

Empire of Métissage

*A few years after marrying the French carpenter Antoine Payet in the Catholic Church, on January 30, 1681, in Saint-Paul, Isle Bourbon, the free Malagasy woman Louise Siaram gave birth to a *mulâtresse* baby girl named Louise Payet.¹ Louise's childhood was cut short abruptly in 1692, when, at age eleven, she was married to a twenty-one-year-old French-Malagasy creole *mulâtre* named François Cauzan in the Catholic Church.² But despite the hardships entailed in such an early marriage, she grew up to become one of the most admired women on Isle Bourbon. By 1709, Boucher described her as "a model for all women of the island."³ Louise never had children of her own, but she took in several little girls from her neighborhood and made it her mission to raise them to become the "wisest and most educated" ladies of the island, teaching them to perform European domestic tasks like sewing and washing the laundry.⁴ Louise and her husband François worked so hard to make a living for themselves that they became one of the island's wealthiest couples.⁵ By the early eighteenth century, they owned nine enslaved people, many heads of livestock, and several parcels of land.⁶ Louise and François also embraced some elements of French material culture: for example, records of public sales and other documents indicate that—in addition to cultivating crops favored in early modern Europe, such as wheat and wine grapes—they wore silk stockings as well as shirts made in France.⁷ By 1709, Louise and François were described as "the most fashionable and best lodged of all the settlers" and had saved up 2,000 écus—a significant amount of money.⁸ François passed away on June 7, 1715.⁹ His death turned Louise into one of the most eligible widows of Isle Bourbon.*

It took only a few months for Jacques Macé, a thirty-two-year-old white army surgeon from Brittany, to propose to Louise. She accepted, and they married on January 14, 1716, in the church of Saint-Paul.¹⁰ Ancien Régime

patriarchal customs gave Jacques some control over Louise's estate, and he could also count on her generosity.¹¹ Louise Payet was an extraordinarily generous woman indeed, as suggested by the many gifts that she made to the Church and to her family and friends. For example, in 1714, she donated a plot of land in the mountains to the incoming governor of Isle Bourbon, Henry de Justamond, who was from Languedoc and also the husband of her youngest sister, another *mulâtresse*, named Luce Payet.¹² A devout Christian, Louise also maintained close ties with the Catholic Church throughout her life. In 1696, she became the godmother of a little girl named Marie Grondin, to whom she gave an enslaved six-year-old Malagasy girl as a Christmas gift in 1714.¹³ In 1715, she also made a donation of 200 écus to Lazarist missionaries on the island, "to provide for two female school-teachers who should educate the girls of the parishes of Isle Bourbon."¹⁴

In 1729, Louise Payet fell gravely ill and died shortly thereafter. She had so many personal effects that it took three days to complete the postmortem inventory of her estate. This inventory listed many plots of land, seven residences and cabins, a pharmacy cabinet worth 400 livres, countless furniture, clothes, shoes, jewelry, and tools for dressmaking, construction, and gardening, as well as kitchenware, including China dishes. By the end of her life, Louise owned thirty enslaved people and several hundred heads of livestock worth over 3,681 livres. She also had over 30,146 livres in savings—an enormous sum of money.¹⁵

This chapter demonstrates that *métissage* (interracial sex) was instrumental to the establishment of France's colonial empire. In remote places where European women were especially few in number, such as Isle Bourbon, mixed children born to early Catholic unions between white men and freeborn or manumitted women of non-European ancestries like Louise Siaram furnished the fledgling French settlements and outposts with free Christian colonists, planters, farmers, artisans, and other free workers, offsetting limited arrivals of people from Europe. Some of these mixed people, especially in isolated places with restricted metropolitan oversight like Isle Bourbon, French India and early Guadeloupe, were assimilated into white settler societies by being classified as "whites" in local official documents—because they were Christian, and often Europeanized and well-off financially.¹⁶ Meanwhile, other mixed children on Isle Bourbon and the French Caribbean islands, who were born to enslaved women who had sexual relationships with white men, began to grow slave

workforces as a relatively rare, yet especially coveted commodity. In vastly larger territories with much more powerful local populations—like Louise's mother's homeland in Madagascar, or Senegambia—mixed relationships (including Catholic unions, intermarriages *à la mode du pays*, and casual sex) between Frenchmen and local freeborn women helped the French forge many of the diplomatic and commercial alliances that proved vital to the endurance and commercial success of the French empire.

In the end, the sexualities of both unfree and free women of non-European ancestries were harnessed in the making of France's early overseas empire. Only a few French officials, most of whom lived overseas, foresaw how some of these widely different mixed relationships could solidify the foundations of empire. Even when these relationships were not endorsed, or when they were outlawed, they often turned a blind eye to them and even leveraged them in order to grow local populations and protect the French colonies and outposts.

Most of the ordinary men and women who engaged in these relationships were probably unaware of the ways their day-to-day sexualities advanced the formation of empire. Some of the free women of non-European descent who formed relationships with white men might have wanted to escape difficult matrimonial practices in their own cultures or increase their influence, for example, by becoming Christian leaders in their societies or diplomatic mediators between the French and their own community. Some were almost certainly hoping to advance their own socioeconomic interests. Many others—both free and unfree—were brutally coerced and violated by European men. The early modern French imperial formation was grounded in sexual violence and coercion because all enslaved women, and many free women of non-European ancestries, did not have the freedom to refuse European men's sexual advances. In Madagascar, for example, several free *roandria* women were presumably pressured by their own kinspeople to marry or live in concubinage with Frenchmen to advance their clan's military and economic interests, while hundreds of female captives were also coerced into forming such relationships.

This chapter addresses important gaps in the rich literature on the exploitation of enslaved Black women's wombs.¹⁷ In the French colonial historiography, literature on this topic tends to focus chiefly on the Caribbean islands in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, giving less attention to the earlier period and to other French colonies.¹⁸ Most importantly,

although scholars have already focused on the instrumentalization of enslaved Black women's wombs in the rise of slave reproduction, they have paid less attention to the role played by the sexualities of both unfree and free women of non-European ancestries in the growth of *free* settler populations across early European empires.¹⁹ In the Illinois Country, Catholic intermarriage between Frenchmen and Frenchified Illinois (especially Kaskaskia, but also Tamaroa and Peoria) women famously minted new subjects who were categorized as "French" in official documents, thereby helping the French to populate their settlements.²⁰ Americanists often cite the Illinois Country as "the exception to the rules" for having "managed to incorporate Native and *métis* people as subjects in the French empire" through widespread Catholic intermarriage—which itself has been described as "a practice unique to the Illinois Country."²¹ Yet even more Frenchmen entered Catholic marriages with women of non-European ancestries in the remote outposts and settlements of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century French India and Isle Bourbon.

In addition to growing colonial populations, mixed Catholic marriages, marriages "in the manner of the country" (*à la façon du pays* or *à la mode du pays*) and casual sex with local women facilitated the formation of essential diplomatic and commercial alliances in vast continental arenas well beyond North America.²² In particular, like their counterparts in North America, Frenchmen in Senegambia and Anosy understood very well the opportunities that flexible (breakable) unions "in the manner of the country" could give. They leveraged those marriages in both regions to multiply alliances with local populations. Well beyond North America, too, in places like Madagascar and Isle Bourbon, Catholic intermarriage also advanced French colonization by encouraging female converts and their female descendants to serve as models or spread Christianity in their communities. Many of the women of non-European descent who formed relationships with Frenchmen entered these relationships as agents in their own right, hailing from widely different cultures that gave them significant sexual freedom.

The question of whether *enslaved* women could have some agency as well when having sex with a free man is a more complicated and delicate one. Some scholars hypothesize that some enslaved women used their relationships with white men to improve their own living conditions and those of their mixed children.²³ According to other scholars, this perspective runs

the risk of minimizing the violence of the slave system “by turning the trauma and coercion enforced by enslavers into narratives of power wielded by the enslaved.”²⁴ As Walter Johnson puts it, the agency of the enslaved is “thick with the material givenness of a moment in time.”²⁵ This is why this book approaches the agency of enslaved women as a “historically confined” process—to use the words of Marisa Fuentes.²⁶ It does so by offering an in-depth study of the “thickness” of the adversity within which these women’s agency existed while also recognizing the possibility that some of these women who improved their conditions may have done so as a result of their own strategic actions. In particular, this chapter seeks to recover the “thickness” of the adversity faced by enslaved women by questioning the notion of “consent” within the context of slavery, and by exposing the hitherto unacknowledged breadth of the sexual violence they faced across the French Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds.²⁷

Sexual Abuse and Slave Reproduction in the Caribbean

From the onset of French colonization in the seventeenth century, the sexual coercion and rape of enslaved women by white men, when resulting in pregnancy, helped reproduce enslaved workforces in the nascent Caribbean slave societies. Ownership gave slaveholders unlimited power over the bodies of enslaved men, women, and children, allowing them to act with impunity whenever they wanted to.²⁸ For this reason, I agree with Saidiya Hartman, Tiya Miles, Jennifer Shaw, and other scholars that real “consent”—defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “voluntary agreement to sexual intercourse or other sexual activity by a person *who has the (legal) freedom and capacity to make such a choice*”—could not exist between an enslaved person and their owner.²⁹ Instead, Sharon Block usefully employs the expression “coerced sex” to describe sexual relations between slaveowners and enslaved people that cannot be neatly categorized as “rape” defined as “the act or crime, committed by a man, of forcing a woman to have sexual intercourse with him against her will.”³⁰ This does not necessarily mean that mutual fondness and desire did not exist and complicate the dynamic in those relationships.³¹ However, these affective ties—real though they sometimes probably were—did nothing to free enslaved people from their owners’ control when they did not result in

a manumission. Affection could even reinforce an enslaved woman's subordination when a white man used it to his own advantage to further exploit her or when he made her jealous by forming relationships with other women: as Hartman puts it, "sentiment, enjoyment, affinity, will, and desire facilitated subjugation, domination, and terror [. . .] by preying upon the flesh, the heart, and the soul."³²

While many scholars have already theorized slaveowner–slave relationships, less attention has been paid to sexual relations between enslaved women and white men other than their owners. Those men could also act with impunity because French slaveowners were not inclined to defend their enslaved women against abuse, especially if they were not so injured that they became unable to serve them. Some slaveowners gave very little value to their enslaved servants' lives and well-being, especially when doing so could come at the expense of another white person. This is illustrated by an incident that took place in 1752 involving the Ursuline nuns of New Orleans: when asked if they wanted to press charges against a French soldier named Pochenet for wounding their captive, Louison, in what looked like a probable attempt at sexual assault, the Ursulines responded that "they would prefer losing their *négresse* rather than doing anything uncharitable to their fellowmen."³³

Cases of sexual coercion and rape of enslaved women appear only sporadically in early French legal records because authorities never criminalized sexual abuses perpetrated against enslaved people in the French colonies.³⁴ The Edict of Blois of 1580 defined rape in the kingdom of France as the enticement of a woman under the age of twenty-five, which was punishable by death.³⁵ However, enslaved women remained unprotected by this regulation because of their special nonhuman status as property.³⁶ Instead of trying to dissuade slaveowners from abusing their own female captives, article IX of the *Code Noir* of the French Antilles (issued in 1685 to regulate slavery) merely condemned freemen who had children with enslaved women outside of Catholic wedlock to pay a fine of 2,000 livres of sugar and ordered the confiscation of their enslaved concubines and mixed children except if "the man [. . .] were to marry the aforementioned slave in the Church."³⁷ Enslaved people were not even allowed to appear as plaintiffs in civil and criminal courts.³⁸ When a case involving a sexual assault against an enslaved woman did reach a court, it was because a white person had also been injured in the process or because the trial focused solely on

the resulting loss of or damage to “property” on the part of the owner (if an enslaved person had been murdered or wounded in the process).³⁹

For enslaved Africans bound for the Americas, sexual abuses began in Africa. African women, girls, men, and boys in the context of the Atlantic slave trade faced humiliating physical examinations in which merchants and buyers evaluated their beauty as well as their physical and reproductive capacities.⁴⁰ Marine personnel sometimes purchased women and girls with the sole intention of abusing them during their long transatlantic voyage, like the French ship captain who acquired an enslaved woman from the *damel* (king) of Kajoor in 1715, reportedly “for his own lecherous abuse.”⁴¹ Several ship captains and sailors also abused women and girls in cargo holds during the Atlantic crossing. Women and girls amounted to about one-third of the captives sent from Senegambia to the Caribbean between 1701 and 1807.⁴²

Once in the French Caribbean, many enslaved Black women were raped and sexually coerced in their owner’s households, on their owner’s plantations, and outside their owner’s estate, from the very beginning of African slavery in the region. After spending time in the French Caribbean in the 1640s, Du Tertre explained that “there are some colonists who have abused their *négresses*.”⁴³ He also lamented that many enslaved women and girls in the Caribbean were forced into submission by “[their] fear of bad treatment, the terrifying threats of [their masters], and the force used by these passionate men to corrupt them.”⁴⁴ Such relationships were not unusual as suggested by the French crown’s decision to punish slaveowners who had fathered a child with their female captives in the *Code Noir* of 1685. In 1695, the missionary Jean-Baptiste Labat mentioned several (allegedly jealous) white mistresses who had denounced their own husbands to religious authorities because they had fathered a child with their enslaved servant. One of those white mistresses was married to a mysterious Monsieur ***, who was described as a rich planter established in Fort-Royal, Martinique. Labat lamented that several white men had even promised freedom to their Black concubines on the condition that they would not mention their names to French authorities.⁴⁵ He recounted how one of these white slaveowners went so far as to induce his Black partner to falsely accuse a priest of being the real father of her *mulâtre* child, insisting—amid general courtroom laughter—that her baby really resembled the missionary.⁴⁶

Plantation overseers in the Caribbean also often used their positions of authority to abuse enslaved Black women. A regulation issued in the French Caribbean in 1672 condemned “the vicious actions of plantation overseers with the *négresses*.”⁴⁷ Du Tertre noted in 1667 that “a plantation overseer sometimes abuse[d] a *négresse*,” who would then give birth to “a *mulâtre* child.”⁴⁸ Those abuses were frequent enough to prompt Labat to advise plantation owners to hire Blacks or elderly whites instead of young white men as plantation overseers, “so that they would be less inclined to cause [those] disorders with the *négresses*.”⁴⁹ He also advised plantation owners that “as soon as one realizes that white men at our service are doing things with the *négresses*, the best response is to fire them immediately.”⁵⁰

The status of children born from sexual relations between freemen and enslaved women in the French Caribbean changed in the second half of the seventeenth century. Before 1674, the *mulâtres* were, it seems, not subject to the Roman legal principle *partus sequitur ventrem* (“that which is born follows the womb”), according to which the slave condition was literally transmitted to children through their enslaved mothers’ womb. Du Tertre explained that “the governors [in the Caribbean] do not follow that legal principle giving the condition of their mother to the child, *partus sequitur ventrem*, and [therefore] [the *mulâtres*] have been declared free.”⁵¹ It is unclear at which point in their lives the *mulâtres* became able to enjoy this freedom. According to Labat, they were only considered free after reaching twenty-four years of age, and only so long as they had serviced their owner for eight years to compensate for the loss of labor incurred when their mother raised them.⁵² French authorities initially approved of the manumission of the *mulâtres* not only because of their paternal parentage but also because of their Europeanized upbringing. The French governor-general of French Antilles, Charles de Courbon, count of Blénac, advocated for the systematic manumission of the *mulâtres* on the grounds that they were Christian and Frenchified. He explained that: “they take our manners, our language, and they rise up in our religion.”⁵³

The relatively flexible practice of letting the *mulâtres* become free at some point in their lives began to disappear in the 1670s as the result of a change in their legal status. The king decided in 1674 that all *mulâtres* born to an enslaved mother and a free father in the Caribbean would

inherit the condition of their mother, in accordance with the Roman law principle *partus sequitur ventrem*. Labat explained that “the king [. . .] reinstated the Roman law principle according to which children follow the condition of the womb that bore them [. . .], and as a consequence, *mulâtres* born to slave mothers will also be enslaved.”⁵⁴ The Council of Guadeloupe officially confirmed the enslavement of the *mulâtres* born to unfree women in 1680.⁵⁵

In applying the principle *partus sequitur ventrem* to all children born to enslaved women, the French had aligned their legislation not only with Roman law but also with existing Iberian and British legal practices. As early as the thirteenth century, the *Siete Partidas* (a famous Castilian statutory code) had already determined that “he who is born of a slave mother is also a slave.”⁵⁶ The practice of hereditary slavery was also inscribed in the slave code of Virginia since 1662, on the basis of this same *partus sequitur ventrem* Roman legal statute.⁵⁷ As shown by Camillia Cowling, Jennifer Morgan and Sasha Turner, among others, the *partus sequitur ventrem* principle applied across all other early modern British, Spanish, and Portuguese Atlantic colonies.⁵⁸

As was the case in other European empires, hereditary slavery was above all else a way for authorities to perpetuate slavery and help European slaveowners maximize their wealth.⁵⁹ Buying enslaved people was initially considered more cost effective than relying on slave reproduction, due to high infant mortality rates, the labor loss incurred when an enslaved woman was pregnant or nursing, and the cost of raising enslaved children into their adulthood.⁶⁰ Because fertility rates were low and infant mortality rates were high, slavery in the seventeenth-century French colonies was essentially maintained through the slave trade.⁶¹ Yet French officials and planters began to take a few measures to advance slave reproduction as early as the late seventeenth century because, as Jennifer Morgan puts it in her study of the early British American colonies, “high mortality rates and decreased fertility rates [among enslaved women] did not remove childbirth from the equation”; on the contrary, “if anything, the rarity of surviving infant births may have further highlighted the pragmatic and symbolic value of African women’s reproductive potential.”⁶²

French contemporaries clearly understood the possible advantages of hereditary slavery from the beginning of French colonization in the

Caribbean. As a case in point, here is what Du Tertre explained to his readers after he had spent time in Guadeloupe between 1635 and 1647:

The power that masters have over their slaves is so complete, and they enjoy such a full ownership over them, that they do not only own them as they do purchased goods: they also have the same right over the unfortunate children who are born to their marriages [. . .]. It is for this reason (that the *nègres* make the strength and wealth of their masters [. . .]) that our Frenchmen marry [their Black slaves] to each other as soon as they can: to acquire children who then replace their own fathers, doing the same work, and serving them in the same way.⁶³

Even King Louis XIV recognized the possible economic benefits of hereditary slavery: in 1680, he complained of the lack of marriages among enslaved Blacks in the Caribbean, lamenting that such conduct “prevented [slave] women from becoming pregnant, thereby depriving him of the support that he could get from *nègres* who could be born in the country.”⁶⁴ The French began to explicitly promote Christian marriages among enslaved people as early as the late seventeenth century, in order to increase enslaved labor forces and advance Christianity.⁶⁵ According to the Jesuit missionary Jean Mongin, who spent time in Martinique and Saint-Christopher between 1676 and 1682, a few French slaveowners even went so far as to pay enslaved men from other plantations to breed with their enslaved women “in order to acquire the children who always belong to the master of the mother.”⁶⁶ A similar practice was recorded on Isle Bourbon where, in 1704, a slaveowner gifted a twenty-year-old Black woman named Isabelle Moine to another slaveowner, in order to force her to copulate with a twenty-two-year-old enslaved Black man named Maximin, in exchange for “a little six-year-old *négresse*,” as well as “the first two children to be born to said Black and *négresse*.”⁶⁷

By applying the Roman legal principle *partus sequitur ventrem* to the *mulâtres*, French authorities ensured that coerced sex and rape by freemen against enslaved women would further expand enslaved workforces. The number of *mulâtres* recorded in Guadeloupean censuses rose from 47 in 1671 to 282 in 1696. It reached 290 in Martinique by 1688.⁶⁸ Those numbers were admittedly small. However, planters in the seventeenth-century French Caribbean particularly valued enslaved *mulâtre* workers. Because of their mixed origin and creole upbringing, the *mulâtres* were typically assigned the most desirable positions within Caribbean enslaved communities, instead of

being asked to do field work, which was considered especially demeaning. By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, several *mulâtres* in the Caribbean were trained as artisans, while others worked as domestic servants.⁶⁹ The *mulâtres* thus became a highly marketable commodity in the eyes of many slaveowners.

As is to be expected, Black women reacted to the commodification of their children with ineffable grief and despair. Since the 1940s, considerable research has been produced on instances of “gynecological revolt” by enslaved women in the Americas, who dared to defy sexual exploitation through infanticide and the use of herbal remedies as contraceptives or abortifacients.⁷⁰ In the French Caribbean, the missionary Labat lamented “the frequent abortions” performed by enslaved women when they became pregnant with mixed children. He described these women as “very skillful” in their use of herbal remedies to terminate their pregnancies without suffering medical complications.⁷¹ He also accused their white abusers of encouraging them to do so.⁷²

Recent work by Jennifer Morgan, Sasha Turner, Rhaisa Kameela Williams and others has also moved beyond historiographical narratives of resistance by approaching motherhood among enslaved women as a site of trauma—attributed to their inability to “convey kinship,” or “to have family represent something other than the expansion of someone else’s estate.”⁷³ Black women in the French world were no strangers to this unbearable suffering. In the French Caribbean, Du Tertre even dedicated a special section of his book to the love that enslaved Blacks had for their children. He explained, “The *nègres* love their children with such intensity that [. . .] they can’t bear the thought of seeing them being punished, or to hear them scream [. . .] I have never seen a slave as unable to control their anger as when the interest of their poor children is in question.”⁷⁴

French contemporaries in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds sought to morally dissociate themselves from the sexual exploitation of the enslaved by spreading representations of Black women as extraordinarily resilient mothers. Much like British observers, they depicted those Black mothers as nonhumans who could not be descended from the biblical figure of Eve since they were not subject to the curse that made her feel the pain of childbirth. In order to make the commodification of mixed children more acceptable and to justify horrible postpartum treatment, French observers, like their British counterparts, described those Black women as extremely fertile mothers who were so unaffected by the difficulties of childbirth that they could go

back to work immediately afterward.⁷⁵ Du Tertre described enslaved Black women as “naturally hugely fecund.” He added: they “give birth with a lot of ease; most don’t even need a midwife to help them do it.” “They are so untouched by childbirth that I have seen some work right after for two or three hours in the cabin, as if nothing had happened.”⁷⁶ Frenchmen in the Indian Ocean made very similar remarks regarding Black women. Here is what Carpeau du Saussay said about Madagascar: “It seems that the punishment imposed on Eve by God after her sin, in condemning her to give birth in pain, does not apply to women of this country; indeed, the easiness with which they give birth is unimaginable [. . .] a woman giving birth in the morning returns to her usual business in the afternoon, as if she had never been interrupted.”⁷⁷ As opposed to what happened in the French Caribbean from the late seventeenth century, many of the mixed children born to white men and unfree Malagasy women in Madagascar and Isle Bourbon were free, since their mothers had been manumitted before they had married European men. Those mixed couples minted more colonists who came to play a vital role in the progress of the colonization of Isle Bourbon.

Assimilation and the Peopling of Imperial Margins

French officials instrumentalized the sexualities of free and manumitted women of non-European descent by assimilating mixed children born to their Catholic marriages with Frenchmen to “white” society in an attempt to populate the French settlements and outposts. This pattern of assimilation through Catholic unions occurred on multiple French imperial margins, including the Illinois Country, but also early Guadeloupe, Isle Bourbon, and French India. Assimilation in the Illinois Country was largely the result of consistent campaigns of Christianization, Frenchification and Catholic intermarriage that had begun in the first half of the seventeenth century in New France. French authorities had also promoted intermarriage between Frenchmen and Christianized women of South Asian descent on Isle Bourbon and in French India. By contrast, they had shifted their policy regarding Malagasy women when they prohibited relationships between Frenchmen and “women of the country” in Madagascar, starting in 1664. Intermarriage in the Caribbean was not supported by any official policy either, except, some may argue, for article IX of the

Code Noir of the Antilles of 1685, which condemned freemen fathering mixed children with their enslaved servants to pay a fine and have their concubine and mixed children confiscated, except if they were “to marry the aforementioned slave in the church.”⁷⁸ Yet colonial officials often turned a blind eye to *intermarriages* when they were unendorsed by French authorities or even when some began to be prohibited from the 1660s. They also allowed some of the mixed descendants of Christian unions to be integrated into “white” society, no matter their (Malagasy, African, South Asian, or Native American) origin(s), well into the early eighteenth century.

The practice of assimilation was not limited to the French colonies: it was a common pattern across many other European colonies and outposts, from the Spanish Americas to Dutch Batavia.⁷⁹ An official form of whiteness grounded in wealth, instead of being inscribed in skin color, was made accessible to people of non-European descent in the Spanish Americas as early as the sixteenth century.⁸⁰ By the 1770s, children born to Portuguese men and Christian Asian women in Portuguese India were officially granted white status, too, in accordance with an earlier order that had declared the “Christians of Portuguese India [to be] equal in every respect to the Portuguese.”⁸¹ Similar assimilationist practices were recorded more sporadically in the English-speaking world. By 1707, several people of non-European descent in Jamaica were able to claim white status at colonial assemblies. People of African ancestries were able to claim “white” status in Barbados, as well, after four generations of intermingling with Europeans.⁸²

The most important step toward assimilation in the French context was the formation of Catholic unions between white men and freeborn or manumitted women of non-European descent, whose Catholic mixed offspring were then integrated into the settlers’ class. French authorities in the Caribbean initially turned a blind eye to the practice of assimilation partly because they needed whites to control growing enslaved workforces and defend the colonies against enemy threats.⁸³ Recounting the history of this practice in 1842, the French abolitionist and politician Victor Schoelcher explained, “When we ask the reasons for this [. . .], they retort that we probably needed white people at the time!”⁸⁴ Frenchmen in the early period of colonization in the Caribbean were especially likely to seek out relationships with non-European women, since there were very few female European colonists on the islands. By 1686, there were more than two white men

per white woman of marriageable age in Guadeloupe (1,899 men for 788 women), and some of these women were already married.⁸⁵

Few European men in Guadeloupe ended up marrying Indigenous women because contact with the Kalinago was limited. As early as 1636, authorities in Guadeloupe implemented a segregation policy, confining the Kalinago to an area in the Southeast of the island, which was labeled “the home of the *sauvages*.”⁸⁶ By 1671, only fifty-one Indigenous people (categorized as *sauvages*) were recorded in the census of Guadeloupe because many had died of Old World diseases or been removed from the island in the aftermath of the Franco-Carib Wars (1654–1660).⁸⁷ With the rapid decline of the Kalinago population, only a few Frenchmen married Indigenous women in the Catholic Church. Among them was Charles des Champs, a man established in the southern parish of Capesterre. He married Susanes Belamée, a woman categorized as a *sauvagesse*, with whom he had twin boys who were baptized in 1648.⁸⁸

Other French men and women in Guadeloupe married people of African ancestry. Some of these unions were between white women and men of African descent. Here is what Du Tertre noted in 1667: “There are many [. . .] *mulâtres* on the islands, who are free; I have seen some of them, who have married French women. This disorder was more common in the past than it is today: but at the beginning of the establishment of the colonies, it was dreadful and almost without remedy.”⁸⁹ The first census of Guadeloupe, taken in 1664, listed Manuel Vaze, a thirty-five-year-old “free *nègre*,” married to a (presumably white) “Marie Blanche,” with whom he lived in Capesterre.⁹⁰ But most intermarriages in Guadeloupe were between white men and women of non-European descent, owing to the challenges posed to both gender and racial hierarchies by alliances between white women and men of African descent and because men outnumbered women in the French population.⁹¹ In 1669, governor of Guadeloupe Claude-François Du Lyon wrote that “there [were] many more men and boys than girls of marriageable age, which is why [. . .] some masters have married their *négresses*.”⁹² For example, the census of 1671 listed Mathieu Pasquet, a white slaveowner married to a Black woman named Marie, with whom he had a *mulâtre* son. That year, another white man named Florent Commère was married to a Black woman named Luce Sarisse, who came from the parish of Goyave, in the East of Basse-Terre. One Jacques Cramilly was married to a Black woman named Suzanne in Grande-Terre.⁹³ Some of the white

men who married women of African descent in Guadeloupe came from the upper strata of French society. For example, Jacques Valette, a Frenchman listed as a “Cabin Master, Bourgeois and Merchant” in the Guadeloupean census of 1671, had married a woman named Marie Mamachou, categorized as a *négresse* and a “domestic servant.”⁹⁴ Another Frenchman named Sieur Antoine Lietard, described as a lieutenant in the militia of Pointe-Noire (on the western shore of the island), married a Black woman named Barbe in 1673.⁹⁵ The missionary Labat described Barbe Lietard as “a very beautiful *négresse*” and her mixed children as “handsome little *mulâtres*.”⁹⁶

While Labat’s comments seem rather supportive, by the late seventeenth century, many local colonists looked unfavorably on those mixed alliances. According to the parish registers of Pointe-Noire, no banns were published to announce the marriage between Antoine and Barbe, “for very grave reasons.”⁹⁷ Authorities in Guadeloupe had already expressed their objection to such alliances six years before Antoine had married Barbe. In 1667, a Flemish settler named Jacob Michel had been taken to the court of the Council of Guadeloupe by relatives who wanted to exclude his Black wife, Marie Lâcotti, from a family inheritance. Strikingly, the council had agreed to annul this marriage, invoking “the shame [*la honte*] on the family”—we will see later how this notion of familial shame was brought up again several times across the empire.⁹⁸ This sentiment of shame arose as settlers in the Caribbean increasingly relied on enslaved Africans, causing Black identity to become increasingly associated with the debased status of the enslaved. The Council of Guadeloupe had also issued an edict after the trial, which in the end was never ratified by the crown, that prohibited clergymen from officiating weddings “between a white man and a Black woman, and a white woman and a Black man” without the approval of the governor or the commander of the island.⁹⁹

But despite growing opposition to intermarriages, some of the *mulâtres* born to mixed Catholic unions in the French Lesser Antilles were assimilated into the “white” population of the islands. This practice was apparently less frequent in Martinique than it was in Guadeloupe, for several possible reasons. The first of these is that Black plantation slavery was more developed in Martinique than in Guadeloupe: there were 11,476 enslaved people in Martinique in 1688, compared to 5,347 in Guadeloupe in 1687.¹⁰⁰ Martinique may have exhibited heightened prejudice as a result, with colonists on that island being more committed to protect the slave system.

Importantly, colonists in Guadeloupe experienced less oversight from metropolitan authorities than their counterparts in Martinique owing to the island's isolation: beginning in the 1660s, the port of Saint-Pierre in Martinique exercised a monopoly that prevented direct exchanges between France and Guadeloupe.¹⁰¹ According to historian Jessica Pierre-Louis's study of the parish registers of Fort-Royal, Lamentin, Marin, Rivière-Pilote, La Trinité, Sainte-Marie, and Le Prêcheur, the number of people of African descent who were assimilated into white society in Martinique grew from thirteen in the period between 1674 and 1683 to fifty-two in the period between 1714 and 1723.¹⁰² A higher proportion of people of African descent might have been able to cross the color line in Guadeloupe: this is suggested by Frédéric Régent's study of the story of the 1,400 members of the Caniquit family, who were all descended from two Black women named Marguerite Maignan and Isabelle Galande and from a Brazilian man named François Caniquit. Because all the female descendants of the Caniquit family married white men, only one was classified as a *mulâtre* in parish registers.¹⁰³ According to Régent, the process of assimilation that took place in the seventeenth century played a significant role in the formation of the (pseudo) "white" planter class of Guadeloupe.¹⁰⁴

But of all French colonies, Isle Bourbon was probably the one where the practice of assimilation was the most widespread. To trace the history of assimilation on Isle Bourbon, we must first go back in time and return to Madagascar for a moment. Since the 1640s, many Frenchmen in Anosy had married local women in both *vodin'omby* ceremonies *à la mode du pays* and the Catholic Church, often after establishing a farm with them in the countryside of Anosy.¹⁰⁵ While some of these unions, between Frenchmen and *roandria* women, were intended to seal or strengthen diplomatic and commercial alliances with *grands du pays*, others were to enslaved captives captured in raids since the 1630s. Many of these mixed marriages to manumitted captives started off as relationships of concubinage.¹⁰⁶ Johannes Swarts, a traveler from Batavia, noted sarcastically in 1661 that every French colonist in Madagascar "openly [kept] a concubine in his house to serve him, like a nobleman [served] by a slave."¹⁰⁷ Because unfree and free Malagasy women in those relationships with European men in Anosy faced sexual coercion and abuse, the French Company of the East Indies resolved to take measures to protect them: article III of the "Statutes, Ordinances, and Regulations" issued by this company in 1664 prohibited Frenchmen

from raping and mistreating local women in Madagascar. It explicitly declared, "Whoever takes a woman or girl by force will be punished."¹⁰⁸ Although this ordinance did not target enslaved women specifically, article XIII of the same document did enjoin Frenchmen to treat enslaved servants "humanely without molesting or outraging them, under pain of corporal punishment."¹⁰⁹

Because no parish registers have survived, the precise number of Catholic intermarriages officiated between manumitted or freeborn women and Frenchmen in seventeenth-century Madagascar cannot be assessed, nor can the number of mixed children born from them. Over two dozen French–Malagasy Catholic intermarriages are documented, however, and dozens more probably took place.¹¹⁰ As early as 1648, the missionary Nacquart reported that some of the Malagasy women who had been baptized in Anosy had been married to Frenchmen.¹¹¹ Then, in 1656, the missionary Bourdaise officiated the marriages of ten Frenchmen (and one English Catholic convert) to Malagasy women.¹¹² Over a decade later, *Sieur Du Bois* noted the presence of 250 Frenchmen in Madagascar, who "for the most part [had] married women from this island," although probably not all of those marriages were Catholic.¹¹³ Most Catholic marriages celebrated in Madagascar were between a Frenchman and a Malagasy woman who were already married in the manner of the country, or already living in concubinage.

The Tanosy tradition of intermarriage was subsequently transported to *Isle Bourbon* by the French–Malagasy couples and other evacuees who began settling on the island from 1663, helping authorities to remedy the lack of European settlers in the colony. Reflecting on the history of *Isle Bourbon* in 1717, the French traveler *Guy Le Gentil de La Barbinais* recounted how some of the mixed couples on the island had come from Madagascar, fleeing the French outpost of *Fort-Dauphin* after the anti-colonial revolt of 1674. A group of European pirates had also settled on *Isle Bourbon*, where, in his own words, "they [had] married Black women out of necessity."¹¹⁴ European sailors had then married the mixed girls born to those earlier alliances. *La Barbinais* claimed that these mixed girls were "neither Black nor white, but rather had something of both colors."¹¹⁵ By 1690, an astounding 70 percent of all free couples recorded in the census of *Isle Bourbon* consisted of a European man and a woman of non-European descent (twenty-eight couples). Of these European men, 39 percent had

married Christian Luso-Indian women (categorized as *métis des Indes* or *Indo-Portugaises*), 32 percent had married Malagasies, and 21 percent had married mixed women of Malagasy, South Asian, or other non-European ancestries born on Isle Bourbon (labeled *métis* or *mulâtresses*).¹¹⁶ Most of these mixed unions were celebrated in the Catholic Church because those women had been converted by European missionaries in India, in Madagascar, or on the island itself. Many manumitted women of Malagasy, South Asian, and African descent on Isle Bourbon also married Frenchmen in the Catholic Church after they were baptized by the Lazarist priests.¹¹⁷

This is how mixed children born to Catholic unions between Frenchmen and women of non-European ancestries came to form the bulk of Isle Bourbon's free settler society through the late seventeenth century and into the beginning of the eighteenth. Among the dozens of evacuees from Madagascar, there were already at least four mixed French–Malagasy children (categorized as *métis*).¹¹⁸ Sieur L'Huillier even claimed (by mistake) that “the first people who [settled] on [Isle Bourbon] were [mixed French–Malagasy] *métis* who had found refuge [on the island] after they had been expelled from Madagascar,” following the anti-colonial revolt of 1673.¹¹⁹ Among these immigrants, Malagasy women married to European men had at least 97 children (amounting to 37 percent of the first generation of settlers born on Isle Bourbon). Meanwhile, Luso-Indian women had 109 children (42 percent), and Frenchwomen had only 55 (21 percent).¹²⁰ The number of mixed people on Isle Bourbon (initially labeled interchangeably as *mulâtres* or *métis*) grew from only 3 people in 1667 (4 percent of the population) to 106 in 1686 (30 percent).¹²¹ Most of these *métis* or *mulâtres* were of mixed French–Malagasy and Eurasian ancestries.

French metropolitan authorities rapidly began to look unfavorably on these mixed alliances. Many colonial officials on the island clearly supported intermarriages, since they engaged in them. Remember the story of the Six Seniors of the parish of Saint-Paul who ruled over the island from 1692 to 1696: half of them—Touchard, Carron, and Payet—had married women of Malagasy or Luso-Indian ancestries. Yet, from the 1670s, metropolitan authorities began to issue the very first consistent series of intermarriage bans of the French empire, for Isle Bourbon. Ten years after the Company of the East Indies had expressed its intent to prevent mixed relationships between Frenchmen and Malagasy women in Madagascar, in 1674, while visiting Isle Bourbon, the viceroy of the

East Indies, Jacob Blanquet de La Haye, issued an ordinance whose article XX stated, “We forbid Frenchmen from marrying *négresses* [. . .] and we forbid Black men [*Noirs*] from marrying white women [*Blanches*].”¹²² This ban clearly targeted unions between Frenchmen and Malagasy or South Asian women since the labels “*négres[sés]*” and “Black” were commonly employed to designate free and unfree people of South Asian and Malagasy ancestries on the island at the time.¹²³ Metropolitan authorities thereafter repeated on multiple occasions La Haye’s intermarriage prohibition of 1674 for Isle Bourbon, first under governor Sieur de Vauboulon in 1689 and then under his successor, Sieur de Villiers, in 1701 and yet again in 1709.¹²⁴

How can we explain this decision by metropolitan officials to prohibit intermarriage on Isle Bourbon? When they made their decision to ban intermarriage, metropolitan authorities might have been influenced by ideas from other European colonies and outposts in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds. To better understand La Haye’s decision to issue the original intermarriage ban of 1674, we must look at his prior travel experiences. When visiting the French outpost of Fort-Dauphin while on his way to India in 1671, La Haye might have heard about the local ban of 1664, which prohibited Frenchmen from “giving themselves away” to “women of the country.” Then, when he finally reached India in 1672, La Haye traveled to Portuguese Daman, San-Thomé, and Goa, where he also witnessed growing opposition to intermarriage, in this context between the Portuguese and South Asian women.¹²⁵ When issuing the intermarriage bans of Isle Bourbon, French officials might have also been influenced by ideas from the Atlantic world. In fact, the rhetoric employed by French authorities to justify the issuance of the intermarriage ban on Isle Bourbon in 1709 echoed the language of “shame” already used by the Council of Guadeloupe decades earlier: its authors described intermarriages between whites and Blacks on Isle Bourbon as “indecent and shameful [*ignominieux*].”¹²⁶

But the series of intermarriage bans issued for Isle Bourbon from the 1670s was, above all else, a response to local circumstances. These bans were clearly intended to protect the emerging bonded labor system on the island, since article XX of La Haye’s ordinance explicitly stated that mixed marriages would “divert Blacks from [their] duties.”¹²⁷ Colonists on Isle Bourbon initially engaged in subsistence agriculture to become self-sufficient and supply fresh food to passing ships en route to Asia.¹²⁸ Because they relied on a bonded workforce, bonded laborers on Isle Bourbon

already amounted to 45 percent of the population by 1674.¹²⁹ Preventing intermarriage in this context thus seemed necessary to avoid manumissions and protect the local economy.

Despite prohibitions, however, the tradition of *métissage* on Isle Bourbon remained alive and well throughout the early eighteenth century. The number of mixed couples on early eighteenth-century Isle Bourbon cannot be evaluated with precision, though, because census makers in 1704 and 1705 began to group all island-born free men, women and children under the undifferentiated categories “creoles of the island” (*créoles de l’isle*) and “from Mascarin island” (or *de Mascarin*, which was the other name given to Isle Bourbon).¹³⁰ Only four French married couples were recorded in 1705, amounting to just 5 percent of all free households on the island. Eight free mixed white-Malagasy married couples were also recorded that year (amounting to 10 percent of all free households), as well as five free white-Luso-Indian married couples (6 percent). It is reasonable to assume that many of the free men and women categorized as “creoles of the island” or “from Mascarin island” by the early eighteenth century had origins in Madagascar and South Asia, since most were born to earlier mixed unions. Therefore, as many as sixty other free married couples in 1705 might have been mixed or nonwhite (78 percent).¹³¹

The story of the Fontaine family illustrates how *métissage* became entrenched in the local tradition of Isle Bourbon. The French carpenter Jacques Fontaine married Marie Anne Sannes “from the Matataña [province], on the Island of [. . .] Madagascar,” in 1671.¹³² Together the couple had five children, whom Boucher labeled “creole *mulâtres*” in 1710.¹³³ Hervé, their fifth son, married Thérèse Damour—the daughter of Georges Damour from Paris and Marie Toute from Madagascar—in 1696. Marie Anne Sannes and Marie Toute were close friends, which probably brought the two families together. In 1698, Jacques and Marie’s third child, Jacques Fontaine Jr., married the daughter of a Frenchman and a Malagasy woman. Their second child, Marie Anne Jr., married a Frenchman named Jacques Lauret a year later and had three children with him.¹³⁴ The Fontaine family ended up building kinship networks that extended far beyond Isle Bourbon: in 1702, Jeanne, another of Marie Anne and Jacques’s children, married a white sailor named Eustache Le Roy from the Caribbean island of Martinique.¹³⁵

Mixed French–Malagasy and French–Luso-Indian children born to early intermarriages were assimilated into the “white” population of Isle Bourbon, eventually forming the bulk of the island’s “white” planter class, which by the 1720s played a key role in France’s colonial coffee economy.¹³⁶ These mixed children probably amounted to a majority of the free population of Isle Bourbon by the 1710s: in a random sample of 201 free adults studied by historian Nathan Marvin, as much as 52 percent had at least one parent of Malagasy or Asian ancestry by 1711.¹³⁷ The assimilation of these *mulâtres* into the “white” population of the island was progressive, as reflected by the evolution of the lexicon used in local censuses to describe them. Until the 1690s, local census makers employed racial labels to classify free people on the island—such as “white woman” (*femme blanche*), “*négresse* woman from Madagascar” (*femme negresse de Madagascar*), “*métis* woman from the East Indies” (*femme des indes mestice*), or “*négresse* woman from the East Indies” (*femmes des indes negresse*).¹³⁸ Those racial labels began to fade around 1704 and 1705, when local census makers began to use the labels “creoles of the island” and “from Mascarin island.”¹³⁹ Then, finally, the census of 1713 lumped together all white Europeans and white creoles with free creole people of Malagasy and Luso-Indian descent under the label “white males and females” (*Blancs mâles et femelles*).¹⁴⁰

French officials’ practice of assimilating populations of Eurasian descent into the “white” category was not limited to Isle Bourbon: Eurasian people were also classified as “whites” in the censuses of French India, as a result of an attempt by local officials to populate their commercial outposts with white-passing residents.¹⁴¹ With the near-absence of European women, Frenchmen in the remote South Asian outposts were especially inclined to associate with local women: this applied to men from all strata of society, from soldiers and gunners to high-ranking officials.¹⁴² Many of these women were Luso-Indians, while some were Indian Hindus (labeled as *Gentils*), Muslims, and *topas*—the *topas* formed a community of Indians who had been Christianized and exposed to European cultural practices during the earlier period of Portuguese presence.¹⁴³ While some were economically comfortable, most came from the lower strata of society: in 1702, Louis-Estienne de Pilavoine, the director-general of the company, told company officials that “those of your employees who die in the [East] Indies are typically married to a woman of the country, who is often of low birth.”¹⁴⁴ Marriage, even to a low-ranking Frenchman, could bring some

economic benefits to an Indian or Luso-Indian woman and to her family. Such was especially the case when the man died because widows in French India were entitled to a pension that was paid to them by the company.¹⁴⁵

Many mixed marriages took place in the French outposts of India. Around 1690, the French traveler Robert Challe noted that most of the 200 Frenchmen who resided in Pondicherry had married “Indian women or Portuguese girls, who are not Black, but rather *métis* or *mulâtre*.”¹⁴⁶ In 1693, Pilavoine mentioned several company employees “with families in Surat.”¹⁴⁷ Although parish registers from the outposts of French India do not usually state people’s origins, it is reasonable to assume that many of the women with Portuguese names in these records had South Asian origins, since the populations labeled as “Portuguese” (*Portuguais[es]*) in India usually had mixed ancestries.¹⁴⁸ An official document from Pondicherry, dated 1716, presented most members of the so-called “Portuguese race” of India as “*mulâtres*” (Eurasians).¹⁴⁹ According to officer Mathieu de Gennes de la Chancelière, who spent time in Bengal in the 1740s, the “Portuguese” were “mainly descended from the families of Portuguese *métis* (or *mulâtres*), widespread in Bengal.”¹⁵⁰ Thus, as many as 89 percent of the marriages (93 out of 104) recorded in the parish registers of Pondicherry between 1687 and 1719 might have involved a European man and a woman of South Asian descent. Seven of these unions involved women labeled as *métis* or “creole” or women whose parents were labeled as *Gentils*. The rest involved women born in South Asia or Africa, with creole origins on Isle Bourbon—or who had a Portuguese name and/or at least one parent with a Portuguese name.¹⁵¹ In the same Pondicherry registers, only seven unions can be identified with near certainty as involving two Europeans.¹⁵² Because they were Christian, Europeanized and often comfortable financially, Luso-Indian women and their mixed children in Pondicherry and Chandernagore were either not assigned a racial label at all in official documents or lumped together with white Europeans under the “white” label. In fact, Luso-Indian people lived together with the French in the “white town” (*la ville blanche*) of Chandernagore.¹⁵³

How did the process of assimilation work, exactly, across the French Indian Ocean and Atlantic positions? Multiple factors determined who could be assimilated into the “white” population. To start with, assimilated people had to be Catholic, married in the Catholic Church, Europeanized, and/or born to Catholic parents. According to historians Adrian Carton and Leonard Hodges, being “white” in Pondicherry and Chandernagore

depended on one's style of dress and religious practice rather than skin color.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, the Bourbon Island Creoles of Malagasy and Luso-Indian ancestries were classified as "whites" because they were Catholic and embraced European fashion conventions, as well as other elements of French material culture, such as farming European crops with axes and spades, drinking wine, cooking in iron pots, or using European silverware.¹⁵⁵ But other factors also determined who could be considered "white," including social rank, wealth, profession, education, reputation, and social networks.¹⁵⁶ In fact, social status was probably the most important criteria for assimilation.¹⁵⁷ In 1804 and 1805, looking back at the history of Guadeloupe, a Frenchman stressed the importance of reputation. He claimed, "There are some whose African origin did not even go back three generations when they were incorporated into the white class! The virtues of these families made them deserve to pass into the superior class."¹⁵⁸ This same Frenchman emphasized the importance of social connections as well: "protections also brought this surprising privilege," he claimed.¹⁵⁹

Phenotype—especially white-looking skin acquired through generations of intermixing with white people—also allowed many to integrate into the "white" category. By the late seventeenth century, French observers began to notice the presence overseas of several communities of non-European ancestries able to blend into the white population because they had literally become "whitened" by successive generations of intermixing with white Europeans. This rhetoric had already surfaced in the Indian Ocean by the 1690s. One of the Frenchmen who articulated this idea of skin "whitening" through *métissage* was Robert Challe—a French globetrotter who spent time in New France before traveling to Pondicherry in the 1690s and spent time in the Antilles while on his way back to France. Like several French observers after him, Challe recounted with both fascination and contentment his encounter with one of those "whitened" populations. In 1690, he reflected on the impact that mixed alliances had on the skin color of Eurasian children. He claimed that the children of Luso-Indian women and Frenchmen in Pondicherry were "light-haired, and with a skin color as white as that of the finest Europeans."¹⁶⁰ The French traveler Guy Le Gentil de La Barbinais reached a similar conclusion while spending time on Isle Bourbon, suggesting that this kind of rhetorical gesture was probably not uncommon in the Indian Ocean. He explained in 1717 that, through sustained association with white men over generations, mixed Bourbon Island

Creole women “purif[ie]d their] blood” and “their complexion “bec[ame] whiter step by step,” to the point that three generations later, the child was “blond-haired, and as fair-skinned as an Englishwoman”—a visual experience which in his own word “made him feel admiration.”¹⁶¹

By the end of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, French observers in the Americas drew on this same “whitening” rhetoric that had emerged in the Indian Ocean by 1690. Only five years after Robert Challe had noted the presence of Eurasian people with a skin “*as white as that of the finest Europeans*,” the missionary Labat had reached a similar conclusion concerning the children born to Caribbean *mulâtres*.¹⁶² He claimed, “If we marry male or female *mulâtres* to white people, *their children will become whiter* [. . .]. A color becomes stronger step by step, by merging with a color of the same species.”¹⁶³ A few years later, after spending time on Isle Bourbon between 1698 and 1702, Henri Roulleaux Sieur de La Vente, the vicar-general of Louisiana and one of the most fervent proponents of Native American–French intermarriage, also invoked the skin “whitening” effect that intermarriages could have on mixed children.¹⁶⁴ Here is what he wrote about Illinois converts to Christianity in 1708, perhaps after hearing similar language used with respect to Bourbon Island Creole people while he was sojourning in the Indian Ocean: “We do not see that the blood of the *sauvages* will have any prejudicial effect on the blood of the French. As we see, the whiteness of the children of French men married with the *sauvages* is equal to that of the French themselves.”¹⁶⁵ It should be noted that not everybody agreed with La Vente that the process of amalgamation through skin whitening could ever be complete. Back in the Indian Ocean, La Barbinais felt compelled to specify that the women who had become “blond-haired” and “as fair-skinned as Englishwom[e]n” on Isle Bourbon “though they had changed their [skin] color, never lost a certain smell (which may be called *fumet* [game meat smell], which betrays their origin.”¹⁶⁶

Women’s Role as Christian Leaders Advancing Evangelization

In addition to enabling assimilation, Catholic intermarriage also advanced the French colonial enterprise by encouraging local female converts and their descendants to set a good example and become evangelizing leaders in

their communities. Scholars have already brought to light the stories of several Illinois women who endeavored to evangelize their communities after they had married Frenchmen in Catholic ceremonies.¹⁶⁷ The story of Marie Rouensa, an Illinois woman who took it upon herself to Christianize both her family and her community in Kaskaskia after she married a French *voyageur* named Sieur Michel Accault in the Catholic Church, is well known.¹⁶⁸

Several Christian women of non-European descent played a similar role in the Indian Ocean after they had married Frenchmen in the Catholic Church. This is illustrated by the story of Louise Payet, the French-Malagasy *mulâtresse* of Saint-Paul, Isle Bourbon, who educated several little girls from her neighborhood and also made a donation to Lazarist missionaries so that they could appoint two female schoolteachers who would instruct young women across the island. Recall also how Malagasy women had been encouraged to take on a key role in the French evangelizing project around the mid-seventeenth century, in the context of the French colonial enterprise in Anosy, Madagascar. As early as 1655, the missionary Bourdaise had praised several Malagasy female converts who had just been married to Frenchmen for their virtue and devotion to the Catholic faith, describing them as “a model for all other women to follow.”¹⁶⁹ One year later, in the valley of Ambolo, Father Mousnier baptized three Malagasy women who had also married Frenchmen.¹⁷⁰ He rejoiced that these women had relinquished their old ways and were now “living righteously, setting an example for other Malagasy women.”¹⁷¹ Bourdaise hoped that the daughter of a village chief named Dian Ramouse would encourage members of her community to convert to Christianity. She had gotten married to a Frenchman described as “a very honest man, and especially a good Catholic.”¹⁷² At least one Malagasy woman did convince members of her community to convert. Bourdaise praised the *roandria* daughter of a *grand du pays* who had married a Frenchman named Balar for her wisdom and devotion to the Christian faith. Like Marie Rouensa, she had managed to convince her entire family to convert to Catholicism. She also frequently brought new converts to Bourdaise so they could be baptized.¹⁷³

Mixed Christian marriages had another unforeseen positive effect on the progress of the religious missions: they turned insubordinate Frenchmen into compliant Christians. Catholic intermarriage in the Illinois Country famously encouraged unruly French itinerant *coureurs de bois* and *voyageurs*

to become devout Christians, settle down, and cultivate the land.¹⁷⁴ The story of Accault, Marie Rouensa's French husband, who was "famous in [the] Illinois Country [for all his debaucheries]," is well known. Accault was transformed by his marriage to the devout Marie Rouensa: he purchased half of the Illinois concession, stopped traveling, and embraced a righteous Christian lifestyle.¹⁷⁵ His story echoes that of another Frenchman who lived in Madagascar in the second half of the seventeenth century, whom Bourdaise described as a drunken scoundrel "ruder and more barbaric than [Malagasy] islanders." He portrayed his Malagasy wife as "the strongest woman that God made [him] find in this corner of the world." Although she was brutally battered by her French husband, this woman still took good care of him when he fell sick, eventually nursing him back to health. Bourdaise claimed that this woman "touched the heart of this barbarous Frenchman [. . .] who [began to] love her deeply and [. . .] abandoned his debaucheries." He described this Frenchman as "an unbeliever [who had been] sanctified by his devout wife."¹⁷⁶

What led those Malagasy women to embrace Christianity and to marry Frenchmen? Imbalanced sex ratios caused by endemic male-led warfare in Anosy might have been an important factor. Some might have also wanted to stay away from the difficult realities of polygamous life. According to Flacourt, women within the same polygamous household in Anosy called each other *mapirase*, which meant "enemy," because these "wives who share only one man hate[d] each other to death."¹⁷⁷ Many were also looking for security, food, foreign goods and connections for themselves and their kinspeople.¹⁷⁸ Conversion to Catholicism and marriage to a European man also allowed a few to garner influence in their patriarchal communities as evangelizing agents but also as diplomatic intermediaries. Some, on the other hand, were pressured into marrying Frenchmen by members of their communities because they were eager to form advantageous military and commercial alliances with the Europeans.

Métissage and Alliance Formation

As was the case in North America, Frenchmen in Anosy and the Senegambian coastline utilized intermarriage to multiply alliances with powerful

locals.¹⁷⁹ Catholic marriage and marriages *à la mode du pays* with *roandria* women helped the French form vital diplomatic and military alliances with several kings and chiefs in Anosy. Marriages in the manner of the country in Anosy were almost certainly more widespread than Catholic unions, partly because of the lack of missionaries on the island. This would explain why, in 1656, the missionary Bourdaise rejoiced that Malagasy women on the island were finally asking to be “properly married, like the [wives] of the French.”¹⁸⁰

Accounts of wedding ceremonies *à la mode du pays* in seventeenth-century Madagascar vary. Flacourt mentioned a blessing said by an *ombiassa*, after which the newlyweds would tie their hair together while holding hands and press against one another’s knees.¹⁸¹ The marriage was sealed with the sacrifice of an ox or a sheep, intended as a gift to the ancestors to attain their blessing. Then the blood of the sacrificed animal was mixed with red coal to form a paste (*aringelo* or *arimbelona*), which was applied to the faces of the newly wedded couple. The best part of the sacrificed animal’s meat (*vodin’omby* for cow’s rears and *vodiondry* for sheep’s rears) was offered to the wife’s family.¹⁸² The ceremony was followed by a feast and a dance.¹⁸³

Several *roandria* explicitly supported marriages between women in their communities and Frenchmen. Despite the fact that they favored endogamy, they sometimes let *tha-vinany* intermarriages (“across the lagoon”) take place in order to find new allies who were obligated to give them food, livestock and military support after being integrated into their family.¹⁸⁴ The *roandria* had very high expectations from their kinfolk indeed. After they married a *roandria* woman, Frenchmen were expected to feed their new relatives and share with them a portion of the livestock that they captured in raids.¹⁸⁵ This is illustrated by the story of Governor Jacques Pronis. Pronis married the *roandria* princess Dian Ravellom Manor, the niece of the king of Anosy, in a ceremony “following Malagasy precepts” in 1643.¹⁸⁶ His subsequent decision to support his new *roandria* relatives occasioned a major mutiny in Fort-Dauphin: in 1646, a group of hungry French soldiers threw the governor in prison for having used the company’s meager food supplies to feed his new kinfolk.¹⁸⁷

On the other hand, marriage to a *roandria* woman also allowed the French to strengthen their military power and be given new land. Remember how, after marrying the daughter of King Rassisate, the French

soldier La Case became the king of the valley of Ambolo and acquired an army of 10,000 Malagasy warriors, which he used to defend and feed the French at Fort-Dauphin. La Case was not the only Frenchman positioned to inherit a local kingdom as a result of marrying into a local royal lineage. After marrying Dian Ravellom Manor, Jacques Pronis joined the line of possible heirs to the entire kingdom of Anosy and was given the new name Ra[/]jac (which meant *grand Jac*) by his new people. Pronis's brother-in-law, another pretender to the throne named Dian Tsissei, even attempted to murder the man in order to improve his chances: he plotted an attack on Fort-Dauphin that was eventually thwarted in 1648.¹⁸⁸

Like their counterparts in the early eighteenth-century Illinois Country, many of the Frenchmen who formed alliances with local women in Anosy acquired a plot of land that they could cultivate.¹⁸⁹ The French administrator Sieur Du Bois counted hundreds of Frenchmen in Madagascar who had acquired agricultural estates after marrying local women.¹⁹⁰ It was customary for the future husband in a marriage *à la mode du pays* to pay a dowry to the wife's family, which usually consisted of livestock, jewelry, furniture and other valuables. The groom would traditionally receive a dowry from his wife's family, too, that could include livestock and household goods.¹⁹¹ He would also be granted privileges and land by the chief of his wife's village. Remember when governor Flacourt reported that the masters of the villages offered to French grooms the opportunity to cultivate their land.¹⁹²

Local wives and consorts in Anosy acted as diplomatic intermediaries between their communities and the French at Fort-Dauphin.¹⁹³ Such was the case of queen Dian Nong after she had married La Case, the legendary French soldier who became king of the valley of Ambolo. She came to the fort bearing gifts as a testimony to the continued friendship between the French and the people of Ambolo.¹⁹⁴ In 1671, another Malagasy woman, who was married to a French lieutenant named Thomaspin, was sent as an emissary to negotiate an important peace deal with a *grand du pays* from southern Madagascar named Rafelle, who had plundered the French outpost at Fort-Dauphin and kidnapped a Frenchman.¹⁹⁵ Other local women alerted French authorities at the fort of impending enemy attacks.¹⁹⁶ In fact, it was Pronis's own spouse, Dian Ravellom Manor, who had allowed the French to thwart the 1648 attack of the other pretender to the throne of Anosy, Dian Tsissei, by sounding the alarm.¹⁹⁷ That same year, Dian Ravellom's own

nursing mother also alerted the French at Fort-Dauphin of an impending attack by king Dian Ramach after he had turned against them.¹⁹⁸

In addition to helping them protect their fragile position on the Tolagnare peninsula, intermarriage and relationships of concubinage enabled the French in Anosy to advance their commercial and wider economic interests. Those who married high-ranking *roandria* women in Catholic and *vodin'omby* ceremonies *à la mode du pays* gained membership in both a local clan and trading networks.¹⁹⁹ Those who farmed the land across the countryside of Anosy often formed business partnerships with their Malagasy wives and consorts, managing the land, livestock, and human captives together with them and using their own houses to store their farm products before they could be sold.²⁰⁰ The women drew on their own connections to find buyers, selling the farm's products on their husbands' behalf.²⁰¹ According to a French settler named Degrandmaison, by 1670, individual Frenchmen effectively controlled the French trade in Madagascar because they—unlike the Company of the East Indies—had intimate access to “Blacks” able to find outlets for their merchandise.²⁰²

Intermarriage *à la mode du pays*, along with casual sex, played a similar role on the islands and in the coastal areas of Senegambia. French authorities repeatedly complained of high-ranking company agents and ordinary employees in the region who broke the company's monopoly by trading with African and Eurafrian women. Looking back at the history of Saint-Louis while on his mission to Senegambia in 1758, the French botanist Michel Adanson explained that, in the past, “these women [. . .] traded on behalf of the employees with whom they partnered, at the expense of the company, and they obtained [. . .] fine and precious merchandise from the director or commandant [. . .].”²⁰³ The evidence suggests that some European men had sex with some of these African and Eurafrian merchants. When he met several women from coastal villages in the company's store in 1685, La Courbe claimed that “there are many of them who, on the pretext that they come to sell merchandise, debauch our white men to get merchandise in return.”²⁰⁴ He eventually resolved to expel these women from Fort Saint-Louis in 1686 in an attempt to prevent French company employees from having sex with them.²⁰⁵ Some of the relationships between Frenchmen and female merchants were in all appearances formed in the context of the *folgars*. An adventurer named Sieur Mathelot accused Frenchmen in Senegambia of wasting “the most beautiful and precious

merchandise of the company to please and satisfy the luxurious aspirations of those indecent women” during festivities.²⁰⁶ A few of the female merchants who formed relationships with French company agents and employees in Senegambia were high ranking. For example, La Courbe described Senhora Belinguer, the merchant princess who hosted him in Albreda in 1685, as a “famous *courtesan* of this country [. . .] beautiful, tall, and with a nice body, although a little old.”²⁰⁷

Casual sex, along with the regularity of divorce and remarriage in marriages *à la mode du pays* with local women, must have played a critical role in sustaining colonial trade in both Senegambia and Anosy.²⁰⁸ Back in Madagascar, Carpeau du Saussay noted that “polygamy, which is in use among many populations, is also practiced among [Malagasies].”²⁰⁹ Sieur Du Bois also specified that “men [in Madagascar] ha[d] as many women as they want[ed] as long as they ha[d] the means to feed them.”²¹⁰ French observers also commented on the reversibility of marriage in Anosy: as Carpeau du Saussay explained, “Men and women [were] allowed to remarry whenever they want[ed].” In an attempt to satisfy his readers’ craving for sensationalism, he added that “many use[d] this freedom to change wives almost every day.”²¹¹ According to Sieur Dellon, “[Malagasies] accept[ed] each other without demanding reciprocal promises, and they le[ft] each other whenever they want[ed] to” as well.²¹² Sieur Du Bois agreed that “men [were] allowed to leave their wives when they want[ed], and women c[ould] leave their husbands [. . .].” He explained that “they live[d] together as long as they like[d] each other, otherwise they le[ft] each other and [found] someone else.”²¹³

Although many people in early modern Christian Europe would have disapproved of divorce and polygamy, many Frenchmen in Anosy embraced those practices out of personal preference—and probably out of economic self-interest as well. In 1642, so many Frenchmen had already separated from their spouses in Anosy that Governor Flacourt was forced to stipulate in letters patent that “a Frenchman married to a girl or woman from the island shall not leave or abandon his wife under any circumstances.”²¹⁴ Unaware of the existence of this ban, the missionary Bourdaise wrote a letter to his superiors in 1655, explaining that “we need a law here, among the French and the *nègres*, compelling men to only have one woman, and to stay with her.”²¹⁵ Neither Flacourt’s letters patent nor Bourdaise’s complaint succeeded in convincing the French in Anosy to abstain from

polygamous practices. By 1664, the French Lazarist missionary Nicolas Étienne literally complained of the numerous Frenchmen on the island who were in the habit of “maintain[ing] several wives.”²¹⁶

Divorce and remarriage were common practices in Senegambia as well, allowing Frenchmen to form alliances with local African and Eurafrican merchants and businesswomen. Most of the Frenchmen who married local African and Eurafrican women in Saint-Louis did so through Lebu and Wolof ceremonies *à la mode du pays*.²¹⁷ Inter-marriage between local women and European men was hardly new in the region: African women had begun to marry Portuguese traders on the west coast of Africa beginning in the late fifteenth century.²¹⁸ Jean Barbot, a French Huguenot who spent time in West Africa in the 1670s and 1680s, explained that marriages *à la mode du pays* were “not unbreakable [. . .] but rather [lasted] as long as the parties ha[d] no reason to complain about each other, or until they [were] separated forever.”²¹⁹ The French medical doctor and explorer René-Claude Geoffroy de Villeneuve, who traveled to Senegambia in the 1780s, also explained that free African and Eurafrican women “freely contract a type of limited marriage with Europeans, regarding themselves as legitimate wives [. . .]. The departure of the white [man] to Europe, with no expectation of returning, breaks the ties of matrimony, and [the woman] soon after enters a new contract.”²²⁰ Those unions could be advantageous for local African and Eurafrican women if the Frenchman had access to European merchandise. They were especially advantageous for Frenchmen when the woman had access to inland connections that could allow her to secure trading opportunities across Wolof, Lebu, and Pulaar circles.²²¹

Although those mixed relationships turned out to be crucial to the commercial exploitation of the French outposts in Senegambia, French authorities had divided opinions about them. Several French officials clearly approved, since they were willing partners in such unions. Sieur Mathelot noted in 1687 that French “*superiors*, residents and sailors [in Senegambia], freely formed relationships with the *négresses*, and for all to see, as if they were their legitimate wives.”²²² Yet other French officials loudly disapproved. Because these interactions facilitated illicit trading exchanges, the Royal Company of Senegal took measures to prevent them in an ordinance issued in January 1688. Articles III and IV of this ordinance prohibited Frenchmen in Senegambia from “support[ing] any *négresses*, go[ing] to

their cabins, or let[ting] them enter their own, under any circumstances [. . .] under penalty of paying a fine of six livres for each time” or “go[ing] to the villages of the *nègres* without orders from the commandant.”²²³ These regulations were clearly intended to prevent illicit trade between French employees and African women: their authors explicitly complained of “abuses and disorders sustained by [. . .] Directors, Captains, Clerks, Sailors, Soldiers and other employees, who only think about their own profit and will bring about *the ruin of [the company’s] business*.”²²⁴

* * *

Métissage helped the French lay the foundations of their early colonial empire overseas in many different ways. Some women engaged in sexual relationships with Frenchmen as powerful (though most of the time unwitting) agents themselves, while others faced brutal sexual exploitation, coercion and violence. The French began to exploit slave reproduction as early as the seventeenth century in the hope of improving their revenues. They established hereditary slavery and on occasion even engaged in brutal human breeding practices. Though mixed children born in slavery were relatively few in number, they were considered a particularly desirable commodity in the eyes of French colonists. *Métissage* also facilitated the populating of France’s most remote overseas colonies and outposts. Well beyond the Illinois Country, French authorities endeavored to assimilate many freeborn and manumitted Christianized and Europeanized people of non-European descent into “white” society. This pattern of assimilation was most widespread on Isle Bourbon, though it also existed in places like French India and the early French Caribbean. Similarly, the practice of forming alliances with powerful locals through intermarriage or sex advanced empire building not only in North America but also in Anosy and Senegambia. From North America to Senegambia and Madagascar, many Frenchmen embraced local matrimonial practices, using intermarriage “in the manner of the country” to form vital alliances.

Despite the role it played in empire building, not all French officials viewed *métissage* positively. Biases against local women, along with public health preoccupations, led the French Company of the East Indies to issue a first order prohibiting mixed relationships in Madagascar in 1664. Then, as Black people’s identity became associated with the debased status of the enslaved, the Council of Guadeloupe issued the unratified edict of 1667

that prohibited clergymen from officiating marriages “between a white man and a Black woman, and a white woman and a Black man.” A few years after this, between 1674 and 1709, colonial officials on Isle Bourbon enacted a consistent series of intermarriage bans, citing concerns that such unions would “divert Blacks from [their] duties” and were “indecent and shameful.” This series of bans was followed by the decision of the Royal Company of Senegal, in 1688, to prohibit Frenchmen from associating with African or Eurafrican women, in order to curb illicit trade. Opposition to intermarriages was also on the rise in North America by the early eighteenth century.²²⁵ There were concerns that the Frenchmen who had married Native American women in ceremonies *à la façon du pays*, along with their mixed children, were becoming *ensauvagés* (“savage”) by staying in Indigenous villages. At the same time, the Christian missions of New France were failing to deliver their expected outcomes. These factors, along with the staggering expansion of plantation slavery across the eighteenth-century French Atlantic and Indian Oceans, brought a very important shift in the content of imperial policy during the 1720s. This shift marked the end of the early era of French imperialism overseas, whose hallmark was the assimilation project, and ushered in a new era of stringent racial policing.

212. ANOM DPPC G1 477 “Recensement de L’isle de Bourbon en general, fait en Mars 1709”; Barassin, “L’esclavage à Bourbon,” p. 36.

213. Ricquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l’Île Bourbon*, 2:1114; ANOM DPPC G1 477 “Liste des habitans de Lisle de bourbon du mois de Septembre 1690”; ADR C°767 “Recensement général de l’Isle de bourbon année 1708,” f. 35v. For more information about Monique after Louis’s passing, see ANOM G1 477 “Reçenssement general Du quartier St Paul de l’année 1719,” p. 18.

214. Ricquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l’Île Bourbon*, 3:2772. ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir,” pp. 67–68 (quotation); see also ANOM 5 DPPC 31 and “Recensement general de tous les Habitans chefs de familles, femmes, enfans et esclaves qui sont dans l’isle de bourbon [. . .],” Quartier de St Paul, 1705 et avril 1705, f. 2 and “Recensement de l’Isle de Bourbon en général, fait en Mars 1709. On one occasion, Elisabeth was mistakenly categorized as an Indian woman. ANOM 5 DPPC 31 “Liste des habitans de Lisle Bourbon, enfans et negres,” Quartier St Paul.

215. ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir,” p. 67.

216. ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir,” p. 68. For more information about Elisabeth after Athanase’s passing, see ANOM G1 477 “Reçenssement general Du quartier St Paul de l’année 1719,” p. 5.

217. ANOM G1 477 “1704 et avril 1705 Resencement General de tous les Habitans,” f. 2; ANOM G1 477 “Recensement de L’isle de Bourbon en general, fait en Mars 1709.”

218. ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir,” p. 68.

219. See Sabine Noël, *Amours et familles interdites. Blancs et Noirs à l’île Bourbon (La Réunion) au temps de l’esclavage (1665–1848)* (Paris, Les Indes Savantes, 2022), 193. Antoine was baptized in 1709. He initially took the name of his white father, “Antoine Desforges.” Boucher denied the allegation that Antoine was his son, and even petitioned the Superior Council of the island to prevent the boy from using his name.

3. *Empire of Métissage*

1. Louise Siaram bore many mixed children, including both Louise and her younger brother Laurent—who later fathered Marianne Payet, the comfortable coffee planter introduced in “A Tale of Two Mariannes.” Ricquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l’Île Bourbon*, 3: 2125–2126.

2. ADR C°2793 “Contract de mariage de Jacques Maçé Et Louise payet Veuve Cauzan,” f. 29.

3. ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir,” p. 93.

4. On laundry washing as a signal of adhesion to European notions of cleanliness, see White, *Wild Frenchmen*, 19. ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir,” p. 93.

5. ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir,” p. 94.

6. ADR C°767 “Recensement général de l’Isle de bourbon année 1708,” f. 27v.

7. Silk and shirts from France: ADR C°2793 “Vente publique faite des Effets appartenant a Deffun Pierre Folio.” Wheat: ADR C°767 “Recensement général de l’Isle de bourbon année 1708,” f. 27v; Wine grapes: ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir,” pp. 93–94.

8. ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir,” p. 94.

9. Ricquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l’Île Bourbon*, 1:429.

10. Ricquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l’Île Bourbon*, 2:1762.

11. On France's patriarchal culture and inheritance customs, see Marvin, "Bourbon Island Creoles," 6–7.

12. ADR C^o2793 "27 mars 1714," ff. 5–5v. Earlier, in 1707, Louise and François had already given a generous loan of 1,500 livres to Henry. See ADR C^o2793 "22 aoust 1715," f. 16v. Louise also gifted an enslaved Malagasy woman to her niece Agatte Hoareau. See ADR C^o2793 "18 nov[embre] 1715," f. 26.

13. ADR C^o2793 "Lan mil Sept Cens quatorze, et Le Vingt quatre Decembre [. . .]," f. 9.

14. ADR C^o2793 "16 Sept[embre] 1715," f. 17v.

15. ADR 3E03 "Succession Louise Payet. Inventaire après décès de Louise Payet épouse Jacques Macé St Paul, 21 Mars 1730."

16. For a convincing explanation of why the term "assimilation" is appropriate in this context, see Jessica Pierre-Louis, "Les Libres de couleur face au préjugé: Franchir la barrière à la Martinique aux XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles" (PhD diss., Université des Antilles-Guyane, 2015), 231–236.

17. For recent publications in this field, see C. Cowling, M. H. Pereira Toledo Machado, D. Paton, and E. West, "Mothering Slaves: Comparative Perspectives on Motherhood, Childlessness, and the Care of Children in Atlantic Slave Societies," *Slavery & Abolition* 38, no. 2 (2017): 223–231; Sasha Turner, "Home-Grown Slaves: Women, Reproduction, and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, Jamaica 1788–1807," *Journal of Women's History* 23, no. 3 (2011): 39–62, and *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childrearing and Slavery in Jamaica* (EBook, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/duke/detail.action?docID=4854373>. Scholars have been eager to study slave reproduction in this later period because of the major slave trade blockages caused by the Seven Years' War and by the rise of the British abolitionist movement from the 1780s. For an important exception, see Morgan, *Laboring Women*.

18. See especially Arlette Gautier, *Les Soeurs de Solitude: Femmes et esclavage aux Antilles du XVIIe au XIXe siècle* (Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010).

19. There are only a few publications considering assimilation in the historiography on the early modern French colonies. On the French Caribbean, see Pierre-Louis, "Les Libres de couleur face au préjugé," 25–28; Frédéric Régent, "Les Blancs métissés en Guadeloupe au XVIIIe siècle," *Ultramarines* 24 (2004): 25–28, "La fabrication des Blancs dans les colonies françaises," in *De quelle couleur sont les Blancs ? Des 'petits Blancs' des colonies au 'racisme anti-Blancs'*, ed. Sylvie Laurent (Paris: La Découverte, 2013), 67–75, and "Blancs, demi-Blancs, libres de couleur et esclaves dans les colonies françaises avant 1848," *La traite négrière, l'esclavage et leurs abolitions: Mémoire et histoire. Séminaire national organisé le 10 mai 2006. Paris* (Versailles: CRDP de l'académie de Versailles, 2007), 31–40. For some examples from Saint-Domingue, see Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 61; Stewart R. King, *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig: Free People of Color in Pre-Revolutionary Saint Domingue* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 158–179; John Garrigus, *Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 45–49. On the Illinois Country, see White, *Wild Frenchmen*.

20. See White, *Wild Frenchmen*, 30; Kleber, "Gendered Societies," 3, 223.

21. Quoted from Kleber, "Gendered Societies," 10. Sophie White also refers to a "unique pattern of conversion and sacramental intermarriages" in her study of the Illinois Country. See White, *Wild Frenchmen*, 13.

22. Pier Larson treats these relations peripherally in "Play and Possession," and much of the work considering this topic for Senegambia focuses on the later period. For example, see Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa*; Jones, *The Métis of Senegal*; Ken Lo, *De La Signare*; Vial, *Femmes d'influence*.

23. For example, see Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*; Beckles, *Centering Women*, 38–57.
24. Quoted from Shaw, “In the Name of the Mother,” 187. See also Fuentes, “Power and Historical Figuring: Rachael Pringle Polgreen’s Troubled Archive,” *Gender & History* 22, no. 3 (2010): 564–584, 578. Saidiya Hartman goes even deeper by presenting seduction as a pattern upholding the enslaved people’s “perfect submission” because it could convince slaveowners to make the lives of their captives more livable and in the process extinguish rebellious stances that could have ended the institution of slavery. According to Hartman, however, at the same time as it upheld the enslaved people’s “perfect submission,” seduction could also very well “assert the agency of the dominated.” See Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 88.
25. Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, 9.
26. Fuentes, “Power and Historical Figuring,” 566.
27. I pay less attention to abuses perpetrated by white women against enslaved men and to same-sex sexual abuses, since they are less visible in the archives. For an explanation of why this was the case, see the section in Chapter 5 titled “Sexual Violence: A Large-Scale Weapon of Domination in Slave Societies.”
28. On this topic, see Beckles, *Centering Women*, 22–37, esp. 23.
29. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “consent,” accessed December 1, 2024, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/consent_n?tab=meaning_and_use#8580221. See Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 80; Tiya Miles, *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005), esp. chap. 3; Shaw, “In the Name of the Mother,” 185–186.
30. Sharon Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (EBook, Williamsburg: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 3, <https://heinonline-org.proxy.lib.duke.edu/HOL/P?h=hein.beal/rasxpweam0001&i=1>; *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “rape,” accessed December 1, 2024, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/rape_n3?tab=meaning_and_use#27092043.
31. According to Joan Dayan, Doris Garraway, and Saidiya Hartman, affection and desire existed, but only to further complicate power relations between slaveowners and enslaved people. See Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (EBook, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 56, <https://hdl-handle-net.proxy.lib.duke.edu/2027/hebo4571.0001.001>; Garraway, *The Libertine Colony*, 22; Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*.
32. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 5.
33. LSM RSCL File 1752-06-13-01 “Proces Verbal de declaration des Negresses 13 Juin 1752,” p. 5.
34. On Isle Bourbon, in 1729, the Superior Council merely declared, “We will make sure that no soldier will entice or abduct a *négresse* [. . .] We must prevent married and unmarried men from abusing their *négresses*.” ANOM F3 205 “26 Mars 1729,” pp. 158–159 (quotations). Likewise, rapes of enslaved women were not criminalized in the antebellum South. See Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 79.
35. Garraway, *The Libertine Colony*, 341n21.
36. Article XLIV of the *Code Noir* of 1685 defined “slaves” as *meubles* (“movables”). See *Recueils de reglemens, édits, déclarations, et arrêts, concernant le commerce, l’administration de la Justice, et la police des colonies françaises de l’Amérique, & les engagés. Avec le code noir et l’addition audit code*, 2 vols. (Paris: Libraires Associez, 1745), 2:95.
37. *Recueils de reglemens*, 2:85.
38. *Recueils de reglemens*, article XXX, 2:92; ANOM A 23 “Édit du roi, ou Code noir, qui concerne entièrement les esclaves de la Louisiane, Mars 1724,” p. 54; ADR C° 940, “Lettres Patentes en forme d’Édit concernant les Esclaves Negres des Isle de Bourbon et de France, 1723.”

39. Here, I agree with Spear. Spear, *Race, Sex and Social Order*, 72–73.
40. Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, 80–81; Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (EBook, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 158–166, <https://research-ebsco-com.proxy.lib.duke.edu/c/fh2aff/search/details/r22z6cvthj?db=nlebk>.
41. Quoted from Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, 83.
42. Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, 84.
43. Du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, 2:512.
44. Du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, 2:512.
45. Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Nouveau voyage aux isles de l’Amérique*, 8 vols. (Paris: Guillaume Cavelier Père, 1742), 2:185.
46. Labat, *Nouveau voyage* (1742), 2:185–186.
47. ANOM F3 221 “Du 3 octobre 1672,” p. 478.
48. Du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, 2:432.
49. Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Nouveau voyage aux isles de l’Amérique*, 2 vols. (The Hague: Husson et al. 1724), 1:330.
50. Labat, *Nouveau voyage* (1724), 1:330.
51. Du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, 2:512–513.
52. Labat, *Nouveau voyage* (1742), 2:191.
53. ANOM F3 248 “Extrait des avis de Mr de Blenac et Patouet sur divers object d’administration, 1681,” f. 687. Blenac’s position echoed that of late eighteenth-century British abolitionists who wished to use slave reproduction in Jamaica to create “metropolitan whites: Christian, married, industrious, independent, and responsible.” See Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 9.
54. Labat, *Nouveau voyage* (1742), 2:192 (quotation), 191–193.
55. Aubert, “‘To Establish One Law,’” 35–36.
56. Camillia Cowling, *Conceiving Freedom: Women of Color, Gender, and the Abolition of Slavery in Havana and Rio de Janeiro* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 54.
57. On this topic, see Jennifer L. Morgan, “Partus sequitur ventrem: Law, Race, and Reproduction in Colonial Slavery,” *Small Axe* 22, no. 1 (March 2018): 1–17.
58. See Cowling, *Conceiving Freedom*, 53–54; Cowling et al., “Mothering Slaves,” 224; Morgan, *Laboring Women and Reckoning with Slavery*; Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 11, and “Slavery, Freedom, and Women’s Bodies,” *Journal of Women’s History* 29, no. 1 (2017): 177–187, here 177–178.
59. Such was the case despite the fact that the intendant of the French Antilles, Jean-Baptiste Patoulet, justified the French king’s decision to enslave the *mulâtres* by invoking their alleged “bad dispositions” and “libertinage.” ANOM F3 248, “Extrait des avis de Mr de Blenac et Patoulet sur divers objects d’administration, 1681,” f. 687. Patoulet’s rhetoric was partly intended to erect boundaries between Blacks and whites and thereby protect the slave system.
60. Gautier, *Les Soeurs de Solitude*, 69, 87; Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 11.
61. Gautier, *Les Soeurs de Solitude*, 69.
62. Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 9. Of course, those measures were not as extensive as those taken in the wake of the Seven Years’ War and the abolitionist eras, which included balancing sex ratios, improving maternity care, or shielding pregnant women from exhausting work. For examples of measures taken in the British context in this later era, see Turner, *Contested Bodies*, 6–9.
63. Du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, 2:504.
64. Cited in Gautier, *Les Soeurs de Solitude*, 57.
65. Gautier, *Les Soeurs de Solitude*, 57–58.

66. Cited in Gautier, *Les Soeurs de Solitude*, 65.

67. Cited in Barassin, “L’esclavage à Bourbon,” 40.

68. Guadeloupe: ANOM G1 468 “1671, Desnombrement general des hommes, femmes, garçons, filles, serviteurs, servans, neigres, neigresses, neigrillons, Mulastres, Sauvages”; ANOM G1 469 “1696. Recensement general des Isles Guadeloupe Grande Terre, & les Saintes.” Martinique: Léo Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles 1664–1789* (EBook, Paris: Karthala, 2003), 28, <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=A9vPu82grIC&pg=GBS.PP1>.

69. Régent, *La France et ses esclaves*, 111. For more information about enslaved craftsmen and domestic servants in the Caribbean, see Labat, *Nouveau voyage* (La Hague, 1724), 1:328–330.

70. The expression was coined by Orlando Patterson. See Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: a Comparative Study* (EBook, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 133, <https://hdl-handle-net.proxy.lib.duke.edu/2027/hebo3237.0001.001>. For examples from different areas, see Jayne Boisvert, “Colonial Hell and Female Slave Resistance in Saint-Domingue,” *Journal of Haitian Studies* 7, no. 1 (2001): 61–76; Marcela Echeverri, “Enraged to the Limit of Despair: Infanticide and Slave Judicial Strategies in Barbacoas, 1788–98,” *Slavery & Abolition* 30, no. 3 (2009): 403–426; Mary Frederickson and Delores Walters, eds., *Gendered Resistance: Women, Slavery, and the Legacy of Margaret Garner* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013). On this topic, see also Morgan, *Laboring Women*; Sasha Turner, “The Nameless and the Forgotten: Maternal Grief, Sacred Protection, and the Archive of Slavery,” *Slavery & Abolition* 38, no. 2 (2017): 232–250, 233.

71. Labat, *Nouveau voyage* (1742), 2:188.

72. Labat, *Nouveau voyage* (1742), 2:184, 187.

73. Quoted from Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery*, 4–5; Cowling et al., “Mothering Slaves,” 224, 226; Turner, “The Nameless and the Forgotten”; Rhaisa Kameela Williams, “Toward a Theory of Black Maternal Grief,” *Journal of the Association of Black Anthropologists* 24, no. 1 (2016): 17–30.

74. Du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, 2:510.

75. On these tropes in the British Atlantic context, see Jennifer L. Morgan, “‘Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder’: Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500–1770,” *WMQ* 54, no. 1 (1997): 167–192, and *Laboring Women*, chap. 1.

76. Du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, 2:505–506.

77. Carpeau du Saussay, *Voyage de Madagascar*, 253–254.

78. *Recueils de reglemens*, 2:85.

79. Many European fathers in Dutch Batavia legitimized their mixed children and manumitted them, thereby granting them Dutch status. See Bosma and Raben, *Being “Dutch” in the Indies*.

80. Pierre-Louis, “Les livres de couleur face au préjugé,” 155.

81. Cited in Marvin, “Bourbon Island Creoles,” 7n8. By the 1770s, Spanish authorities even granted “white” status to wealthy *pardos* (mixed European, Native American, and/or African people) in exchange for a payment. See Ann Twinam, *Purchasing Whiteness: Pardos, Mulattos, and the Quest for Social Mobility in the Spanish Indies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015).

82. Pierre-Louis, “Les livres de couleur face au préjugé,” 155–156.

83. Pierre-Louis, “Les livres de couleur face au préjugé,” 240; Régent, *La France et ses esclaves*, 64. They stopped turning a blind eye to this practice in the second half of the eighteenth century (see Conclusion).

84. Victor Schœlcher, *Des colonies françaises: abolition immédiate de l'esclavage* (Paris: Pagnerre, 1842), 182.
85. ANOM G1 469 Vol. 2 "Extrait du Recensement [sic] genera(l) de L'Isle Guadeloupe L'année 1686."
86. Jean-Pierre Sainton, *Histoire et civilisation de la Caraïbe (Guadeloupe, Martinique, petites Antilles): La construction des sociétés antillaises des origines au temps présent, structures et dynamiques* (Paris: Editions Maisonneuve et Larose, 2004), 1:225.
87. ANOM G1 468 "1671, Desnombrement general."
88. ANOM 85MIOM182 "Capesterre 1639–1791."
89. Du Tertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles*, 2:513.
90. ANOM G1 469 "Recensement 1664."
91. For more information on the way relationships between white women and men of non-European descent were perceived, and why, see Chapter 5.
92. ANOM C7 A1 "Du Lion Commandant à la Guadeloupe. A St germain en Laye, le 16e aoust 1669," f. 58.
93. Bernard Moitt, *Women and Slavery in the French Antilles, 1635–1848* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 14–15.
94. ANOM G1 468 "1671, Desnombrement general."
95. Labat, *Nouveau voyage* (1724), 1:35.
96. Labat, *Nouveau voyage* (1724), 1:35.
97. ANOM 85MIOM276 "Pointe Noire, 1673–1759."
98. ANOM F3 133 "Appel comme d'abus mariage jugé, 5 Décembre 1667," f. 36.
99. ANOM F3 133 "Appel comme d'abus mariage jugé, 5 Décembre 1667," f. 36.
100. Régent, *La France et ses esclaves*, 335–336.
101. Lucien-René Abénon, *Petite histoire de la Guadeloupe* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992), 60; Nick Nesbitt, *Voicing Memory: History and the Subjectivity in French Caribbean Literature* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 7.
102. Pierre-Louis, "Les livres de couleur face au préjugé," 364.
103. Frédéric Régent, "Le métissage des premières générations de colons en Guadeloupe et à l'île Bourbon (Réunion)," in *Mariage et métissage dans les sociétés coloniales: Amériques, Afrique et îles de l'Océan Indien (XVIe–XXe siècles)*, ed. Guy Brunet (Bern: Peter Lang, 2015), 111–32, here 113–144, and "Les Blancs métissés," 25.
104. See Régent, "Le métissage des premières générations," 112–117.
105. Larson, "Play and Possession," 701–703.
106. Larson, "Play and Possession," 691.
107. Quoted from Larson, "Play and Possession," 691.
108. Quoted from Charpentier, *Relation de l'établissement*, 88.
109. Charpentier, *Relation de l'établissement*, 91.
110. Larson, "Play and Possession," 693.
111. Galibert, *À l'angle de la Grande Maison*, 163.
112. Letter n°XVI, Toussaint Bourdaise to Vincent de Paul, January 10, 1656, in *À l'angle de la Grande Maison*, ed. Galibert, 321.
113. Du Bois, *Les voyages faits par le sieur D.B.*, 70.
114. Loughnon, *Sous le signe de la tortue*, 214.
115. Loughnon, *Sous le signe de la tortue*, 215.
116. ANOM G1 477, "Liste des habitans de Lisle Bourbon, Enfants et Negres Ceci doit estre du mois de Septembre 1690." See also ANOM C3 1 "Memoires du Pere Bernardin 1687–1688," ff. 61–63v.

117. For a history of the Christianization of Isle Bourbon, see Barassin, *Naissance d'une chrétienté*.

118. Larson, "Play and Possession," 687.

119. Sieur L'Huillier, *Voyage du Sieur Luillier aux grandes Indes* (Paris: Claude Cellier, 1705), 150.

120. Marvin, "Bourbon Island Creoles," 28.

121. Barassin, *La vie quotidienne des colons de l'Île Bourbon*, 265; Jean-François Samlong, *Les engagés malgaches à la Réunion: Documents et recherches* (Saint-Denis, Réunion: les Cahiers de notre histoire, 1995), 21.

122. ANOM F3 208 "Isle de Bourbon Ordonnance de M de La Haye [. . .] 1^{er} Decembre 1674," 19.

123. On the racial labels used on Isle Bourbon, see Nathan Marvin, "Incertaines catégories raciales," in *Colonisations*, ed. Singaravélou et al., 702–703.

124. Barassin, *La vie quotidienne des colons de l'Île Bourbon*, 155.

125. Especially those practicing Hinduism. On the origins of Portuguese opposition to intermarriage in Goa, see Nandini Chaturvedula, "Preserving Purity: Cultural Exchange and Contamination in Late Seventeenth-Century Portuguese India," in "Goa: 1510–2010," *Ler Historia* 50 (2010): 99–112.

126. Ordre et Instruction, January 8, 1701, quoted in Barassin, *La vie quotidienne des colons de l'Île Bourbon*, 155.

127. ANOM F3 208 "Isle de Bourbon Ordonnance de M de La Haye," p. 19.

128. Serge Gélabert ed., *La Réunion: histoire d'une île déserte* (Paris: Gélabert; 1997), 10.

129. Filliot, *La traite des esclaves*, 31.

130. ANOM DPPC G1 477 "1704 avril 1705 Resencement General de tous les Habitans."

131. ANOM G1 477 "1704 et avril 1705, Resencement General de tous les Habitans chefs de familles, femmes, Enfants Et Esclaves."

132. ADR GG1 "Bl, Libres, Escl. 1667–1718" "Saint-Paul," "Fontaine Jacques baptisé 26 Mai 1674" (quotation); Riquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l'Île Bourbon*, 1:904.

133. ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, "Le mémoire pour servir à la connaissance," p. 134.

134. Riquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l'Île Bourbon*, 2:1528.

135. Riquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l'Île Bourbon*, 1:904, 1:925, 2:1528, 2:1727; ADR GG1 "Saint-Paul." See also Fontaine, *Deux siècles et demi de l'histoire*, 1:90, 98, 102, 104, 109–110, 158–161.

136. About their role in the plantation economy, see Chapter 6.

137. Marvin, "Bourbon Island Creoles," 30.

138. ANOM DPPC G1 477 "Recensements Île Bourbon 1678–1719."

139. ANOM DPPC G1 477 "1704 avril 1705 Resencement General de tous les Habitans"; ANOM DPPC G1 477 "Recensement de L'isle de Bourbon en general, fait en Mars 1709"; ANOM DPPC G1 477 "Recensement des quartiers de St Paul et St Denis en L'Isle de Bourbon 1711."

140. It also categorized all enslaved people as "Blacks and *négresses*" (*Noirs et négresses*). See ANOM DPPC G1 477 "Recensement de l'île de Bourbon en 1713."

141. Carton, *Mixed-Race and Modernity*, 63–64; Philippe Haudrère, *La Compagnie Française des Indes au XVIII^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: Les Indes Savantes, 2005), 2:594–595; Hodges, "Configuring Colonial Families."

142. Hodges, "Configuring Colonial Families."

143. About the *topas*, see Adrian Carton, "Shades of Fraternity: Creolization and the Making of Citizenship in French India, 1790–1792," *French Historical Studies* 31, no. 4 (2008): 581–607, here 581.

144. ANOM C2 66 “Coppie [*sic*] de la Lettre Ecrite [*sic*] à la compagnie par M. Pilavoine et les marchands du comptoir de Suratte [*sic*]. A Surate 6e février 1702,” pp. 280–281.
145. Hodges, “Sovereign Spaces,” 44. Their husband’s salary and commercial activities could allow them to enhance their condition. See ANOM C2 64 “Coppie de la lettre Ecrite a la Compagnie des Indes Orientales par Mr Pilavoine Directeur du Comptoir de Suratte [. . .] A Surate Le 20 Janvier 1693,” f. 55.
146. Robert Challe, *Journal d’un voyage fait aux Indes orientales [. . .] depuis le 24 février 1690, jusqu’au 20 août 1691* (Rouen: Jean Batiste [*sic*] Machuel, 1721), 2:171.
147. ANOM C2 64 “Coppie de la lettre Ecrite a la Compagnie des Indes Orientales par Mr Pilavoine Directeur du Comptoir de Suratte [. . .] A Surate Le 20 Janvier 1693,” f. 55.
148. Here I agree with Leonard Hodges, “Configuring Colonial Families.”
149. ANOM C6 116–117 “Memoire Concernant Les Colonies des françois dans Les Indes Orientales, Pondichéry,” f. 17.
150. Cited in Hodges, “Configuring Colonial Families.”
151. ANOM 1DPPC4496 “Double du Registre des Mariages de la chapelle et de L’Eglise de St Lasare Et de Notre Dame des Anges des RP Capucins de Pondichery depuis Lan 1687 Jusqu’en 1719.”
152. Three unions likely involved two Luso-Indian spouses, and four involved a spouse whose possible origins could not be determined.
153. Carton, *Mixed-Race and Modernity*, 63–65, ead in Bengal, 72.
154. Carton, *Mixed-Race and Modernity*, 64–65, 67; Hodges, “Configuring Colonial Families.”
155. For example, see those records of public sales and estate inventory involving the Bourbon Island Creoles Gilles Fontaine, Daniel Payet and Marianne Fontaine: ADR C^o2793 “Vente publique faite des Effets appartenant a Deffun Pierre Folio;” ADR C^o 3Eo3 “Succession Marianne Fontaine Inventaire Fontaine épouse [. . .] St Paul 1730.”
156. Marvin, “Bourbon Island Creoles,” 5; Pierre-Louis, “Les livres de couleur face au préjugé,” 240–241, 244, 246, 250, 268–315; Régent, *La France et ses esclaves*, 182, and “La fabrication des Blancs dans les colonies françaises,” 70.
157. Régent, “La fabrication des Blancs dans les colonies françaises,” 73.
158. Frédéric Régent, *Esclavage, métissage, liberté: La Révolution française en Guadeloupe 1789–1802* (Paris: Grasset, 2004), 206.
159. Pierre-Louis, “Les livres de couleur face au préjugé,” 241.
160. Challe, *Journal d’un voyage* (Rouen, 1721), 2:171.
161. Guy Le Gentil de La Barbinais, *Nouveau voyage autour du monde* (Paris: Flahault, 1727), 3: 125.
162. Challe, *Journal d’un voyage* (Rouen, 1721), 171.
163. Labat, *Nouveau voyage* (1742), 2:190.
164. For more information about La Vente, see Chapter 4.
165. Cited in Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order*, 33.
166. Guy Le Gentil de La Barbinais, *Nouveau voyage autour du monde* (Paris: Flahault, 1727), 3:125–126.
167. Kleber, “Gendered Societies,” 187–188, 194–196.
168. Kleber, “Gendered Societies,” 177–197, 227, and Spear, *Race, Sex and Social Order*, 49, 244n154.
169. The accounts of missionaries must be taken with reservations, since their authors were likely to inflate the impact of their own work to gain support from metropolitan authorities.

Letter n°XII, Jean-François Mousnier to Vincent de Paul, February 6, 1655, in *À l'angle de la Grande Maison*, ed. Galibert, 273; Galibert, *À l'angle de la Grande Maison*, 156, quotation at 163.

170. Letter n°XVI, Toussaint Bourdaise to Vincent de Paul, January 10, 1656, in *À l'angle de la Grande Maison*, ed. Galibert, 318.

171. Letter n°XVI, Toussaint Bourdaise to Vincent de Paul, January 10, 1656, in *À l'angle de la Grande Maison*, ed. Galibert, 318.

172. Letter n°XIX, Toussaint Bourdaise to Vincent de Paul, February 19, 1657, in *À l'angle de la Grande Maison*, ed. Galibert, 378.

173. Letter n°XIX, Toussaint Bourdaise to Vincent de Paul, February 19, 1657, in *À l'angle de la Grande Maison*, ed. Galibert, 347–348.

174. Kleber, “Gendered Societies,” 221, 229.

175. “Letter by Father Jacques Gravier in the form of a Journal of the Mission of l’Immaculée Conception de Notre Dame in the Illinois country,” 13 Feb., 1694, Thwaites, JR (1694), 64:212–213; Kleber, “Gendered Societies,” 177, 179; Spear, *Race, Sex and Social Order*, 49, 244n154.

176. Letter n°XIX, Toussaint Bourdaise to Vincent de Paul, February 19, 1657, in *À l'angle de la Grande Maison*, ed. Galibert, 349.

177. Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle*, 85.

178. Larson, “Play and Possession,” 701–705.

179. On this topic in North America, see, for example, Olive Patricia Dickason, “From ‘One Nation’ in the Northeast to ‘New Nation’ in the Northwest: A Look at the Emergence of the Métis,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 6, no. 2 (1982): 1–21, here 7–8; Daniel A. Scalberg, “The French-Amerindian Religious Encounter in Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-Century New France,” *French Colonial History* 1 (2002): 101–112, here 106.

180. Letter n°XVI, Toussaint Bourdaise to Vincent de Paul, January 10, 1656, in *À l'angle de la Grande Maison*, ed. Galibert. However, the handful of French women in Madagascar were not setting the best example. They reportedly threatened to get married *à la mode des Noirs* (“in accordance with Black customs”) or else run away if local officials persisted in keeping them unmarried until their planned departure for Bourbon. ANOM C5 A1 “Madagascar de la Brete-sche Major de l’Ile Dauphine 22 Aoust 1674,” f. 3v.

181. Larson, “Play and Possession,” 701.

182. Larson, “Play and Possession,” 701.

183. Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle*, 82.

184. Larson, “Play and Possession,” 703.

185. Larson, “Play and Possession,” 701.

186. Quoted from Cauche, *Relations véritables et curieuses*, 111. Pronis waited another three years to marry the woman in the Catholic Church, and together, the couple had a daughter who was baptized by the missionary Nacquart. Galibert, *À l'angle de la Grande Maison*, 157–158; Letter n°XVI, Toussaint Bourdaise to Vincent de Paul, January 10, 1656, in *À l'angle de la Grande Maison*, ed. Galibert, 325.

187. Tricoire, “Une histoire franco-malgache,” 247.

188. Payet, “Les femmes dans le marronnage,” 68.

189. In 1734, after presenting a title of succession, the Frenchmen who had married Native American women in the Illinois Country were granted the plots of land that had been abandoned by the Kaskaskias. On this subject, see Kleber, “Gendered Societies,” 232–233.

190. Du Bois, *Les voyages*, 153. See also Tricoire, “Une Histoire Franco-Malgache,” 252.

191. Cauche, *Relations véritables et curieuses*, 32; Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle*, 82.

192. Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle*, 446.

193. Some Indigenous women in the Pays d'en Haut also took that role. See Marrero, *Detroit's Hidden Channel*, 17.

194. La Blanchère, *Un Episode d'Histoire Coloniale*, 10.

195. See ANOM C6 A1 "1671. Memoire de l'estat ou est presentement L'isle dauphine et des difficultés qui se trouvent a lexecution des ordre laissés par Monsieur de la haye a son depart pour les indes," ff. 1–1v.

196. Larson, "Play and Possession," 698.

197. Payet, "Les femmes dans le marronnage," 68–69.

198. Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle* (2007), 278–279.

199. Similarly, the French fur traders and soldiers of the Pays d'en Haut and the Illinois Country who married Indigenous women integrated kinship networks. For example, see Kleber, "Gendered Societies," 177.

200. Pier Larson has already noted how "interracial relationships, whether or not sealed by an indigenous and/or a Catholic marriage, emerged as important affective foci for trade" in seventeenth-century Anosy. See Larson, "Play and Possession," 703; Tricoire, "Une histoire franco-malgache," 256.

201. Tricoire, "Une histoire franco-malgache," 256.

202. ANOM C5 A1 "Lestat de L'Ile Dauphine lors du depart du Navire le saint Denis troisieme mars mil six centz septante," f. 8v. Cited in Larson, "Play and Possession," 703. European traders on the east coast of Madagascar continued to marry Malagasy women in the eighteenth century, which helped them acquire and sell merchandise. See Tricoire, "Une histoire franco-malgache," 256.

203. ANOM C6 15 "Memoire sur Gorée par Mr Adanson 1763," f. 5.

204. La Courbe, *Premier voyage*, 28.

205. He also prohibited Frenchmen from going to these women's cabins outside the fort, under penalty of paying a fine, and ordered the construction of a kitchen so that Frenchmen would no longer need their services. La Courbe, *Premier voyage*, 36–39.

206. BNF Mss. fr. 21690, "Rel. du sieur Mathelot, 1687," 216v in La Courbe, *Premier voyage*, 26n1.

207. La Courbe, *Premier voyage*, 196.

208. Many French contemporaries commented on how common divorce was in North America. In Louisiana, the *commissaire-ordonnateur* Jean-Baptiste Duclos thought that Native American women were unable to stay with their husbands "for the rest of their lives." ANOM C13 A3 "La Louisianne. Le S. du Clos, 25 Decembre 1715," p. 820. Metropolitan authorities repeated what they heard from the colonies, stating in 1716 that "these *sauvagesses* are used to a libertine way of life and leave their husbands to take others whenever they want." ANOM C13 A4 "1716, Projet ou Mémoire du Roy au Srs de l'Espinay gouverneur et Hubert commissaire ordonnateur a la Loüisiane," p. 977.

209. Carpeau du Saussay, *Voyage de Madagascar*, 252.

210. Du Bois, *Les voyages faits par le sieur D.B.*, 114.

211. Carpeau du Saussay, *Voyage de Madagascar*, 252.

212. Dellon, *Relation d'un voyage des Indes orientales*, 1:47.

213. Du Bois, *Les voyages faits par le sieur D.B.*, 115. Flacourt claimed about Malagasy women that "if their husband upsets them, they leave him easily, and go spend time with whomever they want." Flacourt, *Histoire de la grande isle*, 85.

214. ANOM C2 3 "Articles et conditions [. . .] pour l'établissement d'une Compagnie pour le commerce des Indes Orientales, à Paris 26 Mai 1664," article V, f. 71v (quotation); Charpentier, *Relation de l'établissement de la compagnie Française*, 89.

215. Letter n°XIII, Toussaint Bourdaise to Vincent de Paul, February 6, 1655, in *À l'angle de la Grande Maison*, ed. Galibert, 279.

216. Thieffry, *La mission lazariste à Madagascar*, 385.

217. Jean-Pierre Biondi, *Saint-Louis du Sénégal: Mémoires d'un métissage* (Paris: Denoël, 1987), 47–56; Brooks, “The Signares of Saint-Louis and Gorée,” 34–38; Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans*, 125; Knight-Baylac, “La vie à Gorée de 1677 à 1789,” 399; Amanda Sackur, “The French Revolution and Race Relations in Senegal, 1780–1810,” in *People and Empires in African History: Essays in Memory of Michael Crowder*, ed. J. F. Ade Ajayi and J. D. Y. Peel (London: Longman, 1992), 69–87, here 69–70.

218. Ipsen has identified a similar practice on the Danish Gold Coast. See Ipsen, *Daughters of the Trade*, 1, 9.

219. Cited in Tesdahl, “Bonds of Money, Bonds of Matrimony?,” 35.

220. René Claude Geoffroy de Villeneuve, *L'Afrique, ou histoire, mœurs, usages, et coutumes des Africains, Le Sénégal, Vol. 1* (Paris: Nepveu, 1814), 68.

221. Johnson, *Wicked Flesh*, 31, 64; Tesdahl, “Bonds of Money, Bonds of Matrimony?,” 28.

222. BNF Mss. fr. 21690 “Rel. du sieur Mathelot, 1687,” 216v in La Courbe, *Premier voyage*, 26 n. 1.

223. ANOM C6 1 “17 Janvier 1688. De Par le Roy Et Messieurs de la Companie Royale du Senegal et coste d’Affrique [sic],” article III and IV, n.p.

224. ANOM C6 1 “17 Janvier 1688.”

225. Belmessous, “Assimilation and Racialism,” 346–348; Karahasan, “Métissage in New France,” 123.

4. Unifying Racial Policies

1. Jay Higginbotham, *Old Mobile: Fort Louis de la Louisiane: 1702–1711*, 2nd ed. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 139.

2. ANOM G1 477 “Liste des habitans de Lisle Bourbon [. . .] 1690.”

3. For more about La Vente’s story, see Higginbotham, *Old Mobile*, 139–140.

4. ANOM, C13 A1 “Extrait des lettres de la Louisianne de l’Année 1706,” p. 536.

5. ANOM C13 A2 “Memoire [. . .] 21 Juin 1710,” p. 565.

6. For a study of the evangelization of Isle Bourbon, see Barassin, *Naissance d’une chrétienté*.

7. ANOM G1 477 “Liste des habitans de Lisle Bourbon [. . .] 1690.”

8. ANOM C13 A2 “D’Artaguiette to Minister, June 20, 1710,” pp. 544–545; ANOM C13 A3 “La Louisiane. Le S. du Clos, 25 Decembre 1715,” pp. 819–824; ANOM C13 A4 “1716, Projet ou Mémoire du Roy au Srs de l’Espinay,” pp. 977–978.

9. ANOM, C13 A4 “1716, Projet ou Mémoire,” pp. 977–978.

10. Cornelius J. Jaenen, “Miscegenation in Eighteenth Century New France,” in *New Dimensions in Ethnohistory: Papers of the Second Laurier Conference on Ethnohistory and Ethnology*, ed. Barry Gough and Laird Christie (Hull, Quebec: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1991), 79–115, esp. 97.

11. Philippe Haudrère, “L’origine du personnel de direction générale de la Compagnie française des Indes, 1719–1794,” *Revue française d’histoire d’outre-mer* 67, nos. 248–249 (1980): 339–371, esp. 340; Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 246.

12. For more information about this company, see Philippe Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes au XVIIIe siècle. 1719–1795*, 4 vols. (Paris: Librairie de L’Inde, 1989).

Sex and Racial Power

*André was born around 1708 in the city of Basse-Terre in Guadeloupe to a white Englishman named Richard and a mulâtresse named Jeanneton. Jeanneton was enslaved, and she belonged to Richard's wife, a white woman named Elisabeth. André became Elisabeth's captive at birth, in accordance with the Roman legal principle *partus sequitur ventrem* ("that which is born follows the womb").¹ The precise nature of Richard and Jeanneton's relationship is forever lost to history. Was it an ongoing love story, or did Richard violate Jeanneton? No matter the nature of their relationship, Jeanneton was unable to refuse Richard, since she was apparently never manumitted by Elisabeth. The latter did approach a notary before she died in 1716 with the intention of freeing André, reportedly because of "the friendship that [she and her husband felt] towards [him]."² Unfortunately for André, however, the manumission act was deemed invalid because it did not comply with an ordinance issued in 1713, which prevented slaveowners from manumitting their captives without permission from the governor and the intendant of the island.³*

As a result of this oversight, André spent most of his life in slavery. Following Elisabeth's death, he lived with his father, Richard, according to Guadeloupean authorities, "as if he were his own child, and as a free man."⁴ Then, in 1720, Richard made a secret agreement with a Capuchin priest named Ambroise to have him take André to France so that he could be free.⁵ The priest took André under his wing, teaching him to read and write and treating him as a free man. However, Ambroise and Richard both died before André could be taken to France.⁶ After the two men's passing, the Capuchins did not honor the promise made to Richard. They had André trained as an artisan, allowing him to become "a skillful carpenter, of considerable value."⁷ They treated him like their captive, forcing him to work

in the city of Basse-Terre where he reportedly built “a church and other remarkable buildings” for them.⁸ When in 1738, André petitioned members of the Superior Council of Guadeloupe to obtain his freedom, they rejected his request, declared his freedom papers invalid, and confiscated him from the Capuchins.⁹ Although André’s market value as a captive was appraised at a considerable 5,000 livres, the Marine Secretary ultimately decided to keep him in the king’s estate. In the end, André spent the rest of his life in slavery, building infrastructures for the French crown, including a major bridge in the city of Basse-Terre.¹⁰

André’s story illustrates the main claim of this chapter: although French officials sought to prevent sexual relationships between women of non-European descent and Frenchmen during the first half of the eighteenth century, the continuation of these relationships played an integral role in advancing white people’s domination throughout the French empire. Mixed relations within and outside of Catholic wedlock remained widespread across the French empire in this period, contrary to past claims in the scholarship that the French Americas and Indian Ocean were home to a “small number of mulattoes” and that “racial and ethnic boundaries remained largely distinct” in the French context.¹¹ Although several scholars did note the pervasiveness of *métissage* in these contexts, it was often interpreted as the hallmark of a “lenient racial regime.”¹² Interracial sex in the French colonies has been considered a signal that “racial openness” prevailed and that French contemporaries “exhibited no embarrassment at [the] mixing of blood.”¹³ However, as this chapter demonstrates, interracial relations often contributed to fostering racial regimes by advancing white people’s socioeconomic domination. This argument aligns with recent work on race, empire, and slavery in other European imperial contexts.¹⁴ As these publications have shown, in the context of slavery, “the institutional dominance of white [people] had to be translated into personal dominance,” and such relations could “reinforc[e] the sexual, gendered, and racial orders of colonial societies.”¹⁵

Sexual coercion and violence, in particular, played an important role in advancing white domination. By the first half of the eighteenth century, they both acted as large-scale instruments of subjugation through the terror they inflicted on now-sizable enslaved communities in the slave societies of the Caribbean, Isle Bourbon and Lower Louisiana. Even in the Mississippi

valley, the number of enslaved Black people rose from 533 in 1721 to 4,730 in 1746, and the bulk of this population concentrated in the Gulf Coast region, especially in the New Orleans and Mobile areas.¹⁶ Spurred by the influx of thousands of new enslaved captives in the colonies, white colonists tried to find ways to subjugate expanding slave populations: sexual coercion and violence helped them achieve this goal. Their scope has yet to be assessed, especially because their development in the Indian Ocean has received relatively little attention.¹⁷

Interracial relations outside of Catholic wedlock between Frenchmen and enslaved women also helped shape white dominion by reducing access to social mobility for enslaved Black women and their mixed children. Especially in Louisiana and the Lesser Antilles, these out-of-wedlock relationships became widespread, partly because of official attempts to prevent whites from marrying Blacks. Unlike marriage—which necessitated the approval of a priest and the publication of public banns—interracial relationships outside of Catholic wedlock could flourish because they were relatively easy to hide. Unlike marriage, however, relations out of wedlock did not permit enslaved women and their mixed children to inherit, nor did they allow them to systematically achieve manumission. Their fate in such situations usually remained under the control of their white partners or owners: consider Jeanneton, who was never manumitted by Elisabeth, and André, who could never be free because of his mistress's negligence. Access to patrimony for these people was further blocked by a slew of—largely overlooked—Atlantic policies that prohibited white fathers from acknowledging their mixed children in parish registers.

When Catholic intermarriage did occur despite legal restrictions—as was frequently the case in the Indian Ocean—it was often between an underprivileged white man and a prosperous, assimilated freeborn woman of Malagasy or South Asian ancestry whose fortune allowed the man to ascend the social ladder. This further advanced white socioeconomic dominion, especially since the woman was often categorized as “white” in official documents. Because French inheritance customs and household financial practices were patriarchal, these alliances conferred substantial advantages on underprivileged Frenchmen.

However, free and unfree people of non-European descent refused to stay passive when confronted with manipulation or coercion. This chapter is premised upon Vincent Brown's interpretation of Orlando Patterson's

notion of slavery as “social death,” not as the actual outcome of bondage, but rather as a constant threat that drove the enslaved to fight against alienation.¹⁸ Enslaved women resisted their aggressors as best as they could, for example, by running away or by using self-defense, and they (along with enslaved men) also attempted to protect girls and women in their communities. Other enslaved women, as well as their mixed children, like André, strove to free themselves from enslavement or to ameliorate their socioeconomic condition.

Sexual Violence: A Large-Scale Weapon of Domination in Slave Societies

With the rise of Black slavery in the eighteenth century, sexual coercion and violence became a defining feature of all French slave societies, acting as a large-scale instrument of subjugation not only insofar as it boosted slave reproduction but also by terrorizing large enslaved communities across the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds. Black feminist scholar Angela Davis has convincingly presented sexual violence and coercion as a way for white men to assert their sovereignty by spreading affliction and fear—not only among enslaved Black women but also across enslaved Black communities at large, given the depth of kinship and friendship bonds.¹⁹ We know how enormous the impact of sexual violence was on enslaved people’s experience in other (especially Anglo-American) slave societies for which we have firsthand slave narratives. It is very clear from those accounts that the emotional and physical toll of sexual abuse on enslaved communities cannot be sidestepped, even if the evidence documenting it in the French context is scarce.²⁰

Sexual violence was not solely the preserve of white men over women of non-European descent. Same-sex sexual abuses and sexual abuses perpetrated by white women on Black men were also an important reality. Same-sex sexual abuse is much less visible in French historical documents partly because the French did not have access to an archive-keeping institution like the Spanish Inquisition, whose role was specifically to combat religious irreverence, as in cases of sodomy.²¹ Moreover, most European contemporaries would have found the idea of a white woman abusing an enslaved

woman or man unfathomable: chastity was too central to gender ideals imposed on European women, and any assault by a woman against a man would have upended established European gender hierarchies.²² This is not to say that such abuses did not take place: in fact, there is no doubt that white women also engaged in acts of sexual violence against enslaved men and women. This is illustrated by the story of a white creole woman on early eighteenth-century Isle Bourbon named Gabrielle Bellon, who was said to commit horrible acts of sexual mutilation against her captives. The storekeeper and upcoming governor of Isle Bourbon Antoine Desforges-Boucher described Bellon as “the devil incarnate” because she was known for punishing her captives by attaching them to a pillar, burning their intimate parts, and placing iron plates into their mouths to prevent them from eating.²³

By the first half of the eighteenth century, multiple cases of sexual violence were being recorded in the court registers of the now flourishing French slave societies of the Americas and the Indian Ocean. In 1733, on Isle Bourbon, for example, a French carpenter named Rochefort was fined and imprisoned because he had attempted to rape a pregnant enslaved Malagasy woman named Nanon, causing the death of her unborn baby.²⁴ About ten years later, French officials lamented the presence of colonists on this island who did not hesitate “to resort to violence against [the *négresses*] who resist[ed] their criminal desires.”²⁵ In 1744, in Guadeloupe, a merchant named Antoine Thuillon, who was awaiting his trial for unpaid debts in prison, was accused of having entered the cell of an enslaved Black woman named Marie Anne in order to sexually assault her.²⁶ We only know of this story because Thuillon also attacked the white jailer who came to Marie Anne’s rescue. In the end, Thuillon was not punished for his assault on Marie Anne: he was only sentenced to spend a month in prison and pay a fine of 200 livres for his attack on the jailer who tried to intervene.²⁷

Enslaved victims behaved with incredible dignity, fighting back against their oppressors and attempting to protect members of their communities. This is illustrated by the story of Louison, an enslaved Black woman cook who belonged to the Ursuline nuns of New Orleans. On a rainy afternoon in June 1752, Louison was washing linen with other enslaved women by the Mississippi River, near the Ursuline nuns’ convent-hospital, when she spotted a drunken French soldier named Pochenet. Pochenet’s face looked familiar, for she had taken care of him at the hospital. Pochenet walked

toward the river and requested that the women wash his dirty handkerchief, which they refused to do. Infuriated, Pochenet threw himself at Babet, one of the other laundresses, and stabbed her to death with his bayonet. Louison immediately ran toward Babet to rescue her, putting her own life at risk. In an attempt to assert his control over Louison's Black body, Pochenet forced her to her knees, hit her with his bayonet, and demanded that she beg for his forgiveness. Louison apologized, but only after defying Pochenet by saying, "It is only from God that one ask for forgiveness."²⁸ The whole incident no doubt had a sexual undertone: when the case went to court, one of the first questions that the French commissioner Jean-Baptiste Raguet asked Pochenet was whether he had intended to "seduce the *négresses*," to which the soldier answered that he did not remember because he was too drunk at the time.²⁹ The victims and witnesses' testimonies in this court case shed light on the spirit of mutual aid and community among enslaved people. After hearing the women scream, many enslaved people ran to their rescue, along with a Frenchman and other people from the hospital. They were eventually able to stop Pochenet and take him away. Louison's husband, who was an enslaved surgeon's aide at the hospital, even wounded his hands while trying to protect the women.³⁰

Sexual violence and coercion by white men caused widespread emotional and physical suffering in enslaved communities. This is illustrated by a series of sexual assaults that took place on a plantation in the environs of New Orleans in 1730. That year, a plantation owner and member of the colonial council named Sieur Raymond Amyault d'Ausseville filed a civil claim against his plantation overseer, a Frenchman named Jacques Le Roy Charpentier, for engaging in horrible acts of cruelty. Le Roy created a climate of terror on d'Ausseville's plantation, keeping enslaved people severely overworked and underfed. In addition to having killed a captive, he repeatedly tried to form "scandalous relations" with enslaved women in the fields, mistreating those who rejected his sexual advances. Le Roy had also caused a series of miscarriages among enslaved women on the plantation, killing several unborn babies who might have been his own. An enslaved woman named Suzanne gave birth to two stillborn babies, one of whom had reportedly had "its head crushed," as a result of "a violent blow." Suzanne's husband, an enslaved man named Lafleur, was devastated and inconsolable: "[He] does not want to eat nor drink, all he does is cry, he

complains that [Le Roy] ha[s] beaten his wife even though she is pregnant,” d’Ausseville explained.³¹ D’Ausseville’s position as a colonial councilor did not help him win this case in the end, since the court decided not to rule against Le Roy: the French overseer was allowed to keep working on the plantation until the end of his contract.³²

Like Jacques Le Roy, many white plantation overseers and other white staff on Atlantic and Indian Ocean plantations abused enslaved women, causing such turmoil that officials and several slaveowners were forced to take matters into their own hands to protect French financial interests. Such was the case with a planter named Sieur du Buisson, who lived in Martinique: in 1717, he made the decision to fire his white sugar refiner “for having pressured a *négresse* instead of having her work like he should have done.”³³

Sexual abuse against enslaved women by plantation overseers was especially common on Isle Bourbon. This development even prompted the French Company of the Indies to write a letter to the Superior Council of Isle Bourbon in 1729, complaining that “disorder persists [. . .] with the *négresses*, and [yet] you allow young soldiers to become plantation overseers, and don’t attempt to curb their debauchery.”³⁴ Several Frenchmen described as “young libertine soldiers [. . .] unable to restrain their amorous desires” were imprisoned on Isle of France because they had had sex with enslaved people on plantations. After they were released from prison, one of these soldiers took a married enslaved Black woman away from her cabin, and another abducted a domestic servant described as a “*négresse*” belonging to one Madame Dhauterive.³⁵ Because of those developments, authorities on Isle of France and Isle Bourbon declared in 1729 that “we must ensure that no soldier will abduct any *négresse*, that all the *négresses* have cabins where they can lock themselves while their husbands are away, and which are kept separate from soldiers’ cabins.”³⁶ This declaration did not, however, deter French soldiers and plantation overseers on Isle Bourbon from trying to have sex with enslaved women. In 1736, three white men were expelled from the island because they had had sex with an enslaved Black woman. One of them was a plantation overseer named Joseph Pascal, who used to work for a female planter named Catherine de Justamond in the parish of Saint-Denis. Pascal had reportedly “developed a habit with a married *négresse* with whom he was apparently caught in the

act several times” and who worked as a nurse on Justamond’s estate.³⁷ Members of the Council of Isle Bourbon lamented that “most plantation overseers,” of whom Joseph was a prime example, were becoming “insolent, arrogant and libertine.”³⁸ Another one of the expelled men was a plantation overseer accused of “leading a scandalous life devoted to wine and *négresses*” on the plantation estate of one Mr. Villarmoy.³⁹

Although some refused to let plantation overseers abuse their enslaved property, many slaveowners did not hesitate to assert their own sovereignty over their captives’ bodies, by coercing and violating them. It has been argued in recent work on French New Orleans that, in contrast to what happened in the Caribbean, “white men who did not have a white woman (mother, spouse, or daughter) to take care of their house did not rely on a free or enslaved *ménagère*”—a housekeeper who lived with a white man, often having sexual relations with him, and sometimes acting as his business partner.⁴⁰ A close look at city census data nuances this assumption: by the 1720s and 1730s, a substantial number of single white men and white women in the city cohabited with an enslaved Black domestic servant.⁴¹ By 1721, almost 20 percent of all slave-owning households in New Orleans were home to one single white male or female who lived with only one enslaved Black housekeeper or domestic servant.⁴² Additionally, three out of ten slaveowners in the village of Tchoupitoulas that year cohabited with only one enslaved Black domestic servant.⁴³ In 1731, thirty-nine of the slaveowners who lived by the river right outside of the city also lived together with one Black domestic servant.⁴⁴

Coerced sex must have been a widespread occurrence in this context, reinforcing white dominion in the process: this is suggested by the fast-growing number of *mulâtres* born to enslaved Black women who were baptized in and right outside of New Orleans, most of whom officially spent their life in slavery. The New Orleans census of 1732 listed only six “*mulâtres* or *mulâtresses*,” and only two *mulâtres* were baptized in New Orleans between 1731 and 1733.⁴⁵ However, over the course of the short period between 1744 and 1759, as many as 184 *mulâtres* appeared in New Orleans’ parish registers, most of whom were born outside of wedlock and few of whom were officially manumitted. This is an enormous figure when considered in context, since there were only 759 white people living in New Orleans by 1737.⁴⁶ Priests over this period also baptized eleven children described as *quarterons* (“quadroons”), or born to white men and *mulâtresses*.⁴⁷ *Métissage* in French New Orleans eventually peaked at the

end of the French period: 124 other *mulâtres* and 3 *quarterons* appeared in the city's parish registers between 1759 and 1762, most of whom were not manumitted.⁴⁸ This remained a proportionally large figure, since only 1,284 white people lived in New Orleans by 1763.⁴⁹ Several of these mixed children were explicitly described as being born to "an unknown white father," "an unknown father," "a businessman," or "a master." A baby girl named Marie-Françoise, who was baptized in December 1752 in New Orleans, for example, was described in church records as a *mûlatresse* born to a Black woman named Angelique and as "the product of her master."⁵⁰

Cases of sexual coercion by white slaveowners against their enslaved properties were not restricted to New Orleans and its surroundings: many *mulâtres* were baptized in the northern parish of Pointe Coupée as well, most of whom also remained in slavery. Located about 150 miles north of New Orleans, Pointe Coupée was an isolated frontier settlement surrounded by a U-shaped lake now known as False River.⁵¹ French colonists there purchased a growing number of enslaved people in order to expand tobacco and indigo plantation agriculture, as well as farming. This is why the census of Pointe Coupée of 1731 listed thirty-seven white men, twenty-five white women, and seven *engagés* for seventy enslaved Blacks.⁵² Because those enslaved people were spread quite evenly across all estates, most were forced to live in very close proximity with whites: a majority of white estates in Pointe Coupée owned up to five enslaved people, whereas only six households owned no enslaved people at all.⁵³ Many enslaved women must have faced sexual coercion as a result. This would certainly explain why fifteen *mulâtres* were recorded in the census of Pointe Coupée in 1745, none of whom were officially manumitted, as well as twenty-three others, most of whom were born to enslaved Black women and "unknown father[s]" between 1756 and 1763.⁵⁴ These numbers are significant since Pointe Coupée was home to only 259 white residents by 1745.⁵⁵

Because the French in the Caribbean also lived in very close contact with some of their captives, many enslaved women in the Antilles also faced sexual abuse from their owners or from men in their owner's family. It became a notoriously common practice among white men in late eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue to live in concubinage with an unfree or free Black *ménagère*.⁵⁶ The practice of living in concubinage with a female Black housekeeper already existed in Martinique decades earlier. This is why, in 1722, the Dominican missionary Father Mane criticized white men on the island "who [were] not ashamed to stay and live with *négresses* and

mulâtresses as their concubines, as if they were their legitimate wives.”⁵⁷ Father Mane blamed Blacks and *mulâtresses* for “easily ced[ing] to the seduction and threats, gifts and solicitations of those who want to debauch them”—who, according to him, included “their masters, very often the children of the house, and almost always white domestic servants.”⁵⁸ He explained that “there [were] almost no plantation[s] [in Martinique] left where there [were] not many [*mulâtres*]” as a result.⁵⁹

In the eighteenth-century southwest Indian Ocean, many slaveowners also asserted their authority by forcing enslaved women in their households into concubinage. A Lazarist priest lamented in 1740 that “most [settlers on Isle Bourbon] have a large number of bastard children born to their *négresses*.”⁶⁰ According to the French writer, engineer, and botanist Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, who spent time in the Mascarenes, few settlers on Isle Bourbon were willing to get married “because of how easy it [was] to find concubines among Black slaves.”⁶¹ He claimed that “men far too often neglect[ed] [European and creole women on the island] in favor of enslaved Black women.”⁶²

The practice of keeping enslaved concubines was not restricted to France’s slave societies in the Americas and on Isle Bourbon: in seventeenth-century Pondicherry, for example, the French traveler Robert Challe noted the presence of several very young enslaved Hindu girls whom he branded *filles de mauvaise vie* (prostitutes) because they were hired out by European men for sex and domestic services. He advanced the commodification of these enslaved little girls by describing them as sexually available and consumable, explaining, “There are many Europeans who maintain [them] [. . .]. They cost the same price as *valets* and domestic servants, a *roupie* [local currency] each month is enough.”⁶³

Enslaved women’s sex work was a very important site of enactment of white supremacy. Marisa Fuentes has already shown how brothels and other such institutions, in particular, were places where “degrading and violating racia[l] and [gender] inequalit[ies]” were replicated, since they reproduced the power relations “owner and owned; patriarch and submissive female” and confined enslaved women and Black procurers to “a particular economic function.” White men’s control over enslaved women’s bodies was so complete in this context that powerless women were forced to perform the illusion of “mutuality,” given the “performative nature of such [economy].”⁶⁴ All this is best illustrated by Challe’s extremely troubling account of the prepubescent enslaved Asian girls forced into sex work in

Pondicherry.⁶⁵ He catered to his male readers' appetite for exoticism by bragging about his own sexual adventure with eight of these girls, who according to him had nothing to cover their bodies "except for some bracelets around their arms and legs."⁶⁶ He explained, "Don't be surprised if I am so knowledgeable and confident when I talk about this subject: [. . .] I was there, my eyes have seen, my hands have touched: I have satisfied my curiosity, and that is all."⁶⁷ Challe's account is appalling. He claimed that the oldest girl in the group was only twelve years old and that the two others he touched "weren't even ten years old, having no pubic hair on their intimate parts."⁶⁸ French Caribbean cities were home to a particularly large number of brothels, as well as other such institutions where enslaved women were also forced into sex work. According to a Guadeloupean legal document written in 1711, many enslaved people in Caribbean cities acted as procurers, "gathering women, and conducting their business in manumitted people's homes, managing cabarets, even in white people's homes."⁶⁹

Especially in the Caribbean, many white contemporaries attempted to displace the responsibility for sexual contacts between white men and enslaved women onto enslaved women themselves by describing them as dissolute temptresses responsible for their own victimization. This is manifest in the language employed by members of the court in Guadeloupe in 1738, after they refused to manumit the aforementioned *mulâtre* carpenter André, the son of the Englishman Richard and the enslaved Black woman Jeanneton. They invoked a "need to dissuade those masters who are weak enough *to succumb to the lubricity of their négresses*" from manumitting their children.⁷⁰ Many scholars, including Saidiya Hartman, have already discussed this rhetoric in British American and US slave societies.⁷¹ In 1722, a priest in Guadeloupe even began to encourage acts of public penance for enslaved Black women who had had sex with white men, forcing them to wear iron collars "in order to make the public sanction more glaring."⁷²

Out-of-Wedlock Relations and White Social Dominion in Slave Societies

Out-of-wedlock relations between white men and unfree and free women of non-European descent also helped shape white supremacy by narrowing the path to upward mobility for these women and their mixed children.

Because these relationships, unlike marriage, did not necessarily result in the manumission of enslaved women and their mixed children, white men in this context retained complete power over the fate of their enslaved partner and mixed children.⁷³ They were the ones deciding whether they would receive gifts or whether they would be manumitted and under what terms. And even when the white man did take measures to manumit a woman, a nonmarital relationship did not normally enable her and her mixed children to inherit: the Paris Custom only allowed widows to have a claim to the estate if the couple had been married in the Catholic Church.⁷⁴ Nonmarital relationships between white men and enslaved women thus helped keep patrimony in white hands.

Relatively few Frenchmen across the French Atlantic slave societies defied intermarriage restrictions in the first half of the eighteenth century, favoring out-of-wedlock relationships instead. In the Lesser Antilles, intermarriage became increasingly rare when the practice of requesting marriage authorizations was normalized after the 1720s.⁷⁵ This period also coincided with the prohibition of intermarriage by the *Code Noir* of Louisiana of 1724, which—according to historian Léo Elisabeth—had an enormous impact on marriage practices in the Lesser Antilles.⁷⁶ The governors and intendants of Martinique only occasionally allowed intermarriages from the 1720s onward.⁷⁷ While a total of twenty-four mixed marriages had been celebrated in Fort-Royal, Martinique, in the thirty years between 1679 and 1709, only eleven were celebrated between 1710 and 1739 and only five between 1740 and 1769.⁷⁸ In Guadeloupe, too, authorities appear to have sanctioned only a few of these unions. When they did so, it was often because the relationship was already happening out of wedlock. As a case in point, for the period between 1700 and 1759, the well-preserved parish registers of Le Gosier, Guadeloupe, mention only one mixed marriage, which took place in 1757. This marriage was between a white creole woman named Marie-Madelaine Delbourg and a “free *mulâtre*” named François Taouïra, with whom she already had two mixed children born out of wedlock, named Charles and François.⁷⁹ Marie-Madelaine’s own father, Nicolas Delbourg, already had a mixed-race boy out of wedlock with a free *mulâtresse* named Marie Rose Taouïra, who was probably a relative of François.⁸⁰ This family connection may have encouraged him to approve of his daughter’s union with a man of African descent. The parish register in which Marie-Madelaine and François Taouïra’s marriage is recorded

specified that “the marriage was celebrated with the consent of the parents.”⁸¹ This was unusual: relations between white women and Black men provoked even greater opprobrium than those between white men and Black women because they challenged race and gender hierarchies and threatened to give Black men control over white patrimony.

Intermarriages between whites and Blacks, prohibited by the *Code Noir* of 1724, were even rarer in Lower Louisiana than they were in the Lesser Antilles, with Frenchmen preferring out-of-wedlock relationships that offered fewer social advantages to enslaved women and their mixed children. There are no records of mixed marriages celebrated between whites and Blacks in the parish registers of Mobile for the period between 1724 and 1763 or in the records of Natchitoches from 1729 through 1763.⁸² The same is true for the parishes of Pointe Coupée from 1756 to 1768 and Biloxi, Yazoo, and Natchez between 1720 and 1730.⁸³ In the parish registers of New Orleans for the period between 1720 and 1763, only two mixed marriages between a Black person and a white person were recorded. The first one, which took place in 1725, was between a white woman named Marie Gaspart and a free Black man from Martinique named Jean-Baptiste Raphaël. The priest sought the permission of the commandant-general, Pierre du Gué de Boisbriant, before performing the ceremony, probably because of the *Code Noir* prohibition of 1724.⁸⁴ The second mixed marriage recorded in the archives of New Orleans took place more than two decades later. A woman named Christine Chovin, who was listed as a “free *mulâtresse*,” gave birth to a child named Jean-Paul in 1747.⁸⁵ A New Orleans-born man named Jean La France (or La Flot), whom we may assume was white, acknowledged being the father of Jean-Paul and “having the intention to marry the *mulâtresse* Christine, the mother of the child.”⁸⁶ Christine was born to a Frenchman named Delery and a woman named Françoise, who was identified as an enslaved *négresse*. Jean eventually married Christine in 1748, and the couple had another son named Jean-Baptiste in 1754.⁸⁷ Jean-Paul and Jean-Baptiste were lucky because most white fathers in French Louisiana did not usually recognize their mixed children.

Since one of the few scenarios in which a mixed child born outside of Catholic wedlock could inherit was if their father recognized them in official documents and gave his consent, most mixed children born outside of Catholic wedlock faced social inertia.⁸⁸ It has been argued that, “as a general rule, white fathers remained silent [in the parish registers of

New Orleans, Louisiana], not deigning to publicly acknowledge their sexual partners or mixed-race children.”⁸⁹ In making this choice not to record the names of the white men who had fathered those mixed children, however, Louisiana priests might have also been complying with a series of policies imposed by French authorities in the Caribbean and metropolitan France.⁹⁰ A judgment issued after a white father refused to have his name listed next to his *mulâtre* son in a church register of Martinique in 1670 stated, “We prohibit priests as well as all other clerics, to baptize any child *and to name the father* without having obtained the explicit consent of the man who fathered [said child].”⁹¹ Then, in 1734, an ordinance issued in the kingdom of France forbade priests from inquiring about the names of the fathers of all children born outside of wedlock.⁹² Finally, the practice of requesting the names of white fathers who had had mixed children outside of wedlock was targeted by a series of policies formulated in the French Caribbean.⁹³ In 1752, the French intendant of the *Îles du Vent*, Charles-Martin Hurson, opposed the practice of letting mixed children bear the names of their white fathers and requested that priests use the idiom “unknown father” (*père inconnu*) instead.⁹⁴ The Council of Martinique issued another judgment six years later, which reminded priests that, for children who “are not born to a legitimate marriage, there will be no mention of the father” in the records.⁹⁵ This partly explains why 45 percent (228 out of 501) of all free children of non-European descent born between 1763 and 1767 in Martinique, many of whom were mixed, were listed as the progenies of “unknown father[s]” (*père[s] inconnu[s]*) in the records.⁹⁶

A very small proportion of white fathers had their names recorded next to their free and enslaved *mulâtre* sons and daughters in the parish registers of Lower Louisiana, suggesting that few mixed children of African descent in the region were able to enjoy their male progenitor’s patrimony and relative social status. Priests in the Mississippi valley employed the exact same expression as that used in the French Caribbean, labeling the fathers of mixed children “unknown.” Of the fifty-one *mulâtres* baptized between 1744 and 1753 in New Orleans, thirteen were recorded as born to an “unknown father,” and thirty-eight others did not have their father’s name listed in the registers. Only four were born to a white father identified by a name.⁹⁷ Ninety-six of the *mulâtres* baptized between 1759 and 1762 were also born to “unknown father[s],” and only a handful of mixed children bore their white father’s name: the *mulâtre* Joseph La Combe, the presumed

son of the French pitch-and-tar manufacturer whom we encountered earlier in the opening of this book, is one such example.⁹⁸ Another young *mulâtre* of Louisiana, Mathias Forcade, also bore the name of his white father, Jacques Forcade. Mathias was born to Jacques and to an enslaved Black woman named Manon, who belonged to a resident of the German Coast, west of New Orleans. After purchasing Mathias from his owner, Jacques officially acknowledged him as his own son by calling him “Mathias Forcade” in the documents that he drafted to secure his freedom. After moving to Saint-Domingue, in 1745, Jacques enlisted a New Orleans-based woman named Anne Galbreon to help him get Mathias’s freedom.⁹⁹ Since out-of-wedlock relationships, unlike marriage, did not bring manumission, enslaved Black women and their mixed children only became free when their white partners or fathers took the necessary steps to manumit them, as Jacques did.

This dynamic reinforced white men’s authority over enslaved women and their mixed-race children. Some slaveowners might have manipulated their female captive’s hopes of manumission in order to sexually exploit them.¹⁰⁰ The records of a New Orleans court case point toward one probable example of such manipulation. Sometime before 1736, a white slaveowner named Pierre Garçon L’Eveillé promised freedom to his enslaved Black house servant Jeanneton. However, L’Eveillé changed his mind after Jeanneton ran away, told authorities that she was pregnant with his child, and asked to be taken away from him.¹⁰¹ Others only manumitted their captives under certain conditions, perhaps to keep their leverage over them. Such was the case in 1762, in the parish of Pointe Coupée, Louisiana, when a white man named Alexandre Chenet used the services of a notary to manumit his captive Hypolite, classified as a “*négresse*,” and her six-year-old *mulâtre* son, Isidore. Perhaps because Chenet wanted to dissuade Hypolite from leaving him, he added a provision to the manumission act specifying that she would only become free after his death and that she should continue to serve him until then.¹⁰²

Since very few white men in Lower Louisiana took the necessary steps to officially manumit their mixed children or Black sexual partners, most Black concubines and mixed children in the region had no path to getting freedom papers.¹⁰³ According to Cécile Vidal, half of the manumission deeds recorded in New Orleans during the French period involved enslaved women and their mixed children, suggesting that some white men did emancipate their Black partners and mixed offspring.¹⁰⁴ Manumission records point

toward a few cases in which a white man appears to have freed his Black partner and mixed children. For example, in 1735 in New Orleans, one Sieur Pierre de Saint-Julien mortgaged all his enslaved servants and property to manumit Marie Charlotte and Louise, the two daughters of an enslaved Black woman named Gaigne. Saint-Julien claimed to want to manumit those girls to thank Gaigne “for specific reasons, to ease his conscience,” without further explanation.¹⁰⁵ Some fathers used intermediaries to free their mixed children, presumably because they wanted to avoid paying the fee prescribed by the *Code Noir* of 1724 for free men fathering children with enslaved women. I already mentioned Jacques Forcade, the Saint-Domingue-based white man who enlisted Anne Galbreon to help him get his son’s freedom in New Orleans in 1745. A few years earlier, prior to his departure for the Chickasaw Wars (1721–1763) with little hope of return, a Marine troop captain named Sieur Jacques de Coustillas officially manumitted Pierrot, Françoise and Marianne—three captives described as “*mulâtre*” and “*mulâtresse[s]*” in one document. Pierrot was born to a white man who might have been no other than Jean-Baptiste Martin Diron d’Artaguiette—Coustillas’s army fellow and the *commissaire-ordonnateur* of Louisiana turned director of the French Company of the Indies who opposed intermarriage between Frenchmen and Native American women. Manumission records explicitly described Pierrot as “the *mulâtre* son of D’Artaguiette [*sic*].”¹⁰⁶ A few years later, in 1745, in Pointe Coupée, another white man, Vincent Le Porche, manumitted a *mulâtresse* named Marie Louise on the grounds that she should “enjoy full and complete liberty, being the daughter of a Frenchman,” though he did not identify this man.¹⁰⁷

Although more white slaveowners took the necessary steps to free their Black partners and mixed children in the French Caribbean than in French Louisiana, such manumissions were slightly less common in Martinique and Guadeloupe than on the isle of Saint-Domingue. Saint-Domingue developed a large free population of non-European descent as a result of *métissage* and manumissions through self-purchase, military service, and other accomplishments.¹⁰⁸ Colonists on the island developed a flexible approach to manumissions, perhaps because the island’s sizeable dimensions made it more difficult for authorities to control mixed relationships, and the colony also shared a porous border with a Spanish colony—where manumissions had long been common practice.¹⁰⁹ Although Blacks, *mulâtres*, and people of Indigenous descent amounted to almost 18 percent

of the free population in Saint-Domingue (2,525 people) by 1740, they only amounted to 14 percent of the free population in Guadeloupe by 1731 (1,332) and to 13 percent of the free population in Martinique as late as 1764 (1,846).¹¹⁰ At least some white men in the Lesser Antilles must have manumitted their enslaved female partners: this is suggested by the fact that women outnumbered men in the free population of African descent of Martinique.¹¹¹ Women amounted to 63 percent of the free adult population of non-European descent in Martinique in 1726 (422 people) and to 54 percent in 1742.¹¹² Some white fathers must have manumitted their mixed children, as well, since mixed people (categorized as *mulâtres* or *métis*) amounted to a majority within the population of free children of non-European descent on both Martinique and Guadeloupe.¹¹³

Once freed, however, those people saw their social mobility restricted by the slew of racial policies issued beginning in the late seventeenth century. The provision of article LII of the *Code Noir* of 1724, which banned endowments from whites to Blacks “[neither] inter vivos, nor after death,” was applied on at least two occasions in Louisiana.¹¹⁴ Such was the case in 1728, in New Orleans, when a ship captain on his deathbed granted all his personal possessions and all the money owed to him by the French Company of the Indies to an enslaved woman described as “Mr. Larou’s [*négresse*],” reportedly to reward her for “her faithful care of him while [he was] sick.”¹¹⁵ Colonial authorities refused to honor this section of his will invoking “said *négresse*’s incapacity to receive donations.”¹¹⁶ The provision banning donations from whites to Blacks was then used a second time to disenfranchise a Native American woman. One year after the Larou case, in Natchitoches, an enslaved Osage woman was also denied a donation from her owner on the grounds that “said *sauvagesse* cannot enjoy [the legacy] in accordance with article fifty-two of the *Code Noir*.”¹¹⁷

Some other Blacks in Louisiana, who had been manumitted, were even reenslaved following court sentences for crimes. These reenslavement cases did not fully align with article XXXIV of the *Code Noir* of 1724, which subjected free Blacks to enslavement if they had failed to pay the fine for sheltering maroons: there is evidence that two manumitted Blacks were reenslaved for other reasons.¹¹⁸ One of them was a twenty-year-old free man of African ancestry named Jean-Baptiste (or Baptiste) Coustillas, who had been manumitted with his family in the 1730s by his owner and possible father, the aforementioned Marine troop captain Jacques de Coustillas.¹¹⁹

Jean-Baptiste only enjoyed his freedom for a few brief years until he was accused of theft by one Sieur Fabry in 1743. Although Jean-Baptiste denied the accusation, he was convicted for robbery, reenslaved, and sold for the benefit of the hospital of New Orleans.¹²⁰ Jean-Baptiste's sister Jeanne (or Jeannette) was also reenslaved four years later in 1747 for theft and unpaid debt.¹²¹

Although some enslaved Black women and their mixed children did obtain their freedom and retain it, the vast majority remained subject to their white owner's yoke. When a Frenchman wanted to free a Black female partner whom he did not possess, there was no guarantee that her owner would agree to sell her. Still in New Orleans, a militia officer named Sieur André Jung succeeded in convincing one Monsieur Benoît Payen de Chavoye to sell him his probable Black partner, Jeanne, in 1763 for the exorbitant sum of 17,500 livres. He also convinced Chavoye to sell him Jeanne's *mulâtresse* daughter within four years for an additional 4,000 livres.¹²² However, another enslaved woman in Louisiana, named Catherine, was not so lucky. We only know of Catherine's story because she ran away when her owner, a man named Sieur François Henry Duplanty, refused to sell her to her presumed partner, Louis, in 1767, and she found refuge in a cabin belonging to one of her friends. Catherine and Louis continued to see each other in this cabin and in Louis's bedroom at the inn where he had been staying. When Catherine was arrested, Duplanty requested from Louis that he pay a fee of ten livres for each day that she had been away.¹²³

There were also several cases in which a child was manumitted while the mother was not. In New Orleans, this is what happened to a woman named Marie-Jeanne, categorized as a "*négresse* slave." Although her sexual partner, a French merchant named Louis Rançon, secured the freedom of their *mulâtre* son, Louis-François, in 1751, he did not free her and eventually married a more "acceptable" (white) woman, Marie Françoise Gallot, in 1762.¹²⁴ Another woman of African descent from New Orleans, Jacqueline Lemelle, also remained enslaved after a man named Gardelle Gaspard spent 800 livres to purchase and manumit her six-month-old so-called "*quarteron*" ("quadroon") in 1765. Gaspard also agreed to pay an extra twenty sols per day to allow this infant to stay with his mother for another year. He may have acted on behalf of a man named Joseph Dusuau de La Croix, who later admitted being the father of one of Jacqueline's children, a boy named Louis.¹²⁵

Even when the child and the mother were both freed, it could take years before their freedom was officialized or before they could leave their owner's estate. Remember Marianne, the Black house servant who likely engaged in a relationship with Claude Vignon La Combe, with whom she cohabited and probably had two mixed children. It turns out that La Combe's business partner at the pitch-and-tar factory on Lake Pontchartrain, a Paris-born Frenchman named Chavannes, also had a relationship with his house servant. In 1732, in New Orleans, Chavannes requested an authorization from the governor and *commissaire-ordonnateur* of Louisiana to manumit his Black or mixed-race housekeeper, Isabelle.¹²⁶ Yet it took Chavannes another six years to finally have her freedom recorded at the clerk's office, on the grounds that she had "contented him through her loyalty and services."¹²⁷ Chavannes appears on several occasions in historical documents because of his activities as a planter and a secretary at the Council of Louisiana.¹²⁸ He may have fathered a daughter with Isabelle and allowed her to live as free without freedom papers. Strikingly, however, Isabelle and her daughter continued to work for Chavannes, even after their manumission. The couple eventually moved to the northern shore of Lake Pontchartrain, where Chavannes ran the pitch-and-tar factory with La Combe.¹²⁹ When he died in 1752, Chavannes designated Isabelle and her daughter as his sole heirs "as a payment for their salary for when they worked for him."¹³⁰ The council agreed to deliver Chavannes's belongings to Isabelle despite article LII of the *Code Noir* of 1724 (which prevented Blacks from receiving such donations from whites), but only because of "their limited value."¹³¹

Like Isabelle's daughter, several mixed children in the Americas were allowed to enjoy an informal and incomplete form of freedom, without official documentation, and which forced them to remain under white people's yoke. There were different paths to freedom for enslaved people. A few white men in the French Americas used church registers to manumit their mixed children. Such was the case of the abovementioned French merchant Louis Rançon: he had his *mulâtre* boy Louis-François recorded as a "free *mulâtre*" in 1751 in a baptism record of New Orleans, acknowledging his paternity and claiming to have "procured [his] freedom" from his owner beforehand—though there is no evidence that he actually did so.¹³² The practice of recording enslaved mixed children as free in church records was not limited to French Louisiana. The crown protested in 1736

that several white men in the French Caribbean “have children whose mothers are slaves baptized as free, in order to have them identified as manumitted slaves.” As a result, the king enjoined priests not to baptize any children as free unless their mother was clearly manumitted.¹³³ Scholars have called the people in this state of limbo in between slavery and freedom the *libres des savanes* or *libres de fait*, though neither of these expressions was used before the late eighteenth century.¹³⁴

As shown earlier by the story of the carpenter André in Guadeloupe, informal manumissions created a group of second-class subjects of non-European descent whose freedom was entirely dependent on white people’s intentions. The story of Charlotte, an enslaved *mulâtresse* from New Orleans, also illustrates this point well. Charlotte was born to an enslaved Black woman named Jeanneton and a white infantry captain named Pierre-Henri Derneville. Although Charlotte was by all evidence allowed to live as free in her father’s household, he never formally manumitted her. As a result, Charlotte was rumored to be working as a prostitute in the city to make enough money to purchase her own freedom. It seems that she was pushed to do so by her father’s wife, Mrs. Pelagia Fleuriau, who happened to be the daughter of the attorney-general of Louisiana.¹³⁵ Around 1754, Charlotte had a son named Charles, who was probably raised alongside Derneville’s children. Charlotte was only able to purchase her own freedom, and that of her son, years later, in the 1770s, under the Spanish regime.¹³⁶

The archives contain some evidence of white men attempting to afford more protection and care for their mixed children and Black partners than Pierre-Henri Derneville did. Some even took measures to transmit patrimony to them. Recall Chavannes, the secretary at the Council of Louisiana who made his former enslaved housekeeper, Isabelle, and her mixed daughter his sole heirs in 1752. Three years later, in Saint-Claude, Guadeloupe, a white man on his deathbed named Michel Antoine Bourdaise Demontérant manumitted his enslaved house servant Roze, as well as her children and grandchildren, bequeathing them a plantation named Petite Place.¹³⁷ In 1758, still in Guadeloupe, another Frenchman named Sieur Duchesne confessed to having murdered an enslaved man named Pierre to steal the cassava that he was carrying. Members of the Guadeloupean court accused Duchesne of having fabricated his confession to protect his own son, the real murderer—a *mulâtre* named François. In the end, François

was sentenced to be whipped and pilloried, and his father was condemned to pay a compensation along with a fine of 300 livres for his false confession.¹³⁸ Other white fathers took measures to provide for the education of their mixed children, though this did not always lead to freedom, as the Guadeloupean story of the *mulâtre* carpenter André demonstrates. Some mixed children really took advantage of the educational opportunity that was given to them. The story of the Guadeloupean *mulâtre* Joseph Bologne, born in the mid-eighteenth century to a wealthy planter named Georges Bologne and one of his Black captives, is well known.¹³⁹ Georges sent Joseph to France so he could be educated at the Collège Saint-Louis of Angoulême.¹⁴⁰ Joseph then became a renowned composer, conductor, violinist, and fencer, taking the name of Chevalier de Saint-Georges.¹⁴¹ Other white men also made arrangements for the education of their mixed children in Lower Louisiana. Such was perhaps the case with a merchant of New Orleans named Sieur Henry Decours, who manumitted an enslaved *mulâtresse* named Rosette in 1757 on the grounds that he was “much attached to her as she [was] good-natured, and he wish[ed] to take care of her education.”¹⁴²

Marriage and White Men’s Social Mobility

Like enslaved women and their mixed children, white men, too, found some opportunities for upward mobility through their relationships with affluent women of non-European ancestries: such alliances could therefore advance white dominion, especially since French authorities often classified these women as “whites” in state papers.¹⁴³ It was in the Indian Ocean world that intermarriages could be most advantageous for Frenchmen.¹⁴⁴ In India, Catholic intermarriages took place throughout the eighteenth century, partly because of the persistent gender imbalance in the French outposts.¹⁴⁵ Intermarriage in India involved Frenchmen from all strata of society, from soldiers and company employees to merchants and high-ranking officials.¹⁴⁶ Several Frenchmen in India achieved social mobility by marrying affluent women of South Asian descent in the Catholic Church. Probably less than half of the twenty-three wedded European merchants employed by the company in Pondicherry in 1727 were married to French women.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, out of the 306 marriage ceremonies involving a European groom that

were celebrated between 1720 and 1750 at Notre Dame des Anges in Pondicherry, only 35 were to European brides.¹⁴⁸ Many of these marriages were to Christian Luso-Indian women, as suggested by their Portuguese names, while others were to other Eurasian and Indian women.¹⁴⁹ According to a French navy officer named Louis de Granpré, only two European families in Pondicherry had not “allied to Indian families” by the late eighteenth century.¹⁵⁰

Not all South Asian brides and concubines in India came with wealth and prestige. In fact, many French company employees and soldiers continued to form relationships with Hindus, Muslims and low-ranking *topas*, both inside and outside of Catholic wedlock.¹⁵¹ The founder of Pondicherry and first governor-general of French India, François Martin, told the story of a Frenchman named Lafleur who had murdered his wife—a woman described as a “Muslim or Gentile”—for adultery and had run away to Bengal with their children to escape punishment.¹⁵² Officials in India could not prevent French deserters, mercenaries, company employees, and other adventurers from marrying low-ranking and non-Christian Indian women because many of them lived beyond the reach of French authority. Members of the Superior Council of Pondicherry complained in 1731 of several Portuguese monks in Bandel, near Chandernagore, who had agreed to marry several French deserter soldiers to local women “without any formalities” and without the approval of the governor.¹⁵³ Because French authorities in Chandernagore disapproved of his union with an Indian woman named Manique, one former French company employee named Zacharie Piget had found refuge in a Danish outpost. He was sentenced to be burned in effigy in 1729 because he had murdered the French shipmaster who tried to arrest him.¹⁵⁴ By 1737, the upcoming governor of Pondicherry, Joseph-François Dupleix, lamented that “most [company] employees [were] married to creole women of obscure origins.”¹⁵⁵

However, several other Frenchmen in India—including Dupleix himself—also formed alliances with affluent and high-ranking Christian women of South Asian descent. Financially comfortable Christian Luso-Indian women were desirable matches for low-ranking company employees and soldiers eager to marry up.¹⁵⁶ Many employees and soldiers in Bengal had fled severe financial hardship in France only to survive on low wages in Asia.¹⁵⁷ Only a few privileged company employees could afford a wealthy European lifestyle, with a large residence, European commodities, enslaved

people, and domestic servants. Marrying a Luso-Indian woman with a significant dowry could give low-ranking Frenchmen access to this kind of fortune.¹⁵⁸ Wealthy Luso-Indian women also formed a pool of desirable brides for high-ranking French officials and for merchants and employees seeking socially suitable spouses.¹⁵⁹ For example, a French surgeon in Pondicherry married an affluent Luso-Indian woman named Dona Rose de Castro in 1705 and had eight children with her. One of these children, a girl named Jeanne, married a French councilor in 1719. After she became a widow, she married the soon-to-be governor of Pondicherry, Dupleix, in 1741 in Chandernagore.¹⁶⁰ Jeanne Dupleix, also known as Joanna Begum, received a substantial inheritance from her Luso-Indian mother, which included an estate in Pondicherry, furniture, jewelry, and multiple domestic servants.¹⁶¹ Still in Bengal, the nephews of the renowned Scottish-French financier John Law, two high-ranking company employees named Jean and Jacques Law de Lauriston, also married into a wealthy Luso-Indian family called the Carvalhos.¹⁶² Jean's Luso-Indian wife came with a considerable dowry of 17,000 rupees.¹⁶³

Because these relationships could help European men climb the social ladder, French officials did not target mixed marriages to Catholic, Europeanized and financially comfortable Luso-Indian women with their prohibitions. This is illustrated by the language employed by the French governor of Chandernagore in 1732 when he banned unions between Frenchmen and "bastard or country women *who are not descended from Europeans or French*."¹⁶⁴ This language was meant to allow Frenchmen to keep marrying Luso-Indian women born to European men. In fact, Dupleix is not the only French official to have married a Luso-Indian woman himself. Born in 1697 in Châtellerault (a city near Poitiers in France), the director of the Company of the Indies, Pierre Mathieu Renault de Saint-Germain, also married a Luso-Indian widow, named Claire Splanger d'Aranha. Although Renault de Saint-Germain did not get the approval of the Council of Pondicherry, this alliance did not preclude his being promoted to governor of Bengal in 1755.¹⁶⁵

Many other European men formed advantageous alliances with women of non-European descent on the isle of Bourbon. Intermarriage rates cannot be measured with precision for eighteenth-century Isle Bourbon because clergymen stopped recording people's origins on a systematic basis in parish registers. In 1717, however, La Barbinais claimed that "among free

people, there [were] only six families without mixed blood who have been careful enough not to associate with families of *mulâtres* and *métis* [on the island].”¹⁶⁶ About ten years later, the Company of the Indies described the number of mixed marriages between whites and free people of non-European descent on Isle Bourbon as “disproportionate.”¹⁶⁷ Lineages on the island can sometimes be inferred by cross-referencing parish registers with census data and other sources. Through this method, it becomes clear that many white men on the island continued to marry free women of non-European descent in the first half of the eighteenth century.

In particular, just like their counterparts in India, many Frenchmen on Isle Bourbon formed alliances with financially comfortable or affluent women of Eurasian descent. Such was the case of a former pirate from La Rochelle named Jacques Bouyer. In 1707, Jacques married a creole woman of Eurasian descent named Jeanne Wilmann, whose grandmother, Françoise Royer Des Rosaies, was a Christian resident of Daman in India. Jeanne must have come with a generous dowry since her parents, Jeanne Royer and Henri-Guilbert Wilmann, a German man, were prosperous landowners. By 1708, they owned a residence in Saint-Denis, with two plots of land where they raised livestock and cultivated food crops and sugarcane.¹⁶⁸ Jacques Bouyer’s union with a woman of Eurasian descent evidently did not compromise his career, since he eventually became a member of the island’s council.¹⁶⁹

Even the governor of Isle Bourbon and Pondicherry, Pierre-Benoît Dumas, married a high-born woman from Nagapatnam (on the Coromandel Coast of India) in the 1720s, whose name was Marie-Gertrude.¹⁷⁰ Governor Dumas was a low-ranking and penniless man who brought very little to this marriage, as illustrated by a dispute that took place after the couple’s wedding. The controller-general of Isle Bourbon, Mr. Orry, recorded this dispute in a memorandum written around 1731.¹⁷¹ While traveling at sea, presumably somewhere between Isle of France and Pondicherry, the Dumas couple became friends with a Frenchman named Sieur Marion, a major on Isle of France formerly stationed in Guiana, where he had worked as an infantry captain.¹⁷² Dumas soon became suspicious of the relationship between his wife and their new friend, accusing her of “making love to Sieur Marion.”¹⁷³ The controller-general of Isle Bourbon promptly came to Marie-Gertrude’s defense, describing her as “a very friendly Indian

woman,” “young and amiable,” “virtuous and austere,” and “innocent.” He accused Dumas of slander, adding that “nothing is more hurtful for a virtuous lady than to feel dishonored.”¹⁷⁴ He also recounted Marie-Gertrude’s disenchantment after realizing that she had married a penniless man “with no name and no family,” which she reportedly experienced as a “cruel betrayal.”¹⁷⁵ This union to Marie-Gertrude must have been hugely advantageous for Dumas: by 1732, the pair had become the most successful slaveowners on Isle Bourbon.¹⁷⁶

Many other mixed marriages on Isle Bourbon were to financially comfortable women of Malagasy ancestry. In addition to being successful professionally, some of these women had accumulated significant wealth through successive marriages. Many had outlived their husbands because they had gotten married at a particularly young age, due to the scarcity of women on the island in the early years of colonization: remember, for example, Louise Payet, the affluent and devout *mulâtresse* slaveowner of Saint-Paul who married a creole *mulâtre* named François Cauzan at age eleven in 1692, became a widow in 1715, and married a French army surgeon a few months later (see Chapter 3).¹⁷⁷ In accordance with the Paris Custom, a widow retained half of her household’s estate after her husband’s death, with the other half being divided between the children if they were born inside of Catholic wedlock.¹⁷⁸

This is why several Frenchmen were able to climb the social ladder by marrying Bourbon Island Creole widows.¹⁷⁹ This is illustrated by the stories of both Louise Payet and her niece, Marianne Payet—the wealthy creole woman of French-Malagasy ancestry whom we encountered in the introduction to this book. After inheriting from her late French husband in 1742, Marianne married Joseph Choppy Desgranges, a French army captain and the soon-to-be commander of Saint-Pierre and Saint-Louis. The story of another one of Marianne’s aunts (one of Louise Payet’s sisters), Luce Payet, and her French husbands, Pierre Boucher and Henry de Justamond, is also worth mentioning here. By 1705, when Bourbon Island households possessed an average of three enslaved people, Luce’s parents, Antoine and Louise, owned more than ten, as well as several plantations and food crop fields, and two residences.¹⁸⁰ Pierre Boucher, a former pirate from Nantes, must have received a generous dowry before marrying Luce in 1707.¹⁸¹ Antoine Boucher described the man as “a hard-working [person]

[. . .] [who] purchased several plots of land when he settled on Isle Bourbon."¹⁸² By 1709, the couple owned a residence in Saint-Paul, eight enslaved people, nine farms and plots of land, and almost 200 heads of livestock.¹⁸³ Luce was the sole beneficiary of Pierre's sizable estate when he passed away on June 22, 1710. This might explain why Mr. Henry de Justamond—an ambitious Frenchman from Languedoc who was the former tax collector and warehouse keeper of Isle Bourbon, as well as the soon-to-be governor of the island—rushed to propose to her only a few days after her husband's passing.¹⁸⁴ Luce and Justamond went on to amass a considerable fortune in the parish of Saint-Denis that by 1732 included dozens of heads of livestock, a coffee plantation, and close to a hundred enslaved people.¹⁸⁵ Although the couple's five children inherited a significant portion of the estate after Henry's passing in 1763, seventy-one-year-old Luce still owned more than fifty enslaved people and a plantation.¹⁸⁶

In 1715, another former French pirate, Jean-Baptiste de Laval, also married a comfortable creole woman of Malagasy descent, Louise Aubert. Born in 1696, Louise was the daughter of a French-Malagasy *mulâtresse* named Anne Launay and a Frenchman named Jacques Aubert.¹⁸⁷ Marrying Louise would have earned Jean-Baptiste some prestige, since her French father was a prominent political figure on the island: Jacques had worked as the commander of the parish of Saint-Paul.¹⁸⁸ Louise would have also come with a generous dowry, since her parents were among the wealthiest inhabitants of Isle Bourbon: by 1709, they owned hundreds of heads of livestock, ten farms and plantations, and a total of fourteen enslaved people.¹⁸⁹ One year before she married Jean-Baptiste, Louise was also gifted a large estate in the mountains by her friend Louise Payet.¹⁹⁰ Jean-Baptiste enjoyed a comfortable life in the parish of Saint-Paul thanks to his enslaved workers and spouse's estate.¹⁹¹

* * *

In conclusion, mixed relations between white men and women of non-European descent remained widespread across the eighteenth-century French empire, acting as a key instrument of racial power. Especially in the Indian Ocean, mixed marriages to assimilated, financially comfortable, or affluent freeborn women of non-European descent helped many white men improve their socioeconomic standing, further advancing white dominion in the process. At the same time, many enslaved Black women across the

French Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds faced sexual coercion and violence. Those abuses helped white men subjugate the by-now-sizable enslaved Black communities in these regions by spreading fear and affliction among them. Sexual coercion and violence affected many enslaved people in the city of New Orleans, where a substantial number of white slaveowners kept an enslaved domestic servant in their homes. Colonial policies furthered the subjugation of enslaved and manumitted Black women and their mixed children by denying them the financial security marriage could provide and by discouraging white fathers from acknowledging their own mixed children.

French racial policies attempted to erect socioeconomic boundaries in colonial societies not only by prohibiting intermarriage but also by targeting the social mobility of people of non-European descent. Yet, as the story of the Bourbon Island Creoles suggests, many people of non-European descent still managed to accrue wealth and prestige, through the profit they made from both inheritance and their labor. This labor helped challenge the formation of strict socio-racial hierarchies across the empire at the same time that it helped France build, maintain, and exploit its colonial possessions in ways that proved hugely beneficial to many French people throughout the eighteenth century.

5. Sex and Racial Power

1. About this Roman Law Principle, see Chapter 3.
2. ANOM F3 226 “Motifs du Jugement rendu le 8 février 1738,” p. 294.
3. ANOM F3 225 “Extrait de la lettre du ministre [. . .] 26 août 1738,” p. 349. For the ordinance of 1713, see ANOM F3 236 “Ordonnance du Roi Concernant l’affranchissement des esclaves Du 24 [Octo]bre 1713,” p. 681.
4. ANOM F3 226 “Motifs du Jugement rendu le 8 février 1738,” p. 300.
5. ANOM F3 226 “Motifs du Jugement rendu le 8 février 1738,” p. 301. Slavery was in theory prohibited in the French kingdom because of the famous so-called free soil principle. This principle derived from a legal maxim that probably went back to the medieval era, according to which “there are no slaves in France.” On this topic, see Peabody, “*There Are No Slaves in France*” and “An Alternative Genealogy of the Origins of French Free Soil: Medieval Toulouse,” *Slavery & Abolition* 32, no. 3 (2011): 341–362.
6. ANOM F3 226 “Motifs du Jugement rendu le 8 février 1738,” p. 302.
7. ANOM F3 226 “Motifs du Jugement rendu le 8 février 1738,” p. 296.
8. ANOM F3 226 “Motifs du Jugement rendu le 8 février 1738,” p. 303.
9. ANOM F3 225 “Extrait de la lettre du ministre [. . .] Du 26 août 1738,” pp. 349–351.
10. ANOM F3 226 “Motifs du Jugement rendu le 8 février 1738,” pp. 291–332; ANOM F3 225 “Extrait de la lettre du ministre [. . .] 26 août 1738,” pp. 349–351.
11. For studies underestimating the scope of mixed relationships in Louisiana, see Aubert, “The Blood of France,” 475 (“small number”); William H. Baker, “Louisiana,” in *Encyclopedia of the North American Colonies*, ed. Jacob Ernest Cooke (EBook, New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1993), 2: 175 (“largely distinct”), https://www.google.com/books/edition/Encyclopedia_of_the_North_American_Colon/ZPgpAQAAIAAJ?hl=en; Thomas Ingersoll, *Mammon and Manon in Early New Orleans: The First Slave Society in the Deep South, 1718–1819* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 140. For studies underplaying the scope of mixed relationships on Isle Bourbon, see Raphaël Barquissau, Hippolyte Foucque, and Hubert Jacob de Cordemoy, *L’île de La Réunion (Ancienne Ile Bourbon)* (2nd edition, Paris: Émile Larose, 1925), 21; Albert Corre, *Nos Créoles* (Paris: P.-V Stock, Éditeur, 1902), 23; Isidore Guët, *Les Origines de l’île Bourbon et de la colonisation française à Madagascar* (Paris: Charles Bayle, 1888), 76–77. However, it is true that not all parishes in Lower Louisiana were home to widespread mixed relationships between white men and Black women. In fact, no *mulâtres* were recorded in the parish registers of Mobile from 1724 to 1763 and only five in Natchitoches between 1729 and 1763. See Jacqueline Vidrine, trans. and ed., *Love’s Legacy: The Mobile Marriages Recorded in French, Transcribed, with Annotated Abstracts in English, 1726–1786* (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1985); SCD, Dupré Library, UL Lafayette, “Natchitoches Parish Registers, 1729–1792.” This observation adds nuance to Vidal’s recent claim that “many illicit relationships took place while their protagonists lived in distant outposts such as La Balise or Mobile.” See Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans*, 280. Two factors may explain these low *métissage* rates in Mobile and Natchitoches. First, by the 1720s, white men and white women had already reached demographic parity in those two parishes: indeed, ratios of free men to free women were 1:1 in Mobile, Dauphin Island, and Natchitoches by 1721 and 1722. Second, few settlers in Natchitoches owned enslaved people: there were only eight slave-owning households in this parish in 1722. See ANOM 5 DPPC “Recensement [*sic*] des habitants du fort Louis de la Mobile et ses villages Circonvoisins,” June 28, 1732; ANOM 5 DPPC “Les Natchitoches Recensement Des habitants du fort St Jean Baptiste de Natchitoches,” May 22, 1722.

12. Vidal has recently noted this pattern in the historiography. Citation from Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans*, 248. Nathan Marvin, too, has criticized scholars' tendency to consider *métissage* as a sign of "racia[l] harmon[y]." See his "Bourbon Island Creoles," 246.

13. Gwendolyn Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (EBook, Baton Rouge, LA.: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 270 ("openness"), 271, 12, 374, <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=bom1oowjmvvgC&pg=GBS.PA1>; Gary B. Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early North America*, 3rd ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1992), 106 ("no embarrassment"). For more examples, see Nash, *Red, White, and Black*, 107.

14. For publications considering the power dynamics in sexual relations in the context of colonialism, see Ann M. Little, "Gender and Sexuality in the North American Borderlands, 1492–1848," *History Compass* 7, no. 6 (2009): 1606–1615; Gary Nash, "The Hidden History of Mestizo America," *Journal of American History* 82, no. 3 (1995): 941–964; Ann L. Stoler, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia," in *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*, ed. Micaela di Leonardo (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 51–101, and *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*; Richard Trexler, *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order and the European Conquest of the Americas* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995).

15. Citations from Trévor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (EBook, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 175 ("institutional dominance"), <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=JsVIcJiGOVMC&pg=GBS.PP1>; Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order*, 7 ("racial orders"). On the use of sexual violence in slave societies, see also Block, *Rape and Sexual Power*; Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (EBook, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 355–356, <https://heinonline-org.proxy.lib.duke.edu/HOL/P?h=hein.beal/gowvnstaxp0001&i=339>. My thinking here owes much to Ann Laura Stoler's work. See, for example, her *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, and "Tense and Tender Ties."

16. It then dropped to 4,598 in 1763 due to the cessation of slave imports. ANOM 5 DPPC 16 "[1721] Recensement des habitants Et Concessionnaires de la Nouvelle Orleans et lieux circonvoisins"; Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 9.

17. There is one important exception for Isle Bourbon: see Paris, "La page blanche."

18. Vincent Brown, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," *The American Historical Review*, 114, no. 5 (2009): 1231–1249. About the practice of patriarchy in early modern France, see Julie Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy: Gender and the Politics of Household Authority in Early Modern France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

19. Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," in "Woman: An Issue," special issue, *Massachusetts Review* 13, no. 1/2 (1972): 81–100.

20. For one powerful example, see [Harriet Jacobs], Linda Brent [pseudonym], and Lydia Maria Child [editor], *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, written by herself* (Boston: Thayer & Eldridge 1861).

21. For an overview of the vast historiography dealing with sodomy cases in Latin America, see Zeb Tortorici, "Against Nature: Sodomy and Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America," *History Compass* 10, no. 2 (2012): 161–178.

22. See Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 30, 59, 204, 208; Peter Stallybrass,

“Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed,” in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 123–142, here 128.

23. ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir à la connaissance,” pp. 95–97.

24. ADR C°2519 “6 Septembre 1733, Arrêt qui condamne le nommé Janets dit Rochefort a être Blamé et en trente livres d’amande,” ff. 26–26v.

25. ADR C 4 “Du vingt trois aoust 1742, Envoy de plusieurs ouvriers a l’Isle De france pour Cause de libertinage,” ff. 157v (quotation)—158.

26. ANOM F3 226 “La Guadeloupe Conseil de May 1744,” p. 161.

27. ANOM F3 226 “La Guadeloupe Conseil de May 1744,” pp. 161–162.

28. LSM RSC File 1752-06-13-01 “Proces Verbal de declaration des Negresses 13 Juin 1752.”

29. LSM RSCL File 1752-06-12-02 Black Books “June 12 1752. Examination of Pochenet” (quotation); LSM RSCL File 1752-06-12-02 “12 Juin 1752.” This might not have been Pochenet’s first sexual assault. The court of Louisiana accused the French soldier of hiding the truth on the grounds that “he had [already] knifed a woman in France in the town of Metz.” Quoted from White, *Voices of the Enslaved*, 71.

30. LSM RSCL File 1752-06-12-02 “12 Juin 1752”; LSM RSCL File 1752-06-13-01 “Proces-verbal de declaration des Negresses”; LSM RSCL File 1752-06-12-02 Black Books “June 12, 1752 Examination of Pochenet”; “Criminal Trial for Assassination, June 8, 1752”; “Report of Surgeon Gueydon on wound of Babet”; “Complaint of Membrede and petition of the Procureur General against Antoine Dochenet [*sic*], June 12, 1752”; “Interrogation of Dochenet [*sic*], June 12, 1752”; “Interrogation of Dochenet [*sic*], June 12, 1752”; “Proces verbal of declaration of the two wounded negresses, June 13, 1752”; “Arrest and Imprisonment of Dochenet [*sic*], June 17, 1752”; “Second interrogation of the accused, June 19, 1752”; “Conclusions of the Procureur General in the criminal suit against Dochenet [*sic*], June 26, 1752”; “Procureur Général v. Pierre Antoine Pochenet,” June 12–28, 1752,” RSC, *LHQ* 21 no. 2, (1938): 567–573.

31. LSM RSCL 1730-09-05-02 “1730. A Messieurs du Conseil superieur an la Province de la Loüisiane” (“crushed”/ “blow”); LSM RSCL 1730-04-29-01 “Du 25 avril 1730” (“complaints”).

32. LSM RSCL 1730-09-05-02 “1730. A Messieurs du Conseil superieur an la Province de la Loüisiane”; LSM RSCL 1730-04-29-01 “Du 25 avril 1730”; “Jan. 17, 1730, Examination of a Delinquent Steward,” “April 29, 1730, “To Sieur Roy,” RSC, *LHQ* 4, no. 4 (1921), 510, 521; “Aug. 28, 1730, Decisions in Sundry Suits”; “Sept. 4, 1730, Decisions in Sundry Suits”; “Sept. 5, 1730, Petition to Prosecute Scoundrel Overseer”; “Sept. 5, 1730, D’Auseville vs. Charpentier (Le Roy)”; “Sept. 5 1730, D’Auseville vs. Charpentier alias Le Roy”; “Sept. 7, 1730, Petition to Reinforce Prosecution”; “Nov. 22 1730, Petition in Recovery [. . .] Jacques Roy], formerly steward for Mr. D’Auseville”; “Dec. 1, 1730, Remonstrance. Councillor D’Auseville reviews [the demands of his tenant Roy],” “Court Summons. Sheriff Dargaway notifies Jacques Charpentier alias Le Roy [. . .],” RSC, *LHQ* 5, no. 1 (1922), 87, 89, 91, 92, 94, 102, 103–104, 107. See also White, *Voices of the Enslaved*, 127–129.

33. Cited in Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise*, 221.

34. ANOM F3 206 “Lettre de la Compagnie des Indes à Mrs du Conseil Superieur de Bourbon Sur plusieurs objets et notamment Sur le Café Paris 24 Septembre 1729,” ff. 62v–63.

35. ADR C°301 “Au Port Louis, Isle de France [. . .],” undated document.

36. ANOM F3 205 “26 Mars 1729,” pp. 158–159 (quotation).

37. ADR 2MI 19 C°3 “Renvoy en france du nommé jean Nicole et joseph pascal Commandeur,” f. 42v. Pascal continued to visit that same enslaved woman to have sex with her even after he was dismissed from his position.

38. ADR 2MI 19 C°3 “Renvoy en france du nommé jean Nicole et joseph pascal Commandeur,” f. 43.

39. ADR 2MI 19 C°3 “Renvoy en france du nommé jean Nicole et joseph pascal Commandeur,” f. 42v. The third Frenchman who was expelled from Isle Bourbon was a cadet in the garrison of the town of Saint-Denis named Sieur de Langle de la Potinerie. He was sent away in 1737 on the grounds that he was a drunk and a thief who led a “libertine life [. . .] going to people’s cabins to corrupt the *négresses*.” ADR 2 MI 19 C°3 “Du 11 mars 1737 pour renvoyer le Sr de Langle a L’isle de France,” f. 91.

40. Quoted from Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans*, 274–275. On the *ménagères* of the Antilles, Dominique Rogers, “Les livres de couleur dans les capitales de Saint-Domingue: fortunes, mentalités et intégration à la fin de l’Ancien Régime (1776–1789) (PhD diss., Université Bordeaux III, 1999), chap. 10, sec. 2. For a definition of “ménagère,” see Nathalie Dessens, “Les ‘ménagères’ de Saint-Domingue et de Louisiane,” in *Colonisations*, ed. Singaravélou *et al.*, 717–718.

41. Unfortunately, the incidence of this practice cannot be assessed for the 1740s and 1750s because of the lack of censuses for those periods.

42. ANOM 5 DPPC 16 “Louisiane Recensement 1721 [. . .] Recensement des habitants Et Concessionnaires de la Nouvelle Orleans et lieux circonvoisins.”

43. All three were single. ANOM 5 DPPC 16 “Louisiane Recensement 1721 [. . .] Recensement des habitants Et Concessionnaires de la Nouvelle Orleans et lieux circonvoisins.”

44. We do not know how many of them were single. ANOM 5 DPPC 16 “Louisiane Recensement 1731 [. . .] Recensement des habitations le long du fleuve.”

45. ANOM G1 464 “Recensement General de La Ville de la Nouvelle Orleans [. . .] fait au mois de Janvier 1732”; ANO SR/1 “Saint-Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, baptisms, burials, marriages, 1731–1733,” ff. 27, 40v.

46. ANO SR/2 “Saint-Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, baptisms, 1744–1753”; ANO SR/3 “St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, Baptism, 1753–1759.” This data (184 *mulâtres*) includes all baptized children, as well as their relatives and godparents. ANOM C13 C4 “Récapitulatif du recensement général de la Louisiane en 1737,” f. 197. Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans*, 118–121.

47. ANO SR/2 “Saint-Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, baptisms, 1744–1753.”

48. ANO SR/4 “Saint-Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, baptisms, marriages, 1759–1762.”

49. Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans*, 121.

50. ANO “Saint Louis Cathedral. Baptisms, Vol II. January 1 1744 to May 15 1753,” p. 276.

51. See Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 268.

52. Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 278.

53. Gwendolyn Hall has emphasized the role of isolation, and of “closeness and intimacy,” in bringing “extensive [. . .] race mixture” at Pointe Coupée. Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 278, 294 (“race mixture”).

54. HL “Vaudreuil Papers,” LO 54 “1745 Dec. 20 Pointe Coupée Louisiana Recencement [*sic*] General des habitants de la paroisse de la Pointe Coupée”; ABR “St Francis of Pointe Coupee New Roads L.A, Baptisms, Marriages, Burials, 1756–1769.”

55. HL “Vaudreuil Papers,” LO 54 “1745 Dec. 20 Pointe Coupée Louisiana Recencement General des habitants de la paroisse de la Pointe Coupée.”

56. Garrigus, *Before Haiti*, 154–155.

57. ANOM C8 B8 “Lettre du père Mane, 30 septembre 1722,” f. 124. Cited in Cousseau, “La famille invisible,” 47–48.

58. ANOM C8 B8 “Lettre du père Mane, 30 septembre 1722,” f. 124. Cited in Cousseau, “La famille invisible,” 51 (“masters”), 63n51 (“seduction”).

59. Cited in Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise*, 197. Other enslaved mixed children were also recorded in Guadeloupe, including fifteen *mulâtres* and *quarterons* who were listed in the well-preserved parish registers of Le Gosier between the 1720s and 1750s, born to enslaved women and unidentified white men, some of whom might have been their owners. See ANOM 85MIOM197 “Le Gosier, 1688–1772.” Most of those *mulâtres* spent their entire lives in slavery, being listed alongside *nègres* in several Martinican censuses. Adrien Dessalles, *Histoire générale des Antilles* (Paris: Libraire-éditeur quai Malaquais, 1847), 4:574.

60. Rose-May Nicole, *Noirs, cafres et créoles: Étude de la représentation du non blanc réunionnais* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1996), 80.

61. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Voyage à L’isle de France, à l’isle de Bourbon, au Cap de Bonne-Espérance etc., avec des observations nouvelles sur la nature et les hommes*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Chez Merlin, 1773), 1:184.

62. Saint-Pierre, *Voyage à l’isle de Bourbon*, 1:185–186.

63. Challe, *Journal d’un Voyage*, 2:191 (filles de mauvaise vie), 192 (same price as valets).

64. Marisa J. Fuentes, “Power and Historical Figuring: Rachael Pringle Polgreen’s Troubled Archive,” *Gender & History* 22, no. 3 (2010): 564–584, here 576 (“function”/“performative”)–577 (“degrading”/“owner”/“mutuality”), 571.

65. Challe, *Journal d’un Voyage*, 2:191.

66. Challe, *Journal d’un Voyage*, 2:192–193 (quotation).

67. Challe, *Journal d’un Voyage*, 2:191.

68. Challe, *Journal d’un Voyage*, 2:192.

69. ANOM F3 222 “Règlement concernant Les affranchissements des Esclaves Du 15 août 1711,” p. 189.

70. ANOM F3 226 “Motifs du Jugement rendu le 8 fevrier 1738,” p. 318.

71. For Hartman’s interpretation of the notion of Black seduction in the context of slavery, see Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 102–105. See also Cowling et al., “Mothering Slaves,” 228–229; Garraway, *The Libertine Colony*, 232. For another example from the French historiography, see Elsa Dorlin, *La matrice de la race: Généalogie sexuelle et coloniale de la Nation française* (Paris: La Découverte, 2006), 220.

72. ANOM F3 252 “25 Octobre 1722 [. . .] Desny Duvanel Curé,” p. 528. When, five years later, a relative attempted to exclude the Black widow of a diseased white man named Gilles Petit from family inheritance in Guadeloupe, the French attorney-general described Petit as an honest man who had been “seduced by the tricks of th[is] *négresse*.” ANOM F3 224 “Du Jeudy Sixieme Du mois de mars mil Sept Cent Vingt Sept,” p. 216. For more information about this case, see Chapter 4.

73. Article IX of the *Code Noir* of 1685 prescribed the systematic manumission of enslaved women who married freemen and of their mixed children. See *Recueils de reglemens*, 2:85.

74. See Spear, *Race, Sex and Social Order*, 31–32; Vaughan Baker, Amos Simpson, and Mathé Allain, “Le Mari Est Seigneur: Marital Laws Governing Women in French Louisiana,” in *Louisiana’s Legal Heritage*, ed. Edward F. Haas (Pensacola, FL: Perdido Bay Press, 1983), 7–17; Barbara B. Diefendorf, “Widowhood and Remarriage in Sixteenth-Century Paris,” *Journal of Family History* 7, no. 4 (1982): 379–395.

75. Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise*, 222.

76. Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise*, 290.

77. For example, in 1733 and 1734, they authorized two Frenchmen to marry *mulâtresses* in Fort-Royal. See Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise*, 315. In 1749, intendant of the *Îles du Vent* Jean Louis Albert de Ranché authorized the wedding of a Frenchman from Bordeaux with a free

Black woman in Fort-Royal. His successor as intendant, Charles-Martin Hurson, authorized only one intermarriage during his time in office from 1749 to 1755, presumably because the couple already had one child out of wedlock. Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise*, 316.

78. Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise*, 228–229.

79. ANOM 85MIOM197 “Le Gozier, 1688–1772.”

80. ANOM 85MIOM197 “Le Gozier, 1688–1772.”

81. ANOM 85MIOM197 “Le Gozier, 1688–1772.” Prior to having a relationship with Nicolas Delbourg, in 1747, the *mulâtresse* Marie Rose Taouïra had another child out of wedlock with a white man named Louis de Revenes.

82. Vidrine, *Love’s Legacy*; SCD, Dupré Library, UL Lafayette, “Natchitoches Parish Registers, 1729–1792.”

83. ABR “St Francis of Pointe Coupee New Roads L.A., Baptisms, Marriages, Burials, 1756–1769”; ANO SR/56, “St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, Marriage Index, 1720–1730.”

84. ANO SR/56, “St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, Marriage Index, 1720–1730,” pp. 89–90. See also Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order*, 79–80.

85. ANO SR/2, “Saint-Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, baptisms, 1744–1753,” p. 114.

86. ANO SR/2, “Saint-Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, baptisms, 1744–1753,” p. 114.

87. ANO SR/210, “Saint-Charles Borromeo, Destrehan, Combination book, 1739–1755,” p. 95; ANO SR/3, “Saint-Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, baptisms, 1753–1759,” p. 23. The other case is mentioned in Vidal, “Caribbean Louisiana,” 128.

88. Matthew Gerber, *Bastard: Politics, Family, and Law in Early Modern France* (EBook, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 27–34, <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=pXLRcWAAQBAJ&pg=GBS.PR1>.

89. Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans*, 286.

90. By contrast, the parish registers of Isle Bourbon contain only a few mentions of “unknown father[s].” For some examples, see ADR GG44 “ST Denis 2 MIEC773”; ADR 1 GG1 “Bl, Libres, Escl 1667–1718”; ADR 2MIEC 780 “St Pierre.”

91. Pierre François Régis Dessalles, *Les Annales du Conseil Souverain de la Martinique ou Tableau historique du gouvernement de cette colonie*, 2 vols. (Bergerac: J.B. Puynesge, 1786), 1 (1): 104.

92. Cousseau, “La famille invisible,” 52–53.

93. Cousseau, “La famille invisible,” 51–53.

94. Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise*, 317.

95. Cousseau, “La famille invisible,” 53.

96. Cousseau, “La famille invisible,” 49.

97. ANO SR/2 “Saint-Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, baptisms, 1744–1753.”

98. ANO SR/4 “Saint-Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, baptisms, marriages, 1759–1762”; LSM RSCL File 1769–09-20-01 “La Compagnie des mulâtres et nègres libres de cette colonie de la Louïisienne.”

99. “Feb. 14 [1745] Procuration granted by Jacques Forcade [. . .] to Anne Galbreon,” RSC, *LHQ* 13, no. 4 (1930): 671.

100. As Cécile Vidal puts it, “Most slaveholding societies throughout world history authorized manumission, for the hope of freedom constituted an instrument of social control that masters could use as leverage over those they held in bondage.” Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans*, 508.

101. LSM RSCL File 1737-06-29-01 “Pierre Garzou dit Leveillé Declaration [. . .]”; “Aug. 23, 1736, Power of Attorney. Cannes Brulees,” RSC, *LHQ* 5, no. 3 (1922): 384; “June 29. 1737 Declaration in Registry of Superior Council by Pierre Garçon called l’Eveillé,” RSC, *LHQ* 9 no. 2 (1926): 299.

102. LSM RSCL File 1762-02-08-02 “1762 8 fevrier. Chenet Liberté accordée a hypolite negresse Et a Izidore Son fils.”

103. On manumissions in Louisiana, see Chapter 4.

104. Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans*, 277–281.

105. LSM RSCL File 1735-10-09-01 “Je soussigné Sr Pierre de St Julien [. . .],” n. p. (quotation); “Oct. 9 [1735] Manumission of Marie Charlotte and Louise [. . .] by their master, St. Pierre de St. Julien,” RSC, *LHQ* 8, no. 1 (1925): 143–144. A note declared this act of manumission invalid, on the grounds that St. Julien owed three times the amount of the value of his estate.

106. LSM RSCL File 1738-08-26-03 “L’an Mil Sept Cent trente huit. Le ving sixieme aoust avant Midy. Par devant Le notaire Royal de La Province de La Louïsiannie [. . .],” n. p. For information about Diron d’Artaguiette’s position concerning French–Native American intermarriage, see Chapter 4. Marianne was, by all evidence, d’Artaguiette’s concubine. D’Artaguiette fathered several mixed children with her. Although this document refers to her as a *mulâtresse*, she was likely of Native American descent. Françoise is explicitly described as d’Artaguiette’s daughter in this document: LSM RSCL File 1747-07-01-03 “Je Mathias Berthelot.” D’Artaguiette had another mixed-race son named Jean-Baptiste. LSM RSCL File 1747-07-01-01 “A Nos Seigneurs du Conseil Supérieur de la Province de la Louisiane”; LSM RSCL File 1747-07-01-02 “Je Mathias Berthelot.” For more information about D’Artaguiette, Marianne and two of their children, see Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans*, 279–280.

107. “Nov. 14 [1745] Report on legal freedom. Vincent Le Porche files a statement,” RSC, *LHQ* 14, no. 4 (1931): 598.

108. Régent, *La France et ses esclaves*, 337; Garraway, *The Libertine Colony*, 211.

109. About manumissions in Santo Domingo, see Richard Turits, “Par-delà les plantations. Question raciale et identités collectives à Santo Domingo,” *Genèses* 66 (2007): 51–68, here 51. I thank Richard Turits for sharing this article with me.

110. ANOM, G1 497 “Recencement [*sic*] de l’Isle de la Guadeloupe Et Dependances Pour l’année 1731”; Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise*, 314 (Martinique); Régent, *La France et ses esclaves*, 337 (Saint-Domingue).

111. On this topic, see: Debien, *Les esclaves aux Antilles françaises*, 376; Garraway, *The Libertine Colony*, 211, 290; Jacques Houdaille, “Le métissage dans les anciennes colonies françaises,” *Population (French Edition)* 36, no. 2 (1981): 267–286, here 272; King, *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig*, 44.

112. Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise*, 306.

113. Houdaille, “Le métissage dans les anciennes colonies françaises,” 276.

114. ANOM A 23 “Édit du roi, ou Code noir, qui concerne entièrement les esclaves de la Louisiane, Mars 1724,” article LII, fol. 56.

115. LSM RSCL File 1727-07-13-01 “Last will and testament of Francois Deserboy,” Black Books (quotation); “July 13 1727, Will of Francois Deserboy,” *LHQ* 4, no. 2 (1921): 222; “May 28, 1728, Petition for Prompt Settlement. Joseph Lazou [*sic*], executive for the late Francois Deserboy,” *LHQ* 4, no. 4 (1921): 485.

116. ANOM DPPC 2866 “1727. Memoire touchant quelques particuliers qui sont a la Louisianne,” f. 141.

117. This case is surprising because the donation ban in the *Code Noir* only targeted Blacks and did not mention enslaved Native Americans. LSM RSCL File 1729-10-22-01 “A Messieurs du Conseil Superieur de la province de la Louisiane. 22 Oct. 1729,” (quotation); “Oct. 22, 1729, Petition for emancipation of Indian slave by Duplessis, settler at Natchitoches, according to the will of the late Francois,” *LHQ* 4, no. 3 (1921): 355.

118. ANOM A 23 “Édit du roi, ou Code noir, qui concerne entièrement les esclaves de la Louisiane, Mars 1724,” f. 54.

119. Though Jean-Baptiste was described as the son of a formerly enslaved man named Louis Connard, he might have been Jacques’s son since they shared the same name. LSM RSCL File 1739-03-04-03 “A nos Seigneurs du Conseil Supérieur de la province de La Louisiane.”

120. “Aug. 24 [1743], Conclusions of Procureur General in the case of Baptiste. He demands his conviction and that he be reduced to slavery and sold,” RSC *LHQ* 11, no. 4 (1928): 652–653; “Sept. 10, 1743, Interrogation of Pantalón [. . .] accused of Stealing shirts and handkerchiefs [. . .] He denies complicity with Jean Baptiste”; “Sept. 11, 1743, Confrontation of Jean Baptiste and Pantalón”; “Sept. 14 [1743], Conclusions of the Procureur General, finding Jean Baptiste guilty and recommending that he be reduced to slavery for the benefit of the hospital”; “No. 950 Sentence passed by Council. This follows the views of the Procureur,” RSC, *LHQ* 12, no. 1 (1929): 145–147.

121. “April 8 [1747] Sale of a Free Negress”; “April 11. [1747]. Sale and adjudication of Jeanette, a free negress,” RSC, *LHQ* 18, no. 1 (1935): 168; For more on her story, see “April 27, [1747], St. Martin de Jauregibery seeks to recover 35 piastres out of the proceeds of the sale of the free negress Jeannette condemned to slavery for theft and other misconduct,” RSC, *LHQ* 18, no. 1 (1935): 189.

122. “Sale of a negress for 17,500 livres and a mulatto girl for 4,000 livres by Benoist Payen de Chavoye to André Jung,” RSC, *LHQ* 24, no. 2 (1941): 582–583.

123. LSM RSCL File 1767-07-09-02 “9 Juillet 1767. Information contre Jourdan”; LSM RSCL File 1767-07-12-02 “12 Juillet 1767. Confrontation du Nègre Louis avec la négresse Catherine”; “Du 12 Juillet 1767”; “Le 22 aoust 1767”; LSM RSCL File 1767-08-08-04 “A Nos Seigneurs du Conseil Supérieur de la province de la Louisiane.” See also Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans*, 274.

124. ANO SR/2 “Saint-Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, baptisms, 1744–1753,” p. 223; Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order*, 263n84.

125. Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order*, 86.

126. LSM RSCL File 1738-02-15-03 “De Chavannes habitant vous Supplie tres humblement de faire homologuer la Liberté qu’il a accordé a Marie Angelique dite Isabelle Negresse [. . .] 5 [Septem]bre 1732.” Isabelle was sometimes categorized as a Black woman (a “*négresse*”), sometimes as a *mulâtresse*, and in one document as a “quadroon” (“*quarтерonne*”). Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans*, 275–276.

127. LSM RSCL File 1738-02-15-03 “De Chavannes habitant vous Suplie tres humblement de faire homologuer la Liberté qu’il a accordé a Marie Angelique” (quotation); “Feb. 15 [1738], Petition of M. de Chavannes for homologation of freedom granted to Marie Angelique, a negress he bought [. . .],” RSC, *LHQ* 9, no. 4 (1926), 722.

128. For example, see “January 27 [1748], Petition to Superior Council by Mr. de St. Martin to whom Sr. de Chavannes sold a negress and her child,” RSC, *LHQ* 19, no. 1 (1936), 236–237; “Politics in Louisiana in 1724”; “Testimony of Sr de Chavannes March 17, 1727”; “French testimony of Sr de Chavannes”; “Dec. 3, 1737. Petition for Secure Title,” RSC, *LHQ* 5, no. 3 (1722): 303, 309, 313, 423.

129. Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans*, 276.

130. LSM RSCL File 1752-12-02-02 “Entre La Nommée Isabelle Negresse Libre demande En Requete,” p. 8.

131. LSM RSCL File 1752-12-02-02 “Entre La Nommée Isabelle Negresse Libre demande En Requete,” p. 8; LSM RSCL File 1752-12-02-02 “Black Books”; “December 2, 1752, Executive session of the superior council.”

132. ANO SR/2 “Saint-Louis Cathedral, New Orleans, baptisms, 1744–1753,” p. 223. Rançon may have fathered another child with Marie-Jeanne a few years later, a girl described as a “free” *mulâtresse*. Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans*, 271–272.
133. ANOM F3 236 “Ordonnance du Roi Concernant l’affranchissement des esclaves Du 15 juin 1736,” pp. 681–683, 682 (quotation); Debien, *Les esclaves aux Antilles françaises*, 373.
134. Moitt, *Women and Slavery in the French Antilles*, 151.
135. Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order*, 83–84.
136. Charlotte and her father had a contentious relationship. See “June 15, 1751, Order to hear witnesses in case of Battard vs. Derneville”; “June 15, 1751, Proces verbal on witnesses, on request of Derneville”; “Testimony of Francois Nantais”; “Testimony of Antoine Grenet”; “Testimony of Charles Blanc”; Testimony of Pierre Viaud”; “Testimony of Jean Marie Pupil Du Sablon”; “Testimony of Pierre Michel”; “Testimony of Louis,” RSC, *LHQ* 20, no. 4 (1937): 1122–1126; Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order*, 82–84.
137. Moitt, *Women and Slavery in the French Antilles*, 159.
138. ANOM F3 227 “La Guadeloupe 10 Septembre 1758,” pp. 249–253.
139. For a biography on Chevalier de Saint-Georges, see Gabriel Banat, *The Chevalier de Saint-Georges: Virtuoso of the Sword and the Bow* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2006).
140. Banat, *The Chevalier de Saint-Georges*, 43–44.
141. Banat, *The Chevalier de Saint-Georges*.
142. LSM RSCL File 1757-07-01-01 “1757 Juin 20, Decour Liberté accordée a Rozette mulateresse,” p. 1.
143. On this topic, see Chapter 3.
144. Especially on Isle Bourbon and in French India.
145. Carton, *Mixed-Race and Modernity*, 71–72; Hodges, “Configuring Colonial Families.”
146. Carton, *Mixed-Race and Modernity*, 71–74.
147. Catherine Manning, *Fortunes à Faire: The French in Asian Trade, 1719–48* (Aldershot, UK: Variorum, 1996), 54.
148. Manning, *Fortunes à Faire*, 66.
149. Additionally, a scholar working on the French Company of the Indies concludes that “by a conservative estimate [...] during the first half of the eighteenth century, at least half of colonial, married households in Chandernagore had a Luso-Indian wife.” Hodges, “Configuring Colonial Families.”
150. Quotation in Carton, *Mixed-Race and Modernity*, 69.
151. Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes*, 2:595. As we saw in Chapter 3, the *topas* were Indians who had been Christianized and exposed to European customs during the earlier period of Portuguese presence.
152. Alfred Martineau, ed., *Mémoire de François Martin, fondateur de Pondichéry* (Paris: Société d’Edition Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales, 1932), 423 (quotation); Philippe Le Tréguilly and Monique Morazé eds., *L’Inde et la France. Deux siècles d’histoire commune, 17e-18e siècles. Histoire, sources, bibliographie* (Paris: C.N.R.S. Éditions, 1995), 95.
153. Alfred Martineau, *Correspondance du Conseil supérieur de Pondichéry avec le Conseil de Chandernagor*, 3 vols. (Pondicherry: Société de l’histoire de l’Inde, 1915–1927), 1: 119.
154. Hodges, “Configuring Colonial Families.”
155. Manning, *Fortunes à Faire*, 54.
156. Carton, *Mixed-Race and Modernity*, 72, 74–75.
157. Some were former prisoners recruited in overcrowded prisons. Carton, *Mixed-Race and Modernity*, 71.

158. Carton, *Mixed-Race and Modernity*, 75; Hodges, “Configuring Colonial Families.”
159. Carton, *Mixed-Race and Modernity*, 74–75.
160. Tréguilly and Morazé ed., *L’Inde et la France*, 91.
161. Carton, *Mixed-Race and Modernity*, 68–69.
162. Manning, *Fortunes à Faire*, 121–122, 124.
163. Hodges, “Configuring Colonial Families.”
164. Martineau, *Correspondance du Conseil supérieur de Pondichéry*, 1: 178.
165. Hodges, “Configuring Colonial Families.”
166. La Barbinais, *Nouveau voyage*, 3:124.
167. ANOM F3 205 “Des Mariages, de leur convenance, et de la Discipline qui S’y doit observer,” p. 43.
168. Ricquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l’Île Bourbon*, 1:230; ADR C°767 “Resancement [sic] Général Du nombre Des habitans qui sont Sur Lisle de Bourbon [. . .] en Lannée Mil Sept Cent huit,” f. 5v; ANOM DPPC G1 477 “Recensement de L’isle de Bourbon en general, fait en Mars 1709.” By 1732, Jeanne Royer and Henri-Guilbert Wilmann had become comfortable coffee bean planters and slaveowners. See ADR C° 768 “1732 Récensement général.”
169. ADR C°2792 “2e Janvier 1715, serment des Conseillers.” He might have unofficially occupied this position even before 1715. See Delabarre de Nanteuil, *Législation de l’Île de la Réunion: Répertoire raisonné des lois, ordonnances locales, décrets coloniaux, décrets impériaux, et règlements et arrêtés*, 6 vols. (Paris: E. Donnaud, 1861), 4:546.
170. I have not been able to ascertain the date and location of the marriage between Dumas and Marie Gertrude.
171. ANOM C3 6 “Correspondance générale Ile Bourbon 1732,” ff. 74–89.
172. ANOM C3 6 “Correspondance générale Ile Bourbon 1732,” ff. 74, 80.
173. ANOM C3 6 “Correspondance générale Ile Bourbon 1732,” f. 81.
174. ANOM C3 6 “Correspondance générale Ile Bourbon 1732,” f. 80, 88v.
175. ANOM C3 6 “Correspondance générale Ile Bourbon 1732,” f. 88v. Another factor may have led the controller-general to side with Marie-Gertrude: Dumas had made many enemies on Isle Bourbon by supporting a decision made by the Company of the Indies to force local planters to drop the sale price of coffee. See ADR C°2430 “Extrait de registre du greffe du Conseil Supérieur de lisle de Bourbon Du 1er Juillet 1732. Motifs des habitans de L’isle de Bourbon dans leur deputation En France.”
176. ADR C°768 “1732, Recensement general,” f. 91. For more information on Dumas and Marie-Gertrude’s fortune, see Chapter 6.
177. On the topic of women marrying young on Isle Bourbon, see: Noël, *Amours et familles interdites*, 42.
178. Kleber, “Gendered Societies,” 236.
179. Marvin, “Bourbon Island Creoles,” 6–7.
180. ANOM DPPC G1 477 “1704 et avril 1705 Resencement General de tous les Habitans chefs de familles, femmes, Enfants Et Esclaves Qui Sont dans L’Isle de bourbon,” ff. 1–1v.
181. Ricquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l’Île Bourbon*, 1:205, 3:2126.
182. ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir à la connaissance,” pp. 171 (quotation)—172.
183. ANOM DPPC G1 477 “Recensement de L’isle de Bourbon en general, fait en Mars 1709”; ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir à la connaissance,” pp. 172–173.
184. Ricquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l’Île Bourbon*, 2:1441.

185. ADR C^o 768 “1732 Recensement general.”
186. ADR C^o 808 “Recensement St Denis, Ste Marie, St Paul, 1763.”
187. Ricquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l’Île Bourbon*, 2:1566. On Anne Launay and Jacques Aubert: ANOM G1 477 “1704 et avril 1705, Resencement General de tous les Habitans,” f. 3; and ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir,” pp. 64, 117–118. Anne was the daughter of the wealthy Frenchman Gilles Launay and the Black Malagasy woman Anne Caze, discussed in Chapter 2. About Anne Caze and Gilles Launay: ANOM 5 DPPC 62 Boucher, “Le mémoire pour servir,” p. 64; ADR C^o 767 “Recensement Général Du nombre Des habitans qui sont Sur Lisle de Bourbon hommes femmes Enfants Esclaves, année 1708,” f. 19v, p. 21.
188. ADR C^o 2794 “Registre des Actes Publics du quartier de St Paul,” p. 3.
189. ANOM DPPC G1 477 “Recensement de L’isle de Bourbon en general, fait en Mars 1709.”
190. ADR C^o 2793 “Le present Registre [. . .] Commencé Le dix huit Septembre 1713, Et finy Le Seize Novembre 1716,” ff. 4v–5.
191. ANOM DPPC G1 477 “Reçenssement [*sic*] general Du quartier St Paul de l’année 1719,” pp. 12–13.

6. *Empire of Labor*

1. Ricquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l’Île Bourbon*, 3:2022. Marvin, “Bourbon Island Creoles,” 23, 25.
2. Ricquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l’Île Bourbon*, 1:356; ANOM DPPC G1 477 “Recensement general Du quartier St Paul de l’année 1719,” p. 2.
3. Marvin, “Bourbon Island Creoles,” 23.
4. ADR C^o 768 “1732. Recensement général”; ANOM G1 477 “1704 et avril 1705. Recensement General de tous les Habitans chefs de familles, femmes, Enfants Et Esclaves Qui Sont dans L’Isle de Bourbon,” f. 39; Marvin, “Bourbon Island Creoles,” 23–24 (quotation). Ricquebourg, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles de l’Île Bourbon*, 1:356, 3:2022.
5. For more information regarding the *capitation*, see Chapter 4. For information regarding the *corvée* system in the eighteenth-century French colonies, see Anne Conchon, “La corvée au XVIIIe siècle: Des formes plurielles de réquisition dans les colonies françaises,” in *Travail servile et dynamiques économiques XVIe–XXe siècle*, ed. Anne Conchon, Myriam Cottias, and Alessandro Stanziani (Vincennes, France: Institut de la gestion publique et du développement économique, 2024), 77–94.
6. Some reinforced the ossification of the French colonies’ socio-racial orders by acquiring large numbers of enslaved people.
7. The expression “slaves’ economy” was coined by Ira Berlin and Phil Morgan. See Ira Berlin and Philip Morgan, eds., *The Slaves’ Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London: Frank Cass, 1991).
8. Many full-length studies have focused on the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. For Caribbean examples, see: Jacques Adélaïde-Merlande, “Travail libre et travail servile (Antilles et Guyanes françaises, 1840–1848),” *Bulletin de la Société d’Histoire de la Guadeloupe*, no. 75–78 (1988): 3–16; Josette Fallope, “Les occupations d’esclaves à la Guadeloupe dans la première moitié du XIXe siècle,” *Revue française d’histoire d’outre-mer* 74, no. 275 (1987), Économie et société des Caraïbes XVII–XIXe s. (Partie 1), pp. 189–205; Abel Louis, *Les Libres de couleur en Martinique*, 3 vols. (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2012), and “Les Libres de couleur en Martinique des origines à 1815: L’entre-deux d’un groupe social dans la tourmente coloniale”