is there room for critique, for interrogating the mystifying practices of popular culture that collude with the “culture-cidal” forces of empire? Despite the absence of an index, the book has encyclopedic value likely to be appreciated by those who come with specific interests in particular historical periods or locales. So, for example, one studying Hawai‘i tourism or with a specific interest in the Polynesian Cultural Center will find historic images of some value (216–217). For anyone who might approach this project as anything other than a convenient collection of archival images, the content can only blur into vague notions of twentieth-century Pacific “exotic.” These images and objects are of interest precisely because they are so well identified with period fashions in decoration, architecture, art, and film. But the scope and diversity of material included in Tiki Pop suggest that there may be no way to bound such a category beyond some kind of generic primitivity. These projects suggest that “tiki” functions more as an empty signifier than a distinctive style that might in fact be mapped geographically or historically. Lacking a whisper of critical reflection on such topics, the Tiki Pop book and exhibit leave us with parody without purpose, a shell of white male fantasy now colored with the anxious recognition that perhaps the good old days may be gone.

GEORGE M WHITE
University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa

* * *


Drawing on Michel Foucault, Michel Naepels opens his stimulating work with the question: “Does war have any value as an analytical tool for power relationships?” (11). Naepels’s ambitious anthropology uses violence as a principle to decipher the complex web of social interdependencies in the commune of Houailou, New Caledonia, with sensitivity to the minute mechanisms at play within societies. In an engaged examination of archival materials and testimonies, Naepels seeks new means to reintroduce an anthropological politics “at the center of the field of empirical science” (12).

Naepels’s keen awareness of the Kanaks’ ambivalence regarding social and political relations is underscored by the book’s title, Conjurer la guerre, which carries a dual meaning in French, suggesting both the control and harnessing of violence through sovereignty and chiefancy, and the preparation of war in secrecy following the veiled lives of frondeurs (political rebels) and dissenters. These two strategies lead Naepels to the study of martial customs, to the use of physical violence throughout the nineteenth century until the 2000s, and to the social modalities that aggregate and structure collective experiences and actions such as elders’ council and political parties. The author deliber-
ately centers his research on precise historical periods of indecision and change when new forms of government and self-government emerge from within indigenous populations. He proposes a thematic chronological panorama detailing the social interactions and conflicting interests in the Houaïlou province between the French administration and the Kanaks.

The first three chapters of Naepels’s book deal mainly with precolonial and colonial wars. The author starts with the French colonial repression of 1856 and 1867 in Houaïlou. He multiplies the voices and perspectives to better expose the intricate mechanisms leading to a repressive doctrine of control. Notably Naepels inscribes this violence in a longer history of conflict predating European arrival. Detailed research examining the nomination of four important chiefs in 1912 allows the author to trace the interaction between Houaïlou’s main chiefs and the colonial administration. He reveals the ambiguous status of the Kanaks’ chieftaincy, which was mainly a French fabrication. Naepels shows the evolution of colonial warfare and repression in all its facets, including mobilization for the First World War and the “sanitary order” imposed on Houaïlou during that period. According to the author, the tactics used by the French powers to contain and fight against epidemic diseases such as leprosy and plague exemplify another form of colonial warfare from the standpoint of the indigenous population.

The last three chapters deal with more recent history. In chapter four, the 1955 witch hunt allows the anthropologist to differentiate between natural and ethical phenomena through the concept of “Justice Kanake.” Following a group of protagonists linked to those events, Naepels analyzes the multifarious stakes ranging from the religious to the political, the economic to the educational. Chapter five concerns the “indépendantiste” movement and the events that shook New Caledonia between 1984 and 1988. Naepels highlights the recent ideological “break-up,” after more than a century of constant exchanges, between the French colonial powers and the Kanaks. The last chapter draws some conclusions about the history of conflicts in Houaïlou and underlines the ongoing collective memory of violence and warfare through ceremonial aspects. To restrain this violence and “conjurer la guerre” remains Houaïlou’s most important and constitutive element. Those strategies of control protected the fragile balance between indigenous populations and French in New Caledonia.

The opening of Naepels’s investigation best illustrates the writer’s multifaceted, multilayered approach. The anthropologist describes the coastal town of Houaïlou in the midst of rapid change and at the center of powerful global economic interest. The indigenous populations in the 1800s developed contacts first with neighboring groups and then with European traders, sailors, adventurers, and settlers looking for sandalwood, gold, and other riches. These exchanges started the process of Western colonization in New Caledonia and led quickly to ongoing internal wars, the rise of violence, and eventually the subjugation of the Kanaks under the
French empire. Through excerpts from administrative archives, firsthand testimonies, logbooks, and diaries, Naepels draws us into the thick of the colonial endeavor and gives us a clear and comprehensive view of the multiple powers at play.

At the center of this work is a rigorous reconstruction of a retaliatory French operation that was carried out in 1856 Houaïlou. Starting from this act of brutality, Naepels uses various historical sources to contextualize and draw a chronology of what happened. He underlines the cultural and symbolic confusion brought by violence among the Kanak victims. To help readers better understand the situation on a linguistic level, Naepels shares notes on the etymological meanings of “Houaïlou.” He then tackles the controversial question of cannibalistic behaviors and investigates the importance and recent creation of chieftaincy and the role of the elders’ council to better explain the ongoing conflicts and their future implications. The author deconstructs the concept of chieftaincy, unveiling its historical mechanism. In deciding on a network of local chiefs, the French administration weighed heavily on Houaïlou’s subtle social balance, and initial disruptions gave way to a Kanak war. In turn, the deadly combination of Oceanian and Western warfare plunged some targeted tribes into violence and fear. “Ever since that day, Uailo people were terror stricken” (41). For Naepels, the French colonial powers carried out a modern form of state terrorism. The anthropologist traces its global roots and connects its coercive methods to those developed in Algeria and in other parts of the French empire.

Naepels succeeds in illuminating the patterns between global and local dynamics and the political and economic interests crisscrossing Houaïlou. Following the second repression of 1867, the author stresses the importance of the “war stones” and other propitiatory practices. Use of those artifacts becomes a privileged way to question both indigenous and European perspectives via administrative archives, war stories, and interviews. Naepels reveals the tenuous boundary that existed at the beginning of the twentieth century between scientific and missionary efforts. For Naepels, Maurice Leenhardt best symbolized this ambiguous duality. The French pastor and ethnologist used his personal interest for indigenous practices for missionary purposes. The more Maurice Leenhardt learned about complex clan organization, medicinal tradition, and the symbolic power of war stones, the better he could evangelize the local population. For Leenhardt, understanding was the best way to change the traditional pagan mentality and lead the populations toward the Protestant creed. Leenhardt’s interest in Kanak culture made him a prolific ethnologist and the translator of a major “classique de l’anthropologie” (77) titled “Jopaipi.” This seminal text allows Naepels to reconstruct a local version of the 1867 French repression. It also helps the anthropologist to place this episode in a wider indigenous history of conflicts that started in the nineteenth century and ended in the first part of the twentieth century (at the
time of the Jopaipi’s story’s translation).

Leenhardt’s curiosity about Kanak artifacts opened his eyes to deep cultural changes taking place in Houaïlou. He noticed how the Christian converts slowly lost interest in traditional objects such as war stones. According to Naepels, if the Protestant pastor won the cultural battle over the Kanak soothsayer, it was because European medicine was better at saving lives than the local pharmacopoeia and magic amulet. If Kanaks converted in droves, inversely Leenhardt claimed to have taken, albeit jokingly, the opposite route. Along with his missionary colleague Paul Laffay and a young English scientist Paul Montague, he used “a rare magic stone” (105) to put a spell on the German kaiser during the First World War. But Naepels remains dubious about such powers. If the kaiser ended up losing the war, his fellow missionary and the English scientist also lost their lives during the conflict, highlighting the mixed results of local magic.

Naepels answers Foucault’s original question in his study: violence is indeed a potent anthropological tool as well as topic of investigation, one that affords an examination of social relationships in their singularity and their banality. Noting that one and a half centuries of violent colonial history have branded the seal of historical determinism on the Kanaks’ social and political life, at least in the eyes of some ethnologists, Naepels’ pragmatic approach yields a different insight into the history of conflicts in Houaïlou. His purpose is neither to explain nor to generalize but rather to articulate questions about relationships between violence, conflict, and power in order “to look differently at the history of Houaïlou” (16).

LOUIS BOUSQUET
University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa


Multiethnic parties or even stable electoral alliances are a rare breed in the postcolonial world. In Une mairie dans la France coloniale, Benoît Trépied attempts to chart and make sense of one such uncommon alliance over a tumultuous period in a complex colonial context. The Union Calédonienne (UC) was ascendant in New Caledonian politics between the post–World War II discontinuation of the exclusionary colonial regime and the 1980s, a period marked by increasing ethnic strife. Its slogan, “Deux couleurs, un seul peuple” (Two colors, one people), and its ability to effectively mobilize a variety of constituencies across the indigenous-nonindigenous divide make it an extraordinary occurrence both in the Pacific and in the context of colonial France. Think, for example, about the nefarious consequences of a political system dominated by ethnically affiliated parties in nearby Fiji or, as eminent historian of colonialism Frederick Cooper remarks in a note appended to Trépied’s text (369), about the ways in which the settlers of Algeria mobilized after World War II against the prospect of