

Why I am against TMT at Mauna Kea

I have been watching events unfold regarding construction of the new telescope on Mauna Kea from a distance, holding my tongue... reading, looking. Watching. Watching. Being careful not to be seduced by media attention, by my own cravings for attention, by buzz words drawn neatly on exposed breasts with hashtag upon hashtag. Being careful not to be seduced by promises of progress, even-keeled arguments for timeliness, compromise, logical defenses of jurisdiction, and what-not.

I was unsure even of my own position until very lately. I have watched with admiration long-time personal heroes taking very personal stands against TMT, still wondering where I fell in the spectrum of No-to-Yes. As a daughter of a man of science, I will admit that the "idea" of this telescope excites me.

Mauna Kea is the tallest mountain the world from sea level, nestled squarely in the center of the Pacific Rim, unobstructed and largely untouched. It is unique in the world for its location and properties, making it the ideal site for further space exploration. It is unrivaled in terms of prime locations for such a project, as far as I can tell. Who knows what wonders may come?

But the people don't want it.

The people. The same people who trustingly watched their way of life slip through their fingers, the people who have to shamefully demonstrate their bloodline for the smallest hope of regaining what they've lost, the people who make this special set of islands the only refuge I ever again want to call home, even for a minute. **THE PEOPLE TO WHOM THIS MOUNTAIN BELONGS.**

They don't want it.

Despite my silence on the matter, I have been losing sleep. This morning, between sleep and dream, I wrestled with how to connect to the the idea of "We are Mauna Kea". You've seen it, maybe. A friend, a relative, a supreme set of boobies on the Internet. "We are Mauna Kea".

I thought about this very literally.

Are we Mauna Kea? ARE WE?

I imagined myself as an entity that had a living, breathing pulse. A very real, physical form. A manifestation of history and goodness and harsh reality and the giving of life...of providing, protecting, and remaining stoic.

I imagined myself as a woman.

I imagined myself as a woman who was not me... Who perhaps had no voice in what happened to her body, in her being, or in her future. I imagined that I was precious to someone, maybe plenty of people, and they raised their voices. And they spoke on my behalf. To a wealthy suitor who promised the stars and wished nothing more than to have their way. And they said No.

To me, No Means No. Although I understand the benefits a project like this may bring across many realms, I will stand with the opposition. Even if it dwindles to only another.

As long as there is one Child of Hawaii with qualms about moving on, it cannot be pono.

I would not like to be trespassed against, regardless of what good may come later. I would not like to relinquish my right to give permission to enter. I would not like to have violated all that I hold holy and sacred, even if these things are non-issues to you. I would not like the fact that I have consented (however erroneously) to something in the past, be your empirical green-light to do it again.

If it were me, I would count on the people who love me to act in my best interest.

The people said No.

I stand with these people, who I consider to be my people, from a position of love and compassion. It does not matter actually what I want. It does not matter actually what you want.

This is bigger than us.

This is a matter of what is sacred, and those entrusted to defend have spoken loud and clear. Mauna Kea belongs to the Children of Hawaii, and they do not want that telescope here.

With all my aloha,

Tiffany Rose Brown