I'm hoping the next generation will be more advanced and embrace it a little more. My children now understand that because of various health issues, but does that make them do it or not do it.

HSH: What are some of the venues that you provide live food to the African community?

ZA: Now I'm not as consistent as I used to be. Every time they said event and festival I thought that I was suppose to be there. Your talking about the boys and girls high school, Philadelphia used to have a mainstay there, but with Aris and I we've done all kinds of shows in New York, the Boys and Girls Club high school, Jacob Center, food shows, holistic shows etc. And then I've been to Atlanta, Chicago, D.C. Wilington, Washington, Baltimore, Atlantic City, Jersey. I went to African, China, the islands. I have traveled

the world.

HSH: In Philadelphia?

ZA: The Locs Conference, Odunde, Penn's Landing when they used to do the African American Festival, Marcus Garvey festival, Independent Freedom Day, Pearl of Africa, Temple University, John Coltrane Stop. I just used to be everywhere.

HSH: You were somewhere for three days can you elaborate on that?

ZA: As of December of last year, I've been doing food at Black and Nobel which has been a very wonderful experience. People say that its good for me amd say, "what do you mean?" People always are always worried about the money. Well I don't do this for money. Not to say that I don't expect to get compensated. I was doing this for money I would be in a different neighborhood who would pay me \$15-\$20 a plate per plate instead of serving in our community for \$5. So I've always thought of my self as a provider of service in the area of food service, because again there has been a big movement where people have gravitated toward the food. I guess we got kind of stuck in that environment of people, but everything changes. And the need is even greater now for what the food offers and provide for the people. So here at the bookstore I've met all kinds of authors and I've met rappers. I've met spoken word people. You know. And some were still not familiar with the food and so its let me know that my work still needs to be done. There

is still a space for it, but here Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays has just been wonderful. You know it's afforded me a lot of opportunities like this one today. Proximity. It's been a great therapy for me and exposure to the food. I've had some interviews. I've had some Facebook stuff. It's just wonderful.

HSH: Other credentials from a University?

Well not in that area for food because that's not something that they do, but in terms of Sun Fired Food credentials...

HSH: Master's degree?

HSH: Oh. Yes sir. I was coached, corralled, intimidated, threatened, pushed, prodded etc. to go back to school. So it took me two years to move things out of my life and rearrange my life to make that happen. I am a graduate of (M) for Human Services program. May 2010. I also was on the National Honor's Society. It allowed me to think about what I do in food services a little differently. Also, my dissertation was dealing with poor nutrition in African American pregnant and parenting teens, because that was the population that I worked with in school. Many people want to provide services for our teens, but they are scared of and so I loved working with the teens, because I'd get right up in there. I'm not scared. Now I might not know all of the jargon and I may not be able to pronounce everybody's name, but I can get with them. With that population I

just felt that it was such a need for them to understand...with the young sister, “you making a baby. What does the baby need? And how you cook. And you if you have a boyfriend/man/going to be husband whatever you know he’s not going to eat chicken wings all day and rice. You cant keep ordering out pizzas. You have to cook. You have to know how to cook. So I have done various programs for various organizations around the city that had allowed me access. So while in school this became my main thing. Again, as the Messenger taught or gave me the understanding food and food services in our community is a vial. You are what you eat. And from me being able to go get an apple, an orange, bananas, grapes etc. from the corner store. Now you can’t get any of that. If its not a grape hug, now or later, lemon...you know there is not real thing. So I have issues with that. That also talks about the dismantling. The changes that have happened in our community that we watched wide open, but didn’t do anything about it. How the corner store went from being African American owned to series of people where now we have a new Dominican and Costa Rican, Hispanic. I have watched the change and I have watched the food industry change right along with it. And of course our health. I have watched our health decline.

How do you feel the work that you do contributes to the health and wellness of the African community?

I had to really think about that one when I read it. To that I have to go to my notes. There has been physical, mental, emotional, business, environmental, educational,

historical. I think when I really had to look at this and think about this question I had to go in my mind and listen to what people have said about me and said to me. So my answer comes from part of that perspective and then in terms of the list that I just read off or the things that I understand now how food, food service and environmental issues deal. Physically, my food is pretty. My food looks nice. Its excited. Two, as a gardener, the garden looks nice and robust. And understanding how that...by us being melanated people the melanin needs energy to spark our thought. Colors help that process. Mentally, if you are have been stimulated by color and/or aroma your mental state goes some place else. Your endorphins change, because you are at a common state. Environmentally, one people knowing that your available in their environment makes it different, because sometimes people curiosity when then come. Sometimes, now we have various health issues that make you have to find me so again and when I'm in my gardening vibe like yesterday we were in the garden and we painted the outside planters as well as we planted flowers in the planters. Now on the outside of the garden aesthetically is beautiful in its color scope then when you look inside the garden you see. So that is a very common piece for it. We may not understand what it does, but the fact that its there it's doing what it's suppose to do and that is how I see me. I'm there. For years I had no business. I had not clients. People would ask, "what is that?" and I would talk until I was hoarse. I would give out samples. Now at certain events I have a line an hour deep all-day everyday. Food is a social venue. Food is very social. There are not many events that we do where food is not there. Birthdays, death, weddings, barbecues, baby shower etc there is food. We have to know how to reorientate ourselves to know

what's good to eat and what is not good to eat. Of course business. I am a food purveyor so that is my business. I get a chance to look at and talk to people on other echelons dealing with food. Food bring it back down. Historically, well I know growing up in Philadelphia we used to have fruits everywhere and the fruit guy up and down the street and the watermelon man. Well none of that happens anymore and so there is a void. Educationally, being able to teach people, because one of the classes that I've taught down there at PASCEP is called, Food Diet and Health in the African American Community. I put this course together based upon what I saw people not know or the gaps that I saw about our understanding. We don't have a real clear relationship, because we are not taught what food is and what food is for the body, what your suppose to eat, where it comes from and how it's cooked. There is a whole word of stuff that is just kind of left and so Im able to do some educating in terms of pros and cons and what's in stuff. You know. Its not that I can make people eat different things. I can't say, "eat a vegan raw vegetarian diet is for everybody," but I can say, "that a more plant-based diet is for everybody and that you can modify what you eat to adjust it. You don't have to do the processed. You don't have to eat all this highly chemical stuff." This is the stuff that we don't get that. You dot have to high blood pressure or diabetes. You don't have to have heart, gaut and all these cholestrol issues. Look at what you eat. I think I have contributed these things in different venues and different areas to different people at different times. Everybody doesn't get the same thing every time, but this is a part of the scope that I think I have provided to the community and as long as I am alive, I can do it. It may sound some kind a way, but you ask me how I want to go, I would look like to go

one day over my food. Pushing me out the way and ya'll go ahead and eat the food. Its just been a very wonderful experience for me.

HSH: What other courses have you taught at PASCEP?

HSH: "The Twelve Systems of the Body" in that course we tried talk about the twelve systems of the body and what food or herbs would supplement them. I've done a couple of more, but I can't think of them.

HSH: What is your basic definition of wholistic health be?

Well you know brother at first would have to know what age group of the person I am talking to that would hone my answer a little more, but basically I try to take people to a garden experience and how you plant something and its really amazing most people have never planted anything and grown anything. So to get a person to even thing in the mindset, because we all have notion we don't know the difference between soil and dirt. What is your foundation? What is your platform? Most people is your parents taught you how to eat and introduced you to food. And so most of us come from that. I like to tell people that its like a gardener you start with a seed. What is the quality of your seed? Is it heirloom? Is it a hybrid? What kind of seed are you starting with? What foundation are then putting that seed in? In all things there is a period of darkness that you submerge into the dark that you can't see. Now you have to feed it. You have to give it the things

that it needs. You have to give it water. You have to give it sunlight. You have to make sure the temperature maintains. We don't see that in terms of ourselves in terms of how we live and how we eat, because they have given us concept that we are animal. Most people think, "I'm a lion. I'm a tiger. I'm something ferocious," but you were neither. You don't need all of that. You want to think in terms of what is going to sustain you. The best the longest. Wholistic health; what do you do for yourself? Physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually what do you do? What is your environment? How you live? Where you live? Inside your house, outside your house are people that you interact with...and its kind of hard so again I keep going back to that garden and you have some plants that are invasive. You have some plants that just by nature where they grow strangle our other plants with vines. I try to get people to think about who and what you would be on the plant side and what you need, water. Where is your water-source from? How much sunlight do you get? Or are you always under artificial light? How are you breathing? I try to get them with those kinds things to think about health then wholistic health is all those things involved.

It can go a few different ways, but people kind of come and get the understanding. Then I want them to go gardening or either they'll pay more attention to the plants that used to around them in their house or their grandmother's house. It'll spark something that they know...it brings something back. Sometimes for youth it doesn't because they don't have that family upbringing. They didn't get that, but for them it puts them on a kind of "go fetch it", "go get it," "go understand it" process. And some of them may be going to

go talk to their friends, somebody that is doing something else to that like gardening. Little pieces from together. People are able to grasp it on some level and move on.

HSH: When did you join the Nation?

ZA: I came out of high school in 71-72. I think probably by...you know Philadelphia was a Muslim town. Malcolm was coming in and out. Even though I wasn't involved the energy was around. Muslim brothers was on the street, beans pies... and so I imagine somewhere in early 1970's I probably got turned on to the book. Maybe not totally, but again the energy and as I came out of high school I had some friends, Amish American we were all looking at what we were going to be. By the time I got to community college in 1976 I had read *How to Eat to Live*. Somewhere in there I was entertaining the Nation of Islam. When I say entertaining in terms of curious. I cant say that I had went to any meetings, but just curious. Dialoguing back and forth with people finding out what was going on. And I would say between the late 70's and early 80's I was in Chicago and was in it by then and one of the greatest lessons I had ever heard was at a Mosque in Staten Island. The minister that night had talked about classifications of animals. That is when we talked about that the pig was a grafted animal. I remember that very vividly. At that point in time I had made a decision about diet.

HSH: School?

ZA: I went Philadelphia Community College for Restaurant and Hotel Management. They had a stellar course that started me off.

HSH: Was this after or before the Restaurant School?

ZA: This was before the Restaurant School.

HSH: What state?

Philadelphia, PA. The Restaurant School is right down on 41st and Spruce now called the Restaurant School of Walnut Hill. At that time it wasn't all that cute stuff.

HSH: What decade did the holistic health movement become a conversation in the African community?

RA: My answer on my paper that I wrote it has not yet it is still to come. I say that because there still is so many people who don't understand, who don't know, have not graced this information. I think with Aris, Sis. Beverly, Atiya Ola, Mama K and myself now you have a little bit more of an Arsenal and so you go places and you see somebody doing something. I think we are on our way to that big thing, but in terms of what has happened in the past I think the middle to late 1970's to early 80's everywhere...I mean

we're talking about Muslims in Philadelphia and New York, Hebrew Israelites in Atlanta everyone was seeking and searching, because there were a few people who were people that information out. Dick Gregory was a big part of that when he came out from where he was: ribs, pork chop and he started change and losing all his weight. People listened to him. The people that he referred people to got attention. The 21st century Victor somebody died, but he was a big influence everybody was reading him. The anti-apartheid thing so we were in a certain kind of consciousness. I think that was the genesis to whether or not it was a peak... You can't say that the beginning was the peak it was at the beginning and it moved people and changed something's, but I think our peak is still to come.

HSH: Who were the heavy weights?

ZA: At that time you had Aris and you had Brother Kofi. Kofi had a restaurant here called the First Intercourse and not only was he doing raw food which was exciting, but Kofi was polygamist. He had harem of women that brother's loved and when you went to the spot it was pillows on the floor and material hanging and you had all these beautiful black women walking around serving you on trays and stuff. That turned some heads on a couple different levels, but he and Aris were the beginning. Aris was in New York and Kofi was here. Aris would classes and workshops. Then you had the Nation of Akebulan. Nation of Akebulan had a great wonderful dear, sister, friend Mariamu Bantu became my mentor, but she also had mentored under Aris. Through the Nation of

Akebulan, which was a polygamist organization as well as raw food organization. Some of the members are still around today and still embrace a live food diet. They had a restaurant on Shelton Ave after Kofi's restaurant.

HSH: Kofi Restaurant?

ZA: It was called the First Innercourse.

HSH: You know Sis. Fria?

ZA: I don't. The First Innercourse was popping when in Philadelphia?

ZA: Mid to late 1970's early 1980's. It was in Germantown on Vernon Rd. and he opened up and basically they served Kush. Kofi did not do the extensive raw food feast that Aris does. He never was that expansive. He kept to a basic kind of certain things and that's what they did. His restaurant was the first raw food restaurant that I know of and the second one would have been the one the Nation of Akebulan had on Shelton Ave. I can't remember the name of the restaurant, but they basically was patronized by the followers of the organization. They did have some people off the street, but it was basically our and people began to move in. Baba Barashangi...they were all in that same mindset so they became practitioners of the group. Everyone did not embrace it.

HSH: Kwatamani claims to have the first restaurant in Philadelphia?

ZA: That is Kofi Kwatamani.

HSH: Who are the prominent individuals doing the work that you do?

ZA: I don't want to not include anybody, but there are a host of people that I don't personally know that I have heard of and people have referred me. I know that there is a whole host of folks on different levels right now. I want to thank them for what they do. I only know my contemporary age group and that is who I can elaborate on. I do hear of other people all the time who are doing raw food, doing workshops. Even now on the internet there is a whole new raw...I didn't know. Give credit to all these people and most of them came through Aris, Sunfired Food Workshop and stuff. The Hebrew Israelites did a lot. Some of them went on into live food. The Philadelphians that I help in some way Sis Atiya Ola, myself and I know there are a number of other people who are doing Sis Sharon Perry who has a business called Dandelion Brunch. She has her own business, distributing wholistic products. She's up and down the east coast seaboard. she does food, but her venue of promote health food products. So those are the one that I can speak to directly that I know.

HSH: Do you think healthy is necessary for Africans to feel better?

ZA: You use the term African and continental African might not agree that you need vegetables and fruits like I would agree on this side. Having been to Africa and did a women's conference over there in 1996 and fed 1200 African people on a vegetarian diet...

HSH: Was it in Ghana?

In Ghana. I can't say that it was raw, but there was some cooked stuff, but it was vegetarian and I did 1200 people during the conference. Again brother the more research that I have done and living this lifestyle I can speak to the benefits that I have received and say that they have been universal to all if embraced more of a plant-based diet. Our melanin is color. The Plants through photosynthesis have color. We need that connection for our physical enhancement, mental regeneration, and our spiritual rebirth. We need to be higher Egypt, lower Egypt when need to eat high and we need to eat fresh. It has benefits to all.

Higher on the tree?

ZA: Higher on the tree. I will be 60 this year in a few months my birthday. I have no health issues. No high blood pressure, diabetes, or cholesterol issues. When I do go to the doctor's for anything. They question me like where have you been, what do you do? My weight is pretty much...I can fit a size 8-10. My energy level, my stamina, my

mental...are enhanced and at a great space, because of my diet. I've been doing this now for over 45 years. No I'm not totally raw, but I am totally vegan. In the summertime now I get back closer to raw, because I am in the garden and I'm light and easy. A totally raw diet in this environment makes you more light headed. They call libra's aircaps anyway so with a raw diet I am a lot more airy, because its harder to stay...but the benefits are just enormous.

HSH: Can you spell her first name?

ZA; Cherron Perry.

HSH: Elaborate your experience in Ghana where you fed 1200 people?

ZA: But before I can get there I have to take you to China. In 1995, I went to china to the Women's World Beijing Conference and I went as a presenter. I packaged myself up so I did food environment services. I can't remember the name of it what the workshop was. I paid my way and went to China. It was a very faboulous trip in China. While in China I met an African sister, Nana Karantima who is an Akan prestiest here in Philadelphia. She and I were roommates in China. We met this African sister and because of Nana's could speak Akan language the reality of the country we befriended this African sister. When we left China, the sister eneded back here in Philadelphia at Nana's house. They were planning this women's conference for the next year and as we

dialogued about possibilities I actually ended up writing the plan that we used that got us over there. We created an organization here called, S.O.U.L.S (Sister's Offer Unified Labor Sources). SOULS had some meeting, and recruited some people. I sponsored two sister's personally to go to Africa with us to do the food to this women's international conference. There were women the whole of Africa that came to Ghana to look at similar...and again this was taken from China. China all these women came looking at how to bring the women power back, to bring the matriarchal power back. The African woman run the market place. The African women came and said we are going to produce this on our side and we are going to bring women. We were one of the few African American groups that were participating in this conference.

HSH: In China?

ZA: No. The African group when the sister came here to Philadelphia then we were became an intricate part and continued with that process. We actually got to African the next year. With that built me a kitchen, building from the ground up to facilitate my activity.

HSH: In Accra?

ZA: They built me a building on site where the conference was going to be. They actually built me a space and gave me everything I needed. This whole thing about the

shop around places, meeting new people and where to get the food. I was able to do that and it was just a wonderful experience. The Africans asked to stay, but at that time it was impossible to...

HSH: How long was that trip?

ZA: Three weeks.

HSH: Title?

ZA: I don't remember the name of it, but it was the Women's International Conference that's all that I can see right now. And we were in Accra for three weeks.

HSH: This conference was about?

ZA: Women business, how to collaborate with outside people here and within the diaspora. When we went to Cape Coast to the gory island, slave castles a lot of the women from the west coast of Africa did not want to go. The women from South Africa, from middle and east parts of Africa were all very interested in going. Africa has been stripped and voided of their history as well as us. Many of them have only heard stories about us being taken, but they don't know, because that lineage was a gap. You took the griots, the leaders most central people and so there was a void in their history and

memory. Some of them didn't even understand. A lot of us cried together and they could feel the American women that came and now were with the African women and its like now that we can all see that we are sisters.

HSH: The conference in China was about?

ZA: Not just women in the business, but the political, social, economic places of women in the world. You had white women, women from England, women from Sweden. In fact, my roommate was from Sweden and this woman worked three part-time jobs, single-headed household. Except for being blonde and blue-eyed she had the same story. Her thing like with all of us was how do we go back and move, teach, train, motivate, make a woman's, girls journey safer and easier, better, bigger etc.

HSH: What suggestions would you make for a meat-eater that is intrigued about eating to live?

HSH: I have a fast library. I recently picked up a book called the Zen Philosophy of Foods and reading it it talked about a lot of animals that we used to eat that are now extinct. I kind of like to talk to people from that perspective. I remember reading the fabulous story about the dodo bird. The dodo bird used to be a real bird. I can't remember which part of the world, but they were very significant. He wasn't the kind of bird that flew. He had wings, but he wasn't a good flier and so he was easy to catch.

Whatever European people came to this place thought that he was a marvelous thing to eat. Eventually, they ate them all and then the people started noticing that there was a tree that was always there, but now there weren't so many of these trees anymore. It was a very significant tree to this community. Then the people started trying to plant the seeds of this tree for it to grow and they had no success.

ZA: Now most of our food, particularly meats are raised under very inhumane situations. There are pinned up, caged up, there is not movement, no light, none of the natural things that the animals is suppose to do. They are fed artificial food. They are fed chemicals. YouTube any of the stories that deal with food safety in terms of animal go look at how this stuff was raised. Look at what they are doing. We have turned the industry into something else. We have made the mad scientist become madder in terms of insane about what we can do. I remember hearing something about they had a chicken without no feathers. The funniest little chicken I had ever seen in my life, but they didn't have any feather. To the meat eater I try to give them. I try to pick my story, but I try to give them some of this, because you need to understand that your choices of meat three or four times a day what it does to the environment. Its changing the landscape. It is changing not only yourself, but and what they are doing to it. A few summers ago there were all of these floods in the Midwest. I remember reading an article on the pink lagoon. The pink lagoon is not pristine blue water. It is where they put all the pig waist. There would be huge areas. Now when they have a flood that would flood too and all that waist would get into other waters and soils. Some of that in some of the vegetables

that we eat got was a result of the flooding of these, but as a kid on the farm, the pig waste got recycled back. We weren't raising a hundred thousand of them. And they had free room. You don't know what your getting. You have no idea how it was raised. You have now idea at how it is being processed. You have no idea what happens before it gets to me. So many things that you don't know and have no control over. I would say to the meat eater to think about it and maybe start with one day that you don't eat no meat. There were days that you didn't have meat and you made it ok. You made it through the day and you can do it. You can do it.

ZA: Have you written anything?

RA: Yes. I thought about it as I was coming. In school, when I was getting my masters I wrote a curriculum called New Earth and it was basically for my pregnant and parenting teen population that I put this together. I was going to use it and will use it for the purposes of...it is not being revised and edited so that I can put it out as a published work.

HSH: Have you done any lectures?

ZA: I have to go back to PASCEP because that has been a long standing twenty year relationship and the people that I have met the experience that I have had there. But then I can also think of once I was asked to speak at the University of Pennsylvania and that night eight hours there I was doing the food. They just thought that I was doing the food.

When I got introduced as the Keynote Speaker the look on my friends faces they were like, "I just thought that you did food." There are many people that I have associate with an known over the years who have never really heard me talk, lecture. I am now in the process of putting together a talking board, a sign bite to do some classes, because I feel that I do have a particular twist on my subject matter and that I do hold a lot of information that could be helpful to people. I want to do that along with the various books that I've read. I think that would allow me a platform. I mentioned earlier that I worked at the Philadelphia Food Bank for a while and that when they did the video. I talked about the gardening program and the children's piece that I do. I established a new garden yesterday and part of my desire with this space is to actually be able to and talk about the garden and things that are growing. People can take some stuff and actually make some food right there. I think that would be exciting.

HSH: When did you speak at UPenn?

ZA: Late 80's to early 90's, but then I took classes at University of Pennsylvania, landscape and architect in urban planning. At different times I had to speak with graduate students.

HSH: Channel 12?

ZA: This one had to be about 2003 something like that.

When did PASCEP begin?

ZA: Sometime in the 1980s because I was there as a vendor for some years and then I got asked to come and teach.

HSH: When did you stop vending and/or teaching at PASCEP?

ZA: I haven't stopped. It had been almost 30 years now.

Yes teaching for 20, but catering yes. *How Not to Eat Pork*. I met the author, Shaharazad Ali in Atlanta and I was did radio back then. I was WHAT with Mad Humphrey so I got Shaharazad to come to Temple and did my class as well I did the first radio interview with her when her book first came out.

HSH: She came to Philly?

ZA: She was apart of a polygamist family that lived in Philly. I am still in touch with her and her family and so, but that is how Shaharazad and I helped put her around.

HSH: Were you familiar with Jewel Pookrum's womb circle in the early 1990's?

ZA: I was familiar.

HSH: Is there anything imperative to share?

ZA: One of the things is I did some research recently. Melanin, the electro-magnetic energy and relationships. As I am moving through this study there is always more to learn and more to do. The understanding of who we are and what we are. We are an electro-magnetic energy. We are spirits having a human existence. What you eat and how you eat will effect that experience effects the electro-magnetic energy, because it is like a spark. It needs stuff to keep it pulsing. So food becomes that reality and I believe that part of the final genocide for our people is through the food. The more we are forced, prodded, induced, seduced to eat all of these artificial colors, flavors, process everything is creating a health issue in our community. I love the summer time now, but I hate looking at the bodies that are coming out of the houses who sat all winter, who have eaten and done all of these things. Now you have a couple tires around your stomach. You have cellulite, men, women, and children. I am brothered by it. The fact that all these dieaticians and nutricians don't give you the truth. Doctors have very little time. Who do you look for to give you information. I think it is ultimately going to have to come down to people like you and what you are doing and me on some level. Someone who has practiced something for so long and is not wild out. I think for our children it is so important. The biggest part of this is still to come, because we as a community, we as a people in large scale must understand this, must embrace this. Otherwise, we will as

Dr. Omar Johnson is saying we will be relegated to an exhibit in a museum, a people that used to be as opposed to people that are and so we have to take more time with our environment and us, because we are an environment. That is a system and we are a system. There are so many similarities. We just need to pay a little more attention. The brother here we had a conversation the other day, because he is a psychologist and asked him when he was going to get his degree and he said well, "I'm thinking about brother coming out of jail" and I mentioned that I did a paper on this whole phenomenon on chichi's. Chichi's is what the brothers and sisters make as a mock of macaroni and cheese. You can make it in a plastic bag. This is how I was taught on how it was made. Take a pack of oodles of noodles which they can get out of the conversary machine and crush it all up in a plastic bag. Then you would get some cheese twist and you crush the cheese twist up and you put the cheese twist in there. Then put the hot water in there and shake it up. That is your basic foundation of chichi's. From there you can either put tuna in it or beef jerky. My teenagers in high school asked me, "Ms. K you know how to make chichi's?" The boyfriend from prison and when he comes home they are eating chichi's. Now the children in that household are talking about chichi's. I understand, because institutions follow you. It is hard to break so we then institutionalize in terms of our diet. Who said you had to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner? Who put that together? Where did they come from? There is so much misnomer information about what to do and what not to do that I think we need to just do more information. I think why I am going to do some videos, put the publication out and do some other things. I have done food and I will probably continue to do food, but food without foundation doesn't mean a

whole lot. I want to open that understanding of it so that they can make some choices of their own. I will be doing some classes very soon so that its not a mystic thing. It ain't really that deep, but I think why people get hindered is that in their mind they made it more than it is. It just live food. The simplicity. My experience as a kid with food was a field to mouth. I was a raw food person before I knew it. Grams would always say, "try that!" Field to mouth. Most of us never get a chance to experience that anymore and I think that's part of why we got to be. And we don't read, because no one is teaching us. We need to understand the relationship to us and our spirit. That is what the food industry may be trying to make sure the squash. You can't find anything fresh. Now you get Koreans that make a whole lot of money off of...

HSH: Book at Lincoln?

ZA: New Earth, a teaching curriculum for the pregnant and/or parenting teen population. It was called New Earth.

HSH: Published?

ZA: It is written and I am in conference now to get it printed.

HSH: You have your masters so you had to have a bachelor's. Where did you get your bachelors?

ZA: No I didn't. I went to community so I basically had an associate's degree. I went to temple and I didn't finish the entire course process for a bachelor's, but the Lincoln took all my credentials of date, 20 years of teaching, community service and then I was able to then go through the master's course.

I was going to finish my Ph.D. now, but I had a debt. My brother died two years ago. I wasn't able to pursue that totally, but I have continued to research and I feel as I especially with this session I did.

Interview with Yahimba Uhuru

HSH: Can you please tell me your name and talk to me about your upbringing?

YU: My name is Yahimba Uhuru, and I am the seventh child. I was born in Philadelphia. My date of birth is July 1, 1953.

HSH: Have you obtained any credentials?

YU: I am currently in school to receive my bachelor's degree in Health and Wellness. I graduate in January and then I am going for my masters.

HSH: At which school?

YU: Kaplan University

HSH: Currently, what do you do for a living?

YU: I am a cashier at Wholefood Market in Philadelphia. I am also a health columnist for the *Westside Weekly*.

HSH: What is the *Westside Weekly*?

YU: It's a weekly column that covers all of West Philadelphia. I have been writing for them for approximately 25 years.

HSH: Are there certain topics that you concentrate on in the column?

YU: I concentrate on natural healing, alternative medicine, herbology, and going back to basics as far as healing is concerned.

HSH: How do you feel that the work you have done and continue to do contributes to the African community?

YU: I feel it helps them, because it empowers them. It is extremely important in order to make change in your life. I used to teach a nutrition class at an alternative African centered school called Academy of the Way. And some of those students are now in their thirties and they still remember things that I said. So as long as I reach one person at least one person I feel as though I have succeeded.

HSH: Where is the academy of the way located?

YU: That was located in West Philadelphia. They closed down a few years ago. It was ran by Mama Alomisha Alewa who moved to Ghana and passed away within the last three years.

HSH: What would be your basic definition of holistic health?

YU: Holistic health to me is going back to basics. Healing the body through God's pharmacy—through the earth. What we were suppose to do in the first place. Not introducing toxins into the body but work with the body. Not only the body, but the mind and spirit as well since the mind body and spirit is one and not three. If you don't treat the spirit, the mind and the body will never heal.

HSH: How did you come to know what you know?

YU: Well, I remember being tired of being sick, and I just felt as though there had to be another way. And at the time I think I was about 23 and I picked up Jethro Kloss's *Back to Eden* book, and I was really intrigued by it. It taught about how to heal the body and then I decided to purchase some these herbs and see how I felt and know that that was it. I will tell you that Jethro Kloss started me in the direction.

HSH: What year was that?

YU: That had to be 1976.

HSH: Are there any ailments that you would be comfortable to speak about?

YU: Having colds all the time. Being tired all the time. As far as the...just feeling and imbalance in the body i.e. anxiety and things like that.

HSH: Which decade would you say this movement began to gain momentum?

YU: That is hard for me to say, because I can only speak from where I started. Before I started I didn't know anything about it. So when I started then I started meeting people who were about that. So that was in 1970's. So I wasn't really aware of other people doing it.

HSH: Who would you say were some instrumental figures of that movement?

YU: Dick Gregory. A brother that actually introduced me to natural eating was Amaded. He was actually my first husband. He introduced me to holistic healing and then I belonged to *Ecology Food Co-Op* so I had connected with them. Just the brothers and sisters that belonged to the *Ecology of Food Coop*. That was at 36th and Lancaster Ave in Philadelphia. I joined the co-op it was a natural food coop.

HSH: When did the *Ecology of Food Co-op* begin?

YU: I started going there in 1978. I don't know how long they were in existence before then. It was a hub where you could get information and meet people that were on the same lifestyle as yourself.

HSH: When did it end?

YU: Quite a while ago. I think it might have closed up in the 80's.

HSH: Do you think eating healthy is necessary for African people and if so can you share with us why?

YU: Well, because food is our medicine. It's important to eat healthy. Its like you can't put the wrong fuel in a car and expect it to operate at optimal performance. It's the same thing with the body. The wrong food in the body is going to create disharmony and disorder in the body and creates diseases. It's very important to eat the way we were meant to eat.

HSH: What suggestion would you make to meat-eaters?

YU: What I would suggest to a person consuming meat is that if they are going to consume it they need to make sure that it is grass fed and organically raised or whatever. Also, if you are eating five days a week you can cut down to three, cut down to two, cut down to one so that you are not eating it at all. Stick with it and see how your body reacts

to it.

HSH: Do you recommend any other articles on the subject?

YU: Recently in school we had to develop a website. My website wecanheal.webs.com. I have information there. Also, you can go online and check out the articles that I wrote for *Westside Weekly*.

HSH: Can you share information about your business?

YU: I love feeding people. It makes me feel really really good. I used to make food and have people come over and they would say, “you should open up a restaurant.” So, I opened up a place in 1989. It was a small place on 49th and Chestnut St. I taught my daughters how to cook when they were six so they became my chefs. My son Immanuel, he was my dishwasher. My husband at the time, Uhuru, he did the business aspect of it and my son had his own group, *African Griots*. So we used to have entertainment in the restaurant also. So I created a sandwich called the Mock Steak sandwich. It was a family structured business. The children were the dishwashers. They were the cooks. They were the people that kept the restaurant clean. People really flocked there. They used to hang out and play some nice music. We used to have a street fair there where local artists would come. We opened it up in 1989 and we closed in 1996. I decided I wanted to go

to school. The *African Griots* would perform. Plus, we would bring in musicians, Shakare Ensemble, Nani Ka, Baba Crowder, so we would bring in a lot of local artists as far as entertainment is concerned.

HSH: Can you talk to me about the street fair?

YU: We did it every year, the week after Odunde. We did it on 49th Street between Chestnut and Samson. We would have the restaurant open. We would be the only food vendors and we would have vendors and local entertainment.

HSH: Being that you currently work at one, can you talk to me about any other Co-Ops you are or were affiliated with?

YU: I was attached to *Weaver's Way*. I was in Germantown so the only Co-Op that I was attached to was *Ecology Co-op*. I also did work at a wholefoods store on Lansdowne Ave called *The Grocery*. It was a private owned business and the person her name was Eleanor she taught me a lot...how to run a business...just a lot of information that she shared with me.

HSH: When did you work at *The Grocery*?

YU: I worked at *The Grocery* I know it was in the 80's. Eleanor allowed me to bring the

children to work, which was a blessing because that's how the girls became entrepreneurs. They did some of the inventory and things like that. So when we opened up our restaurant they had to acknowledge. My oldest daughter who was working at the restaurant at the time she was a cook so she decided to open up her own bakery inside and she taught her sister's how to bake. So they always had more money than I did. As a matter of a fact they saved up enough to go to the Bahamas for about five days. They asked can they go to the Bahamas and I said sure if you save money and they got the money. I thought they were going to bring me a bucket full of change. They brought me bills. So I booked them a lil vacation in the Bahamas and I had to scrape up my money to go.

HSH: What other items did you offer in the restaurant you owned?

YU: I used to make a dish with mixed vegetables, brown rice and wheat meal. And to this day people will ask me "do you have a mock steak sandwich" or "do you have mixed vegetables with brown rice." I used to make okra, corn and tomato, different type of bean dishes, eggplant zucchini stew, almond roti with cashew gravy. I never used any dairy products or animal product whatsoever. Like I said the girls did the baking. They baked cornbread, brownies, carrot cake...they made all that type of stuff.

HSH: Anything that you wish to share?

YU: One thing that people ask me, “what is my goal?” My goal is to heal the community. People say that you are not going to make any money doing that. I said that is not what I am doing, my goal is to heal the community. The creator will take care of the rest. So that is what I want to do. I want to educate the community on wholistic health, natural healing, alternative medicine, how to get well, how to heal mind, body and spirit, and also teach the community we are what we think. If you have an ailment you have to go to the spirit. You just can’t pop a pill. You can’t run to the doctor. You treat the body and all you have to do is sit down and talk to the spirit. Why am I excepting this in my life right now. What is going on with me. Not so much what is wrong, but what is going on with me? Yesterday on the job...my sister was in the hospital. My sister has lupus. She had heart disease and she has diabetes. She was put in the hospital the other day, because she was breathing irregular...she has severe allergies. All that is is anger. So the doctor said running around doing colonoscopies. She is not going to do well until she deals with her anger. You have to deal with all of it not the body alone.

YU: We can self-medicate. Not self-stupicate, but self-medicate. It’s easier to take the easy way out and not take responsibility. I feel as though my goal in life is to get out here and empower my people. If that means living from penny to penny so be it, because I know in my heart the creator will take care of me.

Interview with Tehuti Khamu

HSH: Can you talk to me about your upbringing?

TK: My name is Ur Aua Tehuti Khamu that is my Kemet grand and title and I was born in New York City and raised in the Bronx and the youngest of three brothers. In terms in the perspective of health, I guess that's what we're focusing on I was fortunate to be raised in a family we pretty much had a normal American diet but we did have some influences in terms of vitamins and importance of health and athletics and things like that and that really served as a good foundation for when I changed my diet and went into a complete health based life style. My earliest memories are of my grandmother who is from Jamaica. It was interesting because it was the first person that I ever experienced that would drink bottled water and back in those days it wasn't like today with Spring water or you know bottled water is very popular. She actually had it delivered. It was in a bottle, glass green bottle and I definitely noticed when I had water in her house it was a different taste and then she had fresh fruit and not that my parents didn't have fresh fruit, but it just wasn't the quality. I just remember the fruit at her house being so delicious. Coming up in the islands I guess she just had that upbringing. She had a large like breakfront in her living-dining area you know for your dishes and she had her top drawer full of vitamins. Every time we went over there she would give us the acerola, vitamin Cs to suck on instead of candy. I think the name of the company was Bart's. It was one

of the first health food stores and she was into it. They weren't vegans or anything like that at that time, but there was that consciousness of natural, vitamins, clean water and things like that. My parents also didn't buy a lot of soda, snacks in the house it was more like we had juices and whole wheat bread. I remember when that was something different. My sandwiches were with whole wheat bread. It was a good foundation. My father was also a trackman. He ran track. And both of his brothers ran track so we were always into fitness and exercise. He would run or he would ride his bike. He encouraged us into sports so being one of three brothers we all participated in sports and my path turned. My brothers were very good at football. One of my brothers was All-City for our high school. And the other one was very good as well. I played football and basketball and stuff like that, but at some point I got hit with the Bruce Lee thing. That's what was going on back in those days. I really got into the martial arts. I got into my first school in Harlem and I was sixteen when I got my brown. I was supposed to be getting my black belt training with the strong brother from George Wells so I got into that and that was also my first exposure to formal breathing exercises and stances which really prepared me for all of the things that I went on to do. That was powerful.

HSH: How old were you when you started martial arts with George Wells?

TK: I was like fifteen or sixteen. I quickly got up in ranks. There were three levels of brown before you took your test for black. I think I passed my first level of brown and

then my teacher stopped teaching. He had some issues or whatever so I wasn't able to get the black, but I went later on to go to other schools and study with Master Numara in Manhattan. Then much later on I got exposed to Capoeira and I just loved it being African-centered. When I found out the history of our people using our own indigenous martial arts to liberate themselves in Brazil I was like man "I got to get this."

HSH: Did you practice the Angola side?

TK: Yes. I actually got introduced first to it from some people that were exposed to our society and then later on I got a chance to find the oldest living Capoeira master and he was teaching in NY. I went up there and trained. He is still alive.

HSH: In the city?

TK: Yes, in the city. 14th street.

HSH: How old were you then?

TK: Much later. I must have been...we've been here twenty years so I must have been 32 or so.

HSH: Do you hold any certifications?

TK: No

HSH: What is your official title, the name of the establishment that you belong to and how long has this business been in operation?

TK: My title is Ur Aua, which means paramount kings. So in the Ausar Auset we have a traditional African kingship. So, we have a Shekem Ur Shekem, which is the kings of kings, and then we have three paramount kings who run different regions, one in London, one in Washington and myself in Philadelphia. Then we have several Queen mothers who run our other areas as well as the national rulers in New York headquarters. My title is the title of chieftaincy within our spiritual organization. So here we have a temple where we have a building in the front. We have our classes and we have a water store and we have a vegan restaurant. In the back we have a building that we're developing to be our temple, our community center so on and so forth.

HSH: What year did the Ausar Auset society begin in Philadelphia?

TK: 1975

HSH: Is there any way that you can elaborate more on how it was established?

TK: Well some students here got it started. They invited Shekem Ur Shekem, Ra Un Nefer Amen to come down. He used to come here every two weeks and teach classes at a community center at people's homes or what have you. That's when the society was in its formative years. We hadn't established the kingship, chieftaincy and all that. So I didn't get involved until 1980.

HSH: Please elaborate on what you do?

TK: I am the chief priest and also as the king my job is to run the society's business and activities and make sure we have a temple and make sure everything is working together. I have two interdependent functions: one is the spiritual leader so I provide most of the classes, trainings, conduct the ceremonies, and do the initiations. I have priesthood that I am responsible for training under Shekem Ur Shekem's guidance. We have a body of

members and then we have the general public. There are different levels of training priesthood. We have classes that we've been operating under my leadership since 1982-1983 or so which have been open to the public. Community service, free-will donation it's not an income earning thing for us it's something that we do to play our part in uplifting our community. I have been continuous since 1982-1983 in New York and then up here.

HSH: How do you feel the work that you do contribute to the health and the wellness of the African people?

TK: Our primary goal is spirituality. Without developing our spirituality, we can't solve any of our problems because in our understanding spirituality is not just your beliefs in a higher power. Spirituality is the understanding of your being or your make-up. If you believe that you are a human being and not a divine being, then our subject to following your emotions and your animal self which is not who you are then you'll never transcend anger. You'll never be able to deal with your fears. You'll never be able to handle the challenges of life without stressing out and because of that you will not reach your potential, your intelligence, your genius, and your performance. And this is the root of what is wrong with us: child rearing, family, business and everything. Until black people go back to our indigenous spiritual culture not just culture like let's get African names and wear African clothes and know African historical facts. Those are part of the

journey, but until we go back to say ok if we were the builders where civilization was the center of, what was the spiritual technology that we used to make a better man, better woman? That led to civilization and we can recover that and re-civilize ourselves. We can rebuild like we did in the past if we can get that knowledge that spiritual piece so we have been blessed to have a stage to guide us and to lead us. With all his (Shekem Ur Shekem) research and books and his meditation we have a system, a full religious system of initiation to take people from where they are to where they need to go.

HSH: What is the name of the system?

It's the Ausarian and the Ra initiation systems. There are two sides to it. Ausarian deals with the knowledge of self and your identity as a divine being. The Ra deals with the knowledge of your spirit and how you deal with powers within your spirit. Part of the Ra initiation is understanding energy and life force which the Chinese call Chi and the Indians call Prana. We cultivate good health as the foundation and cultivate our chi, qigong, meditation, breathing techniques, and yoga. One of the things that was very attractive about the Ausar Auset is that it was integrating all of those elements. You could not be spiritual if you had a ratchet diet. Your three states of energy: your Jing, Chi and Shin are created from one another. Your Jing is damaged if your hormonal system is messed up from drinking, smoking, overly indulging in sex, and perverting your life force with emotionalism. When your chi is not developed you're not developing the shin,

which is the subtle energy developing your mind and your spirit. They (Chinese) have a very beautiful and detailed understanding and body of technique and that's why we use their system because that's one of the things that we have not recovered from our generation. We take the Chinese and we integrate it with giving them credit for it. We integrate it with our system of health education and health development and rely heavily on that.

HSH: What would be your basic definition of wholistic health?

TK: It's a way of life that addresses all aspects of your being which starts with your diet. It starts with you exercising and using your body properly. It starts with your understanding of the breath, the cultivation of your breath and your life force. Then goes on to embrace your thought and spiritual understanding, because you know you can have the best diet in the world and practice techniques of yoga. If you're an emotional wreck you don't have an understanding of your spirituality of who you are. You have to negate or override your physical health techniques.

HSH: How did you come to know what you know?

TK: Well, it started when I went away to school and I just had an intuitive desire to know

more about my history and culture. I had been exposed to material by Dr. Benjamin Clark growing up in New York. Also, the exposure to the Asian martial arts and understanding that there were African influences in that curiosity was there. When I first saw a copy of the *Book of the Dead* I knew something was familiar about that and I never had an attraction to any other. I had attraction to traditional African religion for a reason, but never ever struck me like what I saw and I began to figure out. It's funny because I went to the University of Penn and I remember going to the Registrar and I had some electives and I wanted to get a class on Ancient Egypt. I was looking through the catalog and this is a real story and I'm looking through the African Studies and I say, "where are the classes on Ancient Egypt." And a woman says to me "oh no that's in the Oriental Studies department." I said, "oh! I thought Egypt was in Africa for some reason." That's what it was. Then I got involved in the divestment movement. The divestment movement was very heavy at that time. I was head of the black student league and I was exposed to information on what was going on in South Africa and I became one of the leaders of the Divestment Committee with a Caucasian brother and some really good work was being done. I was looking. I was in that state of consciousness. I was in a business school and my major was finance so my path was to go to work for the banks. I saw what the banks were financing and major corporations were doing in South Africa and everything I was just lost and I thought, "I can't go immerse myself in this world." I just couldn't imagine seeing my life spent that way. The summer before my last year I had come to the conclusion that I needed to find some spirituality. So I had said to my mother in law at the time that I was looking to find something about meditation. I needed

to meditate. I was exposed to meditation through the martial arts and also my older brother one day came home from college fired up about meditation and he sat down and meditated. I said I want to find that. I want to meditate, because I know God is within somewhere. I couldn't get into the external thing and the next week my mother came back from the store, because the store that we had was on 90th street in Alden and I was staying on 93rd, she said "hey here are some classes." They were free classes in meditation and it was in Harlem. I said "black people teaching meditation? Wow! Check this out!" That is when it all began.

HSH: 1967 is a significant year. It marks the year of the publication of Elijah Muhammad's book, *How to Eat to Live*. What year did you go to college?

TK: I graduated in 1981. That was the year I got exposed to the Ausar Auset Society. In 1967 I wasn't looking for nothing.

HSH: In which decade would say this holistic health movement took gained momentum?

TK: That's hard to answer because I came up in the Ausar Auset. My exposure was that we were way ahead of the trend; practicing a vegan lifestyle when I first got involved that was in 1980. We were taking Echinacea. Now everybody knows about Echinacea. Shekem Ur Shekem was the first to really introduce that, I think in the country. The herb was there but the use of it and how to prescribe it was scarce. We would take various herbs and that was one of them. And even fast-forwarding a number of years we were introduced to the low-glycemic diet. It was probably five years ago. Now you go in the store and they have low-glycemic on the packages and people are talking about it. We've always been ahead of what people were doing. We were doing Qigong and breathing before in the 1970's and certainly when I got involved in the 80's. I just know that it was much more difficult to find the things that you needed to eat the way that we eat than it is now. You couldn't get any of this stuff in the supermarket. You had to go to a Co-op or something like that. It wasn't at *Whole Foods* so when it became popular for black people I don't know.

HSH: Was the principle of eating to live taught within the organization?

TK: Well it's within the family. We eat that way and feed our children that way. We have a formal school in New York. We have had schools in D.C. We've had a school here for a few years and that's still in development in terms of providing all educational levels. Certainly diet and the lifestyle is taught in the home.

HSH: Can you embellish on the formal school in New York?

TK: The school is over thirty something years old and its been going from kindergarten grade school to high school it's a regular school, primary education. The only difference is that we have teachers, priestesses, and priests. That's the kind of the example that the children have. It's mostly members' children that are getting it at home and getting at school in addition to the regular academics. They'll do things and Shekem Ur Shekem may teach them different forms of meditation. It's all around the regular curriculum to get them to college and so on.

HSH: Where could I find out more information about the formal school?

TK: I could connect you with the principal.

HSH: Besides yourself within the Ausar Auset Society, who are other the prominent individuals?

TK: You have the Shekem Ur Shekem then you have the Queen Mothers, they are called

the Nesewtu. U is plural so it is Nesewtu and there are three of them and then there is the Ur Au.

HSH: So that I am clear, there three of those?

TK: At this time. Then you have the Watu, the females, queen mothers who rule various areas. We have them in Chicago, Milwaukee, California, North Carolina, and we have three Watu in Washington D.C. There are six of them. You also have the Hemu Shekem and then there is the Shekem Wa and the the Seratu. Seratu are the elders, but they are enstooled elders. It's not automatic. Once you get a certain age you have to be in a certain standing and then you are promoted to that right.

HSH: Do you think eating healthy is necessary for African people to feel better and to do better? If so can you elaborate in your own words?

TK: That is the foundation of your spirituality, because it is a chose between following your appetite's taste and eating for nutrition. When you really look at it that is a spiritual act, because you have to override your animal nature. Our animal nature will make us just want to eat what tastes good. We got to admit that there are a lot of things that are very unhealthy, but they taste really good. Usually when people come to us...we have been very successful at helping people to make their transition into a better way of life

and that is the purpose of the restaurant. Restaurant food is not our typical diet. Restaurant is transitional food. We have mock this and mock that. It is to help people to say, “you know I can still enjoy my life.” Eating is one of the most essential things that we do on a day to day basis. You don’t need a mate to do it. You don’t need a lot of money to do it. It is the escape, the pleasure, and it is a real battle going on in our community. Shekem Ur Shekem said once that I thought it was very poetically put. He said, “we are digging our graves with our knives and forks.” That is what we are doing. This stuff that we have been convinced is soul food and this and that...black people always had a genius to make things taste good so we took the scraps, leftovers and whatever we could get to survive and we made it very palatable. We made it delicious, but then you have to wake up, according to Maat, reasoning and say, “that’s what was necessary in order to survive.” If we didn’t have anything else to eat we would grab a dog, a cow we’d kill it and do whatever we need to do, because we have to eat to survive. Once you are in a position where you don’t have to do that then you need to change and let your appetites follow truth instead of you following your appetites. That is spirituality. Many people can’t do it. They cannot give it up. They don’t want to do it. They can’t make that change. They can’t get rid of the addiction, food addiction. We recognize alcohol and tobacco and say that is an addictive behavior, but food is an addictive behavior. When I first got into Ausar Auset it was the first time that I had any awareness of how harmful salt can be. And how you have to moderate your salt. You have to go on certain periods of time where you ate no salt at all on your food. You didn’t season it with salt. We had to wean off of that. It has gotten so bad now a days

that now in the 2000's...we've even had people who take them off of salt and their blood pressure goes down too low, because their body has been so unbalanced where it's almost used to that. That is a matter of adjustment as same with sugar. You look at an average person out here and see how they order food that is already salted and takes the salt shaker and it blows your mind same thing with sugar. It is very connected with your spirituality for you to say, "ok this is not good for my body and I am going to override my taste buds and my appetite and do something for my health." When you come to really understand the spirituality, the purpose of a man and a woman is to be a vessel of God. It is not just about, "oh! We have to die from something." It not about whether you are going to die from something. It is about how you are living and about how you are not realizing your full, divine potential. Your body and your nervous system, etcetera cannot function at the level that it is supposed to function, because it is wiped out from the food that you are eating. Health and the spirituality are all connected.

HSH: What suggestions would you give to a meat-eater that wants to do better?

TK: Well, the first thing that I would do is remind them that if they can just eat meat-less for three-four days a week that act just alone will reduce their chances of getting a heart-attack. I believe it is 50% if you just cut down. Do that. Acclimate yourself. Learn. People still have misnomers about vegetarianism that all we eat is salads and nuts, berries, but once they have some of the food that we've prepared it's like...in fact, I even

had someone in here one time when we were making mock fried chicken the guy was sitting there eating it and he did not know that it was not flesh. He couldn't believe it. That is good. It helps to open them up to realize, "ok. Giving up what my grandmother made which is tradition, easy and my wife knows how to cook there is a possibility to make a transition." We like to follow the line of least resistance and then as they get more into it and get educated about it and start to experience then they can go further with it.

HSH: Are there any written pieces of lectures that you all have done in Philadelphia?

TK: New York is the center, but a lot of lectures that he's (Shekel Ur Shekem) done we use. Health is something that is constantly moving and changing so I believe he is going to come out with another book. *The Dinner Table Volume V* is the latest piece that he did on health. It was really coming from the psychological, the understanding that healing is connected with your spirit and a lot of the research that was done to show the physical effects of mental imbalance and it also gets into health of the brain and things like that and some of the nutrients and things that you should take. He wrote several books on health, one of which is updated. I believe it is called, *How Marijuana Affects You*. We got flack for that, because a lot of folks are pushing marijuana as natural and this and that. The research shows that it is a drug and it's damaging to your testosterone and sperm count. It was imported to Jamaica by the British as they brought opium into China. It is a

drug. He detailed that and some of the herbs that can detox them and heal themselves. His first book on health was *Health Teachings of the Ageless Wisdom*. I believe there were two volumes of that. He also did a nutritional handbook and herbal guide. He did a guide to *Chinese Herbal Remedies*, qigong. Those been the dominant works, but there have also been some very good lectures on black male health. We just had a festival where we did a black male healing workshop and we have a series of classes on that now and women. In New York they have had for the last three years or so a really great conference every year on black men's health.

HSH: Can you talk to me about the Kemetfest?

TK: Kemetfest is our annual celebration of the greatest of ancient Kemet. It is a series. Depending on the location different states do it differently. It might be two days or three days. We did a three-day Kemetfest this year and we had a bunch of workshops on different topics: meditation, Kemet history, philosophy, QiGong, etc. Then we had a night of entertainment. We had spoken word, drumming, and conscious musicians. We party. Socialization is a very important thing too. People have to socialize and to find a place where you can be around people that are striving to be healthy, be spiritual and understand the history. That is very nourishing to your health. I saw one program once on PBS and they were talking about people with the greatest longevity. I believe these people were in Italy and one of the things they did is that they ate together every day.

They showed them getting together extended family and it's the social interaction that really nourishes us. It keeps us going. It keeps us healthy. That is a big part so the Kemetfest we have a festive environment and its very uplifting for people to realize that they can be spiritual, be healthy and have a really good time as opposed to giving up partying, because "I don't want to be around people that is drinking, smoking and hitting on me and acting that way." That is a part of it and it just to expose people to what we have and let them see that it's not out of their reach.

HSH: Is there anything that I have not asked or that we have not talked about that you feel is imperative to share as it relates to wholistic health or any other work that you do?

TK: I think one of the things that personally has affected me very strongly when I reflect on my childhood and coming up is the need for a rites of passage. In part of the rights of passage program needs to be the exposure to health. We had a black men's healing class and when you understand the importance of your sexual vitality your seed and the conservation of that. When you understand the development of your body and your nervous system you realize how wicked it is. What is going on with our young people, especially our black young men? From a very young age they are over-sexually exposed. They are getting involved in depleting themselves and at the same time they are nutritionally deficient. They are introduced to alcohol, drugs to a nervous system and a brain that is not fully developed. The more I was educated about this, I realized that this

was by design. If you want to compete with a people and keep them non-competitive, castrate their competitiveness. “How you doing brother?” “I’m chilling!” There is nothing about you that should be chilling. As a man, you should be fired up. You should be sharp. You should be aggressive. You should be going to get yours, not laying back chilling out, but we are in this daze that is why we have been able to be manipulated. We have to wake up the black man. We have to wake up and save our youth, because this pattern and I know this from being a priest and a counselor for over twenty-five years that by the time people come to you for help some of us are so far beyond the point of regeneration. We are literally blunted. “Ok brother you need to read and study this.” He can’t even focus and absorb the information. You can’t retain anything. You see you’ve lost so much of your potential. We have to put very type, aggressive rites of passage. We have to get together as black men and establish these things and grab these young boys. You know the majority who are now coming up without any men in their life anyway. Initiate them into what it is that is going to make them strong men, but we can’t do that and just leave. There has got to be organizations of men that are going to be there for them. That is one of the things that we have to work on, because one of the greatest threats to our lives is young black men. You understand that criminal behavior and anger and the lack is where all that is coming from. Lack of viable economic life and the very poor deranged health and everything that is popular about us with this drug culture, alcohol culture is just adding to that. That is something that we have to deal with. We have to address it.

Interview with Nwenna Kai

NK: I was born and raised in Philadelphia in 1975 and grew up in this house where we are at right now. My parents built it in 1968 and since 1971. I have an older sister, two years older than me. Her name is Zakiya. I went to public school my whole life in Philadelphia. Grew up in Philadelphia. Left Philadelphia when I was 17 years old. Went to Howard for undergrad. Went to School of the Art Institute for grad school.

HSH: What is your date of birth?

NK: November 15, 1975

HSH: Do you have any credentials or are you self-taught?

NK: I am self-taught and self-learned. I have definitely have read a lot of books. I have my own story with healing. I have worked with thousands of clients.

HSH: Have you obtained any degrees?

NK: I have my B.A. from Howard University in French with a Minor in film. I have my graduate degrees, MFA in Creative Writing.

HSH: What is the name of your business, the official title, and how long have you been in business?

NK: So, my current business, I am the founder and CEO of the *Live Well Movement*. And we are a total wellness company with a raw, vegan philosophy or plant-based philosophy. We provide health solutions in the form of classes, seminars, speaking engagements on line offline to communicate with organizations and companies that sort of thing.

HSH: When did it begin?

NK: I officially started...I'll say 2007. I used to own a restaurant in Los Angeles. It was an organic-raw-vegan restaurant for four years. I had that from 2003 to 2007 close to 2007. I still wanted to teach. One of the things that I got from my restaurant is that I loved to teach. I loved to do the classes and things like that. So I wanted to create a business where I could teach.

HSH: What is the name?

NK: The name of the restaurant was Taste of the Goddess Café and we were a restaurant-catering company. We had a product line of raw-vegan snacks in 30 whole food stores in Southern California area.

HSH: Did it attract any prominent individuals?

NK: We had everybody from Forest Whitaker to Dereck Luke and his wife Sophia Luke, Monica Lewinski, Sanaa Lathan, her father, Stan Lathan, Meshell Ndegeocello, Angela Basset, Randy Quaid, he use to come a lot and play chess with one of our customers. It's now coming back to me know. One of my favorite, this is a story I used to love the television show *Fame* so Irene Cara who was Coco came in one day that was like the best. Everybody else was cool, but I loved Coco on Fame. When she came in, I said, "it's on."

HSH: How do you feel the work that you do contributes to the Health and the Wellness of the African community?

NK: So. Being brown in this skin everywhere I go when I talk and people see me they see a living example of what I do. That always sells people on it immediately. I always get people that say, "God I want to change my life. My diet" and things like that and that always helps. But also having the experience of being able heal my body and reverse a lot of the illnesses and things like that I was dealing with personally it inspires and moves other people who look like me as well.

HSH: What would your basic definition of holistic health be?

NK: To me, holistic, it means whole, total, complete. Mind, body and spirit. Its more than just eating healthier and, exercising, it encompasses mind body and spirit, but it also encompasses the

environment so the environment being healthy. So it's total health, total wellness and the environment is everything. Its family, school, work its relationships, its your finances, its everything being whole and healthy in body and mind working in life. It's not always easy to get that, but it's like once you get the basics mind, body and spirit right, everything will fall into place. It's a sense of community, being within and out

HSH: How did you come to know what you know?

NK: I have a story where I was very very sick for a long time and I couldn't figure out why I was sick and how to fix this and because I as so young I was refused to accept it. Some people accept that they have diabetes or high blood pressure or they are sick. I refused the fact that I was going to be sick. I had a thyroid disorder, I had vertigo, migraines, I had a face full of acne, I was chronically constipated, I was chronically fatigued, depressed, I also had sciatica. Sciatica was that nervous pinch...

(exhale). What was your question?

HSH: Were you in college?

NK: It started when I was in undergrad when I was about 20, but it kept sort of like progressing. It wasn't until I got to grad school and I was maybe twenty-three that I really said to myself that something's not right here. Something has got to shift and it was because I was chronically constipated that I intuitively thought to myself well I just need fresh fruit, and salad and have

guacamole all day long. I am going to get better. And I did. And I started eating like that and I had no idea what this was called. No idea that this was eating vegan, raw or whatever. I just knew that this what was going to create a shift for me. And it wasn't until I went on yoga retreat and I went on a yoga retreat that was sponsored by the Black Yoga Teacher Association and it was right outside Chicago and I was in the salad line and I met a guy who kept questioning why I was eating salad when I told him he was like, "oh you're a raw foodist." I'm not one for labels. I can't stand the labels, but I was just like, "no this is what I'm eating. Leave me alone." The people were already bothering me about how I was eating and we met and he then took me to the raw food restaurant in Chicago, Karen's Fresh Corner and it was there that I discovered how to make raw foods taste really good and to do something other than a salad. I learned how to make pizzas, and salads, and burgers and cakes and pies and other things. I really expanded my whole. You can take cauliflower and make it look like rice and flavor it and do all these interesting things to it. And so I bough books and DVD and I took classes. I just went home and started experimenting. It was like...I used to live in this studio apartment in Hyde Park of Chicago and it had a bedroom, bathroom, and it had a kitchen. My kitchen was like my healing laboratory. It really became this place for healing and I reading more. I started getting in meditation. I was doing a lot of yoga. I even was going to this acupuncture. There is this acupuncture school in Chicago where you get free acupuncture. I was doing that I really just spent the time on healing my body and I haven't been sick since then. I have not...I have never had the flu. I don't get colds. I don't get headaches. I've had a few headaches since I've been pregnant, but I have not been sick since then.

HSH: In Chicago, where you embraced this knowledge, is that was sparked you to go to

California?

NK: The California thing is where I wanted to produce for television and film. I wanted to be a TV producer, but what happened in California was that everybody in California was raw. All the people that I was running into and because of that I got a job as a TV producer and I was working these really long and horrendous hours still trying to eat. So then I would work and come all home and make all of this food to take with me to work the next day and I would share the food with other people at my job and what happened people started asking me if I could cater small little birthday parties and things like that and I was doing that. And then in the stores there were two stores. One was called Arowan and the other was called the Santa Monica Co-op. Well they had raw food products in there, but it was only like two companies and the products weren't that good. So I come up with this idea to start making products and putting them in the stores. And at that time you didn't need a bar code. You didn't need nutritional information. All you needed was to have a great label, package it give it to them and sell it. And I did that and then eventually the word kept growing and growing. And I needed to find a kitchen, because I was still making the food in my house. I needed to find a kitchen to make the food in and stumble upon a coffee shop in West Hollywood and I turned that coffee shop into my restaurant.

HSH: And that went on for five straight years?

NK: Four years.

HSH: Can you give names whom you give homage to in terms of your own intellectual and holistic growth?

NK: Queen Afua. Dr. Llaila Afrika and Juwanza Kunjufu. Were the first two, because those books were in my Dad's house. We grew up reading those books. Definitely Queen Afua. The names are blanking on me. Like I did my first fast using one of Queen Afua's books.

HSH: What about the book *Heal Thyself*?

NK: Yes. I did my first fast using her books. Her books. Dr. Llaila Afrika. Dr. Iman Bomani. Dr. Aris LaTham.

HSH: And what about Karen Calabrese. Can you just do me a favor? I've done some reading on this sister. I just got reintroduced to her, but for you to basically her being the intermediary for your health can you elaborate a little bit more about her?

NK: Yeah. Karen has been doing what she's been doing for a long time. She has one of the longest standing restaurants in the world so she was doing wheatgrass in the 60 and 70's when it was not cool to do wheatgrass. I like Karen's concepts, because a lot of her customers like raw their like mainstream people who just want to eat healthier which I think sometimes in the raw food community a lot of people tend to like not include other people. We tend to criticize and judge and all that other stuff and Karen you know she has a raw food restaurant. She also has a

cooked vegan restaurant. Her clientele are mainstream people who probably eat steaks as well, but they also want to try raw food as well. So I really just love what she does as well. And she has expanded her company where she has food, but she also does spa component to eat and she does consultations. She's got product line and detox cleanses and things like that. In terms of being who she is and also being an entrepreneur is what I really admire about her.

HSH: Do you think eating healthy is necessary for African Americans? Why?

NK: Yeah. Definitely. So, for African Americans, because we are melanated people. Melanin is the second most studied element in the world for good reason and we tend to absorb so many different things and different rate than most other people. Everything from sounds to food to words to everything. So we really have to be conscious about what we eat. And because our pineal gland is the first gland that develops in our bodies and it's the gland that houses the third eye so if that third eye is decalcified it hinders our ability to make conscious choices about our foods, our diets and our lifestyles, which affects every area of our lives. It affects our family structures. It affects our ability to accumulate wealth. It affects our ability to think properly. So you know if you are making decisions constantly right so if that space is not open and we can only see things on the surface and we can't see beyond them how are we going to be in this construct and making decisions about things that are in our communities. There is a reason why black people are behind in everything literacy, education, family structure, health. There is a reason behind that.

HSH: What happens to the pineal gland when one eats toxic food?

NK: It decalcifies it, which cuts off its possibilities, spiritual and intellectual and economical what have you.

HSH: What suggestions would you make to meat eater in order to get them to consider how to eat to live or embrace a healthier lifestyle?

NK: I always tell people, because I am not dogmatic about things. I don't like to tell people to stop eating meat. Although, you know challenge yourself like maybe stop eating it for thirty days or stop eating it for every single meal that you eat. Maybe have...you know eat strictly vegetarian for three times out of the week. It's like I don't see how people can continuously, continuously consume meat. Its heavy. It is hard to break down and digest. You gain a lot of weight from it. Its just like. It totally ...it ages you. It totally breaks down the whole digestive system. So stop eating it like every single day and just start to consume just more fresher food...Fresher fruits and vegetables. Cut out some of the dairy products. Just replace them with non-dairy products, because you don't necessarily want to eliminate them you just want to replace or substitute it.

HSH: What other things would you have me do to embrace a healthier lifestyle?

NK: So, I would tell the people not to overdo it, because a lot of the times when people move from a meat based diet to a plant-based diet they tend to overdo the meat substitute foods. Like the tofu and the tempeh, or the seitan or the *Morning Star* burger. And you got to be careful, because you can overdo it. But just embrace more legumes like lentil, quinoa, buckwheat, rice those things and you can make them taste really really good. We already know how to season our

food really well. We can season it with fresh herbs and garlic and things like that. Take on those things, because they also have meaty texture that get you full and also is full of protein, because you are looking to replace the protein.

HSH: What about drinking water?

NK: I always tell people to stick to water, because you when you drink a lot of coffees and sugary juices and the sodas they have no nutrients in them. They are full of sugar and they are a lot of calories. So there is a triple whammy and its funny, because I hear so many people say, “I just cut out sugar for thirty days and lost ten pounds. Just doing that alone will reap you tremendous results.

HSH: What suggestion do you have for people with friends that eat differently?

NK: Give up your friends. I don't have a lot of the same friends that I used to have, before I was eating this way and that is the honest to God truth. I also don't get invited to barbecue's because people...its so funny because people will now say, “well I'mma make a salad. I don't know what to make you, but if you want to come.” So with that you have to create the environment around you to live a healthier life. So you have to surround yourself with people who what to eat health. Who want to live long time, because I'mma tell you people who live a long high quality of life they surrounded themselves with friends that did it. My grandmother is 96 years old and she still has two or three good friend that are the same age as her. So you have around yourself with

people. I don't have any friend who smoke or drink excessively. I mean in the past we were friends, but we don't hang around anymore.

HSH: Have you written any books and if so can you tell me what those books are about?

NK: *The Goddess of Raw Foods* was my first book, and I am working on my second book, but it's about 80 recipes most of the recipes are from my restaurant and my catering company and they range from really simple recipes to more broad recipes that you may need a dehydrator for, but most of the recipes you may need like a blender or a food processor, a knife and a cutting board. That is my first book. I have tons of articles online that you can just Google and find those articles. I have YouTube videos. [Youtube.com/nwennakai](https://www.youtube.com/nwennakai).

HSH: What is on there?

NK: I have a TV show that I shot. I did that one. You can watch it on there and I have a couple of videos with my classes and it maybe eight videos on there. I have a few of them on there.

HSH: How can you purchase the book?

NK: They can go to my website which is www.nwenna.com or they can go to amazon.com.

HSH: Is there anything more you would like to discuss?

NK: You know, just eat your greens. My sister, she eats a kale salad every single day. I'm convinced that she is never going to be sick. Eat lots of greens.

HSH: Why greens?

NK: In our culture we are turned off by the color of green. Green is the color of life, growth, vegetation, and harvest. Its life, but...so greens has the elements of chlorophyll in it. Chlorophyll I always refer to as the melanin of plants. It's what gives plants their green color. So chlorophyll has the same molecular structure as human blood so when it goes in you system your body immediately recognizes it, understands its, breaks it down and uses it. Whereas, if you put fried chicken it cannot compute what the heck this is so it's like ok I'm going to put this in the arteries in the cells. It's got to go somewhere, because your body is a computer. So it doesn't understand what it is so it registers it as a toxin. And it won't easily eliminate it so it stays in your colon. Your greens it immediately recognizes what it is. It has the same molecular structure as human blood. Its super alkaline so it will keep your body alkaline and if your body is at least 85% alkaline its impossible for disease to ridden the body.

NK: In eating them, you are oxygenating your blood. The oxygen is pumping the blood. Your oxygen is your first form of life. It increases the hemoglobin in your blood. So it gives your body the ability to boost your immune system. So that you wont get sick. There are so many preventative things that you can do to the body just from food alone to prevent you from getting sick. When everybody else has the flu you don't necessarily have to get that flu.