The Voice of the Folk is mediocre or at least uneven as a book, but there is material for several good articles. Separately, Chapter Six, the Epilogue ("The Poetry of Rock"), and the Appendix are fine essays, definitely worth reading. Perhaps the main advantages in having the materials in book form is the convenience and the index.


Reviewed by Norma J. Engberg.

Na Mele o Hawai'i Nei, 101 Hawaiian songs collected by Samuel H. Elbert and Noelani Mahoe, is an anthology of post-missionary songs composed sometime between 1850 and 1968. Both traditional selections embracing a variety of subjects central to the Hawaiian culture of these years and Christmas carols are included. Such songs owe their musical origin to missionary hymns and are not technically the same as chants, although some are chants which have been edited and set to music. In most cases the composers are known; indeed, some of the songs are written by composers who are still active. In these respects the material is not, strictly speaking, folklore; however, in subject matter, in style, in its reliance upon the oral tradition, that is, the use of memory not notation to record and transmit verses, and in the attitudes of many Hawaiians themselves toward these songs, the material is folk.

These mele honor places, persons, or events; a few are patriotic or religious; several concern themselves with food or drink, but the greatest number are love songs. The love songs are of particular interest in their imagery: described for us are native birds and plants wrapped in a misty rain, but the beloved is identified only by an anonymous and sexless pronoun (māua is first person plural dual exclusive):

'Elua wale iho nō māua,
I kolu i ka hone a ka'iēhu kai.
(from "Hanohano hanalei")

She and I are two,
Three with the rustle of sea spray.

Thus, the words of "Aloha 'oe," commonly thought of as a song of farewell, show it to be as its composer Queen Liliuokalani asserted, a love song:

Ha'aheo 'ē ka ua i nā pāli
Ke nihi a'elā i ka nahele
E ua'i ana paha i ka liko
Pua 'ahihi lehua o uka.
Proudly the rain on the cliffs
Creeps into the forest
Seeking the buds
And miniature lehua flowers of the uplands.

As explained in the chorus to "Ka Makanani Kā'ili Aloha," the fragrant flower lei adorning the lover and turning the mind to love, comes to symbolize the beloved when the lovers are parted:

Ku'u pua, ku'u lei, Ku'u
mālimili e,
Ku'u lei kau i ka wekiu,
A he mālimili 'oe, a he hiwaiwa nāu,
A he lei mau nō ku'u kino.
My flower, my lei, my toy,
My lei placed supreme,
You my toy, my pride,
A lei forever for my body.
In addition, the Elbert-Mahoe collection contains curious samples of the superimposed European civilization, as in this song to a lawn sprinkler, "Ka Wiliwiliwai," in which Queen Liliuokalani turns the contraption to practical use:

Oki pau 'oia ala,                      How amazing,  
Ua ninihi ka lawena.                  Quiet but possessive.  
Ku'u iki iho ho'i                    Slow down a little  
I inu aku au.                        'So I may drink.

The missionaries' influence is also shown in songs advocating temperance and book learning, as in this cruel song for children, "Ku'u 'Ilio," sung to the tune of "Londond Bridge" or "Yankee Doodle":

Pono maoli ke ho'omake            Kill  
Kou " 'ilio nani."              Your "pretty dog."  
Koe ke dala, ku'ai buke,          Save money, buy books,  
Waiai no ka lani.                 Wealth for heaven.

In the Hawaiian language phonological and grammatical features reinforce poetic style. Eight consonant phonemes and ten vowel phonemes (half of which are distinguished only by length) with few allophones and a predominance of /a i k/ produce an abundance of homonyms and near homonyms. These are utilized as mnemonic devices in puns and word play and are especially evident in linked assonance (phonologically similar pairs) and linked terminals (pairs with antithetical meanings). In pronunciation, the Hawaiian focuses on initials (alliteration) oftentimes whispering final vowels; this contributes to irregularity in syllable count and is another factor mitigating against rhyme. Noun phrases standing without verbs and verb phrases standing without nouns make the poem into a catalogue of images and acts and, when combined with a lack of sexual gender and a near lack of tenses as English uses them, contribute to the song's ambiguity and vagueness. Place names, 88% of which have recognizable meanings, were given to land areas, to special trees and rocks, to local winds, rains, and ocean currents. As such they have sentimental value to Hawaiians and participate in the word play and echoism which help structure their songs. Lines from "Kupa Landing" illustrate these traditional poetic techniques:

'O Kup Landing,                      Cooper Landing,  
Hanohano i ka la'i,                  Its glorious solace,  
Ho'olu 'ia no, Ho'okena            Ho'okena charm  
Ho'oheno ka mana'o                   Cherished in the thoughts  
Na kupa o ka 'aina,                 Of the natives of the land,  
Ho'olu i ka maka o ka malihini.     Charm too in the eyes of visitors.

Kupa 'Cooper' in the first line is echoed by kupa 'natives', antithetical in meaning to malihini 'visitor'. The place name Ho'okena at the end of the third line is linked in the next line to the nearly homophonic verb, ho'oheno 'cherish'; examples of /k/ and /h/ alliteration abound.

That these mele spring from the older pre-missionary oral tradition is demonstrated in the continuity of poetic devices and the continuing unavailability of notation in the European musical tradition. As the editors point out in their survey of Hawaiian technical terms for the verbal arts, "for the single Hawaiian prose term mo'olelo, there are twenty-one English glosses, but for the single English term 'chant', some twenty-nine Hawaiian equivalents." The anthology makes no attempt to provide musical notation or to comment upon the songs' musical accompaniment.

The Hawaiians before they were exposed to European languages believed in the intrinsic and necessary relationship between word and referent; thus, two objects
were thought to be somehow related if the names for these objects were even partially homophonic. They were very careful in their songs since a mistaken syllable might change a word, altering not only the literal meaning but also the kaona or hidden meaning. Earliest chants were sacred to the gods, including family gods; hence the family guarding these heirlooms was loath to share them with outsiders. This attitude also shielded the songs; although the latter are no longer held to be sacred, there is still a limit beyond which Westernization, it is felt, should not go.

In examining the Hawaiian and English which are printed side by side, one wonders about the problems involved in translation. The editors' stated goal was "to produce an echo that will enable the singer who does not know Hawaiian very well to deduce the meanings of every content word in the song." The English mirrors Hawaiian devices of assonance, does not employ rhyme, and assumes a studied vagueness in an attempt to imitate Hawaiian syntax. However, several criticisms of this plan spring to mind: the mainland cannot sing the songs without the music; furthermore, while the vagueness of the songs themselves may be termed art, the vagueness of the introductory paragraph which heads each song is simply annoying. The editors' intent may have been to make the reader wrestle with kanna, but he cannot help but be defeated since he, in grappling with a cultural context not his own, is always afraid of going too far or of not going far enough. Perhaps it was only the educated twentieth century Hawaiian that the editors had in mind.

The taste is tantalizing, appetizing, but not satisfying. Because the songs are arranged in alphabetical order by title and the book lacks a thorough index of songs by subject and theme, the reader finds it difficult to study likenesses. One would like to know, for example, how often and where native plants and animals, water and forest images appear. Still, these are the complaints of the literary scholar, the folklorist, and the linguistic scientist. For the intelligent tourist or immigrant the book opens up a new Hawaii. To the extent that the book does tantalize, it calls the reader back to it and grants with every reading a deeper understanding of the original people of this land.


Reviewed by Warren E. Roberts.

Publications for the ever-expanding antiques world of dealers, collectors, and museums are many and varied. They range from the glossy picture book intended for the gift-giver with many pictures but little text to more serious works of scholarship. A common type of scholarly work is the finding list of the names of craftsmen, their marks, working dates, and the likes. Because of the history of antiques collecting, such finding lists have usually been made for the eastern coastal regions, the original thirteen colonies. The last decade, however, has seen an unprecedented expansion of antiques collecting. More people are collecting types of things; newer things are being labelled as antiques and collected and, as a result, items which were made far from the original thirteen colonies are being collected. Thus there has been a need felt for finding lists in other states and many have been published. A recent example is the book under review.

Furniture Makers of Indiana 1793 to 1850 is a good example of a carefully done