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“Nā Lei O Hawai‘i”: On Hula Songs, Floral Emblems, Island Princesses, and *Wahi Pana*

OF MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES of public school Lei Day pageants in the 1960s, that of the finale remains vivid: a hula production number, performed to the song “Nā Lei O Hawai‘i.” Each of the dancers represented one of the major islands: Hawai‘i, Maui, Moloka‘i, O‘ahu, Kaua‘i. They were attired in solid-colored satin *holokū* gowns, and each carried a lei, the colors of the gowns and the flowers of the leis corresponding to each island’s color and flower. Each dancer’s entrance was a solo during the stanza for the island she represented; in the course of that stanza, the dancer placed the lei around her neck. Upon the completion of her stanza, the dancer stood onstage and posed picturesquely as the other dancers had their turns. The final stanza climaxed in a wonderful spectacle of color, fragrance, and beauty, as all dancers performed the closing stanza together:

*Ha‘ina ‘ia mai ana ka puana
Nā lei o Hawai‘i e ō mai*

The story is told
Leis of Hawai‘i, answer forth.

Over the years, in the course of research on the music and dance of modern hula, I have encountered modern hula songs by other composers that were essentially identical in concept, in terms of enu-

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The Hawaiian Journal of History, vol. 28 (1994)

merating islands and their associated flowers. These “island/flower” songs as a group contrast with modern hula songs devoted entirely to one island that enumerate districts and their celebrated attributes; both groups contrast as well with yet a third group of hula songs that celebrate a specific locale and commemorate special events associated with that particular locale.

All three types of songs could be considered *mele pana*, songs about famous places. Yet the fact that distinct subgroups began to emerge among this corpus of songs led me to begin pondering questions of genesis and relationship. While the genesis of the song “Na Lei O Hawai‘i” is known (and shall be related shortly), that of associating islands with emblematic flowers and colors has gone unquestioned, as has that of each island’s being represented by a “princess.” The first part of this article presents evidence that addresses such questions of genesis.

The more intriguing problem, however, has to do with relationships among the different types of songs that extol *wahi pana*—famous places. And herein lies my primary purpose in tracing the proliferation of *mele pana* among modern hula songs: by chronicling the circumstances that gave rise to these songs—namely, parades and pageants—transformations in poetic expression become apparent. The fact that these transformations are embedded in poetic expression demonstrates the crucial documentary value of songs and song texts for historical study, for hula songs were specifically the medium of choice exercised by native, and especially proroyalist, Hawaiians.¹

In this paper, I will demonstrate that the conventional poetic use of place common in monarchy-era poetic texts to situate localized events gave way to nationalistic expressions that exploded immediately following the overthrow of the monarchy and loss of sovereignty in the 1890s; this nationalistic expression is epitomized in its most essentialized form in island/flower songs. Throughout Hawai‘i’s subsequent territorial era, nationalistic concerns were gradually eclipsed by a regional emphasis that foregrounded individual islands instead. Thus celebration of *wahi pana* from the late monarchy period through Hawai‘i’s territorial era holds the key to explicating not only the sentiments of native Hawaiians toward place, but, more importantly, the significant role of the expressive medium in which those sentiments were cast.

ISLAND/FLOWER SONGS

Island/flower songs are modern hula songs in which each stanza names one of the islands and its associated flower emblem. The conventional format of modern hula songs derives from that of *mele hula ku‘i*, poetic hula texts of the hula ku‘i tradition that emerged in the mid- to late 1800s.² A song consists of multiple stanzas, each stanza having usually two, or, less frequently, four lines of text. Stanzas are separated in performance by an instrumental interlude popularly known as “vamp,” and the final stanza signals the conclusion through a textual formula, most commonly *ha‘ina ‘ia mai ana ka puana* or some equivalent. Such a format provides a particularly suitable fit for island/flower songs, wherein the locale is named in one line, and an attribute is described in the other. Additionally, the stanza may also name a revered chief or a renowned geographical feature, most often the island’s most famous mountain. Subsequent stanzas adhere consistently to the basic arrangement of elements established in the first stanza.

To date, I have located nineteen island/flower songs (see Table 1). The appearances of fourteen of these songs in published songbooks span Hawai‘i’s territorial era.

From the songs, we can extract a list of floral emblems as well as representative chiefs and mountains that have come to stand for the island (see Table 2).

Among the island/flower songs, the one that stands out as being most widely known, published, and recorded is Charles E. King’s “Na Lei o Hawaii.” This composition was first published in Sonny Cunha’s songbook *Famous Hawaiian Songs* in 1914.³ In 1916, King included the song, still copyrighted by Bergstrom Music, in his *Book of Hawaiian Melodies* (popularly known as the “Blue Book” after the color of the cover); he secured the transfer of the copyright to his name in 1917, and the song occupied the premier position in every edition of this collection through 1948.

King’s composition was predated, however, by a poetic text in the hula song form of the same title by the Reverend Samuel Kapu of Maui, which was set to music by Mrs. Samuel A. Amalu.⁴ It was the Reverend Kapu’s composition that set the format for subsequent composers (including King) to emulate, as demonstrated by the following comparison of selected stanzas.

TABLE 1
ISLAND/FLOWER SONGS

DATE	TITLE	COMPOSER
Published island/flower songs ^a		
[1900]	Na Lei O Hawaii	Reverend Samuel Kapu
1914	Na Lei O Hawaii	Charles E. King
1917	Na Pua O Hawaii	Charles E. King
1917	Sweet Lei Ilima	Anonymous
1917	Sweet Lei Lehua	George Awai
1920	Na Moku Ehu	J. Kealoha
1929	Lei E	Luciana Kalaaau ^b
1935	Lei Ohu	George E. Akiu
1935	Na Pua	Andy Iona and Johnny Noble
1942	Hanohano Hawaii	Francis Kaaua
1944	Kuu Aina Aloha	Bernie K. Kaai
1944	Na Pua Nani	Bernie K. Kaai
1944	Na Pua OHawaii	Bernie K. Kaai
1959	Pua O Kealoha	Anonymous
Unpublished island/flower songs located to date ^c		
n.d.	He Mana'o Ko'u Iā 'Oe	Anonymous
n.d.	Ka Wehi O Na Mokupuni	Abbie Palea ^d
n.d.	Lei Ana Hawai'i	Anonymous
n.d.	Neia Pua Nani	Anonymous
n.d.	Pua O Ke Aloha	Anonymous

^aFor specific sources, see Amy K. Stillman, "Hawaiian Music: Published Songbooks and Index to Songs," typescript, 1988, Hawaiian Collection, Hamilton Library, U of Hawai'i.

^bAuthorship is attributed to K. Holi, copyright 1929 by Francis H. King, in Charles E. King, *Songs of Hawaii* (1942) 122.

^cUnpublished anonymous songs are in the Kimo Alama-Keaulana Mele Collection, Ms. Grp. 329, Bishop Museum Archives, Honolulu.

^d"Ka Wehi O Na Mokupuni" is recorded by Myra English, *Drinking Champagne* (Hula HS-542).

TABLE 2
ISLANDS AND EMBLEMS

ISLAND	DESCRIPTIVE EPITHET	FLOWER	[COLOR] ^a	CHIEF	MOUNTAIN
Hawai'i	<i>hanohano</i> [<i>nani</i>]	<i>lehua</i>	red	Keawe	Mauna Kea
Maui	<i>kilakila</i>	<i>roselani</i>	pink	Kama	Haleakalā
Kaho'olawe		<i>hinahina</i>	grey		
Lāna'i		<i>kauna'oa</i>	orange		
Moloka'i	<i>kauland</i> ^b	<i>kukui</i>	green	Hina	
O'ahu	' <i>ohu'ohu</i> [<i>ha'aheo</i>] ^c	' <i>ilima</i>	yellow	Kakuihewa	Ka'ala
Kaua'i	<i>kaulana</i>	<i>mohihana</i>	violet	Manōkalanipō	Wai'ale'ale
Ni'ihau		<i>pūpū</i>	white		
Molokini		<i>limu kala</i>	med. blue		

^aAlthough colors are not named in the island/flower songs, they were reported to be "customary" by 1912. See Mary Pukui and Marie Neal, "The Leis of Hawaii," *PP*53 (Dec. 1941):39-44, for a full discussion.

^bOccurs only in "Na Lei O Hawaii" by the Reverend Samuel Kapu.

^cOccurs only in "Na Moku Eha" published in the King songbooks; the text published by Mahoe reads "'Ohu'ohu O'ahu."

Excerpt from “Na Lei O Hawaii” by Samuel Kapu

1. *Hanohano Hawai'i moku o Keawe*
E lei ha'aheo nei i ka lehua
 Glorious is Hawai'i, island of Keawe
 Proudly wearing the lehua

2. *Kilakila o Maui iā Haleakalā*
Ua kapu Roselani na'u ho'okahi
 Majestic is Maui and Haleakalā
 The roselani is sacred, mine alone

3. *Kaulana Moloka'i nui a Hina*
I ka ulu kukui o Lanikaula
 Famous is great Moloka'i of Hina
 The kukui grove of (the priest) Lanikaula

Excerpt from “Na Lei O Hawaii” by Charles E. King

1. *Nani Hawai'i ka moku o Keawe*
Lei ha'aheo i ka lehua a me ka maile a'o Pana'ewa
 Lovely is Hawai'i, the island of Keawe
 Proudly wearing the lei of lehua and maile of Pana'ewa

2. *Kilakila o Maui lā iā Haleakalā*
Ua kapu Roselani a na'u ho'okahi wale nō
 Majestic is Maui and Haleakala
 The roselani is sacred, mine alone

3. *Kaulana Moloka'i i ka ulu kukui*
O Lanikaula a me ka wailele o Moa'ula
 Moloka'i is famed for the kukui grove
 Of Lanikaula and the waterfall of Moa'ula

The Reverend Kapu's song contains eleven stanzas. Nine islands are named, moving from south to north: Hawai'i, Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, Kaho'olawe, Molokini, O'ahu, Kaua'i, and Ni'ihau. Variant closing expressions are used in the two final stanzas: *Ha'ina 'ia mai ana ka puana* (The story is told), and *Ha'ina hou mai ana ka puana* (The story is told again). Significantly, this is the fullest enumeration

of islands among all of the island/flower songs; subsequent island/flower songs (to be discussed at length below), for example, do not mention the islet of Molokini.

King's song consists of seven stanzas: Hawai'i, Maui, Moloka'i, O'ahu, and Kaua'i are mentioned in separate stanzas, but Ni'ihau, Kaho'olawe, and Lāna'i are grouped together in the sixth stanza. Over the years, performances have concentrated on only the four largest islands; thus more recent island/flower songs typically consist of four stanzas and the concluding *ha'ina* stanza.

FLORAL EMBLEMS AND PAGEANTRY

Floral emblems for each of the islands, listed in Table 2, are widely known. The inception of this practice, however, is less apparent. One of the earliest documents that acknowledges floral emblems is Joint Resolution No. 1 passed by the territorial legislature in 1923.⁵ The resolution was initiated by the Outdoor Circle, which sought to name the hibiscus as the flower emblem of the territory.⁶ In the course of rationalizing why some flower should be designated to represent the territory as a whole, the resolution contains the following statement:

whereas at the present time several of the islands have adopted a local flower as its emblem,

HAWAII.....	PUA LEHUA
OAHU.....	PUA ILIMA
MAUI.....	LOKELANI
KAUAI.....	MOKIHANA
LANAI.....	KAUNAOA
KAHOOLAWE.....	HINAHINA

A literal reading of this statement establishes that the floral associations for the individual islands were common practice by the time of this resolution. Searches through territorial and municipal records failed to identify prior legislative mandates concerning individual emblems. The fact that the two "Na Lei O Hawaii" songs predate this resolution, however, provides the crucial key for moving closer to the infancy of this custom. The genesis of "Na Lei o Hawaii" by the Rever-

end Kapu and by Charles E. King lies in similar circumstances, namely, the production of historical pageants, or tableaux, which were popular especially in the first two decades of this century. Contrary to claims that the Reverend Kapu's song was composed in the 1890s,⁷ a detailed explanation of his song's origin is related by Lahilahi Webb in an article she published in 1938.⁸ There she presented the translation of a letter, originally in Hawaiian, from Samuel A. Amalu, who was then the lighthouse keeper at Barber's Point. Amalu wrote,

I have received your letter concerning the mele of The Islands. Here is the correct answer. The words of this mele are by the Rev. Samuel Kapu, of Maui. . . . Mrs. Samuel A. Amalu put it to music. This song was put out in the year the Kaumakapili Church was burned [1900]. The year after that [1901] we returned to Hookena, South Kona, Hawaii. There, they gave a concert for the Church of Pukaana. There was the first opening of this song for a church benefit.

It was about two years later [1903] that we returned to Honolulu. There, they opened another benefit concert with this song for the Pauoa Church, . . . Then, afterwards, the Kaahumanu Society members sang the song at the Old Opera House [About 1909]. . . .

It was Peleuli's [Mrs. Amalu] idea to put the words of this mele into music. We were the first ones to set this song into a tableaux, at the Old Opera House [each island was acted by a girl].⁹

Further on in this article, after recalling hearing the song performed by Mr. and Mrs. Amalu on several different occasions, Lahilahi Webb describes the staging of this song in the tableaux presented by the Kaahumanu Society around 1909 (see also fig. 1, which accompanied the original article).

Each island was represented with its own colors. Each member of the Society representing an island, wore a lei formed of the Island's flower. Niihau had no flower and so a shell lei of pupu niihau was worn by its representative. Molokini was represented by a limukala or seaweed. Afterwards, other societies took this song up, but none of them ever acted it as did the members of the Kaahumanu Society.¹⁰

Charles E. King's "Na Lei O Hawaii" also appears to have been created specifically for a pageant presentation. Although the exact dates



FIG. 1. "Kaahumanu Society, 1909, Who Sang Song of the Islands." The participants were identified as, standing, Mrs. Kapuahelani Makuakane (Hawai'i), Mrs. Hattie Kaia (Maui), Samuel Amalu and Mrs. Peleuli Amalu (instructors), Mrs. Keoholiko Lilikalani (Moloka'i), Miss Palekaluhi (Kaua'i), sitting, Miss Jennie Mahoe (Molokini), Miss Hiku Poepoe (Kaho'olawe), Miss Homelani Nawahi (O'ahu), Miss Hattie Opunui (Lāna'i), Miss Kauahipolua Malina (Ni'ihau), Mrs. Kaluaipihana Kiakahi (Hiika). (*Paradise of the Pacific*, April 1938, p. 17.)

await positive identification, two bits of evidence are informative. First, in the earliest appearance of this song in Sonny Cunha's songbook, published in 1914, the top of the second page of the musical score bears the remark, in parentheses, "Dance of the Lei Girls." Second, even more revealing are the remarks on the musical score in King's own songbook, first published in 1916, namely, "Dedicated to the YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEAGUE" above the title and "SONG OF THE ISLANDS SUNG 'IN THE WOODS OF HAWAII'" just below the title. These remarks disappeared by the edition issued in 1921. The Young People's League was an association active in civic affairs in Honolulu in the 1910s and 1920s; it is listed, for example, among the participants in Kamehameha Day Celebrations in this period.¹¹

To recapitulate the chronology, the Reverend Kapu's "Na Lei O Hawaii," which enumerated islands and their floral emblems, was set to music by 1900. The staging of the song by the Kaahumanu Society in 1909, with each island having a color, was apparently the first such

presentation, followed not long after by presumably similar staging of Charles E. King's "Na Lei O Hawaii" by 1914 or 1915. But from whence the idea of having a princess represent each island?

ISLAND PRINCESSES AND PĀ'Ū RIDERS

For both *kama'āina* and long-time residents, the close association of islands, floral emblems, and colors is a long-standing feature of another Hawaiian institution: *pā'ū* riding units—groups of skirted female equestrians that constitute one of the unique and distinctive features of parades in Hawai'i. Indeed, it appears that the inception of island princesses lies in the *pā'ū* riding units.

The immediate impulse is to look to the commemoration of Kamehameha Day, a public holiday each June 11 since 1872. Kamehameha Day had been observed through the late 1800s with recreational and sporting events, chief among them horse racing in Kapi'olani Park. In 1905, the Order of Kamehameha, recently revitalized by Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole, brought solemnity to the holiday by draping a lei on the statue of Kamehameha in front of Ali'iolani Hale and standing watch throughout the day. In 1912, members of the Order of Kamehameha invited representatives of other fraternal and civic organizations to participate in a commemorative ceremony; in 1914, the planning committee opted to organize a parade to process from 'A'ala Park to 'Iolani Palace as a prelude to the ceremony at the Kamehameha statue. Thus the inception of the Kamehameha Day parade—but five years after the staging of "Nā Lei O Hawai'i" by the Kaahumanu Society.

The forerunner to the Kamehameha Day parade, however, was a mid-winter Floral Parade held on Washington's Birthday, February 22, beginning in 1906. This parade fulfilled three objectives: to present a display of American patriotism by observing an American holiday, to promenade the still novel but growing number of automobiles in Honolulu, and to exhibit Hawai'i's floral richness by lavishly decorating the automobiles with flowers (see fig. 2).¹² A unit of *pā'ū* riders joined the parade, prompting reporters to comment: "Among the Hawaiians the half hundred pa-u riders aroused more interest than any other section of the line. They noted in them a revival of a purely Hawaiian equestrian pastime that had been dormant for 15 years."¹³



FIG. 2. The Honolulu Normal entry in the 1909 Hawai'i Annual Floral Parade. (HHS.)

Under the initial auspices of the Hawaii Promotion Committee, riding societies were organized in order to maintain the revival and perpetuate the custom of *pā'ū* riding.¹⁴ They entered the Floral Parade in 1907, with a new twist on their presentation:

Following them [the pa-u riders] came the island princesses, five principal islands of the group being each represented by one of their fairest daughters, riding in pa-u costume and preceded by a herald, bearing their colors and banner. *This new feature of the parade proved most successful. . .*¹⁵ [emphasis added]

Interestingly, the colors of their attire were not those that have come to be associated with the islands (see Table 2). For example, the princess representing Hawai'i wore a red skirt and a black waist [i.e., bodice] under a short black cape; the princess of O'ahu wore a black waist, a yellow *pā'ū* skirt, and a black derby hat trimmed with yellow; and the princess of Kaua'i wore a white shirtwaist and a red *pā'ū* skirt trimmed with white material cut in the design of breadfruit leaves. These descriptions did not mention floral lei.

In 1908, with the exception of the princess of Maui, the colors

worn by the island princesses were those that are now emblematic. The newspaper account also mentions the lei.

Stately as befitted royal dames, the Hawaiian princesses passed by. Ahead came Miss Emma Rose with Jimmy Holt for an outrider, Appy Colburn for herald and Eben Low's daughters in attendance. Her colors were red to match the lehua leis, the island of Hawaii's favorite flower, which she wore.

Miss Alice Bartholomew with Stanley Bellina as herald followed. She represented Maui and her colors were red and black. She wore red rose gathered in mighty Iao Valley, the popular flower of her own island.

Oahu was represented by Mrs. Mignonette Meyers, and Francis Brown heralded her coming. The yellow of the royal ilima was the keynote of her color-scheme, and she made a striking appearance. The Garden Isle deputed Miss Emma Pihi to represent her, and John Hollinger announced her coming. Purple and green were her colors and very well they became the wearer. The green was the green of the sweet mokihana, a chaplet of which the Kauai princess wore.

Last came Molokai in the person of Miss Victoria Meyers. James Holt acted as her herald and her colors were green and white, the green of the kukui which has ever been Molokai's floral emblem. Miss Meyers rode well and was well mounted.

*It has been arranged that each princess should wear the flower most popular in the island which she represented and the flowers used yesterday will be worn in future parades.*¹⁶ [emphasis added]

By 1912, the colors had become customary: "There was one [island princess] for each island of the group, each wearing the colors of her island" (see fig. 3).¹⁷

MELE PANA

The custom of island princesses, each associated with an emblematic flower and color, originated, it appears, with *pā'ū* riding units in floral parades in Honolulu, beginning by 1907. The custom of staging island/flower songs, likewise, appears to have originated in the pageant staged by the Kaahumanu Society in 1909. Both customs are vitally important to explicating the importance of *mele pana*—place songs—within the larger realm of hula songs, for they offer vivid illus-



FIG. 3. The island *pā‘ū* princesses in the 1909 floral parade as pictured in the official souvenir booklet. (HHS.)

tration of significant shifts in the conceptualization as well as celebration of *wahi pana*—places of renown.

A deep attachment to place is a characteristic common to Hawaiians. This is evident in the connotative value and associative use of place names to evoke nostalgic sentiments and reminiscences; such use is widespread throughout Hawaiian proverbial sayings, poetic texts, and legendary and mythological narratives.¹⁸ Pertinent to our purpose here is the evocative significance of place in island/flower songs, which contrasts with the use, and praise, of place in poetic texts that predate 1900.

Prior to the emergence of island/flower songs by 1900, the customary celebration of place within a poetic hula text involved naming one or more specific locales. This was most often done to place a person or an event at that locale, thus orienting listeners; any incorporation in the poetry of specific attributes of the locale thus functions as elaboration. For example, the *mele* hula “A Kona Hema ‘o Kalani” was composed in honor of King Kalākaua.¹⁹ In the first stanza, the first line places Kalākaua (referred to as *ka lanī*) in south Kona; the third

line then conflates two proverbial phrases associated with Kona: *Kona, kai 'ōpua i ka la'i* (Kona, where the horizon clouds rest in the calm) and *Kona, kai malino a Ehu* (Kona, land of the calm sea of Ehu [Ehunuikaimalina was a famous chief of Kona]).²⁰

A Kona Hema 'o ka lani
Nānā iā Ka'awaloa
'Ike i ka la'i o 'Ehu
Ehuehu 'oe e ka lani

The heavenly one is at South Kona
 Looking toward Ka'awaloa
 Seeing the calm of Ehu
 You are majestic, o heavenly one

Poetic texts that did focus entirely on a locale were referred to as *mele pana*—place songs. In these *mele*, noteworthy features of a locale were enumerated as a way of intensifying the prestige or renown of the place. Numerous *mele pana* were composed in the hula song form in the late nineteenth century. Such poetic texts were composed in honor of a specific person, however, and often identified the dedicatee in the final line; thus these texts also functioned simultaneously as name chants (*mele inoa*) for the recipient.²¹

Among the *mele pana* poetic texts that have been preserved in extant manuscript sources, primarily in the Bishop Museum Archives, many were composed for members of the nobility—especially Queen Emma (wife of Kamehameha IV, r. 1854–1863), King Kalākaua (r. 1874–1891), his consort Queen Kapi'olani, and Queen Lili'uokalani (r. 1891–1893)—as they traveled about the islands during the final decades of the monarchy. The visit of such high-ranking *ali'i* (chiefs) prompted, in many instances, the composition of sets of *mele*. A representative example is the set of four *mele hula ku'i* composed in honor of a visit by Kapi'olani to Kaua'i:²²

“Hanohano Hanalei i ka ua nui”
 “Hanohano Waimea i ka wai kea”
 “Nani wale ka uka o Pihanakalani”
 “Hanohano Niihau i ka malie”

Each of the four *mele* cites a range of place names; within each *mele*, however, all the places are within a particular district or section of the island. For example, “Hanohano Hanalei” names places from Lumaha‘i, on the northeastern coast of the island, around the northwestern Nā Pali coast, to Nohili, near present-day Barking Sands; “Hanohano Waimea” names places in the Waimea region and inland to ‘Aipō swamp on Mount Wai‘ale‘ale. The final stanza of each of the four *mele*, as printed in the *Buke Mele Lahui* and as preserved in sound recordings of “Pihanakalani,”²³ uses the Hawaiian name Hali‘alaulani:

*Hainaia mai ana ka puana
O Hali‘alaulani kou inoa*

The story is told
Hali‘alaulani, your name

In both scenarios of the customary use of places names in late nineteenth-century *mele hula*, whether to locate an episode being related or to laud the locale, the orientation was basically toward people. Subjects and recipients of the poetry could be either *kama‘āina*, of the area, or *malihini*, a guest to the area; whichever, the poetic texts functioned essentially as name chants.

The appearance of island/flower songs beginning around 1900 represents a major transformation in the use of place in hula songs. Unlike the earlier name chants that included litanies of place names and that usually focused on specific districts on one island, island/flower songs went to the other extreme, of naming only entire islands. It is of utmost significance to view this development within the historical circumstances of the period: these songs appeared in the wake of the loss of Hawaiian sovereignty, first in the overthrow of the monarchy in 1893 and then in the annexation of the republic to the United States in 1898. Hence a shift in conceptualization on two levels: (1) pride in the collective entity of the islands as a nation and (2) honoring the nation in song, rather than a specific individual.

Moreover, the use of the two earliest versions of “Nā Lei O Hawai‘i” in pageants must have sparked the creative imaginations of both pageant producers and song composers, for at least four more

island/flower songs appeared in published songbooks by 1920. A steady stream of new island/flower songs continued to appear in the 1930s and through the World War II years, suggesting that there were uses that warranted not only the composition of these songs, but their dissemination in published songbooks as well, despite the poetic redundancy in enumerating islands, their descriptive epithets, and their emblematic flowers.

Significantly, only three of the earliest island/flower songs contain verses that name all eight of the largest islands: “Na Lei O Hawaii” by the Reverend Samuel Kapu, “Na Lei O Hawaii” by Charles E. King, and “Na Pua O Hawaii” by Charles E. King, in which he set the text of “Na Lei O Hawaii” to an altered melody and harmonization. Evidently following the lead of *pā‘ū* princesses representing only the five largest islands, subsequent songs mention only *Na Moku ‘Ehā* (The Four Islands)—referring to Hawai‘i, Maui, O‘ahu, and Kaua‘i. Several songs include Moloka‘i as well; Lāna‘i, Kaho‘olawe, and Ni‘ihau, however, were excluded.

While the poetic expression of national consciousness was thus incorporated in island/flower songs throughout the territorial era, yet another transformation in the use of place was crystallizing: the emergence of *mele pana* place songs focused on individual islands. This is, then, a manifestation of regionalism, distinct from the extolling of specific locales (i.e., localism) or from the enumeration of multiple islands within an individual song text (i.e., nationalism).

One of the most cited examples of island place songs is the song known as “Hilo Hanakahi.” This song was first published in 1902 under the title “Auwe ke aloha e,”²⁴ after the refrain prescribed in the musical score during the instrumental interlude (the “vamp”) between stanzas. The structure is, like island/flower songs, straightforward: in each stanza, the name of one of the districts on the island of Hawai‘i is sung in the first line, and a proverbial epithet is sung in the second line.

1. *Hilo Hanakahi*

I ka ua kani lehua

Hilo, of the chief Hanakahi

The rain that rustles the lehua

2. *Puna, paia ‘ala**I ka paia ‘ala i ka hala*

Puna, fragrant bowers

Bowers fragrant with hala

This song contains nine stanzas, in which the eight major districts of the island are named in an order that reflects a clockwise circuit: Hilo, Puna, Ka‘ū, Kona, Kawaihae, Waimea, Kohala, and Hāmākua.²⁵ Two other examples of island place songs are "Iniki Malie," also known as "Waikapū" (first published by Charles E. King in 1917),²⁶ in which four Maui districts (Waikapū, Wailuku, Waiehu, and Waihe‘e) are named, along with their associated winds, and "Nani Ka‘ala," which is said to "probably date from the 1930s,"²⁷ in which six O‘ahu districts (Nu‘uanu, Kailua, Kāne‘ohe, He‘eia, Waiāhole, and Waikane) are named, along with descriptions of activities seen at each place.

Like island/flower songs, and unlike *mele pana* from the late monarchy period, these island place songs are not dedicated to an honoree. Moreover, with the known exception of "Hilo Hanakahi" and another similar song, "Hanohano E," which also appeared in the same 1902 songbook,²⁸ and with cognizance of the possibility that other exceptions may yet be discovered, it seems that the concept of naming districts within an island in a hula song is one that began to flourish in the later 1920s—in other words, in the wake of island/flower songs. The 1930s, for example, bore tangible increase in songs that focused on individual islands: bandleader Johnny Noble composed the music for a series of nine such hula songs; he recorded six of those songs in 1932 and published all nine in his *Collection of Ancient and Modern Hulas* in 1935.²⁹

Why the proliferation of island place songs? Throughout Hawai‘i’s territorial era, pageantry and parades flourished, especially in connection with annual Kamehameha Day celebrations, and even a cursory gaze over descriptive accounts points to the integral component in these presentations of paying tribute to the islands. *Pā‘ū* princesses continued to represent islands; over the years, floral floats have also been designated to represent islands as well, and parade and pageant participants included delegations from the islands themselves.

In 1936, Kamehameha Day was celebrated as a large-scale jubilee

that honored not only the presumed bicentennial of Kamehameha I, but also the centennial of Kalākaua as well. Festivities included the customary parade, an afternoon canoe regatta, and an evening water pageant. One account of the pageant demonstrates the use of island place songs:

As a brilliant climax to the Hawaii jubilee, a colorful water pageant was presented in the evening on the Ala Wai. Singing their melodious and impressive way down the canal, which shimmered in myriad reflected lights, princesses, musicians and royal courts rode on nine illuminated barges.

First in the pageant was Princess Kapiolani with her ladies in waiting. . . . Upon arrival at the Ala Moana bridge whereon a throne had been erected, Princess Kapiolani and her court were escorted to the stage set for them. As they ascended, William Kawohi sonorously recited the royal chant.

Resplendent in red, the princesses from Hawaii were next to appear on the stage. . . . *They presented leis to Princess Kapiolani, after which they joined their group in singing their island song.*

*Groups from the other islands followed in succession with leis, songs and dances.*³⁰ [emphasis added]

Parade floats also incorporated the use of appropriate island place songs which musicians and hula dancers performed as the floats proceeded down the parade route. This provided occasion for composers to create new songs. One such composer for whom information is available is Alice Namakelua, who organized the Maui float beginning in 1944. Her notebooks contain three songs with annotations associating them specifically with the Maui float.³¹ Of “Ka Makani Ao Waiehu,” she noted “the composer was a leader for the Maui Float for 7 years at the time and she composed this song and many others before this one to be sung by her group of musicians on Kameha [*sic*] Day, June 11, 1950, and thereafter.” Of “Kou Hooihi,” she noted “composed for Maui and released in 1953 on the Kamehameha Day Maui Float. Mrs. Namakelua’s ninth year of being the leader or chairman of the Maui Float.” Additional identifications of island place songs composed by Namakelua for parade floats include “Kuahiwi Nani” for the Maui float in 1941 and “Hanohano No O Hawaii” for the Hawai‘i float in 1958.³²

One rather innovative way that developed of paying tribute to the islands through songs was to combine stanzas from different songs, one per island, into a medley. The most celebrated combination did not draw, for the most part, on hula songs, but it was an extension of the concept of praising the islands through song. The most common form of the medley included the chorus from “Hilo March” for Hawai‘i, “Maui No Ka ‘Oī” for Maui, the chorus from “Moloka‘i Nui a Hina” (“Ua like no a like lā me ku‘u one hānau”) for Moloka‘i, the chorus of “Beautiful ‘Ilima” for O‘ahu, and a stanza from “Maika‘i Kaua‘i” for Kaua‘i. Indeed, island medleys could be compiled easily, offered a direct way of acknowledging the islands, were often performed either at the beginning or at the end of pageants, partially in homage to audience members, and were included in many informal collections of song lyrics.

Thus multiple transformations have been traced in the celebration of place, from localism in the late 1800s, to nationalism following the overthrow of the monarchy, and to regionalism in the early to mid 1900s. These transformations reflect responses to changing times, when the expression of localism was eclipsed by an encompassing nationalism, and when regionalism subsequently provided a resonant key to paying tribute to islands individually as constituent entities in the nation. That these transformations took place in modern hula songs, moreover, signals the fundamental role of hula songs to register and express the deep-seated allegiance and sentiments among Hawaiians toward *wahi pāna*—places of renown.

*Ha‘ina ‘ia mai ana ka pūana
Nā lei o Hawai‘i e ō mai*

The story is told,
Leis of Hawai‘i, answer forth.

NOTES

I would like to thank Dr. Chieko Tachihata and Ms. Leilani Bashum for their assistance with source material. I especially acknowledge the generosity extended by Mr. Kimo Alama Keaulana with materials in his possession. The support of a Summer Stipend from the National Endowment for the Humanities is also acknowledged.

- ¹ See Amy K. Stillman, "History Reinterpreted in Song: The Case of the Hawaiian Counterrevolution," *HJH* 23 (1989):1-30; John Charlot, *The Hawaiian Poetry of Religion and Politics* ([Lā'ie]: The Institute for Polynesian Studies, Brigham Young U—Hawai'i Campus, 1985).
- ² See Amy K. Stillman, "The Hula Ku'i: A Tradition in Hawaiian Music and Dance," M.A. thesis, University of Hawaii, 1982. Extensive new research on the history of hula ku'i poetry, music, and dance has been underway since 1992 and is being prepared for publication.
- ³ A. R. "Sonny" Cunha, *Famous Hawaiian Songs* (Honolulu: Bergstrom Music, 1914) 89; Charles E. King, *Book of Hawaiian Melodies* (1916-1948) 6; Masaaki Hirose, *Hawaiian Zenshu No. 2* (Tokyo, 1959) [no.] 196; Ruth Hausman, *Hawaii: Music in Its History* (1968) 81; Toshihiko Hayatsu, *Hawaiian* (Tokyo, 1974) 31; Toshihiko Hayatsu, *Standard Hawaiian Album* (Tokyo, 1982) 108.
- ⁴ First published under the title "Na Moku Ewalu," in Charles E. King, *Book of Hawaiian Melodies* (1916, 1917) 61; in John M. Kelly, *Folk Songs Hawaii Sings* (1962) 17-19; Ruth Hausman, *Hawaii: Music in Its History* (1968) 60-61; Noelani Mahoe, *E Himeni Hawai'i Kākou* (1973) 62-63. A translation by Mary Kawena Pukui appears in Mary Pukui and Marie Neal, "The Leis of Hawaii: An Interpretation of the Songs of the Islands," *PP* 53 (Dec. 1941): 43. The two versions of the Hawaiian text and the English translation differ in the order of lines and stanzas.
- ⁵ *Laws of the Territory of Hawaii passed by the Twelfth Legislature Regular Session, 1923* (Honolulu, 1923) 341.
- ⁶ *Journal of the House of Representatives Twelfth Legislature of the Territory of Hawaii, Regular Session 1923* (Honolulu, 1923) 611-12. The paragraph citing the Outdoor Circle in the first reading of the resolution on 3 Apr. 1923 was eliminated in subsequent readings and deliberations, for it does not appear in the resolution passed on 2 May 1923.
- ⁷ Kelly, *Folk Songs Hawaii Sings* 17; repeated by Hausman, *Hawaii* 61.
- ⁸ Elizabeth Lahilahi Rogers Webb, "Genesis of the Song of the Islands," *PP* 50 (Apr. 1938):17, 37.
- ⁹ Webb, "Genesis" 17. Bracketed comments are by Lahilahi Webb.
- ¹⁰ Webb, "Genesis" 37.
- ¹¹ See, for example, the Kamehameha Day Celebration Committee Archives in the Edgar Henriques manuscript collection, Bishop Museum Archives, Honolulu.
- ¹² The March 1906 issue of *Paradise of the Pacific*, a pictorial souvenir of the parade, contains numerous photographs of the decorated automobiles.
- ¹³ Anon., "The Winter Floral Parade," *PP* 19 (Mar. 1906):18.
- ¹⁴ Anon., "Hawaiian Pa-u Riders," *HAA* 1907:108.
- ¹⁵ "Floral Parade Fulfils Hopes of the Promoters by Its Complete Success," *PCA* 23 Feb. 1907:1, col. 2.
- ¹⁶ "Floral Parade a Brilliant and Successful Affair," *PCA* 23 Feb. 1908:2, col. 3-4.

- ¹⁷ “Hawaii’s Annual Floral Parade,” *PP* (Mar. 1912):13.
- ¹⁸ See Samuel Elbert, “Connotative Values of Hawaiian Place Names,” in *Directions in Pacific Traditional Literature: Essays in Honor of Katharine Luomala*, Bernice P. Bishop Museum Special Publication 62, eds. Adrienne L. Kaepler and H. Arlo Nimmo (Honolulu: Bishop Museum P, 1976) 117–33.
- ¹⁹ See Samuel H. Elbert and Noelani Mahoe, *Nā Mele o Hawai‘i Nei: 101 Hawaiian Songs* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1970) 31, for the complete text, translation, and commentary.
- ²⁰ Mary Kawena Puku‘i, *‘Ōlelo No‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings*, Bernice P. Bishop Museum Special Publication 71 (Honolulu: Bishop Museum P, 1983) [199], nos. 1843–44.
- ²¹ Elizabeth Tatar, *Nineteenth Century Hawaiian Chant*, Pacific Anthropological Records no. 33 (Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Dept. of Anthropology, 1982) 45–46.
- ²² The set of four texts appeared together in the Hawaiian-language newspaper *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina* on 19 Apr. 1890:4, col. 4, under the title “He Inoa no Laulani Koki.” The texts appeared again in 1893 in *Ka Lei Momi* as follows: “Hanohano Hanalei,” “Hanohano Waimea,” and “Pihanakalani” appeared on 12 Aug. 1893:1, col. 2, and “Hanohano Niihau” appeared on 19 Aug. 1893:3, col. 4. The four texts were reprinted as one set under the title “Makalapua” in *Buke Mele Lahui* (Honolulu, 1895) 83–86. For translations of the three Kaua‘i texts (with minor textual variants), see Mary Pukui, “Hulas of Kauai,” Bishop Museum Archives HI.M.72 (1936) 36–40.
- ²³ “Hanohano Hanalei i ka ua nui” and “Hanohano Waimea i ka wai kea” performed by Wahinekeauli Paa of Ha‘ena (Roberts Collection of Meles [1923–1924], Audio Collections, Bishop Museum Archives, 1.3a.17 and 1.3a.18 respectively), and “Hanohano ka uka i Pihanakalani” transcribed in musical notation (Helen H. Roberts, *Ancient Hawaiian Music*, Bulletin no. 29 [Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1926] 250–51); “Hanohano ka uka o Pihanakalani” performed by Noenolani [Zuttermeister] Lewis, *Hawaiian Drum Dance Chants* (Smithsonian/Folkways CD SF 40015 [1989]), track 6.
- ²⁴ A. R. “Sonny” Cunha, *Songs of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Bergstrom Music Co., 1902) 37.
- ²⁵ For the complete text, translation, and commentary, see Elbert and Mahoe, *Nā Mele o Hawai‘i Nei* 50.
- ²⁶ *Hawaiian Hulas* (1917) 12–13; for translation and commentary, see Elbert and Mahoe, *Nā Mele o Hawai‘i Nei* 56.
- ²⁷ Kimo Alama, *Puke Mele Volume 1* (Honolulu: Kimo Alama, 1988) 101; the commentary accompanies the song text and translation given on 70–71.
- ²⁸ Cunha, *Songs of Hawaii* 42.
- ²⁹ In geographic order from south to north: “Hawaii,” words by Mary Robins, p. 53 (Victor 24103); “Ka Loke o Maui,” words by Mary Heanu, p. 49 (Victor 24158); “Maui,” words by Mary Robins, p. 51; “Kahoolawe,” words by Mary

Robins, p. 42; "Lanai," words by Mary Robins, p. 52 (Victor 24103); "Molokai," words by Mary Robins, p. 55; "Oahu," words by Mary Robins, p. 41 (Victor 24158); "Kauai," words by Mary Robins, p. 54 (Victor 24003); "Niihau," words by Mary Robins, p. 36 (Victor 24003).

³⁰ May Day Lo, "The Day of Days," *PP* 48 (July 1936): 8.

³¹ Two of Alice Namakelua's notebooks are currently in the possession of Kimo Alama Keaulana.

³² Kimo Alama-Keaulana Mele Collection, Bishop Museum Archives.