

small community than it is elsewhere. Besnier is persuasive in his argument that any image of gossip as somehow contained and confined to the everyday and the trivial is illusory and leads us to downplay an important aspect of human life. This innovative book was selected by the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) for its 2010 prize for outstanding book in any field of applied linguistics.

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*Homealani*. Documentary, 60 minutes, digital DV-Cam, color, 2010. Written, directed, produced, and edited by Ann Marie Nālani Kirk. Released by Blue Crater Media.

2010 constituted a landmark year for Native Hawaiian filmmakers with the premiere of the 'Owi Film Festival, which ran from 1–26 May at the Honolulu Academy of Arts Doris Duke Theatre. Although Native Hawaiians have been active in the filmmaking process for at least the last forty years, the presentation of a collective body of their work in festival form has never been achieved—until now. The film festival was the culmination of an eight-month-long collaboration between film curator Gina Caruso and Hawaiian filmmaker Ann Marie Nālani Kirk; Kirk's two films *Happy Birthday*, *Tutu Ruth* and *Homealani* (the subject of this review) were featured in the festival lineup.

*Homealani*, Kirk's most recent and inarguably most personal work, documents the life of her grandfather, Colonel Oliver Homealani Kupau,

who lived during a time of tremendous cultural, social, economic, and political change in his native Hawai'i. He was born in 1899, a year after the illegal annexation of the islands by the United States, and he witnessed the transition of Hawai'i from US territory to its eventual designation as the fiftieth state in the union in 1959. During that time, Kupau sought to adapt to changing circumstances while never forgetting his Native Hawaiian roots. Kupau's experiences mirror those of many other Hawaiians who had to negotiate between their mother culture and the introduced culture of the United States. It is this universal feature of the film that enables audiences—in particular those of Native Hawaiian descent—to identify with Kupau's life, whether through their own firsthand experiences or through the stories of family members. Indeed, at a 2009 screening of the film at Kamehameha Schools—a private school for Native Hawaiian youth where Kupau was a student in the early 1900s—several elderly audience members stood up at the end to relay their own experiences of having to maneuver between two cultures. This powerful moment of collective remembering underscored the fact that *Homealani* is not only an intensely personal portrait of a single individual, but also a partial unfolding of the wider panorama that is the Native Hawaiian experience in the wake of Western hegemony.

Kirk uses footage shot by her grandfather on 16mm film stock during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s to transport the audience back in time and to introduce them to the world through his eyes. The opening section

of *Homealani* is a montage of moving images taken by Kupau—in both color and black-and-white—which include, among other things, a trio of young girls dancing hula, Kupau’s beloved wife Jessie walking in the family garden, and family and friends preparing what looks like an imu (earth oven). This sequence is infused with an almost haunting quality by technical features such as the graininess of the film and the melancholy piano music that plays underneath the otherwise silent images. But something subtle is at work here, something deeper. It is as if we are watching the past in motion; we are seeing intimate moments in peoples’ lives—moments that may have long been forgotten, but which are forever fixed in time through the power of the camera. *Homealani* evokes an undeniable sense of intimacy with the past and an emotional connection to the people—powerful impressions that Kirk manages to sustain throughout the film.

As with any good piece of literature, a memorable film begins with a compelling first line of dialogue to draw the audience in. Such is the case with *Homealani*. As the opening images slowly fade to black, the filmmaker’s voice-over begins the narrative thread: “I was born the year my grandfather died.” This powerful statement immediately situates Kirk in the wider framework of the story and underscores her connection to her grandfather, even though he died when she was only six months old. Despite his physical absence in her life, Kirk’s understanding of Kupau has come through a treasure trove of resources, including family photographs and letters dating from the early twentieth

century, archival film footage and audio recordings, and the recollections of family and friends. The filmmaker uses this valuable collection of family written, visual, and oral history—much of which she was not privy to until she began the research process for *Homealani*—to give flesh to the shadow of her deceased grandfather and to follow the trajectory of his life from his early childhood and youth, to his life as a husband, father, and military man.

One of the principle themes in Kupau’s life was his thirty-eight-year career in the US military. He joined the army at an early age and worked his way up to the rank of colonel in the prestigious 298th Regiment Hawai’i. He served alongside other Hawaiian men—including Colonel Francis Ho’oka’amomi Kanahale and Colonel Samuel Ke’ala—who, like him, were able to retain their indigenous culture while succeeding in the culture of the military. Speaking about the three men in one of many interviews conducted by the filmmaker with family and friends, Beadie Kanahale Dawson (daughter of Colonel Kanahale) stated, “They were all bright, well-educated men . . . and they never lost their Hawaiian-ness and they never lost their military discipline. They were able to combine the two.” In many ways, as the filmmaker relays, not only did the military provide Hawaiian men with a sense of structure during a time of change, but through their military service these men were able to perpetuate the warrior spirit of their ancestors.

Despite the devoted service men like Kupau gave to the military, however, their loyalty was not always reciprocated.

cated. As the film reveals, Kupau was never promoted to the rank of general, even though he demonstrated the highest level of performance throughout his career. While the Hawaiian values by which Kupau lived his life undoubtedly helped him to be a more effective military leader, many of his family members believe that he was overlooked for promotion because he was Hawaiian. Thus, while Kupau may have been able to integrate the Hawaiian and American cultures with some success, there were times when the fault line between the two was clearly distinguishable.

As one of a growing number of Native Hawaiian filmmakers, Kirk has faithfully carried on the legacy of her grandfather in that she has inherited his love of storytelling through film. As she stated when explaining her experience of viewing film footage taken by her grandfather over a period of three decades, “I see the world through his eyes, through the lens of the camera. I see the things that were important to him.” We can also see what is important to Kirk through the work she has produced over the years. Although *Homealani* is the filmmaker’s most recent project—a project twenty years in the making—Kirk has directed, produced, written, or been involved in some capacity in the making of numerous documentaries, talk shows, and series.

*Homealani* is rich with archival materials and interviews that illuminate not only the life of the filmmaker’s grandfather but also a bygone era in Hawai‘i’s history. It would be a worthwhile addition to courses focused on Hawaiian history and Pacific Islands studies, as well

as providing valuable inspiration to Native Hawaiians interested in telling their own family stories through film. And perhaps some such inspired individuals will consider submitting their filmic narratives for inclusion in the next ‘Oiwī Festival, which is scheduled for 2012.

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*Twelve Days at Nuku Hiva: Russian Encounters and Mutiny in the South Pacific*, by Elena Govor. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-8248-3368-8, xi + 301 pages, bibliography, index, black-and-white illustrations. Cloth, US\$49.00.

The history of Russian expeditions in the Pacific has not attracted much attention in the English language, so it is important that an account of the first Russian circumnavigation led by Adam Krusenstern and Urey Lisiansky in the *Nedezhda* and *Neva* in 1803–1804 has been given such fine treatment in Elena Govor’s *Twelve Days at Nuku Hiva*. Govor analyzes the naval and intellectual precursors, the naval and scientific personnel, and the meetings on the deck and ashore in Nuku Hiva. In so doing, she traverses a wide range of historical fields including cultural encounters, European fascination with Oceania, the science of collecting and observing, naval protocol, the significance of prior scientific and expedition experience, and the problems caused by personality clashes in shipboard relationships. The word “mutiny” in the title is slightly misleading. The contest over com-