

Often an essay about a place has a thread that runs through it about the significance of the place to the author. Sometimes the thread is a feeling, as in the essay "Iwa Bird" by Kenneth Quilantang, Jr. The other idea is that the feeling of the place is connected to its cultural significance. Quilantang used a source which quoted other sources, so his in-text citations follow the format for an indirect source (source quoted in another source). His works cited entry, however, follows the format for a regular book, since that is the actual source that he used.

Another note: Notice that the 'okina are missing in the quoted material. That is because the quoted material did not use 'okina. However, in the part that Quilantang wrote, the 'okina are used the way they normally would be.

'Iwa Bird

Kenneth Quilantang Jr.

(Diamond Journal Spring 2004: 87-88)

Ka'ena Point is located on the northwestern tip of O'ahu. On a clear day one can make out the **faint image** of Kaua'i far off in the distance. This region of the island seems to be the most **isolated** due to its inaccessibility through normal modes of transportation. The few ways to get to Ka'ena Point are through mountain biking, four-wheel drive vehicles, and the old-fashioned hike. This inherent **inaccessibility** seems to imprint a **feeling of loneliness** that I have not felt anywhere else on O'ahu.

My favored mode of transportation is to mountain bike the trail up to Ka'ena Point. As I take my bicycle off the car rack I feel the **loneliness creep** up on me. Above I catch the w-shaped silhouette of a **single 'iwa bird**, gracefully and patiently patrolling the skies. I am almost oblivious to the sound of the crashing waves just 40 yards off shore of me; the 'iwa bird has me in its grasp, both it and I are here, **lone sentinels** at the trail heading to Ka'ena Point.

Today, the skies are **overcast, making the ground bright enough to cast shadows but grey enough overhead to make me feel the uneasiness of the solitude**. I put on the rest of my gear and I'm ready to head out on the trailhead. If it weren't for the pounding surf in the distance, the boulders and trailhead would seem as if they belonged on some other **barren planet**. As I pedal to the metal gate, I am reminded that this is not **Mars** by the distant crawl of a four-wheel drive truck strategically making its way towards me.

The metal gate is flanked by several large boulders on each side to keep motorized vehicles off the trailhead, but it doesn't stop the **metal juggernauts** from traversing around the gate to blaze their own way onto the trail. I slide my body through the gate and instantly I am in the realm of the Ka'ena Point trail.

The vehicle is closer to me, close enough that I see the people in the truck

looking haggard and worn, as if they were in some **battle**. I wave to them and I get a tired reply and they respond, "What's up bra! Only you and some other guys fishing up here. Have fun riding!" I smile as they pass me knowing that's pretty much all the talking I'll do for the next two hours I'm on the trail.

As I step into my pedals, my legs are tight with anticipation of the ride but I must conserve my energy for the ride out. This part of the trail looks as if it were an unfinished road of some sort, no asphalt, and just tightly packed rocks with a few large stones thrown in for good measure. The smell of the ocean is sweet and thick; I can almost taste it due to the crashing waves filling the air with the thick salty haze. The vibration of the rocks against my bike makes my hands tingle at first, then I become numb as I get used to the bouncing about the trail.

The trail is damp with recent rains and it's starting to cake onto my tires. The tiny flecks of mud and rocks hit my frame and make sort of **music to accompany me on my lonesome journey**.

J. Gilbert McAllister writes that historically, Ka'ena Point "is probably best known as **the place from which souls departed from this earth**" (qtd. in Sterling and Summers 92). This area of O'ahu has been the location of many legends and myths in ancient Hawaiian culture. The name has several meanings; commonly it is known as "**the end**" but Mary Kawena Pukui states, "Ka ena--red hot. Kaena was one the relatives of Pele who came with her from Kahiki and decided to stay at this place. That is why she visited this area, to see her cousin" (qtd. in Sterling and Summers 93).

As I head towards the **end of my journey**, I see Pohaku o Kaua'i in the distance. This rock is the center of many stories as well:

"It was at Kaena Point that Maui attempted to unite Kauai and Oahu. According to some legends after stationing himself on the western extremity of Oahu. . . .from which the island of Kauai is clearly visible on a bright day, Maui cast his wonderful hook, Mana-ia-ka-lani, far out into the ocean that it might engage itself in the foundations of Kauai. When he felt that it had taken a good hold, he gave a mighty tug at the line. A huge boulder, the Pohaku o Kauai, fell at his feet." (McAllister qtd. in Sterling and Summers 92)

The end of my ride compels me to wonder, **did the same force that drove Maui to pull Kaua'i and O'ahu together bring me to the Pohaku o Kaua'i? Alone I ponder this question, along with the solitary 'iwa bird, still circling overhead, as I prepare for the ride back to the car, back to the end of loneliness.**

Work Cited

Sterling, Elspeth and Catherine Summers. *Sites of Oahu*. Bishop Museum, 1983.