Ottmar Ette / Gesine Müller (eds.)

New Orleans and the Global South

Caribbean, Creolization, Carnival

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Introduction

Much has been written about New Orleans. In the United States it has been called the 'most un-American city' and a 'socio-geographical accident.' Regardless of whether it is viewed as Caribbean, African American, European (French, to be exact), or Creole, the city is seen to be exotic and different – 'The Big Easy.' From the perspective of traditional *francophonie*, as a former French colony *La Nouvelle-Orléans* is a constituent of the cultural legacy of the *Grande Nation* and should be preserved as such.

However, if one extends one's methodological perspective beyond the narrow confines of national, linguistic, or disciplinary borders and instead views the delta metropolis from the perspective of an *histoire croisée* or transfer history, which no longer privileges a center periphery logic, then New Orleans reveals itself to be a nexus of manifold transareal circulation processes – one that could play a key role in a hemispheric understanding of the Americas. In this way, New Orleans has been successfully placed in the context of the French Atlantic in recent anglophone and francophone research (Bill Marshall, Cécile Vidal, William Boelhower); and a number of current research projects focus on Caribbean (Rebecca Scott, Nathalie Dessens) and global (Adam Rothman) transfer processes intersecting there.

Therefore, this volume goes definitely beyond the myth(s) of New Orleans, analyzing the myth(s) of New Orleans. The city's potential as a paradigmatic metropolis of the Global South is what it aims to explore. The goal is to map out the dynamic, transareal network of relations that New Orleans inhabits. The contributors, experts from the US, the Philippines, France, Great Britain and Germany deal with the linguistic and cultural creolization processes in literature, with carnival and music, and with the idealistic and material transfer movements on which they rely. The focus lies not only on hegemonic transfer processes, which tend to be bilateral, but especially on multilateral ducts of circulation that are substantially dependent on the network of relations between regions of the Global South. A chronological arc is traced from the beginning of New Orleans's *post-colonial* era, which was launched with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, to

the *post-Katrina* period of today – 2015 marked ten years since the hurricane and its devastation.

The volume starts with a transareal introduction on the nature/culture-paradigm by Ottmar Ette from Potsdam about “Carnival and other Catastrophes.” The first section concentrates on creolization processes in literature and language. Ingrid Neumann-Holzschuh from Regensburg opens this section with reflections about the Créol of Louisiana and Philipp Krämer explores the Louisianan Créol from a historico-linguistic perspective. The literary production of the free people of color is in the center of Gesine Müller’s contribution, followed by Owen Robinson from Essex, who enriches the volume with his analysis of Ludwig von Reizenstein’s *Mysteries of New Orleans*.

In the second section, dedicated to the relationship between New Orleans and Carnival, playwright Rosary O’Neill – originally from New Orleans but currently working in New York – offers an inside view on the outstanding role of Carnival in New Orleans, while Aurélie Godet from Paris focuses especially on the so-called ‘Mardi-speak’ and its linguistic roots.

Wolfram Knauer from the Jazz Institute Darmstadt opens the third section about more extensive cultural creolization processes with an overview of New Orleans’s mythical role in jazz history. William Boelhower from the Baton Rouge University in Louisiana explores the socio-geographical foundation of musical practice in the early days of New Orleans jazz. Hans Jürgen Lüsebrink from Saarbrücken examines the transversal relations between Louisiana and Quebec and Tobias Kraft from Berlin revisits New Orleans as a virtual world in computer games. Berndt Ostendorf from Munich closes this section with reflections about “Culture Formation and the Layering of History” in New Orleans.

The focus of the last section is on New Orleans as seen in a transareal context and aims to examine the Caribbean interconnections and also, in a second step, to go beyond the Caribbean concept. In a comparative approach, Sonja Arnold throws light on the “South-South Connections” between New Orleans and Brazil. Bill Marshall from Stirling, Scotland, elaborates on the historical dimension of New Orleans as one of the most important intersection points in the French Atlantic, followed by Michael Zeuske from Cologne who provides an

insight on Havana and New Orleans as two historical metropolises of slave trade in the Greater Caribbean. The volume closes with a contribution from Eugenio Matibag from Iowa City, in which he radically re-thinks the transareal dimension by including the Philippines into his Asian-American-Creolization concept.

This volume is based on the conference of the same title which took place in February 2015 at the University of Cologne, organized by both Departments of Romance Studies in Cologne and Potsdam, and part of POINTS, the Potsdam International Network of Transarea Studies. We would like to thank Michael Bollig and Barbara Potthast, speakers of the Global South Studies Center Cologne (GSSC), who provided our conference with significant financial assistance and who lent their close support to its organization. We also would like to express our special gratitude to the coordinator of the GSSC, Clemens Greiner. Many thanks also to the "Competence Area 4: Cultures and societies in transition" at the University of Cologne, in particular to Meike Meerpohl and Thomas Widlock, for their financial and professional support as well as for their precious advice. Thank you very much to the German Research Foundation (DFG) for their continuous support of the Emmy-Noether Junior Research Group "Transcolonial Caribbean."

And finally, for their comprehensive editorial work, many thanks first and foremost to Marion Schotsch, without whom the manuscript would never have gotten finished – and heartfelt thanks also to Don MacDonald and Jorge Vitón.

Potsdam and Cologne in September 2016,
Ottmar Ette and Gesine Müller

Opening

Ottmar Ette
(Potsdam)

Carnival and other Catastrophes New Orleans: A Global Archipelago

1. On Setting and Un-seating the Opposition of Nature and Culture

Nature is not natural. Since, at the latest, the 1957 appearance of the *Mythologies* by the French semiotician Roland Barthes, we have surely known that the myths that surround us and inform our lives function as "mytho-logics" (see Ette 2014: 41–66) to the extent that what has historically come into being, beyond this historical coming-into-being, can and will be circulated as Nature. Often guided by special interests, this transformation (of that which was devised, produced or invented by human beings into something 'natural') protects the thing declared to be Nature from being viewed as something changeable, and thus something that can be questioned. Nature is, naturally, a political issue.

But if Nature no longer appears to be something discovered by humans, but is rather understood to be shaped, even invented by humans, a pattern of thought develops whereby both a policy on Nature and the political element of Nature can be critically reflected upon. For if Nature can, by its nature, be reflected as something not 'merely' natural, then the changed relations between the discovery (of Nature) and the invention (of Nature) allow a new experience and recognition of Nature as being always a component of that which we can designate as cultural − no longer as something given, so much as something that has become, or even more, as something that has been created (be it on one side or the other of the divine act of creation, as it is so variously developed from culture to culture). But is not Nature then simply subsumed by Culture?

As they are, things are clearly more complex. On the one hand, the 'Not-Naturalness' of Nature proves to be more than a consequence of the fact that that which is Nature has always been culturally de-

termined and set by human beings. Rather, it also proves to be no less than the logical consequence of the fact that, within the tripartite structure of finding, inventing, and experiencing (which makes possible a substantially more complex understanding of the world than the bipolar opposition of fact and fiction could ever allow), we understand Nature as the creation of a specific cultural axiom (*Setzung*) which constitutes the core of Western thought. On the other hand, the un-seating of this cultural *Setzung* (*Ent-Setzung* as it were) must not evoke any reactions of horror (*Entsetzen*) in the face of a simple equalization (*Gleichsetzung*) of Nature and Culture. How then might a way of thinking be set in motion in which Nature is neither strictly separated from Culture, nor casually equated with it?

It is most likely one of the long-term effects of the short texts of Roland Barthes' *Mythologies* (first published in various periodicals over the course of the 1950s) that early on, and particularly in France, notions could develop that reflected upon the nature of Nature and drew into the focal point of their considerations the connection between (the concept of) Nature and Politics. Thus do the following sentences from Bruno Latour's influential volume *Politique de la nature* (see Latour 1999) seem to be composed quite in keeping with the thinking − if not so much with the style − of Roland Barthes when they stress the fact that Nature and Culture − and with them, especially, Politics − cannot be artificially separated from one another, neither from the viewpoint of philosophy nor that of culture theory. Right at the beginning of his book, the French social scientist and philosopher expressed himself in the following manner, as emphatic as it is enduring:

> Since the word "politics" was invented, politics has consistently been defined by its relationship to Nature, whose every feature, whose every characteristic and function goes back to the aggressive will to restrict, reform, establish, illuminate, or short-circuit public life. (Latour 2010: 9)[1]

[1] Engl. trans. O. E.

It lies within the nature of things that the recourse to Nature is, itself, made in light of a naturalness that is advanced in order that the constructedness of such an intervention into the lives of others is not allowed to intrude upon the consciousness. Nature can easily be placed both as a norm and as normative. This eminent political dimension of the Nature concept, and of the *naturalization* of the historical toward the goal of a Politics that does not speak its name, is at the same time of such great efficacy and efficiency that the idea of Nature as a regulating factor of both a Politics of Culture and a Culture of Politics, unfortunately, simply cannot be left out of either the concept or the understanding of Nature. Yet even if Nature indisputably follows certain Natural Laws, Nature 'itself' should not be used and abused as a norm or as a corrective of societal or cultural action. For in being so used, Nature becomes not only abstract − that is, removed from things − but absurd.

The question as to where the political efficacy of Nature or of the Nature concept originates can probably only be adequately examined when one becomes familiar with the axioms, whether historical or having to do with the history of science, that were decisively set forth in the second half of the 19th century. For if we follow the analysis in French cultural anthropologist Philippe Descola's 2011 book *L'écologie des autres*, it was during this period that "the respective approaches and fields of the natural sciences and the cultural sciences were finally delimited" and sharply separated from one another (Descola 2014: 7). Descola, who had already placed the relationship of human beings to Nature at the center of his theoretical attention in his book *Par-delà nature et culture* in 2005, proceeds in *L'écologie des autres* from the insight that, in both the realm of theory and the realm of institutional praxis near the end of the 19th century, those borders between the realms of Nature and Culture had become established which up to today contribute to the determination of the foundations of Western thought − a delimitation of great consequence that (as we might express along with the mythologist Roland Barthes) has long since succeeded in developing into a seemingly unassailable, and thus 'natural,' mythos.

From this development, however, arises a fundamental set of problems that Descola formulates in the "Conclusions" of *L'écologie des autres* in the following manner:

> One need not be an expert to predict that the question of the relationship of human beings to Nature will most probably be the most crucial one of this century. One need only look around to become convinced: the climatic convulsions, the decreasing number of species, the increase in genetically manipulated organisms, the depletion of fossil fuel sources, the polluting of Megacities and of sensitive areas in Nature, and the accelerating disappearance of tropical forests − all of these have become the topic of public debate the world over, feeding the fears of its inhabitants. At the same time, it has become difficult to continue to believe that Nature is a realm fully separate from social life, a realm that is hypostasized, according respectively to conditions, as a nourishing or a resentful and uncaring mother, or as a mysterious beauty waiting to be unveiled, a realm that humans have sought to understand and control, and to whose moods they have occasionally been vulnerable, but which forms a field of autonomous regularity in which values, conventions, and ideologies would have no place. (Descola 2014: 87)

If the question of humanity's relationship to Nature is apostrophized by Descola as "the most crucial" for people of the 21st century, then this can only mean that we must learn, as quickly as possible, not only to think of Nature and Culture in their associations and connections, but at the same time, in their irrevocable interweaving and, still more, entanglement. The examples given in the passage quoted above make it clear how inadequate for today is the pattern of thinking that artificially separates the two realms from one another and seeks to lead us to believe that, in its developments, Nature simply follows some law of its own with which the actions of humans are not connected. How 'natural,' though, are the catastrophes that we designate as 'natural catastrophes'? And which Nature is conserved when we speak, from traditional ecological thinking, of 'Nature conservation'?

The denunciation of a way of thinking that sets Nature and Culture in opposition has inevitably come to a point in time where the human being has become an influential, sometimes enduringly decisive factor in the altering of 'natural' events and processes. The fact that

this questioning has consistently been of the highest importance in the literatures of the world is not reflected in the work of the French anthropologist, but should necessarily be assessed in the critical reflections on the new outlines of ecology in the writings of Philippe Descola or Bruno Latour. For since the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the possibilities and limitations of human coexistence (see Ette 2012b) (not only with gods or other people, but with the animals, plants, and objects with which human beings interact in any way) have stood at the center of that specific knowledge that the literatures of the world have developed over millennia in countless different languages and cultures as a knowledge for living, a knowledge of experience, a knowledge for survival, and a knowledge for living together.[2] One could consequently state, with reference to the development of this specific knowledge found in the literatures of the world, a knowledge that is in no way easily disciplined (and therefore not easily transferred into any particular discipline), that the question prioritized by Philippe Descola regarding the relationship of human being*s* to Nature can be regarded as an important subdomain that is formed within the actual central question of the 21st century: how, and with the help of which knowledge, human being*s* in this world, on this planet, can coexist with one another in peace and diversity. And the plural form, speaking not of *the* human being per se, but of human being*s*, is of decisive importance.

But let us at this point further pursue the considerations of Descola in order to understand more precisely to what extent the anthropologically posed question as to the relationship between Nature and Culture may be understood to be a substantial element of a comprehensive convivence, or perhaps *convivialité*,[3] in which the most diverse realms of human thought and action can be brought together and considered together. For Philippe Descola puts an end to the simple bipolarity of Nature versus Culture:

> This picture is no longer valid. Where does Nature end, where does Culture begin when it comes to the warming climate, the depletion of the ozone layer, the production of specialized cells from omnipotent

[2] See the trilogy by Ette (2004, 2005, 2010). In Englisch, see Ette (2016b).
[3] See also Caillé/Chanial (2014) and Adloff/Leggewie (2014).

> cells? One can see that the question no longer makes sense. More than anything, the facts as they now stand, quite apart from the many ethical problems that arise from them, shatter old notions of the human person and all his or her properties, as well as shattering those of the configuration of individual and collective identity – in the Western world at least, where, unlike the situation in other places, we have become accustomed to differentiating very clearly between that which is natural in the human being and his environment and that which is artificial. On other continents, in China and Japan for example, places where the idea of a Nature is unknown, and where the human body is not perceived as a symbol of the soul and an imitation of a transcendent model – once as divine creation, today as genotype – this problem does not arise. (Descola 2014: 88)

The cultural comparison shown here and examined more exhaustively in the book reveals the fact that the term Nature in no way represents a universal or an anthropological constant, but instead indicates a distinct cultural, historical, and social *Setzung* (axiom), the accepted transhistorical continuity of which proves to be a historically and spatially determinable *Setzung* that has long since become mythos in the Barthesian sense, and which today needs to be un-seated (*ent-setzen*). But how might this axiomatic setting (*setzen*) be fundamentally un-seated (*ent-setzen*) without generating horror (*Entsetzen*)? How might a school of thought be imagined which could succeed in examining Nature and Culture in all of their mutual permeation in a new and fundamentally changed manner, and even more, in Dilthey's sense, *to experience them throughout* (*durchzuerleben*) (Dilthey 1985: 139) at the same time? This school of thought exists: it is the literatures of the world.

2. Political Ecology and Ecology of the Literatures of the World

Far beyond the examples of technological pragmatics illuminatingly introduced by Philippe Descola, a categorical separation of Nature and Culture, of Nature versus Culture, no longer makes sense. How problematic and (at least for the cultural sciences and the humanities) counterproductive it is to speak of the "Two Cultures," as circulated

by Charles Percy Snow, has already been demonstrated elsewhere (see Ette 2010: 27–30) from the perspective of the life sciences. For some time now, it has not been possible to explain or understand phenomena of 'Nature' by means of the methodologies and procedures of natural science alone. We use and shape Nature, transform it as needed, but we suffer quite literally, like the Sorcerer's Apprentice, the backlash when 'Nature' strikes back at us in the form of an increase in natural catastrophes, the number of which has increased markedly. Here progress turns against itself, as it were, as described in the "Convivialist Manifesto":

> Conversely, no one believes that this accumulation of power can perpetuate itself in a logic of unchanged technical progress without turning against itself, and without threatening the physical and intellectual survival of humanity. Every day, the signs of a possible catastrophe become clearer and more unsettling. Doubt lies only in the question of what is most threatening and what needs most urgently to be done. (Adloff/Leggewie 2014: 39)

This also applies specifically to the catastrophes of Nature that are caused by or contributed to by human beings. These natural catastrophes are natural only insofar as processes are involved that can no longer be steered by people and which take their course according to the laws of a no longer controlled or controllable Nature, which we will never succeed in dominating in its entirety. For even the catastrophes visited upon human beings in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, in the *Shijing*, in the *One Thousand and One Nights*, or in the Bible, are transparently the result of other forces, factors, and players that are decisively at work in them. The developments in the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries have brought forth a growing sensitivity to the fact that behind the mythos of Nature and its catastrophes, there are other forces working that are of a thoroughly anthropogenic 'Nature' − right up to the awareness (that decades ago had already precipitated in the relevant geographical handbooks) that it no longer made sense to differentiate in any way at all between 'natural landscapes' and 'cultural landscapes' (see Neef 1974: 700). Our focus should no longer lie upon the definition, the delimitation, and the divisive contention (*Aus-einander-setzen*), but rather, upon

putting together (*Zusammensetzen*), and upon the comprehensive relationality of all forces.

Many (though by no means all) of the problematics implied here may undoubtedly be connected to a term that was first introduced into the discussion in 1873 and since the turn of the 21st century has found an increasing echo in a wide variety of disciplines, especially those included among the cultural sciences. While it is quickly spreading today (though it is not, as far as I can see, employed by the two French philosophers) the use of the term 'Anthropocene' goes back to the early conceptual formation 'Anthropozoic Era,' first used by the Italian geologist Antonio Stoppani in 1873 (see Stoppani 1873). With this phrase, the Italian scientist circumscribed his insight into the fact that, in a new era that at that time had already dawned, geological and geographical phenomena had entered into the increasingly dominant realm of human influence, and were being, to an accelerating degree, anthropogenically reshaped or reconfigured. With ever greater consequences, human beings disrupted not only the topsoil of the Earth's surface, but the geological layers, faults, and flexures as well.

This notion that the works of human beings themselves have penetrated and intruded into the realm of geology, a realm that is thought of in completely different timespans, was first discussed according to these settled terminological choices around the turn of the 21st century. The present-day application of the term 'Anthropocene' gives name to the fact that the human being has meanwhile become one of the most significant factors in terms of influence upon biological, geological, climatological, or atmospheric processes.[4] Foremost among the originators of today's formation of terms are the Dutch chemist and atmospheric researcher Paul Crutzen and the biologist Eugene F. Stoermer,[5] for whom the discussion surrounding this concept, proceeding from the natural sciences, had long since expanded into, and settled in, the cultural sciences. For if we wish to understand what relationship *recorded history*, that is, the history written down over the

[4] Regarding the questions posed here, see also, among others, Chakrabarty (2009: 197–222).

[5] This was then precisely stated by Crutzen in 2002 in an article for the journal *Nature*, where he spoke of the "Geology of Mankind" (Crutzen 2002: 23).

course of the last four or five millennia, has to *deep history*, that is, all of human history before the invention of agriculture (see Chakrabarty 2009: 212), then the un-seating of a customary, conventional Nature/Culture opposition of occidental stamp becomes indispensable.

Philippe Descola, who in the volume mentioned above does not go into the concept of the Anthropocene, describes in his *Ecology of Others*, in a wide variety of contexts, the tremendously powerful force that humans exert upon Nature, drawing attention to the fact that human beings had already begun to exercise a long-term shaping influence upon the vegetation and form of the Earth's surface long millennia ago. At the same time, he explains by way of contemporary examples the degree to which the inextricability of the effects of Nature and the effects of Culture makes necessary an understanding of both anthropology and ecology, which is not directed toward delimitation and exclusion, but rather toward an increasing mutual permeation of these two realms. There can be, of course, no doubt regarding the fact that these are questions that from early on were presented and represented in the literatures of the world. For the question of how we can coexist in our world has included within itself, since the very earliest written accounts, the question regarding the relationship of humanity to the animals, the plants, and the world of things.

Obviously, the intimate relationship between what we in the West designate as 'Nature' and what we today in the Occident refer to as 'Culture' or 'civilization,' is as old as human history itself. Thinking of them as separate, as the poles of human knowledge for living and experiential knowledge is, however, bound to times and cultures equally, and thus in no way 'natural.' It is unnecessary to point here to midsummer celebrations or to the rites on the occasion of the winter solstice, to the expectations of the fructifying flood cycles of the Nile, or to the lyrically sung thaws of lakes and rivers in order to understand in what a fundamental way our entire culture – and especially all of those rites and events that return with the rhythm of the year – as well as the very concept of Culture itself depends upon the constant interaction of the Nature-Culture continuum in the various zones and time-periods of our planet. The experience of what we in the cultural circles shaped by the occidentally perceive as phenomena of Nature is embedded in the cyclically returning festivals in which a

specific knowledge for living, knowledge of experience, knowledge for survival, and knowledge for living together finds expression, coming finally to be aesthetically shaped and 'preserved' in a condensed form in the literatures of the world. Nature, in the sense of human experience, is always Culture: as an object of human perception − and still far more, appropriation − as well as an anthropologically semanticized landscape, with all of its structures and functions.

The inseparability of Nature, Culture, and Politics was called into memory with renewed arguments by Bruno Latour in his development of a *Politique de la nature* (1999), in a manner that is equally culture-philosophical and political:

> One may not in any case, however, maintain that this had to do with two different concerns that had developed always separately from one another, their paths having crossed only thirty or forty years ago. Conceptions of Politics and conceptions of Nature always formed a pair bound as firmly together as the two seats of a seesaw, where the one can only sink when the other rises, and vice versa. There has never existed any other Politics besides that of Nature, and never another Nature than that of Politics. Epistemology and Politics are, as we now see, one and the same thing which, in (political) epistemology, has come together to render the praxis of the sciences as well as the object of public life incomprehensible. (Latour 2010: 44)

While the connections to Roland Barthes are not explicitly revealed in this passage, they are certainly evident upon a more precise reading, had the author of the *Mythologies* but clearly contoured the practices of the (bourgeois) Mythos. For according to Barthes, the mythos unrelentingly seeks to transform history and Culture into Nature and thereby to render them unrecognizable and incomprehensible as Culture (*and, at the same time, as history and, even more, as Politics*).[6] The political ecology toward which Latour aspires clearly starts with a broadening of its field of view and its realm of influence to the degree that it is, for the philosopher, a matter of "a common world," of "a cosmos, in the sense of the ancient Greeks" (Latour 2010: 18)

[6] On Barthes' approach and his epistemological problematics, see Ette (2007: 107–129).

– and thus as much order as beauty. But the question of coexistence, it seems to me, is closely connected to this, such that it comes as no surprise when Bruno Latour time and again puts forth the problematics, recently considered from the standpoint of a (future) ecological politics, of "Can we coexist?" (Latour 2010: 17) and reflects upon "the values and difficulties of coexistence" (Latour 2010: 29). Latour presents his vision of the future State in the following compressed fashion:

> The State of political ecology has yet to be invented, for it no longer rests upon some sort of transcendence, but upon the quality of the monitoring protocol of the collective experiment. The civilization that can put an end to the state of war depends upon this quality, this art of governing without dominating. (Latour 2010: 306f.)

This "art of governing without dominating" may be understood as the expression of a political ecology that seeks to develop, through thinking of Nature, Culture, and Politics together, an art of coexistence and thus a complex knowledge for living together. There is, precisely within this area of convivence, a conspicuous intersection with a thematic realm to which Roland Barthes dedicated his first cycle of lectures at the *Collège de France* under the title *Comment vivre ensemble* ("How to Live Together") (see Barthes 2002). This intersection reinforces the impression that there is more than merely selective agreement between the two thinkers. For both of them, the axioms of Nature and Culture are of seismographic relevance to both assessing and changing societies that have been shaped by the West. From this, one could draw the conclusion that any sort of reflection regarding a knowledge for living together presupposes the relationship of Nature and Culture. Convivence is decidedly more than just (peaceful) coexistence.

Differently from what is to be found in the aforementioned writings of Bruno Latour and Philippe Descola, I find it at this point clearly necessary to bring the knowledge of the literatures of the world into our considerations, if we really wish to be open to an "ecology of others." For the literatures of the world are aimed toward an innovative examination of the question of the relationship between the human

being and Nature and − in a still more comprehensive sense − of the question of the possibilities and limitations of an art of coexistence: in their polylogical structuring, which may only be traced by means of a multilogical philology,[7] they seek forever and anew an art of governing without dominating, and still more, an art of convivence in peace and diversity. The difficult and changing relationship of Gilgamesh to 'his' city of Uruk reveals the (strictly speaking) political problematics of convivence.

But how might the knowledge of the literatures of the world be integrated into an ecology that is oriented toward a coexistence, a convivence on a great variety of levels? The first step is to proceed from the assumption that the knowledge of the literatures of the world is a *sustainable* knowledge[8] that lays things away without laying them to rest. It is in constant motion, and is thereby not preserved such that it should be 'disused,' but rather, to the extent that it is kept alive through continual transformations. The beating heart of the literatures of the world is, from the viewpoint of sustainability, intertextuality: it is this that allows us to translate Homer's *Odyssey* into the Dublin of the Irishman James Joyce, and Scheherazade into the world of the Algerian-born writer Assia Djebar. The spatiotemporal, linguistic, and cultural transfers of these translations include fundamental transformations that open upon new literary formations and aesthetic formats in such a way that, within a text, the multiplicity of other texts always remains dynamically preserved. That which is found (perhaps in the form of the prior, referenced text) is related to something which is invented, or is to be invented, in such a way that a new experience, something newly livable can unfold (and not solely through starting anew). As an intertext within the invented text, the discovered text remains always so present that, in the oscillation between the discovered and the invented, it produces a sustainability of that which is actually past within the prospect of that which may be experienced and lived in the future. To express it pointedly: the sustainability of the Homeric world, or of that of the *Thousand and One Nights*, rests upon its capacity for transfer, translation, and transfor-

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[7] See, on a similar concept, Ette (2013b).
[8] On the history of the concept of enduringness, see Grober (2010).

mation. By means of intertextual inscription, a revision is achieved that both preserves and perpetuates the 'old' form within the new transformation: sustainability can then be understood as the dynamic, transformative processivity of the literary. Herein lies the secret of that other ecology, which is delineated by the literatures of the world.

3. From Sustainability to the Laboratory of Life and the Living

In the sense of this sustainability, the literatures of the world embody and develop a laboratory of life that continually tests the different gnosemes of a knowledge for living, a knowledge of experience, a knowledge for survival, and a knowledge for living together, while at the same time allowing these different dimensions of life to live through the serious play of literature. As precarious and destructible as this laboratory of thought, of cognition (see Nünning 2014), and, even more, of experience may appear to be, the literatures of the world demonstrate a consistency across the millennia, across the many different and often long-disused languages, and across the great variety of cultures, that is far above that of the political power structures that respectively surround them, above that of the cities and architectures that house them, and even above that of the languages and linguistic communities that once gave them birth and gave witness to them. The translatability, the transferability, and the form-and-transformability of the literatures of the world are the guarantors of a sustainability that cannot be exhausted through plundering.

On the contrary: every creative evocation of a text extends its sustainability, vitality, and longevity. And this sustainability is granted, independent of whether the literatures of the world are put in writing and passed down on clay tablets, papyrus, or paper, on celluloid, or on virtual storage systems. Consequently, when speaking in the literary realm on the topic of sustainability, it can by no means be but a matter of the content's presentation or representation of enduring processes or objects; much more, the focus of reflection must be placed upon the sustainability inherent to the transhistorical and transcultural praxis of the literatures of the world.

Sustainability always implies the examination of the limits of the possible and achievable with a prospective perspectivity in which the potential futures are polylogically reflected. In the process, literary texts from schools of thought can develop into schools of life, insofar as they test forms of living and norms of living. As in Paul Valéry's *Monsieur Teste* (see Ette 2013a and 2013d), text and test are always interwoven in a most intimate way. As a laboratory of life, the literatures of the world demand the test, a practical trial that, indeed, always carries with it the danger of failure. For if literature translates the imaginable into the imagined, the thinkable into what has been thought, the writable into the written, the publishable into what is published, the readable into what has been read, and the livable into what is, and has been, experienced, then it also constantly develops certain forms of the test to which the text is subordinated. Failure, however, in this context of times marked by a growing sensitivity to sustainability, is not a losing proposition or some frightful specter, but rather, it opens up the chances of becoming decidedly smarter by means of the reflection upon the failure of oneself or of others. The poetics of failure (see Ingold/Sánchez 2008; Sánchez/Spiller 2009) unlocks, by way of experiencing and living through failure, those productive paths of a prospective knowledge that, without its own failures − and thus without a knowledge of its own border zones and limitations − could never have come into existence or have been developed. Knowledge without (one's own) failures is as unimaginable as is intelligence without (one's own) stupidity (see Ette 2001).

It is important to note that the logics in the laboratory of the literatures of the world are not oriented toward dismantling and dissecting life so as to draw, through examination of the dead, conclusions about (just newly extinguished) life; far more, they compress and intensify life, and in so doing counteract the expulsion of life from the humanities and cultural sciences.[9] To hold new concepts and delineations from the perspectives of cultural theory and literary science in opposition to this expulsion of life from the philologies and cultural sciences is the prerequisite for the survival of those sciences which up to now have set little that is conceptual against the spectacular

[9] With reference to Kittler (1980).

appropriation of the life-concept by the life sciences. In the near future, it will become decisively important, through the influence of the literatures of the world, to breathe (new) life and innovative life-conceptualities into not only the philologies, but into the humanities and cultural sciences in general, so as to gain a renewed sustainability for this universally threatened ensemble of fields.

While the occupation of content with questions of sustainability and, especially, with the problematics of the coexistence of people with other people, with gods, with animals, with plants, or with other objects may be of highest importance, it is also of enormous relevance to incorporate into these deliberations the sustainability that is transhistorically and transculturally written into the literatures of the world, just as it is to incorporate the use of these laboratories of the knowledge of life, in life, and for life, into the sciences and disciplines that are best suited to a translation of the sustainable knowledge of literature. The condition for this, however, is that the multiculturally based ambiguity of the life-concept and the various ways of understanding that which can be designated as "living"[10] are multilogically incorporated and societally imparted in the interpretations of the literatures of the world. For the laboratory of life also includes the testing of that which the living thing respectively is or claims to be.

The (political) ecology of the literatures of the world establishes itself in the context of the above considerations on a level of at least three tiers: on one that is thematic, one that is intrinsically transhistoric and transcultural, and one that is institutional. It is beyond doubt that with the help of literary texts, a history of the broadly various delineations of coexistence or of the notions of sustainability could be written, as could a history of ecological thought, assuming that the "Parliament of Things" is indeed ubiquitous in the literatures of the world. In the process, the boundaries of life could be thought of and experienced in a new way, if the boundaries between the living and the not-living are indeed not infrequently drawn in an entirely different way than, for instance, in the disciplinarily broadly differentiated life sciences and natural sciences of the occidental stamp. The vitality of the cosmos and the vitality of the world of things offer us

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[10] See also Kimmich (2011).

other forms of understanding whatever we can imagine, experience or live as ‘life’ and ‘alive.’ For it becomes apparent from a life science perspective that, in their laboratory of life, the literatures of the world develop a life-concept that allows us to understand life not only multidimensionally, but above all multilogically, following widely differing logics simultaneously. A progressive reduction of the life-concept can thus be counteracted.

The value and meaning of the literatures of the world may not be measured in terms of their capacity to place at our disposal documents of climatological or astrological, botanical-geographical, geological, historiographical, sociological, politicoscientific, or psychoanalytical relevance that may be reviewed and empirically evaluated as unambiguously as possible. The knowledge of the literatures of the world is not to be disciplined, cannot be reduced to specific disciplines, and as such does not separate the great variety of realms and disciplines from one another: it goes for it all.

To this degree, it is quite self-evident that within their knowledge for living, the literatures of the world never sharply separate Nature and Culture from one another, nor subordinate them to different logics or disciplinary categorizations. It is decidedly more a matter of a coexistence between differing logics, between controversial semantic variations or opposing epistemologies. Of the greatest relevance is the development of an ecology that is in the broadest sense transcultural and transareal, which becomes aware of the boundaries of the possibilities of a multilogical convivence, and which also both theoretically and practically develops the forms of life and norms of life in Nature and Culture.

An ecology of the literatures of the world that is oriented toward the coexistence of different logics calls upon the ability of these literatures to place at our disposal, within their experimental space, refined models that allow highly complex developments and processes to be presented *sensuously*, within a comprehensible space of reading and thought, in a manner that is traceable and understandable. The literatures of the world offer neither a database nor an arsenal of facts, neither a reservoir of argumentation nor a quarry of ideas, but they do offer models of understanding of the highest degree of concentration and of the highest aesthetic standards, that are readable, or can be

made readable, from other cultural coordinates or other coordinates in space and time. The sustainability of these models of thought and understanding is based upon their transhistorically and transculturally experienced modeling, which rests far less upon the literary *depiction* of sustainability than upon its experienceable (and livable) *structuring*. For literature *is*, because it is more than it is. It unfolds a knowledge that wishes to be devised and further developed, but does not wish to dominate. And which may be shared, but not dissected. The literatures of the world form a many-voiced and multilogical logosphere and graphosphere through which the readability of the world (see Blumenberg 1986) is made possible − outside of Western tradition too, of course − from out of many areas and for many areas: they present in their Writing-between-Worlds, in the most fundamental sense, an art of convivence that includes the reflection on the boundaries of coexistence.

4. On that which is Natural in Natural Catastrophes

Natural catastrophes are not natural. At least, not in the sense that they unfold and can be explained only according to conditions and rules that are natural and in natural spaces. Natural catastrophes are of more complex considerations and tend to occur more, in the sense of the observations of Philippe Descola discussed above, at the point of intersection between Nature and Culture. Their striking increase over the previous decades, like the enormous rise in subsequent damage, reveals that their frequency has long been substantially influenced by the actions of human beings, and that this anthropogenic triggering of natural catastrophes is accompanied by a deficient capacity of humans to steer or in any way control these catastrophes, that proceed according to certain laws of Nature. In this sense, one could easily say that the concept of the natural catastrophe, like the long-since relativized concept of the natural landscape, no longer makes sense today, insofar as it, here in the Anthropocene, veils and forces into the background the essential cooperation of the human being and, consequently, the active role of 'Culture.' From the perspective of a (political) ecology in the sense of the previously dis-

cussed considerations in general, natural catastrophes are always also cultural catastrophes, though clearly disguised as 'Nature.'

It is not only since the rage of Hurricane Katrina that the city of New Orleans has been connected to natural catastrophes. This Category 5 hurricane, due to the gigantic amount of damage it caused in the southern regions of the USA, particularly in Louisiana and most specifically in New Orleans between the 23rd and 30th of August, 2005, brought about not only a world-wide sensation and extensive aid efforts, but has also produced a far-reaching debate, most especially on the level of politics and the political, which in the end even precipitated a *Wikipedia* entry dedicated to "Hurricane Katrina." The natural phenomenon with the friendly feminine name of Katrina has become as much a part of the political history as of the cultural history of Louisiana.

In the *Wikipedia* article, as in a multitude of other publications, Katrina is always first characterized as "one of the most devastating natural catastrophes in the history of the United States."[11] With her winds of up to 280 kph, Katrina did not only bring to the southern states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi material damages of a magnitude of some 108 Billion USD, a devastation that has generated damages that in some ways have lasted up to today. Still worse, a total of 1836 persons fell victim to the hurricane. At the center of the catastrophe lay New Orleans: "up to 80% of the municipal area lay under up to 7.6 meters of water"[12] and were for extended periods rendered unfit for residence. Not only the waves of escapees from the city, but the lamentably high loss of human life turned Hurricane Katrina into a long-lasting political issue that virtually inevitably ensued from the state of emergency that was declared for both the city and state.

The fact that New Orleans was caught by Hurricane Katrina in an especially dramatic and tragic manner was not due only to the fact that city lay directly along the route of the monster storm (as had been calculated and simulated in advance in computer models with rapidly increasing probabilities), but also to the geographical position of the

[11] Entry for "Hurricane Katrina" in *Wikipedia* (wikipedia.org [1/25/2015]).
[12] All numerical figures according to *Wikipedia*.

city and, especially, to the fact that around 80 percent of broad areas along Lake Pontchartrain and of the city itself lie below sea level. The risks to the population had been known in advance, but sufficient protection for the inhabitants was not provided. The appalling number of deaths, the extensive destruction, and tremendous shortages of provisions led to a number of protests, outbreaks of violence and looting, and the deployment of the 82nd Airborne Division, who patrolled the streets[13] of New Orleans and forcibly suppressed the protests against racism and profound social inequities.[14] The natural catastrophe rapidly became a political one.

The conditions and circumstances preceding the catastrophe were known, the warnings of levees sooner or later breaching were made public, the satellite photos of the accelerating storm proliferated, the path of the hurricane worked out in advance, and the wind speeds measured: this powerful storm could indeed be measured, but it could not be changed. For everyone, this natural catastrophe visibly proved to be a disaster that humans not only influenced, but contributed to in a fundamental way, and a disaster that in its immediate ramifications imperiled not only the survival of large segments of the population, but also acutely endangered the coexistence of the different and differently privileged sections of the population of New Orleans. To all independent observers, catastrophe and convivence revealed themselves to be intimately connected, even though a naturalization of the catastrophe persisted, of course, in the politically accountable discourse. But how might the connection between convivence and catastrophe be thought of, both in all its complexity and from the perspective of its experience?

Long before this natural catastrophe (which consequently was, in a genuine sense, no natural catastrophe) and far away from New Orleans, there appeared in 1997 in Buenos Aires the volume of stories *Catástrofes naturales* by Anna Kazumi Stahl (see Kazumi Stahl 1997). This was the young storyteller's debut volume, comprising twenty-six of her stories grouped into three variously-sized sections with the titles "Exótica," "La Isla de los Pinos," and "Catástrofes

[13] All allegations from *Wikipedia*.

[14] Regarding the central problem of force, see Adloff/Leggewie (2014: 45).

naturales." The narrative texts of various lengths are influenced by emigrations and immigrations that travel across the Pacific particularly from Japan to the US and across the Atlantic particularly from Europe to the American continent, and they tell of the failures of coexistences and the catastrophes of a convivence that constantly pushes its boundaries. These are multiple variations on the failure of a knowledge for living together that, in a transareal context, seems to be able to develop completely only with difficulty. For the reading public then, this is a matter that has nothing to do with natural catastrophes in a conventional sense. So who is the author of this more than merely successful literary debut?

Anna Kazumi Stahl could be described as a Spanish-language writer from New Orleans. She was born in 1963 in New Orleans to a Japanese mother and a US American father of German ancestry, and grew up in New Orleans. She sees her name as a symbol of her multiple heritages that point to Louisiana and Japan, but also to Germany. The literary science specialist studied and graduated with her BA in German language and literature at Tufts University in 1984, and received her MA in comparative literature at Berkeley in 1989, going on then to earn her doctorate in comparative literature in 1995, also at Berkeley. In her literary science writings she concentrated on, among other things, the investigation of ethnic differences and the problematics of migration through the example of literary texts from South America, the US, and Germany.[15] Migrations, then, can be found both in the multilingual author's own life and in her works of literature and literary science.

Over the course of her long years of study in both California and Tübingen, she also not only spent some summers in Japan, but traveled for the first time to Argentina in 1988, where she began to learn Spanish. Since 1995 she has lived in Buenos Aires, where she has received considerable attention not only for her numerous translations into English, but also for, among other things, her collection of stories *Catástrofes naturales*, and her novel *Flores de un solo día* (2002). This novel, her first, was a *finalista* for the most important literary

[15] The topic of her dissertation was: *Order and Displacement in the House of the Nation: Minority Discourse in Three National Contexts* (University of California, Berkeley, 1995).

prize awarded in Latin America, the "Rómulo Gallegos." But *Catástrofes naturales* had already caused many to sit up and take notice.

Tucked away behind the biography of this writer who grew up in New Orleans is not only an eventful life between different continents − between the USA and Japan, but also Europe and, finally, South America − but also a translingual writing, as it is well known that only since 1988 has the author been working with the Spanish language, yet just a few years later, she had transformed Spanish into her literary language.

The presence of different languages in no way resides only in Anna Kazumi Stahl's translation work; on the contrary, it also shapes her way of writing, in which, time and again, a co-presence of different languages appears. So while the acknowledgements at the end of her first work are, like the entire book, composed in Spanish, they are followed in this paratext by expressions of gratitude in Japanese and English as well. The German, on the other hand, is only reservedly present and finds expression, in the story "Berlin" (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 207–215), for example, in the untrilled R, and thus in the accent, of a young woman in Buenos Aires who came originally from Germany. The protagonists of the narrative texts of Kazumi Stahl often speak in different languages and with different accents − and not infrequently, they lack the words needed for understanding or to express themselves.

This translingual dimension that also manifests itself in the different US American, Armenian, German, Japanese, or Argentine linguistic particularities is diegetically transferred into a transareal relationality, insofar as we encounter in the twenty-six stories a hemispheric America in which the north and south especially are bound to one another, but in which Asia and Europe are continually integrated into the respective diegeses. An obvious focal point is formed by the US state of Louisiana, from which not only the text-external author but many of her text-internal female figures hail. The most frequently occurring transareal combinatorics therein arises between New Orleans and Japan, and between Buenos Aires and Japan, that is, two metropolises of the Americas, each with a dimorphic name, that lie on the Mississippi and the Río de la Plata respectively, and that each,

for a long time, have represented important jumping-off points for far-reaching shipping connections.

This sort of *bi*furcation and doubling of heritages as may be seen in the name of the writer Anna Kazumi Stahl, but also in the name of New Orleans or *Nouvelle Orléans*, as the case may be, can be found right away in the first three stories of the volume, collected under the title "Exótica." The middle story, both central to this group and its most extensive, but also the most extensive of the entire volume, has the title "Catástrofes naturales," but was, nevertheless, not included among the identically-named largest group that contains a total of eighteen stories. Moreover, it forms the only story in which, at least at first glance, a natural catastrophe is discussed, insofar as it ostensibly has taken as its subject the approach of a powerful hurricane and its impact on the city of New Orleans. The simultaneously *eccentric* (as it is not placed among the stories in the group of the same name) *and centric* position (within the first group) transforms this longest text of the entire volume into what is essentially the key story that gives the collection its name and in which the question of the *nature* of the catastrophe is of paramount significance in the context of a both familiar and collective convivence.

The story "Catástrofes naturales" (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 28–54) distinguishes itself from the very beginning by being played out in at least two different and explicitly demarcated time frames, one plot line in the year 1955, and another that is set in the year 1991. The entire story falls into a total of seventeen short microtexts, each assigned to a different speaker and time frame. Thus there arises a structuring that is in no way simply linear, but instead, much more relational, insofar as the texts can be ordered according to speaker or time, but of course by thematic or structural peculiarities as well. The longer microtexts, for their part, are subdivided by paragraphs separated from one another, such that a structure that builds upon short and shortest texts can be recognized at first glance. Constant perspective changes, meanwhile, form the structuring element.

The incipit of the story is dedicated to "Ex Teniente William Reilly Helm: 1991" and at first fades in with a medial or even transmedial situation:

> Estoy mirando este huracán aquí en la televisión, lo estamos mirando entrar al estado de Florida como un ejército que escapa del infierno, y me recuerda a aquel que una vez embistió esta ciudad, hace treinta y cinco años. Claro, era 1955, y tú no te acuerdas; aún no me habías conocido. Ni a mí ni a este lugar. (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 28)

From the beginning, both of the aforementioned time frames are called upon as overlying structures, insofar as in the year 1991, the year 1955 is mentioned, and in the midst of the current hurricane over Florida, there appears that monster storm that in 1955 was given the feminine name of Betsy. Though Hurricane Katrina, whose path likewise passed over the Florida peninsula, was in terms of time still eight years away at the time of the appearance of *Catástrofes naturales*, there is a still, by virtue of the text-internal superimposition, a serial structure created that can be activated not only retrospectively, but prospectively as well. *Un ouragan peut en cacher un autre.*

The two doublings are supplemented by another that upon the first reading is not yet so much recognizable as, at best, sensed. For the feminine 'you' addressed by the first-person narrator (the ex-lieutenant William Reilly Helm figure) is no more from New Orleans in 1991 than was the wife of this former member of the army in 1955, of whom we at first learn nothing. This female figure of the year 1955 is also granted no voice of her own in the story. Thus the catastrophe behind the catastrophe remains at first invisible, though it is already present in the cycle of the hurricane from the beginning. The former army serviceman with the meaningful German name of Helm tells 'his' story, which is also the story of his not yet visible first wife, to his second wife, to whom he had clearly told this story again and again, ad nauseam. Helm's wife in 1991 has long since become resigned, and this time again decides to listen patiently to the story. Helm rules, in that he dominates all others − or at least, as patriarch, seems to dominate.

Betsy's approach to the coast is at first described by the former US army officer not as the invasion of a hellish army, but as a slow waltz through the gulf that seems to turn into a kiss ("beso") (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 28) and other signs of tenderness, before Betsy, in a sudden change in gender, begins to descend upon Louisiana like a "mensajero del Diablo," a messenger of the devil (Kazumi Stahl

1997: 28). It already becomes clear through the example of the slow waltz that elements of celebration and dance are in play throughout when speaking of the hurricane crashing down upon New Orleans.

While the pictures and statistics from Hurricane Andrew flash across the screen in 1991, Helm resists the view that a catastrophe of this sort is “horrible”: “Ninguna catástrofe natural es ‘horrible,’ querida – dice –, porque la ves venir, y simplemente debes prepararte para ella” (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 30). Natural catastrophes, for Helm in 1991, are characterized by the fact that one can prepare for them and make sufficient arrangements to avoid negative consequences. Consequently, the human being stands in opposition to Nature; Nature and Culture in Helm’s mind are neatly separated from one another. In his words, Nature appears as something calculable, tamable, and controllable. But does not Helm’s assertion imply conversely that other, *not-natural* catastrophes are then unforeseeable and unavoidable?

For the catastrophe that reveals itself to the readership only bit by bit behind the natural catastrophe in the foreground, this can surely not be the case. We learn of it incidentally, rather, from another perspective. And in the process, we again encounter the isotopy of the celebration and the celebrational. For from the viewpoint of Helm’s daughter Sue (Sumiko) Helm in 1955, the catastrophe announces itself as a longingly desired diversion, much as it does for her father, who distinguished himself off Okinawa in the Second World War: “Vivir catástrofes era un gusto que él había adquirido durante la Guerra” (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 30). Among the catastrophes, however, both Helm and his daughter prefer the “catástrofes *naturales*” such as wildfires and hurricanes, as they are always, in his experience, “más excitantes” (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 30). It is not the state of war, but the ‘natural’ catastrophe’s state of exceptionality that provides the necessary tension, for it is there to be savored in all preludes and aftermaths.

For the daughter, whose double heritage appears within her name, Sue (Sumiko), the father, who had ‘brought’ his wife back from the war in Japan, is clearly, in any type of catastrophe, a hero who always masters the situation. And like her father, Sue looks forward excitedly to the nearby Betsy – until her mother momentarily calls her back, in Japanese, to her homework (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 31). While she

shows a great deal of affection to her father, she has already turned away some time ago from her mother, whom she always perceives as a troublemaker in terms of her relationship with her father. This constellation of figures has consequences.

The statement of her fatherly hero that the hurricane will be constrained ("Lo vamos a domar" [Kazumi Stahl 1997: 32]) transports the daughter into a state of inner excitement and lust for adventure that completely contradicts the reactions of most of the neighbors, who think first of flight and personal safety. In a quarter near Lake Pontchartrain that had already been flooded once before by an earlier storm, and that would later be flooded again by Hurricane Katrina, the daughter trusts her father completely, turning against her own mother who early on packs her suitcase. But the father and daughter play war in peace and wish to defy the forces of Nature: for them, a flight is out of the question, this game, this dressing up, is too tied up in their mutual excitement. As with the narrators, the mother possesses no voice of her own and ultimately has nothing to say.

With virtually military precision, Helm prepares for Operation Betsy and gives to his daughter, who has risen to the level of his right hand and adjutant, and to his wife, who is essentially without rights, orders that are to be followed without question. To the millimeter, the movements of the shifting tropical storm are entered into an area map and battle scenarios are developed, insofar as the news reports on the radio are intercepted like wireless messages, but without any application of independent thought. Both are too much in love with their carnival.

It is only when the actual general, the governor of the state of Louisiana, gives the order for the forced evacuation of all remaining inhabitants, and when it is basically far too late to move without danger to safety, that the family leaves their house, but can no longer manage in time to leave the quarter, from which the vast majority of inhabitants have long since fled. The game is over. With a great deal of luck, father, mother, and child are taken in at a shelter which, because the event of nuclear attack was not least among the reasons it was created, has a bunker at its disposal. Thus the war is present here, too. And yet it is clear that it is the father, with his war games and morale-boosting slogans, who drives the family into the catastrophe.

There is no doubt: in Anna Kazumi Stahl's *Catástrofes naturales*, there is nothing natural about a natural catastrophe.

5. Catastrophe, Celebration, and Carnival

All of the other stories in this collection included in the section called *Catástrofes naturales* are about catastrophes of coexistence which one generally would not designate as natural catastrophes. The italicizing of "natural" in one of the preceding excerpts makes it clear that in this story too, the 'natural' of such "catástrofes *naturales*" (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 30) is being vehemently challenged. In the text itself, catastrophe plans are mentioned that were never adequately prepared, not to mention carried out. The failure of the human being, brought through the example of Helm to the individual level, also becomes apparent − in the serial anticipation of Katrina, as it were − on the collective level. For even the decision of the Governor of Louisiana in favor of a forced evacuation is made late, very late.

But at the same time, the approach of Hurricane Betsy transforms the city of New Orleans into a city of festivities. For many inhabitants now use these days to enjoy extra vacation, "vacaciones extras" (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 32), since the schools are closed and no one has to show up for work. The approaching storm is like a supplemental Independence Day, a holiday, to be taken advantage of and fittingly celebrated (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 33). The isotopy of the celebration runs through the text like a *basso continuo*: unobtrusive, but unmistakable.

Thus the profound connection between catastrophe and celebration builds one of the foundations of this story of a *catástrofe natural*. Early in the text, the place of Nature is taken by Culture, which attaches itself to the great cycles of Nature and takes possession of them. It seems a happy coincidence that right in the year of Hurricane Betsy, Roland Barthes brought forth a text that was originally published on January 29th, 1955 in *Paris-Match*, which he then, in 1957, included in his successful *Mythologies* under the title "Paris n'a pas été inondé" (see Ette 2013b: 9–24). In this text, devoted to the widespread flooding of Paris in January of 1955, he not only employed military

imagery to depict the dikes as a bulwark against the surging enemy in the natural force of the water; even more, from the start he bathed the scenes of the flood in the light of a great celebration that, under the motto of the Parisian city arms "Fluctuat nec mergitur," changed everything, made everything appear different, took everything to a new, de-automated perception. The entire cityscape of Paris changes into a waterscape, imbued with the attributes of a carnivalesque air of exceptional circumstances. In Barthes' little *mythologie*, the landscape of the Parisian capital becomes, quite in a Bakhtinian sense, alienated in a carnivalesque way: in the days of carnival, nothing is how we are used to it being, everything is as if Nature wishes to lend Culture a hand and give all of its objects a new look. Streets dress up as canals, trees transform themselves into islands, street-lights present themselves as enigmatic works of art: nothing appears as it was and as we were all used to it.

The celebration, and in a still more radical sense, the carnival share with the catastrophe the temporally and spatially limited set of exceptional circumstances, the political dimensions of which would become apparent even before the demonstrations of Giorgio Agamben.[16] Very much in the sense of a political ecology, periods of exceptional circumstances take on a tremendous significance, much as they came distinctively to light, by the way, in the manifold political disputes surrounding Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

Natural catastrophe and carnival are connected yet again through the cyclical arrival, as is seen in the case of the cyclonic storms of the hurricane season, the periodic flooding according to seasonally determined snowmelt, or perhaps the forest fires during the dry periods in the Mediterranean region. The fact that all along, if to varying degrees, the hand of man is also playing a role in this proves to be as evident as the fact that phenomena of this sort share with the carnival the character of a world turned upside down, a *monde à l'envers*.[17] Thus carnival, catastrophe, and celebration have many things in com-

[16] See Agamben (2003). A purely thematic parallel examination of carnival and catastrophe can be found in the chapter "Katastrophe und Karneval: Zum 'dionysisch noch nicht entwickelten Moment'." in: Petersen (2010: 370–380).
[17] See the impressive volume by Tristan (1980).

mon, even if the dramatic element of catastrophe is capable of easily hiding this fact.

In his studies of François Rabelais (see Bakhtin 1970a) and of Dostoyevsky (see Bakhtin 1970b), the Russian cultural scientist Mikhail Bakhtin elaborated upon the profound significance of the carnival and of the public culture of laughter to European literature, and since the delayed reception of his writings in Western Europe in the sixties, set in motion a debate over the processes of carnivalization. Within such a carnivalization, according to the ideas of Bakhtin, there arises from a "*Zone of Laughter*" a "*Zone of Contact*" in which "the contradictory and irreconcilable" unify with one another (Bakhtin 1979: 345): "Here … it comes to life as *connection*" (Bakhtin 1979: 345).

What is revealing in these phrases is the fact that Bakhtin is concerned with the *connection* or *bond* between things that are actually not connectable, and this in a reflection that can certainly be brought into connection with that effort that brought Bruno Latour to point out, in the widespread net-imagery of our times, a certain fatigue or exhaustion that opens the way for bonds of a new sort (see Latour 2009: 359–385). For if, according to Latour's criticism, networks are indeed extremely efficient at distributing power, they are on the other hand largely incapable of reestablishing a theory of action that can satisfy the peculiarity of each individual node (Latour 2009: 383). For Bakhtin, carnival and the public's culture of laughter, once transferred into the language of literature, are responsible for consistently exploding "the norms of the epoch" and establishing an "interrelation with other realities" (Bahktin 1979: 346). Ultimately, carnival serves to *connect* two different, contradictory, mutually opposing spheres in such a fashion that the one cannot be thought of without the other. How easily this may be related, straight from the perspective of Bruno Latour, to the relationship between Nature and Culture, and thus to a different ecology, is obvious.

In her book on the carnival in New Orleans, Rosary O'Neill pursued the question of how the city on the Mississippi had been able to become at once the "Mardi Gras capital of America" and the "party city par excellence" (O'Neill 2013: 19). From a culture-theoretical perspective, her answer certainly turns out to be somewhat less com-

plex than the observations of Mikhail Bakhtin, but it makes peripheral reference to the connection between carnival and catastrophe:

> The purpose of carnival is to forget problems. New Orleans is called the Big Easy, and its motto is the French phrase *Laissez les bons temps rouler* (let the good times roll). In the hot and steamy river city, locals look for ways to distract themselves from crime, heat and hurricanes. A carnival mentality lifts the spirits. (O'Neill 2013: 19)

Even if one could definitely call into question or at least relativize the prolonged and continuous existence of a "carnival mentality" (O'Neill 2013: 198) − this term runs throughout O'Neill's analysis[18] − from the standpoint of a seasonal periodicity of the carnival, the suggested imagery in her analysis (imagery according to which the ubiquitous carnival mentality could determine that "the streets like a sudden rain or a nightlong drizzle" [O'Neill 2013: 198]) is illuminating, when the surprising comes to expression in it as much as the natural. The carnival captures essentially all of the senses; it shapes the food just as it shapes the artistic activities in the city. Everywhere in New Orleans, O'Neill maintains, there is music to be heard; the city on the Mississippi can really be understood as the city of music (O'Neill 2013: 212), however, only in light of the influence of jazz − a view to which one such as Boris Vian, as at the beginning of *L'écume des jours*, would surely have subscribed.[19]

Berndt Ostendorf, on the other hand, begins his book on New Orleans with a reverence for that "Caribbean Metropolis of the Senses" (Ostendorf 2013: 15) which, in the opinion of some leading po-

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[18] As it is simply stated in the section "Carnival Mentality": "In the Big Easy, people know how to slow down and enjoy life. That's what having carnival mentality means" (O'Neill 2013: 206).

[19] See Vian (2003: 3), *Foreword*: "In life, it's essential to have preconceived judgements on everything. It turns out the masses are wrong and that individuals are always right. One must be careful not to infer rules of conduct: they do not need to be formulated to be followed. There are only two things: love in all its forms with pretty girls and the music of New Orleans or Duke Ellington, it's the same. The rest should disappear, for the rest is ugly, and the brief demonstration that follows gathers all its energy from the fact that the story is entirely true, because I imagined it from one end to the other."

litical figures and according to surveys, stood on the brink of being abandoned once and for all after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. But if we look upon New Orleans today, the city, amidst the creolization that shapes it, appears more alive than ever. New Orleans thus makes its mark, as ever, as a city of contradictions: "While the cultural heritage of New Orleans remains largely invisible to the North American public and sometimes even to local citizens, it is appreciated throughout the world" (Ostendorf 2013: 15). The charisma of the city is in fact, from the US American perspective, directed more strongly outward than inward.

But that is not all. For Louisiana's largest city is characterized by tensions that, through the numerous protest demonstrations surrounding Hurricane Katrina, were thrust anew into truly world-wide consciousness: "New Orleans is both the cradle of jazz − as a music of freedom − and the most racialized metropolis" (Ostendorf 2013: 14). It seems to fit with an arc of suspense of this sort that in such a city, large catastrophes occur with a certain regularity during the hurricane season, catastrophes that, like the carnival, periodically set the tone for life in the city. The images of New Orleans are constructed from contradictions: it is just these natural catastrophes that seem to have newly confirmed and updated this cultural codification of the city. The history of the city would be inconceivable without all of those strophes that grew forth from the catastrophes.

It should then be considered: the linguistic expression of "catastrophe" is itself "ein Begriff, der mit sich selbst nicht identisch ist" ("a term that is not identical to itself") (Kasper 2014: 7) if there is, linguistically coded within itself, that tension and that inseparable connection in which Nature and Culture are inextricably interwoven. Before the background of a conceptual history (Kasper 2014: 8) that has been complex since ancient times and the frequent fluctuation of this verbal construction between two 'actually' irreconcilable poles, the catastrophe expresses, not least in its linguistic material, that in every catastrophe, as it were, the strophe is present to the ear and can be discerned, or even lived through.

In the catastrophe, therefore, we encounter that intimate bond and connection that can take the laughter in crying, the rising up within crashing down, the still-human striding in the midst of downfall, and

not least, the song in silence or in keeping still, even the *Schrei* (the cry) in *Schreiben* (writing) or the *cri* in *écriture* − to take all of these and render them audible, sensuously experienceable, and indelible. It is this bond that becomes the decisive carrier of that for which the catastrophe stands, or at least, can stand. For especially in catastrophe, which Nature (seemingly of its own accord) prepares for the human being, everything that is particularly human is aesthetically revealed and condensed into the strophe.

Catastrophe and carnival thus exist in a relationship that is intimate and by no means founded only upon the limited extent of the spatial and temporal, and they are indicative of substantially more than a clearly contourable culture of resistance. Beyond such a resistance, which, nevertheless, does become tangible in them, they are marked by a much more fundamental resistivity and indicate an incommensurable binding of the seemingly divergent, of things that presumably do not belong together. Carnival and catastrophe thereby not only open the way, by the force of their connection, for a productive examination of what has happened, what is purported, and what prevails, but they prospectively project a horizon of the *Zusammen-Denken*, the "thinking together" of those things that at first glance do not belong together and cannot be thought of together.

But Anna Kazumi Stahl − who in New Orleans and Buenos Aires interpreted her name, from the German Anna to the coinciding Japanese and German surnames, in the form of a non-linear story[20] − developed these dimensions of catastrophe in her story "Catástrofes naturales" in a masterful way. Just as she sought in her Ted-talk, "Las palabras y el silencio," to bring together the word and the silence, the printed letter and the white surfaces surrounding it into a fruitful binding and connection that does not cancel out the opposites but makes them aesthetically fruitful. So stands New Orleans, in the forever precarious center of all tensions, all lanes of movement, all migrations, all approaching catastrophes that, still in the carnivalesque disguises themselves, are present and visible in the play of father and daughter.

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[20] On this point, see the beginning of her presentation "Las palabras y el silencio" in *Tedx RíodelaPlata* (2013).

Behind the activity of William Reilly Helm and his daughter Sue (Sumiko) Helm, it is revealed ever more clearly, amidst the bustle of preparations for the natural catastrophe, toward exactly what cultural catastrophe the family is tacitly moving. The daughter, clearly taking her father's side as motivated by love, while going against her mother in the tone of a rebuke, leaves this woman, who emigrated from Japan to New Orleans, feeling ever more radically excluded in her own home. But the problem of survival, of a "supervivencia" (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 34), for the mother and for the whole family, becomes ever more essential, though it happens at first in a concealed fashion. In the context of the accelerating double catastrophe, the questions of the limits of coexistence, of the failure of convivence, becomes ever more urgent in the discourse of the daughter, Sue.

The mother, who has recourse to no voice of her own, is effectively muzzled in the story. And yet for us, her fate becomes ever clearer 'beneath' the words of Sue, as it were, from the silence and concealment of all who participated. The daughter attempts to forbid her mother from using Japanese in public, just at the moment when the two, on the father's orders, are in a long-depleted supermarket searching for canned meat, and the mother compares the scenes of the approaching catastrophe to the war: "Senso mitai, parece la guerra" (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 41). Once again, natural and cultural catastrophes are tied together, and this in two languages, which even within the family, even with the bilingual daughter in 1955 – just one decade after the end of the Second World War – still seem to be intensely at war with one another. The suppression of the one language by the other gives a linguistic expression to the suppression of one part of the family by the other: "Mi madre no tenía la menor idea de qué significaba vivir aquí en los Estados Unidos; seguía comportándose como si estuviera en Japón" (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 41). Spaces and times overlap in New Orleans, but at the same time continually shut one another out, and the mother is thus not in her place, she is *fuera de lugar.*

She is not even allowed to take along her suitcase when the family takes flight, which they are late in starting because the father has obviously miscalculated both the path of the hurricane and its possible consequences. When the father and daughter wake up again among the nuns in the bunker of the shelter, the mother has already disap-

peared. And she does not return. Was she perhaps, like another Japanese woman who was one day washed up again by the sea, drowned at the tragic end of a migration that began with the catastrophe of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? But this human catastrophe had already been anticipated in the thoughts of the daughter who had rushed to take her father's side, in of all places, the bomb shelter for possible nuclear attacks:

> Me daba rabia el hecho de que ella transformara cualquier tema en un problema, y durante aquella noche en el refugio realmente deseé que ella se fuera a cualquier parte, de vuelta a Japón o a Canadá o a Francia, no me importaba dónde, hasta que finalmente me dormí. (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 50)

As the centripetal movements of immigration as well as those of the cyclonic storm that dominate the story from the beginning move along their course, ever stronger centrifugal movements step up beside them that finally culminate in the movement-figure of an enchanted Migration to anywhere, to *cualquier parte*. There in the place of refuge, the *refugio* of the nuns, New Orleans becomes at the same moment the place of a reverse movement that leads into the catastrophe, a direction of movement in which natural and cultural catastrophe face off against one another and at the same time complete one another. Meanwhile, William Reilly Helm tries to present the death of his first wife, in order to 'naturalize' it to her successor in 1991, as the result of a natural catastrophe. Yes, she died: "Pobrecita, se la llevó Betsy" (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 53). But Sue (Sumiko), who in 1955 felt at the disappearance of her mother an immense feeling of freedom, knows very well in 1991 why her Mother disappeared:

> Reiko Shimizu Warren fue sacada del mar en la costa de Santa Mónica. Los datos dicen: 45 años de matrimonio, 44 en los Estados Unidos. Su vida debe de haber sido parecida a la de mi madre. Se había casado muy joven con un oficial del ejército enemigo, uno de los triunfantes americanos que ocuparon el Japón después de la rendición. Así habría podido escapar de su mundo. Ese mundo de hambre y vergüenza, para cambiarlo por otro, lejano, victorioso. Jamás habría sufrido hambre otra vez. Pero habrá padecido otro hambre, un anhelo secreto que la

> poseía sin que ella pudiese nombrarlo o satisfacerlo. ¿Dónde estará mi madre? No lo sé. No es algo que yo pueda saber. (Kazumi Stahl 1997: 53)

In the life of another Japanese woman who, as in the first story of *Catástrofes naturales*, married one of the victorious US Americans and transformed into an "Exótica" in Louisiana, the disappearance of Sue's mother is mirrored, to strip the catastrophe of any kind of naturalness. For there is nothing natural in all of those catastrophes that the New Orleans-raised Anna Kazumi Stahl lays before us. Much more, it is the limits of convivence, it is the collapses of coexistence that condemn everything to a failure that runs through most of the stories by the author from Louisiana that are collected here. In the global archipelago of the city of New Orleans, which in the universe of Anna Kazumi Stahl is tied to, among others, Argentina, Armenia, China, Germany, or Japan, stories have settled in which the human catastrophes are transformed into the strophes of a convivence that remains ever-present and ever-precarious. But how can this convivence be considered in the context of a community?

6. Between Continent and Caribbean: Landscapes of Theory

If one follows the thoughts of the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy in his volume *La communauté désoeuvrée* (see Nancy 2004), the thoughts of the modern era revolve around the lost community − and with it, a mythos in which the "longing for the mythical unification of man with the divine realm" (Hebekus/Völker 2012: 100) finds expression. If Jean-Jacques Rousseau appears in *Die undarstellbare Gemeinschaft* (*The Inoperative Community*) (Nancy 1988) from the perspective chosen by Nancy on the (N.B.) European modern era as "le premier penseur de la communauté" or more specifically as "le premier qui éprouve la question de la société comme une inquiétude dirigée vers une communauté" (Nancy 2004: 29), then a hidden image picture, so to speak, of a sought-after community becomes apparent from within a double opposition:

> Distincte de la société (qui est une simple association et répartition des forces et des besoins) tout autant qu'opposée à l'emprise (qui dissout la communauté en soumettant les peuples à ses armes et à sa gloire), la communauté n'est pas seulement la communication intime de ses membres entre eux, mais aussi la communion organique d'elle-même avec sa propre essence. Elle n'est pas seulement constituée d'une juste distribution des tâches et des biens, ni d'un heureux équilibre des forces et des autorités, mais elle est faite avant tout du partage et de la diffusion ou de l'imprégnation d'une identité dans une pluralité dont chaque membre, par là même, ne s'identifie que par la médiation supplémentaire de son identification au corps vivant de la communauté. (Nancy 2004: 30)

One could read this passage as a committed plea, but also as the definition of a community marked by plurality that transforms itself into a living body, a *corps vivant*, for which identity does not necessarily mean something stabile, but the open processuality of an identification. Beyond the notion of the community that stands at the center of Nancy's considerations however, this delineation also proves to be useful for the designation of a convivence that is oriented less toward intensifying its mechanisms of exclusion, and much more toward the refinement of its forms and processes of inclusion. No illusion of the establishment of a homogeneous community-body is delineated here. Rather, Nancy develops a political philosophy of a convivence that rests upon the foundation of a consciously developed knowledge for living together.

The second philosopher who, alongside and after Rousseau, forms for Nancy the decisive point of reference with a view to a way of thinking for the community is none other than Georges Bataille. With him, Nancy opens (himself) a *different* space for a community that is not of a territorial nature:

> Bataille a su mieux que quiconque – il fut le seul à frayer la voie d'un tel savoir – ce qui forme plus qu'une connexion de l'extase et de la communauté, ce qui fait de chacune le lieu de l'autre, ou encore ce par quoi, selon une topologie atopique, la circonscription d'une communauté, ou mieux son *aréalité* (sa nature d'aire, d'espace formé),

> n'est pas un territoire mais forme l'aréalité d'une extase de même que, réciproquement, la forme d'une extase est celle d'une communauté. Cependant, Bataille lui-même resta pour ainsi dire suspendu entre les deux pôles de l'extase et de la communauté. La réciprocité de ces deux pôles consiste en ce que, tout en se donnant l'un à l'autre lieu − en s'aréalisant −, ils se limitent l'un par l'autre − ce qui fait une autre "aréalisation", une suspension de l'immanence à laquelle pourtant leur connexion engage. Cette double aréalisation fonde la résistance à la fusion, à l'œuvre de mort, et cette résistance est le fait de l'être-en-commun comme tel: sans cette résistance nous ne serions jamais longtemps en commun, très vite nous serions "réalisés" dans un être unique et total. (Nancy 2004: 53)

From the perspective chosen here, the linking of the idea of a livable community with the notion of a space that cannot be a simply territorial space appears to be of fundamental importance. For in the intermediate space between community and ecstasy that is opened up through going back to Bataille, the *areality* opens a field of play ("aire") which, as a created space, places a high resistivity against any sort of 'natural' space. The areality intended by Nancy should always be understood as a process, as a permanent *s'aréalisant* that eludes any sort of simple spatiality insofar as it is shaped by a high vectoricity. Suited to the areality intended by Nancy therefore would be something elusive, an *atopia* that reverts neither to a utopia on one hand, nor a topography on the other. The area designated here is consequently to be considered as neither continuous nor continental; against any kind of fusion aimed at producing a unity in which everything can merge into total (or totalitarian) form, it pits grim resistance.

It is tempting to relate such an understanding of areality that is derived from such a highly differentiated philosophy of the present to the conceptual delineation of TransArea Studies, in which the concerns are not so much about boundary delineation as about boundary shifting, less a matter of territorial spaces than of paths and crossings, less a matter of topographies than of *movement-spaces*.[21] The space originates in the triangle of what is found, what is invented, and what

[21] See Ette (2016a); in German: (2012b).

is experienced (or yet to be lived), not from its mere status as being given, but from those transits and intersections that through their very movements constitute a space and, in their vectorial openness and processuality, preserve it. Transareal studies therefore develop no static spaces in which the Other can be unmistakably separated from that which is one's own, instead configuring, beyond static territorial notions, possibilities not only to find spaces, but through constant invention to reinvigorate them, to experience them, to live them. Convivence and community are not bound to static spatial structures.

The recourse to the term *aréalité*, which with this French philosopher may always be understood as a term of motion, opens up the possibilities of a transareal network of thinking together with the connections of a community that generates itself from out of its specific and always dynamic connections. Community may thus be released from any notion of a fixed, static place, if we can understand its areality as dislocation, and thereby, in the more comprehensive context of the transareal. Or, according to the concepts of Jean-Luc Nancy: "Ces 'lieux de communication' ne sont plus des lieux de fusion, bien qu'on y *passe* de l'un à l'autre; ils sont définis et exposés par leur dis-location. Ainsi, la communication du partage serait cette dis-location elle-même." (Nancy 2004: 64) But how might a space of this sort be concretely imagined and delineated as both *Vue* and *Vision* at once?

In the literatures of the world, such dis-locations, such *transareal* delineations of the landscapes of thought, of the landscapes of theory,[22] have been drawn up in long literary filiations and networks and modifiably stored. And there is a literary-aesthetic tradition that connects itself particularly with New Orleans and Louisiana, a tradition that, from out of movement, can develop perhaps most strikingly in the field of travel literature and its vectorially applied knowledge. For it is here that the space of the lower Mississippi and its delta, which had already appeared in roughly the same forms on the great world map of Juan de la Cosa in the year 1500, was well situated in the functions of threshold and hinge that identify New Orleans not only as a part of the North American subcontinent, but perhaps even more as a part of the Caribbean, or more exactly, of the Greater Caribbean.

[22] On this concept, see Ette (2013b: 49–60).

In the sense of Jean-Luc Nancy's arealization, New Orleans is not to be understood as a topographically static place. New Orleans is, much more, the essential hinge within a movement-space that for a long time has been able to configure itself as a landscape of theory.

Even as early as the middle of the 19th century, in the so aesthetically successful *Letters from Cuba* by the well-travelled Swedish writer Fredrika Bremer, a landscape of theory of a distinctly archipelagic and transarchipelagic pattern is developed from New Orleans and Louisiana. We do not know which book the hardy traveler held in her hands on the 28th of January, 1851, when she set sail out of New Orleans and into the Caribbean, bound for La Habana on a ship that many travelers were using to get to the California of the gold rush as quickly as possible. Whatever pleasant or repellent things she may have encountered on board the ship, she succeeded masterfully in sketching the gradual, often hardly noticeable transitions between continental and insular, between geographies that can territorially be clearly delimited and those that are amphibious, so as to literarily condense in this manner the especially transareal significance of the movement-space she crossed. It is the vectorial intermediate forms between the continental inner space of North America and the archipelagic, discontinuous landscapes of the Island-Caribbean, as sketched from the moving ship, that attract and fascinate her in an extraordinary way. So writes Fredrika Bremer:

> We cast off, and with book in hand, I sat down to watch the riverbank from the sundeck at the stern, and I found it wonderful. For I could remain thus alone, while the spectacle of the bank appeared to me like a magical vision of the lands of the South. We sailed down that arm of the Mississippi that opens into Atchafalaya Bay, and from there, on to the Gulf of Mexico. One plantation after another appeared, with their white houses bordered by orange groves, stands of cedar, and blooming oleander, aloe, and palmettos. One after another, they presented themselves, separated by ever greater distances. The banks sank lower and lower, until they turned to muddy land with grasses and reeds, now without trees, shrubs, or houses. They barely rose above the surface of the water: a short while later, they sank under it, and in so doing they took on the uniform and particular figure of that which, due to its similarity to the shape of the Greek letter, they call the "Del-

> ta of the Mississippi." A few grasses still swayed over the water that was moved by waves and wind. Finally, they too disappeared. The waves alone now dominated all. And now the land lay behind me, the immense continent of North America, and before me, the great Gulf of Mexico with its immeasurable depths, the southern sea with all its islands. (Bremer 2002: 17)[23]

With a fine pen, in the pose of Petrarch with book in hand, as it were, the smallest changes that appear on the way through the Mississippi Delta are attentively noted. The dwindling land, the disappearing continent gives space to increasingly interrupted, discontinuous forms, so that we grasp, on the way from the Circum-Caribbean landscape to the Island-Caribbean landscape, that everything is literally dominated by the plantation economy that encompasses the whole Caribbean, that at the same time, however, the water now pushes itself between the fraying pieces of land and a complex, amphibious transitional structure emerges. How far does the 'mainland' extend?

The literary-aesthetically convincing *travelling* of Fredrika Bremer's travel report, which may be classified among a great number of women's journeys whose letters, travel journals, or other writings have been preserved,[24] reveals the slow transition between continent and island world, between the continuous and the discontinuous, between mainland and open sea, whereby the discontinuous structure increasingly allows the complex interconnectedness of an island world to be recognized, wherein everything can be connected to everything else. The water separates and connects at the same time: it forms the mobile element par excellence and allows for a gliding onward that simultaneously connects, in a *transitory* way, as it were, the different and the discontinuous.

So, under the practiced pen of the Swedish author, a landscape of theory emerges in which New Orleans opens upon a Caribbean that, in the discontinuity of its island forms fading into view, a world-wide multirelationality unfolds. As the first space of increasing population density during the first phase of accelerated globalization, the

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23 Engl. trans. O. E.

24 See the work of Abel (2015).

Caribbean, since the turn into the 16th century, was integrated into a world-spanning network of shipping connections. Since the founding of Manila in 1571 and the establishment in 1573 of a connection between Acapulco and Manila that functioned for over 250 years, this network gave rise to transarchipelagic commercial connections not only to the archipelago of the Canary Islands, but to the Philippines as well. In addition to an I(s)land-world in which every island of the Caribbean had at its disposal its own particular logic − and this means its own natural regional setting, its own climate, its own history, language, or economy − there developed an island world of relational connections, insofar as every island is connected to a multitude of other islands, both archipelagically and transarchipelagically.

In this way, Fredrika Bremer's trip from New Orleans to La Habana presents to us not only a linear motion of travel, but at the same time a world-spanning vectoricity in which not only the mainland of North, Central, and South America, not only California or the interior of the North American continent are incorporated, but of course Africa and Europe as well. Along her way, set as it is in a literary scene, the travel writer develops a landscape of theory in which New Orleans appears as a Caribbean metropolis with world-wide connections.

The expression *landscape of theory*, founded in culture theory − and this has no doubt become clear before the backdrop of the analysis of the Nature-Culture opposition carried out here − deals with a conception in which Nature and Culture are thought of together, and are not separable from one another. Just as the term 'natural landscape' has made no sense for some time now, as all the landscapes on our planet, in the Anthropocene, have long since been shaped and reformed by human beings, so would it also be no less pointless, in a term like *landscape of theory*, to wish neatly to separate Culture and Nature from one another. For of all the things that Fredrika Bremer lets glide past the eyes of her readership, what could be classified as purely 'Nature' or as purely 'Culture'? Neither the canals nor the estates, neither the banks of the river, be they high or low, nor the shrubs or flowers, neither the plantations nor the plants themselves allow themselves to be classified as belonging solely on one side or the other.

It is thus a landscape formed by human beings that at the same time possesses a certain natural regional setting that lends this area of the American hemisphere a truly singular hinge function, and which is traversed by a great variety of logics. The landscape of theory into which Fredrika Bremer inscribes New Orleans and the connected rivershed regions to the south embodies a pattern of thinking that is shaped in a profoundly transareal way and which, with direct recourse to that which seems to be 'Nature,' develops a great depth of reflection. Nothing in this landscape is 'natural' alone; nothing is generated only 'culturally.' One cannot simply be set in opposition to the other. The theory attempts to place alongside this complexity and multiconnectedness adequate forms of thought and writing, without reducing the fundamental vectorial polysemy of the term 'landscape,' in which Nature and Culture obviously intermingle. The concept of the landscape of theory is aimed at a convivence of Nature and Culture that is aware of its (political) ecology.

7. New Orleans as Global Archipelago

Among some travelers of the 19th century, the notion soon becomes apparent that in the case of the Caribbean, it could be a matter of a preferred proving ground of a global stamp, as well as a very specific area in which answers to the question of the possibilities and limits of coexistence on a world-wide scale might be found. For over the course of the first, second, and third phases of accelerated globalization, this space, populated by various indigenous peoples, was reached by immigrating waves of Spanish, Dutch, French, British, or Danish conquerors, slaves transported in the most brutal manner from different parts of Africa, contract workers and coolies from India, China, and other parts of Asia, in short: the movement-space at the bisection point of the American double continent became *the* biopolitical hub in the world-wide machine of the globalizing and the globalized. The Caribbean proved to be a transareally constituted area of the most concentrated coexistence of cultures, ethnicities, religions, and languages in a movement-space marked by I(s)land-Worlds and island worlds alike.

Patricio Lafcadio Tessima Carlos Hearn was born in 1850 on the Greek island of Lefkada (Santa Maura) and died in Tokyo in 1904 under the Japanese name that he had meanwhile adopted, Koizumi Yakumo. Like possibly no other, he gave literary expression to a landscape of theory for the Circum-Caribbean in which there was room for a tremendous variety of population groups, cultures, religions, histories, and forms of life on a world-wide scale. Unlike anyone else, besides perhaps the Cuban writer and revolutionary José Martí, who during the same time period delineated in his writings an equally hemispherically and transareally networked Caribbean island world, this author of Greek-Irish descent who, at the beginning of the 20th century shaped in an outstanding manner the image that people in the West conjured when thinking of the distant archipelago of Japan, succeeded in bringing a transarchipelagic world literarily to life as a landscape of theory. For not only with his thoroughly spectacular biography, that took him from the Greek archipelago in the Eastern Mediterranean, via Ireland and England in Western Europe, via Cincinnati, New York and New Orleans to the Caribbean and finally on to Nippon, Lafcadio Hearn embodied transarchipelagic life, thought, and writing on a global scale.

The following pages will examine in what way this author of a literature without a fixed abode further developed that landscape of theory that we encountered in looking at New Orleans and the Mississippi Delta in Fredrika Bremer's travel letters. From a different perspective, only a single text of Lafcadio Hearn's shall be focused upon here.[25]

In his narrative *Chita: A Memory of Last Island*, that was first published in book form in 1889, the archipelagic and transarchipelagic dimension of Hearn's writing is clearly marked from the beginning. Already in the incipit, a travel movement is developed that, in its travelling, is highly reminiscent of the passage from Fredrika Bremer cited above − surely a depiction that can hardly have been familiar to this writer, journalist, and translator. Starting out once more from

25 A more exhaustive analysis of the writings of Lafcadio Hearn can be found in Ette (2016a: 224–236).

New Orleans, a landscape again develops in which the indissolubility of the intermingling of Nature and Culture is programmatic to it:

> Travelling south from New Orleans to the Islands, you pass through a strange land into a strange sea, by various winding waterways. You can journey to the Gulf by lugger if you please; but the trip may be made much more rapidly and agreeably on some one of those light, narrow steamers, built especially for bayou-travel, which usually receive passengers at a point not far from the foot of old Saint-Louis Street, hard by the sugar-landing, where there is ever a pushing and flocking of steam-craft – all striving for place to rest their white breasts against the levée, side by side – like great weary swans. But the miniature steamboat on which you engage passage to the Gulf never lingers long in the Mississippi: she crosses the river, slips into some canal-mouth, labors along the artificial channel awhile, and then leaves it with a scream of joy, to puff her free way down many a league of heavily shadowed bayou. Perhaps thereafter she may bear you through the immense silence of drenched rice-fields, where the yellow-green level is broken at long intervals by the black silhouette of some irrigating machine; – but, whichever of the five different routes be pursued, you will find yourself more than once floating through sombre mazes of swamp-forest, – past assemblages of cypresses all hoary with a parasitic tillandsia, and grotesque as gatherings of fetich-gods. Ever from river or from lakelet the steamer glides again into canal or bayou, — from bayou or canal once more into lake or bay; and sometimes the swamp-forest visibly thins away from these shores into wastes of reedy morass where, even of breathless nights, the quaggy soil trembles to a sound like thunder of breakers on a coast: the storm-roar of billions of reptile voices chanting in cadence, – rhythmically surging in stupendous *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, – a monstrous and appalling chorus of frogs! …
>
> Panting, screaming, scraping her bottom over the sand-bars, – all day the little steamer strives to reach the grand blaze of blue open water below the marsh-lands; and perhaps she may be fortunate enough to enter the Gulf about the time of sunset. For the sake of passengers, she travels by day only; …
>
> Shadows lengthen; and at last the woods dwindle away behind you into thin bluish lines; – land and water alike take more luminous color; – bayous open into broad passes; – lakes link themselves with sea-bays; – and the ocean-wind bursts upon you, – keen, cool, and full of light. For the first time the vessel begins to swing, – rocking to the

> great living pulse of the tides. And gazing from the deck around you, with no forest walls to break the view, it will seem to you that the low land must have once been rent asunder by the sea, and strewn about the Gulf in fantastic tatters.
>
> Sometimes above a waste or wind-blown prairie-cane you see an oasis emerging, – a ridge or hillock heavily umbraged with the rounded foliage of evergreen oaks: – a *chénière*. And from the shining flood also kindred green knolls arise, – pretty islets, each with its beach-girdle of dazzling sand and shells, yellow-white, – and all radiant with semi-tropical foliage, myrtle and palmetto, orange and magnolia. Under their emerald shadows curious little villages of palmetto huts are drowsing, where dwell a swarthy population of Orientals, – Malay fishermen, who speak the Spanish-Creole of the Philippines as well as their own Tagal, and perpetuate in Louisiana the Catholic tradition of the Indies. (Hearn 2009: 77f.)

In a direct turn to the readers, who are in literally taken along on the literary journey, there develops south of New Orleans a labyrinthine landscape in which a steamboat seeks and must clear its not unhazardous way southward. The small and maneuverable steamer traverses a landscape that no longer has anything to do with the great, distant plains of the North American continental space, instead fundamentally distinguishing itself from these. With Lafcadio Hearn too, the abrupt and discontinuous takes the place of the continuous, the continental, that stretches across an immense territory, but is bidden farewell and left behind upon the appearance of new and changing horizons. We are literally plunging into a new world.

South of New Orleans, the assumedly firm mainland is torn and tattered and loses all appearance of a homogeneous landmass. The crossing of differing and quickly changing types of landscape makes its way through river arms and canals, through bayous and bays, through inhabited and uninhabited regions in an intricate terrain traversed and crisscrossed by the river's countless courses. Nothing here is *tierra firme* anymore, nothing presents itself as true dry land: it is an amphibious country, the outlines of which come forth only with the crossings that the steamboat traces in the water on its way through the bayous. It is 'naturally' a matter of open, highly mobile, unmistakably rhizomatic structures here, in which each thing is or

can be connected to every other thing, yet without them ever coalescing, ever fusing into one another. One could speak here of an areality in the sense of Jean-Luc Nancy insofar as resistance is exerted against any sort of fusion, any sort of homogeneity. It is a country that, due to its constant changes, can only be mapped with great difficulty and thus is in every respect difficult to control for long.

Corresponding to the labyrinth of river courses and canals is the labyrinth of sentences and connections that evoke a landscape of theory, in the multiconnectivity of which the readers too can get lost. Rhizomatic structures give rise to a relational logic that must be unraveled artfully. And yet the boat, after following its complicated route, reaches the area in which the swell announces the presence of the sea, in which river water and seawater, mixing freely together like Nature and Culture, like continent and island world, have entered into an inseparable bond. Solid ground is nowhere to be found, crossings are everywhere, constantly, one passes new passages: nowhere in this landscape of the Mississippi Delta can a straight line be drawn that separates the stable from the mobile, the land from the water. Everything in this landscape of theory – including the innate poetics of the writer himself – is in inconstant movement, and always becoming and passing away. The tides set the rhythm of a life of coming and going.

Already hinted at in the twists and turns of both the channels and the sentences, the motif of the intertwining of land, water, and sky that, in the later course of *Chita: A Memory of Last Island*, reaches its peak in the land being devoured by the sky and the water in a powerful tropical storm offers a view of the open sea of the Caribbean, the waves of which in a life-rhythm of ebb and flow are transmitted irresistibly to the ship. And while the tragic destruction of the coastal island world around the *Ile Dernière* (Last Island) along with (almost) all of its inhabitants and visitors is subsequently related, the text already indicates beforehand, on the linguistic level, how not only English and French, but also Spanish, the Creole languages of the Caribbean and the Philippines, as well as the Tagalog of the immigrant population from this last-named archipelago begin mutually to interweave with one another in the text in a transarchipelagic movement that connects Asia to America and the Philippines to the

Caribbean, all within the transcultural world of Louisiana, much in the way that water and land are intimately intermeshed with one another in the Delta. At this threshold between the continent and the transarchipelagic island world, at this point of intersection of two logics and epistemologies that, while fundamentally different from one another, may still be combined with one another, the most widely diverse population groups have settled.

This land, that is no fixed territory, thus forms the movement-space of a convivence that does not result from the fusion of the different population groups, but from their coexistence in diversity. The areality of a community conceived in the sense of Jean-Luc Nancy opens upon a transareality across many languages that takes this land, which really possesses no fixed territory, into a transareal multiconnectivity. For in the Delta of the powerful river-landscape of the Mississippi, the natural elements, the cultures, the languages, and the ways of life of myriad areas come together; in this microcosm of constant becoming and passing away, of intertwining and being devoured, they live together in never-ending tension. And this life of the "Orientals" in the heart of the American hemisphere is based upon a knowledge for living together that sees in the multitude of languages no hindrance, but the prerequisite for convivence.

And while his US American editors and publishers[26] might have badgered him to get rid of the quite large number of foreign-language expressions and words that the extensively travelled writer had left untranslated, Lafcadio Hearn would not allow himself to be convinced to deny multilingualism, as a sign of the multilogical, its due place in his texts. Hearn's prose describes and *is* that landscape of the convivence of a great diversity of logics that his text assembles and shapes from the "fantastic tatters" of this land. How else would the translingual and transcultural dimension of what unfolds here have been describable? Franco-Creoles and Anglophone southerners, but also Malays, Mexicans, and Filipinos appear in a Circum-Caribbean world that is in no way restricted to English. The world that the transarchipelagic writer sketches out does not suffer under the burden of monolingualism, under the mono-logic of a single language – even

[26] See the Note on the Texts in Hearn (2009: 827–831).

when, in the case of English, it represents a world language. New Orleans and its regions, as we have already seen with Anna Kazumi Stahl, is a language archipelago.

In Lafcadio Hearn's highly mobile island universe, one island is always presented in reference to other islands; behind, beside, or beneath a certain island, again and again, other islands emerge that group to form archipelagos, thus instantly forming other, new networks, and in the course of their branching out within their own archipelago, another archipelago appears and again disappears, becomes submerged, remains forever under water and thereby becomes a flooded landscape (see Ette 2015). Everything is precarious, everything is unstable, and for just this reason, filled with that life, with that rhythm of life that here, at the point of bisection of the American hemisphere, can be sensuously experienced.

And at the same time, it can be wounded. In *Chita: A Memory of Last Island*, Lafcadio Hearn has placed a literary monument to an island and, at the same time, to a world that no longer is, and yet continues to exist. For on the *Ile Dernièr*, a popular island retreat in the Mississippi Delta, a festive company that is as illustrious as it is lusty has come together, firmly determined to amuse themselves well during these days as a celebratory community. Not a few of these boisterous dancers might well hail from the 'better society' of New Orleans.

Again and again, sentences in French penetrate the noise of the celebration, and Lafcadio Hearn's English-language text, to fall upon our ears: "*Il n'y a rien de mieux à faire que de s'amuser!*" (Hearn 2009: 91). The celebrating community dances and a captivating "Valse-Tourbillon" (Hearn 2009: 93) begins: women and men enjoy themselves tremendously. But this whirlwind waltz is soon joined by a second one; as in the story by Anna Kazumi Stahl, the catastrophe begins with a dance, with a waltz: "One – two − three!" (Hearn 2009: 93). And after only a short time, the hurricane strikes the land from the south. At first it is "thin streams of water" (Hearn 2009: 93), that spread over the dance floor of the festively decorated dance palace, but soon the sandy land begins to move: nothing remains stable, everything begins to tremble under the feet of the dancers, to quake, to break apart. First fear and then, quickly, a panic spreads over the

partygoers; abruptly, the flood begins to rise. For a final time, the master of ceremonies attempts to calm the guests with a reference to the long experience possessed by the natives of Louisiana with great storms:

> *Messieurs – mesdames, ce n'est rien.* Nothing serious, ladies, I assure you … *Mais nous en avons vu bien souvent, les inondations comme celle-ci; ça passe vite!* The water will go down in a few hours, ladies; – it never rises higher than this; *il n'y a pas le moindre danger, je vous dis! Allons! il n'y a* – My God, what is that? (Hearn 2009: 93)

Once again, in this bilingual passage, it seems that the danger can be averted with the elegance of the French, and the carnivalesque party-community in their expensive gowns may be calmed down. But the dance proves to be a Dance of Death. The coincidence of carnival, convivence, and catastrophe can no longer be stopped.

The hurricane, which had definitely sent ahead it harbingers, strikes the island with full fury, churns up waves as high as houses, and swells the Mississippi in New Orleans above all high-water marks. Not only are the garden levels flooded, the buildings carried off by accompanying tornados, a ship racing by sunk into the sandy ground: even more, the entire landscape is reshaped, the division of land and water changed, as the sandy ground breaks apart. Thus does the *Ile Dernière* disappear with nearly all of its inhabitants and all of their guests, in the flood of waters whipped up by the hurricane. *Last Island* becomes *Lost Island* − and all that tells of the catastrophe are the strophes that can be heard in Lafcadio Hearn's lyrically summarized prose.

They are cata-strophes that at the same time indicate how the vanished island becomes part of a flooded, no longer visible landscape, and thereby broadens, under water, the landscape of theory to the not-visible. For *Last Island*, while indeed no longer visible, has in no way disappeared. The 'last island' has instead become a component of a landscape that, though sunken, is now preserved in literature, and was therefore only superficially effaced − just as New Orleans was almost abandoned in 2005 after the impact of Hurricane Katrina. Can we be certain that the city, in light of ever more powerful hurricanes due in part to human beings, will remain safe from this fate?

But let us not turn the catastrophe into an apocalypse. The destruction of a cultural landscape by Nature by no means transforms the cultural landscape back to pure Nature. The final words of this part of *Chita: A Memory of Last Island* − "The tremendous tragedy is over!" − suggest it: the catastrophe is nothing other than a tragedy, and thus a *Stück*, a piece of human history/-ies, a product of human Culture. And this absolutely cannot be thought of without its insoluble relationship to Nature.

All islands, including the *Ile Dernière*, always point to − and who would not be reminded here of Atlantis? − other islands in space and time. Everything in this archipelago of islands, the river courses, the channels, the bayous and the sandbanks, point to other island groups and island worlds that, of course, lie on the cultural horizon of New Orleans and Louisiana. So among the islands, we encounter other islands, under the land, a different land. New Orleans is not a place and also not a city, but rather, it forms a landscape of theory that can only be grasped from a state of movement, and can only be understood transareally. A landscape marked by catastrophe, marked by its own downfall?

But in downfall it is still possible to perceive the human striding, in screaming the future writing: in the catastrophe, as in the carnival, there lies another world, a world in which the weeping in laughter, the other in the personal, and the personal in the other are omnipresent. It may be that New Orleans does not lie with its back to the Mississippi, but rather that it lies on the Mississippi with its back to the continent, and is noticed astonishingly little in the US. But New Orleans forms a global archipelago that in the abundance of its languages, its cultures, its origins and futures, in the consciousness of its own fragility and its own possible downfall, continually reinvents itself and, in this finding and inventing, experiences itself anew. New Orleans shares this knowledge equally with carnival and catastrophe − and also, naturally, with the literatures of the world which, thanks to their fragile resistivity, have survived all of the geometries of power across the millennia.

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Creolization I
Language and Literature

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Entre la Caraïbe et l'Amérique du *Nord* : le créole louisianais et son lexique à la lumière de ses contacts linguistiques et culturels

1. Introduction

Le créole louisianais (CL) jouit d'un statut particulier parmi les créoles français de la zone américano-caraïbe, c'est là un fait bien connu dans le domaine des études créoles. Cela est dû d'une part à quelques traits morphosyntaxiques « conservateurs » caractéristiques de ce créole, d'autre part au stade avancé de la décréolisation en Louisiane[1]. En revanche, on sait moins que le CL se distingue également des autres créoles de la zone américano-caraïbe dans le domaine lexical. Grâce aux données du *Dictionnaire étymologique des créoles d'Amérique*[2], nous pouvons maintenant entamer de premières réflexions en matière d'analyse différentielle du lexique du CL : celui-ci partage certes un très grand nombre de lexèmes avec les créoles antillais (CAnt), mais possède néanmoins un statut particulier dans l'ensemble des créoles d'Amérique, avec des divergences parfois considérables pour certains types lexicaux, d'origine française ou non-française. C'est ce deuxième volet qui nous intéressera particulièrement, et que nous allons aborder de deux côtés. D'abord, en nous demandant dans quelle mesure le CL est ancré – à travers son lexique – dans la francophonie nord-américaine, grâce à certains lexèmes partagés avec les variétés du français nord-américain (FNA) comme le français québécois (FQ)

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[1] Nous renvoyons aux données de *l'Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Language Structures* (APiCS) pour plus de détails (cf. Klingler/Neumann-Holzschuh 2013). Cf. aussi Klingler (2003), Neumann (1985), Neumann-Holzschuh (1987, 2000).

[2] Le *Dictionnaire étymologique des créoles français d'Amérique* (DECA) constitue la suite du *Dictionnaire étymologique des créoles de l'Océan Indien* (DECOI), dirigé par Annegret Bollée et paru entre 1993 et 2007. Cf. Bollée/Neumann-Holzschuh (2007).

et le français acadien (FA), ces « nord-américanismes » n'étant pas attestés aux Antilles. Nous essayerons en outre, à titre purement préliminaire, de discerner d'autres domaines lexicaux également intéressants pour une analyse différentielle du lexique du CL. Nous tenons à souligner que les observations suivantes doivent beaucoup à l'article d'A. Thibault intitulé « Le français de Louisiane et son ancrage historique dans la francophonie des Amériques » (2016), consacré au français louisianais (FL) et à ses liens de parenté avec la francophonie nord-américaine et antillaise[3]. Les concordances lexicales entre CL et FL étant très larges, les observations de Thibault peuvent être en partie transposées au créole, ce qui ne signifie pas pour autant que le vocabulaire des deux idiomes soit entièrement identique.

Comme base de travail, nous disposons, outre le DECA, du *Dictionary of Louisiana French* (DLF) et du *Dictionary of Louisiana Creole* (DLC) élaborés par l'équipe de chercheurs réunie autour d'Albert Valdman, des importants travaux lexicologiques et étymologiques d'A. Thibault (2008, 2009, 2014, 2015, 2016), et de ceux de J.P. Chauveau (2009, 2012) et P. Rézeau (2008) portant sur les filiations entre les variétés du français nord-américain et/ou les créoles de cette zone.[4]

2. Remarques sociohistoriques

L'histoire sociodémographique de la Louisiane se distingue des autres aires créolophones de la zone américano-caraïbe. Grâce aux liens étroits avec les autres régions francophones d'Amérique du Nord, et aussi à des relations avec la France jamais vraiment interrompues, cette région se révèle être un « carrefour linguistique » tout

[3] Cf. aussi Thibault (2014). Notons que le corpus du FL dépouillé par Thibault (2014, 2016) est un corpus textuel, qui se distingue donc de nos matériaux basés sur le dépouillement de dictionnaires.

[4] Nous disposons en outre depuis peu de la thèse de M. Schaffer Le Merdy (2013) et de premières réflexions d'Albert Valdman concernant un dictionnaire différentiel du FL (Valdman 2014). Signalons également l'article de Robert Vézina (2005) sur les correspondances et différenciations lexicales entre le français missourien (FMis) et le français du Canada.

à fait particulier, avec des répercussions importantes sur la langue et son lexique (cf. Neumann-Holzschuh 2014). Il semble donc que le témoignage du lexique nous fournisse de précieuses informations non seulement sur la nature du CL et du FL, mais aussi sur la situation sociodémographique de cette région et le français des fondateurs de la colonie.

La Louisiane fut explorée et colonisée – à partir de 1698 – par des Français venant aussi bien de France que du Canada, le noyau fondateur étant sans doute d'origine canadienne[5]. Bien que le nombre des colons en provenance de France ait augmenté grâce à la propagande massive de John Law et de la Compagnie des Indes après 1717, les coureurs des bois québécois se livrant à la traite des fourrures le long du Mississippi jouèrent un rôle important dès les débuts de la colonie louisianaise[6]. Étant donné que la Louisiane ne fut jamais une colonie attrayante, les Français arrivant dans cette partie de la Nouvelle France étaient plutôt issus des couches sociales inférieures[7]. Pendant toute la période coloniale, le contact avec le Nord comme avec la Caraïbe resta étroit. Les premiers esclaves sont attestés en 1706 (Klingler 2003 : 6) ; en 1766 – donc avant l'arrivée des Acadiens –,

[5] Pour l'histoire sociale de la colonie, cf. Hall (1992). Selon cette source il y avait en 1699 à Fort Maurepas (Biloxi) « 5 officers, at least 2 of them were Canadians, 5 petty officers, 4 sailors, 19 Canadians, 13 pirates from the Caribbean, 10 laborers, 6 cabin boys and 20 soldiers » (p. 3) ; en 1706, « Louisiana had a total of 85 French and Canadian inhabitants » (p. 3). En 1708, d'après le recensement cité par Hall, 278 personnes vivent sur les habitations françaises, dont un grand nombre d'esclaves amérindiens, auxquels s'ajoutent « over 60 wandering Canadians who are in the Indian villages situated along the Mississippi River without the permission of any governor » (p. 3). En 1726, on compte « 1,952 French citizens, including Germans and 276 indentured servants […] » (p. 8). Dans le Missouri, le taux de Canadiens semble avoir été plus élevé à l'époque, cf. Vézina (2005 : 542).

[6] « Two streams of previous French colonization in North America merged in Louisiana. One component comprised pirates from the Caribbean […]. The other component was the Canadian *courreurs du bois* [sic], experienced in living and trading with Indian peoples. Both components were essential to the survival of early Louisiana » (Hall 1992 : 12).

[7] « During these early years the European population was composed primarily of military personnel, indentured laborers, wage earners and forced immigrants, who had been vagabonds, criminals or prostitutes in France » (Klingler 2003 : 4). Cf. aussi Hall (1992 : 26).

le nombre d'esclaves atteignait 5 799 personnes, la population libre, 5 611 (Klingler 2009 : 92–93)[8]. C'est à cette époque que se forma le français dit « colonial », parler fort variable issu de diverses variétés diatopiques et diastratiques qui se modifia « selon le contexte linguistique particulier des diverses colonies françaises des xviie et xviiie siècles » (Valdman 2011 : 394–395).

Au cours du xviiie siècle et au début du xixe, d'autres groupes francophones arrivèrent dans la colonie. À partir de 1764 et jusqu'en 1785, les premiers Acadiens s'installèrent dans une partie assez restreinte de la région s'étendant le long du Mississippi et du bayou Lafourche ; quelques autres petits groupes d'Acadiens s'établirent plus à l'ouest de la rivière Atchafalaya (cf. Brasseaux 1998). Il est certain que les Acadiens ne formaient qu'un groupe minoritaire dans la Louisiane coloniale, ce qui a eu des répercussions sur la formation du français louisianais (le « cadien »), dont l'origine acadienne est toutefois un mythe, selon Klingler (2009, 2015). Dans les dernières décennies du xviiie et au cours du xixe siècle, le paysage linguistique et démographique de cette colonie fut transformé une fois de plus par l'arrivée d'autres groupes francophones en provenance de diverses régions de la France ainsi que d'Haïti[9]. La formation du FL s'est donc amorcée à partir du début du xviie siècle, pour continuer jusqu'à la première moitié du xixe, sur la base des usages linguistiques de divers groupes de colons.

> Le français louisianais moderne, appelé cadien, est le produit de la confrontation de plusieurs variétés de français y compris les français « colonial » et « acadien » du 18e siècle et le français « de la société

[8] Cf. Klingler (2003 : 7) : « In all then, 5,500 Africans were brought to Louisiana between 1719–1743, of whom 3,909, more than two-thirds, were embarked at the Senegalese concession ». Cf. aussi Hall (1992 : 9, 190).

[9] « In the years 1809-10 alone, more than 10.000 persons – approximately one third of them slaves, one third free people of color, and one third Whites – arrived in from former St. Domingue via Cuba. Immigration from France continued until the Civil War […] » (Klingler 2009 : 93). Grâce à l'essor économique de la colonie, il se forma une élite de propriétaires terriens, dont la langue cible était le « bon français » tel qu'il était parlé en France à l'époque. Pour cette variété du français, Picone/Valdman (2005) proposent le terme « français de plantation », à distinguer du français colonial.

> de plantation » du 19e siècle, pour ne pas exclure l'influence du créole louisianais. Mais dans l'esprit des Louisianais, et souvent celui des chercheurs, c'est la contribution acadienne qui l'emporte toujours. (Rottet 2005 : 213)[10]

L'hétérogénéité géographique des francophones de la période fondatrice est donc un facteur clé pour comprendre les particularités du FL qui, selon A. Thibault (2016 : 247), « s'intègrent dans un ensemble continental dont les origines remontent à l'époque coloniale » et « se sont nourries au fil des siècles d'apports démographiques variés qui ont donné à cette variété de français une physionomie unique ». Cette remarque peut être également reprise pour le CL, né sur place dans la première moitié du xviiie siècle[11], puisqu'on peut retenir que les esclaves se trouvèrent dès le début dans une situation de contact linguistique multiple : non seulement plusieurs variétés de français étaient parlées dans la Louisiane coloniale, mais on y trouvait aussi l'espagnol, des langues amérindiennes, le créole haïtien et, à partir du xixe siècle, l'anglais. Il n'est donc pas surprenant que les correspondances lexicales entre le CL et le FL soient aussi importantes.

Pour ce qui est de la situation actuelle du CL, le nombre de locuteurs créolophones se monte à 6 000 selon le recensement de 2010 (http://www.census.gov/geo/www/2010census), parmi lesquels on ne trouve plus guère de locuteurs monolingues. En raison de l'écologie linguistique particulièrement complexe en Louisiane, le créole a toujours été en contact avec le FL et, à partir du xixe siècle, avec l'anglais, de sorte qu'on observe des phénomènes de décréolisation plus au moins avancés selon la région. Le FL compte environ 135 000 locuteurs selon le recensement de 2010, eux aussi presque tous bilingues[12].

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10 Cf. aussi Klingler (2009, 2015), Picone (2006, 2015), Neumann-Holzschuh (2014).

11 Cf. Klingler (2003 : 46) pour une discussion de la genèse du CL.

12 Cf. Neumann-Holzschuh (2014). Pour l'étiolement linguistique du FL, cf. Rottet (2001).

3. Pour une analyse différentielle du lexique louisianais

Tandis que les études de Thibault mentionnées ci-dessus se distinguent par des analyses lexicologiques très détaillées, le but principal de cet article est beaucoup plus modeste : il s'agit de montrer – simplement à partir d'exemples et sans aucune prétention à l'exhaustivité – que le lexique du CL se distingue des autres créoles de la zone américano-caraïbe, notamment par son ancrage dans la francophonie nord-américaine.

Pour mieux cerner ces divergences, nous avons d'abord dépouillé les fichiers préliminaires B, C (sans CH) et G du DECA en recherchant les mots attestés pour la Louisiane pour lesquels le DECA ne fournit pas d'attestation antillaise. Parmi ceux-ci, nous avons ensuite examiné ceux qui ont une correspondance dans les variétés du FNA.

On peut cependant également aborder une analyse différentielle du CL en adoptant la perspective inverse : y a-t-il des mots ou groupes de mots attestés dans les CAnt, mais pas en Louisiane ? Pour répondre à cette deuxième question, nous nous appuyons sur deux travaux lexicologiques sur les CAnt analysant (a) les mots d'origine normande et (b) les africanismes.

Étant donné que nous mettons l'accent sur les divergences entre le CL et le CAnt, nous n'entrons pas dans une analyse détaillée de deux groupes de mots importants : (a) les mots « panaméricains » et (b) les mots communs au CL et aux CAnt à l'exclusion des variétés du FNA. Pour ce qui est des mots « panaméricains » – nous empruntons ce terme à Thibault (2016) – d'origine française et non-française, comme *abitan* 'fermier, agriculteur', *amare* 'attacher, lier', *boukann* 'fumée', *buten* 'ensemble de choses dans une maison, possessions', *galdri* 'véranda', *grafiyen* 'égratigner', *hale* 'tirer, saisir, transporter', *kite* 'laisser, permettre', *marengwen* 'moustique', *savonn* 'pâture, pré' etc., bien attestés en Amérique du Nord ainsi qu'aux Antilles selon Thibault (2016)[13], il s'agit d'un très fort contingent de mots ne té-

[13] Pour quelques-uns de ces lexèmes ainsi que pour d'autres types lexicaux appartenant à cette catégorie, cf. aussi Thibault (2009) et Schaffer Le Merdy (2013). Signalons que nous suivons les conventions graphiques du DLC pour la transcription des lexèmes créoles ; la signification, elle aussi, est indiquée conformément au DECA.

moignant pas seulement d' « un flux de rapports continuels entre les Antilles et le Canada au point de s'uniformiser dans l'ensemble des colonies françaises de l'Amérique du Nord » (Canac-Marquis/Poirier 2005 : 532), mais en outre, comme le prouvent des attestations jusque dans l'Océan Indien, connus également dans d'autres régions[14]. Ce sont « les équipages des bateaux qui ont été les premiers à nommer en français les réalités naturelles et climatiques du nouveau continent et qui ont contribué à les faire circuler d'une colonie à l'autre » (Canac-Marquis/Poirier 2005 : 519). Les variétés de français parlées par les marins, négriers, colons et boucaniers à l'époque coloniale se caractérisaient par un vocabulaire spécifique relevant de ce que le père Breton appela le « langage des Isles » (1665)[15]. Ce langage, formé dans les colonies françaises dès les premières tentatives de colonisation au xvie siècle, « doit être considéré comme le produit de plus d'un siècle de contacts linguistiques aux Amériques, dans des constellations diverses » (Jansen 2012b : 107). C'est grâce à la dynamique des échanges linguistiques de l'époque (pré)coloniale qu'un mot d'origine tupi comme *maringouin* – cas typique du « vocabulaire des Isles » – attesté aux Antilles au xvie siècle se retrouve non seulement dans tous les créoles atlantiques, mais aussi dans le français québécois depuis le xviie siècle et en Louisiane depuis le xviiie (cf. Thibault 2009 : 100-102). À l'époque coloniale, les Antilles comme la Nouvelle France étaient donc des creusets linguistiques, et il existait sans aucun doute des réseaux lexicaux dont on trouve des traces dans les français du Québec, d'Acadie, de Louisiane, des Antilles et même de l'Océan Indien. Ces mots étant sans doute utilisés par la plupart des francophones du Nouveau Monde, il est donc difficile de dire par quel chemin ils sont arrivés en Louisiane.

À côté de ces « panaméricanismes », il y a un très grand nombre de convergences lexicales entre le CL (et le FL) et l'ensemble formé par le CAnt et le français régional antillais qui ne sont pas attestées ailleurs en Amérique du Nord, témoignant des liens étroits

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[14] Pour la reconstitution du français colonial, une comparaison du vocabulaire des créoles de l'Océan Indien avec celui des créoles d'Amérique s'avèrera sans aucun doute fructueuse.

[15] A. Bollée (2015) préfère le terme « vocabulaire des Isles » proposé par Robert Chaudenson, cf. aussi Jansen (2012a, 2012b).

entre la Louisiane et les territoires francophones des Antilles. Pour la présence de certains « antillanismes » (Thibault 2014) en Louisiane, rappelons en particulier l'émigration de milliers d'habitants de Saint-Domingue vers la Nouvelle-Orléans dans le contexte de la révolution haïtienne[16]. Il s'agit de types lexicaux d'origine française comme *boug* 'gars, bonhomme, type', *boutik* 'boutique, magasin'[17], *jiromon* 'potiron, citrouille', *kòne(n)* 'savoir, pouvoir', *(l)abitasyon* 'plantation, ferme', *lavalas* 'averse' etc., mais aussi non-française, comme les mots mentionnés en 4.2.2. Ces concordances lexicales entre la Louisiane et les Antilles montrent que le CL (de même que le FL), malgré son enracinement dans la francophonie nord-américaine, fait également partie de l'espace caraïbe, le FL se distinguant ici des autres variétés du FNA[18]. Une partie de ces points communs remonte certainement au « langage des Isles », ce qui soulève toutefois la question fondamentale d'une éventuelle différenciation diatopique du français colonial, encore relativement mal connu. En dépit d'un nombre certainement élevé de recoupements, il est très probable que le français colonial de la Nouvelle-France se distinguait nettement de celui de la zone antillaise, à commencer par le domaine des mots d'origine non-française.

Ci-dessous, les matériaux lexicologiques sont présentés sous la forme suivante : (a) forme du CL lemmatisée telle qu'elle se présente dans le DLC[19] ; (b) indication de la catégorie grammaticale sans indication du genre, inexistant dans les langues créoles ; (c) bilan bibliographique très sommaire contenant les attestations des mots dans la

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[16] Cf. Thibault (2014, 2016) pour des détails concernant bon nombre de ces mots. Cf. aussi Thibault (2015) pour l'existence de certains antillanismes dans le français d'Afrique.

[17] Le DLF est plus précis : *boutique* 'any store or shop; grocery store; small specialized retail shop selling clothing, jewelry, crafts or knicknacks'.

[18] Par rapport au FL, Thibault (2014 : 173) constate que « la prise en compte de ces correspondances lexicales est fondamentale pour ne pas avoir du français louisianais une représentation tronquée et appauvrie ».

[19] Notons que dans le DECA, les mots d'origine française sont classifiés sous l'étymon français.

lexicographie consacrée à la question ainsi que quelques très brèves informations étymologiques[20].

4. Analyse lexicologique

4.1 Mots attestés en Louisiane mais pas aux Antilles[21]

4.1.1 Mots louisianais attestés aussi au Québec et en Acadie

Pour ce qui est du FL, Thibault (2016 : 255) observe à juste titre qu'en théorie, ces mots « pourraient être venus directement de France pendant la première moitié du xviiie siècle, être descendus depuis la Nouvelle-France par le Mississippi en passant par le Détroit et le Missouri, ou avoir été diffusés par les Acadiens, une combinaison de ces facteurs étant bien sûr tout aussi possible ». Comme les mots dits « panaméricains », ces mots « nord-américains » appartiennent sans doute à la souche lexicale la plus ancienne du français d'Amérique du Nord, ce qui est corroboré par le fait que quelques-uns d'entre eux sont également attestés dans les créoles de l'Océan Indien[22]. Il s'agit donc d'une source importante pour la reconstruction du français colonial parlé en Amérique du Nord.

batis n. 'bâtiment' (DLC, DLF, GPFC, PoirierG) → FEW 15/1, 177a.

batur, batir n. 'plaine inondable, lit majeur, terre plate (entre un fleuve et une levée) qui s'inonde à marée haute ; eau peu profonde au bord

[20] Pour des informations étymologiques plus étendues, nous renvoyons aux fichiers du DECA accessibles en ligne (https://www.uni-bamberg.de/romling/deca/). Nous tenons à souligner la valeur inestimable des commentaires et suggestions apportés par Jean-Paul Chauveau lors de l'élaboration du DECA.

[21] Notre grille d'analyse reprend *grosso modo* celle élaborée par Thibault (2016) pour le FL.

[22] Notons que quelques-uns des mots rangés par Thibault (2016) dans cette catégorie (comme *barbue* 'poisson chat' ou *caler* 'enfoncer') sont bien attestés dans les créoles des Antilles selon le DECA et devraient donc être plutôt classifiés comme « panaméricanismes ».

de la levée' (DLC, DLF, ALEC 1362, Massignon n° 25, BrChSPM) → TLF.

bèrdase v. 'flâner' (DLC, DLF, PoirierG., Massignon n° 1219, GPFC, BrChSPM) → FEW 1, 540.

kay adj. 'tacheté' (DLC, DLF, GPFC, PoirierG) → FEW 2, 1387a.

kapo n**.** 'manteau, veste' (DLC, DLF, Schaffer Le Merdy 2013, Thibault 2016 : 257) → FEW 2, 271a.

kate(n)n n. 'poupée ; poupée qui sert dans les rites du vaudou' (DLC, DLF, Schaffer Le Merdy 2013, GPFC, PoirierG) → FEW 2, 503b.

koulwar n. 'passoire' (DLC, GPFC, PoirierG, PBrTN) → FEW 2, 878a.

kouvèr n. 'couvercle' (DLC, DLF, ALEC 159, Massignon n° 1274, Cormier, PBrTN, BrChSPM) → FEW 2, 1145a.

kròch adj. 'crochu, recourbé' (DLC, DLF, GPFC, BrChSPM, PBrTN, Schaffer Le Merdy 2013 : 264) → FEW 16, 399a.

garoche v. 'jeter' (DLC, Cormier, Massignon, GPFC, Thibault 2016 : 259) → FEW 17, 624b.

gargoton, gargotan n. 'gorge ; pomme d'Adam' (DLC, DLF, ALEC 494, 2110, 2111, BrChSPM, PBrTN, Cormier, PoirierG) → FEW 4, 55a.

gouf adj. 'émoussé' (DLC, GPFC, ALEC 2310, PoirierG) → FEW 4, 305a (non attesté dans le DLF).

grole adj. 'moitié cuit, dur' (DLC, DLF, GPFC, ALEC 205, 208, 219, Massignon n° 1340, BrChSPM 374) → FEW 2, 1293a.

grimi(y) n. 'petit morceau, miette' (DLC, DLF 'gremille', Ditchy, GPFC, ALEC 194) → FEW 4 287a.

grènaj, grennaj n. 'graine' (DLC, DLF, GPFC, Potier 1743, Massignon n° 264, PoirierG, PBrTN) → FEW 4, 230b.

digri, dugri, dugru n. 'gruau de maïs (maïs concassé dont on fait une bouillie épaisse)' (DLC, DLF, ALEC 875, GPFC, PoirierG, Massi-

gnon n°1316, Thibault 2016 : 270) → FEW 16, 96b. Selon Thibault (2016 : 270), ce type lexical est certes attesté dans diverses variétés du FNA ; en Louisiane et dans le Missouri, cependant, il s'agit d'une spécialisation sémantique.

Par rapport à ces nord-américanismes, notamment ceux désignant la faune spécifique au continent ou la culture matérielle, Baronien (2010 : 236) observe que le lexique a voyagé d'un établissement colonial à un autre. Ainsi, les mots amérindiens *ouaouaron* 'bull frog' (cf. aussi Schaffer Le Merdy 2013 : 474, Thibault 2016 : 261), *micouenne* 'spoon billed duck, souchet (spatula clypeata)', d'origine huronne pour le premier et algonquine pour le second, bien attestés en CL et en FL, sont-ils sans doute venus en Louisiane par le truchement de voyageurs ou de migrants québécois (Baronien 2010 : 235). Notons par parenthèse que les deux autres mots amérindiens cités par Baronien, *babiche* 'lash, old ragged garment' et *mitasse* 'type of Indian legging', tous deux apportés en Louisiane par les Québécois selon lui, sont bien attestés en FL (cf. DLF), mais pas en CL (cf. DLC) ; cela est peut-être dû au fait que les deux mots sont surtout connus dans la paroisse d'Évangeline, où il n'y avait pas d'esclaves à l'époque coloniale.

Pour quelques-uns des nord-américanismes, il semble possible de faire une distinction supplémentaire concernant l'origine acadienne ou laurentienne, bien que ces variétés partagent un grand nombre de mots du fait des influences mutuelles au cours des siècles.

4.1.2 Mots attestés en Louisiane et en Acadie (à l'exclusion du Québec)

Seuls quelques mots des trois fichiers analysés ont une origine clairement acadienne. Ils sont sans doute entrés en CL soit directement par le parler des Acadiens, soit par le FL, dont l'acadien est une des composantes[23].

[23] Parmi les lettres qui nous intéressent, Thibault (2016 : 265) note encore *bouillée* 'touffe ou groupe d'arbustes', qui n'est pourtant attesté ni dans le DLC ni dans le DECA, mais figure dans le DLF. Cf. aussi Thibault (2009 :

byòk n. ‘butor d’Amérique, couac. *Botaurus lentiginosus*’ (DLC, DLF, Massignon n° 426 ; ALEC 1484, PBrTN) → FEW 1, 656a.

kobi v. ‘cabosser’ (DLC, DLF, PoirierG, ALEC 160, Massignon n° 1272, Cormier) → FEW 2, 865a.

kou(r)se, kou(r)si, kòrsye v. ‘courir vite ; chasser ; rassembler (du bétail)’ (DLC, DLF, Cormier) → FEW 2, 1577a.

4.1.3 Mots attestés en Louisiane et au Québec (à l’exclusion de l’Acadie)

Certains mots semblent communs à la Louisiane (CL et FL) et au Québec, à l’exclusion de l’Acadie ; notons que quelques-uns sont aussi attestés dans l’Océan Indien (cf. DECA).

barde v. ‘aller vite, partir vite’ (DLC, DLF ‘to flee’, GPFC) → TLF (s.v. *barder*[3], Région. aller vite).

bèrnen v. ‘salir, barbouiller (de)’ (DLC, absent du DLF, GPFC) → FEW 1, 515b.

betasri n. ‘sottise, bêtise, niaiserie’ (DLC, DLF, GPFC) → TLF *bêtasserie* ‘sottise, ineptie’ (1908) ; FEW 1, 341b (→ DECOI).

klo n. ‘champ’ (DLC, DLF, Schaffer Le Merdy 2013, GPFC) → FEW 12, 385a.

koup n. ‘tranchant ; petit fossé’ (DLC, DLF, GPFC) → FEW 2, 869b (→ DECOI).

gavyon n. ‘gorge’ (DLC, absent du DLF, ALEC 2110) → FEW 4, 1b.

groenase, gre(n)nase v. ‘bruiner, crachiner’ (DLC, DLF, GPFC, ALEC 1180) → FEW 4, 237a (→ DECOI).

116–117) pour le fameux acadianisme *bailler* ‘donner’, très courant dans les CAnt mais plutôt rare en CL et non attesté dans le DLF.

4.1.4 Mots attestés en Louisiane et dans le Missouri (à l'exclusion de l'Acadie et du Québec)

Quelques mots ou significations semblent propres au CL/FL et au FMis, ce qui témoigne des rapports historiques étroits entre ces deux régions[24].

betay n. 'insecte, animal, bête' (DLC, DLF (n.f.), Ditchy, Carrière 1937, Thibault 2016 : 268–269). Le FEW 1, 341 et le TLF a ne fournissant pas d'étymologie adéquate, Thibault suppose qu'il s'agit d'un « dérivé original formé grâce au suffix *–aille* ».

basyè, basyen n. 'baissière, dépression dans la terre' (DLC, DLF, Dorrance) → FEW 1, 273a.

kas-tèt n. 'hachette ; marteau' (DLC, DLF, Dorrance, McDermott, Thibault 2016 : 269–270)[25].

À ce groupe de mots appartiennent aussi quelques termes d'origine amérindienne (notamment choctaw) uniquement attestés dans le Missouri et en Louisiane (cf. Neumann-Holzschuh 1998, Thibault 2016 : 268sq., Schaffer Le Merdy 2013) : *bayou* 'bayou', *karankro* 'buse, vautour', *chawi* 'raton laveur'. Pour le mot *janmbalaya* 'jambalaya' (DLC, DLF, Dorrance)[26], classé comme mot d'origine inconnue par Read (1963 : 123), cf. Schaffer Le Merdy (2013 : 401sq.) qui retrace

[24] Cf. Thibault (2016 : 270), qui range le mot *gru* dans cette catégorie, et Vézina (2005) pour plus de détails. Selon Vézina (2005 : 552), il existe « un rapport indéniable entre le vocabulaire en usage en Basse-Louisiane et celui du FM » dû aussi au rôle joué par les esclaves noirs qui travaillaient dans la région de Sainte-Geneviève dès la deuxième moitié du 18e siècle ». Thibault (2016 : 255) constate avec raison que les sources disponibles pour le FMis sont beaucoup moins riches que celles dont nous disposons pour les autres variétés du FNA.

[25] Thibault (2016 : 269–270) note à propos de *casse-tête* 'tomahawk' : « Il ne s'agit pas d'une innovation du français de Louisiane, mais plutôt d'une survivance de l'époque coloniale […] ; tombé en désuétude entretemps en français laurentien et acadien, le mot semble s'être plus longtemps préservé en français de Louisiane et du Missouri ».

[26] Il s'agit d'un plat louisianais à base de riz cuit avec des épices et des morceaux de viande.

l'histoire de ce mot et le classe comme un « néologisme interne », indépendamment de sa véritable origine[27].

4.1.5 Mots louisianais non attestés au Québec et en Acadie

Mots d'origine française

Certaines unités lexicales d'origine française ne sont enregistrées ni dans les autres variétés du FNA ni dans les créoles ou le français des Antilles, mais sont bien attestés en France, et parfois dans l'Océan Indien[28]. Sans doute l'existence de ces mots démontre-t-elle que les contacts entre la Louisiane francophone et la France étaient restés plus étroits qu'au Canada, isolé de la métropole en raison de la Conquête anglaise au xviiie siècle. Pour ce groupe de mots, il s'avère extrêmement difficile de retracer leur histoire : appartiennent-ils eux aussi à cette « souche coloniale », ou bien ont-ils été introduits plus tard par le biais de l'immigration en provenance de la métropole au cours du xixe siècle ?

bibit n. 'pénis' (DLC, DLF) → FEW 15/1, 121a.

bòrgnon adj. 'borgne' (DLC, DLF) → TLF : *borgnon* adj. 'borgne' 1715–23 ; FEW 1, 569b.

brouyase adj. 'brumeux, brouillardeux ; brumeux, flou, estompé' (DLC, non attesté dans le DLF) → FEW 15/1, 299a.

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27 Selon Schaffer Le Merdy la première attestation de ce mot d'origine douteuse (provençal ? arabe ?) en Louisiane date de 1888. Le mot *kouchkouch* 'plat louisianais fait de farine de maïs sucrée et rissolée, et servi avec du lait' (DLC) démontre aussi l'intérêt de retracer l'histoire du mot : ce mot est sans doute venu en Louisiane avec les esclaves en provenance des Antilles, il s'agit pourtant du mot arabe *coucous* emprunté par le français au XVIe siècle. → FEW19, 100a (cf. Read 1963 : 122 ; Schaffer Le Merdy 2013 : 243–244).

28 Quelques mots rangés dans cette catégorie par Thibault (2016 : 279sq.), qui se réfère au DLF, ont pourtant une équivalence dans les CAnt, par ex. *basset* 'short (of stature)' et *causer* 'parler' (cf. DECA).

karnasyèr n. 'carnassière' (DLC, DLF). Il s'agit d'un mot attesté en France depuis seulement 1743 (TLF ; Thibault 2016 : 280).

gargàn n. 'gorge, pomme d'Adam' (DLC, DLF) → FEW 4, 56a.

Quelques mots ou significations louisianais semblent même être des innovations (de forme, de sens) non attestées dans les autres variétés du FNA ni en France :

betaye v. 'chicaner, couper les cheveux en quatre' (DLC, non attesté dans le DLF). Il est difficile de déterminer l'étymon exact à partir du FEW 1, 342a, 306a, 290a. Il existe, sans doute, un rapport entre ce verbe et le nom *betay* n. 'insecte, animal, bête' (cf. ci-dessus).

kwèt n. 'couette, natte' (DLC, DLF) → NPR : 1.Vx. ou Rég. 'lit de plumes'.

kwafe v. 'coiffer ; éplucher, peler' (DLC). Tandis que dans les autres créoles de la zone américano-caraïbe, ce mot signifie uniquement 'coiffer', le sens 'éplucher' en Louisiane est sans doute une métaphore. Le sens 'éplucher' n'est pas attesté dans le DLF.

Amérindianismes, hispanismes, africanismes

Pour ce qui est des fichiers analysés, nous n'avons trouvé que peu de mots d'origine amérindienne, espagnole ou africaine qui soient en usage exclusivement en Louisiane[29]. La majorité des mots appartenant à ces groupes sont également attestés aux Antilles.

L'hispanisme suivant n'est attesté qu'en Louisiane selon le DECA : *kwart* n. 'fouet' (DLC, DLF) → esp. amér. *cuarta* « f. (Cuba y P. Rico) 'disciplina (instrumento para azotar)' » (DRAE). D'autres hispanismes comme *kalabous* n. 'prison, geôle' (DLC, DLF), *kopal* m.

[29] Un exemple tiré du fichier CH serait : *choupik* 'esp. de poisson, Amia calva' (DLC ; DLF 'bowfish, mudfish') → Read (1963 : 88) « choctaw *shupik* 'poisson de boue' » ; cf. aussi Schaffer Le Merdy (2013), Neumann-Holzschuh (1998).

‘copal (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)’ (DLC, DLF)[30] ne sont effectivement pas attestés en Amérique du Nord ailleurs qu’en Louisiane, mais ils se retrouvent dans plusieurs créoles du Nouveau Monde. Retenons que de nombreux mots « d’origine espagnole » sont en réalité des mots amérindiens ou africains entrés dans le français colonial par l’intermédiaire de l’espagnol (cf. Jansen 2012a, 2012b ; Read 1963 : 128–150). Ainsi, le mot *kachanbo* ‘pipe en terre cuite’ (DLC, DLF) est un africanisme introduit dans le « langage des Isles » par l’intermédiaire de l’espagnol[31] (cf. également ci-dessous 4.2.2.).

Outre le fait que globalement, le nombre des africanismes semble moindre en CL qu’en CAnt (cf. ci-dessous), rares sont apparemment ceux qui ne sont attestés qu’en Louisiane. L’un de ces mots est vraisemblablement *kala* ‘cala (espèce de gâteau de riz sucré)’ (DLC, DLF, Read 1963 : 118). D’autres mots mentionnés par Read et le DLC et le DLF se retrouvent dans les CAnt, ce qui n’est pas surprenant, étant donné qu’il s’agit majoritairement du vocabulaire du vaudou[32] : *banboula* ‘tambour en bambou, danse africaine’, *kalinda* ‘calinda (danse antillaise)’, *kongo* ‘nègre, mocassin (espèce de serpent venimeux)’, *koundjay* ‘counjaille, une danse’ (non attesté dans le DLF), *koundja* ‘gris-gris, sortilège, charme’[33], *wanga* ‘sort (sorcellerie)’, *zonbi* ‘zombi, revenant, fantôme, esprit’.

Le mot *kongri* ‘jambalaya fait de riz et de fèves, riz aux fèves’ (DLC, DLC, Read 1963 : 139) est d’origine inconnue. Sous *congru, ue*, le TLF n’atteste que : « (sous l’Ancien Régime). *Portion congrue.* Pension annuelle modeste, calculée au plus juste, payée par le titulaire

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[30] Cf. *NPR* : mot esp., empr. au nahuatl ; cf. aussi Read (1963 : 139) : « Spanish *copal*, from which Standard French took the word in the seventeenth century, is a derivative of Aztek *copalli*, the generic name for resin […] ».

[31] Selon Read (1963 : 139) ce mot fut adapté à partir du mot espagnol *cachimbo*. « The immediate source of the American Spanish *cachimbo* is Portuguese *cachimbo*, ‘pipe’, rather than Spanish *cachimba*. Be it as it may, the word was certainly brought to the new World by African slaves » ; cf. aussi Baker (2012 : 130) pour l’étymologie bantoue.

[32] Cf. Baker (2012), Hebblethwaite (2012) et Bollée/Neumann-Holzschuh (2015). Notons que *kalinda* et *koundjail* ne figurent pas dans la liste de Baker (2012), mais sont attestés par Hebblethwaite.

[33] Selon Schaffer Le Merdy (2013 : 237) il s’agit d’un néologisme lexématique interne peut-être issu du verbe français *conjurer*.

d'un bénéfice au prêtre qui remplissait sa charge. - *P.ext.* Quantité d'aliments, ressources à peine suffisantes pour subsister ». Le sens du mot louisianais est sans doute néologique. Read (1963 : 139) renvoie au mot cubain *congri* « a dish composed of kidney beans and rice », dont l'origine est peut-être africaine.

4.2 Mots attestés aux Antilles mais pas en Louisiane

Si l'accent a jusqu'ici été mis sur les mots du CL/FL n'ayant pas d'équivalent en CAnt selon le DECA, la question inverse peut également permettre de saisir le profil lexical des parlers louisianais : y a-t-il aux Antilles des mots ou groupes de mots sans équivalents en Louisiane ? Nous devons nous contenter ici d'esquisser une réponse, cet aspect méritant bien entendu une analyse bien plus approfondie.

4.2.1 Les mots d'origine normande

Dans son article de 2012, J.P. Chauveau analyse la contribution dialectale (notamment normande) à la constitution du vocabulaire du créole guadeloupéen de Marie-Galante. Le dépouillement du dictionnaire du père Maurice Barbotin a donné pour résultat 55 régionalismes (la majorité également attestée dans d'autres créoles antillais), dont un grand nombre d'origine normande. Dans le DLC ne sont attestés que sept des ces 55 régionalismes[34] : *kagou* 'épuisé' (55), *fon* 'profond' (60), *siren* 'la rosée' (60), *tralé* 'grand nombre' (61), *kanik* 'graine ressemblant à une bille' (64), *fal* 'dessous de la gorge' (65)[35], *koké* 'faire l'acte sexuel entre humains' (69).

Étonnamment, on rencontre en FL (cf. DLF) douze autres mots qui, semble-t-il, n'ont pas d'équivalent en CL : *mouk* 'moule (coquillage)' (54), *rip* 'copeau' (54), *son* 'sciure de bois' (55), *siryo* 'grand arbuste' (58), *opozé* 'empêcher' (63), *kanni* 'moisi (64), *kan* 'bord,

[34] Les chiffres entre parenthèses se réfèrent au numéro de page dans l'article de Chauveau (2012). Pour les entrées lexicales, nous suivons Chauveau, qui reprend la graphie du *Dictionnaire du créole de Marie-Galante*.

[35] Pour les mots *kanik* et *fal* cf. aussi Thibault (2009).

côté, tranche' (66), *zobèl* 'éclat d'un marteau dur' (67), *biskankwen* 'en cachette' (71), *chikayé* 'mettre en miette' (73), *loké* 'regarder de travers' (83), *takté* 'tacheté' (83).[36]

Ce qui frappe avant tout, c'est l'absence en Louisiane (FL et CL) de nombreux normandismes bien attestés dans les autres créoles de la zone américaine, comme *graj* 'râpe', *grajé* 'râper (surtout le manioc)' (74), *pikwa* 'pioche' (78), *griji* 'faire des fronces' (75), *kaloj* 'petite cage' (77), *fouk* 'braguette de pantalon' (81), *lak* 'appât pour la pêche' (82).

Avec toutes les précautions d'usage, ces données suggèrent que la francophonie nord-américaine, à laquelle appartient aussi le CL – en un sens très large bien sûr –, se distingue de la francophonie antillaise par l'absence de certains dialectalismes.

4.2.2 Les mots d'origine non-française

Un autre domaine de divergence est constitué par les mots d'origine non française, notamment amérindienne (surtout le taïno, le caraïbe, le tupi) et africaine, qui semblent moins fréquents en CL que dans les autres créoles de la zone américano-caraïbe.

Dans le cadre de nos recherches étymologiques, nous avons établi une liste provisoire de 79 mots, classés comme *amérindianismes* par Silke Jansen (2012a, 2012b). La plupart de ces mots sont attestés dans les divers créoles de la Caraïbe et sont aussi relevé par R. Breton dans son *Dictionnaire caraïbe-françois*. Sur ces 79 mots, 15 % seulement (19 mots) sont aussi attestés en Louisiane selon les données du DECA :
akazou 'acajou', *boukann* 'fumée', *hamak* 'hamac', *kaiman* 'alligator', *kasav* 'cassave', *kawenn/kawonn/kawann* 'tortue alligator d'eau douce qui ressemble à la caouanne', *kolibri* 'colibri', *latonyen* 'latanier, palmier des Mascareignes', *marengwen* 'moustique', *maron* 'sauvage', *mai/mayi* 'maïs', *(l)ouragan* 'ouragan', *patat* 'pomme de

[36] Notons que la plupart (soit 30) des 36 régionalismes marie-galantais non attestés en Louisiane (CL et FL) ne sont pas non plus attestés en FQ ni en FA.

terre', *piròg* 'pirogue', *rave* 'blatte, cafard', *savonn* 'pâture, pré', *soumarouba* 'simarouba', *taba* 'tabac'.

Pour ce qui est de l'histoire de ces mots, Jansen (2012a, 2012b) a montré que c'est avant tout l'espagnol colonial qui a contribué à généraliser l'usage de certains mots d'origine diverse dans les langues créoles de la zone américaine. Ainsi, les mots d'origine taïno *hamak, kaiman, kasav, maron, mai, ouragan, patat, savonn, taba* (Jansen 2012b : 87-88) sont entrés dans le français colonial et les créoles par l'intermédiaire de l'espagnol[37] ; d'autres, comme les mots d'origine tupi *akazou, boukann, marengwen* (Jansen 2012a : 97-98) ou d'origine caraïbe (du continent sud-américain) *kawann, piròg, rave* (Jansen 2012b : 101) ont été empruntés soit à travers le contact direct entre Français et peuples indigènes, soit à travers l'espagnol (Jansen 2012b : 98).

Quant au nombre des *africanismes* partagés par les créoles des Antilles et le créole de la Louisiane, nous avons contrôlé les 308 africanismes de la liste de Baker (2012) pour déterminer combien sont également attestés dans le DLC : le total est un maximum de 13 lexèmes, dont des africanismes très répandus comme *banboula* 'tambour en bambou, danse africaine', *bouki* 'Compère Bouqui (personnage des contes)', *bounda* 'fesses', *gogo* 'fesses, cul', *gonbo* 'gombo (légume ; *Hibiscus esculentis*) ; gombo [DLF : soupe-like dish]' (cf. Schaffer Le Merdy 2013 : 358sq.), *kachanbo/kachimbo* 'pipe en terre cuite' (cf. ci-dessus 4.1.5), *kongo* 'nègre, mocassin (espèce de serpent venimeux)', *makak* 'singe ; imbécile, clown', *voudou* 'vaudou', *wanga* 'sort (sorcellerie)', *zonbi* 'zombi, revenant, fantôme, esprit'.

Bien entendu, il ne s'agit là que de photographies instantanées : de nombreuses recherches étymologiques sont encore nécessaires, notamment pour les mots d'origine non-française, mais sur ce point précis, il semble toutefois que le CL se distingue du CAnt.

[37] « Étant donné que les habitants autochtones des Grandes Antilles ont disparu plusieurs décennies avant la fondation des premières colonies françaises aux Antilles, il est évident que les emprunts au taïno sont généralement entrés dans le français et les créoles antillais par l'intermédiaire de l'espagnol » (Jansen 2012a : 116).

5. Conclusion

Ce bref relevé, qui n'est rien d'autre qu'une étape préliminaire, montre que le CL fait bel et bien partie de la francophonie du Nouveau Monde prise dans son ensemble, couvrant l'Amérique du Nord et la région caribéenne :

(1) Son appartenance au monde nord-américain se manifeste par la présence en CL d'un grand nombre de mots appartenant au fond commun des français d'Amérique du Nord et inconnus aux Antilles. Il s'agit d'une part de québécismes et de certains mots d'origine amérindienne relevant probablement d'une souche lexicale plus ancienne, et d'autre part d'acadianismes « pure laine ».

(2) En revanche, un dépouillement plus systématique du DECA ferait sans aucun doute ressortir un nombre très élevé de correspondances lexicales entre le CL et les autres créoles français d'Amérique par opposition aux variétés du FNA, ce qui prouverait que CL est issu de la même façon du monde colonial français des Antilles[38].

(3) Outre les nord-américanismes et les correspondances avec les CAnt, deux autres catégories méritent de retenir l'attention pour discerner le profil lexical du CL :

(a) les mots d'origine française exclusivement attestés en Louisiane, qui semblent témoigner de liens avec la France plus étroits aux xviiie et xixe siècles en Louisiane qu'au Canada, isolé de la métropole en raison de la Conquête anglaise ;

(b) les mots ou groupes de mots attestés aux Antilles mais pas en Louisiane, comme certains dialectalismes français, ainsi un grand nombre d'amérindianismes et d'africanismes.

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[38] Pour le FL, Thibault (2014 : 173) constate que malgré les nombreuses correspondances lexicales avec l'ensemble créole/français régional antillais, « le nombre de particularismes lexicaux que le français de Louisiane partage avec les français laurentien et acadien est beaucoup plus élevé » ; il reste à déterminer si cela vaut également pour le CL.

(4) Dans une perspective lexicologique, le CL a donc un double visage, ce qui lui confère un statut particulier par rapport aux autres créoles français de la zone américano-caraïbe. En nous inspirant de Thibault (2016 : 248), nous résumerons cela de la façon suivante : le vocabulaire du CL, lui aussi, peut donc appartenir « à des aires à géométrie variable », tantôt tourné vers les Antilles, tantôt vers la francophonie nord-américaine, tantôt simplement limité à la Louisiane.

Abréviations

CL	créole	louisianais
CAnt	créole(s)	antillais
FA	français	acadien
FL	français	louisianais
FNA	français	nord-américain
FQ	français	québécois
FMis	français	missourien

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Philipp Krämer

(Berlin)

La créolité au service de la francité. Alfred Mercier, Alcée Fortier et la longue histoire du créole louisianais

1. Fondements de la créolistique du XIXe siècle

Écrivains, savants, militants pour la cause francophone, Alcée Fortier et Alfred Mercier sont des personnages bien connus dans l'histoire intellectuelle de la Louisiane.[1] Dans l'histoire de la recherche sur les langues créoles à base française, ils se présentent jusqu'ici comme des figures marginales, voire négligées, à la grande différence des noms illustres comme notamment celui de Hugo Schuchardt ou de Lucien Adam. Pourtant, les textes créolistes de Mercier et Fortier méritent d'être relus non seulement pour situer leurs travaux sur le créole louisianais dans le cadre de la lutte pour la francophonie dans ce pays acquis par les États-Unis en 1803, mais aussi pour réévaluer l'importance de ces travaux pour la créolistique du XIXe siècle.

Vers la fin de ce siècle tranchant pour les philologies, à l'échelle européenne comme à l'échelle mondiale, on constate une multiplication des travaux sur les langues créoles, notamment sur les langues créoles à base française. Entre 1870 et 1910, on constatera la parution de quelques dizaines de descriptions qui couvrent presque la totalité des langues créoles françaises.[2] La grande plupart de ces travaux se

[1] Une partie de cet article est issue d'un chapitre publié en version allemande dans Krämer (2014 : 150sqq.).

[2] On notera, par contre, la quasi-absence de travaux sur le créole haïtien ou sur celui de Seychelles.

fondent sur une pensée racialiste[3] prédominante de l'époque.[4] On part du principe que les créoles se seraient formés à cause des prédispositions raciales de l'homme « noir » tel qu'il était conçu, dans sa représentation colonialiste, comme une construction généralisée et abstraite. Dans sa prétendue incapacité physique, cognitive ou morale, le « noir » serait inapte à apprendre le français. Les langues créoles seraient donc le résultat d'une acquisition linguistique échouée pour cause des prédispositions biologiques du « noir ». C'est ainsi que le linguiste Julien Vinson définit, dans un compte-rendu du travail créoliste fondamental du Mauricien Charles Baissac, une langue créole comme une « adaptation du français, de l'anglais, de l'espagnol, au génie pour ainsi dire phonétique et grammatical d'une race linguistiquement inférieure » (Vinson, J. 1881 : 416). René de Poyen-Bellisle publie, en 1894, sa thèse de doctorat sur les créoles des Antilles avec un accent sur celui de la Guadeloupe. Dans ce travail académique achevé à l'université de Chicago – les États-Unis étant devenu très tôt un lieu important pour la recherche sur les langues créoles françaises avec, entre autres, le travail de Van Name (1869) − le jeune créoliste guadeloupéen émigré donne une explication très nette de la créolisation :

> L'esclave n'essaie pas pour un seul instant d'assimiler les nouveaux sons qu'il entend à ceux qu'il connaît déjà […]. Ce qu'il a à faire c'est d'essayer de parler comme son maître. Et il essaie. Mais il n'appartient pas à la même race, son appareil vocal n'est pas le même, ses lèvres sont différentes. De là les sons articulés par le Blanc subiront certaines

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[3] Cf. Todorov (1989 : 113) pour une distinction entre racisme et racialisme : Si le terme *racialisme* désigne un ensemble de convictions ou de modèles discursifs qui construisent une différence hiérarchique des hommes en partant d'une prétendue différence raciale, le terme *racisme* englobe notamment les actes tels que la violence, la discrimination ou le génocide qui découlent de ces convictions. Dans le domaine de la science, cette différence n'est pas facile à faire, vu qu'il s'agit d'une pratique qui crée des réalités aussi bien que des discours qui se manifestent dans la parole scientifique. Pour mettre l'accent sur cette dernière dimension, la production scientifique sera incluse, dans le cadre de ce travail, dans le concept du *racialisme*.

[4] À propos des implications racialistes des philologies européennes du XIXe siècle, cf. aussi Messling (2012).

> transformations quand ils sont répétés par le nègre. (Poyen-Bellisle 1894 : 14sq.)

Si Poyen-Bellisle se fonde sur le physique du « noir », d'autres créolistes tels que le Mauricien Charles Baissac (1880) ou le Réunionnais Auguste Vinson (1883) mettent l'accent sur le prétendu manque de capacités mentales – les « noirs » seraient incapables de comprendre les structures du français et notamment les entités abstraites – ou bien ils opèrent avec des catégories morales. Un stéréotype répandu conçoit les « noirs » comme paresseux, trait de caractère qui ferait qu'ils n'auraient ni volonté ni motivation d'apprendre le français de manière complète et correcte.

La question centrale qui se pose dans toutes ces interprétations de la créolisation, c'est celle du développement et du déterminisme. En partant de l'idée de l'infériorité de l'homme « noir », on raisonne sur sa capacité générale de se développer, soit avec l'aide du « blanc », soit de façon autonome. Cette seconde possibilité est très rarement admise dans les philologies du XIXe siècle, et même la première option commence à basculer au fur et à mesure que la « mission civilisatrice » tombe le masque à l'heure de l'impérialisme cynique. C'est ainsi que le déterminisme absolu prend le dessus sur les conceptions plus optimistes et universalistes. On est convaincu que le « noir » est condamné à rester dans son infériorité et qu'il faut donc accepter une différence éternelle, selon la conception racialiste fondamentale, entre les « noirs » et les « blancs ».

Chacun d'une manière particulière, l'universalisme de la « mission civilisatrice » et le déterminisme racialiste s'unissent aux intérêts coloniaux. La « mission civilisatrice » a toujours été un argument central pour justifier le colonialisme en se fondant sur l'obligation imaginée des cultures dites supérieures à soutenir les autres dans leur développement. En même temps, la vision déterministe prétend que le colonialisme se justifie par la nécessité et le droit de contrôler les cultures inférieures dont la primitivité irréductible serait un danger subjacent qui porterait atteinte au droit des « blancs » de dominer le monde. Ces deux perspectives sur la diversité humaine se joignent ainsi dans leur potentiel de servir le régime colonial. La langue est un objet privilégié pour soutenir ces conceptions. Dans le sens univer-

saliste, les langues créoles étaient vues comme prises dans un stade précoce du développement linguistique des « noirs ». D'un point de vue déterministe, comme celui de René de Poyen-Bellisle cité plus haut, les langues créoles seraient le signe d'une incapacité permanente et insurmontable. Dans les deux cas, la créolistique fournissait des arguments, souvent très implicites, pour justifier le système colonial en maintenant et en confortant la thèse des inégalités raciales. De par cet ancrage épistémologique dans le racialisme, la créolistique entre donc dans la tautologie de la pensée colonialiste.

En tant que principe fondamental de ces raisonnements, on trouvera un facteur important qui réapparait fréquemment: le trope du manque d'histoire des peuples « noirs ». Très souvent, les langues créoles étaient décrites comme des langues sans histoire, des produits spontanés qui se fonderaient sur les ruines d'une langue détruite. En Guyane française, le jeune créoliste Auguste de Saint-Quentin décrit ce qui serait, selon lui, le développement du créole guyanais :

> Sur les débris du mélange [du français avec les langues des esclaves, P.K.] germe lentement un idiome nouveau, incomplet, fragile, enfantin, facile à modifier comme tout ce qui est extrêmement jeune, mais vivant, c'est-à-dire *possédant une organisation et une individualité propres, au moins élémentaires*. (Saint-Quentin 1872 : 105)

Selon Saint-Quentin, au cours du procès de créolisation, les structures du français auraient été détruites et complètement décomposées, le français aurait ainsi cessé d'exister dans ce contexte. Le créole se présente comme une langue jeune dont le développement commence à nouveau, sans histoire préalable. Pourquoi nier la continuité historique des langues créoles et leurs rapports avec le français ? Si l'on cherche à maintenir la division essentielle entre « blancs » et « noirs » sur laquelle se fonde le colonialisme, il faut aussi maintenir la division essentielle entre leurs langues. Les langues créoles mettaient en cause cette séparation absolue car elles forment, en quelque sorte, un lien facilement perceptible entre les langues des « blancs » et celles des « noirs », ayant franchi le fossé formé par l'idée d'une prédisposition généalogique entre les deux « races ». En tranchant l'histoire

française aux langues créoles, on évite de tels problèmes argumentatifs.

2. Deux auteurs et leurs travaux : Mercier et Fortier

Dans ce cadre épistémologique, il vaut bien relire les descriptions du créole louisianais de cette même époque parce que celles-ci présentent des particularités apparentes. Dans les textes publiés en Louisiane, les caractéristiques du créole sont expliquées d'une manière toute différente.

Dans leurs biographies, Alfred Mercier (1816–1894) et Alcée Fortier (1856–1914) ne suivent pas du tout des parcours similaires (Neumann-Holzschuh 1987 : 115, 151). Après avoir accompli ses études en France, Mercier devient médecin dans sa Louisiane natale, et son intérêt pour le créole est de nature plutôt privée. Il s'inscrit ainsi dans une longue liste de médecins créolistes du XIXe siècle, dont aussi, par exemple, Auguste Vinson ou encore Armand Corre. Si ces derniers poursuivent leurs études créolistes en se rattachant au discours naturaliste de l'époque, cherchant à établir un lien entre la créolisation et les théories de l'évolution ou l'anthropologie biologique, tel n'est pas le cas pour Mercier.

En tant que professeur de philologie française de la Tulane University à la Nouvelle-Orléans, Alcée Fortier suit une approche beaucoup plus professionnelle. Pourtant, ayant grandi dans une famille francophone louisianaise, il a, lui aussi, un rapport personnel à l'héritage linguistique et culturel du colonialisme français. En dépit d'une différence d'âge de 40 ans, les deux hommes se connaissaient personnellement. Fortier écrit que Mercier est son ami dont il a beaucoup appris (Fortier 1884 : 102), et il est au courant de son travail créoliste sur lequel il fonde un bon nombre de ses idées. Les deux philologues étaient membres de l'Athénée Louisianais, cette organisation qui avait pour vocation de maintenir la langue et la culture françaises en

Louisiane[5] et de servir de réseau d'aide mutuelle des francophones et francophiles, et dont Alfred Mercier était co-fondateur.

Les descriptions grammaticales du créole louisianais sont assez similaires dans les deux textes,[6] et il faut noter que Fortier et Mercier se servent eux aussi de la terminologie établie. Ils parlent de la simplicité du créole, de sa naïveté ou bien de l'esprit enfantin de la langue. Toutefois, à la grande différence des autres créolistes, ils n'en tirent pas la conclusion que les créolophones seraient fondamentalement différents des francophones. Bien au contraire, Mercier écrit :

> Du reste, quiconque parle ici le créole sait aussi s'exprimer en bon français ; il n'est pas de petit nègre ou de petite négresse, dans les rues les plus retirées, qui ne se fasse un point d'honneur, si vous l'interrogez en français, de vous répondre dans le langage que vous lui parlez. (Mercier 1880 : 140)

Cette description est sans doute exagérée, étant donné qu'une partie de la population louisianaise, et surtout les plus démunis, n'avaient pas nécessairement accès à des structures éducatives qui leur auraient permis une acquisition formelle du français standard.[7] La description d'Alcée Fortier de la situation linguistique à St. Martinsville paraît plus réaliste : « French is essentially the language of the inhabitants and it is well spoken by the educated class. The latter speak English also, but the lower class speak the Acadian French mixed with the Creole patois and a little English » (Fortier 1894 : 170).

Pourtant, l'essentiel dans les propos de Mercier réside dans le fait que, selon lui, le français et le créole feraient toujours partie du ré-

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[5] Des mouvements populaires et des structures officielles pour le maintien de la francophonie louisianaise existent aujourd'hui encore, dont par exemple le *Conseil pour le développement du français en Louisiane/Council for the Development of French in Louisiana* (CODOFIL), fondé en 1968 (cf. Henry 1997).

[6] Fortier reproduira son article en 1894 dans son livre *Louisiana Studies* en le recopiant plus ou moins mot par mot.

[7] Cf. Valdman/Klingler (1997 : 110sqq.) pour une description de la situation sociolinguistique actuelle de la Louisiane qui laisse paraître qu'un tel niveau de compétence en français n'était pas non plus très probable à la fin du XIXe siècle.

pertoire linguistique des Louisianais. Les « noirs » ne sont donc pas moins capables que les « blancs » de parler un français impeccable. Une telle proposition est rare et virtuellement exclue dans le cadre épistémologique de la grande majorité des autres travaux créolistes de l'époque. Si certains décrivent des « noirs » francophones, c'est pour se servir de l'exemple en tant qu'exception à la règle pour démontrer que la majorité des « noirs », dans leur essence, serait bien incapable d'apprendre le français.

Pour Mercier et Fortier, la prédisposition raciale n'est donc pas à la base de la créolisation, et ils offrent ainsi une explication alternative. L'émergence du créole louisianais serait dû à un manque d'éducation, notamment un manque d'enseignement du français écrit : « […] rappelons-nous que le dialecte dont il s'agit ici sort de la bouche de gens pour qui les lettres n'existent pas » (Mercier 1880 : 142). Mercier poursuit son analyse : « On voit déjà comment dans l'esprit du nègre réduit aux seules ressources de l'audition, la langue raffinée de l'homme civilisé tend à se simplifier » (Mercier 1880 : 143). Cette dichotomie entre « nègre » et « homme civilisé » est évidemment significative car il s'agit d'une catégorisation importante aussi dans l'épistémologie culturelle et linguistique de Mercier. Il faut noter cependant que cette différence ne sert pas immédiatement d'explication pour le processus de créolisation. Tout autre homme dont « l'esprit aurait été réduit aux seules ressources de l'audition », tout autre homme qu'on prive d'écriture, aurait pareillement transformé la langue. Dans une lettre à Hugo Schuchardt, Mercier montre encore plus clairement combien son travail est ancré dans un universalisme profond :

> Je crois qu'on peut dire que toute langue dans laquelle on n'écrit ni ne lit, se transforme incessamment, et qu'elle tend toujours, si elle est mise en contact avec une autre langue, ou à se fondre avec celle-ci ou a disparaître devant elle. Nous avons très bien senti cela en Louisiane pour le français ; les enfants à qui on se contente de le faire parler, sans leur apprendre à l'écrire et à le lire, l'oublient bien vite.[8]

[8] Lettre No. 7034 d'Alfred Mercier à Hugo Schuchardt (13 novembre 1882) (cf. Krämer 2012 : 150).

Cette explication vaut pour toute la population louisianaise, et elle vaut pour toute autre langue du monde. Logiquement, Fortier constate que la phonologie créole ne diffère que marginalement de celle du français (Fortier 1894 : 136sqq.) car la prononciation peut être transmise sans acquisition du langage écrit. Cette position contraste notamment avec celle de Poyen-Bellisle dans sa description des *sons et formes du créole dans les Antilles* dont une grande partie est vouée à la démonstration des différences phonétiques entre le créole et le français qui seraient dues aux différences physionomiques des races.

Dans leur façon de motiver la créolisation, Mercier er Fortier prennent une position absolument opposée de celle exprimée par la majorité des autres créolistes. Au lieu d'exclure le créole de la famille des langues « parfaites » ou des « vraies langues », ils y voient un objet d'étude important qui fait partie de l'univers du langage humain.

Cela se voit encore plus clairement dans un troisième travail sur le créole louisianais, celui de James Harrison (1882). Dans les détails grammaticaux, ce texte ressemble beaucoup à celui de Mercier, collègue qu'il connaît personnellement et dont il cite le travail dans son article. Ce qui est remarquable et unique, c'est le nombre de comparaisons du créole à d'autres langues compris dans le texte. Bien que l'article ne compte que onze pages, au moins neuf langues et variétés différentes sont mentionnées :

Français canadien (plusieurs fois)
Catalan (p. 287)
Italien (p. 287)
Hébreu (p. 287)
Dialecte parisien (p. 290)
Ancien Grec (p. 292)
Anglo-Saxon (p. 292)
Allemand (pp. 289, 292)
Frison (p. 292)

Pour Harrison, le créole n'est pas du tout une langue exceptionnelle. Quasiment tous les phénomènes grammaticaux qu'il décrit sont comparés à d'autres langues qui montreraient des traits similaires. Fortier aussi fait de telles comparaisons :

> […] we can understand, by studying the transformation of the French into the Negro dialect, the process by which Latin, spoken by the uncivilized Gauls, became our own French. However ridiculous the Negro dialect may appear, it is of importance to the student of philology; for its structure serves to strengthen the great laws of language, and its history tends to prove how dialects have sprung from one original language and spread all over the world. (Fortier 1884 : 101sq.)

Dans ce passage, Fortier arrive à deux conclusions significatives : Le créole correspond aux lois du langage humain, et il a vraiment une histoire. Fortier espère trouver des solutions aux grands mystères linguistiques par le biais de la recherche sur le créole, plus précisément, il exprime son espoir de trouver la base de l'universalité du langage humain. Il ne faut pas négliger le fait que Fortier met en parallèle l'histoire du français par rapport au latin avec celle du créole par rapport au français. Ces similarités sont toujours discutées aujourd'hui. On se pose la question à savoir si le processus qui a mené à la formation des créoles, dans cette situation de contact linguistique intensifié, ne serait pas similaire à la situation de la romanisation de l'Europe qui avait pour résultat la formation des langues romanes actuelles (Mufwene 2005 : 107sqq.). A partir de cette question, Fortier construit tout à fait une continuité historique du créole que la plupart des autres créolistes n'accepteraient jamais. Pour un Baissac ou un Poyen-Bellisle, il serait inconcevable que la créolisation soit soumise aux mêmes mécanismes linguistiques que la romanisation puisque cela signifierait qu'on ne peut plus maintenir l'axiome que le créole serait le produit d'une infériorité raciale. C'est ainsi que Charles Baissac se prononce strictement contre la classification du créole mauricien comme « dialecte » ou « patois » français,[9] tandis que Fortier n'hésite pas à désigner le créole louisianais comme un « dialect of a Romance tongue » dont l'orthographe serait similaire à celle de l'espagnol (Fortier 1894 : 134sq).

On notera évidemment la remarque de Fortier que les Gaulois seraient « uncivilized ». Pourtant, l'histoire du français tel que Fortier la conçoit montre bien que la civilisation a pu se développer depuis

[9] Baissac 1880 : XLVIsq. Pour une discussion de cette position de Baissac, cf. Krämer (2013 : 263sqq.).

l'époque de la romanisation, il ne s'agit donc pas d'une histoire de dégénération. Cela est souligné notamment par un passage dans les *Louisiana Studies* de Fortier dans lequel il compare le français louisianais au français du Canada :

> The Creoles […] generally pronounce French well, and are remarkably free from any provincial accent.
>
> The French spoken in Louisiana is generally better than that of the Canadians. […] The language of Canada has remained nearly stationary, and is almost the idiom of the seventeenth century; that is to say, it is sometimes quaint and obsolete. In Louisiana, immigration continued for a long time, and in the beginning of this century, a great number of exiles came from the French Antilles, and added many persons of high birth and refined manners to the original settlers. (Fortier 1894 : 5)

Les Antilles, pays créolophones depuis longtemps, sont ainsi la source du progrès linguistique de la Louisiane, même si les locuteurs dont il est question dans la citation sont très probablement des francophones et non pas des créolophones. Il est surtout important de noter dans ce passage la différence entre le français canadien, présenté comme vieilli, et le français louisianais qui est décrit comme vital et, avant tout, comme étant bien en règle avec la norme européenne. C'est notamment le développement de la langue, plutôt que sa préservation dans un état historique, qui trouve l'estime de Fortier. Ce développement englobe ainsi non seulement le français contemporain, mais aussi la créolisation en tant que progrès et non pas comme déclin. L'apport des innovations provenant des Antilles inspire au français louisianais un afflux constant de nouveaux mélanges tandis que le français canadien reste fossilisé dans sa pureté historique et anachronique.

Le « manque de civilisation » dont Fortier parle et qui aurait mené à la créolisation est avant tout un manque d'éducation, de savoir et de culture, et en tant que tel, ce n'est qu'un état temporaire. Ce qui différencie les travaux de Fortier et de Mercier des autres créolistes, c'est que cet état temporaire n'est pas dû à un manque d'histoire. Bien au contraire, l'histoire du créole est évidente et visible aussi bien dans la langue que dans la littérature ou au moins dans un potentiel littéraire.

La créolistique du XIXe siècle se limite souvent à la seule littérature orale, par exemple les contes, les devinettes ou les proverbes, genres textuels qui éveillent aussi l'intérêt de Fortier et de Mercier. Pour discuter du potentiel littéraire du créole, les deux créolistes louisianais vont bien au delà de ce cadre spécifique et ils évoquent notamment les nouvelles perspectives que la langue de la Louisiane offre à la littérature classique.

Il ne faut pas oublier que la Louisiane est aussi un endroit très particulier pour la recherche sur la littérature orale créole. C'est ici que les travaux de Lafcadio Hearn sur les traditions narratives des Antilles et de la Louisiane présentent une perspective beaucoup plus dynamique des contes créoles qui contraste avec la vision très répandue en créolistique de les décrire comme de la non-littérature qui découlerait de l'esprit primitif et naturel du « noir » dans son impossibilité de produire un vraie littérature créative et monumentale (Bronner 2005; Ette 2012 : 208sqq.).

Fortier suggère d'utiliser le créole pour la traduction de textes de la littérature antique et médiévale. Pour démontrer que ceci serait une possibilité réelle, il traduit lui-même quelques vers de la Chanson de Roland en créole (Fortier 1884 : 111). Mercier, pour sa part, donne des exemples pour des similarités structurelles entre le créole et le grec classique en citant un extrait d'Homère :

> Il y a, dans le créole, des locutions qui paraissent bizarres ; on se demande, par exemple, d'où peut venir celle-ci : « *Li parti couri* ». […] Elle devait être familière aux Grecs du temps de la guerre de Troie ; on la rencontre fréquemment dans l'Iliade et l'Odyssée. Entre autres vers où elle se trouve citons celui-ci :
>
> *Bê dè théein pará te klisías kai nêas 'Achaiôn* ;
>
> Mot à mot : *dè* donc, *bê* il partit (il s'en alla), *théein* courir, *pará te klisías* et vers les tentes, *kai nêas* et les navires, *'Achaiôn* des Grecs ; il partit courir vers les tentes et les navires des Grecs. Ce vers se traduit admirablement en créole :
>
> « Li parti couri coté tente é batiman Grecs. »[10]

[10] Mercier 1880 : 148 (translittération latine de Mercier).

Fortier, lui, décrit Mercier comme « [a]n excellent Greek and Latin scholar » qui travaille surtout sur la littérature classique hellénique (Fortier 1894 : 75). Des comparaisons comme celle de Mercier sont complètement absentes dans les autres travaux de la créolistique du XIXe siècle car il serait impensable de mettre le créole sur le même plan que le Grec classique. Cela vaut aussi pour l'hébreu dans le texte de Harrison puisque cette langue sacrée et biblique était vue pendant longtemps comme la mère de toutes les langues.[11] Bien que l'orientalisme ait fait ses effets sur l'image de l'hébreu jusqu'à la fin du XIXe siècle, réduisant donc le prestige de cette langue désormais associée aussi aux « Sémites » en tant que collectif stéréotypé opposé aux « Européens », son rôle dans l'histoire religieuse lui vaut toujours un statut à part et pour d'aucuns, une comparaison du créole à l'hébreu relèverait de l'hérésie.

3. Conclusions : Créolité et francité en Louisiane

Les références à l'Antiquité grecque et latine et au Moyen Âge dans les travaux de Fortier et de Mercier ne sont pas du tout fortuites. Ces deux époques servent de modèle dans la culture française, notamment dans la philologie du XIXe siècle, mais aussi dans la littérature ou les beaux-arts. Le modèle classique réapparaît régulièrement dans l'histoire culturelle française et il n'est pas du tout absent au XIXe siècle, bien que le néo-classicisme soit déjà dépassé à l'époque où Mercier et Fortier écrivent leurs articles. Dans le cadre du romantisme dix-neuviémiste, l'intérêt pour le Moyen Âge est primordial, par exemple dans la philologie française qui se lance dans la description détaillée de l'ancien français et qui établit des liens avec la dialectologie historique.

Ces deux éléments, l'idéal classique et l'idéal médiéval, sont des conceptions qui sont extrêmement fortes dans l'identification culturelle française parce qu'ils servent de points de référence pour ériger l'image de la France comme nation civilisée qui se fonde sur son grand héritage historique et culturel. Mercier et Fortier restent très

[11] Cf. à ce propos Olender (2013).

attachés à cette conception de la France qui est absolument idéalisée et utopique. Les deux créolistes louisianais représentent une France des idéaux révolutionnaires et républicains qui n'avaient jamais été réalisés. La France de Mercier et Fortier est ainsi une image abstraite de la fin du XVIIIe siècle, époque où le néo-classicisme est particulièrement fort, ce qui explique aussi la place de la poésie antique dans les travaux créolistes. Alcée Fortier s'intéresse d'ailleurs aussi à l'histoire espagnole de la région et il désigne la France et l'Espagne comme « two great nations » (Fortier 1894 : 76) auxquelles la Louisiane doit beaucoup dans sont histoire et son développement culturel.

Il ne faut pas oublier que les deux auteurs sont Louisianais d'origine et que leur travail s'inscrit donc dans ce cadre très spécifique d'une culture complexe et d'une société en mutation dans le sud des États-Unis. Le fait qu'ils soulignent l'histoire linguistique du créole et ses liens avec la littérature classique ne montre pas seulement que Mercier et Fortier incluent le créole dans la diversité linguistique de la Louisiane, mais qu'ils aspirent à renforcer, par le biais de leur travail créoliste, le lien culturel entre la Louisiane et la France. Le but n'est pas uniquement de relever la créolité de la Louisiane, mais surtout de consolider sa francité.

Cette francité n'est pas directement liée à la réalité de la France des dernières décennies du XIXe siècle, cette France qui est déjà profondément impliquée dans le cynisme colonial de l'impérialisme. Mercier et Fortier veulent croire en une France des Lumières et de l'universalisme. Cet universalisme qui découle de l'égalité des hommes cache l'universalisme condescendant de la « mission civilisatrice », bien que la position privilégiée qu'ils attribuent à l'éducation formelle reprenne une partie importante de cette dernière conception. Cette France universaliste abstraite est censée renforcer le facteur « français » dans la société louisianaise, facteur qui paraît de plus en plus affaibli vers la fin du XIXe siècle. Les deux travaux créolistes paraissent ainsi dans un contexte particulièrement francophile. Il ne faut toutefois pas croire que Mercier ou Fortier prôneraient un retour au colonialisme français en Louisiane. Il s'agit d'une loyauté culturelle plutôt que politique qui ne met pas en question le statut de la Louisiane comme partie des États-Unis, comme le démontre Fortier en donnant un sommaire de la littérature francophone louisianaise :

« The French literature of Louisiana is no unworthy daughter of that of France, and will long continue to live; it is modest and simple, but above all sincere in its love for Louisiana, the United States and France » (Fortier 1894 : 87).

Tout comme Lafcadio Hearn sait éviter les dérives nationalistes des études folkloriques de l'époque, Alfred Mercier et surtout Alcée Fortier arrivent à écrire une créolistique qui balance les loyautés entre la France et les États-Unis tout en bien tenant compte des liens historiques, culturels et linguistiques de la Louisiane avec le Canada francophone dans le Nord et les Antilles créolophones dans le Sud. Cela n'empêche pas Fortier de peindre un tableau euphémique de l'ère coloniale française et notamment de l'esclavagisme :

> These [the slaves] were, as a rule, well treated by their masters, and, in spite of their slavery, they were contented and happy. Not having any responsibilities of life, they were less serious than the present freedmen, and more inclined to take advantage of all opportunities to amuse themselves. (Fortier 1894 : 125)
>
> […] the slaves were certainly not unhappy on the plantations. The proof of this is, that, although our equals politically and citizens of the United States, they often refer to the times of slavery, and speak willingly of those bygone days. (Fortier 1894 : 128)

Ce passage montre que la face noire de l'universalisme colonial – cette image du maître généreux et des esclaves contents en fait certainement partie – n'échappe pas à Fortier et qu'il faut donc trouver des stratégies argumentatives pour maintenir l'image positive de la France et de l'ère esclavagiste en dépit des démérites coloniales qui sont loin d'être inconnues pour un homme intellectuel à la fin du XIXe siècle. Si ces propos de Fortier sont bien clairs, ils ne sont certainement pas suffisants pour construire une opposition nette et simple entre Hearn et Fortier tel qu'elle se dessine par le conflit des deux folkloristes autour du terme « negro-French »[12], terme critiqué par Hearn et employé par Fortier aussi bien que par Hugo Schuchardt[13] et bon nombre

[12] Cf. pour cette position Bronner (2005 : 171).

[13] Cf. p.ex. les travaux sur la « langue nègre portugaise » (Schuchardt 1888) ou bien sur « la langue des nègres Saramacca » (Schuchardt 1914).

d'autres créolistes de l'époque qui pourtant n'adhèrent pas aux principes du racialisme hiérarchique prédominant. C'est notamment dans la vision de la langue créole comme produit progressif du mélange linguistique et culturel que les travaux de Hearn et de Fortier se ressemblent beaucoup plus que leurs débats personnels ne le laissent croire. Loin d'être ouvertement anticolonialistes ou antiracistes, les œuvres de Mercier et de Fortier demandent donc une lecture nuancée qui tient compte de ces contradictions et frictions dans la façon de décrire la diversité linguistique et culturelle de l'humanité.

Suite à leur nostalgie d'une francophonie en voie de disparition, Mercier et Fortier déplorent le manque d'enseignement du français et ils s'inscrivent dans un milieu de protection et de défense de la francité louisianaise, notamment en tant que militants de l'Athénée Louisianais. Fortier, par exemple, ne décrit pas seulement le créole, mais aussi la variété acadienne du français telle qu'elle est parlée en Louisiane. Il est néanmoins remarquable que le créole fasse partie de cette francophonie. Bien qu'il soit le résultat de l'état déplorable d'une société qui ne préserve pas assez la langue française, ni Mercier ni Fortier n'aspirent à supprimer le créole. Leur position pourrait se paraphraser par le slogan « il vaut mieux parler créole que ne pas parler français du tout. »

Ceci est une position véritablement progressive qui se distingue aussi de la réflexion linguistique dans beaucoup de pays créolophones à l'heure actuelle où l'on voit souvent encore dans les langues créoles un obstacle à la maîtrise des langues standardisées européennes. On prétend souvent que promouvoir le créole veut dire automatiquement s'éloigner du français et que l'un ne saurait se faire qu'au détriment de l'autre.[14] Pour Mercier et Fortier, il en est exactement le contraire. Pour eux, promouvoir le créole veut dire s'approcher du français et le renforcer. Si donc les deux articles n'ont qu'une quinzaine de pages chacun, ces travaux n'en sont pas moins précieux pour l'histoire de la créolistique et de la philologie française et ils offrent des perspec-

[14] Il ne faut pas oublier, pourtant, que les associations francophones et francophiles de la Louisiane maintiennent, aujourd'hui encore, l'idéal du français standard international (donc à forte empreinte européenne) comme la norme à enseigner tandis que le créole et le cajun restent marginaux ; voir à ce propos Henry (1997 : 188sqq.).

tives fructueuses pour les débats actuels dans les sociétés créoles et multilingues.

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Writing In-Between: Transcultural Positionings of the Free People of Color in Nineteenth-Century Louisiana

1. Introduction

New Orleans was always a privileged center of colonial circulation processes. With respect to our central question regarding New Orleans and the Global South, the following reflections will introduce, on a literary level, the city's links to the Caribbean in the nineteenth century. It is particularly interesting to examine New Orleans as a literary nexus, not only because Spain and France both served as colonial powers there,[1] but also because the city's early independence from France in comparison to the country's colonies in the Caribbean islands had different political consequences. How, for example, were the city's relations to France – its former motherland – expressed in the US context? What bridging functions were performed by literary portrayals of New Orleans as a continental link between different hemispheric constructs of America?

The literature written by free people of color is particularly enlightening in this context. In the final decades of the eighteenth century, the free people of color established themselves between the ever-growing slave population on the one hand and the white upper class on the other. The Spanish government enacted special laws on the release of slaves, allowing them to purchase their freedom with money they earned performing extra work outside their regular du-

[1] In the 1763 Treaty of Paris, which ended the Seven Years' War, France lost the Louisiana territory to Spain. In the course of the Napoleonic wars, Louisiana was briefly returned to France but in 1803 Napoleon was under enough pressure to sell France's North American colonial territory – more than 2 million km² – to the United States for 15 million USD (the *Louisiana Purchase*).

ties (*coartación*).[2] Because the Spanish colonial government adopted France's *Code Noir*, which had been introduced in Louisiana in 1724, the freed slaves were afforded the same rights and privileges as all other free colonial citizens of Louisiana (Möllers 2008: 49).[3] In the section that was instrumental to the formation of the free people of color as a social group, marriage between Louisiana's whites and people of color was prohibited, regardless of their social status. Extramarital relations between slaves and free people of color were also interdicted. This legal situation led to a growing number of interethnic marriage-like relationships. By the time the United States acquired Louisiana in 1803, a multiethnic society had evolved in New Orleans, including influences from many European immigrant cultures. However, the French cultural sphere in the broadest sense exerted a special impact, which led to the creolized city being perceived from the outside as French.[4]

Due to the cultural dominance of the French, many free people of color in Louisiana traveled to Paris in the 1830s (Fabre 1991). A stay in Paris was seen as a must, particularly in literary circles. B. Valcour and Armand Lanusse probably studied in the city; Victor Séjour, Pierre Dalcour and Louis and Camille Thierry lived in France for most of their lives. None of these writers were runaway slaves or abolitionists, they were members of an elite group of free people of color who enjoyed a certain economic status in New Orleans. Armand Lanusse, born in 1812, served as director of the Ecole des Orphelins Indigents (a school dedicated to providing a free education to African-American orphans in New Orleans) from 1852 to 1866.

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[2] The process by which they bought their freedom was often very lengthy, costly and dangerous. Still, 1,490 slaves bought their freedom in Louisiana between 1769 and 1803 – a sizable number given the small population of 4,433 whites, 9,513 slaves and 907 free people of color in 1785 (see Möllers 2008: 49).

[3] The *Code Noir*, proclaimed in Louisiana in 1724, was a slightly modified form of the *Code Noir* decreed in 1685 for the colonial territories of the French Caribbean islands. See *Recueils de Reglemens*... (1745). Available online at: http://www.archive.org/stream/recueilsdereglem00fran#page/n3/mode/2up [03/15/2016].

[4] For the specific cultural and political gravity of French colonialism see Müller (2012).

Light-skinned enough to pass as a white, Lanusse launched the *Album littéraire* together with Jean-Louis Marciaq as "a journal for young people, amateurs of literature" that published poems and short stories (Fabre 1991: 11). Due to the marginal position of the *Album littéraire* authors in American society, they aligned themselves with and drew inspiration from alternative models to American literature. They felt closer to the French Romantics, especially Lamartine, Musset and Béranger, than to any other school.

Nevertheless, in addition to its affiliation with France, Louisiana was perceived as part of the Caribbean cultural sphere. The territory's spatial and cultural proximity to the Republic of Haiti aroused fears among the white population of New Orleans and the surrounding sugar parishes that the revolution there would inspire imitators among the domestic slave population (Möllers 2008: 75). With the start of the violent conflicts in Saint-Domingue – and especially after 1803 – not only white residents of the colony together with their slaves fled to Cuba, so too did free people of color. When Napoleon's brother Joseph ascended to the Spanish throne, bloody clashes broke out in Cuba between supporters of the Spanish monarch Ferdinand VII and the ex-residents of Saint-Domingue who were loyal to France. 9,059 of these refugees sought asylum in Louisiana between May 1809 and January 1810, among them 3,102 free people of color. The total free population of Orleans Parish grew from 17,001 in 1806 to 24,552 four years later. Of the refugees in the main wave of immigration arriving in 1809, 30 percent were white, 34 percent were free people of color, and 36 percent were slaves (Möllers 2008: 80). In addition to the dangers posed by the Antillean slaves, William Claiborne (1775–1817; first governor of Louisiana 1812–1816) was concerned about a possible resurgence of the trans-Caribbean cultural sphere, which threatened to disrupt the Americanization of the new territory (Möllers 2008: 81).

The following two stories (published in Paris and New Orleans, respectively) and essay on literary history (published in Port-au-Prince) show the image of Louisiana Creole society that was conveyed in contemporary literature and the way these trans-Caribbean connections were described from a literary perspective.

2. Victor Séjour: "Le mulâtre" (1837)

In "Le mulâtre," which Victor Séjour published in the March 1837 issue of *Revue des Colonies*, the narrator retells a story he has heard from Antoine, an old slave in the Haitian coastal town of Saint-Marc.[5] It centers on a young slave named Laïsa, who is purchased by a wealthy, influential twenty-two-year-old plantation owner named Alfred because of her great beauty. Laïsa is unhappy to be at Alfred's mercy and discovers on the journey to his plantation that her coachman is in fact her brother Jacques and that they both have the same father, a slave named Chambo. Alfred, who is kind to whites but merciless and horrible to slaves, forces Laïsa to share his bed for several months. There is even talk of rape. Laïsa becomes pregnant and when her aversion to him does not ebb, Alfred loses interest in her and forces her to leave with her unborn son, whom she later baptizes Georges (he is the character to which the title of the story "Le mulâtre" refers). Alfred makes Laïsa swear never to reveal to the boy that he is his father and threatens to have the boy killed if she disobeys. Laïsa thus tells Georges that he will not learn his father's identity until he is twenty-five. Laïsa dies a few years later but beforehand gives Georges a portrait of Alfred that he is not allowed to unveil until the age of twenty-five. Georges obeys out of respect for his dead mother.

Over the years Georges and Alfred get to know and even become fond of each other. One day Georges learns of a plot against Alfred's life and rushes to save him. Frightened, Alfred initially believes that Georges' attempts to bring him to safety are part of the murder plans and flees. Georges takes on and kills the four assailants but is seriously injured in the fight and hovers between life and death for almost two weeks. Recognizing his mistake, Alfred sends for the best doctor to save the life of Georges, his son. At this point Georges' wife Zélie, a woman of color who is the mother of his two-year-old son, is introduced into the narrative. While Georges is fighting for his life, Alfred tries to seduce her, offering her money to sleep with him. She resists and he has her brought to his bedroom. There she defends

[5] I would like to thank Hafid Derbal for important input regarding Victor Séjour and Joanni Questy.

herself against his attempts to rape her and injures him on the head. Knowing she will be put to death, she hurries to Georges with tears in her eyes and tells him the story. The day before she is to be executed, Georges implores Alfred to intervene and save her life out of gratitude for having been saved by Georges. Alfred is emotionless, and when Georges realizes that his pleas will go unheard, he begins to threaten Alfred and accuses him of attempted rape. He must now flee himself in order to escape death, but he first threatens Alfred with revenge. Zélie is hanged and Georges seeks refuge with his son among a group of renegade slaves.

Georges waits three years until Alfred has gotten married and has a child. He then returns. Shortly after Alfred's child is born, Georges sneaks into Alfred's bedroom, poisons his wife and threatens to slay Alfred, who begs Georges to have mercy on him and give his wife the antiserum he holds in his hands. After Alfred's wife dies, Georges picks up an axe to kill Alfred, who tells him to go ahead and kill his father. Georges takes out the portrait, realizes his damnation and kills himself next to his father's body.

The story paints the picture of a terrible, ruthless slave holder. By contrast, Antoine explains in several passages that Georges has a good heart but even honest people can become criminals in the face of such injustice. The story also shows how this unjust system produces the 'bad' characteristics of slaves, blacks and people of color. It describes the process of 'socialization' without actually using the modern term.

In contrast to the way it is portrayed in texts from the Caribbean islands, the Africa connection in Louisiana appears to be part of a distinct political program. Whether this has to do with the approaching wars of secession is a matter of debate. When the white traveler arrives in Port-au-Prince at the start of the story, he greets a black man with a handshake:

> – Bonjour maître, me dit-il en se découvrant.
> – Ah! Vous voilà…, et je lui tendis la main, qu'il pressa avec reconnaissance.
> – Maître, dit-il, c'est d'un noble Cœur ce que vous faites là…; mais ne savez-vous pas qu'un nègre est aussi vil qu'un chien…; la société

> le repousse; les hommes le détestent; les lois le maudissent… (Séjour 1837: 377)

The strong – though asymmetrical – relationship to Africa becomes especially clear when brother and sister meet and discover they are siblings.

> – De quel pays es-tu, Laïsa?
> – Du Sénégal . . .
> Les larmes lui virent aux yeux; il venait de rencontrer une compatriote.
> – Sœur, reprit-il, en s'essuyant les yeux, tu connais sans doute le vieux Chambo et sa fille . . . (Séjour 1837: 379)

And later, when Georges comes upon the group of Maroons, we read, "Afrique et liberté, répondit Georges sans s'émouvoir, mais en repoussant de côté le canon du fusil . . . je suis des vôtres" (Séjour 1837: 388).

New Orleans is not explicitly present as a city in the story, but the self-evident nature of its impact as a node of diverse circulation processes resonates at many levels of the literary treatment. Though not introduced in any extensive way, Haiti is of course the scene of the action. The connection to Africa is depicted as much more self-evident and is evaluated more positively than in the texts of the Caribbean islands. Whereas the texts of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean were formulated more programmatically at the time, the Francophone stories and novels attempted to draw clearer boundaries (see Müller 2012).

To the extent that the comparative colonial perspective on transfer processes within the Caribbean arises between multirelationality (Spanish colonial space) and bipolarity (French colonial space) – always taking a potential *in-between* into account –, this *in-between* is shown to be more dominant in New Orleans, which is probably a result of its political separation from its motherland of France decades earlier. It is telling that, because of the new censorship laws of 1830, "Le mulâtre" was banned from publication in New Orleans but was widely disseminated by the *Revue des Colonies* – a publication circu-

lating in the Caribbean – and was read and interpreted far beyond the Caribbean in Guyana, several regions of Africa, etc.

3. The Return to Haiti: Joanni Questy's "Monsieur Paul" (1867)

In the 1850s free people of color suffered badly from racist persecution. As a result, many Louisiana Creoles went into exile in France, Haiti and Mexico. Fifty years after the large wave of immigration from civil war-torn Saint-Domingue, a stream of refugees now flowed in the opposite direction. On July 25, 1860, a total of 250 immigrants arrived in Port-au-Prince on board the *Laura*:

> Nous nous félicitons de la prochaine arrivée de ces nouveaux frères. Puisse leur exemple être imité par tous ceux dans les veines desquels coule le sang africain et qui souffrent dans toute l'Amérique des vils préjugés de couleur. Que tous viennent se joindre à nous pour jouir de la liberté, de l'égalité sous le palmier d'Haïti, et nous aider à faire de notre beau pays, fertilisé par le sang généreux de nos pères, la métropole de la race noire dans le monde civilisé.[6]

It was much more than the promise of freedom that drew refugees from Louisiana to the "Black Republic" (Möllers 2008: 152). The Creoles of color in Louisiana felt a strong bond with Haiti; many belonged to the third generation of immigrants from former Saint-Domingue. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, the influx from Saint-Domingue had been so strong that the population of New Orleans had doubled within the space of a year.

In 1867 the short story "Monsieur Paul" by Joanni Questy was published in the daily newspaper *La Tribune de la Nouvelle-Orléans.* Questy was a prominent poet and educator in the Creole community of New Orleans and also wrote for *Les Cenelles*, an anthology by a group of poets that will be described in greater detail below. In "Monsieur Paul," which is apparently set in mid-century New Orleans, a major role is played by the idea of the refugees from the revolution and their descendants returning to Haiti (see Möllers 2008: 152).

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[6] *Le Progrès: Journal Politique,* September 8, 1860 (Port-au-Prince), cited in Duplantier (2006: 163).

After visiting a public theater, the protagonist (unnamed in the story, henceforward “Joanni”) sets off for home. On the way he meets a gentleman in the darkness, Monsieur Paul, who asks for a cigarette. The two have a friendly chat and M. Paul invites Joanni to call on him soon. Joanni visits M. Paul, who is apparently quite wealthy and has servants and slaves. When M. Paul sees Joanni in the daylight, he cannot conceal his surprise that Joanni is black. M. Paul’s reaction is embarrassing to him and he apologizes to Joanni. He shows him quite clearly that he has no problem with his skin color and that it does not call their friendship into question. A few days later Joanni receives a handwritten message from M. Paul requesting a visit. At this meeting M. Paul informs Joanni that he has been asked to draw up a will because he will duel with Ernest Day shortly. He tells Joanni about his past, that he had a black wife named Athénais (they were secretly blessed by a priest) and two children by her. He explains in great detail how much she means to him and how much he regrets the existing prejudices against people of different skin color:

> Pour m’assurer la jouissance tranquille de la femme qui m’aimait, je fis bénir secrètement notre union par un prêtre – un mariage de conscience – croyait que ses prières seraient comme un rempart autour de mes amours. Le préjugé de couleur, avec sa réprobation terrible, ne peut m’arrêter dans mon fanatisme amoureux. Quand j’épousais Athénais, je prends Dieu à témoin, mon ami, je me considérais légitimement et éternellement lié à elle. (Questy 1987)

It is precisely this love affair that is the reason for the duel, as his wife has left him for Ernest Day. Jealous and desirous of revenge, M. Paul has made a plan he wants Joanni to carry out should he die the next day. Joanni should keep safe the inheritance he has left to his wife and children, but he is to wait two years before handing it over. In taking this step, M. Paul hopes to ensure that Athénais will deeply regret her infidelity. According to M. Paul, this course of action is necessary because of the legal situation – otherwise the inheritance will be confiscated and handed over to some distant relatives in France:

> A peine mort, moi, on posera les scelles partout: la loi inflexible et tyrannique de votre pays ne reconnaît pas la validité de mon mar-

> iage: le consul français me trouvera bien quelque parent, quelque héritier perdu dans un département quelconque de France, c'est bien sûr (Questy 1987).

What follows is a central passage in the text, one that shows the connection to Haiti. In it M. Paul once again demonstrates his attitude toward blacks by asking Joanni to give his slave Georges an inheritance:

> Il ne faut pas oublier Georges! Tenez, ce rouleau-ci lui appartient aussi bien que cette lettre: vous la lirez ensemble. Deux mille piastres en billets, voilà l'héritage de mon . . . esclave. Une recommandation spéciale: Mon ami, vous enverrez Georges en Haïti. Brave, jeune, intelligent, doué d'excellentes qualités, pas superstitieux, il fera son chemin dans ce pays-là. Georges a un amour de la liberté à faire trembler, n'oubliez pas cela, mon ami. (Questy 1987)

The next day Ernest Day is killed in the duel and M. Paul suffers a severe head injury. His two *white* witnesses, who are supposed to assist him, depart indifferently, leaving him badly wounded to fend for himself. By contrast, the two *black* men Georges and Joanni attend to M. Paul attentively and loyally. After several days in a delirium, M. Paul succumbs to his injuries. At this point his wife appears at his deathbed with a cry of despair. It is worth noting that she is not referred to as Athénais but as Madame Paul. M. Paul's will reveals that Georges is not his slave but his nephew, the son of his brother and a slave woman, both of whom died shortly after Georges' birth. Georges in fact immigrates to Haiti just as the Wars of Secession are looming:

> Au point où nous sommes arrivés de notre récit, il se faisait des préparatifs de guerre dans tout le pays; la future Confédération du Sud comptait déjà dans son sein plusieurs états qui avaient déclaré leur séparation de l'Union. Il était question à la Nouvelle Orléans de devenir un défenseur forcé de l'esclavage. Il s'embarqua à bord de la Laura qui partait pour Port-au-Prince, et fit le serment de ne jamais revenir dans son pays tant que "l'Institution particulière" y subsisterait. (Questy 1987)

After several years of loneliness, Athénais commits suicide. She is found with her husband's will and bank correspondence in her hand. While it is true that, as the conclusion of the story shows, there are family reasons for M. Paul's affection for Georges (as he is not only his slave but his nephew), M. Paul's positive attitude toward blacks is obvious all along. It is reflected in his undeniable love of his black wife and their two children and in his implicit criticism of the church and other institutions for not recognizing this love.

Another interesting feature of the story is the nuanced characterization of the individual figures: M. Paul is white, paternal and passionate; the narrator is black, loyal, reliable and educated; Ernest Day is also white and relatively neutral aside from the fact that he is Athénais's new lover; Athénais is black and plays the role of lover; Georges is black, a slave, intelligent, loyal, freedom-loving and not superstitious; the merchants Jean Delotte and William Brewer are white, disloyal and materialistic. The characterizations make use of fewer racial stereotypes than in other texts. The decisive point as regards our central question is the glorification of Haiti. When M. Paul encourages Joanni in lofty tones to send Georges to Haiti, it is presented as the Athens of the Caribbean, as the center of the two American continents. Port-au-Prince is portrayed as a city with a promising future, as a center of culture and education and as economically prosperous. By contrast, in the French-language texts of the Caribbean islands, Haiti is largely irrelevant or is touched upon only in passing and associated with the motif of fear. There were discourses in the Spanish Caribbean that included Haiti in utopian visions of the Caribbean as a whole, but always as a role model in the struggle over questions of race. Its treatment is particularly interesting when Haitian literary production is itself taken into account: literary representations such as "Monsieur Paul" radically challenge the unidirectional view of France. With the focus on Haiti, what is revealed to us – if we "set things in relation (and motion)" (Ette 2009: 152) – is a transcultural formation of knowledge in condensed form.

4. Joseph Colastin Rousseau: "nos frères d'outre-golf"

In 1862 Joseph Colastin Rousseau published "Souvernirs de la Louisiane," an early literary history of the Creoles of color from Louisiana, in *L'Opinion Nationale*, which was a major newspaper in Port-au-Prince. Rousseau, himself the son of refugees from the revolution in Saint-Domingue, had just returned to Haiti from Louisiana. In his text he describes the Romantic poets of Louisiana – both white and black – as an unfortunate group united by persecution and the economic crisis.

It is no coincidence that Romanticism assumed this form in Louisiana. After all, the return of refugees to Haiti was a pragmatic political issue of the day, one that was well suited to literary treatment. The refugees from Saint-Domingue had first fled to Cuba and then sought refuge in Louisiana in 1809 as a result of clashes with loyalist Cubans over Napoleon's occupation of Spain. Rousseau describes in detail how they were taken in by the Louisiana community:

> En 1809 un débris d'exilés haïtiens expulsés de l'île de Cuba, furent jeté sur les plages de la Louisiane, comme envoyés de Dieu pour venir grossir le petit nombre de familles dont j'ai parlé plus haut [les gens de couleur libres]. Frères déjà par le sang, enserrés dans le cercle de fer d'un inconséquent préjugé, ce malheur commun, les sacrant en les réunissant, leur inspira de pures et franches sympathies; leurs enfans grandirent sous le même toit, de nouveau liens de fraternité, naissant de la situation, se resserrèrent chaque jour plus étroitement et, confondus dans le même sort, ils ne firent bientôt qu'une seule et même famille . . .[7]

Rousseau not only emphasizes the similarities between Haitians and Louisianans, referring to "nos frère d'outre-golfe" (Duplantier 2006: 165), but also describes the blacks and people of color in America as blood brothers. He draws on early Pan-African ideas circulating in the Atlantic world and makes the case for a stronger Creole solidarity. In conclusion, he writes, "afin de renseigner tous les membres de la grande communauté aussi bien que nos frères les Haïtiens – lesquels

[7] *L'Opinion Nationale*, November 29, 1862, cited in Duplantier (2006: 158).

nous touchent de si près – sur l'existence de nos frères louisianais: parce que là-bas quand on dit: Louisianais, c'est comme si l'on disait Haïtiens."[8]

Rousseau shows with great clarity how the bonds of Creole society grew out of a hybrid or relational experience (Duplantier 2006: 155). Like the Creole upper class in Martinique and Guadeloupe, the free people of color were situated *in-between* and articulated disorientation and uncertainty between the various worlds. Nevertheless, the colonial ties to their (former) motherland of France continued to be a sustaining force. French colonialism was so strong that despite the experience of *in-between*, it had an appeal precisely within this position of weakness.

Rousseau's article is divided into two parts. The first introduces several white Louisiana poets: Adrien Rouquett, Alexandre Latil, Oscar Dugué and Tullius St. Céran. Rousseau describes the unique Creole writing practiced by these poets and anticipates the onus of a literary 'bovarism' that came to be associated with all Francophone literature of Louisiana in the nineteenth century:

> Ils sont restés eux quand même, et un cachet d'originalité indélébile semble sceller leurs productions. Soit qu'ils parlent de la France, soit qu'ils parlent de leur pays, l'idée de la patrie ne les abandonne jamais: Elle est toujours restée pour eux un fond sur lequel ils brodaient leurs plus riches tableaux . . . Des enfants du sol, exilé en France pour travailler aux soins de leur éducation, chantèrent aussi leurs cyprières, leurs bayous, leurs lacs et leurs pinières; mille descriptions variées et précises du sauvage errant dans ses courses vagabondes.[9]

But Rousseau also underscores the importance of a poetry anthology entitled *Les Cenelles* that was published by authors of color. This collection did more than unite its contributors – after all, describing the community was an existential act for them:

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[8] *L'Opinion Nationale*, December 27, 1862, cited in Duplantier (2006: 155). On Rousseau's roots in Saint-Domingue, see Desdunes (1911: 111f.).

[9] *L'Opinion Nationale*, October 25, 1862, cited in Duplantier (2006: 155f.).

> Après avoir vu se succéder plusieurs autres volumes de poésie qu'on publia après ceux de St. Céran, Rouquette, Latil et Dugué, dont nous avons déjà parlé plus haut, ces jeunes gens, pleins d'une admiration sincère et respecteuse pour tout ce qui pouvait concourir à l'instruction de leur race, se sont décidés à braver les orages de la publicité, en lançant aussi leur volume de poésie indigènes. Ils se réunirent et décidèrent que chacun d'eux porterait son contingent à l'oeuvre proposée.
>
> En moins de quinze jours, dix-sept d'entr'eux donnèrent 86 pièces de vers, fruit de leur labour. Chacun donna sa quote part pour l'impression et, un mois après, parut un volume de poésies, . . . composé de 200 et tant de pages, intitulé: *Les Cenelles*.[10]

This introduction by Rousseau warrants taking a closer look at this group, which appears to provide a paradigm for self-positionings *in-between*.

5. Les Cenelles: Writing *In-Between*

Nina Möller has shown how the free people of color were forced to express their thoughts in forms that were not censored by the hegemonic society, as they were viewed critically by both the US government and the general public. In the 1840s the free people of color continued to engage in intense intellectual exchanges with the French-influenced Caribbean and their cultural motherland of France. For young men in wealthier families, trips to Paris and enrollment at a famous university in France were all but obligatory, particularly if they had literary ambitions. It was thus natural for the free people of color who were active in literary circles to embrace French Romanticism in the 1840s. They found a movement in Romanticism that enabled them to write poetry which was based on European conventions and was viewed with less suspicion by the white population of America's southern states than the black literary forms just entering the market, such as the folktale and the slave narrative (Möllers 2008: 141).

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[10] *L'Union* 87 (1863), cited in Duplantier (2006: 157f.).

The most important publication by the Creoles of color poets was the *Album littéraire: Journal des jeunes gens, amateurs de littérature*, which first appeared in 1843. This literary magazine was officially published by the white Creole Jean-Louis Marciaq, but the short stories, essays and poems it contained were written primarily by Creoles of color. It was discontinued after a brief run and in 1853 seventeen Creoles of color authors published the collection *Les Cenelles*, featuring around eighty-five poems. The work's title is an allusion to a botanical rarity in Louisiana, the red berries from a type of hawthorn bush that occurs only in isolated areas such as the swampy outskirts of New Orleans (Möllers 2008: 142). Made into jelly because of their exquisite taste, these berries commanded high prices in nineteenth-century Louisiana. Against this backdrop, Jerah Johnson has offered an apt interpretation of the title of the unique work:

> [The pieces] evoked the image of small, uniquely flavored and rare local delicacies that struggled for life in surroundings so hostile as to make the very gathering of them a dangerous travail, but one worth the risk because of the richness of the reward. (Johnson 1990: 410, see Möllers 2008: 142)

The poets – and especially the author of the foreword, Armand Lanusse – emphasized the rarity of their collection. This was not without justification, as it was considered the first anthology of poetry by North American authors of color. However, as far as its reception went, the explosive nature of the small book remained hidden to the public. Although most of the poems were printed under the authors' names, if readers were unfamiliar with these writers, the collection's contents provided no clues as to their ethnic identities (Möllers 2008: 142). Thus, on Louisiana's literary market, *Les Cenelles* was viewed as just another collection of Romantic poetry. And at first glance, the majority of the pieces do indeed seem to be nothing more than "poor imitations of their [French Romantic] models" (Möllers 2008: 143).

Les Cenelles is based heavily on Lamartine's *Méditations Poétiques*, as Lanusse's explicit reference to the French Romantics illustrates: "Naïvement un jour, / J'ai pris pour un jouet la pure et vive flamme / Qu'entretient Lamartine avec un saint amour" (Lanusse

1845). In the preface, the poet names other role models emulated by the young authors of color in *Les Ceneless*:

> Mais ceux pour qui nous éprouvons le plus de sympathie, ce sont ces jeunes hommes dont l'imagination s'est fortement éprise de tout ce qu'il y a de grand et de beau dans la carrière que suivent avec tant de gloire les Hugo et les Dumas; ceux que nous voudrions défendre de toutes les forces de notre âme contre l'indifférence des uns et la méchanceté des autres, ce sont ces jeunes esprits qui, sans avoir la folle prétention d'atteindre jamais à la hauteur où sont arrivés les grands maîtres en littérature dont nous venons de parler, sont pourtant en butte à toutes les tracasseries que ces génies transcendants éprouvèrent au commencement de leur vie littéraire; tracasseries qui les poursuivront sans doute jusqu'aux portes de leurs tombeaux, si elles n'en franchissent pas les seuils. (Lanusse 1979: xxxvii)

Les Cenelles lacks local flair in contrast to the exotic representations in the Romantic texts of the Caribbean islands. Only a few of the poems make use of the special locality of New Orleans or Louisiana. There are also very few identifying characteristics linked to ethnic origin. With only a few exceptions – which then seem all the more prominent – the poems' protagonists are not ethnically marked. The titles point to the main themes of French Romanticism such as love, desire, passion, melancholy and death. All the imitative elements are representations whose special character cannot be denied – a feature they share with the literary productions of the Francophone Antilles.

Upon closer inspection, we can see that the texts in the *Album littéraire*, in particular, as well as several of the poems in *Les Cenelles*, are much more than re-imaginings based on French Romantic models. They are indirect positionings of identity within the complex post-colonial sphere of Louisiana and within the various ethnic, cultural and social groups there with all their elements and influences. Henry Louis Gates Jr., for example, has praised the literature of the free people of color. By perfectly complying with the standards of a Western aesthetic tradition, he argues, this literature undermined the prejudicial view that the black 'race' and culture were inferior (see Haddox 2001: 758). Michel Fabre has emphasized that the foremost

objective of the Creoles of color was not social reform, it was the cultivation of French-influenced literature in Louisiana (Fabre 1998: 33).

The free people of color did not base their writing on the African American genres that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century such as the folktale and the slave narrative. With their decision to use Romantic themes and 'civilized' French instead of realistically reproducing the African American dialect, they highlighted their cultural and social differences to non-Creole people of color (Möllers 2008: 155). In the face of increasing marginalization, the main literary goal of the Creoles of color in the 1840s and 1850s was to demonstrate their similarities and affiliation with white Creole society. By inscribing themselves into the French literary tradition of Romanticism and evoking identity-related similarities such as the Catholic religion, they created a counterweight to the Anglo-American Protestant blueprint identity (Möllers 2008: 156). The decisive point is that the poetry collection of *Les Cenelles* stood in stark contrast to the emerging, genuinely African American literary tradition that would have linked the free people of color to the slaves and the Protestant free people of color in the other southern states.

6. Conclusion. *In-Between*: Inner Turmoil and Productivity

The poems by the free people of color often reveal their turmoil on both an individual and collective level. As a group, they emerged largely from the unofficial interethnic relations that were known under the *plaçage* system, and therefore shied from strongly and clearly expressing their discontent with this system. However, the criticism that was voiced focused not on the sexual exploitation of women, but on the immoral aspect of *plaçage*, which made a functioning family life impossible and worked against the idea of a collective group identity. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to strengthen the community from within in order to preserve the social and economic status of the free people of color in Louisiana.

The irresolvable contradiction that the African Creoles faced in their literary production was that their criticism was directed against a system to which they largely owed their existence and their special

position in society (Möllers 2008: 156). In view of this ambiguity, it is not surprising that the style and means of expression selected by the authors reflected their uncertainty: The poems are marked by an experience of being in-between and by contradictory demands. If they had used new literary elements, as was the case in the emerging African American literature, Creoles of color authors would have attracted greater attention and might even have been more successful in articulating their protest against the hegemonic society. Embedded in their French Creole origins, which positioned them more closely to white Creole society than to Protestant Anglo-Americans, their goal was not only to participate in the ruling social class, it was also to exclude other influences emanating from the African American culture beneath them. In other words, what we are seeing here are the indirect consequences of the French model of integration – even decades after Louisiana had become separated from its mother country.

In the bilingual Boston edition of *Les Cenelles* published in 1979, Régine Latortue and Gleason Adams emphasize this ambiguous affiliation:

> The legacy of Rousseau, of the French Revolution, of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, and the foils of Classicism and Rationalism which gave substance to the musings of Lamartine and Hugo do not reverberate in the verses of their Louisiana imitators; these verses consequently have a somewhat hollow ring. Trapped between races, between classes, between cultures, the Louisiana Creole could not and would not confront the problems and conflicts that blacks, no matter how elevated, experienced; yet, no matter how much they tried, they could not succeed in completely immersing themselves in that culture which seemingly represented salvation. (Latortue/Adams 1979: xiii)

An additional dimension of the in-between positioning of the collection's authors is their emulation not only of the French Romantics, but also of the white poets of New Orleans, as the preface to the anthology makes clear:

> Nous publions donc ce recueil dans le but de faire connaître les productions de quelques jeunes amans de la poésie qui ne jalousent point sans doute les beaux succès obtenus sur la scène ou dans le monde

> littéraire par des poètes louisianais qui ont eu le bonheur de puiser le savoir aux meilleures sources de l'Europe, car ces derniers seront toujours pour les premiers un sujet d'émulation, mais jamais un objet d'envie. (Lanusse 1979: xxxviiif.)

Louisiana's defining feature in the nineteenth century was its 'trans-areal' dimension as the node of various complex transfer processes: politically motivated movements of refugees from Haiti to New Orleans and from New Orleans back to the Caribbean and France; changing colonial affiliations; a variety of cultural reference systems with different powers of self-assertion; and the literary alignment of the Creole poets with French Romanticism as a form of white civilized culture, on the one hand, and as a symbol of their precarious social situation and turmoil on the other. Among the free people of color, these diverse relationalities were expressed in dynamic constructs of identity that ranged from early Pan-Africanism to the tenacious imitation of the white population.

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"Don't anyone tell me that New Orleans is a filthy swamp-hole": Fate, Fever, and the City as Nexus in Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein's *The Mysteries of New Orleans*

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, much consternation was caused by the interventions of various religious leaders – local, national and international – identifying the devastation of New Orleans as God's punishment on a sinful, decadent city, and more generally on a nation that was veering too far away from conservative American values. Many of these comments were directed firmly at the city's comparatively liberal attitudes towards sexuality, and in particular homosexuality (Dyson 2006: 182), while others, prominently including the Nation of Islam's Louis Farrakhan, claimed the storm was a verdict on American racism; still others claimed it was due to the United States' purportedly insufficient levels of support for Israel (Dyson 2006: 180). In the context of the suffering and devastation caused by Katrina, these claims struck many as preposterous, outrageous and callous, not to mention as letting those more tangibly culpable in various ways – President Bush, Governor Blanco, Mayor Nagin, FEMA, the Army Corps of Engineers, and many others – off the hook. Nonetheless, this tendency to see the licentious city as being earmarked for severe punishment for its myriad sins is far from a new one, and one can find comparable comments around virtually all the disasters that have struck the city in its nearly three hundred years of existence: a catalogue of deserved fire, flood, storm, and pestilence effectively going back to Bienville's first attempts at founding a settlement in 1718 being wiped out by hurricanes (for it being such a silly and vainglorious place to build a city). Less on the radar today, having been effectively wiped out in Louisiana in the early twentieth century, is the catastrophic series of yellow fever epidemics that blighted the city throughout the long nineteenth century, but these

were similarly horrific and fatal, in terms both of the massive human cost and the effects on the mentality and identity of New Orleans. In common with many places in the Americas, yellow fever killed many thousands in New Orleans and brought widespread terror and grief to its residents. Before it was eventually determined that the mosquito was responsible for spreading the disease, any number of possible causes were mooted – from its introduction by ships from elsewhere in the so-called New World, to it being harbored by the trees that surrounded the city, many of which were felled in response. And again, we find claims that this appalling disease is punishment for the city's sins.[1]

A fascinating twist on this theme is offered by Baron Ludwig von Reizenstein's scandalous and sprawling *The Mysteries of New Orleans* (1854–1855), which caused a brief uproar upon its serial publication in German-language periodicals in Reizenstein's adopted city before languishing in comparative obscurity until its recent translation into English and republication. Boldly blurring lines between audacious fantasy and brutal realism, heightened romance and extreme sex and violence, international politics and the horrors of yellow fever, Reizenstein's novel unfolds in a city seemingly on the brink of several kinds of catastrophe. It also presents a detailed picture of New Orleans's increasingly diverse population and registers its importance in transnational relations and exchanges. In amongst all this, Reizenstein gives us some of the most explicit, troubling accounts of the effects of the fever we might come across in nineteenth-century accounts and presents a scenario in which it is the weapon used by the occult figure Hiram to punish the city for its heavy involvement in slavery.

[1] Ari Kelman, in his chapter on yellow fever in *A River and Its City: The Nature of Landscape in New Orleans*, provides a detailed account of contemporary responses, such as wealthy New Orleanians' feeling that fever was something that afflicted only the poor, the foreign and the enslaved inhabitants of the city, who brought it upon themselves through their lifestyle choices. He also notes that recent scholarship is not immune from the temptation to attribute "morality in the workings of the nonhuman world" by seeing yellow fever as "biological revenge" for slavery, fever-carrying mosquitoes having originally arrived in the Americas "as a by-product of the slave trade" (Kelman 2006: 93).

As discussed by Steven Rowan in the Introduction to his English translation of *The Mysteries of New Orleans*, Reizenstein's novel can be considered as part of the European tradition of 'Mysteries' that grew in the first half of the nineteenth century and which found itself transplanted to the Americas as significant numbers of French, German and other Europeans continued to emigrate, bringing cultural tastes with them that would contribute to the ever-evolving, complex identities of places in the so-called New World (Reizenstein 2002: 26–30). Reizenstein himself was the son of minor German nobility. After a youth often deemed misspent by his father, he eventually left for (or was sent to) America, arriving in New Orleans in the late 1840s (Reizenstein 2002: 16). There, along with various more or, often, less successful ventures, he wrote for the German-language newspapers and periodicals – there were a number in the mid-nineteenth century – eventually publishing the serialized version of *The Mysteries of New Orleans* over many months in 1854–1855, in the *Louisiana Staats-Zeitung.* It caused much outcry because of its often graphic – at least for the time – depictions of lesbian love and sex, child prostitution, miscegenation, graphic violence and murder, violations of class and ethnic structures, occultism, and, not least, the true extent of the horror of yellow fever. Needless to say, it was also very popular as a result of the same factors. The novel was published in book form soon after, but was then quickly suppressed by its own author in apparent *volte face* on its literary worth and indeed the worthiness of its salaciousness (Reizenstein 2002: 23). It was eventually translated into English by Steven Rowan and published as a book by Johns Hopkins University Press in 2002.

Reizenstein doesn't waste any time in establishing the dominant tone of his New Orleans. The Prologue opens with a line about its cosmopolitanism that could be lifted straight from one of the many travel narratives and guides of the period that feature the city: "No city of the old or new continents, save perhaps for San Francisco and Calcutta, displays a greater panorama of peoples than New Orleans, the Queen of the South, ruler of the majestic Gulf of Mexico." But he quickly proceeds to chart its decline from its "radiance" under French and Spanish rule into "a desolate chaos of morals, languages,

and customs" after the Louisiana Purchase (Reizenstein 2002: 39). He continues:

> New Orleans is the spring from which so many thousands have drawn their wealth, but it is also a bitter cup of suffering, misery, and despair. New Orleans is now the prima donna of the South, the whore insatiable in her embraces, letting go of her victims only after the last drop of blood has been drained and their innermost marrow of life sucked dry. New Orleans is…a vast grave for poor immigrants and the homeless, who can never extract themselves in time from the arms of this prostitute. Here the chains of a maligned race rattle day and night with no advocate for their human rights; they can expect such only from the North. Only rarely is there heard in this southern clime a weak echo of the shouts of revenge in the grove of Abington. No angels have yet appeared to our *Negritians* to announce the birth of a Toussaint L'Ouverture! (Reizenstein 2002: 39)

And as if this isn't a heady enough brew already, we are told that "poisonous mists" from the swamps and the Spanish moss shrouding "mighty live oaks" "marks the region of *yellow fever*" (Reizenstein 2002: 39). This opening page gives a good impression of the city Reizenstein will throw us into for the next 700 pages. Mixing heightened prose, highly sexualized imagery and action, and romantic sentiment – with no aversion to florid cliché, as we see here – with serious social and political comment on the city, the region and the appalling fact of American slavery, he unfolds a messy, elaborate, and sometimes self-contradictory narrative that is at once an attempted polemic, a searing documentary, a frankly creaking romance and a very dark fantasy. Space dictates that I will not be able to discuss all these facets in this article; my focus will be upon Reizenstein's figuring of New Orleans as an 'American' city – in different senses of that word – and upon the novel's engagement with the horrors of yellow fever, drawing also upon some accounts of epidemics by nineteenth-century travelers and residents.

This summoning up of Toussaint L'Ouverture on the very first page foreshadows what will become one of the major plot strands of the novel: the great fear of the white South following the Haitian Revolution that something similar would happen in the South; potentially

coming to pass in the sinister Hiram's use of magic to manipulate the complex racial codes of New Orleans to produce a new Toussaint who will rise from Haiti to crush a population already greatly weakened by Hiram's other great weapon, yellow fever, which he conjures from a mysterious plant called *mantis religiosa*. Arguably like much in the novel, the blending of yellow fever with an effectively supernatural plot to provoke an apocalyptic race war is less than entirely convincing as a plot device, but it does contribute to a fascinating, rich vision of New Orleans as a nexus of influences and tropes, and for most part does not detract greatly from Reizenstein's portrayal of hard realities such as slavery and disease, in the city and the wider American Tropics. If the fiction itself is at times clumsy, then the understanding and presentation of New Orleans as a multi-layered place is complex and powerful.

Doreen Massey, in "A Global Sense of Place," suggests that:

> There is the specificity of place which derives from the fact that each place is the focus of a different *mixture* of wider and more local social relations. There is the fact that this very mixture together in one place may produce effects which would not have happened otherwise. And finally, all these relations interact with and take a further element of specificity from the accumulated history of a place, with that history itself imagined as the product of layer upon layer of different sets of linkages, both local and to the wider world. (Massey 2004: 70)

The period following the Louisiana Purchase is a particularly fascinating period in New Orleans's history to consider in terms such as Massey suggests. They allow us to view the city as a focal point for the colonial and imperialist shifts and movements in the Americas in the nineteenth century and, crucially, to consider the changing role of the United States as it seeks to consolidate and expand its position in the wider region – and as it approaches the internal but transnationally crucial trauma of the Civil War. And they provide ample means of considering how New Orleans's place in this wider American world shapes its unique, fluid, contradictory identity. Louisiana had already experienced the administration of France, from its foundation in 1718 to 1762, and Spain, who gained it as part of the negotiations to end the Seven Years War and ruled until 1800; the

French briefly took over again before selling the entire vast territory to the youthful United States in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. This rapid turnover of official and unofficial identities, complicated further by the vast numbers of other peoples and languages present in the city, contributed to a complex web of relationships and tensions in the nineteenth century; in literature it was perhaps most famously engaged with in the fiction and non-fiction of sometime antagonists George Washington Cable and Grace King, applying the perspectives of skilled post-Reconstruction era story and sketch-writer to the earlier, comparable period. There is also a rich body of writing by travelers and emigrants to the city, writers coming from the United States and the wider Americas, but also from various countries in Europe, not least France but also Germany, Britain and other countries; it is useful to consider elements of some of these often impressionistic journals and travel narratives to contextualize Reizenstein's account of yellow fever in his novel.

Reizenstein's understanding of New Orleans's status as an American place is far from straightforward. On the one hand, his narrative voice seems to share with the majority of his characters very negative verdicts on tastes and characteristics they deem 'American,' and an evident insistence on always considering Americans as 'Other.' Americans care nothing for Louisiana's beautiful live oaks, for instance; American gardens are "stiff" and "lifeless" because of their brick paths; Americans "lack heart and spirit" (Reizenstein 2002: 248, 63, 396). A German comic character known as 'the Cocker' is mocked several times for having lived in New Orleans for seven years without learning either French or English, the former being by far the greater oversight despite the latter being the official language (Reizenstein 2002: 221). A character is described as "a Scot by birth, [but] his facial type has not the slightest resemblance to that nationality. One would take this man to be an American" (Reizenstein 2002: 558) – so even physically, and in ways that scarcely make sense given the demographic history of the Unites States, 'American' is asserted as a type, an 'Other.' So prevalent is this, and so casually presumptive does the narrator seem that his readership will share the view, that the very audience itself seems to be defined as *non*-American. Indeed, that the novel was first serialized and then published as a book in

German only would seem to define a readership limited to Germans in America, possibly even Germans in New Orleans; however, while the majority of characters are of German origin, there are plenty from other European places too, and while differences are noted, it is only 'Americans' and 'negroes' who are so 'othered.' On the other hand, the fact that the city *is* American, in a U.S. sense of the word, and that therefore its citizens are therefore also somehow of the United States whether they like it or not, is not really challenged. In midst of a discussion of Old World dreams turning sour, particularly for women, in the New, "our flag" is referred to unproblematically, for instance (Reizenstein 2002: 145). "*Much is forbidden, but much is also tolerated*," we are told. "This makes New Orleans the freest city in the United States" (Reizenstein 2002: 191). There are, in fact, very few characters in the novel who actually would fall under what in the New Orleanian context would be a very limiting definition of 'American,' so this 'othering' is almost textually complete; however, most people in the book, regardless of origins or family background, seem invested in being a New Orleanian, whether positively or negatively.

New Orleans as an 'American' city in a more hemispheric sense, however, is richly figured. The opening identification of the city as "ruler of the majestic Gulf of Mexico" noted earlier is just one of many assertions of the relationship between this city and this sea. We are told often of how "the City of the Gulf" is refreshed by "the Gulf breeze" (Reizenstein 2002: 229) – in phrases redolent both of numerous travel narratives of the period, and of later, more celebrated writers on the city such as George Washington Cable, Lafcadio Hearn and Mark Twain. The supremely dangerous criminal organization based at the so-called Hamburg Mill – essentially gangsters with the trappings of a secret society, and including in their number figures as various as a coldly murderous Hungarian count and a German Catholic priest with a history of raping and prostituting young girls – is heavily involved in plots in Cuba and Texas, generally for profit rather than political allegiance, notwithstanding a claimed Royalism (Reizenstein 2002: 343). Nor is the Gulf of Mexico the limit of the asserted field of influence: The city's vast warehouses are full of such commodities as "Rio and Domingo coffee . . . testifying to the enormous traffic between our city and foreign harbors" (Reizen-

stein 2002: 262). Such links, crossing over national boundaries to stake New Orleans's presence in a wider American world, indeed seem more keenly felt than those with other places ostensibly in the same nation: A ship newly arrived from San Francisco, for instance, is identified – accurately really – as having arrived from "overseas" (Reizenstein 2002: 395).

But arguably the most powerful way in which Reizenstein registers the extent of New Orleans's transnational importance is his depictions of the multi-levelled impact of yellow fever, an all-too-physical manifestation of the difficulties of New Orleans's geographical position and climate which has a profound effect on the mind and spirit of the city. Yellow fever afflicted New Orleans from the late-eighteenth century through to the early twentieth century, when the link to its spreading by mosquitoes was finally established. In that time, over 40,000 New Orleanians lost their lives to the disease in epidemics that varied in frequency and ferocity. The very worst outbreak was in the summer of 1853 – the epidemic covered in *The Mysteries of New Orleans* – when ten thousand people died: some ten per cent of the population (Campanella 2008: 26; Kelman 2006: 87–9). Beyond the statistics, the widespread fear and the awful manner in which the sufferers died – or sometimes recovered – paralyzed the city with dread and with putrefying corpses and people of all ages succumbing to the hysteria, severe jaundice and black vomit that are among yellow fever's symptoms. All in all, New Orleans's long nineteenth century was one gruesomely marked by Yellow Jack's rampages. It is useful to consider Reizenstein's nominally fictional engagements with the fever alongside some accounts in (fairly) contemporary travel texts by other emigrants to the city.

Some such narratives describe coming upon yellow fever in the city having already encountered it elsewhere in the wider Caribbean region. Edouard de Montulé, for instance, arrives in New Orleans in 1817 having studiously and with some difficulty avoided the fever in his travels across the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, scrapping plans to visit Martinique and Guadeloupe, and realizing that friends in Saint Thomas view him as a dead man walking as long as he stays in this "little city" in which "twenty persons a day were dying" (Montulé 1951: 37). While the causes of yellow fever are far away from

discovery at this stage in the early nineteenth century, Montulé draws attention to the phenomenon of its being transported from colony to colony around the region: to travel here is to play a high-risk game of tag with Mister Jack. Other writers draw attention to the myriad rumors and whispers of the fever's arrival from elsewhere. The architect Benjamin Latrobe, for example, writes in a journal entry in 1819 that a vessel has arrived from Havana that is suspected to harbor yellow fever; a temporary quarantine is introduced, but not before two infected sailors are rumored to have reached the city before dying, thereby sparking a whispering campaign of fear and, indeed, a very real outbreak of the fever in the city (Latrobe 1951: 146). Nearly forty years later, Thomas K. Wharton charts reports of outbreaks in various distant places and tells us that "All eyes turn Eastward in expectation of exciting tidings by the next steamer . . ." (Wharton 1999: 84). Individually and collectively, such accounts contribute greatly to the sense of a city that is at once isolated by its treacherous surroundings and beset on all sides by fearful dangers, it being only an inevitable matter of time before the fever lays waste to New Orleans again. Like the hurricanes that terrorize and devastate the entire region of the American Tropics, yellow fever recognizes and is limited by no national borders, particularly when business is the priority over all else, as Ari Kelman points out:

> In New Orleans, members of the city's commercial community believed that spaces function best as venues for trade; they should be orderly, marked by clearly delineated borders based on uses to encourage the exchange of goods. This view applied to circumscribed spaces close at hand, such as the levee, but also to distant, relatively unbounded spaces such as the Mississippi system, and even to spaces as far removed as the shipping routes of the Atlantic World and the foreign ports making up the city's network of trade. The epidemic of 1853 demonstrates that such a view of space had consequences, because yellow fever did not respect spatial discipline. It moved through space without regard for the laws of commerce – in fact, those laws often abetted the disease's spread. (Kelman 2006: 90)

Wharton, writing as another epidemic looms in the summer of 1855, makes a similar point first-hand:

> It is not unlikely that the confined hold of a vessel lying at the Levee might generate the disease during the summer months of this latitude even without communication with a sickly tropical port. Still a rigid quarantine would be of immense value to this city by excluding a vast amount of morbific influence which every summer flows freely into it, and aggravates the danger of a naturally unwholesome atmosphere. (Wharton 1999: 88)

This, in combination with the disquiet prompted by the causes of the disease being unknown, undermines any sense of security brought about by now being part of the increasingly powerful United States: The transnational disease renders nations effectively irrelevant, particularly when the nations concerned value trade and profit over public health.

There are echoes of these factors in Reizenstein's novel. The authorial voice frequently breaks off from the story ostensibly being told to give unabashedly moralistic verdicts on aspects of characters' or society's conduct, including this vision of an American Venice that could have been:

> What Venice was in its days of glory, New Orleans would long since have become – the queen of the seas, the monopolist of world trade. The merchant of Venice would be just as much at home here as he once was in the city on the lagoons. There is also no lack of Shylocks, with the sole difference being that the Shylocks here are not Jews but orthodox Christians who thirst not just for their pound of flesh but for whole shiploads. Yes, New Orleans would long since have become a Venice if an invisible hand had not punished it in many a year for a crime that meanness and selfishness has held to be a necessary evil. (Reizenstein 2002: 262–3)

Nineteenth-century accounts of New Orleans are replete with positive and negative comparisons with other great world cities, particularly ports. Reizenstein's doing so here, and in making unnamed but nonetheless clear reference to his character Hiram's use of yellow fever as punishment for the city's heavy and fundamental involvement in the international slave trade ("I use it as a means of revenge!" he tells Lucy and Emil earlier in the novel [Reizenstein 2002: 118]),

is effectively to claim that the city is damned and punished for its sins and thereby will never achieve such greatness. Within the story, we are given an account of the transatlantic crossing of some of the major characters, including the sisters Jenny and Frieda, as well as Emil, Jenny's beloved, who will later become one of Hiram's instruments in fathering the child predicted to become the new Toussaint L'Ouverture. Their journey across the ocean goes well until they enter the Caribbean and Sargasso Seas, when the wind drops almost completely and the ship is left in the 'doldrums.' The ship's progress across the Caribbean is painfully slow and this malaise plays upon its passengers. Jenny, in particular, is haunted by a terrifying vision "in sight of the uncanny cliff formations of Haiti" (Reizenstein 2002: 152). Her later diary entries recall her looking "in the direction from which the isle of Haiti loomed out of the eternal flood":

> I perceived a gigantic figure with a pale, pale face, with gray, tousled hair and thin, wrinkled hands, first pressed clamped together and then spreading its fingers to fearsome length. Then the hands raised endless chains that lay at fingertip and dashed them against the rock of the cliffs. . . . Descending from the cliffs I saw . . . Emil, *my* Emil, holding the hand of a beautiful young woman with long, black hair and great sparkling eyes. . . . I saw the black, sparkling eyes of the woman and the sparkling heavenly blue eyes of my Emil who hung joyfully on her mouth . . . then this painting vanished. A streak of fire swept across the island, illuminating millions of black men – they streamed in long columns, whose ends could not be seen, behind flowing, blood-red flags, rushing like spouts of fresh blood, and above these troops I saw that fatal woman along with Emil, and the gaunt giant figure strode before them, with an enormous balance in his bony hand . . . then loud screaming sounded, and I heard intoxicating, wild song, as if from the throats of the victors in a great battle. (Reizenstein 2002: 154)

Before she has even become a Southerner of sorts, then, Jenny is initiated into the white South's great fear of Haiti, her vision both recalling the Revolution itself and anticipating ways in which that revolution, it is feared, will be repeated far more widely and to devastating effect. The terrifying old man here is Hiram; the beautiful young woman, whose blackness of hair and eye is concentrated upon,

is Lucy, the mixed-race woman who Hiram will manipulate along with Emil into parenting the new Toussaint. In the later elaborations of his plan, Hiram reveals just such large-scale intentions as Jenny has envisioned, and certainly the coming together of Emil and Lucy has occurred. Intricately connected with this vision of violent black liberation emerging from Haiti is Hiram's use of yellow fever – which he says he harvests from seeds he found near the mouth of the Red River before the region was first surveyed by the French (Reizenstein 2002: 117) – as a great leveler, to fatally weaken the oppressor, which we have already had wind of. As such, the spectres of racial conflict and yellow fever epidemic are fatally intertwined, imaginatively sited across the Caribbean and the Mississippi Basin and bearing down upon the regional nodal point that is the transnational city of New Orleans.

Returning to travelers' accounts, within the city itself, the apprehension gradually mounts as the summer fever season approaches: A. Oakey Hall describes how, after a winter trying to forget or ignore the killer that is all too likely to strike again, impending summer means that "discussions upon the fever are agitated" (Hall 1851: 66). But even the fear caused by the unknowable but inevitable outside threat is overshadowed by the accounts of conditions when the fever actually does strike, however. Benjamin Latrobe, writing in 1819, charts the steadily increasing numbers of dead and sick, and the disease at times seem omnipresent: "I have had many opportunities of knowing correctly the symptoms of the disorder as they appear this year. . . . Most of my workmen were attacked with different degrees of violence. The sober lived; the drunken died with few exceptions." While this amateur prognosis is probably more reflective of personal inclination than medical evidence, this in itself is suggestive of the numerous narratives the fever provokes. Latrobe's account of the 1819 epidemic also gives vivid accounts of the sufferings of those who survived, writing of "violent vomiting, of yellow, & green, & slimy matter. Pains in the head & back & limbs succeeded." Sweats can be so violent that "cloaths [*sic*] are soaked through & through" (Latrobe 1951: 148). Latrobe himself went on to suffer such symptoms but was not as fortunate as those he discusses: he was to die from the fever the following year.

Thomas K. Wharton's New Orleans journal covers nine years (1853–1862) and he pays witness to several epidemics of varying severity during those years – and his understanding as to who is most vulnerable varies likewise. At times, he notes that newcomers to the region seem particularly susceptible. For instance, in 1858, he recounts a report from an acquaintance: "Mr. Thiel, buried a servant yesterday of fever, she was a new comer from Germany and he says her death struggles were perfectly frightful" (Wharton 1999: 178). The sense of New Orleans as a strange unknowable place that presents strange unknowable danger to the outsider is registered in chilling terms here, in ways that are strikingly echoed in *The Mysteries of New Orleans*. At other times, when the fever is at its most vicious and unforgiving, even such selectivity seems abandoned and the verdict is that no one in New Orleans is safe. Only a little later in 1858, Wharton notes that "Creoles are no longer considered safe": In a city in which Creoles are considered the indigenous population (except by neighboring Native Americans, of course), such a verdict is an ominous marker of the fever's reach at such times (Wharton 1999: 179).

Reizenstein's narrator tells us of the effect of the fever upon the city's mood:

> The curse of yellow fever often strikes so unexpectedly that no one can contemplate the next hour cheerfully or with a light heart. The phrase "Red today, dead tomorrow" dropped from every mouth that opened. So enjoy yourself, my friend, and give a kiss to this or that person, for who knows whether you shall ever meet again. (Reizenstein 2002: 512)

The novel's accounts of the horrors of the disease are among its most powerful aspects, the narrator unstinting in showing us that characters we have been getting to know for hundreds of pages can be taken, horribly, in an instant:

> Just as a beautiful garden announces its presence with its magical aroma, even when the entire night heaven is covered with black clouds, just as the fresh images of flowers entice us and draw our senses into fairy tale lands, so also that house, that chamber, called – even where the throttling angel of plague had swung his shining scythe. But here

> there are no blossoms in whose depths we can linger; here we are driven back by a primal warning force, and disgust and horror rises in those who had been driven to madness by unspeakable pain only moments before. That is the fearful curse of this plague! One is driven back by disgust, and even where one should feel sympathy, aversion rises along with its cold sweat and the stench of corpses. (Reizenstein 2002: 521)

Like Wharton's friend's servant, the corpses here prompting such awful dilemmas between care and repulsion are those of recently arrived German immigrants – a once prominent and wealthy family reduced to abject poverty in their new life in New Orleans. The romance that renders their narrative presence somewhat cloying during life takes on a devastating tenor when applied to their horrific deaths here, as the florid imagery amplifies the horrific pathos of their putrefying bodies being discovered by the young friend of one of the daughters.

The novel shares with contemporary travel narratives a combination of evoking the horrors of the fever with excoriating those deemed responsible for worsening and even exploiting it. To again return to a traveler's account, in A. Oakey Hall's telling, the disease personified by him and others as 'Yellow Jack' has sinister agents, in the form of Board of Health officials and incompetent or corrupt doctors as well as the city's newspapers. The officials tour the city, profoundly affecting the city's mood depending on what they say or how they look:

> The yearly members of the Board of Health become characters for ocular interest as they walk about the streets. Their nods and winks and various gestures are scrutinized with great care; and should any of them be suffering under dyspepsia or any other complaint productive of a long face and sour speech, an article on Yellow Fever is sure to get into the Gazettes, either editorially or by favor of some 'X. Y. Z.' correspondent. (Hall 1851: 67)

Mister Jack's reach manifests through the spreading of fear as much as through his death toll, and when a board member's disagreeable visage is translated into fever symptoms by the newspapers, the city is paralyzed accordingly. There is no escape from this facet of the terror, as even when the Board declares that the fever is present 'only

sporadically,' and therefore is not an epidemic, the citizens of New Orleans are lulled into a false sense of security (Hall also wryly reflects, "Very fine logic all this, but one naturally asks what difference does it make whether one dies sporadically or otherwise!" [Hall 1851: 67]). But when the Board members *do* use the word 'epidemic,' New Orleans becomes a ghost town:

> Girod-street, and Julia-street, and the New Shell road, and Circus-street, and Rue de Conti are dotted through the day with hearses and carriages on their way to the Protestant Yard, or the Cypress Grove, or the Cemetery of St. Louis. An ominous looking cart stands at the door of the Charity Hospital. Physicians' gigs rattle around. The list of daily interments head the editorials in each gazette as being the most interesting item for home and interior subscribers. (Hall 1851: 68)

In a sense, then, the Board of Health and other health/death-oriented people become Yellow Jack's agents again, but this time in terms of terror. As Hall writes it, all it takes is for an official to utter one of the dread words for the streets to turn into death drives, and for the papers to turn from irresponsible denial of fever – shamelessly favoring commercial interest over public safety, in trying to hide facts that might encourage business to leave the city – into frenzied organs of fear and panic. One might counter that here the officials and journalists are rather damned if they do and damned if they don't, but in terms of imagery, Hall's narrative is compelling. The city's doctors are also figured not as reassuringly healing presences but rather as agents of doom: patients' recoveries are as dependent upon their doctors' relationships with quack apothecaries as anything else, but really, as Hall describes it, recovery is largely a matter of luck, and the bodies nominally responsible for public health, treatment and information are corrupt agents of the dread figure that rules the city.

Again, Reizenstein gives us powerful takes on these themes. The narrative disgust for figures deemed to be manipulating and taking advantage of the severity of yellow fever is palpable and the narrator launches into tirades against doctors, landlords, undertakers and various city officials:

> The curse of yellow fever had already lain on New Orleans for several weeks. Those who could flee had already fled, and those who remained behind either lacked the means to travel or were held here by some sort of responsibility. Perhaps there were also those for whom ambition and filthy greed dictated that they risk their little lives despite all arguments to the contrary. There were many in the last category, and, amazingly enough, they were the ones whose ranks were the least winnowed by the dreadful disease. Ambition and greed offered their bold faces to death in this dark, sad, time, and death rarely dared touch its finger to these already pale, cold, children of Mammon. Death can be bribed, too, after all. There were hundreds and hundreds of stories from this time of terror to witness. (Reizenstein 2002: 507)

As Hall and others figure Board of Health officials, doctors and so on, effectively as agents of Yellow Jack, so too does Reizenstein effectively here. Such passages are also undisguised attacks upon the naked capitalism deemed to be overtaking the city since the advent of U.S. rule (perhaps overlooking the fact that New Orleans was a corrupt business venture from the very beginning of French settlement) – as with the lack of quarantine and public health consideration in trade, effectively inviting Yellow Jack into the city. So financial impulses and priorities implicitly and explicitly identified as American (in U.S. terms) are damned as directly culpable in worsening the suffering of victims once the fever is there. Doctors and landlords, then, are shown as being as corrupt as those who use the epidemic, and the city's frenzied attempts to dispose of the dead and deal with the sheer scale of the horror, to cover up convenient murders by passing them off as fever victims:

> *A city corpse-cart bearing twenty coffins.* The drivers do not even go up to the gate of the cemetery. They throw their coffins right over the wall, one after another. Are all the people who lie in this trove of dead persons victims of yellow fever? If the coroner were conscientious, and if he did not automatically issue the verdict "died of yellow fever," one would discover that hardly five of the twenty coffins contained persons who had died of that illness. Then one would soon learn that the pretty cigar seller, Inana M*, had grown tired of her husband and used the excuse of yellow fever to get him out of the way quickly and

> without arousing attention. Didn't people find it quite natural to say that this or that person had died of yellow fever? Did anyone investigate it more carefully? And how is it with W. father and son? Did they fall victim to the disease, or does Mr. Neveu know better?
>
> Yes, yellow fever was the scapegoat of all murderers and poisoners. Insofar as a person stayed alive himself, that was always the best plan. (Reizenstein 2002: 619–620)

Reizenstein's novel contains several such diatribes against the individual and societal corruption that turns people into entirely self-serving agents of death – this it shares with more ostensibly factual accounts like Hall's. But in Reizenstein's fictional version, the by now culturally established figure of 'Yellow Jack' is replaced by Hiram, the bringer of devastating fever and revolution to New Orleans. While the city dies in a terrifying mess of fear and ignorance as to its causes, Hiram's plan seems to be unfolding as intended as the book comes to its messy, tantalizing conclusion.

Reizenstein's sprawling novel ends with a brig called *Toussaint L'Ouverture* arriving to carry Emil and Lucy to Haiti, leaving their infant son in New Orleans in the care of Hiram's agent Diana Robert. Several other characters who had seemed to disappear from the story are revealed to have already been transported there. The novel concludes, then, before the revolution that Hiram has predicted and set in motion, due to come to pass in 1871. We are left in a city devastated by the very worst of so many terrible yellow fever epidemics, with the portent of a massive change in New Orleanian – and indeed *American* (in both US and hemispheric terms) – practice and life to come when the new Toussaint comes of age. Nothing is really resolved but the political message is fairly clear: the great offence of slavery will end, and the likelihood is that it will end through violence. That this was to come about through the means of civil war rather than mystical intervention scarcely detracts from Reizenstein's point. In this, and in the parallels between the transnational spread of anti-slavery revolt and the apparently unstoppable spread of yellow fever, Reizenstein smuggles in genuinely serious – deadly serious, in fact – political intent into his salacious, intriguing mess of a novel and registers New

Orleans as an intrinsic part, for better or worse, of an American scene in the widest of senses.

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Carnival

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'Mardispeak': A Window on New Orleans's History of Imperfect Creolization

1. Introduction

In colonial New Orleans, people who referred to themselves as 'Creoles' did not necessarily have mixed blood, and in fact, the term did not signal anything about one's race. Louisiana-born people of French stock originally adopted the Creole label as a way to distinguish themselves from non-native upstarts, particularly the 15,000 refugees (whites, slaves and free people of colour) who settled in Louisiana after the 1804 revolution in Saint-Domingue which created the Republic of Haiti. Creoles saw themselves as a New World aristocracy, aloof from mainstream Anglo-American culture, and their folkways – they were music, dance, theatre, and gambling enthusiasts – did much to define New Orleans as a culturally exotic, socially permissive enclave. (Abrahams 2006; Dessens 2015; Hirsch/Logsdon 1992) Over time, 'Creole' became more of a signifier of Louisiana Creoles of colour and the Afro-Caribbean roots of their vernacular culture. When used in the context of modern tourism promotion, the word 'creole' now refers to the language and folk culture of Southern Louisiana or to a somewhat ambiguous, romanticized *mélange* of indigenous architecture, food, music and Old World customs. The city of New Orleans is thus conventionally described as a 'creole' amalgam of cultures, meaning a fusion of Native American, African, Caribbean, French, Spanish, Anglo, German, Irish, Italian, Vietnamese and Latin American influences.

In the work of the late Martinican literary critic Edouard Glissant, however, 'creolization' is more than *mélange*. It is a crumbling of boundaries where cultures connect, overlap and simmer together: "If we posit *métissage* as, generally speaking, the meeting and synthesis of two differences, creolization seems to be a limitless *métissage*, its elements diffracted and its consequences unforeseeable" (Glissant

1997: 33). While acknowledging that the encounter of cultures does not always happen in a positive way, Glissant affirms that "the world is creolizing" and welcomes the advent of the "world-earth" ("Tout-Monde" in French): "My intuition is perhaps that there will be no more culture without all cultures, no more civilizations that can make others theirs colonies, no more poets that can ignore the movement of History" (Glissant 1956: 12)[1]. As such, creolization is a utopia – a happy, yet-to-be-achieved state – in which fraternity will be experienced in the translatability of cultures.

Appealing as it certainly is, this definition of creolization is problematic insofar as it eschews the question of the political organization of future Creole countries (Dorismond 2014). A key concern raised by critical anthropologists is that Creole societies often recreate,

> either the insular and intolerant hierarchies of the former colonial metropole in the provincial setting or, as they evolve into settled ethnic communities, find ways to exclude those who do not fit into the reified mix of genealogy and cultural markers used to maintain those ethnic boundaries. (Spitzer 2011: 64)

Viranjini Munasinghe has thus described the plight of marginalized East Indians in the colonially-derived West Indies Creole communities of Louisiana (Munasinghe 2006).

It seems to us that Mardi Gras in New Orleans perfectly epitomizes the limits of Glissant's conception of 'creolization.' On the one hand, it is tempting to see carnival in the Crescent City as "the people's second life, who for a time enter a utopian realm of community, freedom, equality, and abundance," allowing for "the temporary suspension, both ideal and real, of hierarchical rank," (Bakhtin 1984: 10) i.e. a fraternal celebration blending both Creole and Anglo-American, Catholic and Protestant, black and white traditions. On the other hand, one cannot help but question the extent to which the theory of carnivalesque inversion applies to New Orleans, where groups of differently empowered people have tolerated living together side by side

[1] English translation provided by Celia Britton in her book *Edouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory: Strategies of Language and Resistance* (Britton 1999: 8).

for centuries without the hope of justice among them. As performance studies scholar Joseph Roach brilliantly showed in his magnum opus *Cities of the Dead* (1996), carnival in New Orleans cannot only be described in terms of "communitas" – Victor Turner's famous word for the sense of sharing and intimacy that develops among people who experience liminality as a group, usually in the middle stage of rituals (Turner 1982: 44). It also testifies to people's frustrations with the existing social order and, as such, may be seen as a symbolic substitution of uninhibited physical performance for unconstrained physical violence: "It releases some of the tensions caused by social constraints, as well as the contradictions wrought from the strain of living in double cultures, but it also seeks a way to direct them, to focus them, and ultimately to reproduce them" (Roach 1993: 42). From this perspective, carnival is but a ritualized, 'infra-political' space that simultaneously conceals and foregrounds conflicts (Scott 1990). It is about the aestheticizing of politics and "is thus politics masquerading behind cultural forms" (Cohen 1993: 132–133).

While a complete re-interpretation of the history of Mardi Gras in New Orleans based on the concepts of 'infra-politics' and 'primitive resistance' is, we believe, needed (and will indeed be the topic of our next book), the present article wishes rather to shed light on New Orleans's history of 'imperfect creolization' by looking at the (largely overlooked) power dynamics that have shaped the Mardi Gras lexicon since the nineteenth century. Drawing on a list of festive words, names and phrases compiled from printed sources dating from 1857 to 2015, we will argue that histories of New Orleans need to move away from traditional concepts of hybridity and *métissage* to incorporate issues of (Anglo-American) linguistic/cultural/political hegemony and (non-Anglo) resistance. Ultimately, our study of the Mardi Gras lexicon should serve as a further corrective to established views of New Orleans as 'the Big Easy' or 'the city that care forgot.'

2. 'Say What?' Sketching the Contours of Mardispeak

Ever since the Mistick Krewe of Comus's first festive public procession in 1857,[2] the Mardi Gras season in New Orleans – a series of costumed float parades, street gatherings and elaborate balls that starts on January 6th (the feast of the Epiphany) and culminates on Mardi Gras Day, the day before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent – has assumed growing importance both socially and commercially, and the nature of this celebration and the traditions which surround it have given rise to a limited number of vocabulary items which fulfil its peculiar needs.

Using a combination of sources – newspaper files, city histories, Tulane University's and Louisiana State University's respective collections of Mardi Gras ephemera and mementos,[3] guidebooks such as Arthur Hardy's annual *Mardi Gras Guide* (1977–2015),[4] and websites devoted to Mardi Gras, some of which have sections explaining 'krewe,' 'spyboy,' 'Zulu' and many other words pertaining to carnival[5] – we have been able to draw an alphabetical list of approximately eighty words and phrases associated with the Mardi Gras season in New Orleans. While many of the terms on this list are used in connection with places ('call out boxes,' 'den,' 'neutral ground,' 'sidewalk side') or moments in time ('Ash Wednesday,' 'Twelfth Night'), most refer to people ('Big Chief,' 'Big Queen,' 'Big Shot of Africa,' 'captain,' 'duke,' 'float lieutenant,' 'Grand Marshall,' 'king,' 'Lord of Misrule,' 'maid,' 'page,' 'Rex'), objects ('crown,' 'dance cards,' 'go-cups,' 'king cake,' 'mask,' 'property wagon,' 'signature float,'

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[2] Informal parades and festive masquerades are reported to have occurred in major centers like Mobile and New Orleans throughout the early nineteenth century, but officially sanctioned parades only began in New Orleans by mid-century.

[3] Documenting a span of over a hundred years, these two collections can be consulted online at http://larc.tulane.edu/exhibits/carnival and http://cdm16313.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15140coll17/.

[4] The latest issue of the guide, as well as previous editions, can be purchased at Arthur Hardy's online store: http://www.mardigrasguide.com/store/.

[5] See for example http://www.mardigrasunmasked.com/mardigras/mardispeak.htm; http://www.neworleansonline.com/neworleans/mardigras/mgdictionary.html; http://www.neworleanscvb.com/calendar-events/mardi-gras/lingo/.

'throws') and rituals ('callout,' 'flashing,' 'Grand March,' 'Meeting of the Courts,' 'Mister, throw me something!')

Also part of the Mardi Gras lexicon are the names of the New Orleans organizations that have sponsored Mardi Gras events from the nineteenth century to the present day. Some of these 'krewes' were formed for social, fraternal, educational or religious purposes and merely assume a different name when they present their balls and parades, but the majority of carnival clubs actually exist for the sole purpose of celebrating this holiday. Our inventory, complete with each group's date of creation and – when no longer active – passing, currently contains 287 names (from 'Acheans' to 'Zulu'[6]) but by no means claims to be exhaustive – especially since new krewes keep emerging every year.[7]

Big parades with glitzy, thematically-decorated floats and interspersed with high-school marching bands may be most prominent visual manifestation of carnival, but for many aficionados, freewheeling marching or walking groups personify the boisterous spirit of the season. Unlike the more or less unorganized groups that appear sporadically and sponsor truck rides, these ensembles are highly organized and actually march in the parades, often inspiring spectators to follow in their wake. Their costumes frequently tend toward the extravagant, the satirical and the ridiculous. Their penchant for boisterous burlesque and sashaying revelry is, in many cases, suggested by their whimsical names – e.g., the Phunny Phorty Phellows (which started following the Rex parade in 1878, then took a long break in 1898 before returning in 1981), Pete Fountain's Half-Fast Walking Club (created in 1960), the Ducks of Dixieland ("laid in 1985," as their website reminds us), the Intergalactic Krewe of Chewbacchus (established in 2010). The oldest marching club still functioning is the Jefferson City Buzzards, founded in 1890.

[6] Where the names of krewes consist of one word only it can be assumed that their full name is preceded by the phrase 'Krewe of -----.' Names which do not start with this phrase are given in full (e.g. 'Mystick Krewe of Titans,' 'Twelfth Night Revelers,' 'Independent Order of the Moon').

[7] "Krewes come and go. Some survive; some don't. Every ten years, fifteen come into existence and sixteen go out. It averages out" (Arthur Hardy, quoted in O'Neill 2014: 94).

Finally, in addition to the krewes and the marching clubs, there are a number of Mardi Gras Indian tribes in New Orleans, organized for the sole purpose of participating in the carnival celebrations. Orchestrated by black or biracial (African/Native American) men, women and children, they keep up a fiction of Indian royalty while strolling through the backstreets of the city on Mardi Gras day, St. Joseph's night and 'Super Sunday' (the Sunday nearest to Saint Joseph's Day). A tribe generally includes a spyboy, a flagboy, a big chief and a big queen, each dressed in elaborate, hand-stitched 'Indian suits' of beads and feathers. They are followed by percussionists and chanting choruses of neighbourhood and family supporters. All of these New Orleans Mardi Gras Indian tribes maintain the historical practice of parading along unplanned routes without a city permit.

3. A Tale of Linguistic (and Political) Domination

What conclusions can be drawn from such a painstaking, necessarily fragmentary, compilation?

3.1 A Surprising Dearth of French Words

Although Mardi Gras was initially celebrated by the French-speaking community of Louisiana[8] and although New Orleans, with its flourishing French-language newspapers, schools and opera companies, was the preeminent French city in North America until the Civil

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[8] The earliest carnival celebration in North America occurred at a place on the west bank of the Mississippi river about 60 miles (96.6 kilometers) downriver from where New Orleans is today; as the location was discovered on the 3rd of March, 1699, i.e. Mardi Gras Day, French explorer Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville named the spot 'Pointe du Mardi Gras.' The year 1838 brought the first mention of a Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans by the French-speaking press. The large display was applauded by the Creole newspaper *La Créole*, which announced: "The whole town doubled up with laughter…. The beautiful and joyous cavalcade wound its way at full speed… What noise! What hubbub! And what fun" (quoted in Schindler 2001: 8).

War,[9] an examination of the list of Mardi Gras vocabulary items and names of carnival organizations reveals a striking lack of French linguistic influence.

Only a few krewe names of French provenance, such as 'Les Mystérieuses' (the first female carnival society in New Orleans, which only lasted from 1896 to 1900), 'Les Inconnues' (1901−1946), 'Les Pierrettes' and 'Les Marionnettes' (two high school and college-age clubs created in the 1920s, whose respectability entirely derived from the social positions of the members' parents), 'Bal Masque' (1950s–1970s) and 'Les Danseurs' (1929–1957) can be spotted in our New Orleans directory. Among them, two organizations stand out insofar as they have made it their explicit mission to promote the city's French cultural heritage. The thirty-five-year-old Corps de Napoleon, which parades as "an army of bead, cup and doubloon-throwing revellers organized similarly to which Napoleon organized his armies,"[10] aims at honouring the French culture of Jefferson Parish. It is led by captains and officers on a float echoing the famous painting by Jacques-Louis David that shows Napoleon crossing the Alps during the Italian campaign of 1800. Emperor Napoleon and Empress Josephine reign over the parade, coronation celebration and after-parade festivities. The emperor's float features the Arc de Triomphe in Paris and is pulled by a team of four white horses. As to the more recent Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc (established 2009), it parades annually on January 6 in New Orleans's French Quarter in honour of Joan of Arc's birthday and throughout the year seeks to "keep Joan's story

[9] The francophone community after 1830, though no longer a majority, maintained its influence. The francophone newspapers – and there were a number of important ones, such as *L'Abeille*, *Le Louisianais* et *L'Ami des Lois*, which later became *L'Argus* and finally merged with *L'Abeille*, and *Le Courrier* – habitually goaded their readers into doing more to support their institutions in competition with the Anglo sector of the city. Despite continental calls from Anglo-centric foes "to banish the French language" and complaints that "the proceedings and records, in open violation of the Act of Congress for the admission of the State of Louisiana in the Union, are kept in the French Language," the francophone community in New Orleans maintained a bilingual school system in two of the city's four districts until the 1860s (Gitlin 2009: 160–163).

[10] See the krewe's website at http://www.corpsdenapoleon.com/.

and spirit alive by hosting events, workshops, and presentations that illuminate Joan's heroism and timelessness, while connecting her to the French heritage and pride of New Orleans."[11]

However notable such efforts may seem, they have not succeeded in making French the lingua franca of carnival it once was. Indeed, aside from these krewe names, only seven local festive terms can claim a French origin:

1. 'Mardi Gras' itself, naturally, which is French for 'Fat Tuesday.' While the phrase generally refers to the festivities themselves, it is also a moniker sometimes applied to a reveller. So, for example, a New Orleanian might greet a masker by saying: 'Hey, where y'at, you Mardi Gras?'

2. 'Lundi Gras,' which is French for 'Fat Monday.' Initiated in 1987, Lundi Gras celebrations include the ceremonial Mississippi River arrival of Rex, King of Carnival, by boat – reviving an annual tradition that began in 1874 and ended in 1917.[12] In 1993, the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club joined with the Audubon Institute in bringing a new enhancement to the riverfront gala: the Zulu Lundi Gras Frestival. The event, staged in Woldenberg Park, has grown to include an entire day of entertainment, with live music, second line parades and the arrival by boat of the Zulu King and Queen and the Zulu Carnival characters. Rex and King Zulu publicly exchanged greetings for the first time in 1999, as part of the Lundi Gras festivities and have continued to do so every year since.

3. 'Papier mâché,' which is French for 'chewed paper.' Papier mâché is a sculpture technique that uses a malleable material made from paper, flour and water, or paper and adhesive. Typically, the material is applied to an armature or sub-sculpture made of wood, chicken wire or cardboard. In the early years of carnival krewe pageants, design illustrations were sent to Paris. Using papier mâché, artisans would create walking figures used in parades as well as props and decorative elements used for floats and balls – all of which were exported to New Orleans. The first carnival parade fabricated in New

[11] See the krewe's mission statement at http://joanofarcparade.org/who-we-are/mission/.

[12] In those days, however, the term 'Lundi Gras' wasn't used in reference to Rex's royal disembarkation.

Orleans was the Mistick Krewe of Comus' 1873 production, 'The Missing Links to Darwin's *Origin of Species*.'[13] Subsequently, papier mâché developed into a local industry synonymous with carnival and, more specifically, a traditional style of float design favoured by the 'old-line krewes' (Comus, Proteus, Momus, and Rex). Since the 1960s, however, it has been supplanted by more cost-effective and expedient techniques such as fiberglass sculpture. The throne float that conveys Rex, King of Carnival, is one of the few surviving floats using papier mâché.

4. 'Boeuf Gras,' which is French for 'fatted calf.' In nineteenth-century Paris, butchers would compete to see who could raise the biggest *boeuf gras*. The winning beast would be paraded through the streets on Mardi Gras, accompanied by butchers carrying the tools of their trade. A live bull led the very first Rex parade, in 1872. The krewe abandoned the tradition around the turn of the century and then restored it in 1959 as a papier-mâché caricature on a float. Maskers dressed as cooks can now be seen every Mardi Gras riding atop the krewe's signature Boeuf Gras float.

5. 'Flambeaux,' which is French for 'fuel-burning torches.' In the old days, night parades would include 200 to 300 flambeaux borne aloft by bands of robed and hooded black men.[14] For many, it is a patronizing remnant of a time when a rigid colour line generally restricted black participation in 'official' carnival festivities to carrying flambeaux or tending the mules that used to pull the floats. But despite any perceived stigma, and the fact that electric streetlights and illumination on the floats themselves long ago eliminated the practical necessity of flambeaux, the torches (albeit in far smaller numbers than in the late 1800s) are still a noteworthy feature of some carnival parades like Endymion or Bacchus.

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[13] According to *Mardi Gras Treasures: Float Designs of the Golden Age* by Henri Schindler, the krewemen were all on foot, "inside 100 wondrous papier-mâché animals, fish, flowers, insects and sea creatures, some of them twelve feet high" (Schindler 2001: 16).

[14] As described by Henri Schindler, "these ceremonial fires ringed every float, bathing them in clouds of intoxicating, pulsating magic" (Schindler 2001: 11).

6. 'Bal masque,' which is French for 'masked ball.' French colonizers of New Orleans revelled at fancy-dress and masquerade balls in the 1700s. Following a precedent set by the Mistick Krewe of Comus, elite Anglo carnival organizations also started to stage masked balls in the 1850s. During the so-called 'golden age' of carnival, from the 1870s through the 1920s, krewes went to extraordinary lengths to present pageants in which every last detail – as reflected in the costumes, ball décor and the design of the ball invitations – would coalesce in a sophisticated evocation of a theme. In the 1960s, as new krewes formed and opportunities for outsiders to partake in their functions increased, balls and parties assumed a variety of new guises: 'super-krewe' extravaganzas and other revels that jarred with the scripted tableaux and rigid protocols of old-line krewes. Even so, carnival galas usually retain at least some vestige of the traditional rituals established in the nineteenth century. Whatever the variation, masking, music and dancing have remained the crucial common denominators. Orpheus is the only one open to the public, all others are by invite from a krewe member.

7. 'Tableaux,' which is French for 'pictures.' Derived from European Renaissance court spectacles, so-called *tableaux vivants* became a popular form of theatrical amusement in nineteenth-century America. In a parlour or party setting, they could take the form of costumed guests striking poses while someone read dramatic verse. More elaborately staged productions combined theatrical scenery with a series of choreographed poses by a cast of costumed players. The carnival tableau tradition began in 1857, when the Mistick Krewe of Comus presented a tableau ball based on John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Since these staged scenes weren't accompanied by narration, ball guests received programs that provided explanatory context. Since the 20th century, 'tableau ball' has generally come to mean a ball featuring a krewe's presentation of its royal court.

Interestingly enough, three of the above-mentioned words ('tableaux,' 'bal masque,' 'Boeuf Gras') have been exclusively used by the Anglo-Protestant, old-line krewes, which used to criticize the French-speaking Creoles for their lax morals and festive habits. How can such a linguistic co-optation be accounted for? The answer to this question probably lies in late nineteenth-century carnival history,

when old-line krewes admitted elite Catholic, French-speaking Creoles to their ranks in order to combat a new threat – 'carpetbaggers' (i.e. people from the northern states of the United States who went to the South after the Civil War to profit from Reconstruction) and immigrants whose Catholicism was somehow deemed more distasteful than the one the rich Creole population had established in New Orleans (Schindler 1997: 43; Mitchell 1999: 43). Proteus is a great example of the American-Creole merger, since it was the first krewe with a Creole captain and a sizeable Creole population, indicative of the intermarrying between elite Americans and elite Creoles (Hardy 2014: 36). White Creoles barely opposed this double assimilation – to the English language and the Anglo carnival world. Financially ruined by the Civil War, their choice was to be white above all and to deny any common ground – let alone ancestry – with the free Creoles of colour: "Turning their backs on much of their own history, they rejected in the rush to whiteness the historic closeness, indeed interconnectedness, of the white and black creole communities" (Hirsch/Logsdon 1992: 98).

3.2 An Equally Striking Lack of Spanish or Religious Influence

While New Orleans's close association with its French heritage is well-known and makes the dearth of French words in the carnival glossary all the more conspicuous, one should not underestimate Spanish influence on the city either. Brief though it was (Spain held Louisiana for only two generations – in theory, from 1762 to 1800; in practice, from 1769 to 1803), the Spanish period in New Orleans was crucial to the creation of Afro-Louisiana culture. One of the great pioneers of New Orleans jazz, Jelly Roll Morton, often spoke about the importance of "that Spanish tinge" for jazz, and it is the *habanera* bass line which is at the heart of the famous New Orleans "second line" beat (Abrahams 2006: 31). Spanish hold on the city's architecture is also attested by New Orleans street names and streetscapes full of repeated arches, Arabesque ironwork and covered passageways – especially in the French Quarter.

Those roots notwithstanding, our search for Spanish-looking/ sounding words in the Mardi Gras lexicon only brought to light two words:

1. ‘Lagniappe,’ from Spanish ‘la ñapa,’ meaning something given as a bonus or gratuity.[15]

2. ‘Doubloons,’ from the Spanish word for a gold coin (‘doblón,’ so named because the coin was worth double the value of a pistole). Since their first introduction in Rex’s 1960 parade, these coin-like objects made of aluminium and tossed from floats by maskers typically bear a krewe’s emblem on one side and the theme of its parade on the other.

The essentially religious nature of Mardi Gras, an element which one would expect in a population of predominantly Catholic origin, is similarly understated. Two examples of carnival clubs whose names obviously have religious significance are the all-female Daughters of Eve, which paraded in New Orleans from 1973 to 1979, and the Krewe of Eve, which has been parading since 1986 in Mandeville – a city in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain. As for the Society of Saint Anne (founded in 1969), whose parades resemble the old Creole cavalcades that sprawled through New Orleans streets in the 1830s in their spontaneity and disorganization, its Catholic origins are too remote to be considered significant. According to Henri Schindler, the original members of the walking club only selected the name because they lived on St. Ann Street in the French Quarter and once stumbled upon a tomb in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 dedicated to the Société de Saint Anne, a benevolent society founded by the Sisters of Charity to assist indigent American Indian girls by teaching them to sew intricate beadwork, which provided a nice connection to the costuming practices of the members (Adler 2003).

If then the French, Spanish and more largely Catholic heritage of New Orleans is buried so deep in the layers of ‘Mardispeak,’ what are the trends actually exhibited by the carnival lexicon in the Crescent City?

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[15] The word, however, may be thought of as being more Cajun French or Louisiana Creole French than Spanish, as it is used primarily in the region influenced by New Orleans – and therefore Louisiana French – culture.

3.3 The Prevalence of Classical, Renaissance and Arabic References

The first inference that can be drawn from our analysis of krewe names and other carnival-related terms is the predominance of classical references in the terminology of New Orleans Mardi Gras. As a matter of fact, names of Greek and Latin origin form the largest single category of our corpus (about 70 percent). Since 1856, dozens of krewes have, for example, been named after individual Greek mythological figures, including Adonis, Apollo, Athena, Artemis, Bacchus, Comus (the god of festivity), Dionysus, Endymion, Eris (the goddess of discord), Eros, Eurydice, Hera, Hermes, Iris, Jason and the Argonauts, the Muses (which inspired both the recent Krewe of Muses and the much older Terpsichorean Revelers), Morpheus, the Naiads, Nemesis (the spirit of divine retribution against those who succumb to hubris), Nereus (an old sea god), Nyx (the female personification of the night, daughter of Chaos), Orion, Orpheus, Prometheus, the Titans and Zeus. Others have been named after Grecian city-states and regions – examples include the Achaeans, Athenians, Corinthians, Dorians and the Knights of Sparta. Only one figure from Greek history, Pericles, provided the name for a Ponchatoula krewe.

Among the figures from Latin mythology/mystery religion which provided names for krewes are Bacchus, Consus (a chthonic god in ancient Roman religion), Diana, Fortuna, Hermes, Janus, Jupiter and Venus. Two Roman historical figures, Caesar and Marc Anthony, respectively inspired a Metairie krewe in 1975 and a New Orleans festive organization in 1983–1984, while one St. Bernard Parish krewe chose the bellicose name 'Gladiators' in 1973.

Celtic mythology ('the Mystick Krewe of Druids,' 'the Krewe of Ancient Druids,' 'the Bards of Bohemia'), Arthurian legends ('the Krewe of Excalibur,' 'the Krewe of King Arthur and Merlin'), English folklore ('the Krewe of Tucks,' named after Friar Tuck, a character associated with Robin Hood) and Renaissance English literature have also influenced krewe naming. Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*, for instance, were the obvious source of inspiration behind the names of the late nineteenth-century Krewe of Falstaffians and Elves of Oberon.

Interestingly, the name of the oldest old-line krewe, the Mistick Krewe of Comus, combines both mythological and Renaissance English references.[16] In ancient mythology, Comus was the god of festivity and Dionysus's cup-bearer (later reinvented as the son of necromancer Circe and reveller Bacchus). But the Comus krewemen also drew their inspiration from the poetry of English Puritan John Milton. In his list of "persons" at the front of *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle*, written in 1634, the poet referred to "Comus and his crew". In another masque called "L'Allegro", he called upon Mirth to "admit me of thy crew". By adopting a whimsical, Greek-looking spelling of the word 'krewe' and giving a new, more festive, meaning to the Old English word 'crewe' (sixteenth-century English for 'a company of people'), the founders of Comus, who were of Anglo-American descent, obviously intended to give their carnival endeavour both a classical and Old English flavour. In a torch-lit procession on the night of Mardi Gras 1857, with two flats, brass bands and costumed maskers, the organization would go on to present 'The Demon Actors in Milton's *Paradise Lost*,' a theme carried through in the tableaux staged at its exclusive ball.[17]

One last, significant category of carnival clubs has names of actual or apparent Arabic, Mediterranean, or Near Eastern origin. Examples of designations inspired by this trend are the Krewes of Alla, Alhambra, Omarez, Mecca, Moslem (heir to the Arabs of Melsom and to the Krewe of Melsom, which paraded from 1935 to 1956), and the alliterative Caliphs of Cairo and Prophets of Persia. A dozen krewes

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[16] Such a combination was of course enabled by the fact that the Renaissance itself was characterized by a revival of interest in classical antiquity. One of the greatest achievements of the period was, after all, to bring an entire class of Greek cultural works (such as Homer's, Demosthenes' and Thucydides') back into Western Europe for the first time since the Middle Ages.

[17] Interestingly, in their quest for cultural legitimacy and social prestige, members of the highly elitist Krewe of Comus never seem to have questioned their choice of Milton as a proper patron, although the poet also rose to fame as the author of *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), in which he justified Parliament's execution of King Charles I and became the first European to argue that monarchy was an unacceptable form of government (Milton 1991).

selected names based upon the Egyptian or Persian pantheons. Examples of this influence are the Krewes of Amon-Ra (Egyptian sun god), Anubis (Egyptian god of mummification, protector of tombs, typically represented as having a dog's head), Isis (Egyptian goddess of fertility, wife of Osiris and mother of Horus), Mithras (Persian god that gave birth to a mystery religion in the Roman empire), Osiris (Egyptian god originally connected with fertility, whose death at the hands of his brother Seth restored him to a new life as ruler of the afterlife) and Thoth (Egyptian god often depicted as a man with the head of an ibis or baboon).

3.4 Hypotheses

While it is not exactly surprising that the classics provided names for carnival organizations and themes for parades in a city that hosts one of the largest clusters of nineteenth-century Greek Revival and Italianate homes in the United States,[18] named streets for the nine Muses of Greek mythology, and has a boulevard called 'Elysian Fields' (planned in the 1850s, it runs from the Mississippi River to Lake Pontchartrain in Faubourg Marigny, New Orleans's oldest suburb), one may wonder why this trend has perdured beyond the nineteenth century. We believe that the best explanation is that of a snowball effect. In other words, the themes and success of the early Mistick Krewe of Comus (1857), Rex, The Knights of Momus (1872) and

[18] The Greek Revival style, which was actually the fourth phase in the evolution of Classical Revival architecture in America – following the Georgian, Federal and Jeffersonian styles – was developed in the early nineteenth century and became dominant in the United States by the 1830s. In New Orleans it was popularized by New York architects James Gallier and Charles Dakin after their arrival in 1835. While the French and Creole residents of some of the older neighborhoods in New Orleans (such as the French Quarter, Faubourg Marigny and Treme) were largely unaffected by early American architectural styles, the wave of Americans who began to pour into the city after the signing of the Louisiana Purchase strongly identified with American architecture. As a result, Greek Revival style is common in neighborhoods that were developed by the newly arrived Americans.

Krewe of Proteus (1882) parades[19] exerted a strong influence upon dozens of subsequent carnival organizations and reinforced the bias towards the use of names from classical sources.

As for interest in Shakespeare at the turn of the twentieth century, it may be related to the fact that the Bard of Avon was part and parcel of nineteenth-century American culture, and that this period also coincided with the heyday of his popularity on the stage especially in the South, before this translation from stage to page confined him to elite culture (Levine 1988: 72; Vignaux 2010).

Broadly speaking, interest in English literature and folklore may have been prompted by the fact that leading citizens in New Orleans customarily sent their sons to England to be educated (at schools such as Westminster or Eton, and then on to the universities or the Inns of Court, i.e. each of the four legal societies having the exclusive right of admitting to the English bar), where they acquired English tastes in literature and drama.[20]

Explaining the predominance of Arabic words and imagery is harder. After all, immigration from the Middle East has always been small in America,[21] and very little documentation has been collected about the Lebanese and Arabs who settled in Louisiana between the late nineteenth and today, even though university communities have had Arab enclaves since at least the 1950s.[22]

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[19] In 1858 Comus presented a parade entitled 'Mythology.' It was followed by 'Homer's Iliad' in 1872 and 'The Metamorphoses of Ovid' in 1878. Rex depicted 'The Gods of Greece' in 1878, Momus gave 'Popular Myths' in 1881, and Proteus presented 'The Aeneid' in 1884.

[20] Shakespeare and Arthurian legends were not, however, confined to an elite in the nineteenth century. The McGuffey readers, widely used in schools after the Civil War, contained large excerpts from Shakespeare's plays as illustrations of rhetoric (Vignaux 2010).

[21] Although figures vary widely, one estimate is that by 1924, approximately 123,000 people had entered the United States from the region of Lebanon and Syria (Khalaf 1987: 17–35).

[22] Many of the early Lebanese immigrants arrived in Louisiana by way of New York, Canada, Mexico and South America, or entered through New Orleans, having bought package fares on French or American shipping lines. Their descendants, some with non-Lebanese surnames changed as a result of intermarriage with members of other ethnic groups, can be found in almost every city, town and farm community in the state (Saloom/Turner

Given how New Orleans has often "overlook[ed] or demoniz[ed] the actual representatives of [the cultures of the Arab world] here, the Egyptian and Palestinian and Syrian shopkeepers, taxi drivers – and poets and professors, engineers and doctors – of the city" (Hegazzi 2013: 88), it is safe to assume that the selection of Arabic and Near Eastern themes, guises and language did not arise so much from a desire to honour the Arab community in New Orleans as from a desire for the occult and the unusual. It mirrors krewes' fondness for the mysterious and the exotic.

Arabic influences on carnival imagery and onomastics may also be connected with the translation of *Arabian Nights* into English by British explorer and Arabist Richard Francis Burton in 1885 and with the nineteenth-century vogue for orientalism in Britain (as illustrated by Sir David Wilkie's and Pre-Raphaelite William Holman Hunt's paintings). Indeed, the first Arabic words and imagery emerged in the world of old-line krewes, whose world was, as stated earlier, permeated with British culture. For example, the first appearance of Rex in 1872 was heralded by a series of 'edicts' and 'proclamations' coloured by pseudo-Arabic terms and titles, ostensibly emanating from Arabia. They caught the popular fancy, and the custom of issuing 'edicts' couched in simulated Arabic terms has persisted to the present day. The Rex parade was headed by a mounted escort disguised as Arabs, who created something of a sensation at the time. Arabic themes for parades and balls were also utilized at an early date. Rex presented 'The Arabian Nights' in 1881, Momus depicted 'The Moors in Spain' in 1883, and Proteus – after giving 'A Dream of Egypt' in 1882 – cel-

1994). Ironically, most Arabs in New Orleans today are from the West Bank in Palestine and live on the West Bank of New Orleans. Egyptians and Syrians tend to live in Chalmette, New Orleans East and Arabi, where many young men from all over the Middle East live, five to a room, mostly single. Arabi used to be part of New Orleans until a constitutional conflict between the local Benevolent Butchers Association and the Crescent City Livestock Landing and Slaughter-House Company forced it to exile. It then took inspiration from international headlines abuzz with news about Colonel Ahmad Urabi – who founded the Egyptian National Party in 1872 and, ten years later, led an insurrection against the British – and renamed the town in his honor, 'Arabi' being another transliteration of his name (Hegazzi 2013).

ebrated its silver anniversary in 1906 with 'Inspirations of Proteus,' including floats such as 'Persian Romance' and 'Egyptian Myths.'[23]

3.5 Conclusion

As we hope the second part of this article has made clear, the relative paucity of French and Spanish words in the terminology of Mardi Gras and the contrasting prevalence of classical, Old English and Orientalist references are most likely related to the gradual ascendency of the English-speaking aristocracy in New Orleans after the 1840s. As such, Mardispeak testifies to the well-known takeover of carnival by the English-speaking elite in the mid-nineteenth century.

In the antebellum era, carnival street processions were mostly impromptu happenings. The key ingredients to 'Creole Mardi Gras' were masquerade balls, king cake soirées and spontaneous, generally disorganized and sometimes unruly cavorting in the streets – revelry that was, for the most part, racially unsegregated. By forming a social club for the purpose of planning a scripted parade and tableau ball, sociologist Kevin Fox Gotham writes in *Authentic New Orleans: Tourism, Culture and Race in the Big Easy* that Comus "rationalized the production of Carnival" (Gotham 2007: 31). One may add that, by appending the Latin-Catholic tradition of Mardi Gras masking to the monarchic and courtly rituals of Old Europe, the city's Anglo-American elite asserted its social dominance and reclaimed a sense of honour after the Civil War (Gill 1997). Consequently, Mardi Gras celebrations became a way for the city's Anglo-American elite to project cultural power and proclaim superiority over 'lesser mortals' who had assumed positions of authority in the aftermath of the 'War between the States.' Classical, Old English and Middle Eastern

[23] By then, the industry of Oriental tales was in full swing in America and the phrase 'as fantastic as anything in the *Arabian Nights*' and analogous similes served as shorthand for everything deemed astonishingly beautiful, richly luxurious or simply unbelievable (Nance 2009: 32). In 1893, old-line krewes finally had actual Arabs, Persians and Turks at the Chicago Columbian Exposition from which to seek inspiration and their shops from which to acquire clothing and objects.

references brought an outward varnish of cultural sophistication for a social stratum that was looking for both cultural capital and political legitimacy. Linguistic, cultural and political domination thus went hand in hand from the 1850s to, at least, the 1960s.

4. A Counter-narrative of Resistance

Studying 'Mardispeak' certainly enables to unearth the dynamics of power inherent to carnival. Those dynamics, however, cannot entirely be reduced to a narrative of domination. As specialists have often shown, carnival is not the unilateral creation of elites, not a victory for one social group over another, but a ritualized 'infra-political' space where these conflicts are contested. It circumvents dominant modes of representation and objectification and confronts the limitations of binary oppositions. To be as comprehensive as possible, therefore, our presentation must also focus on "primitive resistance" and look at the "hidden transcripts of the subordinate", which are mediums through which alternative social structures can be imagined (Scott 1990: 27).

4.1 Challenges to Old-line, White Dominance

The history of Mardi Gras in New Orleans does not end with the Anglo elite's appropriation and subsuming of Creole traditions. Since the 1960s, and especially since the 1990s, various social, economic and political trends have contributed to challenge the power of old-line krewes.

While the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which slowly enfranchised African Americans who had been largely shut out of municipal politics since the 1890s, may have begun to erode the ability of old-line white leaders to dominate New Orleans and its cultural life, of even greater significance was the subsequent political ascent of a predevelopment and socially progressive mayor, Moon Landrieu (1970–1978), who obtained federal funds for the revitalization of New Orleans' poor neighbourhoods and promoted the involvement of minori-

ty-owned businesses in the city's economic life. The combination of new leadership and outside investment launched projects like the Marriott, the Louisiana Superdome and the Moon Walk, a riverfront promenade facing the French Quarter, rendering the New Orleans carnival elite increasingly irrelevant in the city's development (Wall/ Rodrigue 2013).[24]

The simultaneous growth of 'super-krewes' like Endymion (created in 1966) and Bacchus (founded in 1968), defined by their size, spectacular floats and celebrity riders, turned carnival into a much more commercial, less exclusive, more democratic form of entertainment. In the 1980s, retailers and media companies alike set out to capitalize on the city's celebration. As early as 1987, the cable television channel MTV broadcast continuously from Bourbon Street during the height of carnival. The effort to commercialize Mardi Gras involved the municipal government and further marginalized the carnival 'aristocracy.'

Confirming the municipality's anti-elitist stance, the New Orleans City Council unanimously voted a landmark ordinance in December 1991 that sought to integrate the old-line carnival organizations by race and gender. This led the all-white, all-male krewes of Comus, Proteus and Momus to cease their public parades and to hold private balls instead.[25] Concurrently, Creole forces re-emerged in New Orleans's cultural life with efforts to beautify the French Quarter. This renewed Creole nationalism led to the creation of a 'Creole Disneyland' that responded to tourist expectations of what New Orleans

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[24] Indeed, reflecting his intolerance for the conservative carnival establishment, the young mayor warned the Krewe of Rex that if it did not invite at least a token number of African Americans to its ball, he would not exchange the customary toast with the king from the steps of Gallier Hall, once New Orleans's city hall (Souther 2006: 161).

[25] The ordinance was later found unconstitutional by two federal courts and Proteus did return in 2000, preceding Orpheus in its Lundi Gras night slot. In 2001, on the evening formerly known as 'Momus Thursday,' a krewe that looked very much like the Old Momus parade rolled out of the den that Momus shared with Comus and Proteus. This new krewe, which like Momus specialized in satire and which used Momus's former floats, was called the Knights of Chaos. It still parades today.

should be, rather than to elite concerns with 'authenticity' (Souther 2006: 159).

Last but not least, African-American carnival traditions – Mardi Gras Indian rituals, in particular – were rediscovered in the 1990s and 2000s, moving them from the peripheral areas of New Orleans to the world of museums and jazz festival performances. While not devoid of risk – according to art historian Cynthia Becker, Indians have been turned into "an ethnic commodity that symbolizes black New Orleans" (Becker 2013: 49) – such a move should be seen as yet another sign that white, old-line dominance of the world of carnival in New Orleans has essentially come to an end.

4.2 Greater Lexical and Onomastic Diversity

In line with such changes, krewe names have evolved and new words have entered the Mardi Gras lexicon. Some of these words are exclusively related to Mardi Gras Indian traditions, while others are part of the general African-American working-class Mardi Gras lexicon:

1. 'Humbah.' A Mardi Gras Indian command meaning 'bow down.' In the old days, before competition among Indians came to revolve around aesthetic considerations ('who's the prettiest?'), violence could erupt if an Indian refused a demand issued by a member of another tribe to 'Humbah!'

2. 'Humbug.' A term used by New Orleans's African-American community meaning trouble, argument or physical violence. In the context of Mardi Gras Indians, it refers to a confrontation with members of another tribe.

3. 'Gang flag' or 'flag boy.' In a Mardi Gras Indian tribe or 'gang,' he is responsible for relaying information or 'signals' to and from the big chief. He typically carries a decorated staff or totem emblazoned with the tribe's name. Specific gestures made with this 'stick,' as it is called, convey visual cues or instructions to members of the gang spread out along the line of march. Although normally positioned near the chief, he has plenty of ambulatory latitude, roaming wherever he deems fit to facilitate the flow of vital information.

4. 'Spyboy.' In a Mardi Gras Indian tribe, he functions as the eyes of the big chief. Usually stationed several blocks ahead of the chief, his job is to scout out or 'spy' other Mardi Gras Indian tribes in the vicinity, then signal the flagboy, who in turn relays the information to the chief. The chief then decides whether to meet the espied tribe or proceed in another direction, to search for other Indians. If someone masking Indian has a pair of binoculars around his neck, he's probably a spyboy.

5. 'Wildman.' A position in a Mardi Gras Indian tribe with specific duties relating to crowd control and protecting the big chief. Often seen moving from side to side across the line of march, his job is to clear the way or block Indians from others tribes from approaching his chief unless they have received the proper blessing to do so. An accomplished wildman is, above all else, a master of intimidation. With a rack of horns on his headdress, he'll sometimes charge through a crowd, bellowing in a loud voice and swinging a fearsome stick. If a humbug erupts, he's often the one to step in and play the role of peacekeeper.

6. 'Skull and Bones gangs.' A mysterious African-American folk tradition in which maskers, in the guise of skeletons, bring the spirits of the dead to the streets on Mardi Gras. Their costumes have a do-it-yourself quality consisting of black garb decorated with skeletal patterns, white aprons emblazoned with skull-and-crossbones imagery and portentous messages like 'You Next.' Traditionally, they roam the Tremé neighbourhood early on Mardi Gras morning. Amidst the frivolity of carnival, these 'bone gangs' or 'skeletons,' as they are sometimes called, are macabre signifiers of transience and mortality in a city haunted by a history of yellow fever, cholera epidemics and vengeful hurricanes.

7. 'Baby Dolls.' An informal sisterhood whose members dress in sexually titillating Baby Doll outfits – typically, short skirts, bloomers, satin blouses and bonnets tied under their chins with ribbons. The Baby Dolls of the early twentieth century were known for ribaldry and indeed, most of them hailed from Storyville – New Orleans's uptown red light district. Traditionally associated with the predominantly African-American carnival celebrations centered around the Tremé neighborhood, these promiscuous maskers dwindled in num-

ber and had become virtually extinct by the time Antoinette K-Doe set out to revive the tradition in 2004.[26]

8. 'Skylarking.' An expression used by flambeaux carriers (the majority of which is still African-American today) that means to ham it up, show off or provide amusement for parade spectators with dancing, jokes and repartee. Skylarking is usually done with the expectation of receiving gratuities from spectators.

As far as krewes are concerned, what is interesting is not so much the fact that dozens of new ones have joined the list in recent years as the fact that their names seem to follow a different set of rules.

French, Spanish and religious heritages continue to be remarkably absent from the Mardi Gras directory – with a few exceptions like the Mystick Krewe of Femme Fatale (2014–2015), the heavily satirical Krewe d'Etat (1998–2015) and the Krewe du Vieux subgroup Los Amigos de los Amigos (2009–2015), a group founded after Katrina by Antonio Garza, a multi-lingual teacher, writer and performance artist who grew up on the Texas/Mexico border.[27]

On the other hand, erudite, classical, literary references have been replaced with references stemming from popular culture (films, songs, best-selling novels). For instance, the name of the Intergalactic Krewe of Chewbacchus, which attracts science fiction, fantasy and cosplay fans, is an obvious reference to a beloved character from Star Wars, while the once all-female Krewe of Shangri-La was named after the mystic locale in James Hilton's 1933 novel *Lost Horizon*. As for the Krewe of the Rollin' Elvi (est. 2003), it is a yearly, scooter-motored tribute to the 'king of rock-n-roll,' Elvis Presley.

Often, these popular cultural references are combined with classical references in an obvious nose-thumbing gesture at old-line

[26] Antoinette K-Doe died of a heart attack at the headquarters of her Baby Dolls revival, in the early morning hours of Mardi Gras 2009.

[27] But even this krewe seems less interested in paying homage to the city's Spanish colonial past than in honoring its Latin American roots. Los Amigos de Los Amigos's first annual parade, called a 'Marching Fiesta,' thus proceeded past major cultural sites that recalled New Orleans's history as the 'Gateway to the Americas' at a time (the 1970s–1980s) when the port was a major trans-shipment zone with Cuba, Mexico, and Central America, importing/exporting lumber and bananas and political regimes (Trujillo-Pagán 2007: 95–96).

krewes or bourgeois super-krewes. Examples include the BacchanAliens (another word for members of the Krewe of Chewbacchus), the dog-centered Krewe of Barkus as well as New Orleans's only 'micro-krewe' 'Tit R∂x (which locked horns with Rex in 2011 over the issue of 'name/brand protection').

Another trend in krewe onomastics consists in honouring the geography of New Orleans rather than looking elsewhere for inspiration. This is, of course, not entirely new. For example, the Krewes of Carrollton and Mid-City, which are made up of men and women living in those particular sections of New Orleans, were created in 1924 and 1933, respectively, while the now-defunct children's Krewe of NOR (New Orleans Romance) was formed in 1933 by employees of the city's Convention and Visitors Bureau. But the trend has definitely been reinforced since World War II. Recent geography-based names include: 'Nolamiss,' short for New Orleans Miss, another children's krewe formed in the 1970s; 'Krewe du Vieux,' short for Krewe du Vieux Carré (1987–2015); 'Alla,' 'Grela' and 'Jefla.' Though a conscious effort seems to have been made to produce an Arabic effect, these names were actually formed by taking the first syllable of the suburb in which the members of the krewes live (Algiers, Gretna and Jefferson, respectively) and combining it with the standard abbreviation for Louisiana. Muses (established in 2000) sits at the crossroads of two traditions. While the strictly female krewe's name takes its name from the Greek spirits that inspired gods and mortals alike – Calliope (muse of epic deeds), Clio (muse of history), Erato (muse of lovers), Euterpe (muse of songs), Melpomene (muse of dark thoughts), Polyhymnia (muse of sacred music), Terpsichore (muse of dance), Thalia (muse of joy and beauty) and Urania (muse of the stars) – these are also the names of streets in New Orleans, thus demonstrating an interest in honouring the local geography of the city.

Parallel to this shift towards localization, two concurrent phenomena (globalization and multiculturalism) have led to the inclusion of new deities outside the traditional Greek, Roman and Egyptian religious pantheons. The child-friendly Krewe of Oshun (1996–2015), for instance, was named for the Yoruban goddess of love, fountains and wealth. This may either be interpreted as a way to recognize the historical impact of the Yoruba people (who live in western Ni-

geria and in Benin) on the beginning and development of African-American culture, or as an illustration of the influence of Santería, a Hispanic-influenced West African and Caribbean faith, on local religious practices in New Orleans (most notably nineteenth-century 'voodooism'). As for the gay Krewe of Yuga, created in 1958, its name referenced the Kali Yuga of Hindu mythology, i.e. the last of the four stages the world goes through as part of the cycle of yugas described in the Sanskrit scriptures, as if to celebrate its difference from traditional merry-making organizations in New Orleans while prompting the city to enter a new era of tolerance.

4.3 Conclusion

'Mardispeak' is thus a fluid entity that tells a twofold story: from 1857 to the 1960s, a story of domination by a white male Anglo-American elite desiring to erase a humiliating military defeat; since the 1960s, a story of resistance by proponents of more democratic, more open (but also more commercial) carnival celebrations. As such, it constitutes a perfect window on the process of the evolving power dynamics of the city, from Jim Crow to the post-civil rights era. Ultimately, it also says something about the applicability of the word 'creolization' to New Orleans.

5. Overall Conclusion

Whether in Mikhail Bakhtin's study of European Renaissance carnival or in Edouard Glissant's development of the notion of 'antillanité,' based on parallels between the history and culture of the Creole Caribbean and those of Latin America and the plantation culture of the American South, talking about the past is but a way of envisioning a brighter future. Ironically enough for scholars as concerned with plurality, polyphony and dialogism as Bakhtin and Glissant both were, their interpretations of either carnival as the victory of 'low' (i.e. folk), over 'high' (i.e. sanctioned) culture, or of creolization as a limitless *métissage*, often succumb to the monologic. As far as the

former is concerned, this may have to do with the fact that *Rabelais and His World*'s valorisation of popular culture was largely meant as a veiled critique of Stalinism. In Glissant's case, this may be due to "a major shift in his priorities," which later in life led him to embrace Deleuze's "smoothly nomadological philosophy" and arrive at a theory of "la relation" defined precisely by its elimination of relations with or between specific, positioned individuals (Hallward 1998: 441).

We believe a return to dialogism is essential to the understanding of cultural formation processes in New Orleans – by which we mean moving beyond such concepts as hybridity and syncretism to incorporate issues of dominance and resistance. Returning to the original meaning of the term 'creolization' – i.e. 'the formation of a dialect from the contact of a European language with a local language,' we think it necessary to reflect on how pressures to conform can energize what may best be described as 'antagonistic creolization' (a concept coined by German culture historian Berndt Ostendorf).

Studying Mardispeak is a great first step in that direction, inasmuch as it forces us to consider two conflicting movements: the Americanization of New Orleans's festive terminology and the converse globalization of its references, in line with the general evolution of the city since the nineteenth century. A more systematic examination of the history of Mardi Gras is now needed in order to fully get rid of clichéd images of New Orleans as a 'gumbo of influences' in which all ingredients (including languages) mix together perfectly. In our view, only when the political dimension of cultural processes is fully taken into account by specialists of New Orleans will the concept of 'creolization' be usable (and useful) again in that locale.

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Rosary O'Neill
(New York)

Birth of the Carnival Krewes[1]

Revelry in Antebellum New Orleans

Have you ever wondered how New Orleans evolved into the Mardi Gras capital of America – how it became the party city par excellence where jazz bands salute balls and parades and where people cry at weddings and laugh at funerals?

The purpose of carnival is to forget problems. New Orleans is called the Big Easy, and its motto is the French phrase *Laissez les bons temps rouler* (let the good times roll). In the hot and steamy river city, locals look for ways to distract themselves from crime, heat and hurricanes. A carnival mentality lifts the spirits.

In this chapter, we'll see how this passion for parties and pageantry began in the river city, how its illustrious and not-so-illustrious founders created a climate ripe for revelry and how carnival krewes crystallized the locals' absorption in festivities and glamour. Just as clothes make the man, history makes New Orleans carnival.

Origin of Carnival in Europe

For centuries, Roman Catholic countries have celebrated carnival (Latin for 'farewell to flesh') before Lent (the period of fasting before Easter) with boisterous éclat. Carnival was the season for 'aristocratic' banquets, ballets, court spectacles, parades and masked balls.

France introduced carnival to North America. As early as 1512, the French Court celebrated with a parade in which a fat ox, followed by a triumphal car carrying a child called 'King of the Butchers,' led an elaborate procession. This parade on the day before Ash Wednesday,

[1] This is the first chapter of the book by Rosary O'Neill: *New Orleans Carnival Krewes: The History, Spirit and Secrets of Mardi Gras*. Charleston: History Press 2014.

which initiates Lent, stimulated that day's designation as Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday).

French aristocrats also sponsored carnival parades of huge, grotesque papier-mâché animals and monsters. Masked carnival balls were added as a private medium for the display of elegance. During the early 1700s, these masked balls were given three times weekly in Paris from November until the end of carnival.

The nobility's spectacular, extravagant carnival balls and street processions helped to kindle the fires of the French Revolution. As monarchical rule declined and carnival festivities lost favor (only a few parades are still active in the great cities of Europe), revels mushroomed in New Orleans, now the most renowned city for Mardi Gras.

Carnival has been celebrated since the city's founding as a French colony. During the rule of the Marquis de Vaudreuil (1741–51), all classes imitated his magnificent masquerade balls. Merriment in this port city ripened it for the flowering of carnival.

Enchanting History

New Orleans attracted the rich and the dreamers. From 1718 to 1860, aristocrats and would-be aristocrats had birthed and fanned the need for elegance and romance there. Surrounded by waterways, not the least of which are the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River, New Orleans is the natural stop for the glamorous adventurer.

Few cities claim the devotion of their natives like New Orleans. The city is lush and beautiful (not much of the historic part having been destroyed by hurricanes or wars). The same stunning sights that greeted your ancestors will greet you today: tropical foliage and luxurious balconies, floor-to-ceiling windows, banana trees and palms, large verandas and houses of pale pastels (pink, yellow and green) to reflect the sun.

Creole cottages, Greek Revival mansions and shotgun and camelback houses have survived the storms, and people delight in the beauty of this city built below sea level and out of the swamps. From the outset, New Orleanians have had a *joie de vivre* and a cause to cele-

brate. At Mardi Gras, people can be kings or queens and act out their dreams. Fantasy dominates the culture.

Inclement weather and beauty fuel allusions to the past − to mystery and secrecy. Natives pride themselves on the works of their ancestors (real and fabricated), especially their French, Spanish and American forebears who built the French Quarter, the Garden District, Faubourg Marigny, Esplanade Avenue, St. Charles Avenue, Exposition Boulevard, Audubon Park, City Park and plantations upriver.

Although New Orleans, like the rest of American cities, did not have a 'native aristocracy,' since olden times, New Orleanians have fantasized it so. They have cherished an image of family dynasties and of plantations along the Mississippi River as feudal estates where the planter was once king. Many claim descent from aristocrats, although the majority of the city's first settlers were refugees, commoners and ex-convicts. The city did have some aristocratic founders. And although these adventurers and exiles were few, they disseminated in New Orleanians a pride and a love of festivity that would swell over time.

French Culture

In particular, New Orleanians like to connect themselves to the French. Mardi Gras is the celebratory day preceding the Catholic Lent. Many streets in the French Quarter or Vieux Carré are named for famous French ancestors like La Salle, Bienville and Iberville. The first of these wealthy aristocrats, René-Robert Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle, took possession of the vast territory in 1682 and christened it La Louisiane in honor of Louis XIV. In 1699, Canadian nobleman Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville founded the first Louisiana colony at Biloxi and then left his twenty-two-year-old brother, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, in command. Bienville moved the seat of government from inaccessible Biloxi to the banks of the Mississippi and named the town for the Duc d'Orléans.

John Law, a Scotsman who controlled projects for the French, lured nobles with tales of New Orleans's streets of gold. Some stayed, determined to recreate the lifestyle of France in New Orleans. Other

aristocrats, exiles out of favor with the Regency, fled to New Orleans to avoid incarceration. These embittered Frenchmen tried to establish a culture that would outshine Paris. Their wives did their utmost to give social life the flavor of Versailles. The 'casket girls,' so named because the government furnished each with a cassette (casket) containing clothing and useful articles, were from fairly good French stock. The 'correction girls,' however, came from La Salpêtrière, a Paris house of correction. These girls escaped their past by marrying into the best circles of the new society, for the scarcity of women enhanced their value. As time passed, New Orleans's French families, overlooking the correction girls, traced their ancestry to the aristocracy or the casket girls. A mathematically minded New Orleanian once estimated that if all such claims were correct, each 'casket girl' bore 162 children. Most French immigrants were peasants, soldiers, criminals and indentured servants sold into short-term slavery. Some became wigmakers or billiard-keepers, while others transformed themselves into prosperous local Creole aristocrats. Non-French immigrants adopted local French traditions. The largest group − sturdy, unspectacular Germans − settled on farms. Many changed their surnames when registering in the city (Zweig became La Branch, Reinhardt became Reynaud) and married into Creole families. Gradually, the number of Germans dwindled, and the number of Creoles grew.

African Americans arrived in 1719, when the Compagnie de l'Occident sold to colonists a large shipment of slaves on three years' credit. At first, slaves were imported at three hundred to five hundred annually, but that number quickly grew into the thousands. Absorbing much French culture, slaves spoke a soft patois called 'Gombo French,' adopted the names of their Creole owners and prided themselves on being Creole Africans. By assimilating all, French New Orleans developed a unique lifestyle.

From 1718 to 1762, New Orleans was the center of all French commercial and cultural activity in the Americas. It burgeoned into the largest southern port, rivaled only by New York in productivity and wealth. Catholicism furthered the homogeneity of New Orleans society. Jesuit missionaries came with Bienville, and the Capuchins followed in 1722. In 1724, Bienville published the first Black Code, expelling Jews from Louisiana and prohibiting all religions other than

Catholicism. The Catholic Church spiritually dominated the city until the Louisiana Purchase.

By 1743, Marquis de Vaudreuil took Bienville's post as governor of 2,500 New Orleanians and transformed the city into a miniature French court. He furnished locals with titles and insisted on polished manners and refined speech. He held court as a king rather than a governor, and his wife, fifteen years his senior, set fashions for the colony's ladies. Imitating the style of Louis XV, both were devoted to pomp, pleasure, magnificent balls and dinners on gold plates. At certain festivities, fountains of wine flowed in the Place d'Armes so that all soldiers and citizens could join in the celebration. By 1764, an haute society thrived in New Orleans and nearby plantations. Balls and soirees, promenades, card parties and magnificent banquets in the French mode had become the rule.

For one hundred years, the Creoles lauded extravagance. Wealthy families strove to imitate French splendor. Plantations were called Versailles and Fontainebleau. Modest Creole houses were decorated with costly imported furnishings. Sons went to France for education, and wives ordered gowns and jewels from Paris. African slaves provided for all bodily comforts and did the actual work.

Spanish-French Culture

New Orleanians' pride in their heritage took a temporary reversal when the Spaniards took over. In 1764, at the end of the Seven Years' War, distraught inhabitants learned that Louis XV had 'abandoned' the Louisiana territory to his cousin Charles. Initial reaction to Spanish rule was hurt and indignation. During the rebellion of 1768, the Creoles slashed the moorings of the Spanish governor Antonio de Ulloa's ship, which carried him away to Cuba.

The Spanish epoch ended with absorption of Spanish into French culture and a compromise. The word 'Creole,' which had referred to French natives of New Orleans, came to mean those of French and Spanish descent. The Spanish and French were congruent cultures. The French admired the next governor, General O'Reilly, who gov-

erned understandingly, publishing laws in both French and Spanish and totally reconstructing and beautifying the city.

The Spanish took up residences next to the French in the Vieux Carré, and 'Creolizing' the Spanish through marriage quickened. O'Reilly's successor, Don Luis de Unzaga, married a French-Creole woman. Throughout Spanish rule (1769–1803), marriages between members of all levels of Spanish and French society continued.

In 1788, a fire destroyed most of the old French Quarter structures. O'Reilly and later Spanish governors replaced them with lovely solid buildings with the arches, hidden patios and overhanging balconies with iron lacework that compose the Vieux Carré today.

New Orleans remained the capital of Louisiana and Catholicism the sole religion. By 1800, a French-Spanish or 'Creole' lifestyle flourished among the seven thousand inhabitants.

American Culture

The Creoles' pride was again punctured, only to be reinflated by the Americans. The Creoles were French-Spanish; they felt European and paid homage to their ancestors and traditions of revelry and grace. But the European heritage that would be heralded by the carnival krewes was disrupted. In 1803, Charles IV, in mortal terror of Napoleon Bonaparte, returned New Orleans to France. Bonaparte in turn sold Louisiana to the United States, giving control of the city and her neighboring plantations to the Americans.

At first horrified, the invaders ultimately impressed the Creoles. The Americans were even more extravagant than the Creoles. They built their own town across the city moat and opposite the French Quarter. Canal Street became the dividing line between two styles of architecture and cultures. By 1836, the Americans had split the city and its 85,000 inhabitants into a Creole district, an American district and a third loosely populated *faubourg* downriver. The American district emerged as New Orleans's pivotal commercial and residential section. Streets were paved, wharves built and churches, banks, hotels and theaters, daring in size and magnificence, thrown up in the 'great quagmire' (the Creoles' contemptuous term for the American

section). By 1850, a glamorous American residential area, the Garden District, lorded over the city, which now swarmed with 116,375 people.

Built on rich silt deposited during flood periods, the district became a paradise of magnolias, live oaks, palm trees and flowering vines. Houses, half concealed among lush foliage, dominated large lots of a city block or more and were planted with jasmines, camellias, mimosa, crepe myrtle, irises and roses.

Wealthy Americans built Greek Revival mansions that boasted twenty or more rooms with eighteen-foot ceilings, tall French windows and double doors. Furnishings were purchased abroad or from the local shops selling the remnants of Creole grandeur.

In 1850, state officials claimed that New Orleans was a bad influence on legislators and moved the capital to Baton Rouge. Creoles and Americans who remained insisted that the city did not need to be a capital. Was New Orleans not the fourth-largest American city and the wealthiest port, surpassed only by London, Liverpool and New York?

By 1860, the Americans had developed a fierce, insular pride that matched that of the Creoles. Being Protestant was revered as much as being Catholic. Initially, the Creoles abhorred religious toleration. But as the heavily Protestant Americans grew prosperous, so, too, did their religion.

The Americans' city hall became the seat of power. Eventually, only a few Creole mansions remained – among them the building that today houses the Boston Club. Many Creole plantations also passed into American hands. Americans began to feel that the city's social structure rested more on heritage and good breeding than on material possessions. By the 1850s, the balls and receptions of the Garden District had surpassed the Creoles' festivities in grandeur. Americans proclaimed their uniqueness as New Orleanians of a tripartite heritage: Spanish-French-American.

The Civil War cemented New Orleanians together. They revered their city as a citadel that, had it not been for the Yankees, would have equaled New York. The city itself wasn't destroyed, but Federal forces occupied it. After the war, citizens indulged in a swelling feeling

of superiority − not because they were French, Spanish or American but because they were New Orleanians.

Penchant for Elegance

The New Orleanian from 1699 to 1800 was basically unlearned. He lived for sensation rather than reflection, enjoying balls and dances and busying himself with the social demands of his family. In 1832, the city had only three libraries – 'bookstores containing the worst description of French literature' − whereas New Orleans had 'ample means for eating, playing, dancing, and making love.'

Educational facilities for men were severely neglected, especially before 1803, and most boys did little studying anywhere. The few young men sent to France often spent more time in the brilliant society of Paris than in university halls.

Society's emphasis on a life of sensation condemned girls to careers of appearing beautiful. As late as February 7, 1836, the New Orleans newspaper *L'Abeille* claimed that knowledge in women was deemed to be a disgrace or derogation from their utility. The psychology of a girl's rearing was to transform her into a limp beauty of doubtful intellect, incapable of making any decision. A girl never saw her mother with a shiny face, pulled-back hair and utilitarian clothing. She flaunted abroad in robes of velvet and damask, ornamented with the most costly ribbons. She painted and rouged to hide the ravages of time. Educational facilities for women were severely limited. The Ursulines and private tutors taught Creole girls sporadically. American girls were briefly trained by schoolmistresses or sent for two-year stays in northern institutions. A genteel girl was allowed to read little except newspapers and novels. If unmarried at twenty-five, she was considered a hopeless spinster and forced to adopt the attire of the old maid − a hooded bonnet with ribbons tied under the chin and a plain, shapeless dress − and 'mother' her nieces and nephews.

Love of Romance

New Orleans is a town of extravagant colors, proliferating foliage and flooding sunlight counterpointed by warm haze. There, imagination reigns unchecked; nothing elegant seems improbable.

Planters were romantics. Their mansions outside the city were classic in design and architecture and decorated with magnificent imported furnishings. Their town houses, where families spent the social and musical season, were equally exquisite.

The upper-class man lolled on his verandas, under his oaks or at his dining room table, dreaming. African slaves were forced to accommodate themselves to this white romanticism. Slaves of masters who wanted 'grand circumstances' naturally catered to them. Thus, slaves who encouraged their master's every fancy and constantly enhanced his feeling of power would surround the upper-class man. From his earliest days, when he had been nursed and waited upon by adult African slaves, the gentleman was buoyed up in his romantic self-image by the accommodating gestures, emotions and ideas of enslaved Africans. Perhaps more than any other cause, slavery was responsible for the blossoming of the Louisiana gentleman's self-centered romanticism and the emergence of his penchant for elegance.

Only certain professions were condoned: the planter, the business magnate, the banker, the capitalist, the physician, the broker, the lawyer or the political chieftain. No 'gentleman' could work with his hands or even remove his coat.

Glamorous Holidays

The gentleman could display his person, his presence, his magnificent dress, his flawless deportment, his magnetic charm and his impeccable taste primarily in cultivated entertainments. From 1718 to 1800, feast days, visits, weddings and nearly any occasion provided opportunities for celebration. Americans expanded celebrations initiated by the Creoles. Baptisms, name days, birthdays, anniversaries and holy days in upper-class households were rich ceremonial affairs

that offered the opportunity for a glamorous reception or an elaborate meal for host and guests.

Before the Civil War, visits made by whole families often lasted a week or even a month. To entertain and feed guests lavishly was normal. Every self-respecting household owned a dinner service, with silver and glassware to match, for at least twenty-four. A midnight snack might consist of a dozen items, including gumbo, hot meats, cold meats, salads, gelatins, fruitcakes, charlottes russes, whipped-cream delicacies garnished with red cherries, caramel, sherbet and ice cream. For important visitors, plantations transported famous chefs. Weddings provided unequaled occasions for elegance. In the early 1800s, one planter freed a cargo of spiders from the Orient to spin a cloud of webs among the branches of his estate and had enslaved Africans sprinkle them with gold and silver dust so that a wedding procession could wind its way to a magnificent altar before the mansion.

Theater and Balls

Theater in early New Orleans provided locals a dynamic means for display. As early as 1743, the Marquis de Vaudreuil sponsored elaborate dramatic entertainments for his friends. From its origin, theatrical presentation included an ensuing ball. Ballroom proprietors underwrote the city's first three theaters − the Saint Peter Street Theatre of the Domingo Players (1792), the Saint Phillip Street Theatre (1808) and the Orleans Theatre (1810) − all of which had parquets, boxes, loges, grilles and galleries.

Although the Theatre d'Orleans had the finest play production in America, it was renowned locally for sponsoring the select Creole balls. Inside the building and connected to the theater were the Orleans Ball and Supper Rooms. Sometimes, the theater itself was floored over and the entire house converted into a brilliantly lit ballroom. Any citizen with social pretensions had to be seen in costume de rigueur at the grand Theatre d'Orleans.

To compete with the Creole theaters, in 1824, the Americans sponsored their own glamorous Camp Street Theatre, which featured

leading American stars. But the Camp Street Theatre did not have ballroom facilities, and stars played to empty houses when balls enticed clients elsewhere. The attractiveness of a theater was tied to the magnificence of its ballrooms, where upper-class citizens could participate in rather than just view the amusement. So the Americans built the palatial Saint Charles Theatre in their Garden District.

In addition to theater facilities, the Saint Charles featured an immense ballroom, a hotel, a restaurant, a bathhouse, a saloon and a cigar divan. However, the Saint Charles Theatre was soon surpassed in elegance by the Creoles' Saint Louis Hotel (1838), which provided limited theater facilities but boasted a suite of ballrooms unequalled in size, beauty and exquisiteness.

It is noteworthy that the Saint Charles and Saint Louis theater-hotels, renowned for their splendid theatrical and ball entertainments, were equally esteemed for their slave markets. In fact, they were among the most famous on the continent. Slaves were sold every day in the rotundas of the Saint Louis and Saint Charles hotels. Mounted on a platform, the auctioneer shouted above the chat of dry goods wholesalers, retailers, commission merchants, sugar brokers and other traders engaged in business transactions. A unique feature of these markets was the custom of dressing up the slaves to be sold in large, colorful hats and lustrous pink, brilliant red and flashing blue-and-white uniforms. Nowhere else in the South was such glorification applied to this kind of promenade. Thus, the local penchant for elegance before 1860 was pursued even in this flagrant display of the subjugation of the African.

Opera

Like anywhere else in the country, New Orleanians numbed themselves to the atrocities of the slave market and slavery. New Orleans was a port town full of glamour, distraction and music. Along with great theater, antebellum New Orleans offered the best opera in America. And the operatic world of Europe, alive to this opportunity, courted the city to introduce operas to America. From 1800 to the Civil War, New Orleans was the only American city to continuously

maintain an opera company. Often as many as three opera companies flourished simultaneously.

The popularity of opera was based on the Creoles' and, later, the Americans' establishment of it as the occasion of a girl's acceptance into elegant society. The same families who sent sons to study abroad, particularly in France, prepared for a daughter's initial appearance at the opera. Before 1860, to not be a subscriber at the opera led to condemnation as a person devoid of taste. Frequent appearances there, particularly on grand opera nights, elicited hospitable reception into the best circles.

Although parties might subsequently be given for her, a girl's first appearance at the opera constituted her admission into society. During this event, similar to a debut, the young lady, in an imported Paris gown and carrying a bouquet with long ribbon streamers and a fine-lace fan, patronized the opera and received callers in the box rented for the performance.

The majority of theaters that sponsored operas could not have survived without profitable ballrooms, as balls were used to lure people to the opera. For example, an opera ticket might entitle its holder to attend the ball free of charge. Maskers at fancy-dress balls often rented costumes from the opera house and thus supplied revenue to its hard-pressed management.

However, the opera finally declined because of the balls. By the 1850s, most balls were connected with carnival, the heart of the social season. The elegance formerly attendant upon 'making a debut' at the opera could now be displayed in a girl's appearance and 'debut' at balls during carnival. After the Civil War, New Orleans opera companies lost preeminence among the distinguished operatic groups in the United States, and the carnival organizations became the recognized vehicles for elegance.

Ballets and Concerts

Like opera, ballets and concerts were closely associated with balls. Nearly every concert before 1830 was coupled with a ball. Often, a ball held in the theater followed a ballet. At other times, the curtain

would rise at an inconveniently early hour to allow the concert or ballet to end in time for dancing. By the 1850s, throughout the winter season, halls could not be found for many concerts and ballets since all were solidly booked with balls. New Orleanians' fascination with elegant operas, ballets and concerts was grounded in their connection with balls. The birth of carnival organizations, which incorporated music and dance drama in their tableaux, led to the death of operas, ballets and concerts.

Creolization II
Music and More

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"Do You Know What It Means …" The Myth Called New Orleans in Jazz History, its Origin and its Influence on Jazz up to the Present Day

History is a funny thing. It simplifies complex developments in an attempt to make them comprehensible. Take the beginning of jazz for example. Jazz was born in New Orleans, as we read in so many history books, a city with a rich and varied history which was a melting pot of cultures. Jazz, we learn, took ingredients from all of these cultures and mixed them together, thus inventing a musical style that could not have been formed anywhere else. Jazz's birth, we learn, is firmly bound to the place, time and social environment of New Orleans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Now look more closely. Yes, New Orleans had a peculiar political and cultural structure. The social relationship between the many ethnicities inhabiting the city – Spanish, French, all sorts of British (including Irish and Scottish), German, Mexican, Canadian (= Acadian or Cajun), Caribbean, African, indigenous and native American and everything beyond and in between – the social relationship between these groups was more open than in many other places in the United States. One reason for this was the long history of the city which had known changes in its ruling parties, even the ruling countries and their respective legal customs. Another reason was New Orleans's position as a major harbor, an international trade hub (for goods as well as slaves) with connections to other federal states, to Latin American countries, to Africa and old Europe. This was a different kind of crowd than you would later see or meet in Chicago or in Kansas City. New Orleans was probably the most international city of its kind in the New World.

And everybody brought their own culture. Henry Arnold Kmen's *Music in New Orleans* sets the picture. "The story of music in New

Orleans," he begins his book, "must begin with dancing" (Kmen 1966: 3). Let's remember this, as dancing is clearly one of the ingredients for our melting pot – a mutual form of entertainment which keeps memories of home alive and at the same time allows others in. You don't dance by yourself, you dance with a partner, and you rather dance with others who join the fun. Kmen pictures the balls which were held in the early 1800s, balls that were fun as well as social events, balls that marked class, influence, power. Formal balls and public dance halls proved to be a class-transcending form of entertainment, although the splendor of the upper class events clearly spilled down to the cheaper festivities. The dances were gavottes, cotillions, waltzes as well as the English and the French quadrille. Soon these dances were taken up by the non-white population as well, so-called Quadroon Balls frequented by free colored citizens but often also admitting slaves. And, of course, jazz history is full of stories about Circus Square, better known as Congo Square, where the city government had approved Sunday 'negro dancing' under police supervision. In the early reports about the dancing in Congo Square we see a similar response to the new forms of social entertainment as we would see later when jazz came to Europe in the 1920s. What most impressed the eye-witnesses was the dancing, slow or wild, leaps or circle dances, accompanied by percussive music beaten out on drums and banjos, with the lines of the lead singer followed by responsive chants from the crowd (one of many examples can be found in the travel reports of Christian Schultz, see Schultz 1810: 197).

There was opera and classical music in New Orleans in the nineteenth century as well (see Baron 2013). The city, after all, had the first opera house – and soon two of them, even – in the United States and was proud of staging major works shortly after they had been premiered in Europe. The influence of opera on jazz is both direct and indirect. The orchestras brought many good musicians to the city who served as teachers to a number of later jazz players; the opera also provided a common vocabulary New Orleanians would be familiar with, not so much different from how in Italy arias could become a hit, whistled by the working man on the street. Louis Armstrong is the best example for the influence of opera on jazz: not so much a di-

rect impact as in the dramatic conception of his solos, in his emphasis on melody, in his awareness of musical effects.

Dance, opera, African traditions … add to these the many ethnic music traditions brought along by citizens as well as visitors to the city. Add Scottish reels, Irish jigs, German choirs and much more, and you get a picture of what actually goes into the melting pot jazz history books like to start their narratives with.

Fast forward to the year 1994 and my own first personal visit to the Crescent City. It must have been in August or early September. It was a hot and humid day when I arrived. My friend Scott met me at the airport and took me into town. We wandered around the French Quarter, a drink in our hands, and I was emotionally shaken by the experience of finally being in the city I had read so much about – a city which was home to the music that was at the center of my life. In the evening we went home. Scott lived on Burgundy Street, a small backyard house which used to be the slave servants' quarter to the main house. Two stories, a balcony, a small garden with banana plants, fans turning in the tiny rooms to each side of the staircase. I remember falling asleep with an open window – as a European I was not accustomed to air conditioning – listening to the sounds that mingled in the night. And I remember waking up, sweaty from the subtropical heat, hearing the calliope from a Mississippi steam boat down by the river.

Wait … a calliope? How could I hear the calliope so clearly which was a mile away? I recalled that famous legend about Buddy Bolden whose cornet could supposedly be heard across Lake Pontchatrain. And then it struck me: My one-sided reading had understood the image of the melting pot as a social and cultural phenomenon while I had completely left out a climate component of this image. Sound travels differently in humidity than in dry air. A subtropical climate, houses with cooling courtyards, enormously well-carrying acoustics and an ethnical mix of residents as was custom in the days; all of this in a time when you didn't close your windows in the summer but opened them widely … You hear songs, drums, the calliope, street musicians or just the street noises over blocks of houses – mixed in a mush of sound which makes the melting pot tangible as an acoustic phenomenon.

Creoles

In her essay on the formation of Afro-Creole culture, Gwendolyn Midlo Hall (1992) runs down the different meanings of 'creole' over the years in American history. She explains the origin in the Portuguese 'crioulo,' meaning a slave of African descent born in the New World, its extension to include Europeans born in the New World, its meaning in the Spanish and French colonies where 'creole' distinguished American-born from African-born slaves. She explains how "the Latin-American elite born in the Americas was called the creole elite and was accused of being incapable of self-rule in part because of its racially mixed heritage," and how "rejecting this heritage, the creole elite of Latin America redefined the word creole to mean people of *exclusively* European descent born in the Americas" (Hall 1992: 60; my emphasis). This understanding was strengthened by writings such as George Washington Cable's *The Creoles of Louisiana* (Cable 1884), endorsing an all-white definition of creole, although in other essays Cable opened up the understanding by referring to white purity being softened by real world necessities (Tregle 1992: 175). The fact that many people of color were identified as 'creoles' was excused for a while as a terminological error to be attributed to "the pre-Civil War association of members of this class with the true creole population, giving them identity as 'creole negroes' in much the same way that one refers to 'creole tomatoes' or 'creole cattle,' signifying origin in Louisiana soil" (Tregle 1992: 133).

One might say that from the 1870s onward, the term 'creole of color' was accepted "as a permissible designation for mixed-race offspring or descendants of legitimate creoles" (Tregle: 133; see also Ostendorf 2013), and that for most Americans 'creole' stood for an African American with light skin and possibly some 'Caucasian' features. The term clearly had quite different undertones, referring either to race or class or social standing in a world which was on the lookout for a new national identity among the many ethnic groups which populated it and continued to arrive.

The 'free black creoles' of the nineteenth century had a special status in New Orleans. They had "emerged from French and Spanish rule not only with unusual rights and powers but also with a peculiar

assertiveness and self-confidence" (Logsdon/Bell 1992: 204). Many of them were wealthy within their ethnic group and were skilled in "occupations normally closed to free persons of African ancestry in Anglo-America." They felt superior to the slave population of the city and they self-confidently felt that they had the right of equal citizenship in the United States. Over the years laws tried to a get a grip on the changing racial relationship between whites, free people of color, slaves and non-American whites. Black creoles "escaped much of the renewed severity by living within the virtually autonomous creole municipal districts of New Orleans that were created in 1836, where enforcement of almost all laws was notoriously lax." As a result, "free and slave black creoles continued to gather for festivities, frequent bars and dance halls, and cohabit despite the state laws designed to constrain such activity" (Logsdon/Bell 1992: 207).

Most of the black creoles in New Orleans saw themselves as French creoles and had a specific pride in their French heritage and language which both set them apart from mainstream America and in times of a changing social and racial situation gave them a very specific identity. The black creoles of New Orleans developed their own cultural traditions, ritualized events involving food, dance and music. They also established their own system of aesthetic and social values – a system which ultimately was no less based on group affiliation than the general value system in the United States, which was based on race and national origin.

Enter music …

Then came the Civil War and Louisiana Legislative Code No. 111 which "designated that anyone of any African ancestry was Negro" (Buerkle/Barker 1973: 9). "The change was devastating for the Creole of Color," explain Jack Buerkle and Danny Barker, as "it required the laborious task of creating a new self-image" (Buerkle/Barker 1973: 9). By the 1890s, "the Creoles of New Orleans were being pushed out of their old trades and down on the social scale" (Lomax 1949: 79). "The Creoles of Color," though "making their adjustment to new occupations, tried to capitalize on their educational background and

training whenever possible" (Buerkle/Barker 1973: 10). A musical consequence of this development was that black and creole people of color were being denied access to subsidized music training, a fact which "must have been especially discouraging for the Creoles of Color, for where the dark Negro had not known formal instruction in music in earlier days, the Creoles had" (Buerkle/Barker 1973: 63). As a consequence, "the Creoles of Color and the blacks … developed their own means to continue (in the case of the Creoles), or to begin (in the case of the blacks) formal music instruction without depending upon the whites" (Buerkle/Barker 1973: 63). It was during this time, then, that music which for many of the creoles had mostly been a hobby, became a source of income. Creole musicians prided themselves on their musical knowledge and fended themselves against the non-creole black musicians who for the most part came from a common laborer or service worker background, possessed "no training in music whatsoever and succeeded in this field only because of their talent" (Lomax 1949: 80). "Music, which had been an avocation, became by necessity a vocation. The Creoles' contact with the black man, which had been as minimal as possible (for there had been vast status differences), became much more extensive" (Buerkle/Barker 1973: 63).

Enter jazz…

Let us look at some examples …

Jelly Roll Morton, one of the most important musicians documenting early jazz life in New Orleans, called himself "New Orleans Creole and Inventor of Jazz." Alan Lomax begins his collection of Morton's accounts of his own life with a chapter titled "My Folks Were All Frenchmans" in which the pianist and composer claims his French heritage, his ancestors having arrived in New Orleans long before the Louisiana Purchase. He had anglicized his name, Morton explains, from the French La Menthe because he did not want to be called "Frenchy." Jelly Roll Morton's younger sister, Frances M. Oliver, explains the tension and its consequences: "At one time," she says, "some of the Creole people in downtown New Orleans believed

in class and caste. But my brother wasn't prejudiced against dark people" (Russell 1999: 91).

Similar to Morton's case, the clarinetist Barney Bigard starts his autobiography with a chapter titled "All my people, they all spoke French" and then identifies his family's ethnic background as "'Creoles of color,' which was essentially a mixture of Spanish and French" (Bigard 1985: 5). Even though Bigard no longer differentiates, he paints his teachers – all of them professional creoles – as highly skilled (classically skilled, that is) clarinetists (Bigard 1985: 18). Paul Dominguez, a creole New Orleans fiddler, explains "Creole" to Alan Lomax: "A Creole," he says, "is a mixture of Spanish and white and must talk French" (Lomax 1949: 83). Dominguez then differentiates between different wards, pointing out that the Seventh and Eighth Wards in New Orleans are predominantly creole, while in the Ninth Ward they might call themselves creole, "but they're black and they got bad hair. They're from the country" (Lomax 1949: 83).

The clarinetist Sidney Bechet takes another route and starts his autobiography by identifying his grandfather as a former slave, thus linking him and himself all the way back to Africa (Bechet 1960: 6). Bechet, of course, later moved to France and thus embraced the other side of his cultural heritage, as well. Bechet, who had come from a creole bourgeois family which still spoke French in the 1890s (Chilton 1987: 2) hardly differentiates between creole and black musicians. Creole, for him, is part of an over-all black New Orleans with only the names different, not the music or the musical approach. At the same time, though, Bechet had learned his trade from descendants of a long line of creole clarinet players and teachers, among them George Baquet, Luis 'Papa' Tio and Luis Tio Jr.

Leonard Bechet, on the other hand, a dentist, trombonist and Sidney Bechet's older brother, explains that during his childhood Creole musicians tried not to mix with black musicians. They considered themselves professionals and the style of playing of the black uptown musicians as being too "rough." He gives an example: "Louis [Armstrong] and them played that low-down type of music, when us Creole musicians always did hold up a nice prestige, you understand, demanded respect among the people, because we played nice music" (Lomax 1949: 96). The same rough, risk-taking approach which

favored improvisation over planned musical structures was highly popular, though, which made young musicians strive to learn both approaches – the more formal one as well as the one favoring hot playing, or, in the words of the older Bechet: "You had to play real hard when you play for Negroes" (Lomax 1949: 98).

Although the inner-ethnic differentiation according to skin color, African or Caucasian features, specific origin, name, language spoken, lineage of family, teachers, colleagues, and bands played with continued to be a decisive factor in getting work in the 1920s – when the jazz scene had moved up to Chicago –, at one point the idea of 'creole' had become mostly nostalgic, a memory of days when it was so much easier to differentiate between people, between musicians, between cultural concepts.

King Oliver's ensemble, which made some of the most influential first jazz recordings in 1923 featuring the young Louis Armstrong, called itself the "Creole Jazz Band," riffing on a seven-piece ensemble which had toured the United States from 1914 to 1918, called the "Creole Band" or the "Creole Orchestra." King Oliver hired some musicians who would qualify as 'creole' such as Honoré Dutrey, Johnny St. Cyr and later, Barney Bigard and Albert Nicholas, but most of his band members would be identified as New Orleans uptown blacks. The name was a label and apart from some mocking remarks which some of the self-confident creole musicians on the scene would provide to put down their non-creole colleagues, nobody in the North would know or care about the difference. Class differentiation in the North was designated through what W.E.B. DuBois called the "talented tenth" – ministers, lawyers, doctors, educators who "strove to exercise civic leadership for all blacks in the realms of culture, morals, religion, and politics" (Peretti 1992: 61). Some of the Northern blacks felt that the Southerners "brought discrimination with them" when they arrived and didn't quite fit into the middle-class culture which had developed among blacks in the North (Peretti 1992: 61). The cultural segment of the talented tenth looked at white art music for guidance instead of the more rough forms of music making, which was essentially seen as backwards, rural, Southern, past. The writing about music during the Harlem Renaissance reflects this

move to adapt black aesthetics to a European value system instead of analyzing and embracing it as a merit in itself.

The Creole Concept

However, as the term 'creole' has become obsolete both as a stylistic and a class category in music, there is some element of the creole/black discourse in New Orleans which has survived in jazz and which is a decisive factor in this music to this day. Well aware of the different meanings of the term 'creolization' (see Ostendorf 2013), I would opt for a different terminological solution for this phenomenon: I call it the 'creole concept.'

The creole concept would be the realization of Creole musicians in New Orleans that in order to continue their musical journey they did not only have to let others – in this case the uptown, black musicians – into their world, but that this kind of merging was essential, was basic for the music they were playing. The creole concept would be the realization of black musicians in New Orleans that in order to continue their musical journey they needed to keep developing their own voice and also to take the advice of others, of downtown creole 'musicianers' (as Sidney Bechet would call the learned professionals). The creole concept would take into consideration the reality of a musical world where the sounds of French opera, German *Chorvereine*, all sort of British ditties, Caribbean melodies and rhythms, and the drums, banjos and responsive chants of Congo Square had to mix because music does not only preserve memory but lives in the 'now' and mirrors the present. The creole concept would not reinforce class differences but create community, based in this case on the cultural values of the music. The creole concept, then, would be the realization that in order to play this music – jazz – you need to accept many different things: the tradition of the music, the heritage of the community in which the music originated, the background of the musicians you play with, the expectation of your audience, your own personal musical background which inspires you and makes you want to play. The creole concept would be the element which makes jazz such a productive music, asking of everyone playing it to respect its

tradition, but also that in respecting its tradition everybody playing it should put his or her own story into the music and thus change the same tradition. The creole concept would be a concept of pride and daring, of preservation and experimentation, an acknowledgement that human culture develops by people coming together, mixing their experiences and constantly changing history.

The creole concept, as I call it, would be different from a hybrid concept because 'hybridity' just takes the facts and not the deliberate willing into consideration, the consciousness of incorporating different traditions, backgrounds, musical vocabulary or musical strategies into specific strains of the genre family. I usually use another, admittedly less loaded term when I talk about the productivity of jazz which asks of every musician to add his own five cents to the music; and only then, only if he or she is aware of his or her personal position within the cultural relationship, he or she will be fully able to grasp the art form. The creole concept is a productive concept as it constantly changes the subject itself with every new addition, as it changes reality, as it changes the scope and the sound of the music with every new musician mastering the idiom.

Let us look some examples which I think will help explain this idea of what I call the creole concept in jazz and which might fill my very general definition with some more specific content.

Example 1: Duke Ellington

In his autobiography, Duke Ellington talks about the first New Orleans musicians he had in his band, the bassist Wellman Braud and the clarinetist Barney Bigard. He loved what he called Bigard's "woody tone," the way he put "the filigree work into an arrangement" which at times reminded him "of all that delicate wrought iron you see in his hometown" (Ellington 1973: 115). Where Bigard and Braud spoke of their proud creole heritage, Ellington was already developing his own kind of creole concept, a sound strategy for his band which emphasized the individual voice in a way never before used in jazz and hard to follow by other composers or arrangers. Ellington is well known

for having selected members of his band for their individual sound more than anything else. Each of his trumpeters, trombonists and saxophonists was instantly recognizable, even if they played within the section – a horror for any other bandleader, but bliss for Ellington and us. The magic of his concept is that his music, even though he has all of these highly individual voices, sounds like Ellington, first of all – thus proving that the creole concept is not one of chance, live and let live, hybridity; it is one of aesthetic curiosity which comes out of the conviction that any new but authentic ingredient will only add to the persuasiveness of the thing itself.

I could have chosen any other album to exemplify this aspect in Ellington's music, but I thought it a good choice for this volume to focus on a number from Ellington's "New Orleans Suite" from 1970. The piece is called *Second Line* and it starts with that woody clarinet sound mentioned above which Barney Bigard had introduced, played here by Russell Procope. What one should listen to, though, is the ensemble playing of the orchestra and how one can clearly hear each of the single musicians within the instrumental sections – in a way that one no longer hears these sections as one voice but more like a moving sound in which it seems possible to identify all of the overtones – and, if you know Ellington, you will actually be able to name them, identify the musicians in that section just by listening to the arranged parts.

Example 2: Albert Mangelsdorff

The creole concept becomes especially visible when the musicians taking up the music are not originally from the United States. Thus, in each country, European jazz history went through a process of fascination, imitation, assimilation and innovation. It is in the last of these stages in which musicians grasped the very idea of jazz, which is that in order to play this music convincingly you had to learn the vocabulary and structural grammar; but you also had to be able to identify your own personal position within the music's continuum. It was not enough to sound like an African American artist whom you admired; you had to find your own voice which came from within

you, which was informed by the musical socialization you had gone through yourself. And thus, when jazz spread all over the world, the music's experiences during its own birth became most important. Its productivity – the creole concept, as I call it – is written into the DNA of jazz: take whatever will come from your heart and incorporate it into the ever-growing idiom of jazz.

Albert Mangelsdorff is a case in point. He started playing jazz right after the war, building his style on the model of musicians such as J.J. Johnson, establishing a status as one of the 'best' European trombonists in modern jazz. However, a visit to the United States in 1958 changed his approach completely, as he realized that he would never be able to play anything comparable to Miles Davis or all of the other American musicians he heard there; this was simply because they could draw on such a long history of African-American music which he loved but which was not his own background. Mangelsdorff's personal style as well as his band style changed after that. He looked into where he came from, protestant hymns, contemporary composition, a kind of versatility on his instrument which reflected the German virtue of diligence.

This becomes very clear in *Ant Steps on an Elephant's Toe*, one of Mangelsdorff's solo performances in which he employs a technique called multiphonics which allows him to play polyphonic, chordal lines by playing one note, singing another and thus evoking overtones which fill up the chord. The example also shows that productivity in jazz is not a one-way street. Jazz is not, as the Smithsonian Institution still wants us to believe, "born in the USA, enjoyed worldwide,"[1] but that inventions such as Mangelsdorff's stylistic addition to the improvisational vocabulary of his instrument became a reference point among trombonists in America, the birthplace of jazz – and this in a way not so much different from when habanera rhythms found their way into New Orleans street bands as an element of the *Spanish Tinge*.

[1] This has been the annual slogan for Jazz Appreciation Month for many years.

Example 3: David Murray

The next example is the exact opposite of Mangelsdorff. In 1997 the tenor saxophonist David Murray recorded an album in Guadeloupe entitled "Creole." He brought together some American colleagues for this album such as flautist James Newton, pianist D.D. Jackson, bassist Ray Drummond and drummer Billy Hart, as well as a group of Caribbean percussionists, vocalists and the guitar of Gérard Lockel. Before it he had recorded the album "Do Deuk Revue" which combined his saxophone sound with Senegalese griots and rappers. Murray's understanding of 'creole' is closer to the idea of Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic, a discovery of cultural links through music.

On the album "Creole" one finds songs in French and Portuguese and a strong percussive rhythm section; however, Murray's aesthetic dominates the music. Murray was born in Oakland, California, in 1955, became part of the New York post-free jazz loft scene of the 1970s, was a founding member of the World Saxophone Quartet and has been generally considered a major voice of American jazz since the 1980s. Murray lives in Portugal today and is a presence on the European concert and festival scene; he is a major link between the New York loft scene and the European avant-garde. Gérard Lockel, on the other hand, is a musician born in Guadeloupe who moved to France in the 1950s, then returned to his home country in 1969 where he is both known for his nationalist convictions and is credited with bringing the traditional Gwo-ka music up to date. Gwo-ka literally means 'big drum' and is the name of a major Guadeloupean folk music traditionally performed during outdoor celebrations held on Friday or Saturday nights (Camal 2012: 170). It is music a bit reminiscent of what we read about the historic Congo Square with drums building a foundation above which other percussion instruments embellish and interact with dancers, singers and the audience.

The idea of Gwo-ka and how David Murray is being involved in the traditional format can best be heard in the song *Savon de Toilette* on the album; however *Guadeloupe Sunrise* and *Guadeloupe After Dark* – both duets of Lockel and Murray – are perhaps most interesting as a meeting of equal souls, a meeting of two musicians who

value the traditions they come from yet are curious enough to listen to what the other has to say.[2]

Example 4: Soweto Kinch

Soweto Kinch is a young British alto saxophonist and rapper, born in 1978 to British-Caribbean parents who was turned on to jazz after meeting Wynton Marsalis, and who in the 2000s became a big name in the British jazz scene. Kinch has a conventional approach to his jazz sets, influenced just as much by Sonny Rollins as by classical music or his British colleague Courtney Pine. He often performs in a trio setting with bass and drums, playing virtuoso improvisations over an intense dynamic rhythm; at the same time he will sing his rap tunes, or use all kinds of pop or other music references, confronting his diverse audiences no matter where they come from, with both familiar and suspicious musical material. Soweto Kinch and other musicians of his age (and in other countries as well) believe in jazz as an ever-evolving musical idiom, not a thing of the past but desperately in need of the present. If anything, this is the other side of the creole concept: It's not just respect for other cultures touched by the music; it's not just the need to acknowledge one's own musical background to be authentic; it's only by staying in touch with the present that a productive music such as jazz will keep evolving. A good example is "The Legend of Mike Smith," a double album epic from Soweto Kinch that tells the story of an aspiring rapper possessed by each of the seven deadly sins.

Finally: New Orleans today

New Orleans lost its position as a musical capital around the time when jazz became popular. Musicians from New Orleans migrated to where the entertainment industry had their factories, theatres and

[2] A discussion of the terms 'creolization,' 'Creole' and 'creolité' (but not what I call the 'creole concept' in this essay) in reference to David Murray's music can be found in an article by Jerome Camal (2012).

recording studios: to Chicago, New York, California. Yet, while New Orleans was no longer at the center of the action, it did not lose its music. In the 1920s already, the idea of New Orleans had become mostly nostalgic, a stereotype for 'way back when.' Musicians continued to work in the Crescent City with its many restaurants, bars and venues of all kinds, playing the music fitting the city's cliché of 'Let the Good Times Roll': smooth, often danceable Dixieland with a hint of the blues and Cajun. There was modern jazz as well. New Orleans had its share of swing orchestras and bebop bands, of modern jazz combos and free jazz sessions. However, these were clearly a minority within the local music scene; if you played anything more modern than classic New Orleans or commercial Dixieland you would probably soon leave the city and move elsewhere. What New Orleans always retained, though, was a strong feeling of community based on the fact that the city over the twentieth century was and remained one of the poorest in the nation, a fact especially visible in its black population. Outlets for this feeling of community were, as they always had been, the black church and music. The celebrations of New Orleans, from the traditional Mardi Gras to the cutting edge Southern Decadence, from old-time jazz funerals to loud and happy block parties – remember Henry Kmen's words: "The story of music in New Orleans must begin with dancing" – the celebrations of New Orleans were and are class-transcending events, building a feeling of community stronger than in most other American cities.

After Katrina, the need for communal unity became even stronger with the realization that neighborhood help was closer than FEMA. Music served an important function in the healing process of the stricken city. Musicians and music lovers from all over the world partook in initiatives to help reconstruction of New Orleans and to support the return of its people in an effort to keep a place alive which for them had as much emotional importance as it did for me when I first arrived there in 1994.

New Orleans after 2005 was far from New Orleans in the mid-nineteenth century. The ethnic diversity had trickled down to three major groups: White, Black and Hispanic. The divisions which ethnic groups tried to establish within themselves by subdividing their ethnicity into even smaller fragments had made place for a clear class

differentiation: rich vs. poor. And, of course – and unfortunately it seems more so than ever – racism is still a subject. Being on the poorest end of the United States economy, though, New Orleanians are pragmatic: If Washington doesn't help, if the government in Baton Rouge is not effective enough, we have to help ourselves. Centuries of community-building experiences help New Orleanians in this effort to live a decent life, to re-build their city, to remember their past identity, good and bad, and to build a future based on the smallest social networks, a system they can trust in because it always worked: their communities.

To this day, New Orleans music has a special function within these communities. If you come across one of the young brass bands gathering on street corners – yes, they play for the tourists, but they play for their own sake as well. They play their own music of the twenty-first century, riffing on Louis Armstrong and the Eureka Brass Band just as much as on Miles Davis, James Brown, Michael Jackson, Madonna, Eminem or Jay-Z. Their music won't be at the avant-garde of today's jazz, but you can be sure that out of their ranks will come some of the future jazz inventors because they learn the creole concept from the bottom up: Be part of a community, acknowledge the difference, listen into your own past, know what's going on in the world, find your own voice, play your own thing.

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Music

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William Boelhower

(Baton Rouge)

Laus Urbis: City Space, the Birth of Jazz, and Floating Signifiers

1. Problems of method

How does one go about capturing a particularly event-filled moment in the cultural history of such a self-conscious Atlantic-world city as New Orleans – roughly speaking, a thirty-year carnival moment of musical creativity deeply entangled in the socio-economic and racial conditions of the city as a whole? The moment in question, the belatedly studied birth of what is now called New Orleans jazz (1880–1920), has proven to be so elusive and legendary that scholars cannot put it to rest. It might best be described as a cultural vortex combining performance gestures and sites of memory (Roach 1996), for the birth of 'jazz' involved a volatile force-field of brass bands and string bands, ensembles and soloists, high-brow and low-brow cultures, a city-wide range of performance venues from Sanctified Churches and music halls to parks, street corners and an entire district of brothels, as well as the confluence of diverse cultural traditions, each competing for recognition as they shouldered their way (sometimes violently) across racial, class and gender lines.

Capturing the origins of New Orleans jazz evidently goes beyond fact-finding and the simple gathering of information to involve us in an impending problem of representation – what Siegfried Kracauer once referred to as a dilemma of the law of levels: macro-history versus micro-history; history from above versus history from below; application of a general idea like jazz versus thick description of singular musical events wrapped abysmally in legend, memoir and oral history (Kracauer 1995: 114–134). It should be said that we already have a shelf full of synthetic histories about the emergence of a New Orleans style of jazz. Such histories typically revolve around observations such as this one by Martin Williams: "As I hope my essay

demonstrates, Jelly Roll Morton's music represented a synthesis and summary of what jazz, and Afro-American music in general, had accomplished up to the moment of his arrival" (Williams 1993: 5).[1] Succinctly put, this historiographical approach presumes that the bird always swallows the fly, when it is equally true that bird and fly must necessarily coexist, with many more flies than any bird can hope to digest. But setting aside the shelf of fly-catching jazz syntheses, what we now need when it comes to the crucial pre-recording period of early 'jazz' are micro-historical studies written from the bottom up and tempered by an ecological heuristic of the city during the period in question.[2] For instance, Thomas Brothers's innovative *Louis Armstrong's New Orleans* (2006) seeks to apprehend the antinomic nature of time and place in New Orleans, where divergent strands of musical events coexisted side by side, rather than trace a linear sequence driven by a hypostasized general idea like New Orleans 'jazz.'[3]

As I will argue below, a more steadfast focus on ensemble events as embedded scenarios will help to expose levels of experience that plunge below mainstream historical mimesis to social science *aperçus* (from anthropology, sociology, psychology) and the visual revelations

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[1] Jelly Roll Morton, a Creole, began composing in 1902 and, before leaving New Orleans, worked mostly alone as a pianist in Storyville. He had a known dislike for African Americans and their music. One could argue that the history of New Orleans jazz mainly revolves around its cornet players (Buddy Bolden, Fred Keppard, Joe 'King' Oliver, Bunk Johnson, Louis Armstrong, Tommy Ladnier, Mutt Carey, Lee Collins, Joe Smith), but this, too, is a restrictively biographical approach to the city's music (Schuller 1986: 136–137; Finkelstein 1988: 30–31).

[2] Such general histories include Ted Gioia, *The History of Jazz* (1997); Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans* (1997); Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz. Its Roots and Musical Development* (1968); Martin Williams, *The Jazz Tradition* (1993); Sidney Finkelstein, *Jazz: A People's Music* (1988), to name a few.

[3] Through a process of hindsight, historians often start out with a general idea of 'jazz' and then make it the central cause behind the evolution of a variety of styles. In his exemplary study of the early life of Armstrong, Thomas Brothers describes his project as follows: "This book … is, rather, about one musician's experience of a complex city. To the extent that it is a biography, it is a highly decentered one" (Brothers 2006: 6).

of performance and cultural studies. Scaled down to such scenarios, microhistory as a rule acknowledges historical gaps and discontinuities rather than skate over them by generic appeals to a higher order of representation. The advantage of performance studies and cultural studies is that they extend beyond the reach of linguistic mediation. Thus, cultural practices and performances based on various kinds of bodily expression can be read as valuable sites of inscription, so that the ecstatic stomping, singing and wailing of the Sanctified Churches of Louis Armstrong's youth can offer us a possible proxemic source for understanding the joyous and dissonant rhythms of low-down African American music in New Orleans's Third Ward in the 1880s–1910s (Brothers 2006: 32–54).[4] While textual documents like memoirs and oral history are undoubtedly necessary anecdotal sources in the study of New Orleans early jazz reputations and performances, they need to be tempered by other founts. Jazz recordings, knowledge of musical instruments, photographic archives, the vagrant formation of ensembles, the incongruous nature of city spaces and districts, types of audience and performance venues, racist legislation and practices, competition among bands, and many other *ad hoc* forms of attention, depending on the scenario-moment in question, all come to mind. In short, our approach should lead us to embrace the entire urban *Lebenswelt* of jazz ensembles and soloists. This socio-economic domain includes a history of dance halls, the professions and trades of the musicians, parade routes, jazz funerals, social and sporting clubs, street life in the city's various districts, racial dividing lines, and any number of other socially inscribed spaces.

Inseparable from the city's vaunted carnival spirit, the postbellum influx of thousands of African American families from the surrounding plantations, and the sophisticated cultural traditions of the down-

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[4] As Thomas Brothers points out, "Sanctified churches are famous not only for rhythm and movement but also for communal participation" (Brothers 2006: 40). Buddy Bolden, Joe Oliver, and Louis Armstrong were all raised with the rhythms of the Sanctified churches in their veins. Buddy Bolden even included church songs like *When the Saints Come Marching In* in his dance-hall routines. When speaking of the birth of New Orleans jazz, Louis Armstrong himself once confessed, "It all came from the Old Sanctified Churches" (Armstrong 1999: 170).

town French Creoles (both white and African), the heuristic challenge of worlding the origins of New Orleans 'jazz' throws us headlong into a history of events and performance scenarios. As Fernand Braudel famously observed when discussing the slippery representational order of event-history (*histoire événementielle*):

> The history of events … surface agitations, the waves that tides raise up by their powerful motion … it is the most passionate, the richest in humanity, and also the most dangerous. Beware of this still-burning history, as contemporaries felt it, described it, and experienced it by the rhythm of their lives, short as our own. It has the size of their furies, their dreams, and their illusions. (Braudel 1978: 17)[5]

This prescient assessment nicely evokes the ambitions of scenario visualization of the early decades of New Orleans 'jazz' and foregrounds some of the intangibilities (the "furies," "dreams" and "illusions") besetting conventional representations of it, as the scholars in Krin Gabbard's essay collection *Representing Jazz* (1995) confirm. Particularly true of improvisational music like early 'jazz,' the players are the music. Their performance and the rhythms and sounds they produce are the result of an abiding tension between imitation and a higher act of *poiesis* (a unique creative moment). And we should also add to this *mimesis–poiesis* tension an ecological dimension, since musicians play in front of an interactive audience at a particular place and time. Each venue-occasion contributes to making a gig special. Each is unique and unrepeatable. It is curious that Braudel, the creator of geohistory and geoculture, chose not to consider the spatial dimension of events, as if they were merely dust in the eyes; not facts but only interpretations or, even worse, floating signifiers without any relation to their socio-physical surround. I will return to these floating signifiers below.

In his suggestive essay *Hermeneutik und Historik*, the historian Reinhart Koselleck sought to anchor the subjective processes of interpretation (hermeneutics) by outlining what he considers the pre-

[5] English translation of Braudel passage is from Furstenberg (2015: epigraph to Part II).

linguistic conditions for the writing of history: "*Historik* is rather the theory of the conditions for every possible history" (Koselleck 1990: 17). These conditions, which take a step beyond Braudel's scepticism towards individual action, include such binary categories as friend/enemy, being-towards-death/being-able-to-kill, inside/outside, private/public, sexual potency/the weave of generations, strong (master)/weak (slave), and the hierarchical statuses above/below. By keeping these pervasive vital tensions in mind, jazz historians should be better prepared to transform the racial complexities of human experience into historical knowledge. It is easy to see that many of these prelinguistic conditions are relevant to a more cross-disciplinary understanding of the daily struggles African American and Afro-Creole musicians faced as they competed citywide for opportunities to swing or parade or win a spot in a band or orchestra. In the early years of the city's dynamic, hot-tempo and polyrhythmic music milieu, few musicians were able to make a living from their performances, even though New Orleans was a uniquely musical city. Almost all of the musicians had trades or day jobs, and few of the colored musicians were allowed the rights, privileges, and opportunities that white New Orleanians enjoyed.[6] All this went into the music in one way or another.

In an attempt to set the record straight, Creole clarinetist Sidney Bechet remarked in his autobiography *Treat It Gentle* that jazz was only "a name white people have given to the music" (qtd. in Harlos 1995: 134). Indeed, the issue of race is a central theme in all African American and Afro-Creole jazz musicians' memoirs (see also Armstrong 1936, 1954; Barker 1986). But divisions in the city were based not just on color and Jim Crow, they were also ethnocultural (see Hirsch/Logsdon 1992: 189–200; Logsdon/Cossé Bell 1992: 201–261; Gehman 2000: 208–222). Creoles of color, for example, created a significant body of concert-type sheet music and in the period under

[6] Vigilante terrorism took hold of the city on memorable occasions in these 'early jazz' years: for the massacre of eleven Italians in 1891, see Smith (2007); for the citywide pogrom against blacks following the Robert Charles shootout in 1900, see Hair (1976). For black musicians, Robert Charles was considered a race hero. In the black community, there were rumors that Charles was not killed but had escaped the white mob.

discussion they distinguished themselves from most African American musicians by their institutional training and ability to read music (Sullivan 2000: 71–100). But while they could sight-read, they still had to learn how to swing and improvise, and that the African Americans, who were noted for their exuberant brass bands and vernacular blues, could teach them (Blassingame 1976: 139–171). Blues musical gestures and themes came from the long-suffering experience of African American folk under slavery. It provided early 'jazz' with a soul and a repertoire of musical practices that marked the playing and singing of the likes of Buddy Bolden, Jelly Roll Morton, Sidney Bechet, Joe Oliver, Freddie Keppard, Kid Ory, the Dodds brothers and Louis Armstrong (Murray 1976). In moving from the plantation to the city, rural African Americans brought the blues idiom, textures, story lines and gestures with them. But you had to live uptown and in the back of town to hear it. It is from living in the neighborhood around Perdido and Liberty streets – an area of black prostitution and honky tonks – that a young Louis Armstrong was fully exposed to its cultural and musical élan. In those days, blues, 'early jazz,' and ragtime were all in the mix and developing at the same time (Brothers 2006: 159). For a young musician, it was a question of keeping one's ears open, dropping in on the hot bands or sitting in after hours at Pete Lala's and trying to imitate or compete with the stars.[7]

The above-mentioned Perdido Street neighborhood brings us back to questions of method. While we undoubtedly have to do with a vaporous history of flickering events in this period of the city's musical life, it is also true, in the words of Jean-Marc Ghitti, that "[h]istory is a way of belonging to place" (Ghitti 1998: 60).[8] Between the 'second-line' experience of yielding to the rhythmic cataract of *When the Saints Go Marching In* as played by a local brass band in a street parade and recognizing that the band, the song and the performance style belong to a specific uptown city neighborhood is to recognize that the semantically entangled words 'to inhabit,' 'habitant,' 'habi-

[7] Ragtime was the general term for up-tempo hot music that Armstrong and his social group used for what would later be called jazz (Brothers 2006: 105). Needless to say, there were many different kinds of new music in New Orleans in those years.

[8] All translations from Ghitti are mine.

tat,' 'habitation' all share the same etymon – deriving from the Latin *habitare* (to dwell). Analysis of the social ontology of a city must begin with this epistemological skein. If we can visualize the scenario of the parade along Rampart Street – the Broadway of New Orleans African American parades –, then we can also see (meaning 'to understand') that the players, the music and the marching are all part of an inscribed performance *habitus* springing from the collective culture of the *habitants* living in the racially girdled *habitat* of the city's Third Ward. This socio-geographic circle tracking the semantics of everyday living and dwelling in the Rampart neighborhood designates not so much a logic as an ecology of traces, as I will discuss in the concluding part of this essay.

In the context of an ecological focus on the inscribed web of traces, floating 'jazz' signifiers and New Orleans topology go hand in hand and should be woven into a single narrative argument. Unfortunately, jazz historians rarely work across disciplines or have the patience to do so. At this point in early jazz history, however, it would be more strategically cogent to start from the city itself, for it is the city – with its Faubourg limits and passages, and the subliminal tensions between the river, downtown, uptown and back of town – that stirs us to speak of its unique but tense festive culture. For that matter, as we learn from classical dialectics, rhetorical *topoi* (discursive places) were not disconnected from the realm of *physis*. Word and place were intimately connected. Tropology (the use of rhetorical figures) and topology (the array of oratorical themes based on an *ars inveniendi*) belonged to one realm of argument and discourse. This is why Jean-Marc Ghitti can say, "Le lieu, c'est ce qui fait parler" [It is place that generates talk about itself] (Ghitti 1998: 160). So it is with the carnival-centric city of New Orleans, which singularly engendered a type of music that became the 'talk' of the nation. Only that city could have produced it and it took a collective, creolizing effort at that.[9] After discussing this self-reflexive cultural moment in the history of the city immediately below, I will then briefly discuss the early modern genre, *laus urbis*, which embraces the methodological *va-et-*

[9] For a clarifying discussion of the history, ethnography and theory of creolization, see Stewart (2007).

vient between performance and place that I have been pursuing here. The genre of *laus urbis*, perhaps an unsung antecedent to the modern guidebook, arose specifically to celebrate the renaissance city's claim to fame. During the early twentieth-century diaspora of New Orleans musicians to Chicago, the West Coast and New York, recording after recording and performance after performance celebrated their hometown, creating a choral celebration of its unique culture.

2. The historical frame

In post-Reconstructionist 1877, when New Orleans's white supremacist elite decided to promote the city's Carnival tradition far and wide, it was also announcing the return to home rule, accompanied by the old racial hierarchies, world-port amenities and local cultural traditions. The idea was to make New Orleans a profitable tourist attraction for a hardworking nation (Sparks 2014: 183). Precariously perched between land and sea but sustained by the complementary habits of flood-culture brashness and fleshpot abandon, this semi-tropical city, as foreign as it was familiar, had always been a busy intersection of trade and an intercivilizational contact zone (Thompson 2010; Lightweis-Goff 2014: 147–149; see Miller Surrey 2006; Garraway 2005; Powell 2012; Kelman 2006). Its unique old town (the Vieux Carré) and Faubourgs, French and Spanish street names and Spanish architecture made its creole origins and history visibly alluring – a form of three-dimensional writing all could read and appreciate. Although it had become a United States possession seventy-four years earlier, the city was still culturally and politically exotic – Catholic, tolerant, creole, but also increasingly racist (Fertel 2014: 71–76). The growing Yankee presence was still largely concentrated above the old town, while the Creole French population was concentrated downtown, in Faubourg Marigny. As for the city's African Americans, new housing legislation began to push them to the back of town, in Faubourg Tremé, although older patterns of interracial housing still left the city somewhat integrated (Campanella 2014: 8–17). Unwittingly, by boosting the idea of New Orleans as a fun-loving, Carnival-centric city, its leaders also found themselves

obliged to celebrate its creole culture, French and Spanish history, and Afro-Creole, African American musical traditions. Thus began a trend that would, by the 1960s, crown the city as one of the nation's premier tourist and convention sites (see Souther 2006).

During Carnival, the entire city was turned over to parading social clubs, masquerades, dancing, partying and marching bands. It was a time of misrule and the streets and squares provided the stage. Already in 1877, the message was much the same as that of 2006, the first post-Katrina Carnival: "[T]his is what we do" (Sparks 2014: 194; see also Gill 1997; Mitchell 1999). But New Orleans was a Caribbean and continental byword already by the early decades of the eighteenth century, not only because of its geographical location but also because of its cultural pique and prodigality (see Watts 2006). In the words of Ned Sublette:

> With slaves to do the work, and winters that were short and relatively mild, those New Orleanians who were prosperous had ample time for leisure, something that became practically the stereotype of the New Orleans Creole … The libertine population, from the wealthy few to the many poor, continued celebrating with their dances, their masquerades, their drinking, their gambling, their fighting, and their couplings, especially during Carnival season but also during a year-round schedule of festivals, parties, and balls. (Sublette 2008: 80)

By the closing decades of the nineteenth century, there was horseracing nearly all year around, a hive of sporting and gambling clubs, some thirty halls for dancing and band music, a French opera house and excellent theaters and restaurants. What is more, the city fathers had sexualized an entire district called Storyville to go along with the city's celebrated music and Cajun cuisine (gumbo, rice and beans, fried catfish, crab and shrimp) (see Long 2004). As the jazz musician Danny Barker summed it up, "It was gay New Orleans, the city of pleasure" (Shapiro/Hentoff 1955: 26).

In part due to its music and red light district, the city allowed many occasions for mingling and mixing – among classes, races and the sexes, in spite of legislation aimed at dividing blacks from whites. By the turn of the century, New Orleans was also the nation's hotbed for a new kind of music that expressed an "unprecedented exu-

berance and unabashed vulgarity" (Schuller 1968: 176). Not yet officially called jazz, it was played by entertainers – or 'musicianers' (not quite artists) – most of whom had day jobs and trades to support themselves. In the words of Zutty Singleton, "They were bricklayers and carpenters and cigar makers and plasterers. Some had little businesses of their own – coal and wood and vegetable stores" (Shapiro/Hentoff 1955: 17). Most African American musicians did not know how to read music, and when they played, they all improvised around a lead chorus or riff set down by the cornet player.[10] The lead-in could be taken from anywhere, a popular song, a church hymn, a march, a blues phrase, a work song. In the 1890s, some Afro-Creoles, most of whom could read music, began to play in ensembles with African American musicians, and this encounter eventually led to a distinct New Orleans ensemble and solo style of hot, polyrhythmic, blues-inflected, up-tempo swing.

As many musicians and critics have pointed out, in those racially-tense, post-Reconstructionist years the city was overflowing with music and musicians as never before, and they were playing throughout the city, at all kinds of black, white and tan social activities: marching or playing for social club and society events from birthdays and funerals to lake-front dancing, lawn parties, advertisement gigs announcing city events from the back of horse-drawn wagons, playing in halls, sporting clubs, gambling joints, honky-tonks and barrel houses. Unfortunately, popular recordings of New Orleans bands – those of Edward 'Kid' Ory, Joseph 'King' Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, Sidney Bechet, Louis Armstrong, the Dodds brothers, Sam Morgan – were first made in the early and mid-twenties, while the new vernacular styles were already playing out in the city in the 1880s–1910s, with bands and orchestras like Buddy Bolden's, John Robichaux's, Oscar 'Papa' Celestin's, Manuel Perez's, Jack Carey's, Frankie Dusen's and Kid Ory's (Southern 1997: 378–380, 342–345; Gioia 1997: 34–45). Those who had recording opportunities had already left the city after the closing of Storyville and a major flu epidemic.[11] So the

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[10] Sidney Finkelstein (1988: 71) says that the first widely accepted definition of jazz was 'collective improvisation'.

[11] Jelly Roll Morton left the city around 1908, Keppard in 1914, Bechet in 1916, Jimmie Noone in 1917, King Oliver in 1918, Kid Ory in 1919, Johnny

period that is crucial to the rise of early 'jazz' remains cast in legend and held together mostly by the reminiscences of those who later took the time to tell their story.

3. Laus urbis: early 'jazz' performance scenarios and New Orleans topology

To announce the origin and kind of music they played in Chicago, New York and elsewhere, a number of New Orleans musicians proudly named their bands after their hometown or a well-known feature of its culture: Kid Ory's Creole Jazz Band, the New Orleans Wanderers, King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, Sidney Bechet's New Orleans Feetwarmers, Freddie Keppard's Original Creole Ragtime Band, the New Orleans Rhythm Kings (with Leon Rappolo) and so on. Use of the word creole meant a mixture of Spanish and French. In other words, in terms of the racial politics of New Orleans, neither black nor American (Brothers 2006: 173). What attracted people to the dance halls in the Midwest and Northeast was the heralded New Orleans connection. Musicians from the creole city brought its special *joie de vivre* with them in their performance practices and swing, and in the way they talked and acted. In the early modern period in Italy a genre celebrating the great cities of the Renaissance emerged and spread across the cosmopolitan circles of Europe. Prominent intellectuals like Leonardo Bruni and Poggio Bracciolini revived classical Greek texts composed specifically to sing the praises of Athens. This genre, called *laus urbis* (praise of the city), focused on the city as a physical artifact and the site of an exemplary republican government. Written as panegyrics, these treatises focused on, say, Florence's or Venice's beautiful palaces, churches and other monuments as material evidence of the city's claim to fame. The city itself was presented as a human-built work of art and a visible expression of the spirit of a people and its prince. These treatises also went beyond the physical description of the city to praise it as a *civitas*, a political and civic

Dodds in 1919, Baby Dodds in 1921 and Louis Armstrong in 1922 (see Gioia 1997: 45).

culture epitomizing the achievements and status of the citizens living there. These treatises were an early form of what in 1890s America would be called city boosterism. More to the point, this genre of *laus urbis* offers us an important methodological analogue for holding together in one narrative the two aspects of *urbs* (city ecology) and *civitas* (a special cultural élan) in our study of early New Orleans 'jazz'. Thus embraced, the city of New Orleans itself becomes a euphoric site, "a puissance which generates discourse … [and is] irreducible to language" (Ghitti 1998: 167, 198).

Noted for its brimming ecology of performance sites, public festivals and expressive scenarios linked to the birth of a set of musical practices, New Orleans also manifested both a complex racial topology and an entrenched sense of boundaries. Already in the 1870s, uptown, downtown and back-of-town had quite different cultures and socio-economic characteristics. Each had its distinct ethnic and racial identity. In 1894 the city passed legislation compelling Afro-Creoles to live in the uptown ward. When someone from the Rampart Street neighborhood went across town, they had to know their place; even though in the commerce of everyday affairs, African Americans, Creoles, and white Americans depended on and came constantly in contact with each other and mixed easily. The city could not so readily erase its pre-United States history. African American women worked regularly as domestics in the homes of whites, and creoles continued to work at their special trades, such as plasterers, cigar rollers, tinsmiths, carpenters and bricklayers. With the creation of Storyville in 1897, the city's musicians had even more opportunities to move across racial borders and mix. Apart from the carnival frenzy of Mardi Gras, the city's many parades, music halls, hotels, weekend dancing dates at Lincoln and Johnson parks, debutante balls, country club and yachting club events, college dances, private parties on St. Charles Avenue, advertising jobs, riverboat excursions and the constant demand for musicians in and around the Storyville district made New Orleans an unrivaled festive city. Always in demand, musicians (whether black, creole or white) were in an ideal position to negotiate the sharp economic, cultural, and racial divisions of the city, and it is this mobility and variety of occasions across urban space that led directly to a unique creolization of musical practices and styles.

Between 1880 and 1910, about 40,000 rural African Americans migrated to New Orleans and packed into the city's racialized Third Ward, offering what Thomas Brothers calls "a huge mass of patronage for the new music, an essential element in any artistic flowering" (Brothers 2006: 136). It is in this Ward that Charles 'Buddy' Bolden, who played exclusively for black audiences, emerged as a legendary cornet player of the blues.[12] These blues were made for dancing and Bolden's rough and boisterous style made him a special attraction – as well as someone to imitate. Later on, a number of New Orleans musicians from those years claimed that 'King' Bolden was the first to play the new music. As Lawrence Duhe, Kid Ory's bandmate said, "That's where all New Orleans musicians got that idea, from Buddy Bolden. There is no question Buddy Bolden started jazz" (McCusker 2012: 54). Mixing the musical and expressive culture of the Ward's Sanctified Churches with the field and street music developed by African Americans under slavery and, later, Jim Crow, Bolden created a timely dance hall music for his besieged people and it quickly became the rage for many New Orleans musicians on the lookout for new ideas to imitate. If you wanted to hear King Bolden hold forth in his favorite milieu, you had to go down to 1319 Perdido Street to Funky Butt Hall, between Liberty and Franklin – the very neighborhood where Louis Armstrong grew up and thrived on its street culture. Or you could also catch Bolden at the Odd Fellows and Masonic Hall on Perdido and on weekends, playing for segregated dances in Lincoln or Johnson Park.

Funky Butt Hall was once a Baptist church, but as the area turned into a black Storyville in the nineties, the minister decided to convert it into a dance hall and make some money. The hall held up to 700 people and Buddy Bolden could fill it up. One evening he played a number called *Funky Butt Hall*, which became an overnight sensation throughout the city (McClusker 2012: 56, 59). The song put the hall on the city map, although without the hall and its neighborhood

[12] The term 'blues' here does not mean the genre of Mississippi Delta blues emerging during this same period. Those blues featured the guitar; Bolden's blues were driven by wind instruments, primarily the cornet. Bolden developed a hot, improvisational, loud style that he played for dancing (see McCusker 2012: 54, 59–60; Brothers 2006: 158, 132–163).

there would have been no song called *Funky Butt Hall* to dance to. Bolden played loud, delivered seductive lyrics and made the place rock and drag. But his music didn't exactly appear out of thin air. According to Bud Scott, who played for Bolden's major rival, John Robichaux, "Each Sunday, Bolden went to church and that's where he got his idea of jazz music. They would keep perfect rhythm there by clapping their hands" (Shapiro/Hentoff 1955: 37). There is some truth to Scott's remark and it also applies to other African American musicians like Oliver and Armstrong.

In the Sanctified Churches of the Third Ward, the people danced and shouted and improvised what amounted to a collective rhapsodic catharsis. The experience was soulful and overwhelming, the harmonies jagged and dissonant (Hurston 1980: 80), like Bolden's band. It was music for the lower classes, for those who had just been stripped of their voting rights, their right to move freely around the city and their right to be treated with respect. Within their storefront space, the Sanctified Churches helped to restore black sovereignty through their fiery performance rituals. For a brief period in the history of the city's musical revolution, Funky Butt Hall became a central medium for registering innovative musical performances. Here, too, the clientele could dance to freedom. Besides Bolden, also Bunk Johnson, Kid Ory, King Oliver and Louis Armstrong were able to rag for the all-black crowd and feed off their energy, but a period of apprenticeship was required. More than a list of names, this genealogy of musicians represents a line of succession based on imitation, competition, creative performance and Rampart Street venues like Funky Butt Hall.

The old city was originally bounded by the Levee (river front), Canal Street (the upriver boundary separating the Americans from the *Vieux Carré*), Esplanade Street (the downriver boundary), and Rampart Street (the back of the city). Aligned along a direct axis with Jackson Square, the city's focal point for important social and administrative functions, was an equally large public space once called Congo Square. Unlike Jackson Square, however, Congo Square was outside the city limits, right off Rampart, and was originally surrounded by cypress swamps. During the antebellum period it won notoriety as the site where enslaved Africans were allowed to meet on Sundays to dance and sing and be themselves. They also used the

place for a thriving market that the city could not do without (Douglass 2011: 17–23). Witnesses to their dances were astonished by the spectacle of hundreds of Africans performing a ring dance accompanied by drums and other 'African' instruments (Evans 2011: 23–37). They could not believe their eyes: Africa in the city's backyard. It is worth noting that Congo Square underwent a remarkable number of renamings delineating the shifting social and political views of the city over time. Each name indicates a change of use or administrative attitude in relation to the Square's original disposition: Place des Nègres, Place Publique, Circus Place, Place Congo, Congo Square, Beauregard Square, Congo Square (Douglass 2011: 27). It was not until 1997 that the city officially recognized the importance of this place as a national heritage site by restoring the African place name (Souther 2006: 210).

African American musicians in the Third Ward often performed outdoors on the square. For that matter, it was customary for them to play a few numbers out in the street to let the people know they were about to begin their gig. Adjacent to Congo Square, Rampart Street musicians continued to fill the neighborhood streets with their bold new music. If we could have observed both the kind of performance vortex Bolden's band regularly whipped up in Funky Butt Hall in the first years of the twentieth century and the hours-long, polyrhythmic and improvisational drumming and dancing among those gathered in Congo Square in the 1830s and 1840s, very likely we would have been struck by a number of similarities. There were quite a few eye-witnesses to both scenarios. In trying to pin down the origins of the New Orleans "street beat" or "bamboula beat," Freddi Williams Evans argues convincingly that it "entered the city with enslaved Africans who had been brought to Louisiana directly from Africa" (Evans 2011: 37–46). In a rich weave of textual sources, she succeeds in reconstructing a long tradition of repeated cultural practices by which the New Orleans beat was kept alive in the city.

Certainly in Bolden's day, the musicians of the Third Ward were fully aware of the significance of Congo Square as an African performance site. The Square was once an intense vortex of intercultural exchange among different African peoples, as was the Rampart-Perdido Street area in the period 1890–1920. Having met and befriended

Buddy Bolden in 1905, the young Creole trombone player Kid Ory began to play in the tough clubs of black Storyville. Once he had absorbed Bolden's expressive style and immersed himself in the neighborhood's vernacular street blues, he began to pick up gigs with white sponsors across the city. As Ory's biographer John McCusker notes: "That Ory netted such jobs provides a clue to the cultural shift taking place with regard to the appreciation of hot music." In addition, "Ory helped the music cross over the racial and cultural threshold" (McCusker 2012: 108). While both Oliver and Armstrong eventually made their way across Canal Street to play in Creole ensembles, a number of Creoles besides Ory learned to swing with the African American bands, among them Big Eye Louis Nelson Delisle, Freddie Keppard and Sidney Bechet. Congo Square cultural exchange continued through the new music later called jazz.

Around 1916, when Ory and Joe Oliver began to play together, Ory claimed that it was Joe who came up with 'the new style.' Playing with Ory's band, Oliver learned to soften his tone and became famous for his solo breaks, when the band would stop and he would fill in with a few bars of solo cornet (McCusker 2012: 114–115). Oliver used various kinds of mutes to make his cornet sound like a rooster or a horse or a baby crying. In the same period, New Orleans musicians were occasionally singing scat vocals instead of words, using various phonemes to go with the melody. Only Oliver's young disciple, Louis Armstrong, would surpass him in swing, tone, soloing and blues phrasing, but that came after an intense apprenticeship with the man he called Papa. Growing up in black Storyville, Armstrong spent a lot of time in the streets listening to the music. In his autobiographies he often speaks of being totally involved in the neighborhood's many musical moods. Watching the brass bands parading proudly and loudly down Rampart, it was not long before he wanted to become a musician himself. In the Third Ward it was an ideal way to "take advantage of the disadvantages," as the African American saying goes (Brothers 2006: 159). Marching bands also represented a way out of the neighborhood and into the city at large. Armstrong quickly became an avid second-liner, running along behind the bands and even carrying Joe Oliver's cornet for him along the parade route.

As Thomas Brothers notes, "A parade is, by definition, a performance that moves through a public space" (Brothers 2006: 13). In his autobiography *Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans*, Armstrong recalls that special August day in 1921 when he marched with the Tuxedo Brass Band as a substitute cornetist: "I really felt I was somebody … I too could go into any part of New Orleans without being bothered" (Armstrong 1954: 219, 226). Armstrong was twenty years old at the time, but he already had enough of a reputation to be asked to play with the famous Creole outfit. Commenting on this important moment, Brothers says, "With his 1921 march with the Tuxedo Brass Band, Armstrong felt that his musical ability had granted him a passport for safe passage throughout the city" (Brothers 2006: 18). One of the most dazzling solos Armstrong ever recorded came in a song titled *I Ain't Gonna Play No Second Fiddle* (Schuller 1986: 96–97), as if the break were meant to back up the title statement. Among other things, performance mastery brought a new form of personal confidence. There were various ways for a jazz musician to build a reputation, but one of the most common was when different bands working an advertising job from the back of a wagon met at a busy street corner and began to compete with each other to see who could win the people's favor. These competitions were called 'cutting contests' and the people on the street were the judges. In *Satchmo*, Armstrong recounts one such occasion:

> Kid Ory and Joe Oliver got together and made one of the hottest jazz bands that ever hit New Orleans. They often played in a tailgate wagon to advertise a ball or other entertainments. When they found themselves on a street corner next to another band in another wagon, Joe and Kid Ory would shoot the works. They would give with all that good, mad music they had under their belts and the crowd would go wild. (Armstrong 1954: 97–98)

The occasion was further enhanced by the fact that Ory was playing around with a new riff that eventually became one of his biggest hits, "Do What Ory Say." That day in the advertising wagon, Oliver immediately picked up on it and so they started playing it then and there (McCusker 2012: 118–120).

In Carnival-centric New Orleans the music was so pervasive that it created a city atmosphere like no other. The outdoor venues, which were the most popular, included the frequent parades, lawn parties, park dances, funerals, excursion boats and roving advertisement work. In the Third Ward and in Storyville as a whole, the streets were filled with music. And during Mardi Gras the entire city became a stage for musical performances. Commissioned by the city of Cologne, Germany, to compose a piece of music for the Collegium Vocale Köln, Karlheinz Stockhausen wrote the work *Stimmung* in 1968. The composition experiments with tones and overtones structured by a series of 108 pitches, each of which is introduced serially by a lead vocalist and to which the other 5 vocalists must adapt their own material before a new rhythmic-phonetic pattern can be introduced. The German word *Stimmung*, in fact, means 'tuning' and 'mood.' The tuning indicated by Stockhausen's composition suggests a tuning of voices which work to come together in harmony. The vocal material is based on the magic names of gods and goddesses from different cultures and on quotations from erotic and intimate love poems written by the composer. Stockhausen explained that his source of inspiration for *Stimmung* was a month spent walking among the pre-Colombian ruins of Mexico. He felt in the atmosphere around him the living presence of the ancient Aztec and Toltec cultures. This presence was felt both as an embracing ecology and as a haunting presence of floating signifiers.

None of the musicians who created what later came to be called jazz ever recorded their music in New Orleans – neither Louis Armstrong, Freddie Keppard, Jelly Roll Morton nor Johnny Dodds or Kid Ory (Souther 2006: 104). Yet the titles of many of their songs spoke of places in the city where they lived, performed and invented the new expressive styles that made them and New Orleans famous. Evidently, they may have left the city bodily, but they and the music they recorded were forever haunted by it. Here are a few of the titles of those famous early 'jazz' tunes: *Perdido Street Blues*, *Basin Street Blues*, *Canal Street Blues* (Oliver), *West End Blues*, *Franklin Street Blues* (Bunk Johnson), *The King of the Zulus* (King of the Third Ward Mardi Gras parade), *Oh Didn't He Ramble* (played during funeral parades), *Down in Honky Tonk* (Armstrong), *Gravier*

Street Blues (Johnny Dodds), *Buddy Bolden Blues* (Morton), *Creole Bo Bo* (Kid Ory), *New Orleans Blues* and *New Orleans Stomp* (Jelly Roll Morton), *New Orleans Stomp* (Oliver), *Mahogany Hall Stomp* (Armstrong). The street names, place names, and themes mentioned here evoked places, events, people, occasions and performances that they knew and remembered well and that were related to the cultural practices of early New Orleans 'jazz.' For those who had never been to the city, the music must have spun an atmosphere and a mood – a *Stimmung*, we might say – made up of a swarm of floating signifiers mysteriously reflecting New Orleans culture. Although cut free by the new recording process, these signifiers still represented and presented the very soul of the new music: driving or dragging chorus breaks, casual dissonances, jumps, ragged melody, bending or bluing of notes, collective improvisation and polyrhythms, odd vocalizing, scatting, and, of course, swing. But all this came from the place itself. In New Orleans, performing this kind of music around the city was frequently a matter of life or death. In Chicago, New York, or Los Angeles, it was above all a matter of life.

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Louisiane − Québec − Acadie. Enjeux politiques et créativités culturelles dans les relations francophones transversales

1. La Louisiane et La Nouvelle Orléans : un espace francophone archipélique – configurations socio-culturelles et concepts théoriques

La Louisiane, comprenant en son noyau le microcosme de la Nouvelle Orléans, a constitué, et constitue toujours dans une certaine mesure, un espace francophone archipélique.[1] De même que les communautés francophones au Canada (hors Québec), la francophonie louisianaise semble habitée par une structure mentale et culturelle « insulaire » qui est caractérisée, selon Dominique Daguet, par un profond mouvement dialectique résultant en même temps d'un geste de repli sur soi et d'un désir d'ouverture vers un horizon plus large : « En effet, si partout où se trouvent des communautés francophones l'on a souvent tendance à se refermer sur soi-même, l'on a aussi l'attention très ouverte sur ce qui se passe ailleurs » (Daguet 1984 : 3). Intégré dans un continent dominé par la culture anglo-américaine et la langue américaine, soumis depuis le début du XXe siècle à une forte pression d'assimilation, cet espace francophone est devenu, depuis les dernières décennies du XIXe siècle, de plus en plus fragmenté, morcelé, et délimité par des frontières de plus en plus floues et des configurations en mouvance perpétuelle (Rogers 1971/72 : 45-67). Le français et les langues et cultures créoles jouent dans cet espace culturel archipélique un rôle de plus en plus résiduel et aussi, depuis les premières décennies du XXe siècle, de plus en plus folklorisé.

Comment penser les relations entre les différentes composantes de l'aire culturelle francophone, et à travers quels concepts, quels ques-

[1] Cf. sur cette notion les travaux d'Ottmar Ette et, en ce qui concerne l'espace francophone nord-américain, Lüsebrink (2012).

tionnements et pistes de recherche ? Nous proposons d'esquisser ici quatre approches qui pourraient être désignées d'emblée par quatre concepts : centre et périphérie ; réseau ; transculturalité ; et transversalité.

Les concepts de *centre et périphérie* constituent, certes, l'approche la plus commune pour penser les relations au sein de l'espace francophone, en particulier entre la métropole et les cultures francophones hors de France et notamment hors d'Europe. « Tous cherchent à se définir », souligne Auguste Viatte dans son *Histoire comparée des littératures francophones* (1980), dans ce langage imagé qui lui est propre, « par rapport à la littérature de France, leur aînée, déjà riche de plusieurs siècles à leur naissance, et qui reste au centre de leurs rencontres et de leurs préoccupations. […]. Celui qui les suit dans leur cheminement ne peut que partager cette conviction. Il voit, autour du foyer primordial, Paris, s'allumer progressivement d'autres foyers un peu partout ; il voit, alimentés d'abord à la même source et ramifiés de terroir en terroir, se multiplier les courants fertilisants ; à travers les contingences de l'histoire et de la politique et quelquefois malgré les dissensions, il voit s'épanouir une floraison d'œuvres parentes et diverses dans le monde entier » (Viatte 1980 : 3). Le même constat d'une dépendance foncière par rapport à l'extérieur, et en particulier par rapport à l'ancienne métropole coloniale, la France, est fait par Mathé Allain, l'une des meilleures spécialistes de la littérature de la Louisiane : « Pendant longtemps », note-t-elle dans un article programmatique sur « L'invention de la Louisiane », « la Louisiane fut inventée de l'extérieur et accepta l'image de l'étranger » (Allain 1987 : 105).

Héritage de l'époque coloniale, ces concepts marquent des structures de dépendance concernant l'ensemble du secteur culturel – la littérature, le film, les médias, comme la presse, mais aussi et surtout l'édition. Même si ces formes de dépendance se sont atténuées et transformées depuis les années 1960, dans le sillage du postcolonialisme politique et culturel, et de nouveau dans le courant des années 1990, elles sont néanmoins persistantes et encore visibles : par exemple à travers l'importance symbolique accordée, dans l'ensemble des cultures francophones hors de France, à des formes de consécration littéraire, culturelle et scientifique en France même, par les prix

littéraires français ; à travers l'importance accordée au fait d'être publié par un grand éditeur parisien ; ou encore à travers la valorisation d'une présence dans les institutions (salons littéraires, académies) et médias hexagonaux.[2] Ces structures de dépendance impliquaient aussi des formes de *paternalisme culturel*[3] que l'on peut saisir également à travers de nombreux exemples dans la Louisiane du XIXe siècle. L'écrivain Oscar Dugué, élève de l'écrivain louisianais Adrien Rouquette et grand admirateur de Chateaubriand, qu'il considéra comme le « père des écrivains » louisianais à qui il envoya un poème inspiré de la nouvelle *René* où il s'identifiait lui-même fortement au personnage.[4] Il reçut par la suite une réponse assez condescendante de l'auteur français résumée en ces quelques mots : « […] vos vers, Monsieur, sont de la bonne école : ils sont solides et naturels, sans tours forcés, sans affectation de mots » (cité d'après Viatte 1954 : 259, note 4).

Comme le montre avec lucidité et précision Patrick Chamoiseau, dans son ouvrage *Lettres créoles. Tracées antillaises et continentales de la littérature 1635-1975* (1991), l'évolution des littératures et cultures de la Caraïbe, dont fait partie également l'espace francophone louisianais, fut marquée dès ses origines au XVIIe siècle par des relations de dépendance et d'imitation, dont les écrivains et producteurs de biens culturels allaient essayer, de manière successive et dialectique, de se détacher, notamment à partir des premières décennies du XXe siècle et de l'essor des mouvements anticolonialistes. La toute première pièce de théâtre dans la littérature louisianaise, le drame *Poucha-Houmma* écrit en 1814 en vers alexandrins par Le Blanc de Villeneuve, un officier français employé par le gouvernement de la Louisiane, fut inspirée du *Cid* de Corneille avec sa mise en scène des valeurs aristocratiques. « Ce n'est pas une œuvre de génie, mais c'est

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[2] L'importance médiatique accordée au Québec, et plus généralement dans le monde francophone, à la nomination de Léopold Sedar Senghor (en 1983), puis d'Assia Djebar (2005) et de Dany Laferrière (en 2013) à l'Académie Française en témoignent.

[3] Cf. sur la notion de « paternalisme », ses formes et ses enjeux dans le contexte colonial, Lüsebrink (1984).

[4] « Mon âme est inquiète ; image de René / Je ne sais pas pourquoi je suis infortuné. / O mon frère en douleur, ô René, que je t'aime ! Que j'aime en ton histoire à me trouver moi-même » (cité d'après Viatte 1954 : 259).

le premier écrit en Louisiane », note à ce sujet Édouard-J. Fortier dans un article sur les « Les Lettres françaises en Louisiane », « c'est notre *Cid* et c'est précieux. Notre Rodrigue n'a pas de Chimène ; mais si Rodrigue offre sa tête à Chimène, notre Poucha offre la sienne à ses pires ennemis, pour sauver celle de son fils » (Fortier 1915 : 6).

Le romantisme et ses figures de proue, Chateaubriand, Alphonse de Lamartine, Alfred de Musset, Victor Hugo, mais aussi, dans une moindre mesure, Alessandro Manzoni et Walter Scott, puis Alexandre Dumas et Eugène Sue, ont exercé dans tout l'espace francophone une influence importante, tant dans les Caraïbes qu'au Canada francophone et en Louisiane au milieu et pendant la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle. L'influence de Musset et son modèle esthétique est ainsi perceptible dans le drame *Qui perd gagne* (1849) de l'écrivain louisianais Placide Canonge ; et celle de l'écrivain romantique italien Alessandro Manzoni dans la pièce *Le Comte de Carmagnola,* également écrite par Placide Canonge, jouée en 1856 à la Nouvelle Orléans. Le milieu du XIXe siècle vit la parution, à la Nouvelle Orléans, de plusieurs imitations d'œuvres d'Alexandre Dumas et d'Eugène Sue, comme *Les Veillées louisianaises* de Charles Testud publiées en 1849 et inspirées de Dumas, ou le roman *Les mystères de la Nouvelle Orléans* (1852-55) du même auteur, calqué sur *Les mystères de Paris* (1842-43) d'Eugène Sue. Les romans historiques de Walter Scott, mais surtout des modèles littéraires et esthétiques du romantisme français, comme ceux nés sous la plume de Chateaubriand, de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre ou d'Alphonse de Lamartine, ont fortement imprégné l'œuvre littéraire d'Alfred Mercier qui fut certes l'écrivain louisianais le plus important du XIXe siècle à la Nouvelle Orléans. La *Nouvelle Atala*, une réécriture louisianaise du roman *Atala* de Chateaubriand, publiée en 1879 par Adrien Rouquette, reflète une certaine volonté de prise de distance par rapport aux modèles hexagonaux, même si ce roman renoue avec des formes d'idéalisation des peuples amérindiens, héritées du XVIIIe siècle, des peuples qui « ressemblent » à ses yeux « aux héros d'Homère et d'Ossian » (Chahta-Ima [Rouquette] 1879 : V; cf. aussi Viatte 1980 : 35 , 1954 : 259)

Cette évolution dynamique, qui allait marquer le développement de la littérature louisianaise pendant la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle, peut être mise en parallèle avec les processus de prise de distance

par rapport au « mimétisme » que Chamoiseau et Confiant ont relevé également dans les littératures antillaises de l'époque (Fortier 1915 : 16). En ce qui concerne Adrien Rouquette, qui fut prêtre et qui se retira, après son séjour d'étude en France, pour vivre parmi les Indiens à Bonfouca, adoptant le nom amérindien du peuple des Chactas, de « Chahta-Ima » (qui veut dire « l'un de nous »), sa stratégie de réécriture découla de sa connaissance intime des cultures amérindiennes et de sa volonté de présenter une autre image de leurs réalités sociales que celle développée par Chateaubriand, même si son écriture demeura, assez paradoxalement, fortement imprégnée de l'héritage français et des topoi de perception de l'Autre véhiculés par la littérature préromantique et romantique française (Fortier 1915 : 18).

Comme dans d'autres aires culturelles francophones, cette dynamique de la prise de distance et de la réécriture de modèles littéraires et culturels français, et plus largement occidentaux, déboucha aussi en Louisiane au XIXe siècle sur l'ébauche de la conception d'une littérature nationale. L'écrivain Thomas Théard en dessina les contours dans un article paru le 7 octobre 1841 dans le journal *La Louisiane.* Tout en faisant référence au mouvement romantique européen comme modèle esthétique et culturel, il marqua en même temps certaines distances par rapport à celui-ci. Il définit ainsi la littérature louisianaise comme une « littérature toute brillante de génie et d'originalité », caractérisée par un « romantisme sans ‹ extravagance ›, qui, au lieu de suivre ‹ servilement la trace des écrivains français ›, exhalerait ‹ un parfum indigène ›, avec la ‹ tristesse vague › qu'inspireraient fatalement […] ‹ la mélancolie de nos grandes plaines couvertes de forêts de pins ›, ainsi que ‹ des beautés plaintives de nos lacs solitaires et de notre ciel brumeux ›. »[5]

Le concept de *réseau* implique, en second lieu, que les relations entre les différents espaces culturels francophones ne soient pas seulement imaginaires, renvoyant à une communauté fictive, voire « fantasmée », basée sur la langue et la culture françaises, mais qu'elles soient également ancrées dans des flux bien réels de migration d'hommes,

[5] Viatte (1980 : 35) cite ici l'article de Théard publié dans le journal *La Louisiane* le 7 octobre 1841. Les termes et expressions entre guillemets simples sont empruntés à Thomas Théard.

avec les réseaux en découlant : d'abord les migrations et réseaux hérités de l'époque coloniale, entre la France, d'une part, et les Antilles, la Louisiane, la Réunion, l'Afrique Subsaharienne et le Maghreb, d'autre part ; et ensuite, les flux migratoires et réseaux postcoloniaux et contemporains, reliant par exemple Haïti au Québec, la France au Vietnam ou au Maghreb, la Belgique au Zaïre, Haïti à la Louisiane, La Réunion à l'Île Maurice et aux anciennes colonies françaises en Inde et en Indochine. Trois flux migratoires paraissent importants pour la Louisiane francophone et ses cultures : d'abord les migrations allant des Antilles, en particulier Haïti, vers la Nouvelle Orléans, non seulement suite à la Révolution haïtienne, mais aussi tout au long des XIXe et XXe siècles. L'écrivain Charles Testud, mentionné précédemment, qui émigra à New York après avoir passé son enfance en France, vécut par exemple pendant plusieurs années à Pointe-à-Pitre avant de s'installer définitivement à la Nouvelle Orléans en 1843, après le tremblement de terre en Guadeloupe la même année. D'autre part, la Louisiane fut profondément marquée par l'afflux de populations en provenance de l'Acadie en 1755, dû à l'occupation anglaise et à la politique d'expulsion brutale pratiquée par le pouvoir britannique. Et, enfin, la production littéraire et culturelle de la Nouvelle Orléans fut aussi marquée par les séjours prolongés de nombreux membres des élites sociales louisianaises francophones en France, notamment à Paris, des flux de migration généralement temporaires qui tarirent largement après la Guerre de sécession ayant entrainé la décadence de l'économie des plantations en Louisiane et la ruine de nombreux planteurs francophones établis depuis des générations. Ces migrations intellectuelles temporaires qui ont créé des réseaux transatlantiques ayant souvent un impact créatif important sur les cultures francophones hors d'Europe, ont caractérisé aussi d'autres francophonies nord-américaines, en particulier le Québec depuis la fin du XIXe siècle.[6]

Vu sous cet angle, l'espace francophone reflète, de manière originale et avec un héritage historique spécifique, des facettes importantes du mouvement de globalisation contemporain. Il témoigne d'une nou-

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[6] Cf. sur ce sujet la préface dans : *Lettres de Berlin et d'autres villes d'Europe*, par Edmond de Nevers (Lüsebrink 2002) et Warren (2005) ; ainsi que Lüsebrink (2011) et, dans une perspective complémentaire Lacroix (2014).

velle intensité des réseaux transculturels et d'une nouvelle dimension des espaces d'interaction, ce que l'historien allemand Jürgen Osterhammel a appelé, dans son livre sur la globalisation contemporaine, « Interaktionsräume » (espaces d'interaction) et « Netzwerke » (réseaux) (Osterhammel/Petersson 2005 : 20). La francophonie – plus précisément l'espace francophone – a été, en effet, pendant longtemps un espace foncièrement imaginaire, constitué essentiellement par la conquête coloniale et les discours politiques et littéraires s'y rattachant, beaucoup plus que par des réseaux concrets et des migrations d'hommes d'importance vraiment significative.

Le concept de *transculturalité*, en troisième lieu, désigne, sur le plan théorique et méthodologique, des relations liant plusieurs cultures et traversant plusieurs espaces culturels. L'occidentalisation du monde non-européen, dans le sillage de l'expansion coloniale, constitue sans doute le phénomène transculturel le plus important de l'époque moderne. Étudier les littératures et cultures de l'archipel francophone de la Louisiane et de la Nouvelle Orléans dans une perspective transculturelle signifie ainsi saisir les processus culturels communs aux littératures francophones, mais qui dépassent en même temps la relation périphérie-centre : tels par exemple les processus d'américanisation, que l'on peut éclairer dans une perspective à la fois interculturelle et comparatiste en essayant d'analyser l'impact de la culture matérielle et médiatique des Etats-Unis sur différentes cultures francophones, et les formes d'appropriation culturelle mises en jeu. On peut également étudier les formes d'affirmation identitaire qui sont propres à plusieurs sociétés et cultures, comme par exemple celles communes aux sociétés et cultures francophones en Amérique du Nord, englobant la Nouvelle Orléans et la Louisiane, le Québec et les provinces canadiennes maritimes, le Nouveau-Brunswick et la Nouvelle Écosse, ou l'ancienne Acadie.

Le concept de *transversalité* implique, enfin, dans le cas de l'espace francophone louisianais, l'existence de formes de relations entre différentes sphères de l'espace francophone qui court-circuitent, dépassent ou transgressent les relations centre-périphérie. Auguste Viatte, dans ses différents travaux, et en particulier dans son ouvrage

pionnier *Histoire comparée des littératures francophones* (1980), a retracé de nombreuses transversalités de ce genre, basées parfois sur des relations interculturelles, c'est-à-dire sur des formes d'interactions, de contacts, d'échanges et de transferts. Viatte désigne ces relations généralement par les concepts de « convergence » et de « divergence », d'« universalisme » et de « particularisme » ainsi que par ceux d'« analogie » et de « parallélisme ».[7] Fondées sur des relations de dépendance semblables par rapport aux modèles culturels, idéologiques et esthétiques français, les cultures québécoise, louisianaise et acadienne développèrent ainsi, à la même époque, c'est-à-dire au milieu du XIXe siècle, des formes similaires et très comparables d'autonomisation ainsi que des concepts analogues d'identité nationale, de littérature nationale et de défense de la langue française. Et ces processus favorisèrent l'émergence d'une transversalité d'échanges et de contacts, en l'occurrence entre la Nouvelle Orléans, le Québec et l'Acadie à partir du début du XXe siècle.

2. Transversalités francophones : Louisiane – Acadie – Québec 1912–1945

Paradoxalement, les échanges, les interactions et les contacts transversaux entre les différents espaces de l'archipel francophone en Amérique du Nord se développèrent plus intensément à une époque, celle des premières décennies du XXe siècle, où la langue française était déjà en net recul en Louisiane et où la littérature et la culture francophones y étaient en nette décadence.[8] Les actes des deux grands congrès de la langue française organisés en 1912 et en 1937 au Canada à Québec et réunissant des représentants de toutes les communautés francophones en Amérique du Nord, permettent de saisir, dans un premier temps, les enjeux de ces relations transversales entre

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[7] Cf. Viatte (1980), ainsi que Viatte (1954 : 506-518, « Conclusion générale », chapitres « Les deux constantes des littératures de l'Amérique française – Universalisme et particularisme » et « Leur progrès et leur parallélisme »).

[8] Cf. le tableau d'ensemble dans Viatte (1954 : 276-301, chapitre II, « Littérature louisianaise : le déclin »).

la Louisiane et les francophonies canadiennes et d'analyser en même temps les dispositifs discursifs mis alors en place.

En 1912, la délégation de la Louisiane francophone au Premier Congrès de la Langue Française au Canada qui se déroula à Québec entre le 24 et le 30 juin 1912, fut présidée par Alcée Fortier (1856-1914), un historien et philologue membre d'une vieille famille francophone de la Nouvelle-Orléans, professeur de littérature française à l'Université Tulane à la Nouvelle Orléans, à l'époque président de la Société Historique de Louisiane et membre de l'Académie des Sciences de La Nouvelle-Orléans. Son discours sur la « Louisiane Française », prononcé lors du congrès de Québec et publié dans les actes, retraça les grandes étapes de l'histoire de la Louisiane et de ses liens à la fois avec la France et le Canada, respectivement la Nouvelle France, et souligna ensuite, dans une deuxième partie, l'importance de la culture française en Louisiane, en évoquant le droit (le Code Napoléon), la littérature, la presse ainsi que le système scolaire. « La domination française, » affirma-t-il, « a laissé une empreinte ineffaçable en Louisiane, où le sens artistique est ainsi plus développé que nulle part ailleurs aux États-Unis. Nous avons l'opéra français, à la Nouvelle-Orléans, tous les hivers, et, pendant le carnaval, d'admirables bals de la plus haute société représentant des sujets allégoriques, historiques ou littéraires » (Fortier 1913 : 318). Ses observations sur l'implantation de l'enseignement du français, qui avait pourtant perdu depuis 1878 son statut de langue d'enseignement officielle dans le système scolaire de la Louisiane, sont plutôt optimistes puisqu'il souligne que « [n]ous avons en Louisiane bien des écoles où l'enseignement est bilingue, parmi lesquelles sont des écoles religieuses, des écoles libres, et deux écoles françaises. » Mais il y ajoute un regret : « Malheureusement le français ne fait plus partie des cours officiels des écoles primaires publiques » (Fortier 1913 : 320). Le discours de Fortier reflète une vision élitiste de la culture et de la langue française en Louisiane, caractéristique pour l'élite créole de l'époque, qui valorise les normes linguistiques, culturelles et esthétiques forgées en métropole. La seule mention d'une particularité culturelle et linguistique propre à la Louisiane est celle relative aux descendants des Acadiens, une population rurale qu'il qualifie d'« honnête et religieuse » et parmi laquelle certains seraient « arrivés à de hautes

positions dans notre État ». Il ajoute qu'ils « parlent bien le français », même si la plupart d'entre eux « parlent un idiome qui se rapproche de celui des ‹ habitants › canadiens et qui est un intéressant dialecte à étudier au point de vue philologique » (Fortier 1913 : 321). Les textes poétiques publiés à la fin de l'article de Fortier, des extraits d'œuvres d'Adrien Rouquette et d'Alfred Mercier, deux figures de proue de la littérature louisianaise du XIXe siècle, reflètent, en effet, une *thématique* nord-américaine, mais sont rédigés dans un français basé sur les *normes* linguistiques et esthétiques classiques de la métropole.

Vingt-sept ans plus tard, au Deuxième Congrès de la Langue Française au Canada en 1937, qui se déroula aussi à Québec, la construction identitaire de la Louisiane francophone se présente de façon très différente. À la tête de la délégation louisianaise se trouve cette fois-ci non pas un représentant de l'élite culturelle de la Nouvelle Orléans, mais un ecclésiastique, l'Abbé Jean-Baptiste Lachapelle, vivant et travaillant en région rurale, dans le village de Léonville au centre de la province, habité majoritairement par une population de « Cajuns », c'est-à-dire de Francophones dont les ancêtres étaient venus de l'Acadie canadienne après l'expulsion de la population francophone en 1755. Le discours de Lachapelle met l'accent sur les traits communs de la population francophone en Louisiane : « Nous sommes tous frères de la même race ; nous sommes fils de la même culture intellectuelle et religieuse » (Lachapelle 1938 : 251), affirma-t-il ainsi de manière insistante. Mais à lire de plus près son discours, et en tenant compte aussi des non-dits, on constate que Lachapelle considère que les « paysans des bayous » (Lachapelle 1938 : 251) représentent désormais la seule communauté francophone réellement vivante en Louisiane. « Les Acadiens », souligne-t-il dans cette perspective, « forment la majorité de la population française en Louisiane » (Lachapelle 1938 : 255) et ils parlent « le dialecte acadien ». Il en défend les particularités : « Ce parler émaillé de mots et d'expressions étrangères possède une virilité surprenante dans la bouche des Acadiens louisianais. Ce parler est l'histoire en raccourci de la Louisiane française et de ses pionniers et fondateurs » (Lachapelle 1938 : 255). Lachapelle distingue ainsi trois communautés francophones en Louisiane, avec trois histoires distinctes, trois cultures foncièrement différentes et trois langages spécifiques dont seule la troisième, les

« Cajuns », aurait encore une réelle vitalité socio-culturelle : D'abord les vieilles familles françaises des grandes plantations et de la haute société de la Nouvelle Orléans, issues de l'immigration française du temps de la colonisation et de l'immigration en provenance de Saint-Domingue, fréquentant les « écoles, collèges et universités », mais marquées par une forte assimilation à la culture anglo-américaine depuis le début du XXe siècle ; puis, en second lieu, la population d'origine afro-américaine, parlant, dans une certaine mesure encore « le créole », « la langue des noirs », les descendants des esclaves, dont il juge le parler avec une certaine condescendance : « Aussi ils se fabriquèrent, c'est le mot – un français à eux, tout à fait à eux ; nous pourrions dire un idiome, qui est connu de tout Louisianais français. Ce patois est d'une simplicité enfantine. Sa note dominante, je dirais, est la naïveté » (Lachapelle 1938 : 256). La troisième communauté, enfin, celle des paysans des bayous, descendants des Acadiens venus du Canada, représente selon lui la majorité des 300 000 personnes parlant français dans la Louisiane des années 1930. Les liens anciens avec le Canada, renouvelés depuis le début du XXe siècle, permettraient, aux yeux de Lachapelle, d'une part de renforcer les revendications de droits minoritaires et linguistiques, notamment dans l'administration et l'enseignement. Ces droits obtenus par les Francophones au Canada, depuis le XVIIIe siècle et de nouveau, en ce qui concerne les minorités francophones en Ontario, pendant et après la Première Guerre Mondiale, à travers des luttes politiques et sociales acharnées[9], auraient été successivement perdus par la population louisianaise à partir de la Guerre de Sécession Américaine, puis depuis la Première Guerre Mondiale qui a vu la suppression des dernières écoles publiques francophones en Louisiane. Et ces liens et réseaux reconstitués entre les Francophonies du Canada et les Francophonies de la Louisiane permettraient, d'autre part, de développer la culture francophone en Louisiane que Lachapelle voit comme une culture en premier lieu hybride, principalement orale et rurale, et non pas urbaine, bourgeoise et écrite.

[9] Il s'agit ici en particulier de la lutte autour du règlement 17 en Ontario entre 1912 et le début des années 1920. Cf. sur ce sujet Bock/Charbonneau (2015).

3. Nostalgies et survivances

Les multiples liens – politiques, sociaux et culturels – qui se sont tissés depuis le début du XXe siècle entre la Louisiane francophone et les communautés francophones du Canada – dont les deux Congrès de la Langue Française de 1912 et de 1937, suivis de deux autres congrès en 1952 et en 1957, ont chaque fois souligné l'importance, n'ont pas pu arrêter l'érosion de la langue et de la culture française en Louisiane, face à la puissante force assimilatrice des cultures anglophones nord-américaines, et particulièrement celle des États-Unis (cf. Rogers 1971/72). La coupure brutale entre la France métropolitaine et les communautés francophones en Amérique du Nord pendant la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale a eu pour effet de renforcer les liens et les échanges – déjà établis auparavant − entre les différentes Francophonies nord-américaines, également entre le Québec et la Louisiane. Cette intensification nouvelle des réseaux, des échanges et des transferts culturels entre le Québec et la Louisiane s'étendit aussi sur le reste du continent américain. Elle fit naître en Québec un intérêt nouveau pour les cultures sud-américaines et états-unienne, mais donna également une dimension neuve aux relations entre les différentes francophonies américaines. En témoigne par exemple l'essai d'Olivier Maurault, intitulé *Aux Louisianais,* paru en 1943 à Montréal où l'auteur rappelle les liens historiques étroits entre la Nouvelle-France et le Québec, d'une part, et la Louisiane, d'autre part, un essai qui s'achève sur l'invocation emphatique, voire idéalisée, des particularités sociogéographiques de la Louisiane et en même temps la mise en avant des traits culturels et sociaux communs entre les communautés francophones :

> La facilité de la vie, le climat vraiment tempéré, l'abondance de la végétation, des fleurs particulièrement, la variété des oiseaux et de leurs chants, la douceur du paysage d'où toute rudesse est absente, les races d'hommes qui s'y sont établies – françaises, antillaises, canadiennes, acadiennes, africaines – races gaies ou doucement mélancoliques, races dont le labeur n'a pas la rigueur mécanique et sombre d'autres familles humaines, races hospitalières et tolérantes dont la population anglo-saxonne a subi l'influence : tout cela fait de la Louisiane un pays fortuné que le Canadien ne peut s'empêcher de chérir, parce qu'il y re-

> trouve beaucoup de lui-même, dans un cadre plus doux, moins austère et plus haut en couleur. (Maurault 1943 : 160)

Ces liens transculturels entre la Louisiane francophone et les Francophones canadiens ont néanmoins eu un impact important qui s'avère essentiellement double. D'une part, la Louisiane a pu obtenir depuis 1968, avec la mise en place du CODOFIL (Conseil pour le Développement du Français en Louisiane), un statut particulier pour la langue française en Louisiane, favorisant l'établissement d'écoles françaises et l'enseignement du français en général. Des coopérants français, canadiens et belges, soutenus par le Québec et le Canada ainsi que par les institutions de la Francophonie, vinrent ainsi en nombre croissant pour enseigner le français dans les écoles en Louisiane (Griolet 1986 : 106). Et en 1972 fut élu le premier Gouverneur francophone de la Louisiane, Edwin Edwards (1972-1980). Même si ces mesures demeurent bien en-deçà du statut acquis par la langue et la culture françaises avant la Guerre de Sécession, c'est-à-dire pendant la première moitié du XIXe siècle, elles paraissent toutefois remarquables dans le contexte culturel des Etats-Unis et sont à resituer plus largement dans le cadre des luttes francophones au Canada, qui ont connu un nouvel essor avec la Révolution Tranquille au Québec dans les années 1960 et dans celui de la politique du multiculturalisme menée par le gouvernement fédéral canadien depuis les années 1970.

Outre le fait de représenter une réalité sociale (très) minoritaire, mais défendue depuis la fin des années 1960 par un militantisme inspiré et renforcé par les communautés francophones du Canada, et outre le fait de constituer un véritable élément folklorique, la « French touch » étant utilisée délibérément par le marketing touristique de la Louisiane, la culture francophone louisianaise semble aussi caractérisée depuis la fin des années 1960 par une créativité remarquable qui est dynamisée par les multiples liens avec le Canada francophone nés dans les années 1910. Elle renoue essentiellement avec le troisième type de culture francophone distingué en 1937 par Lachapelle, celle des « Cajuns » descendants des Acadiens du Canada maritime. Barry Jean Ancelet souligna dans les années 1970, de la même manière que le faisait quarante ans auparavant le représentant de la Louisiane au

Deuxième Congrès de la Langue Française, le caractère à la fois hybride, populaire et oral de cette culture francophone des « Bayous » :

> Spanish, Germans, and Anglo-Americans in the region eventually adopted the traditions and language of this new society, thus creating the South Louisiana mainstream. The Acadians, in turn, borrowed many traits from these other cultures, and this cross-cultural exchange produced a new Louisiana based community, the Cajuns. (Ancelet 1999 : 3)

L'écrivain et critique littéraire louisianais Barry Ancelet définit, dans d'autres écrits, la ré-émergence de la littérature et de la chanson francophones en Louisiane depuis les années 1930, et surtout depuis la fin des années 1980, comme une « renaissance » :

> La Louisiane francophone vit aujourd'hui une passionnante renaissance culturelle et linguistique, car Cadiens et Créoles, après avoir frôlé la perte de leur ethnicité, récupèrent leur héritage. L'influence homogénéisante de l'Amérique se fait sentir à travers la civilisation occidentale toute entière, mais les Etats-Unis n'ont pas réellement absorbé leurs ethnies en partie grâce aux efforts délibérés de visionnaires qui comprirent qu'un jour la société standardisée perdrait ses charmes et l'Amérique préférerait à un insipide brouet national des ragoûts régionaux plus relevés. Or, depuis les années '30 déjà, la Louisiane française réclamait son droit à l'existence et donnait un exemple de ténacité culturelle et linguistique, focalisée sur la musique. (Ancelet 1977 : 11)

Jean Arceneaux, Debbie Clifton, Émile Des Marais, Kenneth Richard, Karla Guillory, mais surtout le poète et chanteur Zachary Richard sont des représentants majeurs de cette hybridité créative de la culture cajun contemporaine (cf. Allain/Ancelet 1981). Ils sont publiés aussi bien par des éditeurs louisianais que, québécois ou acadiens et sont lus par des publics appartenant à ces deux espaces francophones nord-américains. Ils constituent donc en même temps des passeurs (ou médiateurs) interculturels entre différents archipels francophones nord-américains. Se sentant plus proche des provinces maritimes du Canada, de l'ancienne Acadie, que du Québec, et très éloigné de la France, Barry Jean Ancelet se pose en porte-parole de

ces poètes-chanteurs de la Louisiane contemporaine, et souligne leur parenté avec l'Acadie et ses écrivains, telle Antonine Maillet. « Une littérature écrite semble tellement évidente pour une culture », note-il dans sa préface au recueil *Cris sur le bayou. Naissance d'une poésie acadienne en Louisiane*, « mais il faut se rappeler que la grande majorité des franco-louisianais n'ont jamais eu l'occasion d'avoir une éducation en français. Leur langue maternelle orale, c'est bien le français, mais leur langue maternelle écrite, c'est l'anglais. [...]. Avec une richesse comme celle de la tradition orale acadienne et créole, ne serait-il pas un crime d'aller imiter la France, ou le Québec, ou n'importe quelle autre culture française du monde où il y a une longue tradition de ‹ belle littérature › ? » (Ancelet 1980 : 11, 12). Les auteurs émergeant dans la Louisiane des années 1960 affirmaient, en prenant résolument leurs distances par rapport à leurs prédécesseurs du XIXe siècle :

> Notre collection n'imite rien. Elle vient du creux de la Louisiane. Elle représente l'expérience d'être Acadien ou Créole asteur en Louisiane, dans un temps plein d'émotions, de sensations, de sentiments particuliers, un temps bouleversé par le danger de perdre une langue et une culture, un temps de grandes réussites et de grandes défaites, un temps de rires et de pleurs. La naissance de cette expression poétique est justement ça : une naissance. Il n'y a aucune prétention à la Grande Littérature comme celle de la France. [10]

Plus de cent ans après l'apogée de la langue, de la littérature et de la culture francophones à la Nouvelle Orléans, autour de 1850, nous sommes ici à l'opposé même du positionnement géopolitique et socioculturel qu'avaient incarné des écrivains fascinés au XIXe siècle par la lointaine métropole française, par ses modèles esthétiques, ses institutions culturelles et ses modes de sociabilité, comme Adrien Mercier ou encore Alexandre Barde, admirateur de Victor Hugo, fervent républicain exilé de France et adversaire farouche de Napoléon III, qui reprocha aux Louisianais leur indifférence au Théâtre français. Les rapports centre-périphérie, avec les normes esthétiques

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[10] Ancelet 1980 : 12 (Extrait de la préface à *Cris sur le Bayou*, recueil collectif publié à Lafayette). Cf. aussi Ancelet (2009 : 78-81).

et langagières qu'ils impliquaient, ont cédé la place à une nouvelle transversalité des relations entre la Louisiane et d'autres espaces francophones[11], de même qu'à une autre cartographie culturelle. Au sein de celle-ci, l'hybridité linguistique et culturelle, l'absence de normes établies et de frontières culturelles très précises, ainsi que l'importance donnée à l'oralité, à la performance, au corps et à la voix semblent désormais constituer des éléments essentiels.

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[11] Cf. sur ce sujet aussi Bouchard (2014), en particulier la conclusion : « Cette intégration continentale, si elle semble bénéfique pour les champs majeurs (le Québec, l'Acadie et l'Ontario), devient une question de survie pour les champs développés en milieux minoritaires. Par exemple, les littératures franco-louisianaises survivront difficilement sans une intégration institutionnelle (et non pas stylistique ou thématique) dans les autres littératures francophones nord-américaines. »

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Towards the Digital Atlantic? New Orleans's Open World in *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation HD*

Computer games have long ago become an integral part of worldwide consumer cultures. Major game releases have reached the impact level of international blockbusters, easily matching both costs and revenues of major movie productions. But while debates on computer games as the defining art form of the twenty-first century have shown responses from total rejection to zealous approval, the industries artistic output itself has fallen short of its many expectations. In light of this criticism, the release of *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation* (Ubisoft) for Sony Vita in 2012 and, especially, the follow-up release of *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation HD* for some of the major gaming platforms in 2014 has attracted interest both in cultural debates and in academia. The game's protagonist is the assassin Aveline de Grandpré, child of a *plaçage* between a French merchant father and an African mother. The game's setting is New Orleans in colonial French Louisiana during the Seven Years' War and the Louisiana Rebellion of 1768. Being the first female hero of the acclaimed *Assassin's Creed* series, Aveline is also a Creole of color and slavery fighter. Her appearance in the international computer game market has recently been discussed as a significant contribution to diversity studies and postcolonial discourse (Suellentrop 2014).

But is that true? Has the "French Atlantic" (Marshall 2009) suddenly become a digital playground? Can and should we take a closer look at contemporary gaming cultures in the context of scholarly inquiry and cultural theory of slavery, emancipation and postcolonial discourse?

1. Presenting Our Object of Study

Even though computer games themselves carry a history old enough to be museum-ready (www.computerspielemuseum.de), this story relies on a rather recent phenomenon. In 2007, the French computer game company Ubisoft released the computer game *Assassin's Creed*, which was to become the first of a long series of franchise titles under the same name. Until today, this acclaimed series has sold almost 80 million copies worldwide (www.ubisoftgroup.com). Since that year, the game's general narrative framework follows the same pattern: There is the protagonist Desmond Miles, in a science-fiction setting in the twenty-first century, forced to relive the memories of his ancestors through a time-traveling machine called *Animus*. At the core of these time travels lies the century-long confrontation between the Shiite order of the Hashshāshīn and the Christian Templar Order.[1] The first part of the series from 2007 actually recreates the historical setting of the twelfth century and follows a plot of betrayal around the Third Crusade, involving historical figures like Robert de Sablé as antagonist and King Richard I of England. For all further installments of the series, the antagonism between the Assassins on the one and the Templars on the other side is used as an excuse for almost any kind of historical unfolding of events. No matter what century we are dealing with, the battle between Templars and Assassins maintains its objectives throughout the times. While this staging clearly shows analogies to popular genres like the Dan Brown novels in its fancy for medieval conspiracy plots and religious symbolism, the *Assassin's Creed* series takes a heavy stance at historical fiction in a broader sense. Its installments have since then send the gaming community to Renaissance Italy (*Assassin's Creed II*, 2009), Colonial America (*Assassin's Creed III*, 2012), the era of the Pirates in seventeenth-century Caribbean (*Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*, 2013) and the French Revolution (*Assassin's Creed Unity*, 2014), with more

[1] "Historically the Assassins belonged to a secret order of religious fanatics in the Ismaili branch of the Shiite sect of Islam. At the time of the Crusades they controlled much of north Syria and were accustomed to doing away with their opponents by murder" (McCarthy 1973: 77).

titles on Imperial China and Victorian England on the way (see http://assassinscreed.ubi.com).

Assassin's Creed III: Liberation (2012) brings, as briefly mentioned above, a series of inventions to the acclaimed franchise: the colonial setting in the heart of the French Atlantic New Orleans, the appearance of a female mixed-race action heroine and the narrative focal point of eighteenth-century slavery in the Americas. Their significance for our debates on the French Atlantic will be discussed in a moment.

Let me first address a few thoughts on the general topic of examining computer games as objects of cultural inquiry.

2. Computer Games as Object of Cultural Inquiry

The last 20 years have seen the rise of computer games from being an entertainment toy for teenagers to becoming a centerpiece of global consumer cultures. Its revenues place production companies like Ubisoft at the top level of the international entertainment industry. The massive distribution of high-end mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets has given further acceptance to computer games around the world and throughout the social ladder. Everybody plays a game every now and then. And gaming has long left the niche of being a teenage boy hideaway from society.

To quote Simon Parkin from *MIT Technology Review*:

> Video games have been the most profitable medium in entertainment for decades now. In the early 1990s, Nintendo generated more annual profits than all of the American film studios combined. In 2012 the traditional video-game market boasted revenues of $58 billion, even excluding smartphone, tablet, and Facebook games. Since the first PlayStation launched in 1994, Sony has sold approximately 350 million video-game consoles, roughly equivalent to the total number of iPods sold by Apple up to and including 2012. (Parkin 2013)

Recent statistics by the independent, non-profit Entertainment Software Rating Board ESRB show interesting figures for the usage and distribution of computer games in US households. They make one

thing very clear: Games have grown up, together with the first generation of gamers, and have reached the center of our society's social life.

– the average age of a gamer is 34

– most adult gamers have been playing for 12 years

– 40 percent of all gamers are female

– most parents actively participate in the computer game consumption of their kids (Entertainment Software Rating Board)

While these numbers alone do not say much about the cultural value of computer games in today's societies, the quantitative leap in market penetration has shifted attention towards the creative side of the industry.

Henry Jenkins, Professor of Communication, Journalism and Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California, is among the most prominent critics of contemporary computer game culture. He belongs to those who framed the notion of computer games as the defining art form for the twenty-first century and actively promotes that idea in publications and on his official weblog.

Jenkins concedes that cultural criticism of computer games still lacks to a large degree an aesthetic theory and judgmental vocabulary, e.g. for the narrative setting, game mechanics or gaming experience itself. At the same time, he does make an important point in favor of computer games' status as art (instead of conceding to their quality as an act of mere craftsmanship). His point is – interestingly enough – political and almost a call for action. Only if we assume that computer games are more than commodities, Jenkins argues, that they behold the possibility to challenge the minds of people through their creative, aesthetic and conceptual modeling of the world, that they are – to put it briefly – more than cigarettes or chocolate, will we eventually help to promote more creative freedom in the industry (see Jenkins 2006). In other words: As long as we don't take computer games more seriously, they will not become any better!

In some cases, this new grown-up mentality does already exist. Some games have stirred the gaming community's attention from the

perspective of historic accuracy and the persuasive power of simulating and re-modeling certain historic settings. This was true, for instance, in the case of *Grand Prix Legends*, a sports simulation set in the golden era of car racing (see Uricchio 2005: 327). Even though its release dates back more than ten years, the game still enjoys a high reputation, mostly because of its level of seriousness and knowledge required to create the accuracy in which the game simulates, narrates and connotes the historic race experience. The fact that *GPL* is a very hard game to play has only added to the seriousness surrounding the game's community culture. In order for this specific reputation to foster and persist, there needs to be a high level of judgment on the side of the active community. Such a kind of quality assessment goes far beyond questions of visual or general game design but touches upon contextual knowledge and hermeneutic competence on the cultural history of sports and, in this particular case, car racing.

But that is, in the end, only sports. And sports do, of course, follow a different paradigm than our discussion of shared history in the framework of race and colonial politics does. To state the obvious: Popular sports are as much part of the (globalized) entertainment industry as computer games. The popular culture that surrounds both industries is mostly a fan culture, which has long ago created legions of specialized followers highly knowledgeable in their field, but fails to do so for the field of critical inquiry. Fandom, as elaborate as it may be, is in fact quite the opposite of critical inquiry for obvious reasons.[2]

3. *Kulturindustrie*, Leisure and Gaming Culture

Irrespective of fanculture and its inaptness to function as a motor of critical debate: Can we imagine a gamer's community and general public that shows a broad level of commitment with games concerned with the many facets of social, political and colonial history, much

[2] Admittetly, this is an apodictic judgement. A counter-argument proposes Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht who argues in favor of sports as a central venue for contemporary aesthetics and aesthetic critique, both from the point of its production as well as its reception (see Gumbrecht 2006).

like the *Assassin's Creed* series? A commitment that would indeed inspire a politic reading and critical judgement of the possible contributions computer games make to contemporary discourse? It seems difficult to argue in favor of such prospects. The mere fact that computer games belong to one of the most explicitly commercial branches of a global(ized) entertainment industry gives way to one classic argument in line of the *Frankfurter Schule*, which betrays all intentions of political critique. Following that rationale, the *Kulturindustrie's* product always resembles an essentially profound affirmation of the given (social, economic, political) order, instead of serving as a counter-argument to a society's norms. It can therefore *never* be free of its underlying intentions and only works as a tool for inquiry and critical reflection in as much as it *simulates* (not stimulates) that very potential. In other words: culture (or art, for that matter) produced by our *Kulturindustrie* is never outside of anything, never the opposite of what it apparently challenges, it is the system's most subtle expression.

Next to the historic critique on any form of *Kulturindustrie* and its inaptness to shape independent thinking, there is a second argument against the critical potential of computer games. This argument, of course, relies on the cultural roots of computer games as a product of leisure and consumption. And those forces do not only move the market, they also tend to follow a rather conservative pattern. Leisure and pleasure have limited levels of accepting the new and challenging. They counteract the industry's need for a more risky, and more deliberate creative expression. In the end, computer games – also those by Ubisoft – serve a genuinely commercial purpose and are bound to please a multinational consumer market. They are always and foremost a *product*, never in the first place an expression of art, much less the expression of an individual artist or single, creative mind. But then, of course, we would rely on a rather limited definition of art itself.

The crucial question here is not whether we judge or perceive computer games as aesthetically appealing or innovative or whether our notion of art is broad enough to include the semantic and generic complexity of computer games. Form, narrative and visual meaning all exist in contemporary computer games like *Bioshock* and *Fall-*

out 3 on a level of complexity easily comparable to the artistic seriousness of movies and contemporary novels (see Bissell 2010: 5ff., 160ff.). The crucial question starts at the moment when we press 'play' to start a game. The specific form of interaction that computer games require and that shapes the meaning of the word 'gaming' sets them apart from other forms of visual and narrative forms of world modeling. Gaming is the act of participating in the simulation of interaction with a given set of operational and narrative options. And even though the interaction itself is only the effect of a simulation, it is by all means more direct and 'active' than interactions of the kind we have with books, movies or paintings, much more resembling the kind of experience we might have with music that we play.

Most of the time, gaming is the kind of activity you pursue to pass time. When it is done alone, a single player mode like that of *Assassin's Creed* is the most common setting. Here, the ludic – the useless play – prevails over the agon – the purposeful contest between two or more opponents (like, for example, in sports). And in contrast to (the way we have learned to engage with) film, music, literature and theater, our gameplay seems to be almost exclusively motivated by the pleasure of entertainment and the liberating experience of exclusive distraction. In a world of highly competitive work ethics and time optimization, the luxury of playing games is measured in as much as it consumes our time and shortens our perception of duration. To say the obvious: Six hours of (good) gameplay seem like two. To have 'lost' four hours is the provocative luxury we consume as gamers.

So again: Do politics fit into this kind of private commodity and excessive pleasure? Topics like slavery and colonial history in the transcultural setting of the Greater Caribbean?

4. Playing Aveline

The success of the *Assassin's Creed* series seems to give a good answer to that question. We might be playing, merely having a good time. But we do so in the historical fiction of eighteenth-century Louisiana, walking through New Orleans, listening to the French-, English- and Spanish-speaking population on the muddy streets, at

the harbor and in the governor's mansion, fighting political intrigue, climbing and swimming through the Bayou swamps, liberating enslaved African workers from the farms they are forcefully held on.

With all this in mind, it is hard to imagine someone playing Aveline without any awareness of the given historical setting. The historicity of this setting, however, alters. The player engages with a story full of historical allusion mixed with fantasy novel elements, which later in the game take the female Assassin on a cruise to the Templar hideaway at Chichen Itzá in search of a Prophecy Disc, material remains from what is considered the 'First Civilization.' But inside the more referential historical framework of the game's storyline, Aveline does pass through and participate in several moments of recorded history.

In the wake of transition from French to Spanish power at the end of the Seven Years War, director general of Louisiana, Jean-Jacques Blaise d'Abbadie makes his appearance in the game. But while the historic d'Abbadie was ordered to dismantle French forces in the colony in wake of the shift of power and later struggled with different local interests, the fictional d'Abbadie is killed by Aveline when she reveals his Templar identity and conspiracy with another Templar, the Spanish Rafael Joaquín de Ferrer. While Ferrer is merely a fictional add-on, another Spanish general – the naturalist traveler and astronomer Antonio de Ulloa – arrives at the scene as the first Spanish governor of Louisiana. Again, historical record and game narrative differ: while historical record has it that the Louisiana Rebellion of 1768 successfully expelled Ulloa from town, in the game it is again Aveline who is sent out to kill the presumed Templar Ulloa, who is involved in a secret slave-trade to Chichen Itzá. After killing his guards and confronting him, Aveline decides to let him live and leave town alive.

5. "History is Our Playground" – the Gamification of Historical Fiction

Given the liberties the game takes in unfolding the Templar-Assassin antagonism on top of historical record, the motto of the *Assassin's Creed* series becomes quite self-explanatory: "history is our playground." The series exploits historic settings, characters and events

in order to create a narrative environment suitable for their foe-friend constellations. This by all means simplistic (and ideologically stained) constellation sets the stage for, indeed, dazzling combat situations, suspense and action. On the other hand, Ubisoft's producers, writers and game designers take great caution in underlining that a lot of historical research has gone into the development of each of the series' installments.

By the same token, the disclaimer at the beginning of each game states that "this work of fiction was designed, developed and produced by a multicultural team of various religious faiths and beliefs." The paratextual quality of this reference to the cultural and religious composition of the game's production team – its authors, so to speak – may have a troubling ring to it. The tactics of the original Hashshāshīn order to execute murder attacks in the name of faith and religious warfare, during daylight and with the explicit purpose of causing shock and awe among the civil population, too closely resemble the mediated perception we are being given of today's terrorist attacks around the globe. In that light, the disclaimer could be a message of reassurance that the (hi)story depicted maintains a proportional balance while both representing and respecting diversity.

6. Whose Playground?

Nevertheless, the disclaimer's political correctness remains ambivalent. Aren't we playing a member of the Assassin's order, which – following the storyline of the narrative frame around Desmond Miles – exists through the times, much like the Templar Order, and represents the fight for freedom, while the Templars represent the fight for political control, social order and oppression? Aren't we, in consequence, freedom fighters, revolutionaries, heroes with a cause and license to kill, set out to fight tyranny? Aren't we, as assassins, always on the *right* side of history, fighting against slavery or in favor of the civil masses during the French Revolution (as in the series' recent title *Unity*)? *Liberation*'s storyline both confirms and oddly evades this interpretation. On one side, Aveline is indeed set out to fight the Templar's conspiracy in historic New Orleans and thrives for

justice for *her* oppressed people. On the other side, her ultimate goal is to find the cultural remains of the so-called 'First Civilization,' an ancient, far advanced alien race which settled on earth and created men as their domestic race, enslaving humanity for their purposes. The technologic and apparently 'magic' remains of this Civilization are watched over by the Templars. They are the reason that motivates the company around the time-traveling software machine *Animus* to send Miles on his quest. In other words: A company in the twenty-first century sends the descendant of the Assassin Order back to eighteenth-century New Orleans, where he becomes a Creole woman fighter in search for the remains of a pre-historic alien race, which are in the hands of the Templar Order, seeking – and effectively upholding – perpetual world domination.

This, of course, is all blank nonsense and the trivial pursuit of a silly storyline, barely fit to permit the recreation of historic sceneries. What turns this 'playground' into an interesting object of study is the care and the selection of the historic moments depicted and recreated in the series, which – unlike the framing storyline – do live up to the promise of engaging with the reference. In fact, one of the most interesting aspects of this game – and of the entire series for that matter – lies in its detailed recreation of everyday life in the colonial era right around the American Revolution and in the midst of the French Atlantic.

Some of the staged scenes directly display the social tensions of the times through movie-like dialogue that directly tackle issues of colonial politics, revolutionary upheaval and social injustice.[3]

7. Open World as a Metaphor: Constellations of Movement and Configurations of Space

It is in the detail of street sceneries above all that the genre term 'Open World' gains cultural significance. To explore the alleys and

[3] See, for instance, the dialogue between the Assassin Connor – like Aveline child of double heritage of a native (North American Indian) mother and a colonist father – and Samuel Adams on civil liberty and the speaking out on slavery at https://youtu.be/5ciDoEuwQo8.

streets of New Orleans, to stroll the Bayou swamps with the liberty of experiencing its visual, auditive and spatial richness permits a specific interaction with the historic scenery depicted that goes beyond the storyline the game imposes on us. The non-linear logic of movement, that the game – like any open-world game – permits, creates a proper space of visual and virtual experience genuine to gaming. The space of Aveline's open world becomes the gamer's space in as much as he or she configures that space through his or her movement. The individual pattern of this movement, I would like to argue, might be the way in which the active experience of playing an open world computer game is specific. The narrative of gaming, hence, is a narrative *through* movement. Its aesthetic experience, in the end, lies in the way and the ways we play, the routes we take and the context of space we create through that very movement. Why not consider this possible space of a virtual eighteenth-century New Orleans to become culturally significant, to remain in the visual and spatial memory of gamers as the fictional representation of one's own or, to some degree, one's shared history?

8. Slavery and Gender

The *Assassin's Creed* series is special in this sense, as it combines the spatial recreation of historical settings with the spatial creation of open world movement, driving the narrative plot not just towards the conspiracy simplicity of Templars against Assassins, but focusing also, and consequently, on historic political events.

In the case of *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation HD* that narrative focal point is slavery in the slave-holder society of eighteenth-century New Orleans. Aveline "infiltrates plantations to gather intelligence from enslaved people. She incites slave riots. She fights an overseer, disarms him of his whip and then uses it against other would-be masters. No game I've played," writes New York Times critic Chris Suellentrop, "deals this directly with the history and imagery of slavery in the New World, much less does it with sensitivity and intelligence" (Suellentrop 2014).

Confronting these facets of American colonial history widens the spectrum for computer games in their capacity to engage in postcolonial discourse (see Lammes 2010). In light of the multilingual character of *Liberation HD*, especially to be appreciated while walking the streets of Louisiana, the game also sheds light on the specific transcultural dimension of historic New Orleans precisely in the moment when two colonial empires overlap in their power regimes only some years before the Louisiana Purchase. As small as these steps might seem, they do set the scene for a different perception of computer games. If *this* is possible (and successful) in mainstream computer games culture, one might say, then we have just raised the bar enough to go a step further. In that next stage of development, we might see a new joint venture between 'serious' and commercial games fostering public discussion much like other aesthetic interventions (potentially) do.

9. French Atlantic Gaming

In all this, *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation HD* certainly is not the epitome of postcolonial or any other socially relevant discourse. We would stretch the storyline too far if we conceive of Aveline's story and enactment through the gaming passages of *Liberation* as a virtual embodiment of "transnational black subjectivity" (Ekotto 2011: XIV). Aveline is not Genet's *Les Nègres*. We might even wonder if Aveline embodies *someone* at all, if the storyline carries far enough to consider her a *character* in its own narrative right.

If we more closely examine the ways in which she presents herself as a person – mostly through the movie scenes and staged dialogues with her family and other characters throughout the game – her ambitions and motivations stay shallow. We are never explained why and how she became the skilled assassin we are given to act with. Her motivation to risk her life for the cause of liberating the enslaved never goes beyond the obvious trail of heroic solidarity and individual sacrifice.

As we play, we quickly learn that Aveline can embody three different personae, three different disguises: the lady, the assassin and

the slave, each with their own set of skills. These options broaden the gameplay and provide more options for non-linear gaming and strategy. The division between three personae seems simple at first: As a lady, Aveline can bribe city officials, easily enter public areas and flirt with men in the streets; as an assassin, she can ambush, climb, fight and kill; as a slave, Aveline can blend into the city's everyday life and virtually disappear while still wandering the streets without being detected as a villain. Alongside this simplicity, the three-fold character of Aveline offers to opt in and out of class, culture and legal status in a stratospheric glimpse of differences. Even race is marked that way, as we can consider the lady personae to blend in with white society as much as the slave disguise makes her blend in with the free people of color and the enslaved population of New Orleans. As such, the gameplay oscillates between a subtle metaphor of French Atlantic revolutionary events and a simplistic typology.

Alongside all these considerations, I still think that we should incorporate Aveline into our (future) canon of cultural representations of the French Atlantic. We should take notice of the diverse and creative computer games industry and accept their contribution as elements in our analysis of alternative world-modeling. This approach implies further development both in the experimental creation of more complex and aesthetically appealing computer games as well as in the more nuanced production of cultural criticism. Aveline might not be a revelation to the literary scholar. But it certainly highlights a new sensitivity in gaming culture towards the inheritance of colonial history, of racial divide and social injustice.

A next step has already been taken: Ubisoft renewed its programmatic (and at times risky) approach towards the genre of history games with one of the company's most recent releases: the standalone single player *Assassin's Creed: Freedom Cry* (2014). Here, we play Adéwalé, an ex-slave raised by pirates and set out to liberate the enslaved workers on the plantation farms around Port-au-Prince, support the maroons in their fight for freedom, incite the Haitian Revolution (!) and fight the slave contrabandists on board his own ship Experto Crede.

With all this in mind, we can clearly say that the playground for history keeps evolving and that we might – optimistically speaking –

be looking at the eve of the *Digital Atlantic*, about to unfold in popular culture around the globe.

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The Mysteries of New Orleans: Culture Formation and the Layering of History

Let me start with a contradiction in the reception history of New Orleans: There is a marked difference between the local and the global perception of New Orleans. Former mayor Ray Nagin once said: "Whenever anywhere in the world New Orleans is mentioned eyes light up." His boosterism was well taken, as the cultural heritage of New Orleans is appreciated throughout the world. Most of it – food, sex, music, dance, architecture and religion, belongs to the world of the senses and is embedded in the *popular* expressive arts. Hence it lacks moral legitimacy and ethical prestige at home. New Yorkers and Bostonians of 'property and standing' are falling over each other trying to 'save Venice' (with Woody Allen leading the pack), yet few of these Venice-addicts would lift a finger to save New Orleans. This tacit habit of the heart bordering on contempt is due to the negative role New Orleans has acquired in the nation's moral economy. For many Yankee moralists, New Orleans has become the metropolis of transgressions, a den of guilty and outrageous pleasures. As a consequence, New Orleans is regularly badmouthed for its pathological governance, marked by corruption, urban crime, poverty, sexual license – a veritable Sodom and Gomorrah. And yet, on the other hand New Orleans is the Big Easy, a sensuous, bohemian, an enchanting Creole Queen, a cosmopolitan, culture-producing center. And in this coincidence of total public disapproval on the one hand and the often clandestine enjoyment of its sensuous attractions on the other lies the problem of judging its urban merits. In no other city on the North American continent is there a more dramatic or extreme pendulum swing between intense appreciation and visceral revulsion, between jouissance and contempt. This conflict may also be the source of energy that drives and inspires the *mise en scene,* the staging of New Orleans culture.

In short, the culture of the city is deeply compromised, for it lies buried in a long and contradictory history of satisfying the senses which is shocking to the North American sense of civic propriety. But it is also energized by its seductive siren song. This conflict-ridden history needs to be rescued from studied neglect and defended against knee-jerk moral strictures; it treasures those memory layers and historical sedimentations, which give New Orleans its spectacular urban aura, a synaesthesia of sight, sound, taste, smell and touch which is felt most keenly when it is gone. Hurricane Katrina has sharpened our sense of loss and it has alerted us to the fact that the cultural cosmopolitanism and urban jouissance of New Orleans are a welcome bastion against Wal-Marting and urban sprawl. But Katrina also made visible the mysterious divisions of race, class and caste that continue to plague the city.

The anthem of New Orleans captures the sensory quality of this deprivation well:

> Do you know what it means to miss New Orleans
> And miss it each night and day.
> I know I'm not wrong, this feelings getting stronger
> The longer I stay away.
> Miss them moss covered vines, the tall sugar pines
> Where mocking birds used to sing,
> And I'd like to see that lazy Mississippi hurrying into spring.
> The moonlight on the bayou, a Creole tune that fills the air
> I dream about magnolias in bloom, and I'm wishing I was there.[1]

In order to appreciate the special qualities of New Orleans as an urban space of the senses it is essential to first comprehend the *historical layering* that went into the formation of New Orleans culture and then grasp both the dynamic *synergy* and the multiple conflicts and connections between these layers and scapes. To do this we must understand the historical *indigenization* of the city's unique sets of multiple scapes that come together to form a rich cultural gumbo:

[1] Eddie DeLange, Lois Alter. From the 1947 film *New Orleans* with Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday. Harry Connick with Dr. John. *Harry Connick Jr. "20"* CBS 1988.

streetscapes, ethnoscapes, financescapes, foodscapes, soundscapes, seascapes, landscapes. Dr. John in his autobiography *Under a Hoodoo Moon* captures the hidden complexity of New Orleans culture in a fitting local image:

> In New Orleans, everything – food, music, religion, even the way people talk and act – has deep, deep roots; and like the tangled veins of cypress roots that meander this way and that in the swamps, everything in New Orleans is interrelated, wrapped around itself in ways that aren't always obvious. (Dr. John/Rummel 1994: 250)

These processes of syncretism and synergy are deeply rooted in the senses and in what one might call libidinal urban exchange. Many cities of this world may have any single one of the characteristic layers or scapes mentioned below, but it is their collusion in an urban space and their specific interactions over three centuries that makes New Orleans an outstanding example of what I would like to call antagonistic creolization (Ostendorf 2013; Devereux/Loeb 1943): Here is my personal list of scapes that need to be understood first in order to comprehend the hidden mysteries and the cultural choreography of New Orleans.

1. Cultural palimpsest of three colonial empires

New Orleans was founded and grew in the contact zone of three major empires: France, Spain and Anglo-America. Founded by France in 1718, the unprofitable colony was ceded to Spain in 1766. The town was Spanish during a crucial period of growth, the early charter period, when many cultural habits gelled. New Orleans burnt down twice, in 1788 and again in 1794, and was rebuilt by Creole artisans under Spanish control. Therefore the so-called French Quarter may just as well be called Spanish Quarter. The three most impressive buildings – the St. Louis Cathedral, the Cabildo and the Presbytère date from this period. Finally the territory was bought by the United States in the most spectacular real estate transaction in modern history: The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 engineered by Thomas Jefferson

cost the United States a mere $ 15 million. For that sum the young republic received the Louisiana territory, i.e. the western part of the continent up to the Rockies. As a result of this history there are three layers of colonial practice that form a palimpsest of public space, of customs, habits and laws. Three systems of slavery, three racial (and sexual) etiquettes, three legal systems, three governmental bureaucracies and traditions of governance, three types of architecture with specific traditions of public space, three culinary and several religious traditions thrived at the periphery of three colonial empires and are now layered in a rich cultural memory. Because of this tricultural genesis, New Orleans should not be seen as the southernmost city in North America but rather the northernmost city of the Caribbean. And in that historical, demographic and economic setting it is one of the first cosmopolitan cities of early modernity.

2. Economy: Seaport and river port

New Orleans's dual role as a seaport and a river port had important ramifications. The seaport served the Atlantic and made hemispheric trade networking with Europe, Africa and the Caribbean possible. The river port connected the American colonies with the Atlantic Rim and became the meeting place for multicultural sailors as carriers of culture. The *Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs* of New Orleans were inspired by a tradition of urban slaves in Havana, probably transported from there by merchant marines. (In Cuba the *Buena Vista Social Club* is a belated heir to this tradition.) The economy of New Orleans's harbor was dominated by a single commodity: sugar in the eighteenth century, cotton in the nineteenth and oil in the twentieth. Hence New Orleans began as an early captive of globalization. Each commodity created its attendant urban ecology and sensory spectrum. It is often forgotten that before the Civil War, New Orleans was the second largest immigrant port in the United States, trailing only New York. The river port connected with the Mississippi, the Missouri, the Mid-Western hinterland and Canada. Immigrants who wanted to travel to the Midwest sought out ships that went to New

Orleans, not to New York. Ships brought manufactured goods or immigrants from Europe and returned with cotton.

3. Rule of law: Three revolutions

New Orleans was deeply affected by three world revolutions: the French, the Haitian and the American. First, there were the demographic after-effects of these revolutions. The French Revolution drove a number of Foreign French – most of them professionals – to New Orleans, and the Haitian Revolution and subsequent exodus caused the population to double between 1810 and 1820. Both augmented a francophone professional class at the very moment when the Americans had arrived intent on improving and modernizing the city. As the city governance became more 'Americanized,' French and Creole cultural traditions were stubbornly and defensively reaffirmed. This accounts for the edge of resentment and antagonism in Creole identity. Second, the cultural impact of Saint-Domingue on New Orleans needs to be studied in greater detail. The Haitian and French revolutionary utopias are alive in the population and continue to affect voting behavior. To this day New Orleans's Creoles cherish the radical universalism of the Haitian and French Revolutions whereas Protestant African Americans hold on to cultural nationalism, e.g. to maintaining historically black colleges. The recognition that the Haitian Revolution was the only successful one by slaves has made Toussaint l'Ouverture a revered figure of New Orleans folklore. Each of the three revolutions introduced a different spin on civil rights. The French and Haitian Revolutions went for a radical universalism in civil rights. The American Revolution and its Constitution held that promise only in theory for the *gens de couleur libres*. In practice civil rights were displaced by the protection of property, by chattel slavery and the one-drop rule. As a consequence New Orleans became the most important *entrepôt* of the U.S. slave trade. Homer Plessy, who gave his name to Plessy vs. Ferguson (1896), was a New Orleans Creole committed to the universalism of the Haitian and French Revolutions. With his legal action Plessy put the American constitution to a test – which it lost. Many of the lawyers and journalists sup-

porting the legal action had a Saint-Domingue background. Third, it is in the area of music that New Orleans owes most to the Haitian Revolution. Most of the refugees came to New Orleans via Cuba. The first serious American composer, Louis Moreau Gottschalk, whose mother was from Saint-Domingue, learned his music from his black Haitian wet-nurse. Throughout his life he remained committed to a Caribbean style of music as is demonstrated in his "Bamboula: Danse Nègre." Many jazz musicians – including the self-proclaimed 'inventor of jazz,' Jelly Roll Morton – have ancestors from Saint-Domingue, which accounts for a musical quality known as 'funky.' Morton spoke of a noticeable 'latin tinge' and others call it the 'habanera roll' which adds a propulsive, Latin energy to the New Orleans style.

4. Slavery and race: Creoles and African Americans

There has always been a powerful African connection active in New Orleans. Its strength is due to a homogeneous African charter generation from Senegambia. Some scholars argue that in 1760 black culture was more coherent than the white demimonde. Whereas the white population consisted of drifters, prostitutes, deported galley slaves, trappers, gold-hunters, adventurers and foreign legionaries from many different nations, all slaves imported to New Orleans between the years 1720 and 1732 came from one cultural region; they belonged to what was then known as the Bambara Empire in what today is Senegambia. Later a sprinkling of slaves from the Congo was added. Normally slave traders would mix their slaves in order to prevent communication that would lead to plotting or insurrection. Most importantly the Bambara slaves brought with them a small market economy and plenty of crafts – hence there is a strong African baseline due to an early synthesis, i.e. creolization. Some of the unique traditions such as the market on Congo Square, Vodun, Mardi Gras Indians drumming practices, Second Line Parades, Jazz, Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs are evidence of this fact. In the early period the plantation economy of Louisiana was lagging behind other colonial enterprises. In order to save on expenses Louisiana slave owners allowed slaves to plant their own provisions and develop small markets

or to hire themselves out as craftsmen. This practice not only resulted in a Monday-to-Friday slavery with week-ends off, but it also gave slaves and free blacks enormous leverage and opened the door to material independence. Many slaves earned their own money to buy their freedom – particularly during Spanish rule. By the time of the Louisiana Purchase this practice of self-purchase, called *coartación,* had resulted in the largest community of free blacks on the continent. Congo Square began in the late eighteenth century as a market that blacks, slaves and free had created for selling their provisions to the city. When a *Cédula Real* by the Spanish king ordered the cessation of market activities on Congo Square for reasons of public safety, the governor wrote back that the king might as well close the city, for it had come to depend on that market. The governor simply ignored the command of the distant king. By the early nineteenth century Congo Square had become the center of black dancing immortalized by George Washington Cable's essay "The Dance in Congo Square." Cable, however, fails to mention the most important fact: There would not have been a dance without the previous market. Then there was an active Maroon culture where run-away slaves bonded with Indians in the extensive bayous. The tradition of Mardi Gras Indians and their mythology are the cultural products of this bonding. Most of all, memories of a porous tripartite racial system persist which is more Caribbean than North American. The elaborate system of dual marriages, known as *plaçage*, had created first a sensory intimacy between the races and a kinship system of 'dual' families, one black, one white, bearing the same last names and sharing their DNA. Manumission was widespread as many Creole slave owners gave freedom to their biracial sons and daughters. The dual family track is traceable in the history of jazz where there are black and white family dynasties with identical names, a tradition immortalized by George Washington Cable in *The Grandissimes.* Before the abolition of slavery the Creoles of Color formed the largest group of free blacks on the continent.

5. Religion: Catholicism, spiritualism, vodun

There is a great variety of religious expression in New Orleans. First we have several versions of Catholicism with a French, Spanish, German, Irish, Italian, Afro-Creole touch; then there are any number of Protestant denominations; but most of all the off-beat religious traditions are active in New Orleans. Spiritualist churches, Santería from Cuba, Vodun from Haiti, and Root Work from the American South, all add the special flavor to a gumbo of religious energy. Their confluence created a particular taste for a non-dogmatic spiritualism and for an energetic, liturgical *mise en scène*. This fountain of religious enthusiasm explains among other things the rise of gospel music and of a certain kind of rock 'n' roll. Not surprisingly Mahalia Jackson hails from New Orleans. Mardi Gras Indians, the caretakers of African drumming practices, often network with Spiritualist churches. Many future musicians have learned their musical skills in such rocking churches. The emergence of Jazz funerals was only possible in a dance-driven, religious New Orleans with its tradition of a second line. Unfortunately many of the small store-front, Spiritualist churches in the Lower Ninth Ward were destroyed by Katrina – as were the neighborhoods that sustained them.

6. Immigration and ethnicity: Irish, Germans, Italians, Dalmatians, Mexicans

At the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 the city had 10,000 inhabitants; by 1840 their number had risen to 102,000. By this time New Orleans had become the second largest immigrant port, topped only by New York. A multi-ethnic immigration set in after 1825 and radically changed the demographic profile of the city. The Tulane historian Lawrence Powell writes:

> A major entrepôt to the Mississippi Valley, and between 1812 and 1840 the fastest growing urban area in North America, the Crescent City by 1860 boasted the highest percentage of foreign-born white persons of any urban area in America – 45 percent, a figure that is probably too low. (Powell 2006: 147)

The super-imposition first of an Anglo-American and then of an immigrant population on the Afro-Hispano-French Creole traditions created a new set of social problems, for the Americans brought with them an economic program as well as a new racial order with the color line and the one-drop rule. Again the result is a very special palimpsest of conflicting traditions. Now German, Irish and Italian immigrant workers, craftsmen and traders competed with Creoles and blacks in a small market economy that was non-industrial and non-manufacturing. Hence there emerged a checkerboard settlement pattern, unique for small market economies with a strong craft tradition. Blacks and whites who were competing for the same jobs settled in close proximity, hence inter-racial contacts were more numerous. Jazz emerged in these inter-ethnic urban spaces. The Catholic *ancienne population* (the Creoles) rubbed shoulders with Protestant Americans; French-speaking, Catholic slaves and free blacks encountered Protestant ex-slaves from the Mississippi Delta, then ethnic immigration added Germans, Irish and Italians to the melee – this created conflicts but it also set free multipolar cultural synergies. In 1836 the inherent divisions became unmanageable and the city divided into three municipalities: one American – today the business district – a second for the Creole population in the French Quarter and Tremé, a third for an ethnic mix in Faubourg Marigny and Bywater. This political boundary maintenance lasted for two decades. After the Civil War New Orleans received a massive migration of former slaves from Mississippi, Alabama and the Carolinas. A marked division in the black population between sophisticated Creole-Catholic-francophone blacks (downtown) and simple, illiterate African American Protestant blacks (uptown) continues to impact politics and cultural practices today. New Orleans school politics and universities reflect this multi-racial ethnic mix to this day. Tulane, Xavier, Loyola, UNO, Dillard and Southern service these different constituencies. New Orleans's own dialect known as 'Yat' reflects this immigrant history; linguists call it a phonetic mix between the accents of Brooklyn and New Orleans ethnic workers plus residual Creole admixtures.

7. Catastrophes, yellow fever and Katrina

New Orleans and the Lower Mississippi River saw repeated outbreaks of yellow fever. The Louisiana Purchase was made possible by yellow fever: Napoleon's army in Saint-Domingue had experienced severe losses of up to 75 percent from yellow fever before he gave up and withdrew as a political player from the area. After the Louisiana Purchase New Orleans experienced a series of yellow fever epidemics, the worst in 1853 when the toll was 7849 dead and another 4000 in 1878. From 1817 to 1905 a total of 45,000 New Orleanians died of yellow fever. In other words 'the city that care forgot' had experienced a long history of living with disaster by the time Katrina struck in 2005. The human casualties of the hurricane reached a 'mere' 980 dead, but this time the material losses were immense. The public recognition of its aftereffects and the record of its recovery may be organized along the good news, bad news trope: for New Orleans after Katrina, the record is mixed. Whether the good news outweighs the bad or vice versa depends very much on what aspect of the city you look at, whether you consider macro-economic factors or the quotidian experiences of individual victims, whether you ask African Americans and Creoles in the Seventh and Ninth Wards or whites in the Garden District, Carrolton or Metairie. Catastrophes such as yellow fever and Katrina bring into the open the deep social, economic and cultural divisions that have long plagued New Orleans – particularly the class privileges of certain rich white families, the inadequate social services and the political corruption in city hall. But then the city soldiers on and tries to ignore the bad news. Both after the yellow fever epidemic of 1878 and after Katrina the question was raised whether to celebrate 'frivolous' Mardi Gras or not. Both times the Krewes decided to parade. The *New Orleans Louisianian* warned in 1878 "that we are about to get supreme contempt as a silly people, or a tender pity as madmen who know no better" (Mitchell 1999: 91). But City Councilwoman Jacqueline Brechtel Clarkson said in 2005 after Katrina "we can't afford to miss a beat." In New Orleans it is the beat alone that matters (Mitchell 2007: 789).

8. Carnival culture: Mardi Gras, Mardi Gras Indians, Zulu, Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs

My main thesis: A tolerant Caribbean culture in which everyone participates is a substitute for the lack of a civil society. Examples of this carnival culture include Mardi Gras, Zulu, Mardi Gras Indians, Jazz Fest, Gay City, Second Line parades and any number of ad hoc festivals. Public misrule is over-layered by a string of parties. While urban politics may divide, carnivalesque street culture connects. This tradition is already in evidence with the early emergence of a masked ball culture between 1803 and the 1850s, where the two races met under cover of a mask. The system of *plaçage* (informal marriages between octoroons and white planters) increased the number of free blacks of (light) color who participated in this carnival culture and its sexual license. In a letter to Thomas Jefferson, Governor William C. C. Claiborne complained that Americans talked about improvement, whereas Creoles were only interested in dance and music. The French civil servant Moreau de St. Méry identified certain Caribbean traits concerning the management of senses that still apply to the city at large:

> The Creole loses sight of everything that is not part of satisfying his penchants, disdaining everything not marked with the seal of pleasure, giving himself up freely to the whirl that carries him along. Transported by his love of dance, music, parties and everything that charms and entertains his delirium, he seems to live only for voluptuous pleasures. (Sublette 2008: 133)

The official Mardi Gras parade as it exists today was introduced by the American business class (modeled after English and French Renaissance pageants) in order to control the inter-racial octoroon balls and the attendant street carnival, which was getting out of hand. Though a prominent spectacle for the tourist trade the official Mardi Gras is by no means of central importance for the locals. In fact, today's carnival operates on several socio-political and cultural levels: First, the official Mardi Gras parades of the white Krewes serves as a control mechanism to maintain law and order, affirm a patriarchal system and prevent interracial mayhem. Second, the black Zulu parade is an

anti-carnival or reversed minstrel show that mocks the social pretensions of the white business class by adopting and exaggerating their excessive caricature of black behavior. Third, the spontaneous street carnival of the Mardi Gras Indians is virtually uncontrollable and thumbs its nose at the forces of law and order. Fourth, there is the gay carnival in the French Quarter with its politically incorrect, brazen gender transgressions. It speaks for the resiliency of New Orleanians that Mardi Gras was not canceled after Katrina, indeed the first post-Katrina carnival in 2006 thematized the will to survive. In his 2006 documentary *When the Levees Broke* Spike Lee captures the spirit of carnival in various neighborhoods destroyed by Katrina.

9. Food & cuisine: Creole, Cajun, N'awlins

Harvey Levenstein attributes the rise of what he calls 'negative nutrition' in Protestant Anglo-America to a basic fear of New World abundance, a fear promoted by dietary gurus such as Sylvester Graham, John Harvey Kellogg and Horace Fletcher. "Food has replaced sex as object of guilt … . a culture that seems doomed to celebrate its food abundance while simultaneously avoiding enjoying it too much" (Levenstein 1999: 528). Their crusades for abstinence and anti-sensory repression have resulted in what experts have called America's 'dietary confusion.' Here New Orleans is the exception to the American rule. Many American cities may have good restaurants that bravely battle these repressive habits. But according to Zagat Survey, New Orleans does not suffer from dietary confusion; instead it has three distinct cuisines: Creole, Cajun and N'awlins.

> **Creole** is the European-by-birth urban cuisine of the sophisticated French and Spanish settlers of the city that's been seasoned with the aromatic herbs and spices of New Orleans's African, Native American and Caribbean ancestors. A mix of sweet, salty and hot tastes from a variety of ethnic origins is added, always relying heavily on the availability of fresh local ingredients. (Litwin/Denechaud 2000: 7)

This food is found at Galatoires, Antoines, or Brennans. Roux and Gumbo Filé create a typical New Orleans sensation in terms of smell and taste.

> **Cajun** is the earthy, spicy, rural cuisine of the Southwest Louisiana Bayou country. Developed in home kitchens, it is dominated by what many chefs now call the holy trinity of seasonings–chopped celery, onion and green pepper. (Litwin/Denechaud 2000: 7)

Though Cajuns do not properly belong to New Orleans, there has been a massive immigration of rural Cajun cooking, particularly of its black version, to the city – a spirit of fusion which has given rise to the final and most interesting culinary tradition:

> **N'awlins** combines Creole and Cajun dishes with Italian, Country or Classic French–and even an occasional Caribbean or German dish. 'Haute New Orleans' and 'Down Home N'awlins' respectively describe fancy restaurant and simple home versions of New Orleans-style cooking. (Litwin/Denechaud 2000: 7)

My personal favorites here were Upperline and Uglesich restaurants, the latter a Creole-Dalmatian fusion cuisine.

10. Literary profile: A sense of place

New Orleans belongs to the small number of American cities with a distinct literary profile. No city in the United States – with the possible exception of New York – has a stronger sense of place. After the Civil War, the city went into deep economic decline; however, a veritable New Orleans renaissance occurred during the last three decades of the nineteenth century and became the chronicler of the languid, exotic, mysterious, Creole lifestyle. Lafcadio Hearn and George Washington Cable did much to popularize this moribund urban culture just as it was expiring, thus adding the typical nostalgic spin to these cherished traditions, which thus became the motor of the emerging tourist industry. The literary interpretation of this conflict-ridden lan-

guid decline can be found in the works of Grace King, Alice Dunbar-Nelson and Kate Chopin. Many authors such as Sherwood Anderson and William Faulkner were profoundly attracted by the aura of decay, the latter also by the fact that prohibition did not seem to have any effect on the pursuit of pleasure or the availability of liquor. Faulkner called the city an aging courtesan, thus capturing a certain feminine, laid-back spirit. During the twenties the French Quarter became a 'Greenwich Village South' with the journal *Double Dealer* expressing New Orleans's ambiguity about modernism. Faulkner's New Orleans Sketches and later his novel *Absalom, Absalom*! capture his own ambivalent attitude of distancing from and involvement with the New Orleans scene. Tennessee Williams enjoyed the free bohemian and decadent world of New Orleans and stressed the cosmopolitan sense of freedom. Lyle Saxon recorded the wacky folklore of the city that gave him the moniker 'Mr. French Quarter'. Lillian Hellman used New Orleans as a setting for her play *Toys in the Attic*. New Orleans's languid, lazy, laissez-faire approach to religion, business, politics, law enforcement, labor, intellectual pursuit and sexuality excited the imagination of many a fugitive from puritan prohibition-ridden North America. A. J. Liebling called Louisiana politics the greatest free show on earth, and Robert Penn Warren, a typical refugee from the Puritan North, immortalized Louisiana politics – especially Huey Long – in *All the Kings' Men*. Walker Percy's *Moviegoer* is 'sunk in the everydayness of his own life' and John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces* celebrates the carnivalesque outrage of the city. Both are milestones of New Orleans storytelling (Lowe). Toole's gargantuan character Ignatius Reilly represents a distillation of New Orleans's transgressions, "a mad Oliver Hardy, a fat Don Quixote, a perverse Thomas Aquinas" as Walker Percy calls him, an "intellectual ideologue, deadbeat, goof-off, glutton who is in violent revolt against the entire modern age" (Kennedy 1992: 85). Anne Rice's fascination with vampires draws upon the strand of sensual morbidity in the city that reflects her early upbringing. A thriving black literary scene involving Tom Dent, Brenda Marie Osbey and Kalamu El Salah, particularly in poetry, developed after the seventies until Katrina swept it all away.

11. Jazz and dance: African rules of performance

Before jazz there was a strong tradition of classical music, particularly opera. But it was the dance-driven musical culture that put New Orleans on the world map of music. The propulsive quality that musicians call 'funky' owes its genesis to New Orleans dance. The second line is a common training ground for musicians and dancers, and represents a kinesthetic arena of the first order (Ostendorf 2000, 2006). New Orleans's best known music, jazz, emerged from the combination of many factors: (1) The social stratification of Creoles and African Americans; (2) the decline of Creoles of Color and their exchange with an African American Blues culture; (3) the surge of a Latin tinge and musical and demographic exchange with Cuba and Veracruz in Mexico; (4) the spatial proximity of black and white ethnic entertainment and dance cultures; (5) the love of dancing in the street by the second line. There was a love of music in the city ranging from classical music and Italian *bel canto* and French opera to ethnic popular dance traditions and black spiritual and blues. In the early nineteenth century New Orleans maintained two opera companies that would regularly travel to New York and Havana. A trans-racial musical exchange has worked until today: Mardi Gras Indian music liberally quotes from the Cuban musical styles. The white pianist Harry Connick Jr. studied with James Booker. Dr. John (alias Mac Rebennack) learned his funky New Orleans style from Professor Longhair. NOCCA, a high school for the creative arts, had a lasting impact on the biracial revitalization of the musical scene with Wynton Marsalis leading both the classical and jazz cohorts. Tellingly he ended up at the Lincoln Center in New York thus again bridging the gap between classical and popular traditions. And rightly so; for most of the musical innovations in the United States owe an important impulse to the dance-driven musical traditions of New Orleans: New Orleans Piano Jazz (James Booker, Professor Longhair), Rhythm and Blues (Fats Domino), Country and Western (Hank Williams), Mardi Gras Indians and Rock n' Roll (Neville Brothers), Zydeco and Cajun (Clifton Chenier), Gospel (Mahalia Jackson). The vast majority of active musicians – some say 85 percent – lived in the parts of town that were destroyed by Katrina: So the reconstruction of musical New

Orleans depends on the will to bring those neighborhoods back. Not revitalizing these areas would mean that the continued diversification of the musical heritage of New Orleans has come to an end. After Katrina the mood of local musicians was definitely on the grim side. Nik Cohn writes that especially those at the poor end of music making, i.e. rap artists, are affected by the near-complete destruction of their creative milieus (Cohn 2006: 230). Tom Piazza is also skeptical whether New Orleans will regain its central importance.

12. Public space

New Orleans represents a singular urban space in North America with its own vernacular architectural tradition: shotgun, camel back, Creole cottage and the balconies of the French-Spanish Quarter. Particularly remarkable is the Creole Hispanic architecture of the plantation houses such as Destrehan and Pitot house and of the West Indian-inspired Creole Cottages, which were built by planters for their concubines, and the French-Spanish-Creole town architecture of the French Quarter with its elaborate balconies. Their ensembles form real neighborhoods and stabilize a sense of community. Though the age of the automobile has partly destroyed some classic Creole neighborhoods such as Tremé, New Orleans has remained a city for *flaneurs* with a lively street life. People walk in the French Quarter, Garden District, Carrollton and Magazine Street and talk to residents who are socializing on the porches. Where else in the US can you walk the streets with a drink in your hand? Visitors can roam in the Garden District for hours and be overwhelmed with ever-new building styles, a continuous architectural bricolage that has created a unique urban aura. Street names evoke magical and mythical memories: Where else would Race and Religious Street meet, where do you find Piety Street connecting with Desire, where else would Jefferson Davis run into Martin Luther King? Lafcadio Hearn gave expression to a local sentiment in 1880: “It is better to live here in sackcloth and ashes than to own the whole state of Ohio” (Hearn 2009: 820). And a black street artist on Jackson Square seconds him: “I’d rather be poor in New Orleans than rich in Pittsburgh.”

And yet the metropolis of the senses deserves to be restored to its previous energy levels. One hundred and thirty years ago Lafcadio Hearn captured the special magic of the city's cosmopolitan scapes in his 1878 editorial for the *City Item* entitled "The Glamour of New Orleans":

> To a native of the bleaker Northern clime – if he have any poetical sense of the beautiful in nature, any love of the bright verdure and luxuriance of landscape – the approach to the city by river must be in itself something indescribably pleasant. The white steamer gliding through an unfamiliar world of blue and green – blue above and blue below, with a long strip of low green land alone to break the ethereal azure; the waving cane; the ever-green fringe of groves weird with moss; the tepid breezes and golden sunlight – all deepening in their charm as the city is neared, making the voyage seem beautiful as though one were sailing to some far-off glimmering Eden, into the garden of Paradise itself. And then, the first impression of the old Creole city slumbering under the glorious sun; of its quaint houses; its shaded streets; its suggestions of a hundred years ago: its contrasts of agreeable color; its street re-echoing the tongues of many nations; its general look of somnolent contentment; its verdant antiquity; its venerable memorials and monuments; its eccentricities of architecture; its tropical gardens; its picturesque surprises; its warm atmosphere, drowsy perhaps with the perfume of orange flowers, and thrilled with the fantastic music of mocking birds – cannot ever be wholly forgotten… . And to these wondering and wandering ones, this sleepy, beautiful, quaint old city murmurs: "Rest with me … My charms are not the charms of much gold and great riches; but thou mayst feel with me such hope and content as thou hast never felt before. I offer thee eternal summer, and a sky divinely blue; sweet breezes, and sweet perfumes, bright fruits, and flowers fairer than the rainbow. (Hearn 2001: 187–188)

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New Orleans, Caribbean and Beyond

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Beyond Robinsonade – Friedrich Gerstäcker's Descriptions of New Orleans and Brazil as Examples for a South-South Connection

> *"To America" – and with that one word their whole life and work suddenly lies behind them, as well as the ties of blood and friendship and all the hopes and concerns that they once had. "To America!"*[1]
>
> *Friedrich Gerstäcker (To America)*

"To America!": This exclamation of nineteenth-century German immigrants was also the name of one of the novels of the German writer Friedrich Gerstäcker (1816–1872); it obviously already includes the notion of 'America,' which at this point in time was still used as a very unspecific term, as a kind of paradisiacal *locus amoenus.* By taking a look at Gerstäcker's descriptions of New Orleans and Brazil, my essay aims to show that New Orleans served as a point of connection to Latin America which, on the one hand, shared many characteristics with what is considered Latin America today, but which, on the other hand, also differed in many ways from his descriptions of Brazil. New Orleans thus occupied an exceptional position, as it was an intersection between the North and South while not fully belonging to either.

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[1] "'Nach Amerika!' und mit dem einen Wort liegt hinter ihnen abgeschlossen ihr ganzes früheres Leben, Wirken, Schaffen – liegen die Bande, die Blut und Freundschaft hier geknüpft, liegen die Hoffnungen, die sie für hier gehegt, die Sorgen, die sie gedrückt. – 'Nach Amerika!'" (Gerstäcker 1889: 6). All English translations are my own since the only nineteenth-century translation of the novel is no longer available.

Friedrich Gerstäcker was born in Hamburg in 1816 and first traveled to the US in 1837, which led him to New York and then to Louisiana via Canada, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas. This journey lasted several years and he held several different jobs in that period. From 1840 on, he managed a hotel in Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana (see Seyfarth 1930: 11), where he stayed for two years in order to save enough money to be able to return to Germany from New Orleans in 1843. During that time he became increasingly familiar with the city of New Orleans. Although Gerstäcker mentions his disfavor for New Orleans in his sketchbooks (see also Ostwald 2010: 42), and although few of the descriptions in his sketchbooks deal with cities (and most of the cities that do crop up are located in the Midwest, see Prahl 1943: 216), he dedicates several passages in his sketchbooks as well as the novels *Nach Amerika* (*To America*) (1855) and *In Amerika* (1872) to detailed descriptions of New Orleans. In a climate of increasing interest in descriptions of the New World, which mainly arose from the German *Sturm und Drang* literary movement of the late eighteenth century and the reception of writers such as James Fenimore Cooper, Gerstäcker became a well-known writer of travel and adventure literature in Germany, alongside the likes of Charles Sealsfield. His general mode of thinking about the US follows a very dualistic model: everything related to cities was automatically seen as civilized and therefore European. However, Gerstäcker was looking for 'the other' from the perspective of a European, and he found that other in the backwoodsmen and farmers of the Midwest (see Prahl 1943: 233) – descriptions of those people dominate his works. There is one passage in his sketchbook that shows his general attitude towards American cities and the Southern states: "I am writing these lines in Louisiana, and life here is too simple and boring to even consider describing it as worthwhile" (Di Maio 2006: 6). Nevertheless, his descriptions of Louisiana and New Orleans, which he published several years later in the novel *Nach Amerika* (*To America*) (1855), deserve our attention, for they provide us both with detailed descriptions of the German emigration process to Louisiana at the beginning of the nineteenth century and with interesting insights about the conception of New Orleans at that time,

seen through the eyes of the recently arrived immigrants.[2] In his foreword to the novel, Gerstäcker mentions a well-known situation for nineteenth-century German peasants and intellectuals:

> "To America," the defiant fool calls out easily and merrily at the first heavy and sad hour, which should prove his strength and steel his courage. "To America," whispers the desperate who is slowly facing the abyss. "To America," the poor man says quietly and resolutely, who with all manly strength repeatedly struggled in vain against the circumstances, and who asked for his "daily bread" with bloody sweat, and did not obtain it, and who sees no help for himself and his family in his own country, and yet does not want to become a beggar and cannot steal. "To America," laughs the criminal after a successful robbery, longing for the distant coast, which offers him safety from the law. "To America," cheers the idealist, being angry with the real world because it is simply real, hoping for images across the ocean which were produced by his own great brain. "To America" – and with that one word their whole life and work suddenly lies behind them, as well as the ties of blood and friendship and all the hopes and concerns that they once had. "To America!"[3]

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[2] However, it should be noted that the descriptions dealt with in this paper are mainly fictional in nature. They are treated as elements of an ÜberLebenswissen (see Ette 2012a: 4f.) which has been provided and preserved by literature. This approach may also be convincing when taking a look at Gerstäcker's (factual) sketchbooks, which contain very similar ideas. By considering literature an open and polylogic system (see Ette 2012b: 81), it can be seen as a privileged place for the discussion of issues of conviviality.

[3] "'Nach Amerika' leicht und keck ruft es der Tollkopf trotzig der ersten schweren, traurigen Stunde entgegen, die seine Kraft prüfen sollte, seinen Muth stählen – 'nach Amerika,' flüstert der Verzweifelte der hier am Rand des Verderbens dem Abgrund langsam aber sicher entgegen gerissen wurde – 'nach Amerika,' sagt still und entschlossen der Arme, der mit männlicher Kraft, und doch immer und immer wieder vergebens gegen die Macht der Verhältnisse angekämpft, der um sein 'tägliches Brod' mit blutigem Schweiß gebeten – und es nicht erhalten, der keine Hülfe für sich und die Seinen hier im Vaterlande sieht, und doch nicht betteln *will*, nicht stehlen *kann* – 'nach Amerika' lacht der Verbrecher nach glücklich verübtem Raub, frohlockend der fernen Küste entgegen jubelnd, die ihm Sicherheit bringt vor dem Arm des beleidigten Rechts – 'nach Amerika,' jubelt der Idealist, der wirklichen Welt zürnend, weil sie eben wirklich ist, und über dem Ocean drüben ein Bild erhoffend, das dem in seinem eigenen tollen

Two points deserve our attention here. First, the slogan "Nach Amerika!" was not a very specific one at the time: it could mean either the US (normally without any further differentiation) or Latin America. This therefore provides us with a concept of 'America' that originated with Martin Waldseemüller, who presented the first map of the New World in 1507 (see Waldseemüller 2007) and thereby "set in print the narrative that would present the basis for the naming of America" (Schwartz 2007: 49). At that time, the US and Brazil were the most common destinations for German immigrants (see Neumann 2005a: 12). Without any access to concrete information about the conditions of life in these countries, travelers sought land, freedom and better climates, as well as adventure; 'America' was generally considered a very exotic place. These travelers gained information about their potential new lives through literature, such as Gerstäcker's work, but also more fantastic novels, for example Amalia Schoppe's *Die Auswanderer nach Brasilien oder die Hütte am Gigitonhonha* (Schoppe never actually traveled to Brazil, see Neumann 2005b). Those who were not able to read – which was the vast majority of the German population – relied on the reports and letters from former emigrants that were read in public or on the great number of songs circulating about life in the New World. There was a massive propaganda machine that tried to convince people to start a new life in the so-called 'New World,' and the producers of this propaganda also sold the passages, land and documents necessary for the emigration process. The so-called *Auswanderungsagenten* (agents of emigration) – Georg Anton von Schäffer probably the most famous among them (see Neumann 2005a: 45) – went on promotion tours, visiting restaurants, taverns and markets, and also set up their own offices, making immigration its own business.[4] Second, Gerstäcker's

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Hirn erzeugten, gleicht – 'nach Amerika' und mit dem einen Wort liegt hinter ihnen, abgeschlossen, ihr ganzes früheres Leben, Wirken, Schaffen – liegen die Bande die Blut oder Freundschaft hier geknüpft, liegen die Hoffnungen die sie für hier gehegt, die Sorgen die sie gedrückt – 'nach Amerika!'" (Gerstäcker 1889: 6).

[4] See also the passage in Gerstäcker's novel *Ein Parcerie-Vertrag*: "Der Hauptstrom der süd-amerikanischen Auswanderung ging nach dem Süden von Brasilien, wohin die Regierung selber deutsche Auswanderer wünscht und sie in vielen Stücken begünstigte. Dort befanden sich die Colonisten

foreword already illustrates the motives for emigration by quite realistically drawing on economic, intellectual, legal and climatic motives, as well as on religious persecution. Poverty, intellectual repression after the time of Napoleonic authority, as well as hard winters that often ruined whole harvests, led to a situation of social tension and made emigration increasingly attractive to large numbers of people from all social classes. Many of the German emigrants to the US settled north of New Orleans in the area of St. John the Baptist Parish, which soon came to be called 'the German Coast' (see Taylor 1976: 11), but they arrived in the city of New Orleans.

In Gerstäcker's novel, the places to convince people of emigration are mainly taverns. Huge propaganda charts show the possibility of a better life in 'America,' a term that denoted a land mass stretching all the way from Canada to the Tierra del Fuego:

> Next to the picture, and on both sides of the door, and even in the inner part of the window, there were long lists with different offers for emigration. First of all New York, then Philadelphia and Boston, then Quebec, and New Orleans, Galveston; in Brazil, Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande; Adelaide in Australia, then Chile, Valdivia and Valparaiso and Buenos Aires, along with a lot of recently discovered colonies and settlements.[5]

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wohl und schrieben nach Deutschland zurück, wie gut es ihnen ging. Diese Briefe wurden häufig von gewissenlosen Agenten benutzt um arme unwissende Menschen in Deutschland, die keine Mittel besaßen ihre Passage zu bezahlen, zu täuschen" (Gerstäcker [1869] 1984: IV). [The majority of the emigrants to South America went to the South of Brazil, where the government itself wanted German emigrants and favored them in many ways. There, the colonists did well and wrote letters back to Germany that told how well they were doing. These letters were often used by unscrupulous agents to deceive poor and ignorant people in Germany who did not have the means to pay their passage].

[5] "Neben dem Bild, und zu beiden Seiten der Thür, wie sogar noch an dem innern Theile des Fensterschalters, hingen lange Listen der verschiedenen anzupreisenden Plätze für Auswanderung. Obenan New-York, Philadelphia und Boston, dann Quebeck und New-Orleans, Galveston; in Brasilien, Rio de Janeiro und Rio Grande; in Australien Adelaide, dann Chile, Valdivia und Valparaiso, und Buenos Ayres mit einer Menge neu entdeckter verschiedener Kolonien und Ansiedlungen" (Gerstäcker 1889: 84).

In the novel, the emigration agent Weigel provides passengers with the necessary documents and travel arrangements, also choosing taverns and public places to convince people of emigration.[6]

The first two parts of the novel recount the decision to emigrate, farewell scenes and the difficult passage with little food and poor hygienic conditions on board, exemplified by several different people – among them professor Lobenstein and his family, the recently married Clara Dollinger, as well as people from other social classes. The third part finally describes the arrival in the US. When the ship nears Louisiana and the cry of 'Land in sight!' can be heard, the passengers' first disappointment is at hand. Seeing the swampland, they feel disappointed by the decidedly non-exotic appearance of the landscape:

> It was a feeling of suffocation that surrounded them – the first disappointed hopes in the new land that they had imagined, secretly but all too elaborately, with all the fascination of the Southern zones, and which now turned out to be an endless swamp.[7]

However, the desired exotic element finally turns up when the ship heads further along the coast to New Orleans. The huge plantations, with their orange groves and beautiful buildings in the Creole Hispanic architecture of the plantation houses (see Ostendorf 2013: 24), as well as their endless sugarcane and cotton fields, deeply impress the passengers and finally fulfill their expectations of exoticism.

This becomes even more obvious when the vivid import and export trade with other – seemingly even more exotic – countries is observed by the narrator:

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[6] This practice shares many similarities to the German director Edgar Reitz's 2013 movie *Die andere Heimat* (Home from Home), which also deals with the emigration process to Brazil from the German region Hunsrück at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and which depicts similar tactics used to convince people of emigration.

[7] "Es war ein beengendes erdrückendes Gefühl das sie erfaßte – die erste getäuschte Hoffnung in dem neuen Land, das sie sich mit allem Zauber südlicher Zonen, wenn auch heimlich doch nur zu eifrig ausgeschmückt, und das jetzt vor ihren Augen wie ein stehender endloser Sumpf began" (Gerstäcker 1889: 401).

> And the stream was as busy as the bank: crowds of small sailboats glided over to the sunny shores; wide steamers puffed down to supply distant zones with the country's products; and powerful ships lay here and there on the shore, often secured to the trees with ropes, high piles of cotton bales and long dark rows of sugar waiting to be taken on board and carried to the colder parts of the world.… Aromatic pineapples with green crowns, red pomegranates, golden oranges, juicy peaches, coconuts in their brown shells, mealy bananas, Nordic apples and pears and grapes, with pomegranate and orange blossoms lay there in a wild and colorful mixture and yet thoughtfully arranged, and the hands of the poor emigrants, who were used to a salty diet, stretched out, longing all the more for the treasures shown – especially since almost none of them could afford to buy anything.[8]

The role of New Orleans as a "metropolis of transgressions" (Ostendorf 2013: 15) becomes obvious in the presence of different fruits and products from all over the world, linking the two Americas and also joining Europe to them, with New Orleans acting as a point of intersection, making the city all the more attractive to the recently arrived immigrants. New Orleans's role as a "bricolage" (Ostendorf 2013: 11) or "cultural entrepot" (Hirsch/Logsdon 1992: 5) can also be exemplified by the passengers' – however, stereotypical – perception of the population:

[8] "Und so belebt wie das Ufer war der Strom; Massen von kleinen Segelbooten glitten herüber und hinüber zu den sonnigen Ufern, breite Dampfer schnaubten hinab, die Produkte des üppigen Landes fernen Zonen zuzuführen, und mächtige Seeschiffe lagen hie und da am Ufer vor Anker, ja oft mit Tauen an irgend einen Baum befestigt, am Land hoch aufgestapelte Baumwollenballen und lange dunkle Reihen von Zucker- und Syropsfässern an Bord zu nehmen, und zu kälteren Welttheilen hinüber zu tragen. … Duftige Ananas mit den grüngezackten Kronen, rothbäckige Granatäpfel, goldene Apfelsinen, saftige Pfirsiche, Cocosnüsse in ihrer braunen Schaale, mehlige Bananen, mit nordischen Äpfeln und Birnen und schwellenden Trauben, mit Granat- und Orangenblüthen überworfen lagen in wilder Mischung bunt und wirr und doch sinnig geordnet, durcheinander, und die Hände der armen, Salzkost gewöhnten und gequälten Auswanderer, streckten sich nur soviel sehnsüchtiger nach den gezeigten Schätzen aus, als fast den meisten die Mittel fehlten, sich augenblicklich in Besitz derselben zu setzen" (Gerstäcker 1889: 414, 424).

> Passengers push to and fro, joining the town's inhabitants in business or in their idleness; the lively Frenchman, who populates one fourth of the whole city, and who guaranteed the right of his mother tongue next to English in court against the Americans; the quiet Spaniard with his sombrero; the busy Yankee, recognizable by his long awkward figure, his bony face and gray and lively eyes; between them, the rich Creole with his sun-tanned skin and the hard-working German, the taciturn Englishman and the fiery Italian, pushing through a crowd of Negroes and mulattoes who went with cargo up and down the levee, or ran back and forth busily, all the while laughing, singing, and shouting.[9]

The city's tricultural or multicultural genesis can also be seen in these developments, linking not only the French, Spanish and Anglo-American histories that are typically attributed to New Orleans, but also, at the time of Gerstäcker's novel (i.e., after the Louisiana Purchase), German, Irish, Mexican, Indian and Santo Domingan histories, as well as the largest concentration of free people of color in the South (see Hirsch/Logsdon 1992: 9). Starting with 10,000 inhabitants in 1803, the population numbered 102,000 by the late 1940s (see Ostendorf 2013: 20). The history of New Orleans is thus a history of different movements that are linked to each other and that show in the conviviality (see Ette 2012b) of different ethnic groups. Literature can serve as a dynamic account of these movements and crossings. These intersections can also be seen in Gerstäcker's descriptions of the different languages spoken in New Orleans – a city that already seemed like a kind of Babel. Apart from Creole languages, which opened

[9] "Passagiere drängen dabei herüber und hinüber, sich zu den Bewohnern der Stadt, in Geschäften oder Müssiggang, zu gesellen; der lebendige Franzose dessen Stamm ziemlich den vierten Theil der ganzen Stadt bevölkert, und sich selbst dem, im Besitz befindlichen Amerikaner gegenüber das Recht seiner Muttersprache in den Gerichtshöfen neben dem Englischen gesichert hat; der ruhige Spanier mit seinem breiträndigen *sombrero*; der geschäftige Yankee, an der langen ungelenken Gestalt, dem knochigen Gesicht und den grauen lebendigen Augen kenntlich; zwischen ihnen der reiche Creole mit seiner sonngebräunten Haut und der thätige Deutsche, der schweigsame Engländer und der feurige Italiener, durch ein Gewühl von Negern und Mulatten drängend, die mit Fracht auf und ab die Levée steigen, oder hin und her geschäftig laufen, und dabei lachen und singen, schreien und zanken" (Gerstäcker 1889: 478f.).

a big field of investigation in the Romance languages (see Krämer 2014), we can find French, Spanish, English, Yiddish, German and many others, often mixed together by one speaker, as the following example from the novel shows:

> "Wald! als ich gesund will bleiben – *tri* '*scaleng a piece trois bits* drei Real's Stück, bester Qualität *werry fine! bong!*" rief der junge Bursche in einem Athem den Freund begrüßend und in allen möglichen Sprachen seine Waaren zugleich ausbietend, keine unnöthige Zeit zu versäumen – "*wer you come from? tri* '*scaleng – only tri bits* Schentelman, *werry fine bong!*" (Gerstäcker 1889: 441)

In spite of forty years of Spanish influence, Spanish language and culture did not really dominate in New Orleans. It was intermingled with French, British and other influences (see Johnson 1992: 50) so that the different groups preserved their national and cultural identities only to a certain degree and became rather "New Orleanians" (Johnson 1992: 46). These transnational, translingual and transcultural characteristics on the one hand led to enthusiasm among the German immigrants, since their diffuse picture of 'America' seemed to be completed in a city linking the Northern and the Southern Hemispheres. On the other hand, it becomes a disappointment for those who arrived with fixed ideas about how their lives in the New World would be and are often shocked by the – in their opinion – chaotic circumstances. Climatic factors, the focus on sugar and cotton production as well as the mixture of nationalities, cultures and languages made many immigrants move further north, where they hoped to find more adequate structures for their way of life. The immigrants steered clear of the unfamiliar and tried to establish their new lives in places that seemed more organized and 'civilized' which corresponds to Henkel's recommendation to Professor Lobenstein in the novel:

> But if he wanted to be sure and had a few thousand dollars to invest in a new beginning, so he would choose the more eastern states, Indiana

> and Ohio, where he would be in a more civilized neighborhood, so to speak, and not in the middle of the forest.[10]

The eastern and northern states were regarded as corresponding better to the German or European way of life, in contrast to the southern states and to Latin America. This reflected a separation of the hemispheres that is nowadays typically attributed to the contrast between the US and Latin America, which first emerged in the 1830s. A similar distinction is drawn when Gerstäcker looks at the recent epidemics of yellow fever in the nineteenth century: "The plague-like yellow fever spreads its leaden wings over the city, and its inhabitants flee to the shores of the neighboring lakes or up to the North in order to elude the grim, merciless enemy" (Smith 2011: 90). As Ottmar Ette shows, a history of movement often not only correlates with intersections of language and culture but also with large epidemics (yellow fever in the nineteenth century, HIV and Ebola in more recent times) (Ette 2012a: 18–24). Many immigrants therefore feared New Orleans's role as a meeting place of different movements. New Orleans was somehow located at the frontier of the two hemispheres without really belonging to either of them, although it shared strong parallels with the southern countries. In this point of view, New Orleans is no longer seen as "the southernmost North-American city" of the US, but as the "northermost city of the Carribean" (Ostendorf 2013: 17).

Although the narrator's very first descriptions are paradisiacal and the reader is provided with impressions from New Orleans that foreground a mixture of beautiful colors, the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups and the city's exotic character, all of which are emphasized by the import and export market, the difficulties of the German immigrants are described soon afterwards. Many of them are not able to find a job and so run out of money, forcing them to live in taverns that are run by other Germans – most of the time, however,

[10] "[W]olle er aber ganz sicher gehn und hätte er ein paar tausend Thaler an einen Anfang zu wenden, so riethe er ihm die mehr östlichen Staaten, Indiana oder Ohio zu wählen, wo er gewissermaßen schon in eine civilisirtere Nachbarschaft komme, und nicht mitten im Wald zu beginnen brauche" (Gerstäcker 1889: 445).

these living situations only serve to increase their debts. After some months in the same situation, many of them consider New Orleans's plurality as negative: The many languages spoken as well as the different groups – which were primarily regarded as positive exotic experiences at the very beginning of the novel – are now viewed mainly as a lack of civilization. Another persistent problem is the question of slavery: Although Gerstäcker considered himself a strict opponent to slavery, the issue was not debated much in his works. In *To America* this attitude, which also serves as a general attitude for all the fictional German immigrants, leads to severe conflicts with the locals, for example when one of them tries to intervene in an act of violence against a female slave:

> "What?" cried the boy, too cowardly for a real confrontation. "What? You want to interfere here when I chastise my slave, you abolitionist!" And as he spoke the word, a number of people passing by shouted something in English, which I could not understand, and then they suddenly shouted, "An abolitionist, an abolitionist!" … "Congratulations! This time you escaped easily. He who lives among wolves has to howl with them, and he who wants to live in a state of slavery and cannot keep his mouth shut, would better never have seen the country!"[11]

The persistence of slavery is thus also seen as one of the motives behind German settlers leaving the city to move north, which once more emphasizes New Orleans's role as "part of a 'North Caribbean' zone within a Southern United States that can in turn be figured as a 'Caribbean South'" (Marshall 2009: 219). A comparison to Gerstäcker's impressions from Brazil, which he visited in later years, on the one hand shows that the country shared many characteristics with

[11] "'Was?' schrie da der Bube, zu feige mir selber männlich entgegen zu treten – 'was? – wollen Sie sich hier einmischen wenn ich meine Sclavin züchtige, – Sie Abolitionist Sie?' – Und wie er das Wort sprach, und dann noch einer Zahl vorübergehender Menschen etwas in Englischer Sprache zurief, das ich nicht verstehen konnte, schrieen die plötzlich 'Ein Abolitionist! – ein Abolitionist!'… 'Sie können sich gratuliren daß Sie dießmal so weggekommen sind; wer unter den Wölfen ist muß mit ihnen heulen, und wer in einem Sclavenstaat leben will und nicht das Maul halten kann, dem wäre wohler er hätte das Land nie gesehen!'" (Gerstäcker 1889: 602).

New Orleans and could thus be regarded as a connection point of the Americas. These similarities are grounded in the double role of New Orleans as a seaport and a river port serving as an intersection point of the hemispheres (see Ostendorf 2013: 17), as well as in the different migration movements from Saint-Domingue, France, Germany, Italy, etc. On the other hand, New Orleans's outstanding role is emphasized, since the settlers in Brazil generally preserve their culture and language in isolation.

After its independence in 1822 and the end of slavery, Brazil needed workers and also wanted to use its new immigrants against the Spanish influence, especially in the south of the country (see Neumann 2005a: 12f.). In 1824, the first Brazilian colony was founded in São Leopoldo, in the South Region, close to the city of Porto Alegre. On another one of his journeys, Gerstäcker set foot on South America, California, Tahiti, Hawaii, Australia and Java, leading him in 1849 to Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, and Valparaiso, and he returned via Maiao, Tahiti and Sydney (see Ostwald 2010: 118–147). In 1860 he visited Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil and New York. As a governmental confidant, he was supposed to investigate and assess the situation of German immigrants in Brazil, especially in the Southern states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina as well as in Petropolis, close to Rio de Janeiro. He even met the Brazilian emperor at the time: Dom Pedro II. After these journeys he published several novels on life in Ecuador and Peru as well as on his Australian experience. His descriptions of Brazil, which were represented by the two novels *Die Colonie* (1864) and *Ein Parcerie-Vertrag* (1869),[12] in many ways resemble his descriptions of New Orleans. On the one hand, the description of the exotic diegetic world with palms and exotic fruits as well as the question of slavery and a peaceful coexistence of the different cultural groups play an essential role. These parallels can be explained by the fact that most immigrants did not distinguish between North and South America. On the other hand, New Orleans gained an exceptional status for its role as a point of intersection in Gerstäcker's work. While the German immigrants

[12] For a detailed analysis of the two works in question, see Neumann (2005b).

to Brazil remained among themselves and founded whole colonies of German-speaking communities (which exist to this day), New Orleans was clearly characterized by the variety of cultures and languages, and by transcultural and translingual movements. Although many elements in the two novels resemble typical elements of a Robinsonade (the domination of wilderness, see Frenzel 1976: 637f.) or formula fiction (the plot is made up of love stories and intrigues), on no account does Gerstäcker idealize the immigrants' life in the Americas. He portrays the difficult labor situation, the necessity of working hard and for many hours as well as adapting to different climatic conditions, and even warns his readers of a too idealistic point of view in the forewords of his novels (see also Ostwald 2010: 191). In *Ein Parcerie-Vertrag* he describes (along with the other plot line, which is focused on the main character's family issues) the situation of many German peasants at the beginning of the nineteenth century: too poor to pay for passage to Brazil, but granted passage in exchange for cultivating land in Brazil which was not their own. The expectations in the 'New World' are again paradisiacal for the fictional characters:

> [B]ut coffee will be free, and sugar also grows in Brazil; yes, in the hot zone there are even milk and butter trees, and it's always summer. You never have to heat an oven or freeze your fingers, and you can make your hats yourselves from palm leaves, and cotton grows there too.[13]

We are sometimes confronted with typical Robinsonade-like structures as, for example, with the contrast between civilization and barbarism (a contrast typical of literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries). However, the indigenous population is never described as one that either automatically speaks or is taught the immigrants' language. Gerstäcker rather warns his readers to not adopt

[13] "[A]ber den Kaffee habt ihr da umsonst, und der Zucker wächst ebenfalls in Brasilien; ja, in der heißen Zone kommen sogar Milch- und Butterbäume vor, und immer Sommer, – nie einen Ofen heizen und die Finger erfrieren – und Hüte könnt ihr Euch selber aus Palmblätter flechten, und die Baumwolle wächst dort auch" (Gerstäcker 1984: 13).

an overly idealistic image of Brazil[14] by recounting the stories of German immigrants who immediately turned back to Germany when they recognized the hard work that waited for them in the colonies. In contrast to New Orleans, the German settlements are quite isolated and there is little contact with other segments of the population. This is why the second generation of immigrants, born in Brazil – and even some German descendants today – consider themselves German rather than Brazilian:

> "Us? No," the man laughed. "That is to say, yes, we are actually German, but we weren't born in Germany, we were born here in Brazil. My father came from the Rhine and my wife's father from Innsbruck; both came here about thirty years ago and settled in San Leopoldo."
> "So you are Brazilian?" Guenther said, disappointed.
> "Ah, no, we're actually German," the woman laughed good-naturedly, "and we always go with the Germans, as you see, because with the leadfoot, it doesn't work out, and they simply don't want to work."[15]

The immigrants' strong identity is maintained throughout the whole work: There are few interactions with other population groups even though Brazil was (and remains) a melting pot of different cultures. Contact with other groups is rare and full of conflict, and the groups are often depicted with stereotypes: there are the Portuguese who

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[14] "Ich kann Auswanderer nicht genug davor warnen, sich von irgend einem Agenten Entfernungen auf den Karten zeigen und erklären zu lassen" (Gerstäcker 1984: 37). I cannot warn emigrants enough about the way those agents demonstrate and explain distances on the map.

[15] "'Wir? – Nein,' lachte der Mann, – 'das heißt, ja, wir sind schon Deutsche, aber doch nicht in dem Deutschland drüben geboren, sondern hier in Brasilien. Mein Vater stammt vom Rheine und der Frau ihr Vater von Innsbruck, die Beide vor etwa dreißig Jahren hier herüber gekommen waren und sich in San Leopoldo niedergelassen hatten.'
'Also Brasilianer?' sagte Günther enttäuscht.
'Ah, nein, wir sind schon Deutsche,' lachte die Frau gutmüthig, 'und halten uns ja auch immer zu den Deutschen, wie Ihr seht, denn mit den Bleifüßen ist es doch nichts, und sie wollen nichts arbeiten und schaffen.'" (Gerstäcker 1864: 12).

do not work,[16] religious conflicts between Protestant immigrants and Catholic Brazilians, as well as descriptions of the indigenous population as hostile Indians: "The Negroes, however, did not come up on deck, they remained below in their seats in the boat."[17] In contrast to New Orleans, where the immigrants adapted linguistically and culturally quite quickly, the German immigrants in Brazil keep their traditions. Even the landscape is Germanized by the immigrants:

> As they rode through the small town, the two strangers could not fail to perceive how their compatriots had settled here: quite at home in a foreign tropical country, as if they were back at home in the old fatherland.
>
> The signs on the various houses had German names all over them, in German script; German children with their flat heads and thick, healthy, dirty faces were playing in front of the doors. Women in their red woolen petticoats were washing their dishes here under the palm trees, just as they had done at home under the old lime trees, and German craftsmen, in fell and slippers, were busy with their work.[18]

It is only on their arrival in Blumenau that, after years of struggle and suffering, they finally succeed in leaving their contract and finding their way back to their own identities.

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[16] As Aliaga-Buchenau illustrates with the example of Gerstäcker's description of Ecuador, it is not so much the indigenous population that is criticized and viewed as inferior to the German immigrants as it is the (Portuguese) colonial power (see Aliaga-Buchenau 2010: 74–76).

[17] "Die Neger kamen indessen nicht mit an Deck herauf, sondern blieben unten im Boot auf ihren Plätzen sitzen" (Gerstäcker 1984: 60).

[18] "Sie ritten heute gerade durch das kleine Städtchen durch, und den beiden Fremden konnte es nicht entgehen, wie sich ihre Landsleute, selbst in dem fremden tropischen Lande, so ganz heimisch angesiedelt hatten, als ob sie daheim im alten Vaterlande lebten.
Die Schilder an den verschiedenen Häusern trugen überall deutsche Namen in deutscher Schrift; deutsche Kinder mit ihren Flachsköpfen und dicken, gesunden, schmutzigen Gesichtern spielten vor den Thüren. Bauerfrauen in ihren wollenen rothen Unterröcken wuschen ihr Geschirr hier unter den Palmen, wie sie es daheim unter den alten Linden gethan hatten, und deutsche Handwerker, in Schurzfell und Pantoffeln, waren eifrig dabei, ihren verschiedenen Geschäften obzuliegen" (Gerstäcker 1864: 91).

Friedrich Gerstäcker's descriptions of New Orleans and Brazil illustrate the nineteenth-century German immigrants' perspective on 'America,' which has yet to be divided into North and South America, and which thus seems to be in line with the very first use of the term by Martin Waldseemüller. Although many of Gerstäcker's plots are fairly traditional and include stories of love and intrigue, he describes the general living conditions and the topography quite realistically. In his descriptions of New Orleans, we are confronted with a number of different languages and cultures, and New Orleans emerges as a point of economic, cultural and linguistic intersection in such a way that the city becomes a place of transgression and is clearly separated from the northern states by its integration of Caribbean and Latin-American elements. Many of these elements can be recovered in Gerstäcker's descriptions of Brazil, which resemble New Orleans in their characterization of the exotic diegetic world, different cultural groups and the topic of slavery. However, the Brazilian immigrants are less able to adapt and so they preserve their language and culture in isolation. These differences are most likely due to New Orleans's urban structure and its intersections of cultural, linguistic and economic movements, which come from the city's multicultural history – in contrast to a rather rural Brazil where space serves as an important element that inhibits contact between the different ethnic groups and allows the immigrants to maintain their traditions. Thus, New Orleans can be considered as a northern part of the Caribbean and Latin America however, as a comparison to descriptions of nineteenth-century immigration to Brazil clearly shows, the city also plays a very specific role in the connection of the hemispheres. When many of the immigrants move on to the northern and eastern states of the US, New Orleans's exceptional role is emphasized once more, revealing the city's double function: as a point of intersection between the North and South, while not being part of either of them.

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New Orleans and the French Atlantic

In February 2008, the then candidate for the Democratic Party's Presidential nomination, Barack Obama, spoke at Tulane University in New Orleans. In his speech, which inevitably lambasted the Bush Administration's handling of the 2005 Hurricane Katrina disaster and its aftermath, he revealed a certain fondness for this city, where "races, religions and language got all mixed up."[1] Affection for this 'mixedness' may be due to the fact that Obama, himself of mixed race after all, found in aspects of New Orleans' history and culture an alternative to the black/white, either/or polarizations of United States racial politics. His 1995 memoir *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* explains the alignment to these he felt obliged to make as he began his legal and political career, after an upbringing and youth in Hawaii and Indonesia.

My argument is that the perception and reality of what is 'all mixed up' in New Orleans crucially depends on French cultural inputs, or more accurately on the workings of the French Atlantic. I have used this term (Marshall 2009) to designate a transoceanic movement of particles of Frenchness, minimum units of language, culture and meaning which, embedded in materialities of travel, migration and settlement, compose and combine with new, American landscapes and populations, often in minority situations. The 'French Atlantic' thus allows us to surpass the centers and peripheries implied in terms such as 'French and Francophone Studies' which bedevil my particular discipline.

This attempt to rethink 'Frenchness' in spatial terms – and thus to locate New Orleans within this – owes much to the work of Edouard Glissant and his concept of the archipelago. In his *Introduction à une poétique du divers* (1996), which examines cultures based on relation and diversity in a globalized world in fact anticipated by the Car-

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[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laHW0sF1nmM [02/01/16].

ibbean, Glissant writes of the new "world totality," where there is no longer any "organic authority" and "everything is archipelago" (Glissant 1996: 22).[2] He thus calls for "an archipelagic thought, that is a thought which is non-systematic, inductive, exploring what is unexpected in the world-totality" (Glissant 1996: 43−44). The archipelago would then correspond to a scattering of islands – units of human communities – that are both separate and interlinked, whose identity production is always already bound up with what Glissant calls Relation. The 'archipelagization' of continents in the contemporary world would thus mean an overcoming of the centripetal tendencies of thought and culture associated with the latter kind of land mass.

In addition, it is only the recent 'atlanticization' of American history that has permitted Louisiana to find a more rightful place in that narrative, with it partaking of an interconnected Atlantic history, and even constituting one of its nodal points. Bradley G. Bond, in his introduction to a volume of essays on the French colonial period, points out the centeredness of Louisiana in relation to Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, British colonies, and to woodlands and plains Indians, which "allows French colonial Louisiana to occupy the historiographic middle ground between the Atlantic World and the United States." This seemingly marginalized space in fact "stands at the thematic center of the shared historiographies of those places," so that recognizing that "the colony belongs to the *extended* stories of France, Africa and the Caribbean' complicates their histories in turn"[3] (Bond 2005: ix, xx, see Hall 1992).

Following the periods of French colonial rule (1718–1763, 1800–1803, legally), and that of Spain (1763–1800), the most flourishing period of New Orleans' francophone culture began, paradoxically, after the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, and this despite the influx of American settlers and businessmen. The city remained majority French-speaking for another thirty to forty years. This was because of a large influx of new francophone immigrants. Through gerrymandering, the state remained in Francophone political control until the 1840s, and until 1852 New Orleans was separated into three distinct

[2] All translations are mine.
[3] My emphasis.

municipalities: two downtown, dominated by French Creoles, one uptown by Anglo-Americans. The 'foreign French' were migrants from metropolitan France, particularly the south and west, from 3,000 to 7,000 people a year from the 1830s, among their ranks a large number of political exiles. Indeed New Orleans was a haven for these: royalists in the 1790s, anti-bonapartists after 1799, bonapartists after 1815, republicans after 1848. To these are to be added the large influx from Saint-Domingue that began in the 1790s (for example, Louis Guillaume du Bourg, born in Cap Français, was the founder of the city's first newspaper, *Le Moniteur de la Louisiane* in 1794; the first mayor in the American period, James [Jacques François] Pitot, settled in New Orleans in 1796, via Philadelphia from Saint-Domingue, where he had been in the sugar business). This culminated in 1809–1810, when Joseph Bonaparte's usurping of the throne of Spain led to war and the expulsion of exiles from Cuba – 10,000 of whom pitched up in New Orleans (in roughly equal numbers of whites, free people of color, and their slaves), adding themselves to the 5,000–10,000 that had arrived since 1791. This doubled the French-speaking population of the city. These arrivals swelled the ranks of the francophone merchant and professional classes, and contributed much to the cultural dynamism of the following decades, educational attainment and even literacy among the white Creoles being low, despite the *ancien régime* pretentions of the upper-classes.

This influx from Saint-Domingue also significantly increased the presence of free people of color. Often but not always lighter-skinned, they contributed to the unique character of New Orleans with its three-tiered Caribbean-type society at odds with the polarizations of American racism. They represented 29 percent of the free population in 1810 (the majority of the city's population were slaves until 1840), although as the city boomed and its population grew, this figure fell to 6 percent by 1860. Moreover, if most were artisans, many were property-owners (in fact owning 60 percent of all the property in the United States owned by African-Americans, and forming by far the wealthiest of such groups), and 5 percent – a large figure for the time – were professionals. Some were also slave-owners. Their presence, itself a testimony to the relative racial fluidity of the French colonial period, had increased dramatically during Spanish rule, due largely

to the greater ease of manumission (slaves could buy their freedom, a provision not available in French colonial jurisdictions until the reign of Louis-Philippe), and they had contributed to the defense of the city with their own militia. In Saint-Domingue, the free people of color made up nearly half the free population and several hundred of them were wealthy plantation owners. Their existence is due to Articles 9 and 55 of the 1685 *Code Noir* which regulated the treatment of slaves in the French colonies (and which stated that any slave married to a free person was automatically free, and that masters could free their slaves at will), and also of course to widespread sexual activity between white men and black women which often included paternal recognition of the offspring. As American rule meant an institutionalization of racial exclusions – not least a denial of voting rights, a ban on interracial marriage in 1808, segregation in theatres in 1816 – the free people of color often looked to the traditions of Enlightenment and republican France for inspiration and support, particularly when slavery was definitively abolished and suffrage extended to black males throughout the French empire in 1848. Their literacy rate of 80 percent in 1850 was higher than for Louisiana whites, and the assertion of their cultural capital counted for much in an increasingly hostile social environment. This was one of the motives for the publication of the poetry anthology *Les Cenelles: choix de poésies indigènes* (1845, named after a local fruit), which was the first such collection by African Americans.[4]

The influx of Francophones had held off but could not indefinitely postpone the inevitable majority status of the English language and Anglo-American political control, not least as waves of immigration – New Orleans was second only to New York in this respect – brought in tens of thousands of Irish and Germans, so that by 1850 almost half of the population had been born outside the Americas.

While their support for the Confederacy was at least initially due to a belief in the possibility of re-establishing a French-dominated Louisiana, the assimilation of the white Creoles to the English language that followed demonstrates the all-pervasiveness of the racial

[4] Two of its poems were anthologized by the Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes (1958).

question. The Union army occupied New Orleans in 1862 and closed down the separate French public school system for a period. Creoles were financially ruined by the war and were neither able to send their children to France to be educated nor to import French tutors, and after 1865 faced an economic onslaught from northerners. Moreover, the white Creoles had to choose their side in the bitter and violent divide of southern racial/racist politics which marked the period through Reconstruction (when the south was occupied by the Union army and black political rights pushed through), its end in 1877, and beyond. The choice was to be white above all and to deny any common ground, let alone ancestry, with the free Creoles of color.

In order to illustrate how the French Atlantic is a key determinant in shaping cultural forms produced within this extraordinary historical context, I wish to take four examples – of music, a novel, a painting and a film – that embody the kind of hybridities and mixing typical of New Orleans.

Jazz is one of the most exemplary French Atlantic phenomena. The example of jazz is eloquent, for in the answer to that basic Cultural Studies question about the material determinants of cultural forms (why does that particular form emerge there and then?), certain crucially French Atlantic elements stand out, including: the specificities of French slave trafficking, ownership, and regulation; the presence of a significant population of free people of color; and the resulting rich black cultural and musical life which contained both African and European influences. And that is not, of course, the end of a French Atlantic story of jazz, since its exportation to France especially after 1917 led to specifically French takes on the phenomenon in both practice (Grappelli, Reinhardt) and theory.

The unique musical culture of New Orleans and the genesis of jazz can be traced spatially. Famously, Congo Square was the public site of a continuous African tradition of music and dance that began in the 1740s or 1750s and lasted for a hundred years through the French, Spanish and American regimes. Article 6 of the *Code Noir* gave slaves Sundays off. They would gather unsupervised in Congo Square, building on Amerindian market traditions at the site (the nearby bayou St-Jean provided a link to Lake Pontchartrain, and a canal basin was later built nearby), a *place publique* which was lo-

cated in a liminal space beyond Adrien de Pauger's original fortified city wall (today Rampart Street at the northern edge of the French Quarter), near a poor house for the dying, and the cemetery, built not in the churchyard of the Place d'Armes at the center of the town but segregated from the living. The square's liminal status continued even as the city expanded.[5] Accounts from the early nineteenth century record the often lascivious dances of hundreds in groups, to the sound of tom-toms and drums, and string instruments that were variations of the banjo.[6] The Americans, newly in charge, had never seen native African dance and music still being performed: nothing like this existed in the rest of the United States. Indeed, Negro Acts passed after the Stono slave rebellion in South Carolina in 1739 had banned slaves' ownership of drums, which had been used to send messages. But what is also evident is that Congo Square was not simply a memory of Africa, it was also the site of the production of new forms: "a convergence of dance and musical forms, clustered feats of daring and invention, which were deeply indebted to Africa and yet no longer of it – living proofs of its impermanence and unforgettability" (Roach 1996: 66). The performances involved syncopation, improvisations, polyrhythms. Subject to increased scrutiny and surveillance during the later century – limited to two and half hours in summer and supervised by police in 1845, petering out in the 1850s after the municipal union of the city in 1852 – it nonetheless fertilized and cross-fertilized with other musical practices (Johnson 1991).

Creole and then American New Orleans was full of music and dance, including European traditions such as the polka and waltz, the quadrille (adapted from eighteenth-century elite Parisian gatherings) and opera. Indeed, white entertainment often involved slaves

[5] Today what remains of the square is part of Louis Armstrong Park. In 1893, the White southern backlash led to the renaming of the square after the Confederate General P.G.T. [Pierre Gustave Toutant] Beauregard, the son of white Creole plantation owners in St Bernard parish near New Orleans, the flipside of this French Atlantic story. In the late twentieth century, the area slowly metamorphosed into a *lieu de mémoire*, with a fountain and brick paving arranged in circular fashion to represent the movements of dance.

[6] The architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe in his journal of 1819 (Latrobe 1980). He also provided sketches of the instruments.

being invited to perform, for example after dinner. The composer and concert pianist Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869), son of a white Creole mother and British Jewish father, helped create an 'American' classical and vernacular music, anticipating ragtime in fact, by drawing on aspects of New Orleans musical culture and packaging them – with great international success at the time – as 'exotic' for white and foreign audiences. Thus his piano piece "Bamboula, danse des nègres," rather than quoting the rhythms of Congo Square, provides a "catchy genre title" (Starr 1995: 74) for what is in fact an adaptation of the melody of a French Creole folk song, "Quan' patate la cuite," familiar to him from childhood (his grandmother was from Saint-Domingue and like most children of his class he had an African American nurse). On the other side of the racial divide there is the example of Basile Barès (1845–1902), who had his first piece, "Grand Polka des Chasseurs à pied de la Louisiane" published in 1860 while he was still the slave of a piano merchant in New Orleans. The free people of color bestrode the musical worlds. Thus Edmond Dédé (1827–1903), whose parents were from Saint-Domingue, ascended the metropolitan French musical ladder, attending the Paris Conservatoire and settling in France. Barès and Dédé are just the most famous of not uncommon itineraries in the classical musical world made by people of color.

By the end of the nineteenth century, there were therefore two black communities in New Orleans to be understood as both distinct and symbiotic. With Canal Street as the dividing line, the uptown blacks – or 'Anglo-Africans'– had their origins in the slaves brought by Americans to the city after 1803: Protestant, English-speaking, characterized largely by the culture of the rural south. The downtown 'Franco-Africans' were descended from free people of color from the French and Spanish colonial periods as well as from Saint-Domingue, their slaves and those of white Creoles, thus combining Caribbean elements, Catholicism and cultural traditions often heavily invested – in the case of the *gens de couleur libres* – in the assertion of cultural capital. The historian Jerah Johnson (2000) takes issue with those writers who ascribe the coming together of these two groups to segregationist 'Jim Crow' laws passed in that decade (in fact they applied only to public transport and to interracial mar-

riage). He argues that the distinction between the two communities was about the cultural difference of a much more recent memory, in historical terms, of African culture among the ‘Franco-Africans,’ and that in any case the communities were growing together after Reconstruction, especially with the decline of the French language: Louis Armstrong, for example, was the product of such a union. Segregation really took hold in the city at the time of World War I, by which time jazz had already developed, and its early proponents were leaving for the north or for France. On the other hand, it seems plausible that the racial polarization of the post-Reconstruction era closed doors to some, perhaps lighter-skinned, ‘Franco-African’ musicians who might otherwise have found an outlet in legitimate orchestras and theatre. In any case, many ‘Franco-Africans,’ ambitious bearers of cultural capital or simply imbued with a rich, eclectic musical culture, are precursors of jazz or seminal figures in its early development: John Robichaux (1866–1935), whose dance orchestra was popular with white and black audiences alike, and which played cakewalk and ragtime, among other forms, from written scores; Lorenzo Tio Sr (1867–1908) and Jr (1893–1933), clarinetists of Creole and Mexican descent who brought classical music theory to ragtime; and sons of artisans – Jelly Roll Morton, born Ferdinand Joseph Lamothe (1890–1941) and Sidney Bechet (1897–1959), taught by Tio.[7] On the National Parks Service website, the incorporation of jazz into ‘heritage’ and a national American narrative allows the contemporary telescoping and federation of this complex cultural input: “Bechet possessed the ability to call upon spirits of his enslaved ancestors who danced in New Orleans’ Congo Square or appeal to the most courtly of opera fans with dazzling technique and range.”[8] Here the French (Atlantic) dimension is absent; the African element is associated not with technique but with ancestry (race?). Nevertheless, the reference to “spirits” conceals much about New Orleans’s capacity to generate performance, in the sense of “restored behavior not merely as the recapitulation but as the transformation of experience through the displacement of its cultural forms” (Roach 1996: 29), and in ef-

[7] For more on Bechet’s subsequent career in France, see for example White (2001: 69−74).
[8] http://www.nps.gov/jazz/historyculture/bechet.htm [02/01/16].

fect, bearing in mind Congo Square's proximity to the *extra muros* cemetery, to desegregate the dead.

There is a coda to this story of French Atlantic jazz. Not only is jazz music itself very visible/audible in French culture after World War I, when it was brought in by GIs: French critics played a crucial role in early jazz scholarship and criticism. This took place in a context of profound ambivalences over modern life, as Jeremy Lane puts it: "Critical reactions to jazz in France inevitably involved engaging with […] these connotations of modernity, primitivism and liberation" (Marshall 2005: 612). But jazz also became a site of struggle about the meaning of Frenchness, including the colonial past of the French Atlantic. Hugues Panassié, author of the influential *Le Jazz Hot* (1934), eventually saw it as consistent with the corporatism and 'authenticity' of the policies and values promoted by the collaborationist Vichy regime. André Coeuroy, who had contributed to André Schaeffner's *Le Jazz* as early as 1926, also came to sympathize with Vichy. In his *Histoire générale du jazz, strette, hot, swing* (1942), he argued for the *essential* Frenchness of jazz, in that French traditions such as the quadrille and folk melodies as well as the superior management of slaves were crucial to its formation. Jazz's quintessential French Atlantic characteristics are thus in turn a site of struggle between these 'major' readings of Frenchness, in which the circulation and emergence of cultural forms is harnessed to a grand, national (and decidedly non-republican) narrative, and those 'minor' readings which, as in this chapter, seek to emphasize particles of Frenchness which enter into micro-circuits of exchange and hybridity – all of course subtended by the realities of slavery and other colonial crimes.

It could also be argued that the French Atlantic plays a part in the creation of rhythm and blues, and hence rock 'n' roll. Fats Domino was born Antoine Domino in New Orleans in 1928 to a family that had recently moved from rural Louisiana – in fact Vacherie upriver – where their forebears had been slaves in the early nineteenth century. Thus at home Antoine spoke his first language, Creole French (Coleman 2006: 17). There was a Saint-Domingue connection in the form of the great-great grandfather of his mother, Donatile Gros. One of the venues of the emergence of rock 'n' roll in the years immediately after the Second World War – and a site of struggle over segregation,

the swing musician Louis Jordan protesting in 1948 at the confinement of black audience members to the balcony – was the Municipal Auditorium, built a stone's throw away from Congo Square.

The example taken here from the abundant but under-researched New Orleans literary corpus of the nineteenth-century is that of French émigré Charles Testut's abolitionist novel, *Le Vieux Salomon*, written in 1858 but not published until 1872. Like Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), it offers a journey narrative (full of peripety, designed for serialized form; Testut had bought a weekly paper, *La Chronique*, in 1849) which separates slaves from a relatively 'mild' existence and propels them into other circumstances, most dramatically into the hands of a cruel overseer or master. But whereas Stowe grounds her anti-slavery novel in Christian, feminizing and ultimately sentimental notions of 'shared humanity' (the death of white Little Eva that announces that, Christ-like, of Tom), Testut grounds his in French republicanism and even socialism, along with freemasonry, remnants of Christianity but unambiguous anti-Catholicism, and a dose of spiritualism. His narrative centers on Casimir and Rose, a young married slave couple living in Guadeloupe in 1843. However, their kind owners are obliged due to financial reasons to sell them to an American, Captain Jackson (although importing slaves to the United States was by then illegal, they are offered a high price). Explicitly rejecting the precariousness and poverty of life in a *marron* camp, Casimir and Rose sail first to New York, then to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, via New Orleans. It transpires that Jackson is Casimir's half-brother and that after a period in the family home he and Rose are to be freed, but the old man dies before this happens and they are sold to a plantation, where the owner, Monsieur Roque, is stabbed to death by Casimir when he is about to submit Rose to a cruel whipping for not succumbing to his sexual advances. The pair is aided, however, by an international network of abolitionists operating secretly in Louisiana. Although Casimir is eventually put on trial in New Orleans, he is helped to escape and the couple are able to return to Guadeloupe, in time for the general emancipation of 1848. Framing the tale is the presence of the blind, centenarian "vieux Salomon" himself, which permits the embedding of a narrative of the middle passage: as an African noble, many of whose peers, it is made clear,

colluded with the slave trade, he is captured and transported across the Atlantic. Moreover, it turns out that, far from being a picturesque if wise old *griot*, Salomon is himself a political activist in regular contact with the abolitionists.

Salomon is thus one way in which the novel takes the archetypal narrative form of the journey or odyssey, relocates it from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and uses it to make juxtapositions across space and time. Indeed, in the port of New York on the way home, Casimir is highly conscious of the ship as metaphor for narratives and encounters, as metonym of wider economic and technical forces, as he apostrophizes: "Come . . . you who carry to all the world's shores goods exchanged in commerce, friends joining friends, exiles returning to their native soil . . . and the persecuted who will seek liberty under other skies!" (Testut 2003: 481).

One key juxtaposition enabled by the French Atlantic is that between French republicanism and the southern United States, which as well as perpetuating the injustices of slave-owning was also a police state. This is made abundantly clear in for example the New Orleans chapters, in which the novel adapts Eugène Sue (mystery, suspense, criminality) to portray a (here urban) regime of terror in which sympathy for slaves and even teaching them literacy can lead to death for white people. While the climax of the novel in 1848 amounts to a kind of apotheosis which promises to reverberate towards the USA ("The French republic has done her duty first: the American republic will do hers" [Testut 2003: 517] are among Salomon's last words), this manifestly transnational text also operates in several ways that radically defamiliarize the terms of the 'American' debate.

Despite the – relative – Anglicization of New Orleans in the scenes set there (French is *reported as* spoken at the slave auction, Cassy is *reported as* admonishing Legree in French), *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is in fact haunted by the French and indeed other Atlantics. The key passage that discusses the French and Haitian Revolutions has Augustine St Clare, the more liberal of the two, defend the equality of men ("one of Tom Jefferson's pieces of French sentiment and humbug," retorts brother Alfred), and, to Alfred's protest that "contemptible Haiti" would not be so if the Haitians were part of the "dominant race" of Anglo-Saxons, argue that the large numbers of mixed-race slaves

with “Anglo-Saxon blood” will mean they will lead “If ever the San Domingo hour comes”: “Sons of white fathers, with all our haughty feelings burning in their veins, will not always be bought and sold and traded. They will rise, and raise with them their mother’s race” (Stowe 2002: 248–249). The fugitive slave George Harris and his family flee to Canada and settle in Montreal, then go to France, where he obtains “a very thorough education,” but they return to the United States because of (ill-defined) “political troubles” (Stowe 2002: 399). His sister, Mme de Thoux, had been sold to “a good and generous man” who had taken her to the “West Indies” (not specified, but possibly French given her husband’s name), and, in a culture and disposition seemingly very much at odds with that which had distorted the destiny of Cassy, freed her and married her (Stowe 2002: 395). So it is not that slavery is not put into some kind of international context in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*: what emerges, however, in George’s decision to go to Liberia and consistent with Harriet Beecher Stowe’s support for the ‘Colonisation’ project for American former slaves there, is the idea that French Atlantic notions of equality and particularly *métissage* are inappropriate for American destiny.

In *Le Vieux Salomon*, slavery is obviously seen as not simply a ‘national’ issue, but its internationalization of the question also contrasts American and French republican traditions and puts them into *political* practice in ways which the religiosity of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* cannot envisage. Whereas the *telos* of the latter novel is the kingdom of heaven (“better than Kintuck” [Stowe 2002: 387], Kentucky, where Tom – like Casimir and Rose in the Caribbean – enjoyed a mild regime and familial relationships), in *Le Vieux Salomon* it is most certainly on Earth: Guadeloupe and republican emancipation. Salomon dies happy, not because of what is to come, but because of what he has already witnessed in Guadeloupe in 1848. Thus in the novel New Orleans is defamiliarized, seen from an outsider’s point of view; in a letter home, Casimir writes, “the streets, virtually empty and barely lit, seemed to us like lugubrious lanes in a cemetery” (Testut 2003: 194). Moreover, *Le Vieux Salomon* differs from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (where it is the white man, George Shelby, who strikes the tyrant Legree) in its justification of activism and even violence.

Testut's novel also has a distinctive take on the challenge to racial polarizations represented by the mulatto.

Both Casimir and Rose are *mulâtres*. The various permutations of this figure in American culture have historically partaken of the 'one drop rule,' in which those of mixed race are understood to be not even midway points between white and black, but unambiguously as the latter:

> By prohibiting racial intermarriage, winking at interracial sex, and defining all mixed offspring as black, white society found the ideal answer to its labor needs, its extracurricular and inadmissible sexual desires, its compulsion to maintain its culture purebred, and the problem of maintaining, at least in theory, absolute social control. (Frederickson 1971: 277)

This nineteenth-century notion of 'blood' is also at the origin of the widespread notion of the 'tragic mulatto,' so near and yet so far from the freedom of whiteness (as in the quadroon Cassy's tale in Chapter 24 of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*). In all, Testut's use of the mulatto, preoccupied as he is by the different taxonomies of mixed race, is an example of his emphasis on a distinct 'Latin' or French Atlantic regime of slavery (as in the couple's literacy) and racial codification brought into an American setting, a distancing but simultaneous *identification* with the protagonists invited of his free readership. It is precisely this American codification that Casimir breaks when he claims the right to defend his wife's virtue and honor, and which the prosecuting counsel successfully reinforces by labelling it as a lie. It may be argued that Testut's francophone readership was already well aware of the distinctiveness of the French Caribbean and Atlantic world in these matters, and nonetheless, as we have seen, many white Creoles supported the Confederacy. But *Le Vieux Salomon* may also be placed alongside Testut's historical and other writings, proposing here a slave narrative which also has elements of an origin narrative for French Louisiana itself, an origin in the French Atlantic and its republican transformations, an alternative for the Creoles to throwing in their lot with a Confederate *ancien régime*.

The most significant French artistic encounter with New Orleans was the visit by Edgar Degas in 1872–1873, the only example of an

Impressionist painter working in the United States. For Degas, the visit was a family affair, a stay with his maternal uncle Michel Musson and his cousins: His mother, Célestine Musson, who had died in Paris in 1847, was the daughter of a refugee from Saint-Domingue who made a fortune in cotton in New Orleans. Edgar Degas's brothers René and Achille had moved to New Orleans in 1870 to work in the family cotton business. The family of Degas's great-grandfather Vincent Rillieux was also related to the city's community of free Creoles of color through his son Vincent junior's liaison with a colored mistress, Constance Vivant; their son, Norbert Rillieux, became a leading scientist and chemical engineer, prominent in the sugar industry. Degas's main works from his five-month New Orleans stay, apart from family portraits, are *Children on a Doorstep (New Orleans)*, which is the only one to represent a black personage, the children's nurse, and *A Cotton Office in New Orleans*, a portrait of the offices of the Musson family firm and "one of the great depictions of modern business life" (Benfey 1997: 164). The dislocating angles, thresholds and frames-within-frames of the painting speak to Tocquevillean, and originally therefore aristocratic, ambivalences about American business: democracy but atomized or competitive individualism, unboundedness but also mediocrity.

The painting hovers among different relational possibilities between people: between social order and isolated, autonomous gestures, human details and commercial exchange, the private and the public, the anonymous and the intimate. This is at one level a family portrait: Michel Musson in the foreground is checking the quality of the cotton, seemingly absorbed and isolated, with his back to the others, almost feminized as if knitting, an empty chair beside him which may suggest the recent death of his wife; Degas's brother René is reading the newspaper, Achille is leaning against the left window like a *flâneur*. But it is also a picture of abstract, separate activities rather than shared, direct relations. Dominating the scene, at the center of a play – contrast (see how Musson's top hat is picked out) and continuity – of blacks and whites in the men's dress, and of the newspaper, is the pile of cotton itself, which implies by its very presence the "absent black labour" (Brown 1994: 42). Or might we go further, and

see that “absence” as precisely the surplus value extracted from the (now wage) labor?

Catching the light streaming in from the window on the left, its spectrality thus transmits itself, in turn illuminating the transformations – the samples stacked on the right, the men’s shirts – until at bottom right the wastepaper basket contains the discarded invoices which are the sign of the transformation of labor and raw material into surplus value and the abstract, circulating exchange value of the commodity. In fact, the painting portrays a world that is fast disappearing: the Musson firm went bust in February 1873 at a time of economic crisis; cotton factors, the planters’ intermediaries which were often small family firms like the Mussons’s, were now being replaced by cotton exchanges linked by telegraph; and the racial and economic authority of these white men was being questioned during the Reconstruction period, so that Michel Musson, after the failure of the Unification project, became one of the leaders of the Crescent White League, a supremacist movement that emerged once it became clear that white and colored Creoles had no future together. Musson is a good example of the fluid, opportunist, business orientation of certain white Creoles, choosing to live in the ‘American’ Garden District rather than the Vieux Carré (before financial difficulties forced the family to move to a rented house on Esplanade), and ready when appropriate to sign his name “Michael.”

By far the most famous representation of New Orleans in French literature is the canonical *Manon Lescaut* (1731) by the abbé Prévost. The landscape into which the protagonists Des Grieux and Manon escape, two *lieues* from New Orleans, is, inaccurately, a vast treeless plain. However, this is appropriate in terms both of the bleak reality of the colony in relation to previous propaganda and of the moral and emotional wasteland in which Manon’s death takes place. Manon is the victim of the sexual brutality of the colony, in which the fate of unmarried female migrants – be they deportees (200 women were thus transported in the Regency period, mostly from the Salpêtrière prison where they had been confined for begging, prostitution, vagabondage and other petty crimes) or *filles à la cassette* bearing a royal dowry (120 in 1719–1720) – was in the hands of the governor. Manon/*Manon* also inaugurates a tradition of feminizing and sexualizing the

city of New Orleans which has since taken many forms, bearing, since the founding of the Ursulines convent, the deep structure of nun/prostitute. This tradition continues through the city's port culture, the quadroon balls and the setting up of the Storyville district, named after the police chief who instigated the idea, within which from 1897 to 1917 prostitution and brothels were legalized. As well as playing an important, integrated role in the city's economy, Storyville was one of the seedbeds of jazz:

> Cities like Paris and New Orleans that are feminized and associated in popular memory with consumption rather than production, pleasure rather than labor, offer multiple opportunities for artists to explore contradictions, secrets, the sexually and racially exotic and gothic – especially when populist discourses can present such cities too easily as outside history, associated with the consuming pleasures of the female body.[9]

Storyville is the setting of Louis Malle's 1978 film *Pretty Baby*, which is best known for the controversy at the time, and since, of the sexualized portrayal of twelve-year-old Violet (Brooke Shields). However, the film in fact avoids many of the eroticizing, dehistoricizing clichés of New Orleans that tend to dominate Hollywood's rather uneven fictions of the city.[10] Very self-conscious about looking, *Pretty Baby* contains a key scene in which Violet's virginity is sold to the highest bidder. Violet/Shields, after being carried into the room with much fanfare and placed in a raised position before the audience of punters, unsettlingly stares directly at the camera and thus at the cinema spectator. There is also a montage of shots of the assembled, mostly middle-aged white men, dressed in black suits and white ties and shirts, gazing back. At one point the camera stays in close-up, for an unusual near half-minute, on the troubled reaction of the brothel's black pianist, 'Professor' Floyd (Antonio Fargas), as he watches the auction and listens to the bids for, in the words of the Madame, the "merchandise", this "finest delicacy New Orleans has to offer". In

[9] "New Orleans", in Marshall (2005: 866–872). See also Chapter Four, "New Orleans: 'America's European Masterpiece'", in Taylor (2001: 91–128).
[10] For a rapid overview of these, see McMahon (2007: 42–44).

fact the character of the pianist is based on the description of Tony Jackson in Malle's source book, Al Rose's *Storyville, New Orleans* (which also contains photographs by Ernest J. Bellocq, the character played by Keith Carradine). Jackson, known as a piano virtuoso, moved to Chicago in 1906; brothels and bars were his only outlets in the Deep South of the period.

Jelly Roll Morton played the brothels of Storyville and witnessed similar events, even if he could do so only by cutting a hole in the screen separating the piano and the stage: he described what he saw as "cruel" (quoted by Roach 1996: 226). Both he and Jackson, and the character Floyd, knew that there was a historical continuity here, metonymically displaced and reconstructed. Storyville was located just north of the French Quarter, in the same liminal space as the cemetery and Congo Square; moreover, only a few blocks south, New Orleans's slave emporia had flourished, with highly sexualized scenes that the scene in *Pretty Baby* re-enacts, restores and reworks. Storyville even contained a brothel, Lulu White's Mahogany Hall, which specialized in mixed-race women and advertised itself as 'The Octoroon Club.' As Joseph Roach has argued, the virginity auction in Malle's film constructs "linkages between the diverse flesh markets throughout the circum-Atlantic world" (Roach 1996: 227).

The fact that slavery is so closely bound up with these four examples is a constant, inescapable and therefore healthy reminder that the French Atlantic, far from being a utopian space of free and easy hybridities, is always *subtended* by wrenching disjunctures and displacements, by relations of power and domination, especially the slave trade and its racialized terror, along with its aftermath and memory.

Power relationships also exist between languages, and here the politics of language as they relate to English and French is crucial; while on a lesser scale in terms of both history and horror, the issue and its outcomes in nineteenth- and twentieth-century New Orleans are equally bound up with race and the aftermath of slavery. For what of translation across the divide in this context? There was none. This is the tale of a once dual city – one in which more than one language coexists, where one language does not, or not yet, constitute the established horizon or 'given' – where the linguistic communities turned their backs on each other, and the explanation for this, and for

the eventual disappearance of French as both a vehicular and literary language in the city by the early twentieth century, lies with demographics and migration, but also race and civil war, with the white Creoles rushing to whiteness and throwing their lot in with white American culture, as we have seen.

Francophone New Orleans literary output petered out before the First World War, and Louisiana imposed restrictions on the use of French until reversing policy actively to encourage it with the creation of CODOFIL (Council for the Development of French in Louisiana) in 1968 (which is arguably more interested in the international French of immersion classes than its specific Louisiana forms, although the Council's existence has accompanied the manifestations of the Cajun renaissance in the state). Between the intervention by the novelist George Washington Cable in the 1890s, and renewed academic activity from the late 1970s, the sole examples of English translations of French Creole work were those by Langston Hughes. In 1979, Regine Latortue, Professor of Africana Studies at Brooklyn College and then a postgraduate student in French and Francophone Literature at Yale, and Gleason R.W. Adams published a bilingual English-French edition of the collection *Les Cenelles* with G.K. Hall Publishers of Boston. Other than these interventions in African-American cultural politics, translations from the 1990s onwards have been by academics inserting works by New Orleans writers into, firstly, debates within American Studies (the rediscovery of the multilingual past and indeed present of American literature), African-American Studies, and, in more limited fashion, the 'francophone turn' within French Studies, helped by the work of the Editions Tintamarre in republishing nineteenth-century texts at Centenary College upriver from New Orleans in Shreveport. Norman R. Shapiro, Professor of French at Wesleyan University, has translated a wider collection of poetry from that era in *Creole Echoes: The Francophone Poetry of Nineteenth-Century Louisiana*, published by the University of Illinois Press in 2004. As Shapiro points out in the preface, these rediscoveries have "dramatically altered our literary timeline" (Shapiro 2004: xxxiv) and he gives the example of the mixed-race Victor Séjour's 1837 violently abolitionist short story "Le Mulâtre"/"The Mulatto" which, it is now clear, is the first published work of fiction by an African-American, and it

is in French. It was translated by the academic Philip Barnard in 1995 for the *Norton Anthology of American Literature*, and by the African-American writer Andrea Lee in 2001 for *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature*. The cross-disciplinary and polycentric category of the French Atlantic may help to contribute to a fuller, multilingual understanding of New Orleans as a place (defined by the cultural geographer Doreen Massey as "the particular set of social relations which interact at a particular location," where certain specific interactions occur, meet in ways specific to the location and produce new effects), located in turn in 'space,' or 'space-time,' understood not abstractly but as the form of "the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations at all geographical scales," from the intimate to the global (Massey 1994: 168).

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Michael Zeuske
(Cologne)

La Habana and Nueva Orleans/New Orleans – Two Metropolis of Slave Trade

And then I realized ... that New Orleans was not an American city. It was a Caribbean city. Once you recalibrate, it becomes the best-governed, cleanest, most efficient, and best-educated city in the Caribbean. New Orleans is the Geneva of the Caribbean.

Andres Duany (The Atlantic, Nov. 2009: 64)

Today representations of New Orleans as an American city with some cultural particularities and its own unique style (music, food, *mardi gras*, 'French' Creole tradition) obscure the fact that New Orleans has not only a particular history as one of the Southern cities of the United States, it also has been and still is an important center of the Caribbean as a cultural space – that is to say, New Orleans was also a center of slave trade and even illegal slave trade (contraband trade/traffic).

The Caribbean as a whole is characterized through three global historic lines of *longue durée*: European colonialism and black slavery (Geggus 2010) as well as transculturation based in Atlantic slave trade, slaveries and migrations. It is known that the Anglophone Caribbean (Jamaica, Bahamas and other islands of the Caribbean such as Trinidad and the British colonies in North America until 1783, as well as the young United States until more or less 1815) was periphery of the Spanish Caribbean for a long time – but that also applies to New Orleans (Gould 2010). Until the beginning of the 18th century all southern and southwestern parts of North America (essentially the today's states of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana,

Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona and California [Hilton 2007, 2004; Fernandez-Armesto 2014]) were part of the giant Spanish empire in the Americas, called *Las Indias* or *reinos ultramarinos*. Because of the Indian autonomy and resistance (first of all Apaches, Pueblos, Comanche, Pawnee, Five Civilized Tribes, Seminoles [Landers 2010; Reséndez 2016]), neither the Spanish nor the French (since 1718) could dominate these frontier-territories of Northern America or build plantation slavery platforms (like on the southern shores of the Caribbean on the base of cacao in Venezuela).

1. Chaotic Start – La Nouvelle-Orléans/Nueva Orleans during French and Spanish Times

New Orleans as part of the French zone of influence in North America was founded in 1718, approx. 200 years after La Habana. During the so-called 'French Rule' New Orleans and Louisiana experienced all the problems of a new frontier-colony founded by the strategical and financial needs of a centralized crown (control of North America through the control of the Mississippi Valley and mouth of the Mississippi River). It was also a symbolic strategy of power – meaning that the real control of lands in the New World as colonies was seen as important for France's role as superpower (Hall 1992b; Dawdy 2008). Such colonies could not survive without slave trade due to lack of European settlers and capital. The French crown sent a monopoly company to supply enslaved settlers (*Compagnie des Indes*). The majority of the first deliveries of African captives (1719–1743) consisted of people from Senegambia, mainly of people from the Senegal Valley (3250 out of 5987). Other large contingents came from the Bight of Benin and from Congo/Angola (Hall 1992c, see also Hall 1992a: 382–397 "Appendix A"). Until the end of 'French Rule,' France placed little value upon the expensive and troublesome (and for France extremely marginal) colony of Louisiana. A plantation economy did not arise. New Orleans was indeed a local market, but very seldom an Atlantic slave market.

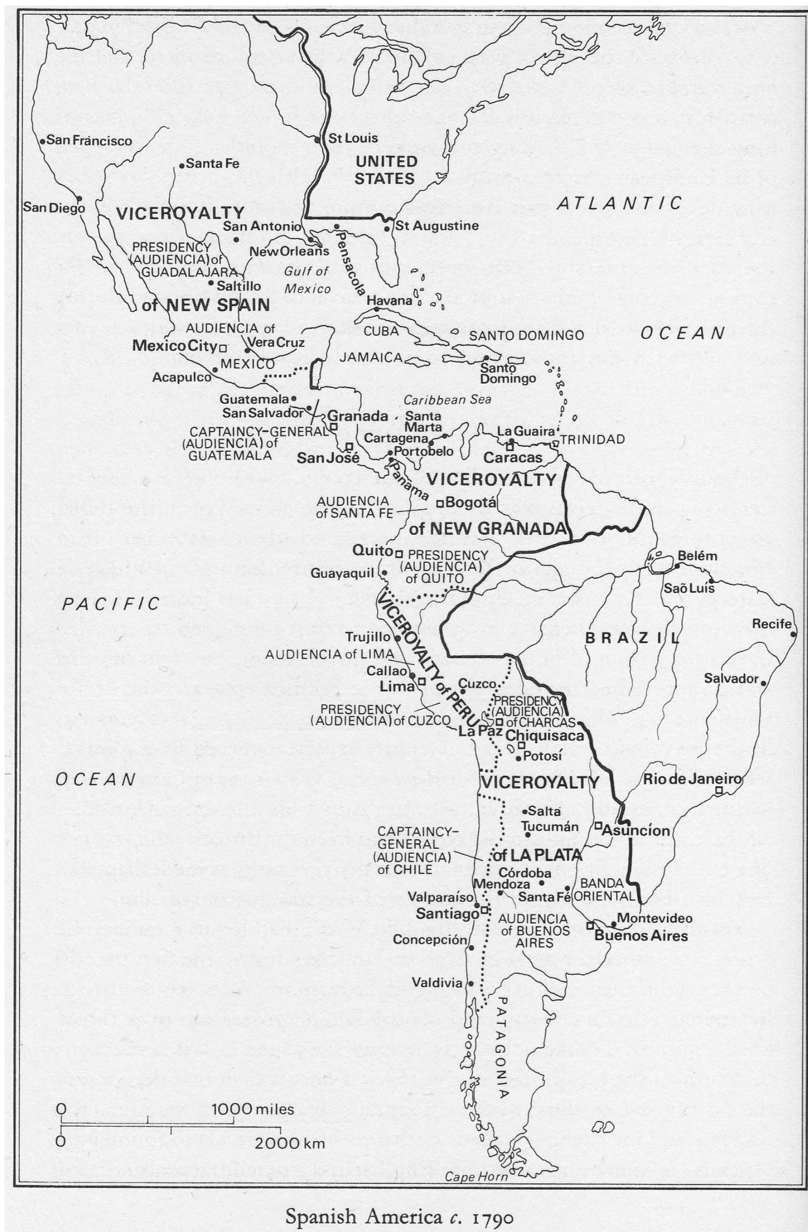

Abb. 1: Spanish Empire, approx. 1783.

After the defeat of France in the French and Indian War (1754–1763; part of the worldwide Seven Year's War 1756–1763), Louisiana – as *Luisiana* – became part of the "old, wealthy, well-established Spanish empire in the Americas" (Hall 1992d). Spanish-Colonial urban elites were also well established as slave owners and slave-economy entrepreneurs (*hacendados*), first of all in the greater Antilles and on the southern shores of the Caribbean (*tierra firme* – today's Venezuela and Colombia), but also in the cities, ports and along the imperial infrastructures. Nevertheless, these Creole elites – calling themselves *españoles* (Spaniards) – suffered under the control of the imperial state over the Atlantic slave trade (*Atlantic slavery*) (Adelman 2006; Borucki/Eltis/Wheat 2015).

The new colony of Louisiana held enormous strategic importance for Spain, related to the defense of the Greater Caribbean and the vast lands of North America: "During the period of Spanish rule [official: 1763–1804; actual: 1769–1803 − MZ], Louisiana was Spain's most heavily subsidized colony" (Hall 1992d: 276; Vidal 2014). Louisiana under Spanish rule became a slave society based on special cultures (like tobacco, wooden cypress boxes for sugar and tobacco exportation of the Caribbean plantation societies, indigo, flour trading from Delaware and Ohio Valleys). The high quality woods of the island of Cuba, as the cedars, were allowed to be used until 1816 only for the imperial shipbuilding industry, not for sugar boxes (Vázquez Cienfuegos 2008a; see also Webre 1984). By 1790–1880, Havana imported 200,000 Louisiana sugar boxes per year. Only Louisiana boxes could be used in all Spanish ports in the Gulf region (Hall 1992d: 277). Louisiana developed an economy of the swamps, with strong runaway slave communities (*cimarrones*/ maroons) in the wetlands and swampy woodlands along the Mississippi River from Plaquemines to Natchez. Like any other European colony in the Americas, Spanish Louisiana was an immigration land of 'free' and unfree immigration – the latter by slave trade and smuggling of human bodies. In Spanish times between 2600–3000, Acadians (from French Canada) immigrated to Louisiana (Hall 1992d: 277). About 2000 *canarios* (Canary islanders) came via the Caribbean to Spanish Louisiana (Brasseaux 1987; Din 1988).

People from Africa were, without doubt, by far the largest group of forced migrants introduced into Spanish Louisiana. Spanish colonial *Luisiana* was a slave society, but it was not a plantation economy. The census of 1788 counted 20,673 slaves and 18,737 free people in Lower Louisiana – 39,410 people, including Natchez (Hall 1992d: 278). Slave population of Louisiana increased under Spanish rule from 5600 in 1766, 9649 in 1777, to 20,673 in 1788 (Acosta Rodríguez 1979: 440, 458; Chambers 2008). Much larger numbers of slaves than in French times were imported into Spanish Louisiana. Nevertheless, after the French and the Haitian Revolutions (1789/1791–1795/1803) the population of Spanish Louisiana – both free and enslaved – appears to have declined (Hall 1992d: 278). The French slave trade to Louisiana was centralized and is well documented up to this day. Despite the same claim, the Spanish slave trade was never well documented (Hall 1992d: 279). The Spanish government and the Captain General of Havana were not directly involved in the slave trade. Most of the slaves seem to have been imported by smuggling from the French and British Caribbean or by contraband trade from Cuba (Borucki/Eltis/Wheat 2015). A royal decree in 1777 allowed the slave trade between the French West Indies and Spanish Louisiana, and in 1782, another decree authorized duty-free importation of slaves from friendly or neutral countries (Hall 1992d: 279; see also Johnson 1999). In February 1796, Governor Carondolet banned the importation of slaves of any origin – primarily out of fear of the consequences of the Haitian Revolution (Gonzalez-Ripoll Navarro et al. 2005; Fischer 2004; Buck-Morss 2011; Ferrer 2012, 2014; Chambers 2008; Langue 2012). Gwendolyn Hall writes that the "foreign slave trade was illegal most of the time after 1795" (Hall 1992d: 281). Based on the work of Antonio Acosta Rodríguez, Hall also points out:

> … the slave traders in Spanish Louisiana were mainly British … [there] was a substantial slave trade organized from Jamaica by Scottish merchants operation trough Pensacola, Natchez, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans. They were most likely interlopers and smugglers … the British established along the east bank of the Mississippi River north of New Orleans were heavily involved in contraband trade. British and Scotch slave traders living in Natchez and Baton Rouge, including George Profit [and Robert Ross from the British firm *David*

> *Ross and Company* − MZ], sought Spanish protection and citizenship when American boats came down the Mississippi River … After the slave trade was opened to friendly and neutral nations in 1782, Scotch slave traders with headquarters in Jamaica were deeply involved [in the trade with human bodies − MZ]. (Hall 1992d: 280)

We do not have much information about concrete slave markets. We can only assume that the official slave markets functioned as formally regulated, as in other parts of the Spanish empire (arrival of the ships, health inspections, castings of the bodies of the captive persons, determining the healthiness and the value with respect to the ideal measure of slave value (*pieza de Indias*[1]), determination of taxes and charges by a commission and sale to the local monopoly representatives (to 1790) (Zeuske 2015b). We have reason to be suspicious about the actual locations of the slaves' sales. The officially regulated slave trade in Spanish American ports took place in solid houses by port administrations or customs buildings. Gwendolyn Hall writes:

> In 1784, *la Thètes* arrived from Angola, and the slaves were sold by McKenzie of New Orleans. *Nôtre Dame des Carmes* arrived under Captain Robin in 1785. Two Chamba, a Mina, a Coromanti, and one Maninga [Spanish – *mandinga*] from its "cargo" were sold by Charles La Chapell. The only other slave ship recorded in Pointe Coupee listing slaves arrived in late 1795, probably to replace the male slaves executed and exiled after the 1795 conspiracy. (Hall 1992e; see also Andreu Ocariz 1977; Hall 1992f)

For New Orleans, the question of the concrete spaces of the slave markets includes the problem if by that time slaves were already being sold in *slave pens* (private urban yards) (Johnson 2000b).

Regarding the transculturation it stands to reason that in the Spanish times more captives were deported from Congo/Angola and Mozambique to Louisiana (often certainly also through smuggling from the Caribbean) (Hall 2005a; see also Hall 2005b: 161):

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[1] The ideal *pieza de Indias* was a healthy male body (skin, eyes, teeth, genitals) aged from 15–30.

> In Louisiana after 1770, Africans recorded as Kongo were most heavily clustered on estates in Orleans Parish and after 1803 in St. Charles Parish immediately upriver as well. Sugar plantations were booming in both parishes. The proportion of Kongo listened in documents spiked between 1800 and 1820 [when slave trade to Cuba and other Spanish colonies in general was still formally allowed – MZ] … in late 1803, the foreign slave trade to Louisiana was [again] outlawed. The illegal slave trade appears to have focused heavily on West Central Africa [Kongo, Loango, Angola, Benguela – MZ], although some of the Kongo in Louisiana documents could have been transshipped legally from Charleston before 1808 [when all Atlantic slave trade to the United States was abolished – MZ] … . It appears that these smuggled Kongo, heavily male, were used for intense gang labor in the sugar industry. (Hall 2005b: 160)

In relation to the long-lasting transculturation dating from French and Spanish times, writes Peter Kolchin:

> Nighttime carousing and dancing, prevalent among New Orleans's predominantly African-born black population during French and Spanish rule, continued unabated after the city came under American control in 1804. In 1817, reacting to complaints from white residents, New Orleans's mayor set aside a public square – officially named Place Publique and then Circus Square but informally known as Congo Square – for black revelry, and restricted it to Sunday afternoons. The weekly dancing on Congo Square quickly became institutionalized as a mayor black cultural manifestation, which enabled hundreds of slave to congregate on their day off to dance, sing, and trade information, as well as to buy and sell food and other items. Many whites were attracted to watch the festive activities … Dancers moved in rings, organized by nationality – each marked by distinctive tattoos – playing on African drums and stringed instruments; African languages crowded out French and English, and voodoo rituals (brought by refugees from Haiti) flourished … Although they … continued until 1862, the … festivities differed markedly from those of an earlier era. As New Orleans boomed in the antebellum period, the center of a huge domestic slave trade … [brought] hundreds of thousands of bondsmen and women … from the seaboard states to the rich cotton-producing region … [and] its slave population became increasingly 'American-

ized' (although it never entirely lost its distinctive character). (Kolchin 1993: 46f.)

2. La Habana as Caribbean Center of a Superpower and Winner of the Breakdown of the Spanish Colonial Empire

In the twelve years around 1789, Spain was the strongest and most important empire of the Western World – a real superpower. From 1783 (Peace of Paris, ending the wars of the American Revolution; Great Britain had to return the Floridas to Spain) until 1795 Spain was at the height of its imperial splendor (Acosta Rodríguez 1983). As an Atlantic superpower, Spain controlled the Mexican Gulf, the Caribbean and its coastlines (excluding only Demerara, Essequibo, Suriname and Cayenne, and parts of Belize and Nicaragua). Madrid was trying to reconquer Jamaica and the western part of Santo Domingo (Saint-Domingue/Haiti). By that time, Havana was the political, institutional, economic and cultural metropolis of *Luisiana* and of the whole Caribbean. The bureaucratic structure of the Captaincy General of Havana (*Capitanía General de la Habana*) was as follows: the governor of Havana (*gobernador de La Habana*) was in person also Captain General (*Capitán General*) and exercised military command and political supremacy over the governors of Santiago de Cuba, the two Floridas (*las dos Floridas:* East and West Florida) and *La Luisiana* (Amores Carredano 1998; Vázquez Cienfuegos 2008b). During the American Revolution (1776–1783), Spain seized Pansacola (Pensacola), Mobile, Baton Rouge and Natchez of Western Florida, and added them to Lower Louisiana.

In 1795, Natchez was given to the United States (Hall 1992d: 277). Moreover, in the Peace of Basel (1795) Spain was forced to cede to Napoleonic France the eastern part of Santo Domingo (today's *República Dominicana*). The oldest Spanish territory in the Americas went to a hostile power. From this historical moment began the end of Spain as a superpower: Santo Domingo (1795), Louisiana (1803[2]),

[2] Until the arriving of the French refugees from Haiti, which passed through Spanish Cuba (1792/1803–1808), and the Battle of New Orleans (1814), which saved Louisiana for the USA, the city was in a traumatic crisis

Florida (1810/1817), Tejas/Texas (1836/1840) as well as the continental colonies in the Americas in the *independencia* (1811–1825). Additionally, in the same historical momentum, the boom of Cuba and Havana as the new economic center of the Spanish empire became visible (the real processes leading to the plantation and slavery boom in Cuba dated from the 1740s).

La Habana around 1800 had already a long history as a center of *Atlantic slavery* (Lopéz Mesa 2000). Moreover, it was confirmed by Alexander von Humboldt during his stays at Havana/Cuba in 1800/1801 and 1804 to be a much more dynamic new metropolis within the Spanish empire than any other town – from 1783 until 1795/1804 it was the capital of the Caribbean and its American shores (Zeuske 2010, 2011). With the 'freedom' of the slave trade by the Spanish crown in 1789 (final de-monopolization) and with the activities and plans (*Discurso sobre la Agricultura de la Habana y medios de fomentarla,* 1792[3]) of the Spanish-Creole oligarchy of Havana, there was the real possibility of the development of an Caribbean empire of plantations and mass slavery, dominated by Havana. However, Havana and its oligarchies were already a center of slavery and slave trade since its foundation (1521 at today's location of the old city center and *plaza de armas*). In these early times of colonization, the city was important as one of the secondary centers of the Iberian Atlantic (the most important until 1565 being Veracruz and Cartagena/Portobello/Panamá); from 1564 onwards, La Habana was the most important center for the returning Spanish fleets (*flotas y galeones*) and the most important harbor for shipbuilding and services to the marines (with many slaves as skilled artisans) (Fuente [García] 2008). In times of the union of the two most important Iberian crowns 1580–1640 (Portuguese and Castil-

(see Paquette 1997; Scott/Hébrard 2012b; 2012c: 68: "2731 people who in the context of New Orleans in 1809 could convincingly portray themselves as whites; 3102 people who were deemed by observers to be 'of color' but who managed to persuade those around them that they were free; and 3226 individuals who were deemed by observers to be of African ancestry and in whom one or another arriving passenger – or someone else – could make a persuasive claim to a property interest, hence 'slaves'.").

[3] The most widespread document issue is Pichardo (1973: I, 162–197); see also Tomich (2003). The best editions are Arango y Parreño (1952, new edition 2005).

ian, under the domination of the kings of Spain), Havana became, after *Cartagena de Indias* in *Nueva Granada* (today's Colombia), the second most important harbor for *Atlantic slavery* in the giant Iberian empire (Fuente [García] 1990, 2004; Studnicki-Gizbert 2007; Wheat 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2011).

We do not know very much about the concrete slave markets in the city during this time (1565–1640). What we can speculate – since the slave trade was monopolized by the state and its colonial functionaries – is that after a complicated bureaucratic procedure (see above), the new arriving captives were sold directly from the slave vessels or they were hold in the stone houses of the *aduana* (customs house) until being sold to holders of the slave trade monopole (Ortiz 1975; Arriaga Mesa 2014). The first cargo of those enslaved directly from Africa (Cape Verde), in Cuba called *bozales*, arrived in 1526. A slave market had existed in Havana since the 16th century at any rate. In the middle of the 16th century there might have been about 1000 black and African slaves in Cuba. In 1605 in Santiago there were about 236 slaves (men, women, and children) and in 1609 about 5000 slaves in Havana (Zeuske 2004b). While up until the 1830s the slaves altogether made up only a low percentage of the population, their numbers rose quickly from the first official census (1774), just as the number of the immigrated Spaniards. At the end of the eighteenth century, Cuba had a slave population of only 26 percent of the total; it had already risen to about 32 percent in 1792 and to 37 percent in 1817. The number of non-slaves sank from 74 percent (1774) to 63 percent (1817). Already in 1792 there was a light surplus of non-whites compared with the white population ('whites' 133,600 (48.7 percent), *libertos* 54,200 (19.7 percent), slaves (86,600 [31.6 percent]; the relation of 'white' to non-white amounted to 48.7 percent to 51.3 percent). These are the numbers. However, the slave trade is more interesting: From 1526 until more or less 1640, Havana was not a center, but it was an important harbor city, with a key local slave market (Fuente [García] 2004; Arriaga Mesa 2014). From 1640 until 1763, it was on the one hand a center of monopole trade (*asientos*); on the other hand, it became a center of slave contraband trade, especially from the Caribbean colonies of Jamaica, Saint-Domingue, the Bahamas and Curaçao (Borucki/Eltis/Wheat 2015). The concrete procedure of the enslaved

castings and slave selling, arriving in a concrete ship, have been described in a chapter of my book on slave traders (Zeuske 2015b). The important point here is that there have probably never been 'free' slave markets as we would imagine; this image is based on visual representations from the ancient world, on films or on representations from the USA (see the chapter below on slave pens in New Orleans). More or less 'free' slave markets are known from Dutch Surinam or from a description of Humboldt about a slave market in the marginal town of Cumaná in Eastern Venezuela.[4] Regarding contraband trade, we have only an extremely few contemporary descriptions (which is only logical, as it was just smuggling): one is from Puerto Rico (like other small Caribbean islands, virtually an unsinkable smuggler's platform). George Coggeshall, an American captain at around 1850, was an eyewitness to the arrival of a *negrero* ship near the city of Ponce, a new Caribbean sugar plantation boom area of the nineteenth century. He writes:

> While I was at Ponce … a large brig, under Spanish colors, arrived at a small port about a league to the eastward of this place, with 350 negro slaves from the coast of Africa. They were all landed under the direction of the government officers, and I was told their owners paid a duty of 25 Dollars per head … I went with my friend G. to see them landed; they were all taken to a neighboring plantation, and there exposed for sale … the men and women were quite naked, except an apron which they wore about their loins… . They were healthy, sleek, an in good condition; they appeared pleased to get on shore … a large quantity of boiled plantains [sic] and salted herring was prepared for them. They seemed to eat with good appetite and enjoy their food. The planters from all this part of the island, soon came to this dépot, and they were sold singly, in pairs, or in large numbers, as was agreed upon by the parties. (Coggeshall 1853: 256–257; see also Landers 2008)

Apart from the statements about the good state and good mood of the enslaved, Coggeshall's statement for certain kinds of 'open' con-

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[4] "Eine Sklavin mit zwei Kindern wird in Paramaribo öffentlich versteigert" (Benoit 1839: "Plate XLIII," printed in: Zeuske 2015a: 248, par. 13). See also Lockard (2008), McInnis (2011). For Humboldt, see Humboldt (1991: 260–261).

traband trade seems to be generalizable. Indeed, after the formal abolition of the Atlantic slave trade (1820 in the Spanish empire – see next below) there were also monopoly deliveries of whole shiploads of enslaved for single big slave owners (generally called *alijos* – illegal slave ship landings on certain coastal points), like the case of the illegal slave ship *Lady Suffolk* in 1853.[5]

Cuba and Havana were the most central territories in the development of modern slave trade and dynamic slave societies since the beginnings of the so-called 'Bourbon Reforms' in the Spanish empire (1763–1795). As already mentioned, the Spanish crown lifted the monopoly of the Atlantic slave trade in 1789. With this 'freedom of the trade,' the northern coasts of South America (in Spanish called *tierra firme* – today's Venezuela and Colombia), Havana and Cuba would develop as booming slaveries' territories – Cuba first of all in its central western areas, around Havana/Matanzas moving to the central plains of the famous red earth (*llanura de Colón*) (Marrero Cruz 2007; Zeuske 2015d). This giant region of mass slavery and export crop production (coffee and sugar and tobacco at the frontiers) is called *Cuba grande* in Cuban historiography (Zeuske 2004a: *passim*, 2015e). *Cuba grande* was, together with the 'New' (Lower or Deep) South of the US and the south of Brazil (and some other territories, like Puerto Rico, Guadeloupe, Martinique and Dutch Suriname) part of the modern slavery region of the *Second Slavery* (Tomich 1988, 2004; Tomich/Zeuske 2008; Drescher 2009; Laviña/Zeuske 2014; Rothman 2009). With the Haitian Revolution (1791–1803) and the crisis of the Spanish empire since 1795 (loss of Santo Domingo 1795 and loss of Luisiana 1804, see above) the territories of *tierra firme* also fell into crisis – Cuba (and Puerto Rico – the Spanish Caribbean) didn't – in spite of some minor crises (Santamaría García 2011). Cuba became the

[5] Letter from the Teniente Gobernador of Cienfuegos, Juan Antonio de Reyes, from Cienfuegos to the Captain General in Havanna, June 14, 1853, in: Archivo Nacional de Cuba (ANC) La Habana, Asuntos Políticos (AP), legajo (leg.) 48, no. 24: "Expediente sobre denuncia del Consul Ingles de que el buque Lady Suffolk mandado por D.n Eugenio Viñas hizo de un desembarco de 1100 á 1200 negros bozales entre Mariel y Bahía Honda, pero q.e posteriormente supo que el alijo tuvo lugar en la ensenada de Cochinos, jurisdicción de Cienfuegos. Nota: El Cónsul se nombra Jos: I. Crawford, La Habana, 5 de Junio de 1853," folios (f.) 12r–f., f. 20r–22v.

territory of the most modern slavery and the most modern colony – in terms of production dynamics, exploitation, technologies (especially since the construction of railroads since 1837) and richness of the Spanish-Creole elites. In the period of 'free slave trade' (1789–1820) first British, Caribbean and other foreign slave traders controlled the slave trade to Cuba. However, since 1808, Spanish-Cuban merchants, called *capitalistas*, took over more and more the Atlantic slave trade (Johnson 1999; Anderson 2011; Zeuske 2015f, 2015g). From 1789 to 1820 about 200,000–300,000 people from Africa, mostly men, were kidnapped and taken to Cuba – all together in the nineteenth century (until 1880) between 700,000 and one million people (some estimates reach 1.3 million).

At the beginning of the 19th century until about 1830, Iberian slave traders were almost all radical liberals and became extreme conservatives, according to their biographies as *negreros*. The best example is Pedro Juan de Zulueta (as well as all the Zuluetas) who was expelled after the French intervention in Spain and the end of the *Trienio Liberal* from Spain (1823) and founded later the commercial firm and banking house of Zulueta & Company in London (Bahamonde Magro/Cayuela Fernández 1992; Cayuela Fernández 1988; Rodrigo y Alharilla 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2013a). Another biographic pattern is that young Spanish came as desperately poor men from Spain to Cuba (or Africa). If they survived the years as a slave trader on the sea (captain) or in Africa (factor or *mongo*), they prospered and sometimes even came into wealth. Alternatively, they took part in the unlawful resale of smuggled Atlantic slaves in Cuba (like the López brothers or the later magnate Tomás Terry) after the Atlantic slave trade had been formally forbade in 1820 by the crown in Madrid (Rodrigo y Alharilla 2000, 2013b).

After difficult negotiations with England, the Spanish crown abolished the 'free' Atlantic slave trade (1789–1820) between Africa and the Spanish colonies in 1820. There were increases in (tightening of) the abolition laws in 1835, 1845, and 1854 as well as in 1860/1861. The tightening usually came about under pressure from England, who controlled the West-African coasts and the coasts of the Caribbean with her warships. The English captains received more and more rights with the direct control of ships. The local political elites

of the Spanish empire drove a double strategy – on the one hand they led abolitions and civilization discourses, and on the other they faked papers to demonstrate that smuggled Atlantic enslaved were slaves born in Cuba or Puerto Rico (*criollos* – as in the Amistad case). From 1820 onwards, Havana was both formally and officially no longer a market for Atlantic slaves (like New Orleans from 1808 onwards, see below). In fact and informally (and against any written law), the following took place: Until 1840, the colonial authorities left slave ships in the harbors or nearby during the night. The town and the harbor area filled more and more with *barracones* (slave barracoons) under the control of the *Real Consulado de Agricultura, Industria y Comercio*, the mighty organization of the slaveholders, planters (*hacendados*) and the big merchants (*comerciantes*) (Moreno Fraginals 1995: 145−156; Tornero [Tinajero] 1996; Goncalvès 2003). Moreover, the barracoons filled with emancipated slaves (*emancipados*) and smuggled Atlantic slaves were identified in phony (forged) papers as *criollos* ("born in Cuba" [Zeuske 2015h]). In addition, there was a local slave trade with slaves who were formally bought between Cuban owners or were sold (documented in millions of notarial records). We can suppose that a good part of the acts of sale were made inside the barracoons to private buyers. We can only speculate where the local buy-and-sales-acts were done – perhaps in private houses (with the presence of a notary public or his scribe). *Emancipados* or 'emancipated slaves' were enslaved, who originated from captured Spanish-Cuban (or other) slave ships and which had been released by English warships. They received formal release papers ('freedom papers') (Eltis 2010). However, they were put under control of the local authorities – in Cuba, under control of the general captain of the island. These 'new' slaves, categorized under *emancipados*, formed a group of state slaves. The Captain General and his bureaucrats were giving them for seven years to a 'respectable family' (where they officially should be trained to be 'civilized,' which in reality meant – work as slaves). The 'respectable families' were always slaveholders. They paid a small sum for the *emancipados* they got (Zeuske forthcoming).

From 1840 until more or less 1880, smuggled slaves from slave ships that escaped British war vessels rarely landed in official harbors,

they landed in private harbors (like La Guananaja, Ramón Ferrers private harbor on the Northern coast [see Zeuske 2015c: 16]) or wild coasts (on one of many islands of the Cuban archipelago), and were sent on awful night marches either to the Barracoons or immediately on the plantations of the big slave holders. It may also have been that there were 'free' market situations of sale like Georges Coggeshall's statement for certain kinds of 'open' contraband trade (see above). In Cuba these acts of sale were called *feria*. However, with the increase of the anti-slave trade laws, the trafficking in human beings took more and more closed forms. Slave traders in Cuba gave lists to captains of slave vessels on which was registered which and how many slaves they wanted to have. These lists contained the special brand (Cuban Spanish: *carimbo*) of the respective slave trader with whom his enslaved should be marked. Experienced captains (who could earn a lot of money and get bonuses) attached the brands on the bodies of the enslaved and then, after crossing the ocean, landed on wild coasts of Cuba, where they were already expected by the employees of the slave traders or local captains, waiting on smaller ships (like the Amistad and Ramón Ferrer [Zeuske 2015h]) to help them land at the right place. After the landing, they marched the slaves to the slave merchants in Havana or to a specific plantation.

So, from 1820 until the 1880s, Havana (together with Matanzas and, from the 1850s onwards, Cienfuegos, Sagua la Grande and Cárdenas – the traditional Trinidad until more or less 1830) was formally and officially a center of 'domestic' slave trade (documented in hundreds of thousands notary records). Unofficially, Havana, and to a lesser degree the other cities, were centers of giant and unlawful contraband systems of human bodies that came to Cuba crossing the hidden Atlantic. What we still do not know is: What was the quantitative dimension of this contraband system between Havana and New Orleans and other territories and cities of the US South (like Charleston) or Florida and Tejas/Texas? (Campbell 1991; Landers 2008).

3. New Orleans as a Slave Trade Metropolis of the U.S.A.

Some of the biggest slave traders of Cuba had offices in New Orleans. During the Haitian Revolution, imperial wars (Napoleonic wars) and anticolonial wars against Spain (*independencia*, 1810–1830), New Orleans was a center of piracy, revolutionary corsairs and filibusterism – all three activities are close to illegal slave trade (Géigel 1946; Franco 1974a; Ortiz 1971; Ferro 1976; Aury 1966; Cacua Prada 2001; Lucas de Grummond 1983; Vidales 1990). However, around 1820, New Orleans became the center of its own US system of slave trade, together with Natchez (Deyle 2004; Arnalte 2001; Obadele-Starks 2007a). This is perhaps the most important development in the history of the city of New Orleans. New Orleans was no more a marginal periphery of the great Antilles, but the most important city of the 'new' south (Lower South). New Orleans controlled the mouth of the Mississippi and was the entrance of what the Southern slaveholders called the 'Cotton Kingdom.' Walter Johnson writes: "Slaveholders … populated the new states of the emerging South – Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana – with slaves brought from the East: 155,000 in the 1820s; 288,000 in the 1830s; 189,000 in the 1840s; 250,000 in the 1850s" (Johnson 2000b: 5). Approximately two thirds of this mass of people was kidnapped by slave traders from the economically less successful Upper South into the booming Lower South (Berlin 1998, 2003). Slaves also came from the Greater Virginia/Chesapeake region (with its exhausted soils by many years of tobacco planting), from Kansas and Tennessee, or from Charleston, from St. Louis, Baltimore, Washington, New York, Richmond, Norfolk and Nashville. They were sent south either overland in chains, by sailing ships around the North American coast or by steamboats down the Mississippi (Johnson 2000b: 7; see also Johnson 2013). They were sold in the urban slave markets of "Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, Natchez, and especially New Orleans" (Johnson 2000b: 7) – often several times from slave market to slave market. There were more slaves from the Caribbean which we know even less about: "Slaveholders preferred Africans to Caribbean slaves, fearing they had been tainted with the virus of rebellion. Despite the 1808 ban, Louisiana slaveholders attempted to import slaves through Cuba, Texas, and Florida

and then ship them to New Orleans" (Foley 2005). Walter Johnson did record, however: "Thousands of slaves from all over the South passed through the New Orleans slave pens every year in the antebellum period" (Johnson 2000b: 7). Slave buyers came to New Orleans to buy field slaves, but they specially came to this city and its slave markets to buy skilled slaves, as artisans and domestic slaves "who represent the high end of the slave market and could be found only in large urban centers like New Orleans" (Johnson 2000b: 7). Altogether, there were about 2 million purchases and sales (Johnson 2000b: 8) of people in the antebellum period: "The history of the antebellum South is the history of two million slave sales" (Johnson 2000b: 17). We do not really know how many of these acts of purchase and sale have taken place in New Orleans – but it was many. 'Slave trade' is a too general concept to grasp the life realities of all involved actors of the economic imagination of a market – traders (slave sellers), buyers and enslaved that would be sold or bought. Walter Johnson emphasizes:

> Historians have generally followed the traders in defining the boundaries of the slave trade around the commercial record it produced – a sale in the upper South to a slave trader as a beginning and a sale to a slaveholder in the lower South as an end. This definition of the slave trade, however, cannot withstand the centrifugal pressure of the competing perspectives presented by the narratives, the court records, and the letters [Johnson's main source categories − MZ]. The slave trade did not begin or end in the same place for traders, buyers, and slaves. For slaves, the slave trade was often much more than a financial exchange bounded in space and time. A slave trader's short-term speculation might have been a slave's lifelong fear; a one-time economic miscalculation or a fit of pique on the part of an owner might lead to a life-changing sale for a slave. For buyers, too, the slave market was a place they thought about and talked about long before they entered the confines of the pens and long after they left with a slave. (Johnson 2000b: 14)

I have a theory concerning the centers of cities of the slave trade and today's tourism industry and tourism advertisements. Centers of the slave trade during slave trading were often very rich in ma-

terial, architectonical and financial regard, but also in their culture (because of the many enslaved from different cultures and the cosmopolitism of the slave traders, captains and their employees). After the final suppression of the slave trade (formal and informal), many of these cities fell into crisis. They became so poor that the old urbane structures and buildings, walls, etc., could not been torn off. When the mass tourism arose (1920–1960), the towns invented themselves anew. They used the old cities silhouettes and structures for these processes of reinvention, which were now transfigured to and visualized as 'authentic' – as well as the transcultural music, food, the celebrations (carnival), lifestyle and the underlying cosmopolitism of the slave trade. This worked in the case of Cartagena de Indias (the great slave trade center of South America), Salvador de Bahia (the great slave trade center of Brazil), Trinidad de Cuba, and Charleston, and many towns in other parts of the Atlantic world (not in the case of Havana or New York [Farrow/Lang/Frank 2005], because they found other ways to maintain their metropole status). And that is clearly the case with New Orleans.

> Nineteenth-century New Orleans was on the verge of becoming one of antebellum America's leading cities, a city to be compared to New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Charleston. What had once been an imperial outpost, passed back and forth between European powers in faraway trades was, by the early nineteenth century, a city poised on the brink of commercial greatness. (Johnson 2000b: 1; see also Fehrenbacher 2001)

In 1789, the constitution of the USA had been ratified. It contained the clause to abolish the Atlantic slavery after 20 years (1808). This was a compromise between traditional slaveholders (above all Virginians, like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson [Finkelman 2001]) and slave trade opponents. However, the social basis of this abolition of Atlantic slavery was the experience of the slaveholders in the English colonies of North America that "the enslaved population of North America had been self-reproducing for at least fifty years by the time the Constitution was ratified" (Johnson 2000b: 5). In reality this did not mean for the new republic that slavery would become extinct. Since in contrast to tropical slaveries (like in Cuba or

in Brazil), slavery in the USA would become a further developing of its own demographic social base and the expansion of the slavery into the South and the West would “take the shape of a forcible relocation of American-born slaves” (Johnson 2000b: 5; see also Tadman 1989, 2000, 2004, 2007). In the center of this ‘forcible relocation’ was the historical city center of New Orleans (today the French Quarter). New Orleans was in this respect a central place between upper South and lower South, between east coast and south coast of the USA, between sea, river and interior of the gigantic land mass of North America, but also between the cotton plantations region in the north of the town and the sugar plantations on the alluvial plain of the Mississippi Delta in the south of the city (we will see below, in the conclusion, whether it was also a central place of communication with Cuba, Havana, and the *hidden Atlantic*). Louisiana slavery had a reputation for hardships, especially in sugar and cotton. By 1850, some 1500 sugar plantations were arrayed along the bayous of Mississippi (lower Mississippi Valley). By 1860, the fourteen sugar-parishes held 116,000 slaves. The slaves changed landscape with their work; in addition, they changed the life of all people in the region of New Orleans – ever since then, people there eat rice, red beans and gumbo (typical ingredients of slave food). The sugar-parishes produced 87,000 metric tons (and some cotton, corn, sweet potatoes and potatoes). The culture of sugar slavery was mainly a swampy hoe/cut-culture (Scott 2005b: 12).

The core of a slavery society is the slave market. The most important slave market of historical New Orleans was on the corner of Chartres Street and the boulevard Esplanade (today: Esplanade Avenue). At that time it was somewhat off the city center behind gin bars and sailor’s lodgings in the direction of the docks – in most slave trade towns the place of concrete slave markets (Bergad 2004; Zeuske 2013) – today only few steps away from Cabildo, Jackson Square and the cathedral (Bremer 1853: I, 373, 493; II, 202–205; Johnson 2000b: 2). In 1840, a second slave market was set up – in the central business district of the city. This underlines the centrality of the business with human bodies for New Orleans. Interested travelers, like the Swede Fredrika Bremer, found there what they searched to understand – for them the ‘institution of slavery.’ What they really saw was routine

slave trade, slave trade architecture, human bodies as capital and people with a price. Walter Johnson writes:

> Both of these markets were really clusters of competing firms, each of which, in turn, maintained its own yard for keeping slaves – "slave pens" in the parlance of the trade – and frontage for displaying them. Between September and May – the months that bounded the trading seasons – the streets in front of the pens were lined with slaves dressed in blue suits and calico dresses … The walls surrounding the pens were so high – fifteen or twenty feet [5–6 meters − MZ] – that one New Orleans slave dealer thought they could keep out the wind. Inside those walls the air must have been thick with overcrowding, smoke and shit and lye, the smells of fifty or a hundred people forced to live in a space the size of a home lot… . Along the inside walls were privies, kitchens, dressing rooms, and jails. The jails were sometimes as many as three stories high and built of brick … The real business took place in the showrooms, which were large enough for a hundred slaves to be arrayed around the walls, questioned, and examined. These rooms had finished floors and painted walls, a fireplace, a few chairs, and doors all around – a door from the offices where the traders did their counting and signing, a door from the street where the buyers gathered before the pens opened, and a door from the yard where the slaves waited to be sold. (Johnson 2000b: 2−3)

In his book, Walter Johnson shows the story of these showrooms (slave pens) and, with it, the story of formal aspects of and for antebellum slavery and its consequences as part of the history of the South. He also shows how a slavery society (Johnson 2000c) from slaves and slaveholders originated from many hundred thousand acts of sale (Johnson 2000d); he shows how people were transformed from these sales acts into products (Johnson 2000e) and how children of slave mothers were made into slaves by brutal 'education' (Johnson 2000a: 21−22). Johnson shows the traumas of the sold, the reading of slaves' bodies by the buyers and the imaginations (like race)[6] as well as the dreams of the traders and the surrounding slaveholding society (Johnson 2000g; see also Walker 2004).

[6] "… picked over slaves' bodies for signs of illness or injury," "looking for scars from whipping" (Johnson 2000f: 173, 145).

The following is a typical sales document of an enslaved in New Orleans (notarial record):

> James Madison Price … who declared that for the Consideration of the price and sum of Five hundred dollars, to him paid in ready money … He does by these presents, grant, bargain and sell with all legal warranties and with subrogation to all his rights and actions against all preceding Vendors or possessors, unto Mistress Augusta Baquié, wife of Alexis Bonnecaze … a certain mulatto man, slave for life named *Henry*, aged about twenty-eight years, fully guaranteed against all the Vices and Maladies preserved by law.
>
> … To have and to hold the said slave unto the said purchaser, his heirs and assigns, to their only proper use and behoof forever.[7]

New Orleans, in the times of her glory as a principal city of the 'new' South, was a space in the shadow of the slave market. However, what happed in this story of New Orleans as a center of acts of sale, with trafficking and contraband in human bodies?

4. Instead of a Conclusion: Havana, New Orleans and the Hidden Atlantic

When I was working in the archives in New Orleans, I was surprised that there were many notarial records in French and Spanish (as well as English, clearly). One of these records in Spanish is the following, containing a possible act of sale of two enslaved men in 1874 (more than ten years after the abolition of slavery in the United States):

> Estados Unidos de America. En la ciudad de Nueva Orleans, Estado de la Luisiana, á diez y siete de Noviembre de mil ochocientos setenta y cuatro, anti mi, el infraescrito notario público y testigos compareció Don Manuel Castillo y Suarez, de este vecindario, mayor de edad á quien doy fé conozco y dijo:

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[7] New Orleans Notarial Archives Research Center (NONAR), Edward G. Gottschalk, N.P., Vol. No.10, Jan Dec 1861, (record) No. 59 "Sale of Slave J.M. Price to Mrs. A. Bonnecaze," New Orleans, March 25, 1861, f. 301–304.

> Que dá y confiere todo su poder cumplido bastante, cual en derecho se requiere y sea necesario a Don Rafael Medel vecino de Consolidacion, en la Isla de Cuba, especial para que en su nombre y representando su persona y derechos pueda vender los negros Silvestre y Timoteo criollos, el primero de veinte años y el segundo de diez y nueve años los cuales hubo de Don Pedro de la Cruz, vecino de Consolidacion, por escritura publica ante Don Pedro Alfonso en dicho pueblo el diez de Octubre de mil ochocientos sesenta y cuatro, á favor de quien le parezca, por el precio en que pueda convenirse y ajustarse, el cual recibirá en su poder, otorgando la carta de pago si se lo entregasen en el acto o en otro caso … .[8]

For this notarial protocol it is not clear whether the two enslaved were present in New Orleans or whether it is a written notarized statement for a sales act only in Cuba (this is more likely[9]). But one thing is clear – the notables of New Orleans (and notaries were among the dignitaries) were still very accustomed to the slave trade.

[8] New Orleans Notarial Archives Research Center (NONAR), J.A. Quintero, N.P., Vol. No. 2, Aug–Feb 1874–1880, (record) No. 5 "Power of Att.y M. Castillo to Rafael Medel," New Orleans, Nov. 17, 1874 (without foliation). [United States of America. In the city of New Orleans, State of Louisiana, November 17 of 1874, before me, the undersigned notary public and witnesses appeared Don Manuel Castillo and Suarez, from this neighborhood, adult whom I know and said: That he confers and gives quite all its power, which is required by law and necessary to Don Rafael Medel neighbor of Consolidation on the island of Cuba, especially for in his name and representing himself and sell the rights to negroes Silvestre and Timoteo Creoles, the first twenty years and the second of nineteen years, which he bought from Don Pedro de la Cruz, a resident of consolidation, by public deed before Don Pedro Alfonso in that town on October 10 of 1874, … for the price that may be agreed and set, which receive their power, giving a surcharge if you give him in the act or otherwise.]

[9] Comment by Rebecca J. Scott (e-mail of October 10, 2015, to the author): "the slaves are and have been in Cuba, not New Orleans. One would not be able to hold anyone as a slave in Louisiana in 1874 – Radical Republicans are in power, the 13th amendment has been ratified, and all transactions involving property in persons are null and void. It is a bit surprising that the notary does authorize the document; property in persons is not recognized in any form any more."

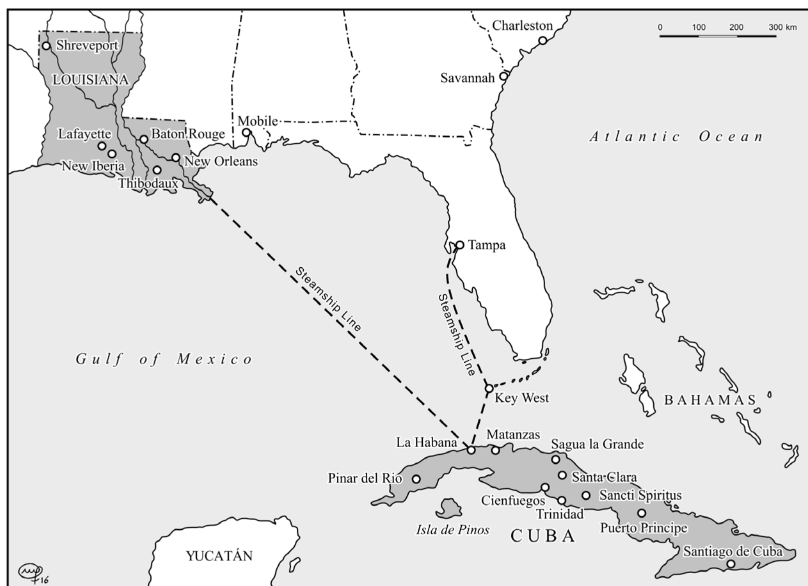

Abb. 2: New Orleans and Cuba

As we have seen, Cuba and New Orleans had long-standing ties. Those connections expanded in the nineteenth century. Maritime activities increased between Cuba and U.S. ports like New York and New Orleans. Regular packets operated between New Orleans and Cuba. Steamships could travel between Havana and New Orleans in only two days. In 1844, New Orleans capitalists built Havana's new gas system.

The ties between Havana/Cuba and New Orleans/Louisiana were especially close in the immediate shadow of the Haitian Revolution, 1793–1803 and 1808/1809. By this time, many towns and cities of Eastern Cuba, as well as Havana and New Orleans, were linked by the migrations of French *colons* (colonists and slave owners) from Saint-Domigue/Haiti. The general pattern is: first this migration was directed to Spanish or other Catholic territories, especially to Eastern Cuba, and then, after the invasion of Napoleon into Spain (1808), to New Orleans (Cruz Ríos 2006). Rebecca Scott writes:

> In the summer of 1809 a flotilla of boats arrived in New Orleans carrying more than 9,000 Saint-Domingue refugees recently expelled

> from the Spanish colony of Cuba. These migrants nearly doubled the population of New Orleans, renewing its Francophone character and populating the neighborhoods of the Vieux Carré and Faubourg Marigny. At the heart of the story of their disembarkation, however, is a legal puzzle. Historians generally tell us that the arriving refugees numbered 2,731 whites, 3,102 free people of color, and 3,226 slaves. (Scott 2011: 1062)[10]

The main driving force of the Haitian Revolution was the abolition of the slave status by the enslaved, i.e. freedom from slavery and colonialism. But during the revolution in Saint-Domingue there were years of civil and revolutionary wars, i.e. former enslaved had to save their bare lives. In particular, many former slave women remained with the families of their former owners for fear of war. With the military expedition of Napoleon to subdue the insurgents under Toussaint Louverture (1802), the former slave owners fled with their former slaves from Saint-Domingue to Cuba, where slavery was not only permitted but was politically, economically and socially desirable (for the slavery society) and encouraged. "But slavery and the status of slaves had been abolished in Saint-Domingue by decree in 1793, and abolition had been ratified by the French National Convention in 1794" (Scott 2011: 1062; see also Amores Carredano 1998; Vázquez Cienfuegos 2008b; Scott/Hébrard 2012c).

This means that the above 3226 people were re-enslaved by force or legal ruse by their former owners if they didn't have any individual, notarized papers that confirmed their release (which had not been necessary in Haiti individually because of state abolition by France). So, New Orleans has also been a city of re-enslavement or the imminent re-enslavement as Rebecca J. Scott and Jean Michel Hébrard have shown – not only by example of the 3225 people but also with the example of the individual destiny of Rosalie, a slave from the Fulani (*peul* or *poulard*) nation in the hinterland of Senegambia:

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[10] Some additional migrants arrived later, via Jamaica, bringing the total to 10,000 (see Lachance 1988, 2001; Dessens 2007). The official figures on the numbers and (apparent) status of the refugees are provided in the *Moniteur de la Louisiane*, March 24, 1810.

> The relationships of godparentage, marriage, legal ownership, manumission, and inheritance cut across these categories [the struggle between planters, slaves and free people of color, or revolutions, M.Z.] and shaped the behaviour of Rosalie and those around her. Although Rosalie first encountered the revolution as a slave, she would, across the decade from 1793 to 1803, become a freedwoman, a conjugal partner, a mother, and then a refugee. (Scott/Hébrard 2012d: 21; see also Popkin 2007; Scott/Hébrard 2014)

Because for some reason, even in Saint-Domingue Rosalie had an individual release paper in her name and for a part of her children's (and kept this paper well-hidden), she could reject the claim of re-enslavement of her former owner (or other persons). She had not had such an individual paper for a posthumous son.

In spite of the fact that Cuba and Louisiana belonged to different states after 1804 they were close-knit by the hidden Atlantic and the smuggling of human bodies (and many other entangled histories). Cuba, Havana, Louisiana and New Orleans all had close relations, at least until 1861, on the basis of slavery, plantation export production and slave trade (in whatever concrete form it took). "Those ties, the shared commitment to slavery and New Orleans' role as the largest slave depot in the United States help explain the illegal slave trade between New Orleans and Cuba" (Sparks forthcoming; Zeuske 2015ig; Graden 2014).

Between 1815 and 1865, the Britons concluded contracts against the slave smuggling in the hidden Atlantic with all states. At the core of these contracts was the right to search ships ('right to search' – on high seas anyway, but possibly also in the harbors). In 1839 the United States was the only Western Atlantic country which refused these right to search. Only in 1862 did the USA accept this right (Sparks forthcoming). This means that many American ships, captains, officers and ship doctors, but also merchants/pirates (like the famous Lafittes or the not so well known José Joaquín Almeida [Portuguese: José Joaquim Almeida]; 1777–1832), took part in the smuggling of human bodies to Cuba or to Brazil (Franco 1974b). Or Spanish-Cuban and Portuguese or Brazilian slave vessels used the American flag to hide their illegal activities on Atlantic waters or on the shores of West Africa and the Caribbean (Obadele-Starks 2007b; Sparks

forthcoming). With the final abolition of slavery in the United States (1865), the modernity based on slave trade and slavery ended – New Orleans underwent a deep and prolonged crisis. The times of glory as a rich center of inhuman business were over. Not so for Havana – slavery and unlawful slave trade boomed there till 1886, and could, together with Spanish colonialism, only be ended in long lasting anticolonial wars (1868–1898). As Caribbean cities, spaces of specific cultures, life styles and centers of struggle for freedom and of resistance against Spanish colonialism, Havana/Cuba and New Orleans/Louisiana had also close ties during the times of post-emancipation (USA: 1868/Cuba: 1886) as well as a strong Latino and Caribbean migration, partly with a specific Cuban-French background (like in the case of Santiago de Cuba or Cienfuegos) (Scott 2005a: *passim*; Scott/Hébrard 2012a: *passim*; Sluyter/Watkins/Chaney/Gibson 2015).

After the breakdown of the Spanish empire in the last war, Havana became the capital of an independent state, but dependent from the US. As such the metropolis of Havana had good possibilities to avoid the crisis after slavery modernity. The constellation for New Orleans was – especially with regard to export economies or financial matters – not so favorable. But the 'Crescent City' was a city of mostly free colored and black population with connections to the Caribbean. On this base the reconstruction of the transcultural dimensions of the town began. Since the beginnings of the 20th century these reconstructions were called 'French' traditions. Elements of these French traditions came from all three periods of slavery – the marginal times of French colonization, the Spanish times as heavily subsidized part of a mighty empire, and the times of boom and glory as part of the Cotton Kingdom of the antebellum American South. In the Spanish times and at the beginnings of the American era, New Orleans was closely connected with Saint-Domingue/Haiti and in all the era of glory as a modern society of second slavery, with the hidden Atlantic and the contraband trade in human bodies from Africa to Cuba and Brazil (Sluyter/Watkins/Chaney/Gibson 2015; Sparks forthcoming).

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From the Philippines to New Orleans: Asian-American Creolizations on the Louisiana Gulf Coast

If creolization is the process whereby new identities are forged through the mixing and mutual transformation of diverse cultural elements, then the identities of Filipinos living in communities of southern Louisiana during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were indeed creolized ones: For in their semi-isolated villages the members of these communities consciously combined Philippine and Spanish practices with the ways of a New World in a process of reinventing themselves, and surviving. We can learn something about the creolization process undergone by the 'Cajun Filipinos' of Louisiana as we reimagine their collective experiences and learn about their resourcefulness for making a living in the swamps and bayous of Barataria Bay and other areas nearby. From this study we can gain a sense of the ways in which a Creole culture with Asian and Hispanic antecedents came to be, through a process of 'Americanization.'

It could be said, metaphorically speaking, that the Filipino communities of Barataria Bay and Lake Borgne added themselves as an 'exotic' ingredient to the social equivalent of a sort of gumbo; that is, the stew of *quimbombo* or okra, cooked with shrimp and andouille sausage, spiced with red pepper or Tabasco – altogether a blend of diverse ingredients similar to what Fernando Ortiz called, in a Caribbean context, an *ajiaco* that combined ingredients that were African, American and European. With the Filipino presence, we add an Asiatic flavor to the transareal region of the Crescent City done up in what was becoming a transnational *mise en place*, contributing its robust spirit to our sense of New Orleans as an "un-American city," as a "socio-geographical accident" (see introduction of this volume). Barataria Bay lies some 30 miles to the south of New Orleans. The Filipino settlers of southern Louisiana were "transnational villagers,"

(to borrow a phrase by which Peggy Levitt describes modern-day Dominican Americans), strangers from other shores who built Creole communities that stood apart from the colonial metropole whose needs it served in part to fill. The very existence of the Filipino settlement in the Barataria Bay region signifies a crossing of ethnic and cultural boundaries and a rebuilding of the social order (see Pechey 1989: 41).[1]

And this Filipino community may have played a significant part in the history of Louisiana's Gulf Coast. The Battle of New Orleans, fought against the British invaders in 1815 and the final major battle of the War of 1812, would not have resulted in a victory for the American side were it not for the participation of men called 'privateers and smugglers,' and some believe that the Filipino Baratarians which Lafcadio Hearn called 'pirates of the Delta' may have joined in the fight on the side of the Americans. Jean Lucas de Grummond recounts that Major-General Andrew Jackson had arrived in New Orleans with his supply of ammunition and flints nearly exhausted after the Creek campaign. Yet thanks to the arms and materiel provided by the Baratarians, the Americans could sustain a continual bombardment against the British from the last week of 1814 to nearly the third week of the following year and thus win the Battle of New Orleans (de Grummond 1961: ix).[2] The 1,500 soldiers commanded by Jackson in the Battle of New Orleans had defeated some 8,000 British. Once the battle had ended, 289 British and 31 Americans had lost their lives (Bautista 1998: 106) – needlessly, it turned out, as the signing of the Treaty of Ghent had officially ended the war three weeks earlier.

The Battle of New Orleans does not, however, mark the first appearance of Filipinos in the New World, for much earlier – some two hundred fifty years before that event – the Filipinos were arriving

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[1] The naming of Barataria – possibly after the mythical island that Don Quixote promised to Sancho, and to which Sancho was actually assigned the governorship – introduces a literary and fictional dimension into the conception of the place.

[2] Bautista conjectures that "Spanish fishermen" who guided the British Admiral Lord Thomas Cochrane through the Bayou Bienvenu may have been Filipinos who were so mistaken by officers of the British troops due to their ability to speak Spanish (Bautista 1998: 106).

in America aboard the so-called Manila-Acapulco galleons: These were the Spanish cargo ships, called *naos de China,* that, once or twice a year, made the perilous voyage across the Pacific Ocean, from the Philippines to New Spain and back again. They began setting sail from the year of the conquest of the Philippines, 1565, continuing to make its transoceanic crossings until 1815 – that is, five years after the beginning of the Mexican War of Independence and near the end of the Battle of New Orleans. Among the crews of these Pacific-crossing Asian-American argosies were Spaniards, Mexicans, Chinese and native Filipinos. The numbers of Filipinos in service in the Manila-Acapulco trade may have reached as many as 60,000 during the two hundred fifty years of the galleon trade's operation, according to the estimate by William Mason; they comprised at least a fifth of each crew, and sometimes the majority of the total shipboard complement (Mercene 2007: 3, 141).

That is, some two-thirds of the galleon crews of 60 to 100 men could comprise Filipino mariners or servants who had been impressed into labor, obliged by the requirement of "polos y servicios" a Hispanic version of *corvée* (Bonus 2000: 190 n.4). They were to carry out the backbreaking work of cutting the wood and building the ships, loading the ships, sailing the ships, and handling the munitions (Espina, cited in Cordova 1983: 1). Frequently, however, when the ship would dock at its destination in Acapulco, numerous Filipino crewmembers would find a way off the boat and run for freedom. In this manner they defied the tyranny of the Spanish masters, as did the men who abandoned the Espíritu Santo in 1618, later to earn a living by teaching winemaking to the local Mexican *indios* (Schurz 1939: 209−211, cited in Boeck 2015). All seventy-five Filipino crew members save one abandoned the Espíritu Santo in Acapulco, and the wine they produced was the Mexican version of the *tubá* that in the Philippines was made from the extracted sap of coconut palm trees (Mercene 2007: 10, 143).

Yet many of the Filipino crewmen were not content to remain in *Nueva España.* After jumping ship in Acapulco, many decided to make their way across Mesoamerica on the mule trail *con destino a Veracruz*. Filipinos taking this overland route would travel with cargo destined for Spain via the port of Vera Cruz (Mercene 2007:

106). From Veracruz they crossed or circled the Gulf of Mexico to seek out a new home. Making this route by traveling it, they built the "Louisiana-Mexican Connection" (Cordova 1983: 2). Arriving finally at the Mississippi Delta of Louisiana, now in the territory that had been repossessed by Spain since 1763, they founded villages and gave them names: St. Malo, in the swamps of Lake Borgne in St. Bernard Parish, east of New Orleans; Manila Village on Barataria Bay at the Delta. Others would be established in the Jefferson Parish, Leon Rojas, Bayou Cholas and Bassa Bassa; and still others in the Plaquemines Parish, Camp Dewey and the Alombro Canal.[3] The residents of these settlements were predominantly Filipino, with some Mexican, Chinese and Spanish folk in the mix (Espina 1974: 119; Cordova 1983: 2).[4] All this was happening when Mexican shipmates were journeying to the Philippines, effecting what would be called a reverse migration, some to make the islands their home, and when some of the Filipino sailors who remained in Mexico were settling in what would become the state of Guerrero (Francia 2010: 76).[5]

The Louisiana settlements obviously present a novel twist in the story of New Orleans and the Circum-Caribbean region with transverse implications. In view of their survival – both physical and cultural – it could be said that the Filipinos who first settled the New

[3] The Filipinos' settlement in Louisiana was contemporaneous with the movement of their countrymen northward from what is today Mexico to Alta California amidst the troops of Spanish and Mexican settlers, participating in the founding of the settlements of San Diego and other locations along the coast of California under the leadership of Gaspar de Portola and fray Junípero Serra (Mercene 2007: 70).

[4] Another version, reported by journalist Larry Bartlett, holds that Filipinos debarked from a schooner at New Orleans in 1763. They may also have arrived from Mexico during the eighteenth century, possibly passing themselves off as Mexicans once they found a safe haven in Louisiana, with their Hispanic names and command of the Spanish language (Mercene 2007: 106).

[5] In a discrepant view, Carmelo Astilla argues that Filipinos most likely arrived in New Orleans in the decade of the 1860s, arriving in Louisiana perhaps no earlier than the end of the eighteenth century, but brought in larger numbers along with the Chinese laborers imported into the southern states to replace black labor in in the aftermath of the American Civil War (Mercene 2007: 111).

Orleans-Barataria Bay region were eighteenth-century *cimarrones*: that is, they were runaways. The 'plantation' from which they fled was the floating one of the galleon, and their Filipino-styled villages built in the bayous were in certain ways not unlike the eighteenth-century slave settlements called *quilombos* in Brazil or the *palenques* in Santo Domingo and Cuba. And like the Afro-Brazilian quilombos and the Afro-Caribbean palenques*,* the Filipino-American Manila-towns, comprising shanties erected on stilts in the mosquito-infested swamps of the Delta, provided a haven and refuge to these Filipino refugees, a place of their own, where they constructed self-governing communities of free men.

On Bayou St. Malo, the houses stood upon stilts, with the eaves and roofs of the houses looking like great giant hats in slanting 'Manila style,' but constructed of wood, not the palmetto and cane that, unsuited for the rough climate, otherwise would have covered their shelters. Lafcadio Hearn, on his journey to discover the "tahalas" of St. Malo, counted some 13–14 of these "odd" abodes on that site (Bautista 1998: 101). About these 'Malay' fishermen, Hearn published his article in an edition of *Harper's Weekly* in 1883. His contemporaneous account is the most detailed that we have of the Filipinos fishers and shrimpers of the Louisiana bayous (Hearn 1883; Posadas 1999: 14).

The existence of St. Malo is important because the life of the 'Filipino colony' antedates the very founding of the republic; because the Filipinos working and residing there built their share of a disjointed economic system within which living on the lakes was the alternative when discrimination excluded them from jobs employment in the urban center (Espina 1978: 56). Because they settled the area as true pioneers, they have earned a place in the American historical narrative, while claiming a place of humble pride in the story that connects the Circum-Caribbean with the further reaches of the Global South.

In view of their translocation, the Filipinos' process of creolization in southern Louisiana displayed several features that run against the now conventional theory that defines 'Creole identity' as: (1) originating exclusively in the New World and developing uniquely in the host country, and (2) defined by its syncretic newness in contrast to what is "old, deep and rooted" (see Eriksen 2007: 112). Although the

Filipino Louisianans experienced a degree of 'boundedness' in their bayou communities, their transnational connections with groups lying beyond the enclave only confirm the notion that that community cultivated what could be called a 'diasporic identity,' by which they maintained a sense of belonging to the ancestral homeland and a syncretic connectedness to other sociogeographical centers and nodes of contact. We see in the activities of the Filipino Louisianans, despite their partial isolation, that "substances and meanings" moved along channels of transcultural and transnational flows to join them to both to the ancestral homeland and broader world (Eriksen 2007: 113). Theirs was in effect a diasporic society that, as it sent down roots in the New World, maintained its ties to an older one. They created and improvised their version of what Benedict Anderson has called an 'imagined community,' one in this case imagined by the transareal Filipinos living on the bayous. From the Filipino perspective, 'from below,' of *l'histoire croisée* – the 'transfer history' of physical and cultural crossings – emerges an image of dynamically lateral relations among nations and colonies, and the genesis of a notably hybrid identity among the members of the community.

As 'Filipinos,' however, it should be noted that they were already constituted with identities which were already 'hybridized,' these 'Hispanic Malays' from the empire's Asiatic colony whose own composition brought together elements of Southeast Asian, Hispanic, Chinese and Indigenous ethnic groups. And since its conquest in 1565, the Philippines had been administered as an extension of the Viceroyalty of New Spain until 1815. Coming to Mesoamerica, the Filipinos brought back what Spain and New Spain had made of them as 'Filipinos.'[6] With regard to the Filipino communities of the Louisiana Delta, Espina and Boeck have pointed out that, despite the absence of natural families, the translocated Filipinos reproduced the traditional community of the *barangay* in the bayous of Louisiana. A barangay is a traditional Philippine social unit made up of some 30

[6] Though it should be remembered that this name did not gain the general sense it has in identifying all the inhabitants of the archipelago until the interventions of the Spanish-speaking Filipino *ilustrados* residing and agitating for reforms in Barcelona, Madrid and Paris in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

to 100 families held together by a network of kinship relations, with its historical antecedents in the boatloads of folk who had traveled together to their island destinations. Differing from the Philippine model, some settlements such as St. Malo were composed almost exclusively of men (Boeck 2015).

The New Orleans-Philippines connection was further strengthened by the 1840s, when Louisiana Filipinos sent money to friends and family members in the homeland to pay for their passage aboard Spanish ships, with the idea that they could make a break for freedom once the ship docked at an American port (Hearn 1883: 198, quoted in Boeck 2015). Thus the Manilamen engaged in a sort of practice that anticipated what today is called 'chain migration', with the invitation for friends and relatives in the Philippines to join them in their Louisiana home (Mercene 2007: 99), hence thus forming a part of the pattern of labor migration from Asia to New Orleans and to the rest of the Circum-Caribbean. This exemplified the manner in which the circulation of people, goods and capital crossed through New Orleans, the country's second largest immigration port (after New York), in their pursuit of a dream of freedom and good fortune. They managed to carve out a relatively congenial and certainly sustainable existence in the swamps and marshlands of the Mississippi Delta.

Barataria Bay lies to the south and west of the Mississippi River outlet, where it disembogues into the Gulf of Mexico. In 1897, a Quintin de la Cruz founded Manila Village on the shores of the same Barataria Bay, which today is located in Jefferson Parish and Plaquemines Parish. The colony, situated 15 miles south of Myrtle Grove and 15 north of Grand Isle, was originally home to a population of some 250 Filipinos; this population rose to 1,500 by 1833. In addition to fishing for trout and shrimping, the Filipinos of Manila Village engaged in hunting muskrats and selling their furs. The village remained standing for longer than a hundred years (San Juan 1998: 25; Espina 1988: 2, 3), and what remained of Manila Village thereafter met its definitive end in 1965, razed by Hurricane Betsy (Darbey, cited in Boeck 2015).

But an earlier Filipino colony was St. Malo, founded possibly in 1825 (Espina 1974: 119).[7] In this colony of the bayous, the mainly ‘Catholic’ men spoke Tagalog, Spanish and Cebuano. They kept their separate peace and order, with disputes settled by the eldest of the community acting in the role of judge (Espina 1974: 8). For reasons that remain unclear, no women lived or were permitted to live in St. Malo, and no liquor was possessed or allowed there. There is a story of how once upon a time an ‘oriental beauty’ came to live in the village, instantly to become the object of a fierce rivalry among the men for her attention. In a grim and perhaps apocryphal conclusion to this story somewhat reminiscent of a Borges narrative, the woman held responsible for disrupting the harmony of the bachelor community was sentenced to death and dismemberment, her body to be fed to the alligators (Mercene 2007: 96). Numbering some 100 at a time, the men of St. Malo, in the absence of women and families, could attempt to fill the void by creating voluntary associations headquartered in the city, which served the extended Filipino community by providing mutual assistance among members (Espina 1981: 84–85).

By Lafcadio Hearn’s famous romanticizing account of St. Malo, published in the March 31, 1883 edition of *Harper’s Weekly*, a strange kind of anachrony ruled in that community, such that Hearn felt moved to assert that it existed not in the nineteenth century but rather in the Bronze Age. Hearn had been sent on assignment by the *Times-Democrat* of New Orleans and *Harper’s Weekly (A Journal of Civilization)*. The former had chartered an Italian lugger, with

[7] Louisiana’s St. Malo is named after the Saint Malou of Brittany situated on the English Channel. It was named after a disciple of Saint Brendan and it has a tradition of independence, having pronounced its autonomy from France from 1490 to 1493. Like the residents of its American namesake, the Malouins have carried on associations with corsairs and privateers. This reputation was reflected in the nineteenth-century drama by Jean Richepin, *Le flibustiers*, and in an opera by the same name composed by César Cui. Interestingly, Jean Cartier, the explorer of the St. Lawrence River and hence the navigator credited with discovering Canada, considered Saint-Malo at the mouth of the Rance his home base and port. The colonists who would later settle these islands that the British would rename the Falklands – las Islas Malvinas – originally named them *les Îles Malouines* after their port of call on the French coast (“Saint-Malo” 3).

squarish lug-sails attached to the horizontal spars, to transport the intrepid chronicler who later would be credited with 'inventing New Orleans.' In his article, titled "Saint Malo: A Lacustrine Village in Louisiana," Hearn's account evokes the otherworldly "ghastliness" of what he encountered in the Manilamen's homesite, which he compares to the "weird landscape" of Edgar Allan Poe's "Silence: a Fragment." Their houses are "fantastic," he writes. They are "poised upon slender supports above the marsh, like cranes or bitterns watching for scaly prey." Its mostly "cinnamon-colored" inhabitants are like the land: "strange, wild, picturesque." For Hearn, when visiting the village, each day of the week seems the same as the day before. Apparently, according to Hearn, no calendar is consulted there: "Here time is measured rather by the number of alligator-skins sent to market, or the most striking incidents of successive fishing, seasons, than by ordinary reckoning." Their dwellings are generally unfurnished. Primitive and spare are the Filipinos' appurtenances for sleeping. A mattress filled with "Spanish beard," a sort of native moss, serves as a bed, which is placed on a shelf-like tier set in the walls of the dwellings. Housemates bid each other a good night with a thoughtful *buenas noches*.

Hearn's description of the Manilamen suggests the sort of *mestizaje* that took place in the Asian crossroads of the Philippines, evident in the very physique of the Filipino men:

> Most of them are cinnamon-colored men; a few are glossily yellow, like that bronze into which a small proportion of gold is worked by the moulder. Their features are irregular without being actually repulsive; some have the cheekbones very prominent, and the eyes of several are set slightly aslant. The hair is generally intensely black and straight, but with some individuals it is curly and browner. . . . None of them appeared tall; the great number were under-sized, but all well-knit, and supple as fresh-water eels. Their hands and feet were small: their movements quick and easy, but sailorly likewise, as of men accustomed to walking upon rocking decks in rough weather. (Hearn 1883)

As for their culture, it appears as rudimentary in Hearn's report. The only works of 'art' that Hearn discovers in the colony are a well-conserved circus poster and two precious photographs kept in the sea-

chest of a 'white' man called Maestro, the one who has assumed the duty of officiating over religious rituals as a sort of backcountry cleric. "These represent," says Hearn of the photographs, "a sturdy young woman with creole eyes, and a grim-looking Frenchman with wintry beard – the wife and father of the ship-carpenter." "Mon cher vieux père," the Maestro utters, kissing that photo (Hearn 1883; Mercene 2007: 100).

The autonomy of St. Malo is demonstrated for Hearn in its freedom from taxation, despite its location in the St. Bernard parish, and in its peculiar way of administering justice. The man known as Padre Carpio, the oldest of the community, acts as judge and jury, invested with the power to sentence a man to a punishment of confinement in a "fish-car." After he is found guilty, the convicted is "left there" in the fish-car, writes Hearn, "until cold and hunger have tamed his rage, or the rising tide forces him to terms." In another case, an assailant is caught and later he is sentenced by Padre Carpio to be left in the swamp, tied to a stake. "Next morning they found him dead: the mosquitoes and tappanoes had filled the office of executioner."[8] The Maestro dug his grave in the "soft gray mud." The Maestro's liturgy of the burial is polyglossic, embellished by a "marvellous profanity expressed in four different languages."

What also fascinates about Hearn's romantic evocation of a human group as reverted to a virtual 'state of nature' is its implicit relationship to the city of New Orleans. Here, in Hearn's account, are established the grounds for an American chronotope of the wilderness community, one whose ties to the concrete and natural, as a sort of 'counter-state,' also affirm a connection to historical cycles and the renewal of the democratic nation. Here, the rule is experimentation and improvisation; the life of the community exemplifies the trial of democracy as a "collective learning process" (Hirschkop 1989: 31). Here, in St. Malo, America is reinventing itself.

The St. Malo Filipinos made a living mainly by the activity of shrimping. They caught not only shrimp, however, but also fish – es-

[8] In an interesting cross-lingual creolization of his survey, the "great green-headed *tappanoes* dreaded by the fishermen" appear to have been what are called in Spanish *tábanos*, insect arthropods with sucking mouth apparatuses commonly called horseflies or gadflies.

pecially red fish and sheephead. These, and also the alligators they trapped, formed the basis of St. Malo's economy, as did the trapping of furbearing creatures such as muskrats. Lugger ships loaded with ice weighing anchor in New Orleans arrived in St. Malo, from where they transported shrimp, fish, skins and furs ("St. Malo" 3).

In a day and age lacking in refrigeration, the Filipinos had need of applying their indigenous technology for preserving the shrimp so it would keep and last the voyage. They did so by laying and spreading shrimp out on platforms, leaving them to dry in the sun. Once the shrimp were dried, the Filipinos, with the purpose of removing the shells from the shrimp bodies, practiced an odd sort of ritual that earned the name of 'dancing the shrimp'. This ritual consisted of the 'dancers' moving rhythmically about on the platform in a more or less large circle, stepping and stomping on the crunchy crustaceans to the music of an old guitar. According to the description of one witness:

> Their hands descend to their hips in comic coquettishness. The music swells and rises, and they take up their dance – a weird shuffle with scuffling feet, to the accompaniment of swaying hips. Round and round they go in unending cycles. (M.O. Frost, cited in Espina 1988: 10)

In the Manila Village during the time prior to the introduction of mechanical means to carry out the process, this dancing of the shrimp was the preferred method of shell removal, carried out by men who trod on the shrimp with feet wrapped in burlap (Kane 1943: 92, cited in Boeck 2015).

The structures of the Manila Village buildings were described in a WPA (Works Progress Administration) guide to Louisiana in 1941, which accounted for the community's "dozen or so red-roofed, green-painted buildings" raised upon stilts and constructed upon "the platform," which consisted in fact of a set of slopes with drainage valleys between them. The shrimp were spread on the open spaces of the platform for drying, once they had been boiled in big pots rectangular in shape. The dried shrimp were then tossed in revolving hoppers, which produced a residue of shells, heads, tails and other bits, altogether called the "shrimp-bran" or "shrimp-bob" (Hansen

1941: 569–570, cited in Boeck 2015). The shrimp would be laid out to dry after boiling in salt water for some twenty minutes in copper cauldrons. Long-handled rakes would serve for spreading and stirring the shrimp for even drying. The entire process lasted up to four days in the summer and as many as ten days in the winter (Mercene 2007: 104). This practice of drying shrimp, beginning at the Manila Village, spread from there to the rest of the state and the country (Bautista 1998: 106). The product itself was shipped out, going on to fertilize fields and to feed hogs. The remaining bulk of the lot, packed in barrels each weighing around 225 pounds, went to New Orleans and from there, elsewhere – much of it to China, some of it to Canada, Central America and South America (Espina 1974: 119).

Alimentary habits traveled from the Philippines to New Orleans along with the Manilamen, and with these habits some of the terms for naming food items. The translocated Filipinos knew a diet of rice and fish, shrimp and crab, though rice was scarce in Louisiana. Like the Mexican shipmates with whom they labored, the Manilamen ate raw fish with oil and vinegar, a sort of *ceviche* (Bautista 1998: 103). Chicken, pork and sweet potatoes would provide supplements to such a diet (Boeck 2015). The *New Orleans Times-Democrat* ("St. Malo" 3) reports a list of Tagalog words heard in the settlement inclusive of names for food. Such names included *bigas*, meaning 'rice,' *toolug*, for 'sleep' (*tulog*), *manuk* for 'chicken' (*manok), marame namouk* for 'plenty of mosquitos' (*marami lamok*), *barboot* for 'pig' (*baboy*) and *ta poosna* for 'I am done' (*tapos na*) (cited in Boeck 2015).

Again, despite their relative isolation on the bayous, the Filipino camptowns maintained connections with the world beyond. The fishers and shrimpers living there during the work seasons would visit families maintained elsewhere, and they did some trading in New Orleans, Procterville and La Chinche (Hearn 1883: 1998). Among the Filipinos who arrived to Louisiana in the nineteenth century was one Felipe Madrigal, a Visayan who sailed on galleons in the Pacific and on a ship in the Atlantic. He and his Irish bride reportedly settled in New Orleans (Macabenta 1994/1996: 13). Hearn gives some space to telling of a "Manila restaurant" that was established in the oldest quarter of New Orleans. Patronized mainly by "Spanish West Indian sailors," its menu listed the fare in both Spanish and English. The

Filipino owner ended up selling it to a “Chinese” who was managing it by the time Hearn made his way to the establishment. Filipino men of the Manila Village found work in the big city as well. One ran a restaurant in New Orleans; another oversaw the Wilkinson Plantation in Myrtle Grove; yet another became a tailor in the French Quarter (Espina 1979: 36, cited in Boeck 2015).

Even in death was there a connection between the bayou and the city. Those of St. Malo who pass away, writes Hearn, first are buried “under the rustling reeds,” a cross of pine marks the burial site, where the flesh is allowed to rot from the bones. Later on, a lugger is commissioned to transport the remains to New Orleans, where they will be “shelved away in one of those curious niche tombs which recall the Roman *columbaria.*” The writer seems to be referring to the typical charnel house or above-ground vault, or perhaps to the sepulcher also known as *ossuary.*

As for their diversions, the Louisiana Filipinos of the bayous often played keno and monte in their non-working hours. These gambling games, too, have their transareal antecedents. Keno is a sort of bingo-lottery game that involves the drawing of numbers, which are called out to players who place their wagers on blank tickets on which are printed 80 numbers. The player with the most numbers that match the drawn numbers will win the wager. Significantly, the name of *keno* derives from the French *quine,* meaning ‘five winning numbers,’ and it traces back as well to the Latin *quini,* ‘five each.’ The game itself may have originated, incidentally, in China during the Han Dynasty some three millennia before (Keno History), and the Chinese who were transported to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century to build the Transcontinental Railroad must have known how to play it. As for the gambling card game of *monte*, also known as *montebank*: it had its origins in Spain and so was played originally with the Spanish deck before moving to Mexico and later to the American Southwest and, evidently, to southern Louisiana. It is reported that monte became popular among the American Indians, who played it with the Mexicans (Parlett 1996).

Monte, as Hearn explains it, is a kind of keno. In its play, there is a man called the *cantador* who “sings out the numbers” drawn from a calabash, decrying with a kind of Catholic-fisher poetry in Spanish.

Pareja de uno;
Dos piquetes de rivero –

Which is to say: the ‘eleven’ (“pareja de uno” – a pair of ones) resembling the two stakes to which are tied the *rivero*, or fishing boat. Other calls are as follows:

Número de cuatro;
La casa del gato –
[Number 4, house of the cat]

Seis con su nueve;
Arriba y abajo –
[6 with its 9, up and down]

De dos pareja [i.e. 22];
Dos paticos en laguna –

That is, the number ‘22’ that resembles two ducklings swimming in a lagoon, and the *dos gansos* (two geese) *en laguna* look like the two sevens of ‘77’, and the ‘55’ read vertically, as it were, seems like ‘two boats moored’: *dos galíbos amarrados*.

Other calls of the cantador play with the numbers as well:

Tres y parejo;
Edad de Cristo –
[Three and the same, age of Christ]
Nueve y parejo;
El mas Viejo –
[9 and the same (i.e. 99), the oldest one]

Dos con su cinco;
Buenas noches pasado –
[20 with its 5, Christmas Eve passed]

The multilingual keno players no doubt entertained themselves, all of them strangers in a strange land keeping good company with one another. Yet, as if to make up for the lack of balanced households and the benefit of kinship ties, the bayou Filipinos formed the aforementioned mutual aid associations. In these organized groups with links

to the colonial center, the members could collaborate in helping each other out and in taking political action. Espina writes that together, the Filipinos in New Orleans worked to strike down a law that prohibited Asians from owning land, an achievement that made it possible for some Filipinos to own immense tracts of land in southern Louisiana (Espina 1988: 78).

The association of Filipinos headquartered in New Orleans named La Union Philipina, whose existence was remarked by Lafcadio Hearn, claims the distinction of being the first civic organization founded by Filipinos in the United States. The St. Malo Filipinos in 1870 formed the Sociedad de Beneficencia de los Hispano Filipinos de New Orleans, whose purpose was to give assistance for widows and orphans and to provide mutual self-help for its members and eventual burial in the society-owned sixteen-vault tomb that still stands today in the city's St. Vincent de Paul Cemetery (Mercene 2007: 101).

As for the political status of Filipinos living in Louisiana, it posed a curious question since the passage of the Naturalization Act of 1790. This Act decreed as eligible for U.S. citizenship only 'free white persons,' with the understanding that African Americans, Native Americans and all other people of color were to be excluded. The Filipinos of New Orleans were therefore forced to inhabit a limbo of stateless residency afterwards, once the United States under President Jefferson secured the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 at the price of $15 million. This action doubled the territory of the United States but left Filipinos as it were out in the cold. Curiously, it took nearly a whole century – until 1898, the year of the Spanish American War – until the Filipinos of Louisiana could find a sort of transnational sense of belonging after Spain's last remaining overseas colonies –the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico – became colonial possessions of the United States. After Spain's defeat in that war, the Filipinos would become Americans nationals, although not citizens.

So, how to represent the ambiguous stateless status of the Filipino living the U.S. in the first third of the twentieth century? Oddly, the opportunity came to introduce the issue into the public discourse during the Mardi Gras celebration of New Orleans in 1935. Not to be forgotten or overlooked in the great spectacle, the New Orleans *kababayans* or countryfolk threw themselves into the construction of

a parade float that they would enter into competition. This decision is not too surprising: The celebration of Mardi Gras was already for the Filipino a tradition that blended festival celebrations with a religious procession of ancient provenance – in the Philippines, the third week of January is the time of the Sinulog Festival of Cebu. Its name comes from the root word *sulog*, meaning 'river current,' which the flowing of the festival dancing seemed to imitate, and which to the mind of the Filipinos of New Orleans the processions of the New Orleans carnival maskers must have resembled. The *sinulog* itself is a mixture of Christian and pre-Hispanic meaning, combining the offering for an abundant harvest with the celebration of the Santo Niño of Cebu, whose effigy is raised above the heads of the Filipino revelers during the celebration as they dance and parade down the streets.

Built out of sticks of bamboo and stems of banana trees, the Filipinos' Mardi Gras float was sponsored by the Filipino lodge of the Caballeros de Dimas-Alang No. 34, and it was destined to roll along with the Elks Krewe and its carnival maskers. One Filipino by the name of Jesse Marinelo was to dress as Uncle Sam, complete with white flowing beard and suit of red, white and blue, and he was to ride atop the float. Problems arose, however, when it was discovered that the beard might have begun its existence as the tail of one of the white horses of the Elks Krewe entourage, a fact that left the owner of the now tailless horse none too pleased. The story goes, however, that the return of the purloined tail to horse and owner would have left the Filipino Uncle Sam beardless, and this would never do. The Filipino Uncle Sam kept his beard and the Filipino float rolled on into Mardi Gras history (Espina 1988: 14, 21–22).

It turns out that the float that the Filipinos built was the first of the pageant to be propelled down the avenue in by a gas-driven truck. It bore the name "Independence at Hand" and it sent out a message particularly relevant at this juncture in American-Philippine history. In the float's well-thought-out allegory, the Carnival Queen, performed by one Agnes Ferniz, appeared bound in chains, while at the same time Jesse Marinelo's Uncle Sam stood by with one hand holding a pair of giant scissors and a finger on his temple, contemplating whether to cut or not to cut (Espina 1988: 24; Posadas 1990: 109). Children seated aboard the float pointed toward the chains of the Car-

nival Queen as a number of other riders played guitars. Not only did this entry go on to win the grand prize in the Mardi Gras parade of 1935; but so did the Filipino entries of the next two years and in 1946 (Espina 1988: 24, 31–33).

Marina E. Espina describes and interprets the floating scene in this passage:

> [Uncle Sam] stood with a finger on his temple as if he were thinking while looking at the chain, whether to cut or not to cut. At the time, the Philippines was still a U.S. possession, albeit talks of independence were already underway between American and Filipino leaders.
>
> The children riding the float represented the younger generation. They pointed out to Uncle Sam the chain, as if to say, "Uncle Sam, give us freedom". The rest of the riders (33 altogether) had guitars which they strummed on to the delight of the crowd. [Float-maker] Slim Del Prado had to run alongside the truck to make sure that people did not strip the truck of its decoration, since people were happily picking the leaves and flowers for souvenirs. (Espina 1988: 24)[9]

The Caballeros de Dimas-Alang sponsored the "Independence at Hand" float; it was and continues to be a local branch of the California-based brotherhood organized on the model of the Masonic lodges, which held rituals for funerals, baptisms, and marriages. The grand prize-winning float sponsored by the New Orleans Caballeros in the 1935 Mardi Gras won new honors for the Filipino community (Espina 1988: 94).

Other Filipino American voluntary associations of Louisiana are listed below and are based on information provided by Marina E. Espina (1988: 94).

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[9] Independence would indeed be granted, though not yet provided, by enactment of the Philippine Independence Act of March 1935, commonly known as the Tydings-McDuffie Act; it promised independence and self-government to the Philippines after a waiting period of ten years. Ironically, however, the passing of Tydings-McDuffie would entail the changing of the Filipinos' status from that of American nationals to foreign nationals, making the Filipinos subject to the immigration quota of a mere 50 immigrants per year.

– La Union Filipina, a benevolent society of the Terre-aux-Boeufs area by Lake Borgne, which maintained headquarters in the Crescent City.

– The Sociedad de Beneficencia de los Hispano Filipinos, chartered in July 1870 by the men of St. Malo and headquartered in New Orleans: its aims included the provision of funds to support the widows and children of deceased members; its official language was Spanish, and by 1898 its members had purchased a burial tomb of sixteen vaults in the St. Vincent de Paul Cemetery No. 2.

– The Filipino Progressive Club (later Filipino-American Progressive Club), founded for the benefit of Ilocano families during the Depression in the years 1929 to 1932.

– The American-Filipino Communities of America, founded in the first years of the Depression to support Filipino seamen in search of employment. American-Filipino Communities President Frank Reyes succeeded in becoming Port Steward with the U.S. Merchant Marine Commission, a position that enabled him to obtain positions for Filipinos as crew members aboard merchant marine ships in unprecedented numbers.

– The Bataan-Philippine Post No. 7323, which, along with its Ladies Auxiliary, has brought together Filipino and American Veterans of Foreign Wars since 1946.

–The Filipino-American Goodwill Society of America, of which historian Marina E. Espina became the society's first woman president in 1980.

At present, Filipinos are of course not the only 'Asian Americans' with a sizable presence in New Orleans. The heterogenous ethnic/ethnicized group of peoples residing in the region who trace their ancestry to the Asian countries includes the communities of Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, East Indians and Vietnamese, along with the Filipino Louisianans (see Espina 1980). In certain ways, the Manilamen of St. Malo and Manila Village are the forerunners of such Asian American enclaves as the present-day Vietnamese of East New Orleans, of the district called Versailles of the Plaquemines Parish – thought to be

"the most concentrated community of Vietnamese outside Vietnam" (Chiang 2009). It was the devastation of their homes and neighborhood by Hurricane Katrina in September 2005 that mobilized this community to rebuild itself. And soon after their reestablishment in Versailles, the members of this community organized themselves to voice their vehement opposition to the building of the toxic Chef Menteur Landfill in close proximity to their homes. In a concerted effort with the East New Orleans City Council, the Vietnamese of Versailles succeeded in shutting down the landfill and getting on with the work of reconstruction.

Like the brave example of the New Orleans Vietnamese, whose story was documented by filmmakers Leo S. Chiang and Joel Goodman, the pioneering precedent of Filipino forebears may help to raise Filipino Americans from the obscurity in which they continue to live as the 'forgotten Asian Americans' and as a scattered community of individuals with only their Filipino heritage to identify or weakly unify them (see Espina 1978: 57, 59). Although the descendants of the Manilamen have received the names of "Filipino Creoles" and "Filipino Cajuns" (Sterngass 2007: 40),[10] they should be remembered as no less than the first Asian Americans but also as 'ancestors' in the genealogy of Filipino Americans in the United States, who in the 2010 census numbered 3,416,840.[11] Because New Orleans was the earliest port of entry for the first Filipinos to settle in what is now the United States (Hoeffel 2012: 14; see Espina 1974: 117), Filipino Americans – nay, all Filipinos everywhere who construct themselves as belonging to an 'imagined community' of diasporic people – can look to the Manilamen of New Orleans as their forebears in an eccentric yet strangely robust lineage. It was the same Filipino Louisianans – through their hard work, their ingenuity, their resourceful-

[10] Important to remember is that in 1764, Canadian immigrants called Acadians – later Cajuns – were seeking a home in southern Louisiana, at about the same time the Filipinos were settling in the region, and a year after the retrocession of Louisiana to Spain had been confirmed (Mitchell 1993: 25).

[11] There were 2,767 Filipinos living in the United States a century before, in 1910. The largest group – 109 in total – called the New Orleans area their home, and by 1931, some one hundred Filipino families were living there. Many of the men worked or had worked in the U.S. merchant marine (Melendy 1977: 41, 64).

ness – who not only enriched America, but also did their part in the making of 'America.'

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