

L'ORDRE ET LA MORALE:
LOOKING BEYOND THE TRANSNATIONAL IN A NON-INDIGENOUS FILM
ABOUT RECENT PACIFIC HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

*Most films about the Pacific may be described as transnational in terms of production (and often content), but is it ever possible, within a Postcolonial or Indigenous critique, to move beyond conversations about appropriation? And is the transnational aspect of the film the most useful way to categorise it? Specifically engaging with the Mathieu Kassovitz film *L'Ordre et la morale*, a retelling of the 1988 French military assault on Kanak hostage-takers in Ouvéa, New Caledonia, this article explores whether we can reconcile the twin dangers of Pacific narratives going untold (and the consequent erasure felt by Indigenous people) versus the peril of Pasifika people seeing only shallow, erroneous, or negative stereotypes of themselves on screen. What role, if any, can non-Indigenous filmmakers play in the cinematic reproduction of Indigenous Pacific histories?*

Keywords: transnational cinema; anti-colonial cinema; Pacific history; Kanak independence; Mathieu Kassovitz

INTRODUCTION

Transnationalism has the potential to foreground the possibilities of energising, connecting, creative, original, innovative, and mutually beneficial exchange. However, when transnationalism is used in order to describe a practice that draws on imperial roots, routes (see Clifford 1997), perspectives, and modes of resourcing, and where the terms and possibilities of exchange are explored in the absence of an analysis of power (see Higbee and Lim 2010), the term 'transnational' can feel deceptive, even dangerous.

In the Pacific context, transnational cinematic production has often been

characterised by the voyeuristic, sexual nature of the European gaze on exotic brown bodies (Hokowhitu 2007). Inhabited by the familiar Noble Savages, Uncivilised or Ferocious Savages, and cavorting Dusky Maidens, many non-Indigenous films also turn to stock themes and settings (beaches, huts, dancing, tropical fruit, fishing, cannibalism, etc.) to tell imagined, appropriated, Europeanised/Americanised versions of Pacific stories (see Lyons 2005; O'Brien 2006). For instance, *Moana*, the recent Disney Pixar film, has drawn debate and criticism from scholars who have pointed to the homogenisation and stereotypical or negative representation of Polynesian peoples and cultures and raised questions on Pasifika ownership over their own images and histories (see, for example, Diaz 2016; Mila 2016; Teaiwa 2016). The cumulative effect of these past productions means that every film set in the Pacific has not only a burden to tell its own story in a convincing, entertaining, and moving way but also a burden of being part of a large river of representation of the Pacific from outside the region.

With this discussion in mind and using as a case study the Mathieu Kassovitz film *L'Ordre et la morale*,² this article explores how we can usefully enter into a conversation around issues of appropriation, power relations, and Indigenous agency to evaluate the role of engaged film making in the Pacific. Can non-Indigenous film makers make a respectful contribution to the retelling of important Pacific stories without resorting to stereotypes or appropriation? Is 'transnational cinema' the most useful label to describe such productions?

L'ORDRE ET LA MORALE AND 'THE EVENTS'

On 16 November 2011, Mathieu Kassovitz's *L'Ordre et la morale* was released in France. An anti-colonial, deeply engaged, political action drama, it recounts a bloody episode in New Caledonian history: the 5 May 1988 French military assault on an Ouvéan cave (dubbed 'Operation Victor') where sixteen *gendarmes* (policemen) were being held hostage by members of the FLNKS.³ The hostages had been taken on 22 April following an attempt by local Kanak to occupy peacefully the *gendarmerie* (police station) in protest at regional and presidential elections.⁴ Despite careful planning, four *gendarmes* were shot. The twenty-seven remaining *gendarmes* were taken to two different locations; the first group was released a few days later following negotiations with *gendarmes* and the intervention of local elders; the second group, holed up in a cave near the village of Gossanah in the north of the island, were to be released after the second round of the French Presidential elections on 8 May. Despite entering into negotiations with the Kanak, particularly through the intermediary of the GIGN Captain Philippe Legorjus, and presumably aware that the men would

be liberated after the elections, the French President François Mitterand and Prime Minister Jacques Chirac signed the order for a full-scale military assault on the cave, in effect sanctioning an act of war against their own citizens.⁵

As the smoke cleared, all of the hostages walked free, but two soldiers and nineteen Kanak were killed. It later emerged that some of the Kanak were summarily executed, others had been beaten to death, and their leader, Alphonse Dianou, had been beaten and left to die untreated from a gunshot wound to the knee.⁶ None of these crimes would be investigated, however, as an amnesty was called and the Accords de Matignon-Oudinot were signed on 26 June 1988, ending the period (1984–1988) that in New Caledonian history is euphemistically called ‘les Événements’ (the Events).⁷ As part of the deal outlined in the Accords, the FLNKS was recognised as a legitimate political party, and the status of New Caledonia was to change with the promise of a referendum for independence in 1998.⁸

A CONTROVERSIAL RELEASE ON NEW CALEDONIAN SOIL

Just prior to the release of *L'Ordre et la morale* in New Caledonia, Douglas Hickson, owner of New Caledonia's only multiplex, refused to screen it, reportedly due to pressure from conservative politicians (Sterni 2011). Using the excuse that the film would only open up old wounds, the attempt at censorship was straight out of the colonial handbook. A public outcry ensued, and eventually the film was shown in various locations in *la brousse* (the bush or regional centres) and at the Centre Culturel Tjibaou in Nouméa.⁹

Many different groups had a stake in how they were portrayed in the film, with polemical criticisms aimed at the film prior to and during production continuing after its release as locals flocked to see it (Fisher 2012).¹⁰ The French authorities (politicians and military) sought to uphold the official narrative surrounding the events, denying any atrocities and hailing the hostage liberators as heroes who had bravely rescued the *gendarmes* from the clutches of the ‘savagely’ Kanak. Even though Michel Rocard, who replaced Chirac as Prime Minister in 1988, confirmed that the executions and beatings of the Kanak that were exposed in the film did take place (1ereFR 2011), most of the other French officials, including Bernard Pons (French Minister for Overseas Territories), General Vidal (Chief of the French Forces in New Caledonia and head of ‘Operation Victor’), other military and GIGN personnel as well as Jean Bianconi (Deputy Public Prosecutor), swore that the film was based on lies.¹¹ Certain members of the FLNKS, particularly sensitive to the accusation of having abandoned their Ouvéan members during the hostage crisis and not wanting to

be seen as having been in cahoots with the French politicians, were similarly against the film. Some anti-independence *Caldoches* (non-Indigenous settler New Caledonians) and Kanak took exception to what they perceived as the pro-independence position of the film, fearing it would jeopardise their objective of a *destin commun* (Common Destiny), while others felt that it promoted this concept of ‘Common Destiny’ in an anachronistic way (Paris 2011).¹² The inhabitants of Ouvéa were also divided over the film: a number of them objected to the film being shot through the eyes of Philippe Legorjus, whom they saw as a traitor for his failure to deliver on undertakings made during the negotiations.¹³ All of these groups had their own agendas for protecting their particular memories (individual or collective) of the massacre at Ouvéa.

Of course, with so many interested parties and so many versions of the story, Kassovitz’s job was always going to be daunting. He spent ten years gathering information from written, oral, official, and non-official sources and made several trips to New Caledonia and Ouvéa to talk to as many people involved in the affair as possible. He extensively consulted the Kanak of Ouvéa on their recollections of events and sought their permission to make the film and shoot it on location in Ouvéa.¹⁴

While he was permitted to make the film and initially allowed to film on Ouvéa, Kassovitz shifted filming to an island in French Polynesia because certain sectors of the Ouvéan community expressed dissatisfaction over the project.¹⁵ As well as having economic implications, this move offshore raises the inevitable questions around ‘authenticity’. To what extent can one Pacific Island stand in for another? What impact does the change in landscape have on a story that was very much centred on one specific place? And how does this displacement affect the indigenous audience for whom the absence (or presence) of particular landmarks may hold special significance?

THE ETHICS OF CHOOSING A FILMIC WINDOW

These issues are but the tip of the iceberg when it comes to thinking about an outsider, a non-Indigenous filmmaker, in this case a Frenchman, making a film that recounts the story of nineteen Ouvéan Kanak who died while engaged in the struggle for political independence from colonial France. The only son of Alphonse Dianou, the leader of the hostage-takers, Djiaïnu Dönemwa was categorical in accusing Kassovitz of appropriating this story. He said, ‘Ils sont venus, ils ont volé notre histoire’ (They came and they stole our history); ‘ils sont partis le tourner là-bas à Tahiti’ (they left and went to shoot it over in Tahiti) (‘Révélation, Résurrection KANAKY’ 2011). Yet one of his main issues

with the film was the choice Kassovitz made to tell it from the point of view of Philippe Legorjus, the GIGN negotiator whom Dönemwa saw as the betrayer of his father.

Benoît Tangopi, one of the Kanak hostage-takers, agreed. He was discontented with Kassovitz taking the film offshore and thereby distancing himself from those who were there and who could have actively consulted on the set. He stated that he was not so much against the film itself, rather he was against the decision to base the film on Legorjus's book (Legorjus and Caradec'h 1990).¹⁶ Tangopi (2011) wrote, 'baser le film sur la version de Legorjus a pour objectif de le laver de ses responsabilités dans la mort de nos frères' (the aim of basing the film on Legorjus's version is to cleanse him of his responsibilities in the death of our brothers).

Controversial and unpopular with many, the decision to adopt Legorjus's viewpoint, however, was perhaps, ironically, the only ethical option for Kassovitz. On the one hand, he was very aware of his own identity as a Frenchman and how any attempt for him to tell the story through the eyes of a Kanak would only reinforce the colonial power dynamic that he was seeking to avoid; it is, of course, a delicate balancing act in a film of this genre. While opting to focus on the personal and moral dilemma of the white representative of the colonial power (Legorjus) and by playing this role himself, Kassovitz risked glorifying his (anti-)hero and relegating the Kanak voices to the background (Naepels 2013).¹⁷ On the other hand, by steering away from such an obvious appropriation, Kassovitz makes the point in the film that, certainly at that time and in that place, those Kanak voices that were struggling to be heard were being actively muted by French society and politicians. Kassovitz acknowledged the ambiguous nature of Legorjus but saw him, a compromised figure to whom many people can relate, as an ideal conduit for the film, observing, 'nous sommes tous des Legorjus en puissance' (we are all Legorjus in terms of power). Moreover, we have all been in positions where we have had to do things that go against our morals (Chambon 2011).

Narratively, Legorjus functions as a parallel character with the Kanak leader Alphonse Dianou. Both men are ultimately impotent. Betrayed by their political puppet masters, their destinies are out of their hands. They are fighting for what is morally right but are sacrificed by the politicians for the sake of 'order'. Legorjus, with all his flaws, was the only character in contact with the French political élite, the military, the *gendarmes*, the hostage-takers, and the Kanak of Gossanah, and he thus provided Kassovitz with an ideal cinematic window into the actions and motives of all parties.

Through Legorjus, Kassovitz distils a panorama of savagery that gains momentum as the professional GIGN negotiator recognises the injustices, prejudices, and violence that the Kanak were subject to at the hands of his countrymen. Intercut with the cinematic action, we see and hear contemporary (authentic) French television and radio news reports of the hostage-taking that painted the Kanak as barbarians on a bloodthirsty rampage, who hacked the *gendarmes* to death with machetes. These accounts contrast with the Kanak reality of a take-over gone wrong with the unfortunate and unplanned consequence of four *gendarmes* being shot in panic. The narrative spun by the press had an interest in portraying, through racist and racialist stereotypes, the Kanak as dangerous, savage, and other. These tired colonial tropes were taken further by the politicians and military, who, in labelling the Kanak ‘terrorists’, dehumanised them to a point where their elimination was made all too easy.

THE SAVAGERY OF THE ‘CIVILISED’

The film inverts the civilised/savage dichotomy – to the extent of caricature, according to some critics – showing the viewer that it was the French who were violent, cruel, and ready to torture and kill without conscience.¹⁸ Before the GIGN even arrived in New Caledonia, Legorjus had to remind his men that they were going to a French territory and that the Kanak were French citizens with the ‘same rights and obligations as us’; however, the massive number of French troops sent to Nouméa and their ‘débarquement’ (military landing) made it clear that the hostage-takers were not going to be treated like French citizens. Rather, the Kanak hostage-takers had become the enemy. The Kanak were referred to as ‘monkeys’, ‘primitives’, and ‘cannibals’ by the French military, who, in its occupation of Gossanah, the first time such a take-over had occurred since the Algerian War, displayed all the behaviours of an invading colonial army. The Kanak flag was taken down (and soldiers were seen taking souvenir photos posing with it), men and women were separated, roadblocks were erected, and Kanak were tied to posts, interrogated, and beaten. When the Minister for Overseas Territories, Bernard Pons, paid a visit to the village, he gave the army carte blanche to use whatever means possible (that is, torture) to find the hostages. France, with all her military might and technological advances, could not be humiliated by this ‘bande de sauvages’ (pack of savages). Kassovitz’s decision to have some of the scenes of torture playing out in the background, a point of criticism for some, serves as a powerful reminder of its commonplace nature and underlines the gross inequality, brutality, and ingrained racism of the colonial regime (see Drévilon 2008).¹⁹

Interestingly and importantly, Kassovitz, it seems to me, pays homage to a

Kanak worldview in the way he plays with time in the film. The opening scene depicts a bewildered and broken Legorjus surveying the aftermath of the final assault – once the flamethrowers have been used, and the Kanak are being dragged out of the cave to be executed. This beginning with the ending, or cyclical notion of time, is contrasted with the European linear countdown to the tragic dénouement. This disconnect with the linear concept of time, a fusion of past and present, is masterfully portrayed when *gendarme* Samy Ihage, a Kanak and one of the first group of released hostages, recounts the hostage-taking to Legorjus, and we see the events unfold in front of the two men who remain standing in the frame. These devices underline the idea that in New Caledonia in 1988 there were two parallel and inherently different worlds, the Kanak world and the French/white settler world, which were hurtling towards an inevitable clash.

LIEUX DE MÉMOIRE

While clearly sympathetic to the Kanak cause, Kassovitz skirts accusations of appropriation by electing to denounce the cover-up of the massacre, condemn the cynical French political manoeuvring, and highlight the extremity of the actions of the imperialist military by revealing all through the increasingly critical eyes of the non-Indigenous Legorjus. While using this white man's perspective, Kassovitz nonetheless manages to create a *lieu de mémoire* (site or space of memory) for some of the Kanak of Ouvéa by including scenes showing the actions, motivations, and aspirations of the Kanak separatists and the Gossanah villagers.

Despite opposition from some locals, Kassovitz worked very closely with a number of Kanak of Gossanah, people who witnessed the events or took part in them or who were relatives of the hostage-takers. Some of these people acted in the film, in effect taking on the skin of their ancestors. Others helped with the script or advised on cultural protocols. For this group, headed by Matthias Waneux and Maki Wea, Kassovitz's film represents the brutal reality of what they experienced in 1988. They claim that the film accurately retells their story and highlights their feelings of betrayal and abandonment. It is a record that they contributed to and of which they are immensely proud. While it is not a Kanak-made film, it is the first feature film starring Kanak actors made about a local historical event, and it offered them an opportunity to get their story heard and seen on the big screen.

For many Ouvéans, this film is a hugely important outlet for telling their story, a story which, given its controversial and political nature, likely would never

have attracted funding or been allowed to be made had a local filmmaker attempted to tell it. Speaking at the Arras Film Festival in 2011, Dave Djoupa, who played his father Wenceslas Laveola, killed by the French military in the final assault, described the rehabilitating power of the film. He said, ‘Nous, depuis qu’on est en classe de 6e, 5e, jusqu’au lycée, on nous appelle des enfants d’assassins. Le film montre la réalité de pourquoi on s’est battu. Il nous redonne notre fierté’ (Since we were in Year 7 or 8 and throughout high school, we [the children of the Ouvéan hostage takers] were called the murderers’ children. The film shows the reality of why we fought. It gives us back our pride) (Ecrannoir.fr 2011). Maki Wea has pointed out that, with the passing of time and the passing away of many elders, the Ouvéan community is losing memory of these events. Having the film as a document is therefore essential for them to trace the history of their island and, more broadly, their place in the history of New Caledonia (‘Débat télévisé à propos de la sortie du film *L’ordre et la morale*’ [‘Television debate’] 2011).²⁰

If the film represents the collective memories of some of the Kanak of Ouvéa, it cannot be seen as pan-Kanak. Indeed, it is naïve to talk about a single Kanak story or even a single Ouvéan story as Kanak are divided along ethnic, linguistic, geographic, religious, and political lines (see, for instance, Bensa 1990; Spencer, Ward, and Connell 1989). Many different camps have appropriated the events portrayed in the film, yet none of these groups share the same memories (and some of them display certain degrees of collective amnesia) when it comes to the Ouvéa affair. A film, no matter how ‘objective’ it might try to be, cannot show all of these points of view (Chambon 2011).²¹ By drawing on the specific memories of Legorjus and the Kanak of Gossanah, however, *L’ordre et la morale* manages to resonate universally as a critique of imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism in the francophone world.

STARTING CONVERSATIONS

FLNKS leader Roch Wamytan has criticised the film for failing to provide sufficient background as to why the Ouvéans attacked the *gendarmérie*. In a television debate about the film just prior to its release, Wamytan also lambasted Kassovitz for not making a film that recounted the centuries of Kanak suffering and their long-term struggle for independence (‘Television debate’ 2011). When he put this to Kassovitz years before *L’ordre et la morale* was made, the filmmaker apparently replied that this story would not sell, a response which indicated to Wamytan that Kassovitz was simply another European seeking to profit from Kanak suffering. While the response could certainly be interpreted this way, Kassovitz the filmmaker had recognised how the Ouvéan massacre

as a stand-alone event would translate perfectly onto the screen, which is essential if a film is to get funded and made. A two-hour film could never do justice to an all-encompassing tale of 150 years of postcolonial Kanak history, and Kassovitz, a non-Indigenous Frenchman, would not be the ideal person to tell such a tale. Instead, he offers this snapshot, temporally brief yet terribly complex, which contains enough information for viewers to comprehend the context of colonial violence in which it is set and to understand that it is just a small piece of a greater story of resistance.²² The film brings this particular episode to the attention of local and international audiences and whets their appetite to discover more. As such, the film paves the way for further exploration of Kanak stories by Kanak filmmakers with its very existence opening up dialogue around possible future productions, not to mention the possibilities it creates for local filmmakers to ‘write back’ (Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffiths 1989).

Indeed, the very purpose of this film is apparently to start conversations. Leaving behind the land of the *non-dit* (the unspoken or not said) (Barbançon 1992),²³ where old wounds have been left to fester rather than heal, people enthusiastically have entered into debate about the film, revisiting memories of the massacre. They have shown that any hope of reconciliation must begin with acknowledging the events and recognising past injustices. Denying their past or sweeping such events under the carpet is only another form of violence, another form of silencing the voices of the colonised.

These previously silenced voices are heard in Kassovitz’s film, which provides them with a cinematic space simply to be. The Ouvéans speak their own languages when communicating amongst themselves or engaging in ceremonial exchange. Indeed, in the film, *la coutume*, the Kanak custom of engaging in dialogue with outsiders based on a system of mutual respect, holds a central place. The importance of *la parole* (the word) in Kanak society as opposed to the duplicity of the French, is also underlined. The significance of language, communication, and mutual comprehension in the postcolonial space is underscored by the way Legorjus, the French and French-speaking negotiator, fails in his mission to bring the Kanak back to the French (colonial) order of things; his failure makes the point that language, communication, and comprehension cannot be unidirectional (that is, favouring the French). Kanak values of respect, trust, and communication, given so little credence by the French, seem to point the way to a reconfiguration of *le destin commun*, a moving forward on Kanak terms, choosing the path of dialogue and mutual respect rather than accepting the colonial structures and worldviews that have been imposed from above. The film’s purpose, then, seems not to stir up old animosities – these are still present as the polemic around the film has shown

– nor to divide; rather, it appears to offer a way in for New Caledonians to confront their traumatic history, acknowledge it, and talk about it openly. It is also a clear and pointed reminder to France of its broken promises.

HIGHLIGHTING THE LOCAL THROUGH THE TRANSNATIONAL OR
ANTI-COLONIAL

Iabe Lapacas, who played his cousin Alphonse Dianou in the film, spoke of the ‘beau bébé’ (beautiful baby) that had been produced. He said at the Arras Film Festival,

Ce film est important car c’est notre histoire à tous. Elle nous habite, nous qui sommes kanaks, et nos compatriotes aussi, qu’ils soient kanaks ou pas, qu’ils soient indépendantistes ou pas, vous aussi nos compatriotes français, mais aussi tous les peuples en lutte dans le monde, car je pense qu’ils se reconnaîtront dans la lutte du peuple kanak. Et cette histoire est universelle aussi pour les militaires qui verront le film ainsi que pour les politiques. (Ecrannoir.fr 2011)

[This film is important as it is everybody’s story/history. It lives within us Kanak and our compatriots too, whether they are Kanak or not, whether they are pro-independence or not. It lives in you too, our French compatriots, and it is also in all of the people engaged in a struggle throughout the world as I think they will recognise themselves in the struggle of the Kanak. This story is also universal for the soldiers who will see the film as well as for the politicians.]

Any lingering qualms we might have about appropriation of a particular Ouvéan narrative in this film, then, are balanced out by its contribution to the political landscape and its role in provoking discussion. While the film has provided a vehicle for the cinematic representation of the voices of Ouvéa, memorialising the events of 1988, it is also significant in the retelling of New Caledonian, Pacific, and French colonial history. It deconstructs the official narrative of the ‘heroic’ rescue of the *gendarmes* from the ‘savage’ Kanak ‘terrorists’, a narrative that was replayed by media throughout the world. It condemns the devastation that the twin evils of capitalism and colonialism have wreaked on this French Pacific territory. Like Gillo Pontecorvo, the director of *La Bataille d’Alger*,²⁴ Kassovitz invites regional, metropolitan, and international viewers into the conversation. In this particular case, it would seem, Kassovitz moves the transnational lens beyond stereotype and appropriation to underscore Indigenous agency and resistance in the Pacific. If there are

universal themes, the film does not pander to imperial or neo-colonial tropes nor deny the specificity or rootedness of the story in Kanaky-New Caledonia. While we might call it transnational cinema, the film is more usefully seen as part of a wider movement of anti-colonial film-making.

NOTES

- 1 Associate Professor Karin Speedy is Head of French and Francophone Studies at Macquarie University. She works on historical, cultural, linguistic and literary links between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. Her particular interests include transnational, colonial and postcolonial history, language contact, migration, race and racism, critical whiteness, postcolonial literature and literary translation.
Email: karinelakiwi@gmail.com
- 2 *L'Ordre et la morale* translates literally as 'Order and Morality' or 'Order and Ethics'. The French title beautifully captures the dilemma of a military man, an instrument of the French Republic, charged to uphold the republican value of 'order' against his own moral evaluation of the situation in New Caledonia which he views as unjust and ethically wrong. The film was released in the English-speaking world with the title 'Rebellion'. This title fails to evoke the ethical conundrum at the centre of the film. It seems more of a marketing ploy to position the film as an action movie and shifts the questioning of morality in the original title to a judgement of the Kanak action as a rebellion against order.
- 3 FLNKS: *Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste* (Kanak National Socialist Liberation Front). Note: all translations in this article are my own.
- 4 'Kanak' comes from 'Kanaka', the Hawaiian term for 'man' that spread through the Pacific in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries via Anglophone sailors and then through the contact languages used in trade. As '*canaque*' it was once a pejorative word used by the French to designate the Melanesian population of New Caledonia but was adopted by the Independence movement in the 1980s as a collective name for the local Indigenous people. It was officially inscribed in the Nouméa Accord of 1999 (Angleviel 2002).
- 5 GIGN: *Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale* (National Gendarmerie Intervention Group, a counter-terrorist, special operations group in the French military).
- 6 For a detailed investigation into what happened in Ouvéa in 1988, see Sanguinetti's report (1989). It was by reading this report that Kassovitz first learned about

- the Ouvéa massacre and became inspired to write a film about it (Filmosphere 2011).
- 7 This was a period of civil and political crisis during which pro-independence advocates (mostly Kanak) and conservative loyalists (mostly from the white settler community) clashed violently and repressive measures were taken against the Kanak (see, for example, Aldrich 1993, 240–84).
 - 8 The full text of the Accords de Matignon-Ourdinot can be found here: www.mncparis.fr/uploads/accords-de-matignon_1.pdf.
 - 9 The film had several screenings (accompanied by a debate with actors and stakeholders in the film) at the Centre Culturel Tjibaou in December 2011, was shown subsequently in Nouméa at the Fédération des Oeuvres Laïques, and toured ten villages in the *brousse* in New Caledonia (L'Humanité.fr 2011).
 - 10 For a summary of this polemic, see Levacher (2011). Denise Fisher (2012) notes that the film was shown 'to audiences that comprised Europeans and Kanak alike. Cinemas were full and the run had to be extended'.
 - 11 Their reactions, written up in the right-wing media, have been strong and defensive. See, for instance, Bianconi (2011); Delcroix (2011); Lefèvre (2012); Pons (2011).
 - 12 Robert Paris (2011) writes, for instance, 'Le but du film de Kassovitz est la réconciliation [...] entre les victimes et les assassins! Ce n'est pas notre but!!!' (The aim of Kassovitz's film is reconciliation [...] between the victims and the murderers! This is not our aim!!!).
 - 13 For details, see Faurie and Nayral (2012).
 - 14 For details, see sohk.tv interview (2013).
 - 15 See Faurie and Nayral (2012) for an insightful description of how Kassovitz's visits to Ouvéa, while well intentioned, created friction when he failed to understand fully Kanak protocol during meetings. In the sohk.tv interview (2013), Kassovitz claimed that the decision to shoot in Tahiti was made because the Gossanah caves were 'sacred grounds'.
 - 16 Legorjus put out another book, prefaced by Mathieu Kassovitz, to coincide with the release of the film (Legorjus 2011). Kassovitz, however, maintained that the

- film was based not on Legorjus's book but rather on his reading of Sanguinetti's (1989) report and years of researching historical documents and oral accounts of the events leading up to the assault. Only later did he make the artistic decision to adopt the point of view of the character of Legorjus in his film (Coquet 2011).
- 17 'This choice of perspective serves to highlight the absence of Kanak points of view, their social worlds appearing in the film as delicate yet opaque' (Naepels 2013).
 - 18 Douglas Hickson, Bernard Pons, and General Vidal all voiced their disdain at what they perceived as the Manichean (good Kanak/bad military) caricatures in the film (Delcroix 2011; Sterni 2011).
 - 19 The New Caledonian television show 'Case Commune' aired a special programme dedicated to the events that occurred in Ouvéa in 1988. Élisabeth Dréwillon's documentary film 'Grotte d'Ouvéa: Autopsie d'un massacre' formed part of this television special and was uploaded on 2 December 2011 to YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHLQCnDaHzQ>. It includes numerous eye witness accounts, footage from the time, and vivid descriptions of the torture experienced by the Kanak of Ouvéa during this period.
 - 20 Maki Wea spoke passionately about the film and his role in it during a debate shown on New Caledonian television before the film's release ('Débat télévisé à propos de la sortie du film *Lordre et la morale*' 2011). As a sign of his respect and gratitude to the Ouvéans for sharing their story, Kassovitz held a special screening of the film on Ouvéa prior to its official release. The locals therefore got to see it before the mainlanders. However, Djiaïnu Dönemwa was critical of Kassovitz's disrespect of Kanak protocol in his failure to invite those Kanak who had not supported the film to the first screening in Ouvéa ('Révélation, Résurrection KANAKY' 2011).
 - 21 Kassovitz has claimed that he tried to stay as neutral as possible in the retelling of this story (Chambon 2011).
 - 22 Akin to a postcolonial novel, this film challenges the viewer from the Centre. Kassovitz integrated intertextual elements into the film, such as the image of the Kanak *indépendantiste* martyr Éloi Machoro, killed by a GIGN sniper in 1985, without explanation, leaving it up to non-local viewers to take the time to find out for themselves.
 - 23 The *non-dit* is the unsaid or unspoken and refers to the tradition of not talking

about the past (Barbançon 1992).

- 24 Known as *The Battle of Algiers* in English, this powerful film, made in 1966, showed the colonial crimes of the French during the Algerian War of Independence. It was so controversial that it was banned from screening in France for five years.

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