

lure that few young people know how to use today. There are three other tributes worth mentioning here: “Wordsmith” and “Te boto” are for Taomati Nakibae Taramatang of Rabi Island in Fiji (94–95, 97); “Golden chord” is for the late Alphonsus Kanimea, who composed many popular Kiribatese hymns that can now be heard in churches throughout Fiji and Kiribati (98–99).

In this section is my favorite of all of Teairo’s drawings. Titled “Dancer,” it depicts half a female dancer’s body from the right breast to midway down her black skirt, which is held by ornamental belts (92). Frigate birds are outlined against a dark wall and only two tiny flowers—one yellow, one red—interrupt the brown, black, and white that mark this simple, elegant piece. The frigate bird is one of the most important Kiribati motifs and I-Kiribati dancing is based on the movements of these birds.

This collection is a visual joy and I appreciated the opportunity to engage poetry in the Kiribati language, which rarely appears in a regionally accessible form. Many thanks to my father, John Tabakitoa Teaiwa, for discussing each one with me. It is my humble opinion that Teairo’s voice in Kiribatese is grounded well within the ancient poetic traditions that characterize Kiribati culture. His voice in English, like his waa, is just beginning to break through the storm of popular literary models.

Storms
are rude visitors
that come uninvited
bursting into our pacific lives

from across the eternal ocean
breathing restless hurricanes
and sweating heavy rain . . .
and when they hit
they hit hard

so listen too
to the loaded
silence

(Teweariki Teairo, “Storms”)

KATERINA MARTINA TEAIWA
University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa

* * *

Mauna Kea: Temple Under Siege,
56:40 minutes, VHS and DVD, color,
2004. Produced and Directed by
Puhipau and Joan Lander. Distributed
by Nā Maka o ka ‘Āina. Information
on price and ordering is available at
<<http://www.namaka.com/>>

“Clashing Cosmologies.” Manu Aluli Meyer uses these words to describe the conflict between Western scientists and Hawaiians regarding the use of Mauna Kea, the subject of the documentary *Mauna Kea: Temple Under Siege*. The film articulates the opposing interests of scientists, who have built and wish to continue to build telescopes on the summit for scientific research, and Hawaiians, who want the sacredness of the mountain acknowledged and the abuses resulting from the telescopes and their use to stop. With music performed by Brother Noland and striking footage of the mountain—its majesty juxtaposed against the telescopes—this documentary not only captures the importance of Mauna Kea to the

Hawaiian people, but shows it as a symbol representing the larger controversy stemming from the differing values of the indigenous people of Hawai'i and Western settlers.

The film features many Native Hawaiian scholars and kūpuna (elders), including Kealoha Pisciotto, Manu Meyer, Marie Solomon, and representatives from the Royal Order of Kamehameha, all of whom gave testimony about the cultural significance of Mauna Kea. The kūpuna and kumu, or teachers, recount (one of) the Hawaiian tradition(s) affirming that Mauna Kea is the piko (navel) of the first born of Papa and Wākea, and as such is a kupuna to Hawaiians. They clarify how this tradition fits in Native Hawaiian cosmology, explaining that Papa and Wākea are the earth mother and sky father for Hawaiians, and thus, Hawaiians have a familial relationship to the 'āina, or land. It seemed that many of us sitting in the audience the day I viewed the documentary were familiar with this tradition, and therefore, understood its significance. However, because of the lack of respect and understanding many westerners have for oral tradition and the role storytelling has in indigenous people's way of knowing who they are and where they come from, the full meaning of this tradition is often lost on those educated to value technology and scientific exploration above all else.

Yet it is through oral traditions, or mo'olelo, that Hawaiians know and understand Mauna Kea. One mo'olelo shared in the film is the story of Poli'ahu, the snow goddess, and Pele, the goddess of the volcano. The story

tells how the two goddesses fought on the summit, with Pele eventually leaving Mauna Kea to Poli'ahu. While the volcano at Mauna Kea has not erupted for over four thousand years, showing that Pele has kept her promise, a specific kind of pōhaku (rock) resulted from the heating and cooling that occurred during battle between these two goddesses. Hawaiians found this pōhaku perfect for making ko'i (adzes). Mauna Kea is home to numerous archeological sites, of which this ancient adze quarry is but one.

Representatives from the Royal Order of Kamehameha also spoke to the cultural importance of the summit—but I question whether the significance of the order is appreciated other than by those who understand the order's legacy. Dressed in their regalia, I wonder if to outsiders they appear to be just another tourist attraction. Since the historical context of this group, its lineage, and its purpose, were not discussed (other than mentioning that the order honored the present-day princess of Japan's grandfather with honorary membership under the reign of King Kalākaua), I imagine the impact of their presence and words was lessened for those unfamiliar with Hawaiian tradition.

Alongside the mo'olelo and Hawaiian tradition, Hawaiian scholars—those educated mostly in Western institutions and who can speak in ways westerners respect, including biologists and entomologists—discuss the desecration of this wahi pana (sacred place), and the negative ecological impact the telescopes have

had on the summit. Numerous plants and animals now sit on the verge of extinction due to deforestation and traffic at the summit. Images of the mountain—some picturing it from quite a distance—show that the telescopes now dominate the skyline at the peak. Some astronomers compare the shape of the telescopes to ancient European castles—but a Hawaiian kupuna called them “pus pockets.”

At the heart of the conflict is the legal situation of Mauna Kea. Mauna Kea is a ceded land and as such is currently managed by the University of Hawai‘i. Management in this case includes renting it out. Most shocking is not the thirteen telescopes already at the peak, each of which is the property of a different country (including France, Germany, and Japan), but the fact that the university charges these countries just \$1 a year to rent this prime piece of property. As if this weren’t enough impact, at the time of filming there were plans in the works for adding more telescopes to the thirteen—perhaps twice as many. In interviews, Western scientists explained that although the monetary compensation is small, this financial loss is made up for in research time “traded” on the different telescopes.

The documentary depicts scenes from several meetings in which both sides had opportunities to express their views. Hawaiians adamantly stated that using the mountain in the way it is currently being used is a sacrilege. And the scientists maintained that their research, which from their perspective can only be conducted from the summit, will unlock the answers to the universe. Several

times, certain scientists expressed the sentiment, “Can’t we compromise?” and in my head I heard the words, “Can’t we all just get along?” Ironically, these words are hardly ever spoken by the group being oppressed, but mostly by the group in power. The scientists claimed to be sensitive to the cultural significance of Mauna Kea, but also did not seem ready to stop any of their current activities or plans for more building at the summit. One is left to wonder what compromise really means.

It bothers me that at the screening I attended I didn’t notice anyone in the audience who looked like one of the scientists shown in the film; and I realize that, in reality, just by looking at the makeup of the audience, the film was preaching to the choir, so to speak. I also know that a 2 November 2004 *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* article stated that plans to increase the number of telescopes on top of Mauna Kea have been approved (“State OKs 6 Small Telescopes” <http://starbulletin.com/2004/11/02/news/story7.html>). I find myself asking, what would it take for the scientists represented in the film and their supporters to recognize the negative impact their actions are having on an entire culture? The assumed nonviolent nature of astronomy masks the devastation and destruction caused by the astronomical observatories. This controversy surrounding Mauna Kea is even more alarming when viewed as a representational symbol of the situation Hawaiians continue to face as a people having to fight to preserve their culture and their existence in their own land. There is death—both

of a people and a whole way of life—
at stake. However, although Western
cosmology might continue to influ-
ence what happens at Mauna Kea for
some time yet, Hawaiians possess a
key that escapes the astronomers
searching the universe; as one kupuna
put it, the astronomers look to the

skies for answers, but Hawaiians
know who they are; they know where
they came from.

GEORGANNE NORDSTROM
University of Hawai'i, Mānoa

* * *