

Maisin have engaged at every turn with the novelties and opportunities that colonialism, missionization, nationalism, and monetization have presented. They have done so with integrity, encompassing (albeit not perfectly) the cash economy within the moral economy—through remittances from Maisin who are employed in town, for example, and by continuing to share, within their wide kinship networks, any material benefit that comes their way. Barker subtly insists on the place of anthropology in an era of globalization: “global trends and connections always take shape and have effects within localities. These localities, in turn, exert their own influences” (177). The reader sees Barker in the field and understands how he came to know what he knows as well as the confusions and stumbles he experienced along the way. Never self-vaunting, Barker nonetheless tacitly establishes himself as a model anthropologist: respectful of the people he studies, willing to help when help is needed, and a thoughtful reporter for the global audience his book is likely to command. The book is rich in information and insights and is very well written. Ideal for advanced undergraduate as well as for graduate courses on the Pacific, environmental studies, and cultural anthropology, the book also makes a strong scholarly contribution to these fields.

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The Insular Empire: America in the Mariana Islands. Documentary, 59 minutes, 35 mm, color/black-and-white, 2009. Written, directed, and produced by Vanessa Warheit. Distributed by Horse Opera Productions. Available for screening or purchase through Transit Media: <http://theinsularempire.blogspot.com/p/buy-dvd.html>

Posing the provocative question, “What is it like to be a colonial subject of the greatest democracy on Earth?” Vanessa Warheit’s *The Insular Empire: America in the Mariana Islands* encourages closer consideration of the complex and ongoing colonial history of the Chamorro people. The 2009 release of the documentary resurrects age-old questions about the cost of the relationship between the indigenous peoples of the Marianas and their present-day US administration. Shot entirely on location in the Marianas and including archival footage, such questions are placed within an “on-the-ground,” contemporary context that remains largely relevant and accessible across generational, social, economic, and cultural lines. No longer are Chamorros framed simply as “colonial subjects” as they are so frequently in canonical texts. Rather, these subjects are afforded faces and names giving audiences an intimate and up-close look into contemporary life in the Marianas and the realities of modern colonialism in the region.

Insular Empire takes on a task often avoided by most historians—that of considering the Marianas as a collective unit that shares significant ties despite divergent colonial trajectories following the initial geopolitical

division of the culturally homogenous Marianas in 1898. *Insular Empire* offers a much-needed, nuanced glimpse into the complex journeys of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands toward US territorial and commonwealth statuses. In doing so, the film offers a broad look at the manner in which US imperialism has affected the indigenous Chamorros and longtime Carolinian residents of these islands in relatively similar ways in spite of their otherwise separate colonial histories.

Warheit's documentary makes great strides in tracing the convoluted histories of US administration in Guam and the Northern Marianas, highlighting the core limitations imposed on the people of the islands by the United States. These limitations rest primarily in limited US citizenship, the absence of absolute guarantees to constitutional rights and liberties, and the retention of plenary powers by the US Congress over the islands and their residents. Such limitations are all too often dismissed as a small price to pay for the benefits of association with the United States. While Warheit acknowledges those benefits, she also offers critical and stimulating examination of the injustices inherent in these colonial situations. In particular, Warheit foregrounds the ambivalence felt among those in these islands who are never completely within the fold of the US polity, nor completely released from it.

Indigenous ambivalence toward the United States is articulated in the film through four prominent community leaders and activists: Hope Alvarez Cristobal and the late Carlos Pangelinan Taitano of Guam, and Lino Olopai and Pete Tenorio of

Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Each individual story affords a personal glance at the ongoing struggle in the Marianas toward some measure of parity between the island governments and the US federal government. Ranging from outright protest against US colonialism offered by Cristobal and Olopai, to efforts toward cooperation and collaboration as embodied by Taitano and Tenorio, the individual stories that emerge reflect the extent to which indigenous communities have actively responded to the US presence in and control over the islands.

Although the four individuals featured in the film offer invaluable insight into key resistance movements in the islands, *Insular Empire* proves limited in its scope in that these individuals largely belong to what can be characterized as elite circles and for the most part represent the indigenous intelligentsia. Grassroots resistance movements and the recent rise in activism among Chamorro youth in particular are almost completely ignored. Moreover, save for a few sparse clips of individuals voicing these concerns that remain in the shadow of the others, Warheit fails to adequately address the more pronounced, and even hostile, calls for political independence and a complete separation of the Marianas from the United States. Although these calls for more radical change in the political statuses of the islands have not yet gained complete favor among the majority of residents, they have grown in recent years and achieved notable momentum. At the very least, a more conscious acknowledgment of these sentiments would provide for a greater

sense of balance in Warheit's consideration of indigenous protest and dissent in the Marianas.

Equally lacking in Warheit's documentary is an adequate complication of the issue of US military enlistment by indigenous men and women in the Marianas, which features prominently in the overall narrative of the documentary. As acknowledged in the film, enlistment in the military among members of the indigenous community remains the highest per capita in the nation. Often framed as blind patriotism and loyalty to the United States, the significantly high enlistment rates in the economically struggling islands are rarely analyzed critically in terms of the desires for economic advancement and mobility; these powerful motives are not adequately acknowledged here. Further, Warheit explores only briefly the traumatic World War II experience of the Chamorros and their subsequent liberation from Japanese occupation by US military—a history that continues to foster acceptance of the US presence in the islands as a means of preventing that history from repeating itself. These economic and historical factors that influence Chamorro-American relations deserve closer and more critical examination.

Despite these notable shortcomings, *Insular Empire* achieves success on multiple levels. Largely accessible and thought-provoking, the film stands out

as a clear reminder of the continual presence of colonialism in the contemporary Pacific at large, and thus has the potential to engage audiences both within and outside of the Marianas and the United States. The documentary proves a valuable addition to any classroom across the humanities and social sciences disciplines and, more important, has the potential to find a home in the community at large outside of academia due to its accessibility and direct confrontation of key issues that residents across social and economic lines grapple with on a daily basis.

The 2009 release of the documentary has proved timely in light of the current plans to dramatically increase the US military presence in the Marianas. The potential for this increase to have harmful impacts on indigenous populations has incited a renewed focus on the political statuses of the islands and the continuing imbalance in political power between the islands and the United States. The core strength of this particular film lies in its ability to stir and raise social consciousness on these particular issues, making it a welcome addition to the ongoing discussion of twenty-first-century colonialism in the Pacific.

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