

state (neplanta) of writers moving into a new identity, which Anzaldúa considers as a form of birthing the self. These analogies, and the emphasis on fluid identities throughout, privilege the mestiza subject, and position her as the embodiment of cultural bridging and translation. If entry into English is essential to pan-Oceanian literary belonging (translation might be less important to dance, music, or visual culture exchange), it is the mobile figure of the translator of Mā'ohi writing who must at least initially play the facilitating role.

However, Mateata-Allain makes clear at all points that the Mā'ohi literary/social movement is at heart grounded in the struggles of Mā'ohi people for self-determination and stewardship of Mā'ohi lands, and that it moves in alliance with more rooted commitments to language and culture. This point is emphatically made in chapter 5, "Colonial Abom(b)inations and Bombing Nations," which tracks the historical connection between the emergence of Mā'ohi literature and activist struggles, particularly against nuclear testing. For many—as Mateata-Allain shows through readings of works by Chantal Spitz, Rai a Mai, and Titaua Peu—nuclear testing at Moruroa epitomized the French authority's disregard for Mā'ohi wellbeing and worldview, along with the desecration of their environment. In showing how a growing consciousness of this fired the desire for self-representation through literary forms—and in showing how literary movements and metaphors are paralleled and literalized in the political vision of leaders like Oscar Temaru—Mateata-Allain brings her book full circle.

Bridging is the first full-length work in English that I know of to devote itself to "fire-starting" (190) the conversation among Mā'ohi writers and anglophone Oceania. The book would have benefited from a better editorial process than the publisher apparently provided (there are a number of repetitive passages and misspellings or misidentifications of places and people), and several of the arguments are admittedly starting points rather than conclusions, but *Bridging* makes some important contributions. In addition to the fine translations of Mā'ohi literature that are included as inter-chapters, the critical essay chapters contain extensive translated selections from Mā'ohi writers. These make clear—as did translated quotations in the concluding chapter of Robert Nicole's *The Word, the Pen, and the Pistol: Literature and Power in Tahiti* (2001)—that the literary-activist voices of French Polynesia, including Mateata-Allain's, have much to say that resonates with and enriches the conversation about Oceanian literary production.

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House-Girls Remember: Domestic Workers in Vanuatu, edited by Margaret Rodman, Daniela Kraemer, Lissant Bolton, and Jean Tarisesei. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007. ISBN 978-0-8248-3012-0, ix + 163 pages, map, 18 photographs, boxed sections in Bislama, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$47.00.

The experience of domestic workers in Vanuatu and across the Pacific has been little explored to date, and so this

book is very welcome. *House-Girls Remember* combines oral histories by women who have been haosgels (house-girls), with reflections by eleven women who are filwokas (fieldworkers) with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and several foreign anthropologists. It is an exemplary product of the research collaboration vigorously promoted by the center. The voices of ni-Vanuatu women are amplified here by a lightness of editorial touch in transforming their words into text and in situating the volume in the broader comparative literature. The main sources are women's narratives and participant observations, primarily by haosgels themselves. The experiences of ni-Vanuatu and migrant Tonkinese women recorded and analyzed in this volume span over a hundred years—from the period of conjoint British and French colonialism in the New Hebrides/Nouvelles-Hébrides, through independence in 1980, to the twenty-first century. The domestic work considered includes both indentured and wage labor. Despite being referred to as “family” by their employers, throughout the book the unequal relations between masta, misis, and haosgel are palpable.

Perhaps the most poignant story is that of a Tonkinese child servant, Uwan (108–120). This is told not in Uwan's words but through the recollections of an elderly woman, Celestine, the daughter of a French planter family with whom Uwan lived in the 1930s and 1940s on South Efate, Vanuatu. Uwan was the orphaned daughter of a Tonkinese couple who had relocated to the New Hebrides as indentured laborers but did not survive the harsh conditions. At age

seven Uwan joined the household as a companion for Celestine and as caretaker for her younger brother. Celestine stressed their childhood identity as young girls (in Bislama, “emi olsem mi” [she was just like me], 109). For author/anthropologist/filwoka Jean Mitchell, this heartfelt claim occludes the profound differences of power and privilege that existed between Uwan and Celestine. Uwan's arrival, along with forty other indentured workers, facilitated the growth of Celestine's father's plantation of coffee, cocoa, cotton, and coconuts, and enabled the family to lead a genteel domestic life, while Celestine's mother worked for the Condominium government. Uwan was both “intimate insider and perpetual outsider” (115), reinscribing the colonial inequalities of race, class, and gender in the “inner recesses of bourgeois life” (114). Her female servitude slipped into sexual service for other French planters. At eighteen Uwan became pregnant; says Celestine, “we married her to a Tonkinese” (115). Both Celestine and her brother were devastated by Uwan's sudden departure; her brother, who “loved her like a mother” (116), wept for a week. Uwan was repatriated to North Vietnam with her husband in the 1940s; there they had six more children. Mitchell perceives the nostalgic recollections of the elderly Celestine, still living in the independent state of Vanuatu, as evincing both “the power of loss and the loss of power” (119).

Similar questions about the relation between domestic intimacies and inequalities in both colonial and postcolonial periods pervade most of the stories told by indigenous ni-Vanuatu women. There is a rich diversity

to these stories, but here I distill three dominant themes. First, there is the question of the value that women attach to the work itself: preeminently child care, cooking, cleaning, and laundry. Although most acknowledge that domestic work is arduous, repetitive, and constantly undone by daily life, they also attest to its importance (13). Rather than seeing such work as demeaning manual labor or drudgery, haosgels celebrate it, especially the responsibilities and joys of child care. Many speak lovingly of children who had been in their care, and report that even decades afterward, when they had grown up, their charges kept in touch with them, sent them letters and presents, and came to visit them (23). Food and cooking also loom large in the stories, as affirmations of both cultural difference and human connection. There are hilarious tales of the strange eating habits of British, French, or Vietnamese employers, and their repulsive or indigestible food (47, 50). Stories of a misis who daily inspected her freezer for theft (137) and a masta who offered stale, moldy bread (134) are seen as symptomatic of the ungenerous, unequal relations between indigenous workers and their expatriate employers (128). In contrast, eating and cooking together created a sense of “family” (32, 34, 39, 48, 49, 53, 54, 66).

Second, although the money earned was important, its value was intrinsically connected to the relationship with the employer. Good employers were generous and kind, providing goods and services beyond cash: food and board, transport, clothes, or sewing machines. Bad employers were niggardly, failed to pay well, or scolded

(87–88, 106–107). Some haosgels left in protest and, if possible, returned to a subsistence lifestyle (20). Such relative economic autonomy is less available to urban haosgels in Vanuatu today. Paid employment options for uneducated women are few and cash is needed in town. Two of the volume’s coeditors, Daniela Kraemer and Margaret Rodman, note in the conclusion that contemporary haosgels are considered worse off than in the past (143ff). Most are day workers who pay their own expenses of transport, accommodation, food, and utilities. The difference in employment conditions reverberates with a novel sense of disconnection from their employees. The “fictive family” of the colonial period seems gone; most domestic work (except for the care of babies and young children) is done while employers are at work and older children are at school. Most haosgels interviewed in 2001 felt “overworked, underpaid, and ignored” (144). An important shift in the post-independence period is the emergence of an indigenous middle class who also employ haosgels. Such ni-Vanuatu employers, though perceived as kinder, are also seen as potentially the worst bosses; poorer than expatriates, they can afford neither to pay minimum wages nor to buy expensive, time-saving domestic appliances. Especially vulnerable are haosgels who are genealogically related to their ni-Vanuatu employers, who can end up trapped in situations of exploitation or even abuse (144–147). Perhaps, like the fictive families of colonialism, domestic arrangements that combine servitude and kinship prove especially perilous for contemporary haosgels.

Third, haosgels' stories are suffused with stories of sexual pressure from male employers. Uwan's story is not unique; there are many accounts here of colonial mastas who had sexual relations with domestic servants and other ni-Vanuatu women (6off, 96–97). Some women reported living in fear of their colonial mastas, which would have surely increased the latter's coercive potential. Other women acknowledged that they preferred to work in the fields rather than the house to avoid such risks. But some also reported successfully refusing sex, sometimes by quitting work (59, 68). More consensual sexual relations developed between some haosgels and mastas (80–82, 95–97) and some of these became recognized as marriages, even rivaling extant marriages with a white misis (71–73). Several women lamented how white fathers neglected their children with ni-Vanuatu mothers (62–64).

The collaborative workshop from which this book emerged was aimed not only at analyzing the situation of domestic workers in Vanuatu but also at effecting some positive changes through promoting respect and human rights. The book concludes with a "House-girl Awareness Pamphlet" where several rights are articulated: minimum wages (16,000 vatu per month in 2003), and rights to breaks, holidays, sick leave, and maternity leave, and to report a boss who "hits or touches you" (150). Hopefully both the pamphlet and this book will help improve the situation of domestic workers in Vanuatu.

This book is highly recommended. There might have been more editorial analysis of the integrating themes and

more theoretical reflection in relation to questions posed by the broader literature on gender and domestic work. For example, why have domestic servants been predominantly women in Vanuatu, at least since World War II (unlike many parts of colonial Papua New Guinea and Africa)? What are the differences between indentured and waged domestic work and between concepts of value in commodity and kastom economies? How salient was Christian conversion in transforming models of families, households, and domestic work? How might the material on contemporary domestic work in this Pacific archipelago be situated in ongoing debates about contemporary transnational flows of nannies and maids? Still, perhaps posing these broader comparative and theoretical questions might have diminished the volume of the indigenous female voices herein and even the attraction of the book for Pacific audiences.

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Une pirogue pour le Paradis: Le culte de John Frum à Tanna (Vanuatu), by Marc Tabani. Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2008. ISBN 978-2-7351-1193-0, 254 pages including photos, figures, bibliographic references, map. €20.00.

John Frum first appeared on the Vanuatu island of Tanna in the late 1930s. Since then, successive generations of ethnographic observers have contributed to a voluminous literature dedi-