

script worked against that. Directing a diverse, accomplished group of Hawai'i actors (none Rotuman), Megan Evans used the Kumu Kahua space effectively, making good theater of the play. Yet the performance lacked the "Pacific feel" of Hereniko's *Last Virgin* and *Fine Dancing* in both of which dance, music, chant, clowning, and aspects of Pacific performance were vital components. This production of *Love 3 Times*, and to some extent the script, moved toward performing generalizable features of contemporary fragmentation. Or as Evans phrased it in her program notes, "Now we live more and more like branches of an urban banyan tree—our roots dangling in the air." The danger of this approach in (and to) the play is that it will be haunted by the bad faith of becoming an instance of the phenomena that trouble it, rather than art genuinely haunted and passionately driven to envision alternatives.

PAUL LYONS

*University of Hawai'i, Mānoa*

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*Ka'ililauokekoa*, 76 minutes, VHS (NTSC), color, 2000. Director, screenwriter, and composer: Kala'iokona Ontai; producer and distributor: 'Aha Pūnana Leo, P O Box 1265, Kea'au, Hawai'i. US\$19.95.

"Empowerment for Hawaiians" described it all. At the 3 November 2000 Hawai'i International Film Festival screening, the audience was a who's who of the Hawaiian community. There were faces of all colors, people from all walks of life. In a way it was a "reunion," a reunion of

language. Hawaiian was being spoken by eager children and animated adults looking for their seats; the audience was abuzz with excitement. Outside, the stars of the film were taking still photos alongside their film poster. This was a historic moment for film in Hawai'i—the debut of the first feature-length film done completely in the Hawaiian language and created by a Hawaiian-speaking cast and crew.

People produce images with many goals and purposes. In *Ka'ililauokekoa* the purposes are manifold. According to the film's introduction, the creators hope that it will create "new venues where [our] ancestors' [stories] can be shared." At the debut, composer Ontai explained, "If we have touched the hearts of our *kūpuna* then we have succeeded." The sentiment is clear within the Hawaiian community—we want all the images we produce of Kānaka Maoli to be done with both respect and honor; we want to create something that our *kūpuna* will smile down on and be proud of. Creating such a film, even with notions of how it should be done, introduces certain pressures and difficulties, however.

The film opens with such beautiful imagery—scenes of gorgeous mountains, sky, ocean, and birds in flight—that one can't help feeling proud of being Hawaiian. Contemporary Hawaiian music plays in the background, enhancing the range of emotions portrayed throughout the film, guiding the viewer's senses along with the imagery.

The story of *Ka'ililauokekoa* is taken from a Kaua'i legend that has been passed down from generation to generation. As explained in the

film's press release, much research was undertaken to maintain cultural integrity. Set in the precontact past, the film portrays "a love story, universal in nature but Hawaiian in expression." It speaks of a love that forms between Ka'ililauokekoa, a Kaua'i chief played by Noelani Iokepa (an immersion-school teacher in real life), and high chief Kauakahiali'i, played by Pono Guerrero (a federal firefighter), whose magical flute attracts her to him. As in the many Hawaiian stories that feature strong, independent women, this tale portrays the strength and determination that Ka'ililauokekoa shows in refusing to marry another chief, Keli'ikoa (played by immersion-school teacher Kamakane-oaloha Hopkins), to whom she was promised at birth.

In assessing the first feature film in Hawaiian, one place to start is to look at the use of text versus nonverbal imagery. The filmmakers chose to use subtitles, but the question is, are subtitles needed? Who is the target audience? If the film's audience is students of Hawaiian language, then the subtitles are necessary as a teaching tool. The sometimes elementary level of the dialogue (each character goes through "Hello, my name is . . ." sentences) suggests that the film is indeed targeting language students. Language that is a little less textbook and more conversational would add to the believability of the film and its dialogue, but this is a choice that relates to target audience and purpose.

With regard to the acting, one assumes a choice was made between using experienced actors and speakers of Hawaiian. In choosing to use speak-

ers of the Hawaiian language with no acting experience, did the filmmakers consider holding acting workshops? Better-trained actors would have enhanced the film had they fully "acted" some of the great funny lines in the film. A few minor inconsistencies might easily have been remedied: for example, bathing-suit-tan marks on one of the characters in the village would not have been seen in traditional times. In filmmaking, such details can make or break a film. On the other hand, I liked the use of close-up shots of faces to portray certain emotions, and I would like to have seen more of them.

As might be expected, the special effects were not up to the level that comes with experience and the funding available to other feature films. The blue screen, against which actors were filmed and background images added later, was used very well in some cases, but in others was a bit obvious and distracting. The dream sequence in which Ka'ililauokekoa steps out of her body and the scene goes to black-and-white, a sequence in which she follows the sound of Kauakahiali'i's nose flute, is very dramatic and well done. However, sometimes the color seems to fade in and out, making it hard to tell what is real and what is dreaming. Sound is used very well throughout; for instance, the sound of birds chirping when Kauakahiali'i is discussed helps convey his role as bird keeper.

Despite some difficulties with text, acting, and special effects, the use of *kaona* (hidden meaning) is exceptional. In Hawaiian literature, *lehua* blossoms and their nectar are some-

times used to symbolize women, and the film follows this practice with its many references to *lehua* blossoms. In addition, water, leaves, and waterfalls create another symbolism that enhances the *kaona* throughout. Here, as in many films, the story is at its strongest when it is being told with images rather than words.

In general, the film succeeds very well as a good tool for teaching the Hawaiian language. Given its minimal funding and the limited experience among the cast and crew, this first attempt at making a feature-length film in Hawai'i with a completely Hawaiian-speaking cast and crew created many expectations. The film is very significant for the Hawaiian community in Hawai'i. One hopes it is just the beginning of a long and important legacy of filmmaking in our native tongue. As I wrote in a poem entitled "Empowerment":

Voices can be seen  
with the right lens  
Traditions can be perpetuated  
with the right love  
Films can be made  
with a feeling of Empowerment

MICHELLE M KAMAKANOENOE  
NELSON TUPOU  
*Kapi'olani Community College*

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*In the Name of Growth—Fiji: A Story of Fisheries Development, Indigenous Women and Politics*, 53 minutes, VHS (PAL and NTSC), color, 2001. Filmmaker: 'Atu Emberson-Bain; assistant director, directory of photography, and original music: Michael Preston; editing studio: Digital Domain; distributor: Infocus Productions, Suva, Fiji. Individuals and local nongovernmental organizations US\$25.00 or F\$40.00; institutions or overseas nongovernmental organizations US\$45.00 or F\$65.00, plus postage and handling.

*In the Name of Growth* is the latest Infocus production by independent filmmakers 'Atu Emberson-Bain and Michael Rokotuiviwa Preston. Emberson-Bain is a member of the Fiji Senate and a graduate of Oxford and the Australian National University. Preston is a filmmaker, musician, actor, and sound engineer. The team's previous films (*Where the Rivers Meet*, addressing Fiji's ethnic relations, and *Caught in the Crossfire*, on women sex workers in Fiji) are both UNESCO award-winners. Emberson-Bain also produced *Na Ma'e! Na Ma'e! We Stand Until We Die*, documenting the conditions of indigenous Fijians working for the multinational Emperor Gold Mining Company. *In the Name of Growth* takes as its focus the situation of Fijian tuna cannery workers, this time subjected to poor wages and working conditions by fellow Fijians. The film exposes the human costs of a growth-driven economic model for workers in Levuka's Pacific Fishing Company (PAFCO) on the island of Ovalau.