

actions were fundamentally informed by “political pragmatism” (360). But while a double agenda worked for decades, it came apart when the colonial determinants that characterized New Caledonia in the period between the 1950s and the 1970s were eventually superseded. New waves of immigration from France and elsewhere in the French Pacific, including French Polynesia; the nickel boom and subsequent modernizations; the emergence of “Calédonien” as a new ethno-social descriptor; and the emergence of a new class of educated Kanak leaders all contributed to the final demise of the structural logics of the previous colonial era and the UC.

Is this historical context relevant today? Trépiéd seems to think so, and the book’s opening draws an explicit link between the evocation of a “common destiny” for the indigenous and nonindigenous inhabitants of New Caledonia that is proclaimed by the Nouméa Accord of 1998 and the multiethnic practice that characterized the UC before the emergence of a more radical type of Kanak militancy (7). Ultimately, if the colonial enterprise was eminently incomplete and the rich density of Kanak social life can at least partly be explained with reference to colonial seclusion, whereby social practices could survive in isolation, as Trépiéd argues, there is room for reinterpreting the past as more benign than previous accounts have led us to believe (360). The future, then, could be conceptualized as a return, not to an era of political strife, but to a preceding moment of multiracial cooperation.

Beyond the Pacific and the rest of colonial France, the study of this

“alliance” is also relevant to settler-colonial studies as a comparative scholarly field. Settler colonialism as a mode of domination inevitably faces the contradiction arising from simultaneous settler expressions of indigenizing and Europeanizing impulses. In the context of this interpretative framework, the UC could be understood as a party of indigenizing settlers aiming to chart an autonomous settler course against constituencies that could be represented as exogenous: colonial landowners, metropolitan immigrants, immigrants from Wallis and Futuna, and the central state. In the face of emerging indigenous insurgencies in the 1980s, this creole indigenizing option could not be sustained.

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*Décoloniser l'école? Hawaï'i, Nouvelle-Calédonie: Expériences contemporaines*, by Marie Salaün. Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013. ISBN 978-2-7535-2165-0, 303 pages, bibliography, table of contents, French. Paper, □17.00.

With *Décoloniser l'école?*, Marie Salaün provides a highly informative, detailed, and thorough comparative study of the school systems of New Caledonia and Hawaï'i, with a fixed gaze on the relationships and experiences of indigenous populations with state-sponsored education. An anthropologist and historian of education, and one of the very few French specialists of colonial and postcolonial studies in Oceania, Salaün starts from

a deceptively simple question: How can one seize the postcolonial moment in education? In the wake of the intellectual and conceptual disruptions such a question can foster, the author explains how she moved from studying the part played by education and the school system in the perpetuation of the colonial order to focusing on how these can contribute to the dissolution of that same colonial order.

This is a complex, timely topic, and Salaün is at pains to lead the reader into rich discussion of the material contexts and issues facing education in the colonial and postcolonial Pacific. In a notable early passage, she reminds the reader of New Caledonia's 1999 organic law, article 215, which specifies that Kanak languages are recognized as appropriate for teaching and cultural practice (15). Thus, she notes that the question of how the education system can be adapted to indigenous cultural contexts is woven into the country's contemporary political and legal framework. Refusing to engage in a discussion of what is possible or what is desirable, she rejects a normative position, but, more importantly, her aim is to acknowledge the evolution of the social and political context. Drawing on the length of her research engagement with the region, beginning in 1994, she is well positioned to note that such evolution has only been accelerated by the 1998 Nouméa Accord. In the new context, in which it is now taken for granted that Kanak languages and cultures must be included in the curriculum, she asks, what are the new stakes? The question has now shifted from "Should we do it?" to "How should we do it?"

The first chapter deals with the

discrepancy between the principle of equality among all citizens in contemporary democracies and the acknowledgment of specific collective rights for indigenous people. How do indigenous people's rights challenge the model of the democratic nation-state? The second chapter confronts a first level of complexity in implementing decolonization in the school system on indigenous lands: To what extent does the emergence of a school system specifically designed for indigenous children challenge "l'indifférence aux différences" (16), the indifference to differences that is characteristic of the way in which the French school system operates? To her mind, such a shift requires a careful reflection on the nature of the "colonial" in order to rid oneself of the illusion under which some believe that there is a continuity between the colonial period and today, when, in fact, there is a complete rupture (16–17). She reminds the reader that, literally, to decolonize (*dé-coloniser*) amounts to undoing (*dé-faire*) the school system that colonization had implemented (17). And yet, to "decolonize" education, it is not enough to introduce Kanak languages and cultures. As an assistant professor of French at the University of Hawai'i, I have noticed firsthand that several of my undergraduate and graduate students who come from Tahiti voice recurring complaints regarding the contemptuous and prejudiced attitudes that were displayed by some of their metropolitan school teachers when they were growing up in French Polynesia. It appears that decolonizing the school system remains intrinsically linked with decolonizing mentalities.

The third chapter deals with the discrepancies among the various objectives attributed to indigenous language and culture teaching. The fourth chapter questions the tensions between theoretical models, practical experiences adapted to indigenous people, and expectations in terms of acquiring a common culture. Salaün proceeds to present the reader with a detailed analysis of four experiments in progress: two in New Caledonia (the program of the state government and that of the North Province) and two in Hawai'i (language-immersion schools and the Hawaiian-focused charter schools). The fifth chapter raises issues pertaining to discrepancies between native knowledge and school knowledge: Are they compatible? How does introducing a specific culture into education shape, in turn, the very use of school in its specificity—that is, passing over lessons that only it can do?

As a conclusion, without being as pessimistic as people like Jean-Marie Kohler and Loïc Wacquant regarding the *Projet des Écoles Populaires Kanak* (Plan for Kanak Peoples' Schools, or EPK) in the 1980s, Salaün nevertheless acknowledges that indigenous education seems bound to be written in the very words it is trying to fight (269). Namely, one wonders whether, instead of resorting to confrontation, the indigenous militants have not chosen to introduce culture into the school curriculum via the “back door,” for instance, via the cause of supporting interculturality. The societies in which they live are characterized by multiple ethnicities and multiculturalism, and, despite their recurring argument that an essential opposition exists between

the Western world and the indigenous world, the presence of migrant populations now blurs the old binary opposition between former colonizers and former colonized. And yet, the promotion of inter-culturalism has never been their priority, which can be understood if we bear in mind that multiculturalism is always emphasized by those who have an agenda of delegitimizing indigenous claims. Thus, it is presupposed that while the indigenous people were there first, they are only one part of a whole in which various ethnic and cultural communities are bound to live together (269–270). Salaün further suggests that the counter-ideology of an indigenous school actually creates a dichotomy between distinct types of fundamentalisms (*fondamentalité*), notably the instrumental conception and the patrimonial conception (271)—the perception of school as being used solely in a utilitarian perspective as opposed to school as a tool for the transmission of cultural heritage.

Overall, this extremely comprehensive study is highly informative and highlights the fact that the indigenization of the curriculum is by no means enough in order to decolonize education. It also underlines the urgency of complementing laws with an objective academic analysis of this very complicated situation, without falling victim to over-empathy or militancy, in order to build a scientific framework for implementing necessary changes.

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