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From University of Pennsylvania Press : Louisiana: Crossroads of the Atlantic World (Early American Studies) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Louisiana: Crossroads of the Atlantic World (Early American Studies):

Located at the junction of North America and the Caribbean, the vast territory of colonial Louisiana provides a paradigmatic case study for an Atlantic studies approach. One of the largest North American colonies and one of the last to be founded, Louisiana was governed by a succession of sovereignties, with parts ruled at various times by France, Spain, Britain, and finally the United States. But just as these shifting imperial connections shaped the territory's culture, Louisiana's peculiar geography and history also yielded a distinctive colonization pattern that reflected a synthesis of continent and island societies. *Louisiana: Crossroads of the Atlantic World* offers an exceptional collaboration among American, Canadian, and European historians who explore colonial and antebellum Louisiana's relations with the rest of the Atlantic world. Studying the legacy of each period of Louisiana history over the longue dure, the essays create a larger picture of the ways early settlements influenced Louisiana society and how the changes in sovereignty and other circulations gave rise to a multiethnic society. Contributors examine the workings of empire through the examples of slave laws, administrative careers or on-the-ground political negotiations, cultural exchanges among landowners, slave holders, and slaves, and the construction of race through sexuality, marriage, and household formation. As a whole, the volume makes the compelling argument that one cannot write Louisiana history without adopting an Atlantic perspective, or Atlantic history without referring to Louisiana. Contributors: Guillaume Aubert, Emily Clark, Alexandre Dub, Sylvia R. Frey, Sylvia L. Hilton, Jean-Pierre Le Glaunec, Cecile Vidal, Sophie White, Mary Williams.

"The ten essays in this volume prove the value of an exploration of Louisiana's colonial and American territorial past from an Atlantic world perspective. American, Canadian, and European historians demonstrate through extensive comparative and connective analysis of Louisiana's administrative, economic, and social links to France, Spain, and the Caribbean that eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Louisiana should never again be characterized as isolated and insular." Julien Vernet, *The Journal of Southern History*

"These smart essays make good on the transnational promises and post-colonial potential of Atlantic history. No one, ever again, will refer to Louisiana as the neglected stepchild of United States or French colonial history." Catherine Desbarats, McGill University

"Sitting at the edges of a New France trading economy and a circum-Caribbean system of slavery as well as at the heart of what would become the continental United States, Louisiana did indeed sit at the crossroads of the Atlantic world. Bridging historiographic and nationalistic divides, *Louisiana: Crossroads of the Atlantic World* is a welcome addition to the transnational scholarship of eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century Louisiana." Jennifer M. Spear, author of *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans*

About the Author Cecile Vidal is Associate Professor of History and Director of the Center for North American Studies at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

Introduction Louisiana in Atlantic Perspective Cecile Vidal

"Perros los Franceses" are the words that Antoine Paul, a domestic slave, would have cried out to the Sieur Rivire, a merchant in New Orleans, on one street of the Louisiana capital on a Sunday afternoon in 1766. Witnesses, some neighbors who watched the fight, told the judge that the Sieur Rivire was hitting the slave with a stick and that Antoine Paul was trying to defend himself while "chattering incessantly." None of them understood what the slave was saying, because he spoke in Spanish. The Sieur Rivire complained that Antoine Paul not only tried to defend himself but also attacked him. Coughing and spitting on the ground, the slave would have made "many silly remarks about the French." In front of the magistrate, Antoine Paul claimed that he did not insult the French; he only said "that the English were dogs, that they did not know the Virgin Mary or anything else, and that the Sieur Rivire did not understand correctly if he believed that it was about the French that he talked, that he had nothing wrong to say about them since he was himself a Creole from Martinique." During his first questioning, the defendant had told the judge his complex peregrinations since his birth in Martinique: Dutch merchants bought him and took him to Curacao and then Santo Domingo, where he was baptized. Afterward he circulated in the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, living in various Spanish settlements, before landing in Havana where his current master, Mr. de Loyola, purchased him. The French, the English, the Spaniards in an enslaved man of Africa descent's view . . . The incident happened while Louisiana, a colony founded by the French in 1699, had been divided and given to Spain and Great Britain by the treaties of Fontainebleau and Paris in 1762-1763. Antoine Paul's owner, Joseph de Loyola, was probably the war commissioner who, a few months earlier, had come from Havana to New Orleans with the new Spanish governor Antonio de Ulloa to take possession of the Louisiana capital and the western bank of the Mississippi River. Located at the junction of North America and the Caribbean and at the crossroads of the three main empires that established colonies in the New World, Louisiana experienced a succession of sovereignties in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The lives of Louisiana's inhabitants, whether they were Native Americans, European settlers, or slaves of African descent, were all impacted by this geography and history, and the conflict involving Antoine Paul was emblematic in this regard. "Tensions of empires" between metropole and colonies, within colonial societies, and among various empires and trans-imperial crossings and mobilities especially the slave trade, which was the most internationalized Atlantic commerce were not abstract realities for these various historical actors. These conflicts deeply shaped life trajectories and informed social identities. Louisiana's peculiar geography and history, which makes the "Mississippi colony" (as Louisiana was known in eighteenth-century France) a paradigmatic case study, calls for an Atlantic perspective. *The New Atlantic History* In less than twenty years,

Atlantic history has experienced an extraordinary rise in the United States. According to Alison Games's definition, it is "a style of world history with a particular regional and chronological emphasis." A larger and more inclusive entity is superimposed on the traditional national, colonial, and/or imperial frameworks of analysis. Atlanticists regard the Atlantic world as constituting a unit of historical analysis in which the transnational and trans-imperial connections between the fifteen and nineteenth centuries should be studied first and foremost. The Atlantic paradigm postulates that the relations animating the Atlantic space played an essential role in the evolution of societies on both sides of the ocean. Consequently, Atlantic history "is concerned with explaining transformations, experiences, and events in one place in terms of conditions deriving from that place's location in a large, multifaceted, interconnected world." It goes without saying that no consensus exists on the factors and actors that were the most influential, or on the ways these societies were transformed by their relations with the rest of the Atlantic world or by local circumstances. In spite of the important efforts already made to define precisely the object and methods of the new Atlantic history, works claiming to draw on it are characterized by their great diversity and by the variety of their approaches. There are many competing definitions of the Atlantic world(s) and some very contradictory conceptions of the way Atlantic history should develop. This divergence continues to obscure the debate that has developed over the Atlantic paradigm. Admittedly, the concept of an Atlantic world and the way the related history has developed are not flawless, but critique should not lead to invalidation, nor should it discredit the Atlantic paradigm entirely. Although one should not expect this approach to solve all problems, Atlantic history opens up new and promising perspectives. A few years ago, Trevor Burnard questioned the necessity and the sheer possibility of turning all historians of the colonial period into Atlanticists, pointing out the difficulty for a single person to master several languages and historiographies and to do research in archives disseminated all over the Atlantic world. These obstacles can be overcome in two ways: first by adopting a microhistorical approach and following an individual or a small group in their peregrinations around the Atlantic world; second, by conducting collective inquiries, on the model of the present book, which brings together American, Canadian, and European specialists of French, Spanish, and American Louisiana. As Alison Games has rightly pointed out, the most promising trend of Atlantic history is what David Armitage calls "cis-Atlantic history," since it can be done by any researcher individually. This kind of history "studies particular places as unique locations within an Atlantic world and seeks to define that uniqueness as the result of the interaction between local particularity and a wider web of connections (and comparisons). . . . Cis-Atlantic history, in the more expansive sense proposed here, is the history of any particular place a nation, a state, a region, even a specific institution in relation to the wider Atlantic world." Even more than seventeenth-century Virginia, which several authors have studied in a cis-Atlantic perspective, the Mississippi colony, because of its position at a crossroads, constitutes a prime location for the practice of Atlantic history. Under the French regime (1699-1769), Louisiana was located at the intersection of two models of French colonization in America: a continental Franco-Indian model and an inland and slave Franco-African model. Louisiana's hybridity thus linked different societies of the French Atlantic Empire. Similarly, during the Spanish period (1769-1803), Louisiana occupied two kinds of peripheral spaces: the Hispano-Indian northern margins of New Spain (California, New Mexico, and Texas) and the littoral and island regions of plantations (New Grenada, Cuba, etc.), with their exploited black slave workforce. In the heart of North America, Louisiana's colonial territory was one of the largest in the New World, and the control of the whole hydrographic basin of the Mississippi enabled contacts between Louisiana settlers and those of neighbouring foreign establishments. Because of its perch on the Gulf of Mexico, Louisiana also belonged to the cosmopolitan Caribbean world; it, too, participated in those dense relations with the colonies or former colonies of various European powers. At the same time, because it stood at the margin of three rival empires in North America, Louisiana came successively under French, Spanish, British, and finally American sovereignty during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thus, not only did Louisiana stand at the crossroads of two distinctive socioeconomic and commercial systems, but it also refracted the sovereignties of three distinctive European empires and an American nation-state. It is impossible to confine oneself to a strictly national or imperial approach when studying Louisiana over a lengthy period of time; one is compelled to engage transnational, connected, and/or comparative history. The study of colonial Louisiana enables us to steer clear of a problematic tendency in Atlantic studies, which paradoxically have adopted mainly a national and imperial perspective and taken the form of distinct histories of British, Iberian, French, and Dutch Atlantics. Most of the works still focus on the British Atlantic to the neglect of other empires, despite the formation of a French Atlantic History Group, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, at McGill University in Montreal. The few authors who have engaged in comparative and/or connected history have mostly favored comparisons between British and Spanish Americas in the colonial period. Nevertheless, it is important to include the French Empire in the comparison, because in some respects the British and the French faced similar situations overseas with slave-trading forts in Africa and territories located both in North America and in the West Indies, and both had to negotiate relations with sparse, nomadic, or semi-nomadic Native populations. Imperial rivalries also principally opposed France and Great Britain during the "second Hundred Years' War" (1689-1815), which played an essential role in the construction of a British national identity and in the establishment of Louisiana and its later integration into the United States. Thus, focusing on this region allows us to make the comparison more complex and to confront the colonial models of the three greatest monarchies of

Western Europe, which fought each other for hegemony during the entire early modern period, notably in their colonial peripheries. The Expansion of Louisiana Historiography Although concomitant, the recent expansion of Louisiana historiography does not stem from the rise of Atlantic history. Rather, it results from the progressive broadening of colonial historians' interests from their initial focus on New England to Virginia and the other southern colonies, and subsequently on the Mid-Atlantic colonies, the British West Indies, Spanish Florida, and finally French and Spanish Louisiana, all of which was spurred by multiculturalism. If taking the British West Indies into consideration may be construed as a return to an imperial perspective, the integration of Florida and Louisiana once again connects colonial history to American national history, as these non-British colonies eventually became part of the U.S. national territory. In any case, ever since the publication of Gwendolyn Hall's and Daniel Usner's books in 1992, French and Spanish Louisiana have become a popular research topic in the United States: dissertations, books, and articles on the subject have multiplied, and the findings therein have been integrated progressively into syntheses devoted to "colonial America." Likewise, a new spate of works on territorial and antebellum Louisiana has also materialized. Every historian and ethnohistorian working in the field nowadays recognizes their debt to these two pioneers of the new Louisiana history, while the proliferation of scholarly research on Louisiana testifies to the rising legitimacy of Louisiana history in the field of colonial and antebellum American history in the United States. The new favorable position of Louisiana history owes a great deal to the innovative work of Hall and Usner, whose books were perfectly in line with a fundamental streak of Atlantic history, resolutely "multicultural, multiethnic, and multiracial." While Atlanticists acknowledge that Europeans were initially responsible for the formation and integration of the Atlantic world, they also emphasize the essential contribution of Africans and Native Americans to the formation of new societies and cultures in the Americas. As it emerged in the 1990s, the new historiography provided a synthesis and reconceptualization of various Atlantic and colonial histories: that of the White Atlantic, which appeared in the 1940s and 1950s, and that of the Black Atlantic, which accelerated in the 1970s with the multiplication of works on the slave trade, slavery, and the Black diaspora, while ethnohistory and the study of Euro-Indian relations also developed. In these two latter fields, Gwendolyn Hall's and Daniel Usner's books contributed, twenty years later, to a major historiographical turn. With *The Middle Ground* by Richard White, published just one year before, Usner's dissertation proposed to replace histories of conquest, domination, and acculturation by histories of exchanges and accommodation between European and Native cultures. Thus, it played an essential role in the rise of the New Indian history and in the integration of ethnohistory into colonial history. As for Hall, she took part, with John Thornton, whose book was published simultaneously, in the renewal of the very important historical debate, launched in the 1940s by the anthropologist Melville Herskovits and sustained in the 1970s in the works of Sidney Mintz and Richard Price, over the transfer and persistence of African cultures in the slave communities of the Americas. Hence, the new interest in colonial Louisiana, which should also be related to a concomitant rise in French West Indian history, could be connected with the fact that the study of the French Empire allows American historians to think differently about interethnic and interracial relations in colonial and/or slave societies. Atlantic and Caribbean Louisiana Even though it is not labeled as Atlantic history, and its title and content do not incorporate the term "Atlantic world," Gwendolyn Hall's book clearly belongs to the historiography of the Black Atlantic. By asserting that the Louisiana slave community was one of the most Africanized in the America, Hall confers a special importance on the connections between Louisiana and Africa. The present book builds on this essential idea. Its central hypothesis on which it relies is that Louisiana's relations with other regions of the Atlantic world, not only Africa, but also Europe and the rest of the Americas, played a fundamental role in the formation of its society and culture. Admittedly, Louisiana was a "frontier society." The colony was established very late (in 1699), and during the eighteenth century it still had to struggle for its survival while most other European colonies in the Americas experienced a transformation from "charter" or "frontier societies" into "Creole societies," according to Timothy Breen's model. Within the French Empire, the Mississippi colony was one of the most remote, as it took nearly the same amount of time to cross the Gulf of Mexico as it did the Atlantic Ocean from Europe or Africa to the West Indies. The competition from older and better-located colonies explains the failure of its peopling and the weakness of its export trade to the parent country during the first half of the eighteenth century. During the Spanish period, Louisiana's situation improved but did not drastically change. Thus, local circumstances certainly had a considerable impact on the way Louisiana society and culture developed. However, one can argue that, even though they were weak, the connections with the successive parent countries were not negligible. Moreover, to offset its relative isolation and remoteness from the Old Worlds, Louisiana developed intercolonial relations within the whole Caribbean basin that exercised a great influence on its development. Hence, when Louisiana society is compared to other colonial and/or slave societies, it is very important not only to remember that it remained in an early stage of development for most of the eighteenth century, but equally important to realize that the situation of a new colonial society was very different in the eighteenth century than in previous centuries because it developed within a rising interconnected Atlantic world that was experiencing a general process of racialization from the last decades of the seventeenth century. Although Louisiana was not a slave society as were older plantation societies such as Martinique and Virginia or Jamaica and Saint-Domingue, it did not remain a society with slaves for very long: with slaves soon constituting more than 20 percent of the population, Louisiana

quickly becoming a slave society, with slavery the main source of labor and an institution that informed all social dynamics and cultural representations. As such, this book partakes in an old debate on the respective influence of "nature" and "nurture," the weight of local circumstances versus the cultural baggage of free or forced migrants, the role of internal or external factors in the formation and development of colonial societies. Acknowledging that the Atlantic paradigm is operational in the case of Louisiana, the authors try to apply it carefully, without affirming that it explains everything. The goal, as John Elliott puts it, is to avoid the "natural temptation to exaggerate the extent to which one side of the Atlantic influenced developments on the other, perhaps in an effort to prove the writer's Atlanticist credentials. But it needs to be recognized that there is no need to find a consistency, and still less a progressive development, of interaction over time and space. At some times and in some places the Atlantic component will figure strongly, while at others it may well occupy a subordinate position. Tracing and explaining the fluctuations in the degree of interaction between the whole and the parts is a necessary element in the writing of Atlantic history." One of the major problems that Atlanticists should try to solve is indeed that of the relationship between the parts and the whole, as well as the contradictory and simultaneous processes of integration and fragmentation, though this issue arises both within and beyond the Atlantic world. Some phenomena that interest Atlantic historians, such as the formation of colonial empires or the expansion of European trade, were not confined to the Atlantic basin but extended to all continents. For instance, as Sophie White underlines in her essay, textiles from Asia were imported, looked after, and highly valued by both European settlers and African slaves in Louisiana. Still, the book clearly demonstrates that the "Atlantic component" was the most important in the Louisiana case and that the adoption of an Atlantic perspective enlightens our understanding of Louisiana society and culture. Likewise, if this collection of essays promotes an Atlantic approach, it does not try to impose it to the detriment of other historical frameworks. The volume views hemispheric or continental history and Atlantic history as complementary and not exclusive interpretative frameworks. It seeks to understand how the formation and evolution of Louisiana territory and society were construed on various scales. It is this "game of scales" that made Louisiana a crossroads of the Atlantic world with its transatlantic, hemispheric, imperial, continental, Caribbean, and local dimensions.

Chronological Scale and Geographical Framework

The essays collected here extend both the chronological scale and the geographical framework. Most studies of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Louisiana tend to focus on one political period only, when the region was under French, Spanish, or American sovereignty. Other studies include the entire colonial period but stop at the time of the Louisiana Purchase or the accession to statehood. A few works carry through to the antebellum period, such as Emily Clark's great book on the Ursulines of New Orleans. The essays gathered in this book likewise range over a very large period, from the foundation of the colony at the end of the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century, when francophones ceased to be the majority in Louisiana. The idea is to focus on the colonial period while surveying its legacies in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Contrary to what took place in other colonies that underwent a transfer of sovereignty, such as New York or Canada, both integrated into the British Empire at a century's interval, Louisiana's francophone population became a minority among settlers of European descent very late in time. This was due to the weakness of the hispanophone migrations during the Spanish period and the persistence of intense relations with the former parent country and with populations of former French colonies, including Acadians and refugees from Saint-Domingue. Paradoxically, the migrations from France to Louisiana were relatively more important during the antebellum period than under the French regime. Removed from the French Empire in the 1760s, Louisiana remained an essential component of the French Atlantic for a century after that. The integration of Louisiana into the field of Atlantic studies thus allows us to reconsider the relationship between imperial history and Atlantic history. Several historians have criticized the fact that the way Atlantic history has been (re)developed with works on the various national Atlantics amounts to a revamping of the old Imperial school and displays a very Eurocentric perspective. Other scholars have underlined that the newly proposed view of the Atlantic world as a world of "entangled empires" also leaves aside Africa and an alternative diasporic conceptualization of the Atlantic world. This tendency is reinforced by the choice of many authors to stop Atlantic history at the independence of European colonies in the Americas, obtained for the most part by the end of the 1820s. Consequently, this historiography contributes to an overemphasis on the White or Euro-American Atlantic. The result is to impose its analytical framework on the entire field of Atlantic studies, despite the fact that a growing number of historians point out that there was not one but several Atlantics "shaped by the position, experiences and perspectives of each individual" and group. Kathleen Wilson's comment on David Armitage's and Michael J. Braddick's essay on the British Atlantic puts it this way: "What is lacking is the attempt to rethink British Atlantic history through the very divergent chronologies, beliefs and practices of any of the creoles or non-Europeans who also peopled it. This task is crucial if British Atlantic history is to be more than merely a variant of imperial history, whether new or old." This book adopts a *longue dure* in order to respond to the injunction of Kathleen Wilson and others. This alternative chronology allows us to think about several interconnected phenomena: the fundamental impact of the first migrants—whether free or forced—and settlers on the formation of Louisiana society and culture in the long run; the effects on social and racial relations of the imposition of new legislation and political culture at each transfer of sovereignty; the process of integration of the successive waves of free or forced migrants and their influence on the

local society and culture according to their demographical importance in this evolving context; the legacy of each period of Louisiana history for the succeeding one; and, finally, the formation and evolution of a local society and culture, which was neither truly French, Spanish, nor American. This preoccupation with time and changes is matched by an interest in space and location. The various essays thus take into account every part of the vast original colonial territory, even though some regions receive more attention than others (see Map I.1). Under the French regime, the colony of Louisiana, theoretically, extended from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico and from the Alleghenies to the Rocky Mountains. However, most of that space was, in practice, Indian country. Colonial settlements were limited to a string of outposts in the Mississippi Valley and on the Gulf of Mexico, and to an archipelago of forts south of the Great Lakes and in the Mobile Valley. Because of low immigration, land use followed a dual model, intensive and extensive: compact colonization developed only in the Lower Mississippi Valley, upstream and downstream from New Orleans, while the vast interior remained the domain of the fur trade, aside from the settlements in the Illinois Country. The treaties of Fontainebleau and Paris in 1762-1763 gave New Orleans and the west bank of the Mississippi to the Spanish, while the rest of the Louisiana territory went to the British. The lands east of the river exited Louisiana history to enter West Florida's history, an important point made in Sylvia Hilton's essay. Nevertheless, under the Spanish regime, Louisiana was still a vast territory extending along the entire Mississippi River. Although it was an integrated space as during the French period, American historians tend to study Lower and Upper Louisiana separately during the colonial period; they project onto the eighteenth century a territorial division which appeared only in the first decades of the nineteenth century, when a very small part of Spanish Louisiana became a U.S. state called Louisiana in 1812. If most of the essays in this book deal with the Lower Mississippi Valley, those by Sylvia Hilton, Sophie White, and Cécile Vidal remind us that the history of French and Spanish Louisiana cannot be understood without taking into account the dispersion, remoteness, and diversity of settlements. Although they were located far away in the interior, the six villages of the Illinois Country, on the Mississippi Valley, between the mouths of the Missouri and the Ohio, for instance, formed the second most important settlement of the colony during the French period. The same is true for Saint-Louis and the other villages of the region under the Spanish regime. Because of its location, the Illinois Country served as a link between Canada and Lower Louisiana, and its demographical and economic development depended upon the connections it maintained with both regions. As Hilton demonstrates regarding the fur trade, relations between "Greater Louisiana" and Canada were as important as relations with the West Indies in the eighteenth century. Several of the chapters here deal with New Orleans proper. Apart from Shannon Lee Dawdy's and Jennifer M. Spear's recent book, very few monographs have focused on the city in the colonial period, and they deal mainly with its economy, urbanism, and architecture. In the studies about slaves of African descent, one might infer from book or chapter titles that the authors paid attention to urban slavery, but the expression "New Orleans" designates both the city and the surrounding region and the emphasis is on the slave laborers of the neighboring plantations. Indeed, New Orleans and its region formed a vast agro-urban zone, in which the city lived in symbiosis with its rural environment. Moreover, it comprised only 3,000 inhabitants at the end of the French regime and 8,000 by the time of the Louisiana Purchase. It looked like a rural town for a very long time and did not have any local political institutions before the Spanish period. However, from the beginning, New Orleans was conceived as a city, carried out some urban functions, and gathered specific social groups. Half of the migrants to Louisiana probably came from cities, as did their counterparts to Canada, and they probably brought with them an urban culture and a particular representation of the city. It is probable that a distinct urban society existed very early on, in the space and in the conception the city dwellers had of themselves. The several articles dealing with New Orleans in this book address new important topics such as the specificity of cities in plantation societies, the particularities of urban slavery, and the influence of the urban environment on social and racial relations and on the formation of local culture. As such, the book partakes in the recent development of studies on colonial and/or slave urban societies, outside of Spanish America. A by-product of this focus on the Louisiana capital, which housed very few Indian slaves, is the relative pre-eminence that the book gives to Atlantic actors of European and African descent to the detriment of Native Americans, although they appear in Sylvia Hilton and Cécile Vidal's essays. In no way should this be seen as a sign that indigenous populations are not recognized as crucial actors in Louisiana or Atlantic history. All throughout the colonial period, most of "Louisiana" remained Indian country; under the French regime, the Choctaws alone, who formed the most important Native American nation allied with the French, always outnumbered the few settlers and slaves in the lower Mississippi valley; and European and Indian settlements lived in close proximity. Native American nations were able to play imperial powers against each other and, consequently, to exercise their agency and maintain their sovereignty. It is thus not surprising that Native Americans and Euro-Indian relations have already been a major focus of colonial Louisiana historiography since the 1980s and 1990s. Empires, Circulations, and Intimacies This volume is divided into three parts that reflect various ways of conceptualizing the Atlantic world and of practicing Atlantic history, notwithstanding that all the essays attempt to dialogue with each other. Part I, "Empires," explores how intra- and inter-imperial relations and networks affected Louisiana history, society, and culture in multiple ways. It relies on the idea that, although the history of the Atlantic world cannot be reduced to the history of empires, even of entangled empires, empires did matter within (and outside) the Atlantic world. While the existence of a real French Empire has been

contested, the chapters by Alexandre Dub and Guillaume Aubert demonstrate that, although early modern France did not develop imperial discourse and ideology, both the circulation of administrators managed by the navy and the elaboration of slave laws through collaboration between the metropole and the various colonies created an imperial political, juridical, and social space de facto. Within this imperial configuration, intercolonial relations and influences, sometimes mediated by the imperial center, were of great importance: some administrators used their previous experience in Canada or in Saint-Domingue to fulfill their missions in Louisiana, while the Louisiana Code Noir was deeply inspired by the legislation developed by the French West Indian authorities between 1685 and 1724. Connections and networks were thus as important as discourse and ideology to the construction and consolidation of imperial formations. Along with Sylvia Hilton's essay, these contributions also highlight the essential role the state with officials on both sides of the Atlantic played in the absolutist empires of France and Spain, even if imperial policy was negotiated between the imperial center and the colonial peripheries. But the divide was not only between central powers and local authorities. In the case of the French Empire, which distinguished itself by the fact that it was run by a single and centralized institution, the navy, another fault line existed. As Alexandre Dub's chapter demonstrates, there was a divide between officers who were recruited locally, with no possibility of getting a position outside of Louisiana, and those who had a commission or a brevet, and thus a link to the king, and were able to pursue an Atlantic career in other colonies or in the metropole. The fact that the king was willing to extend his favor and to coopt colony-born elites gave the French Empire a strong sociopolitical cohesion. Moreover, imperial policy resulted not only from these relations and negotiations within the successive empires, but also was elaborated in reaction to pressures from other powers, whether they were imperial or pontifical. Versailles and Madrid had to take into account the mercantilist competition that raged among the great Atlantic empires or the debate that developed over the (in)compatibility of evangelization and slavery in the Catholic Atlantic. These trans-imperial religious connections demonstrate once again that imperial dynamics were not the only ones at work within the Atlantic world. Finally, these three articles illuminate the role played by actors other than officials and elites, whether they were a lowly commis aux critiques (copyist), simple missionaries such as Epiphane de Moirans and Francisco Jose de Jaca, Anglo-Americans migrants who eagerly wanted to take advantage of the plenitude of free lands west of the Mississippi, or Osage Indians who defended their sovereignty against all odds. If the question of circulations was already present in Part I, it is the main focus of Part II. It relates to a diasporic conceptualization of the Atlantic world as a space of high mobility, cultural encounters, and exchanges between various diasporas and social and ethnic groups, as well as the formation of new hybrid cultures and identities. Circulations (of migrants, goods, ideas, practices, etc.) refer here as much as to transatlantic transfers from Europe and Africa to Louisiana as to trans-imperial and intercolonial influences, and intracolony exchanges within Louisiana society among white settlers, free people of color, slaves of African descent, and Indians. Because they demonstrate that the Black and White Atlantics were deeply intertwined and that all Atlantic actors could "contribute and participate into the construction of other diasporas" and Atlantics, both chapters in Part II argue for a better integration of Black Atlantic studies within the larger field of Atlantic history. Jean-Pierre Le Glaunec and Sophie White's chapters deal specifically with the formation and evolution of slave communities and cultures. They take part in the old but still vivid debate that has developed over the transfer, survival, and persistence of African cultures and identities and the development of Afro-Creole cultures among the slave communities of the Americas. Following the steps of other scholars such as Stephan Palmi, Richard Price, and James H. Sweet, they try to avoid the dead ends where this debate has been stuck for a long time. They seek to reconcile "Creolization" with "(re)Africanization" and assimilation or acculturation with retention, tradition, or continuity. Sophie White uses slaves and poor whites' interrogatories and testimonies in judicial cases to show how together they created an underground and informal economy in order to access the material goods that their statuses and social positions deprived them. In that context, slaves adopted and re-appropriated European goods (clothes) and cultural practices (theft practices), but instead of seeing this process of acculturation as the sign of a passivity and lack of autonomy from the slaves, White demonstrates that this behavior of accommodation constituted a way for them to exercise their agency. In response to the slaves' entrepreneurship, the repressive legal and judiciary system became more heavily racialized: it increasingly targeted slaves and criminalized collaboration between slaves and whites of lower condition during the French regime. Taking the young Lubin, a slave who did not know his "nation," as a guide, Jean-Pierre Le Glaunec demonstrates that focusing only on African "nations" to study the creation and transformation of slave cultures and communities constitutes a deceptive methodology. Instead, he analyzes the constraints (the conditions of the slave trade and of plantation life) that weighed against the re-Africanization of the slave communities of Lower Louisiana during the Spanish period. He describes a small world of high mobility and fluidity where slaves of various origins lived in close proximity with white settlers. Hence, both authors call for a more dynamic and relational history of slaves and slavery, which pays more attention to context and time. The three chapters (by Cécile Vidal, Mary Williams, and Emily Clark) in Part III, "Intimacies," demonstrate how sexuality, marriage, and family or household formation lie at the heart of both the development and the contestation of the racial order in New Orleans. Together they discredit a theological and culturalist interpretation that has relied mostly on cultural factors to explain the differences between the French, Spanish, and American periods and to describe the evolution of interethnic relations over time as a

continuous and linear process of growing racialization from the so-called color and race-blind French regime to the strict racial order of the Antebellum period. Thus, the analysis of the language of race by Cécile Vidal reveals that under the French regime missionaries had a racial culture that has not been previously recognized. Mary Williams shows that this racial culture had long-lasting effects during the Spanish period: very few marriages across the color line were then celebrated, although they had become legal. However, many actors took advantage of the new laws introduced by Spanish authorities to provide for their partners and their illegitimate children of mixed descent. Conversely, Emily Clark undermines the traditional conceptualization of nineteenth-century Louisiana society as a three-caste society, emphasizing that plaage was far from a ubiquitous institution among free women of color, free people of color did not constitute a homogeneous community, and New Orleans born-free people of color developed a strong marital culture. These final three essays also argue that both Tannenbaum's thesis on the differences between the Catholic and Protestant Empires and the way it was first rejected were too simplistic, and instead offer a more complex and thoughtful exploration of the relations between law, (political) culture, religion, and society and of the way the various kinds of factors (demographical, economical, religious, cultural, juridical) combined to differentiate national/imperial and/or local models of colonization and slavery in the long run. Vidal's and Clark's essays demonstrate that the role of Catholicism was very ambiguous and could play in contradictory ways: the use made by the free people of color of the institution of Christian marriage from the Spanish period helped them to get away from the inferior status in which the racial order tried to confine them, but the way Capuchins integrated the newly baptized slaves within the Catholic Church contributed to the formation of a fragmented and segregated society and culture during the French regime. Part III, along with the earlier chapters in the book, highlights the necessity to better link North American history to Caribbean history. Vidal's essay explores the fundamental influence the connections between Louisiana and Saint-Domingue exercised on the racial culture of the Mississippi colony, while Clark analyzes how refugees from Saint-Domingue were integrated within New Orleans society and how they greatly contributed to the transformation of the territorial and antebellum city. It is possible that Louisiana history has been marginalized within U.S. history for a very long time precisely because its integration would have forced North American historians to adopt a Caribbean or a Latin American perspective for which they were not ready. Gary Nash's call to recover the "hidden history of mestizo America" has not yet produced much, and historians can seem shaken by the scientific confirmation of the liaison between Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, as journalists may be by the revelations about the mixed ancestry of Michelle Obama. But Nash's use of the Spanish adjective "mestizo" or the use of the French substantive *mtissage* in this book should not convey a wrong idea about interethnic relations in the French or Iberian Atlantics in comparison with the British Atlantic, or in the British mainland colonies in comparison with the islands. It is not because they did not work in the same way that race was not at the heart of all these social systems from the eighteenth century. We should not go back to the negative exceptionalism of some U.S. historians. The concepts of *mestizaje* or *mtissage* during the considered period are related to race-thinking as much as miscegenation. Thus, the adoption of a Caribbean perspective should not lead us to an anachronistic celebration of *mtissage*, but to more complex comparative and entangled histories of the colonial and/or slave societies of the Americas, where intricate intimacies did not prevent relations of domination. This book aims to demonstrate that one cannot write Louisiana history without adopting an Atlantic perspective or study Atlantic history without including Louisiana, but the leads it might have opened in the field of Louisiana and/or Atlantic studies need to be explored and followed more thoroughly for confirmation or refutation. A connected history of exchanges and interactions in the whole Caribbean basin, a comparative history of cultural transfers between island and mainland colonies, or a comparative history of all the colonies that experienced multiple changes of sovereignty: these are all innovative research topics offered to the curiosity of historians by Atlantic history.