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## Was there an Amerindian Atlantic? Reflections on the limits of a historiographical concept<sup>☆</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Proponents of the increasingly prominent “Atlantic history” paradigm argue that ocean-centered, transnational perspectives shed crucial light on connections which tied together Europe, Africa and the Americas in the early modern period, and which older forms of national and imperial histories obscured. In spite of these scholars’ calls for the construction of a truly inclusive history of the Atlantic basin and all its inhabitants, Amerindian peoples have received relatively little attention in the work of Atlantic historians. This article examines the place Amerindians have held in scholarship on the early modern Atlantic. It argues that it is precisely because Atlantic history has been constructed from fundamentally Eurocentric categories like transatlantic empire and commerce that it has accorded little space to Amerindians. It points to this absence as an important shortcoming of such approaches, and suggests that Atlantic history will have to be reconceptualized in fundamental ways in order to bring Amerindians fully into the picture as historical actors.

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### Defining Atlantic history

After first drawing sustained interest two decades ago, subsequently inspiring a still growing constellation of seminars, conferences, scholarly publications and university textbooks, and ultimately taking flesh as tenure-track job lines in university history departments across North America, ‘Atlantic history’ has today taken firm root in the English-speaking academy.<sup>1</sup> With such solid institutional foundations, it is perhaps surprising that historians continue to disagree about what precisely the early modern Atlantic really was. Was there a single Atlantic world, connecting Africa, Europe and the Americas as a whole, or were there many distinct ‘Atlantics,’ each linked to a particular European colonial power, and characterized by specific patterns of colonial settlement, conquest, commercial exchange, missionary projects and relations with indigenous peoples?<sup>2</sup> Was it

<sup>☆</sup> An early version of this essay was presented to the ‘New Perspectives in Eighteenth-Century Atlantic History’ workshop held at the Université de Paris-VIII (Vincennes-Saint Denis) in January 2007.

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<sup>1</sup> Influential institutional homes for Atlantic studies include the Program in Atlantic History, Culture and Society at the Johns Hopkins University, whose history is retraced by Jack Greene, ‘Diversity at Hopkins: Some Reminiscences’ and Sidney Mintz, ‘The Legacy of the Atlantic Program’, in *Crosscurrents* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1993), available at <http://web.jhu.edu/jigs/newsletter.html>, and the International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World, 1500–1825 at Harvard University, <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~atlantic/>. Scholarly journals which today focus to a greater or lesser extent on the field include *Atlantic Studies*, *Itinerario*, *Nuevo Mundo-Mundos Nuevos*, and *Transatlantica*; Brill launched a book series on ‘The Atlantic World’ in 2003. The recent publication of two college-level Atlantic history textbooks confirms that the Atlantic is making a home in undergraduate history curricula: Alison Games, Jane G. Landers, Kris Lane and Donald R. Wright, *The Atlantic World: A History, 1400–1888* (Wheeling, IL, 2007), and *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500–2000*, ed. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, Erik R. Seeman (Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> See for example the overviews in *Itinerario* 23, no. 2 (1999), Pieter C. Emmer, Wim Klooster, ‘The Dutch Atlantic, 1600–1800: Expansion without Empire’, 48–69, Silvia Marzagalli, ‘The French Atlantic’, 70–83, Carla Rahn Phillips, ‘The Iberian Atlantic’, 84–106, and David Hancock, ‘The British Atlantic World: Coordination, Complexity, and the Emergence of an Atlantic Market Economy, 1651–1815’, 107–26.

primarily a commercial space, tying together merchants, suppliers, shippers and financiers in precociously capitalistic transatlantic trade networks, facilitating the long-range circulation of sugar and coffee, tobacco and peltries, gold and silver, slaves and capital?<sup>3</sup> Was it a highway for mass migrations, drawing settlers and indentured servants from Europe as well as slaves from Africa to the Americas?<sup>4</sup> Was it a transatlantic community which shared a largely European civilization, composed by common religious and political ideas, cultural traditions, and forms of sociability, a hot-house for Enlightenment and radical thought in which the seeds of the Atlantic Revolutions in America, France, the Caribbean and Latin America were sown?<sup>5</sup> Was it rather a distinctive cultural space, a crucible for creolization in which new cultures were forged from interactions of European, African and American peoples, a diaspora world of hybridity, fluid identities and cultural change, an African, European, Irish, ecclesiastical and Sephardi mosaic of black, white, green, Catholic and Jewish Atlantics?<sup>6</sup> Might the Atlantic have been first and foremost a maritime space, a pelagic world in which sailors, dockworkers and merchants lived and labored and across which ships, goods, information, men and women circulated? And was the brutal, regimented social life of sailors that unfolded in the wooden world of the ship the matrix for the working-class proletariat of modern capitalism, a world of popular protest, a so-

<sup>3</sup> On merchants and trade, Huguette, Pierre Chauuu, *Séville et l'Atlantique, 1504–1650*, 8 vols. (Paris, 1955–9), Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies* (Ithaca, 1973), Paul G. E. Clemens, *The Atlantic Economy and Colonial Maryland's Eastern Shore: From Tobacco to Grain* (Ithaca, 1980), Peggy Liss, *Atlantic Empires: The Network of Trade and Revolution, 1713–1826* (Baltimore, 1983), Kenneth R. Andrew, *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement* (Cambridge, UK, 1984), John J. McCusker, Russel R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607–1789* (Chapel Hill, 1985), David Harris Sacks, *The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic Economy, 1450–1700* (Berkeley, 1991), Kenneth Morgan, *Bristol and the Atlantic Trade in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, UK, 1993), David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735–1785* (Cambridge, UK, 1995), H. V. Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise and the Making of the British Overseas Empire, 1688–1775* (New York, 1996), Wim Klooster, *Illicit Riches: Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648–1795* (Leiden, 1998), and Sheryllynne Haggerty, *The British-Atlantic Trading Community, 1760–1810: Men, Women, and the Distribution of Goods* (Leiden, 2006). On commodities, Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York, 1985), John McCusker, *Rum and the American Revolution: The Rum Trade and the Balance of Payments of the Thirteen Continental Colonies*, 2 vols. (New York, 1989), Stanley J. Stein, Barbara H. Stein, *Silver, Trade, and War: Spain and America in the Making of Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore, 2000), Judith A. Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), David Eltis, Philip D. Morgan, David Richardson, 'Agency and Diaspora in Atlantic History: Reassessing the African Contribution to Rice Cultivation in the Americas', *American Historical Review* 112, no. 5 (December 2007), 1329–58, Peter E. Pope, *Fish into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, 2004), José C. Curto, *Enslaving Spirits: The Portuguese-Brazilian Alcohol Trade at Luanda and its Hinterland, c. 1550–1830* (Leiden, 2004), and Chris Evans, Göran Rydén, *Baltic Iron in the Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden, 2007). On the slave trade, Johannes Menne Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600–1815* (Cambridge, UK, 1990), Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492–1800* (New York, 1997), Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge, UK, 1999), *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-Rom*, ed. Eltis, Stephen D. Behrendt, David Richardson, Klein (Cambridge, UK, 1999), Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge, UK, 2000), Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy, 1660–1800* (Cambridge, UK, 2001), and Linda A. Newson, Susie Minchin, *From Capture to Sale: The Portuguese Slave Trade to Spanish South America in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Leiden, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of North America: An Introduction* (New York, 1986), Bailyn, with Barbara DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West* (New York, 1986), David Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, UK, 1987), A. G. Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America* (Baltimore, 1993), Aaron Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717–1775* (Philadelphia, 1996), Alison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), Philip Otterness, *Becoming German: The 1709 Palatine Migration to New York* (Ithaca, 2004), Leslie Choquette, *Frenchmen into Peasants: Modernity and Tradition in the Peopling of French Canada* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), Bertrand Van Ruymbeke, *From New Babylon to Eden: The Huguenots and Their Migration to Colonial South Carolina* (Columbia, SC, 2006), Juan Javier Pescador, *The New World Inside a Basque Village: The Oiartzun Valley and Its Atlantic Emigrants, 1550–1800* (Reno, 2004), and for migration of African slaves, relevant works cited in footnote 3.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Kraus, *The Atlantic Civilization: Eighteenth-Century Origins* (Ithaca, 1949), Jacques Godechot, R. R. Palmer, 'Le Problème de l'Atlantique du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Relazioni del X<sup>o</sup> Congresso Internazionale di Scienze Storiche*, vol. 5, *Storia Contemporanea* (Florence, 1955), 175–239, Godechot, *La Grande nation. L'expansion révolutionnaire de la France dans le monde 1789–1799*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1956), Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1959–64), Lester D. Langley, *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750–1850* (New Haven, 1996), Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia, 2000), *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, ed. David Geggus (Charleston, SC, 2002), *Revolutionary Currents: Nation Building in the Transatlantic World*, ed. Michael A. Morrison, Melinda Zook (Lanham, MD, 2004), Carla Gardina Pestana, *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution, 1640–1661* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), and Jeremy Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge, 1992), Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), Ira Berlin, 'From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 53, no. 2 (April 1996), 251–88, Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, 1998), Deborah Gray White, "Yes", *There is a Black Atlantic*, *Itinerario* 23, no. 2 (1999), 127–40, *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil*, ed. Kristin Mann, Edna G. Bay (London-Portland, OR, 2001), *The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities*, ed. Isidore Okpewho, Carole Boyce Davies, Ali A. Mazrui (Bloomington, 2001), *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*, ed. Linda M. Heywood, John K. Thornton (New York, 2002), James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441–1770* (Chapel Hill, 2003), Herman L. Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570–1640* (Bloomington, 2003), James Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic* (Oxford, UK, 2007), and the recent review article Patrick Manning, 'Africa and the African Diaspora: New Directions of Study', *Journal of African History* 44 (2003), 487–506; Kevin Whelan, 'The Green Atlantic: Radical Reciprocities between Ireland and America in the Long Eighteenth Century', in *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660–1840*, ed. Kathleen Wilson (Cambridge, UK, 2004), 216–38; David Lambert, *White Creole Culture: Politics and Identity during the Age of Abolition* (Cambridge, UK, 2005); Allan Greer, Kenneth Mills, 'A Catholic Atlantic' and Erik Seeman, 'Jews in the Early Modern Atlantic: Crossing Boundaries, Keeping Faith', in *The Atlantic in Global History*, 3–19, 39–59, *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450–1800*, ed. Paolo Bernardini, Norman Fiering (New York, 2001), Jonathan Schorsch, 'Portmanteau Jews: Sephardim and Race in the Early Modern Atlantic World', *Jewish Culture and History* 4, no. 2 (Winter 2001), 59–74, Jonathan I. Israel, *Diasporas within a Diaspora: Jews, Crypto-Jews and the World Maritime Empires, 1540–1740* (Leiden, 2002), special issue of *Jewish History* 20, no. 2 (June 2006) on 'Port Jews in the Atlantic World', Adam Sutcliffe, 'Culture and Commerce in the Early Modern Jewish Atlantic', talk delivered at conference 'Jews and Modernity: Beyond the Nation', Berlin, 2–3 May 2006, and *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500–1800*, ed. Richard L. Kagan, Philip Morgan (Baltimore, 2008). For a crosscultural perspective, see Schorsch, *Swimming the Christian Atlantic: Judeoconversos, Afroiberians and Amerindians in the Seventeenth Century*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 2008).

called 'red Atlantic'?<sup>7</sup> Or was the Atlantic essentially a newly constituted arena for far-reaching environmental change, a zone joined together by transatlantic migration and commerce in which the flora, fauna and microorganisms of heretofore separate ecosystems came into contact?<sup>8</sup>

This embarrassment of interrogations has proven both a boon to new research and a troublesome obstacle to its very coherence. It has encouraged historians to think outside traditional frames of inquiry, to seek connections between European, American, and African history, to escape the teleologies of older narratives which recounted the rise of specific nations, and to reimagine the past in broad, inclusive, transnational terms. But it has also made the task of defining the early modern Atlantic a thorny one indeed. With so many historical threads to unravel and such an immense geographical expanse and chronological sweep across which to roam, indeed, with so many possible Atlantics to choose from, one cannot help but wonder whether the Atlantic is truly a coherent historical concept at all. The great challenge of Atlantic history has been to find a way to construct a history that both broadens our historical field of view and still holds it in focus, that expands its scope without losing the ability to parse and to explain, and that is at once all-embracing and sufficiently rigorous to make sense of three centuries of history on four continents.

One solution to this dilemma would be simply to adopt the loosest of definitions, based on the premise that the historical processes unleashed by European voyages of exploration, colonial expansion, transatlantic commerce and the slave trade affected all four continents in profound ways. The Atlantic could then be used as a suggestive, overarching rubric within which to think about the multiple and widely spun connections knit together by these processes. This, indeed, is more or less what historian Alison Games proposes:

Atlantic history, then, is not only about the literal points of contact or connection in the Atlantic world. It should not privilege only the histories of those places, such as ports, or those people, such as merchants or mariners, which were most obviously engaged in a transoceanic world, although such approaches are enormously illuminating. Rather, Atlantic history is concerned with explaining transformations, experiences, and events in one place in terms of conditions deriving from the place's location in a large, multifaceted, interconnected world. Thus, the Atlantic world is not only a single unit of analysis, it is a *logical* unit of analysis. This was a world in which people's horizons could be intensely local – at the level of a village, a clan, a band, or a family, whether in Europe, America, or Africa. But at the same time, the transformations within that local world were determined by a process of interaction with a larger world, and that process began in 1492. It included people, diseases, animals, commodities, plants, and ideas from other parts of the ocean.<sup>9</sup>

In this view, the 'Atlantic world' is a useful heuristic device, a way of highlighting relationships across space which scholars working within traditional disciplinary and geographical specializations might otherwise overlook: 'Atlantic perspectives deepen our understanding of transformations over a period of several centuries, cast old problems in an entirely new light, and illuminate connections hitherto obscured.' This approach sees the Atlantic not as a coherent and unified historical object, but as messy and multidimensional, integrally connected to many other parts of the world: 'Atlantic history, then, is a *slice* of world history. . . . that region was not, of course, hermetically sealed off from the rest of the world, . . . like other maritime regions, the Atlantic can offer a useful laboratory within which to examine regional and global transformations.' No single interpretive framework or methodological brief can hope to make sense of an Atlantic experience that instead 'points to the importance of flexibility in understanding and interpreting changes within the region.' More 'a style of inquiry' than a narrowly framed research program, the study of the Atlantic for Games should be practiced as a kind

<sup>7</sup> On sailors, see Gilles Proulx, *Between France and New France: Life Aboard the Tall Ships* (Toronto–Charlottetown, 1984), Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700–1750* (Cambridge, UK, 1987), Pablo E. Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth Century* (1992), trans. Carla Rahn Phillips (Baltimore, 1998), W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African-American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), Peter Linebaugh, Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, 2000), David Armitage, 'The Red Atlantic', *Reviews in American History* 29, no. 4 (2001), 479–86, Daniel Vickers, with Vince Walsh, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail* (New Haven, 2005), and Emma Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors and Their Captive Cargoes, 1730–1807* (Cambridge, UK, 2006). On ports, *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650–1850*, ed. Franklin W. Knight, Peggy K. Liss (Knoxville, 1991), and Isaac Land, 'Review Essay: Tidal Waves: The New Coastal History', *Journal of Social History* 40, no. 3 (Spring 2007), 731–43. On communication, see Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675–1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community* (Oxford, 1986), and Kenneth J. Banks, *Chasing Empire across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713–1763* (Montréal–Kingston, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> See Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, CT, 1972), Noble David Cook, *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492–1650* (Cambridge, UK, 1998), as well as more global perspectives like William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (Garden City, 1976), Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900* (1993), 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK, 2004) and Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (New York, 1998). For studies that address colonial North America, see William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York, 1983), Carolyn Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England* (Chapel Hill, 1989), Timothy Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, UK, 1990), Mart A. Stewart, 'What Nature Suffers to Groe': *Life, Labor, and Landscape on the Georgia Coast, 1680–1920* (Athens, GA, 1996), and Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (Oxford, 2004); and on Central America, Elinor G. K. Melville, *A Plague of Sheep: Environmental Consequences of the Conquest of Mexico* (New York, 1994). For a recent call to integrate the history of oceanic environmental change into understandings of Atlantic history, see W. Jeffrey Bolster, 'Putting the Ocean in Atlantic History: Maritime Communities and Marine Ecology in the Northwest Atlantic, 1500–1800', *American Historical Review* 113, no. 1 (February 2008), 19–47. For a cultural history of the circulation of knowledge about the natural world of the British Atlantic, Susan Scott Parrish, *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> Games, 'Teaching Atlantic History', *Itinerario* 23, no. 2 (1999), 162–173, quote on 163.

of variable geometry history, a way to escape the historiographical blinders of specific national histories.<sup>10</sup> The Atlantic, to paraphrase Claude Lévi-Strauss, is 'good to think with.'<sup>11</sup>

For many historians, however, the Atlantic is something greater than a handy conceptual tool and more specific than a loosely defined approach. Much more than simply a logical unit of historical analysis, it constituted an organized, unified space which took on real existence during the 17th and 18th centuries. For Bernard Bailyn, who has done as much as anyone to investigate, problematize, and promote the concept, and for others, the Atlantic was a coherent, integrated and interdependent world tying together European imperial powers, merchants and migrant workers, African slave-traders and slave labor, and Amerindian peoples. The early modern Atlantic was, in Bailyn's words, 'a single functional unit', which, while immensely variegated, was nonetheless 'more than the sum of its parts.' There existed 'a common morphology, a general overall pattern, however fluid and irregular, of development and change . . . The elements of the Atlantic world in these years were integrated not only economically, but socially, culturally, and demographically.' It was, in short, a 'system' in which Africa, the Americas, and Europe 'formed a distinctive regional entity.'<sup>12</sup> The Atlantic thus ceases to be a simple object of description or terrain for observation, and instead acquires far greater historical and conceptual coherence, taking on life as a structure or a process whose underlying patterns can be identified, exhumed, and analyzed. Historians like Bailyn argue that what took shape in the early modern period was not simply an interdependent world whose objective center was the Atlantic, but a system that in its coherence, nature and importance was distinctive, exceptional, and decisive for world history. The Atlantic here assumes a new role as an explanatory factor, a motor for change which set in motion its own internal economic, social, cultural and political dynamics, a crucible for modernity which helped forge the global market economy and the Atlantic Revolutions.

The centrifugal 'variable geometry' style of investigation championed by Games and the centripetal systematizing view of the Atlantic posited by Bailyn offer antipodal models for Atlantic history.<sup>13</sup> A flexible approach makes it possible to embrace the multitude of interrogations with which we began this essay, but risks perpetuating the state of fragmentation of an already vast and heterogeneous historiography. The study of the early modern Atlantic as system promises a coherent framework of interpretation – a historiographical Occam's razor whetted to prune back this dense thicket of questions – but in turn carries the danger of imposing an overly reductive Atlantic incapable of accounting for its vastness and complexity. Seeking to chart a sure historiographical course between a Scylla of dissonantly fragmented paths of inquiry and a Charybdis of excessively schematic interpretations, David Armitage has proposed a typology of approaches, identifying three lenses through which one might examine Atlantic history: circum-Atlantic history, a broad transnational approach focused on interdependent relationships and circulation throughout the basin; trans-Atlantic history, grounded in comparative study of the different polities which made up the basin; and cis-Atlantic history, the study of a specific region or nation within its wider Atlantic context.<sup>14</sup>

### Atlantic history and its discontents

As scholars have struggled to make historiographical order out of this conceptual cornucopia and define a useable Atlantic category of historical analysis, a range of skeptics have questioned the ultimate usefulness of the Atlantic as concept. Historians have criticized the Atlantic paradigm for a wide variety of reasons—questioning whether the Atlantic can in fact be considered a coherent geographical space, casting doubt on its distinctiveness from other oceanic spaces in the early modern period, or challenging the extent to which Atlantic modes of history differ in any fundamental way from older forms of colonial history. Taking up one particular criticism, this essay will examine specifically how the all too modest place Amerindians currently occupy within Atlantic history represents a serious shortcoming of the field. Because the challenge of situating the indigenous peoples of the Americas within the Atlantic paradigm touches on many of these critics' methodological objections – the geographical scope over which Atlantic history should extend, for example, or to what extent the approach can succeed in developing a truly inclusive history – it will be useful first to rehearse Atlantic-skeptics' chief criticisms, before returning to Amerindian history.

Some contest the very possibility of fixing the contours of a discrete oceanic space for historical study with any degree of analytic rigor. Geographers point to the considerable methodological challenges of tracing meaningful boundaries for a single body of water, as well as of gauging the terrestrial extent of maritime influence on littoral societies and inland.<sup>15</sup> The

<sup>10</sup> Games, 'Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities', *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (June 2006), 741–57, quotes on 741–2, 748–9.

<sup>11</sup> Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism* (1962), trans. Rodney Needham (Boston, 1963), 89.

<sup>12</sup> Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, MA, 2005), quotes on 60, 62, 83, 91–2, 111, and Bailyn, 'The Idea of Atlantic History', *Itinerario* 20, no. 1 (1996), 19–44, quote on 33. For an alternate conception of the Atlantic as 'system', see Nicholas Canny, 'Atlantic History: What and Why?' *European Review* 9, no. 4 (2001), 399–411.

<sup>13</sup> Compare, for example, how Bailyn emphasizes the coherence of Atlantic historiography in his *Atlantic History* with how others see in it fragmentation, notably Joyce E. Chaplin 'Expansion and Exceptionalism in Early American History', *Journal of American History* 89, no. 4 (March 2003), 1431–55, and William O'Reilly, 'Genealogies of Atlantic History', *Atlantic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2004), 66–84.

<sup>14</sup> Armitage, 'Three Concepts of Atlantic History', in *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800*, ed. Armitage, Michael J. Braddick (Basingstoke, 2002), 11–29.

<sup>15</sup> For an overview of the history of oceanic categories, Martin W. Lewis, 'Dividing the Ocean Sea', *Geographical Review* 89, no. 2 (April 1999), 188–214. On the methodological difficulties of defining ocean spaces, see Jerry H. Bentley, 'Sea and Ocean Basins as Frameworks of Historical Analysis', *Geographical Review* 89, no. 2 (April 1999), 215–24; Rainer F. Buschmann, 'Oceans of World History: Delineating Aquacentric Notions in the Global Past', *History Compass* 2, no. 1 (2004), 1–10, and David Lambert, Luciana Martins, Miles Ogborn, 'Currents, Visions and Voyages: Historical Geographies of the Sea', *Journal of Historical Geography* 32 (2006), 479–93. On coastal societies, see Michael N. Pearson, 'Littoral Society: The Concept and the Problems', *Journal of World History* 17, no. 4 (December 2006), 354–73, and the recent review essay Isaac Land, 'Tidal Waves: The New Coastal History', *Journal of Social History* 40, no. 3 (Spring 2007), 731–43. For a similar general perspective analyzing not oceans, but land-masses, see Lewis, Kären E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley, 1997).

Atlantic, after all, is an anachronistic construct, one which early modern actors, who generally thought of the basin as composed of several distinct oceans, would not have recognized. Some scholars underscore the extent to which the Atlantic was linked to other oceans, arguing that the category's very boundedness is artificial and arbitrary, and thus masks the density and decisiveness of inter-oceanic connections.<sup>16</sup> Rejecting the notion that the Atlantic was a functionally 'discrete unit,' they see it instead as only one among an array of interconnected circuits of circulation and trade.<sup>17</sup> That specialists of other oceans have run into similar problems delineating their oceanic spaces as categories of thalassic analysis illustrates the intrinsic difficulty of the task.<sup>18</sup> Such criticisms challenge 'strong' definitions of the Atlantic as system more pointedly than they do 'weaker' ones content with more flexible approaches. Indeed, Alison Games believes that scholars should plug the Atlantic into wider geographical perspectives: 'if the Atlantic is often a logical unit of analysis, it is also an artificial unit of analysis, yoking together some places that might not be happily joined and segregating others which might shed light on each other. Though historians may limit themselves to a single oceanic basin, inhabitants of the early modern world did not.'<sup>19</sup>

Claims of Atlantic distinctiveness have likewise drawn fire from specialists of other thalassic worlds. They maintain for example that 'Atlanticists' have exaggerated the scope, specificity and importance of Atlantic trade and colonial settlement. They point out that in certain periods Dutch and Portuguese commerce with Asia *exceeded* that of Atlantic trade, that in the mid-18th century England and the Netherlands imported *more* goods from Asia and the Indian Ocean than from the Americas, and that the Dutch sent over 20 times as many colonists east as they did to the Americas. The Atlantic, then, may not have been quite as decisive or influential as its champions claim.<sup>20</sup>

Others have questioned to what extent the Atlantic constituted a truly integrated world at all. They complain that, notwithstanding its aspiration to be an unprecedented kind of transnational history – one that both paints broadly across a wide canvass as well as renders heretofore hidden details with fine brush strokes – Atlantic history in its present form is primarily an Anglo-American paradigm, well-suited to the specificities of British patterns of commercial exchange, overseas settlement, and colonial policy in North America, but little representative of the varied patterns of the basin as a whole. Scholars of the British Atlantic, these critics claim, have been too quick to generalize about the Atlantic in its entirety from their narrow bailiwick. The history of the field of Atlantic history itself lends some credence to this charge: scholars of colonial America and Britain were not only the initial proponents of the idea but have enthusiastically rethought their own fields through Atlantic lenses, practicing Armitage's cis-Atlantic approach to resituate the history of Britain and its thirteen American colonies within a wider context.<sup>21</sup> Far from a broadly integrated Atlantic world, critics charge, the oceanic

<sup>16</sup> See the recent forum 'Beyond the Atlantic' in the *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 63, no. 4 (October 2006), including Games, 'Beyond the Atlantic: English Globetrotters and Transoceanic Connections', 675–92, Philip J. Stern, 'British Asia and British Atlantic: Comparisons and Connections', 693–712, Paul W. Mapp, 'Atlantic History from Imperial, Continental, and Pacific Perspectives', 713–24, and Peter A. Coclanis, 'Atlantic World or Atlantic/World?' 725–42; see also Jason Ward, 'The Other Atlantic World', *History Compass* 1, no. 1 (2003), 1–6.

<sup>17</sup> Coclanis, 'Atlantic World or Atlantic/World?' and Coclanis, 'Drang Nach Osten: Bernard Bailyn, the World-Island, and the Idea of Atlantic History', *Journal of World History* 13, no. 1 (2002), 169–82. Proponents of world-systems approaches likewise push for larger scales of analysis, but on somewhat different grounds, Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, 3 vols. (New York, 1974–89).

<sup>18</sup> See the forum on 'Oceans of History' published in *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (June 2006), whose contributions point to similar problems in the historiographies of other maritime spaces, Peregrine Horden, Nicholas Purcell, 'The Mediterranean and "the New Thalassology"', 722–40, as well as Matt K. Matsuda, 'The Pacific', 758–80. For a similar overview of the Indian Ocean, see Markus P. M. Vink, 'Indian Ocean Studies and the "New Thalassology"', *Journal of Global History* 2 (2007), 41–62. For useful introductions to the current flowering of oceanic history in general, see *Maritime History as World History*, ed. Daniel Finamore (Gainesville, 2004), *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean*, ed. Bernhard Klein, Gesa Mackenthun (New York, 2004), and *Seascapes: Maritimes Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges*, ed. Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, Karen Wigen (Honolulu, 2007). Important examples of work on other oceanic basins include: on the Mediterranean, the influential Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1949), 2 vols., trans. Siân Reynolds (Berkeley, 1996); on the Indian Ocean, K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, UK, 1985), Chaudhuri, *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, UK, 1990), Kenneth McPherson, *The Indian Ocean: A History of People and the Sea* (Oxford, 1993), and Milo Kearney, *The Indian Ocean in World History* (London, 2004); on the Baltic, David Kirby, Merja-Liisa Hinkkanen, *The Baltic and the North Sea* (London, 2000), and Nils Blomkvist, *The Discovery of the Baltic: The Reception of a Catholic World-System in the European North (a.d. 1075–1225)* (Boston, 2005); and on the Caribbean, Richard Drayton's *The Caribbean and the Making of the Modern World* promises to challenge many of the tenets of the Atlantic paradigm (in press).

<sup>19</sup> Games, 'Beyond the Atlantic', 692, and in more concise form, Games, 'Atlantic Constraints and Global Opportunities', *History Compass* 1, no. 1 (2003), 1–4, esp. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Coclanis, 'Atlantic World or Atlantic/World?' esp. 730, and Coclanis, 'Drang Nach Osten', esp. 176–8. For a survey of scholarship on the European presence in Asia, see John E. Wills, Jr., 'Maritime Asia, 1500–1800: The Interactive Emergence of European Domination', *American Historical Review* 98, no. 1 (February 1993), 83–105. Important contributions include, for the Netherlands, C. R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire: 1600–1800* (New York, 1965), Jonathan I. Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585–1740* (New York, 1989); and for Portugal, Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415–1825* (London, 1969), Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Improvising Empire: Portuguese Trade and Settlement in the Bay of Bengal, 1500–1700* (Delhi, 1990) and Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500–1700: A Political and Economic History* (London, 1993). On the dynastic, administrative and commercial links between the Portuguese and Spanish Asian and Atlantic empires, see Subrahmanyam, 'Holding the World in Balance: The Connected Histories of the Iberian Overseas Empires, 1500–1640', *American Historical Review* 112, no. 5 (December 2007), 1359–85.

<sup>21</sup> From the perspective of colonial America, see Jack P. Greene's pitch for American history, 'Interpretative Frameworks: The Quest for Intellectual Order in Early American History', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 48, no. 4 (October 1991), 515–30. For Britain, see Nicholas Canny, 'The British Atlantic World: Working Towards a Definition', *Historical Journal* 33, no. 2 (June 1990), 479–97, Armitage, 'Greater Britain: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?', *American Historical Review* 104, no. 2 (April 1999), 427–45; see also J. G. A. Pocock's calls for studying British history from a wider – though by no means exclusively Atlantic – frame, 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', *New Zealand Historical Journal* 8 (1974), 3–21, reprinted in *Journal of Modern History* 47, no. 4 (December 1975), 601–28, and 'The Limits and Divisions of British History: In Search of the Unknown Subject', *American Historical Review* 87, no. 2 (April 1982), 311–36. A good example of recent work which addresses this concern, see *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800*; for an effort to connect British Atlantic approaches to wider perspectives, see *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*, ed. Elizabeth Mancke, Carole Shammas (Baltimore, 2005).

networks portrayed by Atlanticists constitute nothing more than a narrowly British Atlantic, the handiwork of the crown and its colonial servants, Albion's merchants and their interlocutors. Scholars working on other parts of the Atlantic emphasize just how distinct, compartmentalized and dependent on European colonial frameworks transatlantic networks really were: they underscore that the French Atlantic was both fragile and subservient to the state; they argue that there was no Dutch Atlantic to speak of at all, that Dutch 'expansion without empire' was a pure matter of trade, largely abstemious of political expansion and long-term migration; and they maintain that Portugal's colonial and commercial Atlantic was seamlessly bound up within a wider albeit specifically Lusitanian world, spanning Africa, the Indian Ocean and Asia.<sup>22</sup> Others insist that Atlantic scholarship's tendency to represent merchants as autonomous agents whose collective choices forged a transnational Atlantic both exaggerates the extent of the basin's integration and masks the degree to which commercial intermediaries navigated within and depended upon European states. The Atlantic world in their view was a colonial creation rather than the natural offspring of spontaneous market forces.<sup>23</sup> Others take this case further, arguing that in spite of the paradigm's promise to rethink the history of the Atlantic basin in new, more global ways, the very phenomena it proposes to explain – European conquest and settlement in the Americas, European commerce, and the transatlantic slave trade – make it little more than a fashionably novel label tagged onto familiar narratives of Eurocentric colonial and United States national history, a new wineskin gratuitously filled with old historiographical wine.<sup>24</sup> David Hancock, an accomplished scholar of the commercial life of the British Atlantic, acknowledges the dangers posed by compartmentalized study of national trade networks: 'the Atlantic history perspective, if it is to be anything more than boiled-over imperial history, must accentuate cross-boundary exchanges.'<sup>25</sup>

Others still have warned against the methodological pitfalls of positing the existence of all-embracing patterns of cultural change or the emergence of any general Atlantic 'culture'. They argue that the Atlantic paradigm's emphasis on hybridization and creolization as universal characteristics of the Atlantic experience imposes an overarching global model for cultural exchange, one which lumps together extremely diverse processes rooted in local conditions. As the anthropologist Stephan Palmié has recently argued, to lift 'creolization' from its original Caribbean context and its specifically linguistic and cultural referents is to rob it of any explanatory force.<sup>26</sup> According to this view, to claim that hybridity represents the Atlantic's authentic cultural common ground risks erecting an overly homogenized Atlantic fiction.

Finally, critics reproach Atlanticists for failing to take up their own calls to construct a history encompassing all the inhabitants of the Atlantic basin. This is a serious accusation, given that the only common denominator among the myriad definitions of the Atlantic currently in circulation is a shared commitment to producing an authentically inclusive history that would draw attention to actors and themes which European- and American-centered narratives have obscured. As Alan Karras puts it: 'We . . . propose a unit of historical analysis which takes the three broadly defined "cultural hearths" – of Amerindians, Africans, and Europeans – into account. We call this unit of analysis the Atlantic world.'<sup>27</sup> What Atlantic history has in fact produced, such critics charge, is a history of European-centered commercial exchanges, of the Americas as a platform for European settlement and revolutionary nation-building, and of Africa as a source of slaves for a European-controlled plantation complex. 'Bailyn's very selective Atlantic', as one dismissive Atlantic-skeptic puts it, describes a world shaped primarily by Europeans and white settlers in the Americas, a matrix for understanding the construction of the United States, rather than a historicized analysis of the entire basin.<sup>28</sup>

In recent years, some historians have sought to correct this perceived Anglo-American bias by writing neglected regions and actors into the Atlantic paradigm. Important research into the Atlantic slave trade, for example, has demonstrated the ways in which the commerce in human chattel mobilized capital, maritime resources, mercantile expertise, commercial intermediaries and human migrations on an unprecedented scale and in a truly transnational and transatlantic network.<sup>29</sup> The most influential example of this move is John Thornton's broadly conceived Africa-centered history of the Atlantic. His account documents the considerable power and agency of African societies. He argues that Africans' choices, notably in refusing to allow European colonization on the continent and in actively furnishing slaves to European merchants, shaped the Atlantic world in decisive ways. The Atlantic's history thus cannot be understood without examining the distinct histories of each of its regional components, which both shaped and were shaped by events in the Atlantic world. Thornton's

<sup>22</sup> Silvia Marzagalli, 'The French Atlantic', and Marzagalli, 'Sur les origines de l'« Atlantic History »: Paradigme interprétatif de l'histoire des espaces atlantiques à l'époque moderne', *Dix-Huitième Siècle*, no. 33 (2001), 17–31, as well as Cécile Vidal's analysis of why French historians have been wary to take up the Atlantic rubric, in 'The Reluctance of French Historians to Address Atlantic History', *Southern Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (Summer 2006), 153–89; Emmer and Klooster, 'The Dutch Atlantic'; and A. J. R. Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire, 1415–1808* (New York, 1993). For a study of the British Atlantic that concurs with such assessments, emphasizing the distinctiveness of the British Atlantic, see Stephen J. Hornsby, *British Atlantic, American Frontier: Spaces of Power in Early Modern British America* (Hanover, NH, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> Marzagalli, 'The French Atlantic' and 'Sur les origines de l'« Atlantic History »', and David Ormrod, *The Rise of Commercial Empires: England and the Netherlands in the Age of Mercantilism* (Cambridge, UK, 2003).

<sup>24</sup> Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, 'Some Caveats about the "Atlantic" Paradigm', *History Compass* 1, no. 1 (2003), 1–4; Games, 'Atlantic History', 750–1, and Olivier Pêtré-Grenouilleau, 'Les Négoces atlantiques français. Anatomie d'un capitalisme relationnel', *Dix-Huitième Siècle*, no. 33 (2001), 33–47.

<sup>25</sup> Hancock, 'The British Atlantic', 120.

<sup>26</sup> Palmié, 'Creolization and its Discontents', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35 (2006), 433–56. See also *Creolization: History, Ethnography, Theory*, ed. Charles Steware (Walnut Creek, CA, 2007).

<sup>27</sup> Alan L. Karras, 'The Atlantic World as a Unit of Study', in *Atlantic American Societies: From Columbus through Abolition, 1492–1888*, ed. Karras, J. R. McNeill (London, 1992), 1–15, quote on 4. This anthology of articles represents a rare attempt to hew fully to Karras's stated objective.

<sup>28</sup> Ian K. Steele, 'Bernard Bailyn's American Atlantic', *History and Theory* 47 (February 2007), 48–58, quote on 49.

<sup>29</sup> See relevant works cited in footnote 2.

study is at once an enthusiastic contribution to Atlantic history, in that it calls to expand its bounds and embrace fully the African continent, and a warning concerning the limits of the concept, in that he argues that Africa's history, though incontrovertibly influenced by the Atlantic, must be understood and analyzed on its own terms as to a large degree autonomous.<sup>30</sup>

### Amerindians in the historiography of the Atlantic

The indigenous peoples of the Americas represent another important category of Atlantic actors who have been largely, although not entirely, absent from Atlantic history.<sup>31</sup> This absence raises a number of crucial questions which speak to the core of the Atlantic history project. How can we account for Amerindians' apparent unobtrusiveness in a scholarly enterprise that proudly proclaims its inclusiveness? Is this essentially a historiographical oversight, a corner of the Atlantic canvas that already holds a place in the paradigm, but which simply awaits empirical research? Did Amerindians perhaps not play important roles in the Atlantic world, more passive observers or even victims of the processes that wove together and transformed the oceanic basin, increasingly remote bystanders pushed outside the Atlantic system by the very mechanisms which propelled its development? Has the Atlantic paradigm been defined in ways that have in some fashion impeded the elaboration of truly inclusive frames for study? Are existing modes of conceptualizing the Atlantic capable of integrating Amerindian history, or would it be necessary to conceive new forms of analysis? In sum, do we need to study Amerindians in order to make full sense of the Atlantic, and conversely, do we need the Atlantic to make sense of the history of Amerindians and of their interactions with other peoples in the early modern period?

The very sinews of Atlantic history – transatlantic commerce, seaborne migration, the circulation of commodities, capital flows, colonial settlement, European geopolitics, the African slave trade, and the plantation complex – have left little space for Amerindians. The Atlantic narrative has privileged maritime mobility and particular kinds of actors who in some way had a direct stake in the ocean itself—explorers, conquistadors, merchants, colonial settlers, seamen, African slaves, and Atlantic diasporas. Relatively few Amerindians ever crossed the Atlantic; few Amerindians took direct part in transatlantic commerce; and no transatlantic Amerindian diasporas came into being. Not only has Atlantic history trained its attention on non-native peoples as objects of analysis, it has also articulated its most fundamental interrogations in the idiom of European concepts and objectives. Many of the categories of Atlantic analysis – notably economic exchange and transatlantic empire – are fundamentally grounded in European points of view, and leave little room for incorporating Amerindians' very different aims, cultural perspectives, modes of social and political organization, and frameworks for commodity exchange. And the teleologies which underpin much Atlantic history have played their part in provoking this historiographical imbalance: by using the Atlantic to excavate the early modern origins of the 19th-century Atlantic world rather than to develop a historicized understanding of the oceanic basin, forward-looking approaches have produced narratives which relegate Amerindians to the sidelines as losers in this history. While the Atlantic lens has been extremely successful at bringing into sharp focus certain processes and social groups, its emphasis on European empire, migration and capitalism has also blurred the presence of Amerindians in the story.

Such sins of historical omission are by no means new. Long before the Atlantic fashion swept the historical profession, older traditions of scholarship reserved Amerindians a marginal place as well. In a historiography which narrated the wars waged between European colonial powers, the origins of the independent nation-states forged from the break-up of European empires, the constitutional foundations of democratic political systems, the emergence of capitalist economies, and the invention of American cultures founded on European materials, there was little room for Amerindians other than as primitive peoples out of step with the pace of progress, condemned to assimilate or disappear as modernity marched forward.<sup>32</sup> Beginning in the 1960s, changing attitudes towards colonialism's dubious legacy profoundly transformed scholarship on the native populations of the Americas. Historians immersed themselves in the writings of archeologists and

<sup>30</sup> Thornton, *Africa and the Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1680* (New York, 1992). Games for example argues that 'The most urgent and immediate challenge is to restore Africa to the Atlantic.' In 'Atlantic History', 754. For a recent perspective that explicitly engages with Bailyn, see Robin Law, Kristin Mann, 'West Africa in the Atlantic Community: The Case of the Slave Coast', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 56, no. 2 (April 1999), 307–34.

<sup>31</sup> Steele, 'Bernard Bailyn's American Atlantic', 55–6. It is striking for example that in David Armitage's recent and thoughtful typology of Atlantic historiography, he mentions Amerindians as a theme only once, and cites only two relevant works, 'Three Concepts of Atlantic History', 26. The two references are Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge, UK, 1991) and Ignacio Gallup-Diaz, *The Door to the Seas and the Key to the Universe: Indian Politics and Imperial Rivalry in the Darién, 1640–1750*, electronic book (New York, 2002).

<sup>32</sup> For an examination of the disjuncture between colonial American history and the history of Amerindians, see James H. Merrell, 'Some Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 46, no. 1 (January 1989), 94–119; see also Gordon S. Wood, 'A Century of Writing Early American History: Then and Now Compared; Or How Henry Adams Got It Wrong', *American Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (June 1995), 678–96, esp. 695–6, and an older (polemical) view, Bernard W. Sheehan, 'Indian–White Relations in Early America: A Review Essay', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 26, no. 2 (April 1960), 267–86. On textbook treatments of Amerindians, see James Axtell, 'Europeans, Indians, and the Age of Discovery in American History Textbooks', *American Historical Review* 92, no. 3 (June 1987), 621–32. For descriptions of analogous historiographical patterns in the Canadian context, see James W. St. G. Walker, 'The Indian in Canadian Historical Writing', *Historical Papers/Communications historiques* 6, no. 1 (1971), 21–51, and Bruce G. Trigger, 'The Historian's Indian: Native Americans in Canadian Historical Writing from Charlevoix to the Present', *Canadian Historical Review* 67, no. 3 (1986), 315–42; and in the specifically French Canadian context, Sylvie Vincent, 'Les Manuels d'histoire sont-ils porteurs de stéréotypes sur les Amérindiens, ou Que sont devenus le "bon Huron" et le "méchant Iroquois"?' *Bulletin de la Société des Professeurs d'Histoire du Québec* 16, no. 2 (1978), 25–8, and Christian Laville, 'Les Amérindiens d'hier dans les manuels d'histoire d'aujourd'hui', *Traces* 29, no. 2 (1991), 29–33.

anthropologists, developed new methodologies like ethnohistory to overcome the dearth of written sources, and drew on native-language sources wherever possible, in order to reconstruct a fuller portrait of the Amerindian past. The 'New Indian history' endeavored to demonstrate that Amerindians – to borrow anthropologist Eric Wolf's ironic phrase – indeed had a history before European conquest,<sup>33</sup> to reconstruct the complexity and dynamism of indigenous societies, to document the significance of their demographic presence before and after conquest,<sup>34</sup> to underscore that they were not always in positions of weakness with regards to Europeans, to analyze them as autonomous actors with considerable room for maneuver, and to retell the history of the Americas from Amerindian points of view.<sup>35</sup>

These novel historiographical perspectives inspired an important rethinking of the history of relations between Amerindians on the one hand, and Europeans, white settlers born in the Americas, or Africans free and enslaved on the other. They focused attention on these interactions as complex crosscultural dialogues, constituted of negotiations, transactions, alliances, misunderstandings and conflicts. Specialists of North America, for example, have emphasized that particular Amerindian groups like the Iroquois not only retained considerable autonomy, but were proactive participants in great power diplomacy and warfare.<sup>36</sup> Students of Amerindian–European interaction have sought to pay equal attention to both sets of cultures in order to analyze conflict and cultural change as dynamic, two-way processes.<sup>37</sup> Others emphasize that substantial Amerindian communities continued to live near or among white settler communities well after 1492.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley, 1982).

<sup>34</sup> The size of Amerindian populations before and after 1492 has been the subject of intense debate. See Woodrow Borah, Sherburne F. Cook, *The Indian Population of Central Mexico, 1531–1610* (Berkeley, 1960), Borah, Cook, *The Population of Central Mexico in 1548. An Analysis of the Suma de Visitas de Pueblos* (Berkeley, 1960), Borah, Cook, *The Aboriginal Population of Central Mexico on the Eve of the Spanish Conquest* (Berkeley, 1963), Noble David Cook, *Demographic Collapse: Indian Peru, 1520–1620* (Cambridge, UK, 1981) and Cook, *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492–1650* (Cambridge, UK, 1998), Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History since 1492* (Norman, OK, 1987), Ann F. Ramenofsky, *Vectors of Death: The Archaeology of European Contact* (Albuquerque, 1987), and David Henige, *Numbers from Nowhere: The American Indian Contact Population Debate* (Norman, OK, 1998).

<sup>35</sup> On the relationship between contemporary political debates and Amerindian history, see Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., 'The Political Context of a New Indian History', *Pacific Historical Review* 40, no. 3 (August 1971), 357–82. For reviews of the then-emerging field of ethnohistory in the North American context, see Axtell, 'The Ethnohistory of Early America: A Review Essay', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 35, no. 1 (January 1978), 110–44, Axtell, 'Ethnohistory: An Historian's Viewpoint', *Ethnohistory* 26, no. 1 (Winter 1979), 1–13, Trigger, 'Ethnohistory: Problems and Prospects', *Ethnohistory* 29, no. 1 (Winter 1982), 1–19, Trigger, 'Ethnohistory: The Unfinished Edifice', *Ethnohistory* 33, no. 3 (Summer 1986), 253–67, Toby Morantz, 'The Past and the Future of Ethnohistory', *Acta Borealis* 1 (1998), 59–78, Catherine Desbarats, 'Essai sur quelques éléments de l'écriture de l'histoire amérindienne', *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française* 53, no. 4 (2000), 491–520; see also Trigger's analysis of archeological scholarship, 'American Archaeology as Native History: A Review Essay', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 40, no. 3 (July 1983), 413–52. For a more recent overview, R. David Edmunds, 'Native Americans, New Voices: American Indian History, 1895–1995', *American Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (1995), 717–40. On Canadian scholarship, Ken Coates, 'Writing First Nations into Canadian history: A Review of Recent Scholarly Works', *Canadian Historical Review* 81, 1 (March 2000), 99–114, and the special issue of the *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française* 53, no. 4 (2000) on the 'Histoire des Premières Nations: nouvelles lectures et nouveaux problèmes.' For examples of ethnohistorical approaches, see Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660*, 2 vols. (Montréal, 1976), Jacques Soustelle, *The Olmecs: The Oldest Civilization in Mexico* (1979), trans. Helen R. Lane (New York, 1984), Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, 1992), Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* (Norman, OK, 1992), William N. Fenton, *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy* (Norman, OK, 1998), Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), and Colin G. Calloway, *One Vast Winter Count: The Native American West before Lewis and Clark* (Lincoln, NB, 2003).

<sup>36</sup> See for example Alfred Goldsworthy Bailey, *The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures 1504–1700: A Study in Canadian Civilization* (1937), 2nd ed. (Toronto, 1969), Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from Its Beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744* (New York, 1984), Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America* (New York, 1988), Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca, 1993), and José Antônio Brandão, 'Your Fyre Shall Burn No More': Iroquois Policy toward New France and Its Native Allies to 1701 (Lincoln, NB, 1997), Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York, 1998), and Geoffrey Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia* (Philadelphia, 2001). For a similar approach in the Caribbean context, see Philip P. Boucher, *Cannibal Encounters: Europeans and Island Caribs, 1492–1763* (Baltimore, 1992), and Boucher, *France and the American Tropics to 1700* (Baltimore, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> Such perspectives include Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Williamsburg, 1975), Cornelius Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French–Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1976), Jaenen, *The French Relationship with the Native Peoples of New France and Acadia* (Ottawa, 1984), Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America* (Totowa, NJ, 1980), Kupperman, *Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America* (Ithaca, 2000), James Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (Oxford, 1981), Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York, 1985), Axtell, *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America* (New York, 1992), Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500–1643* (New York, 1982). Case studies along these lines include Richard I. Melvoin, *New England Outpost: War and Society in Colonial Deerfield* (New York, 1989).

<sup>38</sup> For the Spanish empire, Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519–1810* (Stanford, 1964), Steve J. Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest: Huamanga to 1640* (Madison, 1982), W. George Lovell, *Conquest and Survival in Colonial Guatemala: A Historical Geography of the Cuchumatán Highlands, 1500–1821* (Buffalo, 1985), Ramon A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500–1846* (Stanford, 1991), James Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, 1992), Serge Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico: The Incorporation of Indian Societies into the Western World, 16th–18th Centuries*, trans. Eileen Corrigan (Cambridge, MA, 1993), Rebecca Horn, *Postconquest Coyoacan: Nahuatl-Spanish Relations in Central Mexico, 1519–1690* (Stanford, 1997), Matthew Restall, *The Maya World: Yucatec Culture and Society, 1550–1850* (Stanford, 1997), and Gary Anderson, *The Indian Southwest, 1580–1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (1999). For a perspective emphasizing continued Amerindian presence in New England well after the period of British settlement, see Donna Keith Baron, J. Edward Hood, Holly V. Izard, 'They Were Here All Along: The Native American Presence in Lower Central New England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 53, no. 3 (July 1996), 561–86; see also Daniel R. Mandell, *Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts* (Lincoln, NB, 1996).



Given that the 'New Indian History' took shape before and at the same time as the emergence of Atlantic history, its practitioners fashioned their own distinctive methodological tools and historiographical categories in isolation from Atlanticists' conversations. They imagined concepts like 'contact', 'encounter', 'shock of discovery', and 'clash of cultures' with which to think about European–Amerindian interaction. The scholars who contributed to the flood of work on European–Amerindian contact which marked the 500th anniversary of Columbus's first Caribbean landfall also generally ignored the Atlantic rubric.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, far from seeing anything unique or specifically Atlantic in these cultural phenomena, such scholarship has typically preferred to read them as part of a wider early modern European encounter with the world. Specialists of European history and literature draw abundant comparisons between European interactions with Amerindians and other 'others' in Africa, the Ottoman empire and Asia.<sup>40</sup> Historians of the European missionary enterprise in the New World tend not to see anything singular in strategies for the propagation of the faith, Amerindian resistance, the extent to which 'acculturation' was possible, the ambiguous nature of conversion, the persistence of local faiths, and the syncretic character of Christian practice in colonial societies. They instead emphasize continuities with other contexts, from Jesuit missions in Asia to the Counter Reformation missions of the interior within Europe.<sup>41</sup> Other scholars simply see themselves as writing against the traditional modes in which the histories of the nation-states of the Americas had long been conceived and narrated, and seek to retell this past in ways that bring indigenous peoples fully into the picture and recast the history of settler societies in a less heroic light.<sup>42</sup> Happily and profitably absorbed by this rich set of interrogations and historiographical problems, students of Amerindian–European interaction have felt – and continue to feel – little need to ponder the Atlantic in their own work.

The 'frontier' and 'borderlands' concepts have proven particularly fruitful for thinking about European–Amerindian relations. By explicitly considering the question of power, empire, and Amerindian agency, these rubrics help to problematize the contexts in which Amerindian communities and European empires came into contact, zones which were conflictual yet fluid, spheres of contest and violence as well as negotiation and compromise.<sup>43</sup> Richard White's 'middle ground' concept has provided a similar framework for thinking about the ways in which Amerindian groups could exploit the opportunities opened up on the periphery of competing European empires.<sup>44</sup> Many historians have also continued to

<sup>39</sup> See for example James Axtell's overviews of the historiography produced in conjunction with the Columbian Quincentenary, a literature which is striking today for the virtual absence of Atlantic concerns, 'Columbian Encounters: Beyond 1992', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 49, no. 2 (April 1992), 335–60, and 'Columbian Encounters: 1992–1995', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 52, no. 4 (October 1995), 649–96.

<sup>40</sup> Anthony Grafton, with April Shelford, Nancy Siraisi, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago, 1992), *New World Encounters*, ed. Greenblatt (Berkeley, 1993), *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge, 1994), *America in European Consciousness, 1493–1750*, ed. Kupperman (Chapel Hill, 1995), Gordon Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américaines: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature* (Chapel Hill, 1997), *Decentering the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective, 1500–1700*, ed. Germaine Warkentin, Carolyn Podruchny (Toronto, 2001), and Frank Lestringant, *Le Huguénot et le sauvage: L'Amérique coloniale en France, au temps des guerres de Religion (1555–1589)* (1990), 3rd ed. (Geneva, 2004).

<sup>41</sup> In North America, see Carole Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls: The Jesuit Missions and Colonialism in North America, 1632–1650* (Montréal, 2000), Dane Morrison, *A Praying People: Massachusetts Acculturation and the Failure of the Puritan Mission, 1600–1690* (New York, 1995), and Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (New York, 2005). In the Spanish Americas, see Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517–1570* (New York, 1987), Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahuatl-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson, 1989), Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (Princeton, 1991), Kenneth Mills, *An Evil Lost to View? An Investigation of Post-Evangelisation Andean Religion in Mid-Colonial Peru* (Liverpool, 1994), and Mills, *Idolatry and its Enemies: Colonial Andean Religion and Extirpation, 1640–1750* (Princeton, 1997). For works that explore the ways in which Catholic missionaries saw their work in Europe and beyond in similar terms, see *Conversion: Old Worlds and New*, ed. Mills, Grafton (Rochester, 2003), Dominique Deslandes, *Croire et faire croire. Les missions françaises au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle (1600–1650)* (Paris, 2003), and Jennifer D. Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: The Jesuits' Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples* (Aldershot, UK, 2004), esp. ch. 3.

<sup>42</sup> For example Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's 'Heroic Age' Reconsidered* (Kingston, ON, 1985).

<sup>43</sup> For the foundational articulation of these concepts, Frederick Jackson Turner, 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History' (1893), in *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History' and Other Essays*, ed. John Mack Faragher (New Haven, 1999), 31–60, and Herbert Eugene Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (New Haven, 1921). See David J. Weber's overview of frontier/borderland scholarship, 'Turner, the Boltonians, and the Borderlands', *American Historical Review* 91, no. 1 (February 1986), 66–81. See also Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron's reformulation of the distinction between 'frontier' and 'borderland' in 'From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History', *American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (June 1999), 814–41, and the forum published in the subsequent issue, esp. Evan Haefeli, 'A Note on the Use of North American Borderlands', John R. Wunder, Pekka Hämmäläinen, 'Of Lethal Places and Lethal Essays', and Adelman and Aron's response, 'Of Lively Exchanges and Larger Perspectives', *American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (October 1999), 1222–5, 1229–34 and 1235–9. Daniel Weber revisited the theme in 'The Spanish Borderlands, Historiography Redux', *History Teacher* 39, no. 1 (November 2005), 43–56. Recent scholarship that employs these concepts includes John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513–1821* (New York, 1970), Daniel H. Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill, 1992), David Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, 1992), Alan Taylor, *Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York, 2006), *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750–1830*, ed. Andrew R. L. Cayton, Fredrika J. Teute (Chapel Hill, 1998), Michael Leroy Oberg, *Dominion and Civility: English Imperialism and Native America, 1585–1685* (Ithaca, 1999), James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, 2002), Evan Haefeli, Kevin Sweeney, *Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield* (Amherst, 2003), Eric Hinderaker, Peter C. Mancall, *At the Edge of Empire: The Backcountry in British North America* (Baltimore, 2003), who use the concept of 'backcountry' rather than frontier, and Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia, 2006).

<sup>44</sup> White, *The Middle Ground*. On the many ways the concept has been used, see the forums on 'A Historian Who Has Changed Our Thinking: A Roundtable on the Work of Richard White', in *Western Historical Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2002), and on 'The Middle Ground Revisited' in *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 63, no. 1 (January 2006), esp. White, 'Creative Misunderstandings and New Understandings', 9–14, Philip J. Deloria, 'What is the Middle Ground, Anyway?' 15–22, and Catherine Desbarats, 'Following The Middle Ground', 81–96.

analyze the Amerindian/European encounter within the more traditional framework of empire, like Gilles Havard in his recent study of the French–Amerindian relationship in the Great Lakes, on the grounds that it provides greater analytical purchase for describing the nature of power relations.<sup>45</sup> Historians of the indigenous peoples of the Americas have used these analytical categories to enter into dialogue with scholars of the colonial Americas, and to argue that colonial history cannot be understood without considering Amerindians.<sup>46</sup> The very vitality of the frontier, borderland and middle ground perspectives testifies to scholars' considerable success at forging their own analytical tools with which to make sense of Amerindian history, and helps to explain why these same historians have felt little need to draw on the Atlantic paradigm.

### Constructing an Amerindian Atlantic history

The near-absence of dialogue between historians of the native peoples of the Americas and of the Atlantic, while perhaps comprehensible in light of the distinct histories of their respective fields, is nonetheless unfortunate. Both scholarly communities stand to profit from a conversation which would only enrich our understanding of the interconnected histories of Atlantic empires, commerce, and migration and of Amerindian peoples. But the participants in such a dialogue would also have to confront a particularly challenging historiographical problem. Should Amerindian history be seen as a part of Atlantic history, one component in a broader, more or less unified historical whole? If so, is it reducible to the basic terms of the existing Atlantic narrative, or would a genuine integration of Amerindian history into the Atlantic paradigm require a radical redefinition of the very vocabularies and categories of Atlantic history? Might Amerindian history instead constitute an autonomous, albeit related, field, one inextricably linked to the Atlantic world but, strictly speaking, anchored in a distinct, specifically American, world? Finding ways to incorporate native history into Atlantic history thus represents a decisive challenge for the Atlantic project.

How could we go about integrating Amerindians into Atlantic history? What would an Amerindian Atlantic history look like? The very exercise is of course a perilous one, given that 'Amerindian' is itself a vast and not unproblematic category, encompassing an extraordinary range of peoples who inhabited widely varying regions, from Tierra del Fuego to the Arctic Circle. But the attempt to sketch answers to these questions can nonetheless shed precious conceptual light. For Atlantic history, the extent to which historians can bring the indigenous peoples of the Americas into the picture represents a crucial test of whether Atlantic history can ever fulfill its own inclusive pretensions. Discerning the shape which a more ecumenical Atlantic might take will reveal whether historians will need to rethink their existing understandings of Atlantic history if they are to take Amerindians into account. And the success or failure of particular models of interpretation will test whether Atlanticists' current conceptual frameworks can be successfully generalized to broader and more inclusive contexts. For Amerindian history, situating Amerindians' experiences within a broader Atlantic setting allows students of native history to assess what the Atlantic has to offer them.

The simplest starting point for such an exercise would be to take up the principle categories with which historians have manufactured the Atlantic paradigm. Such a history could begin by focusing on the early phases of contact along the Atlantic's hydrographic boundaries, those crucial moments when the first European explorers and colonists entered into dialogues and trading relationships in the space which James Axtell calls 'the water's edge'.<sup>47</sup> This type of approach would help to bring home just how dependent the European presence in the Americas was on the cooperation and support of specific Amerindian groups, particularly in its early stages.

This Amerindian Atlantic history could also reconstruct the commercial relationships which Amerindians brokered with Europeans and settlers, and which in turn drew American commodities into the Atlantic exchange. An already sizeable historiography on the fur trade in North America offers a good illustration of such an approach. Denys Delâge, who himself borrows more from Immanuel Wallerstein's world system model than from the Atlantic idea, documents the integration of the Huron and Iroquois into the Atlantic economy via the peltry trade; others like E. E. Rich and Arthur Ray have emphasized the considerable initiative and influence Indians exercised in these exchanges; some have shown how Amerindian suppliers of peltries also became consumers of European goods; and Peter Mancall situates his explicitly Atlantic-inflected study of how Iroquois and Algonquin peoples in the Susquehanna were drawn into

<sup>45</sup> Havard, *Empire et métissages. Indiens et Français dans le Pays d'en Haut 1660–1715* (Québec-Paris, 2003).

<sup>46</sup> See James Axtell's call almost four decades ago to integrate Amerindian and colonial American histories, 'A North American Perspective for Colonial History', *History Teacher* 12, no. 4 (August 1979), 549–62, his case for the decisive role played by indigenous peoples in shaping colonial America, 'Colonial America without the Indians: Counterfactual Reflections', *Journal of American History* 73, no. 4 (March 1987), 981–996, Daniel Richter's overview of the place of Indian history in the wider colonial America literature, 'Whose Indian History?' *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 50, no. 2 (April 1993), 379–93, and Ian Steele's overview of recent colonial American historiography, 'Exploding Colonial American History: Amerindian, Atlantic, and Global Perspectives', *Review in American History* 26, no. 1 (March 1998), 70–95. Recent works that work towards such objectives include Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York, 2001). For an early attempt, see Gary B. Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1974).

<sup>47</sup> Axtell, 'At the Water's Edge: Trading in the Sixteenth Century', in *After Columbus*, 145–81.

networks of transatlantic trade in just this way.<sup>48</sup> Work like this can help document Amerindians' impact on the Atlantic economy.<sup>49</sup>

Such a perspective could also focus on the commodities which were exchanged by Amerindians and Europeans: American foodstuffs and other goods which made their way to Europe, like beaver furs, cochineal, chocolate, maize, peppers, potatoes, tobacco or tomatoes; or the introduction of European crops, livestock, textiles, tools or weapons into Amerindian societies. Such an approach would underscore the ways in which this exchange transformed economic, social and cultural life, as well as environmental conditions throughout the Atlantic basin and beyond.<sup>50</sup>

Amerindians could also be studied as sources of labor in the Atlantic economy. Iroquois for example worked as guides, hunters, interpreters and porters in exchange for European goods and cash; in the late 17th and early 18th centuries Indians were hired or coerced into sailing aboard Nantucket whaling vessels.<sup>51</sup> The most obvious avenue of research would be to study the contexts in which Europeans enslaved Amerindians. Indigenous peoples served as a coerced labor force in ways which both anticipated and differed from African slavery on plantations and in silver and gold mines in central and South America and the Caribbean, and as slaves or servants in colonial New England. Existing narratives of Atlantic history do not always recall that most slaves in the Americas before 1700 were Amerindians rather than Africans—and that, like Africans, Amerindians both practiced slavery and furnished slaves to Europeans.<sup>52</sup> Tituba, the Puritan minister's slave who played a prominent role in the Salem witch trial, probably an Arawak brought from South America to Massachusetts via Barbados, is a famous example.<sup>53</sup> Such work would highlight Amerindians' roles within the European colonial productive complex. And

<sup>48</sup> On the historiography of the fur trade, see discussion below, esp. footnotes 81–5. For examinations of the settler side of the fur trade complex, see Paul Chrisler Phillips, *The Fur Trade*, 2 vols. (Norman, OK, 1961), Thomas Elliot Norton, *The Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 1686–1776* (Madison, 1974), and Louise Dechène, *Habitants and Merchants in Seventeenth-Century Montreal* (1974), trans. Liana Vardi (Montréal–Kingston, 1992). On the European market for fur, see J. F. Crean, 'Hats and the Fur Trade', *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science/Revue Canadienne d'Économie et de Science Politique* 28, no. 3 (August 1962), 373–86, Michael Sonenscher, *The Hatters of Eighteenth-Century France* (Berkeley, 1987), Thomas Wein, 'Selling Beaver Skin in North America and Europe, 1720–1760: The Uses of Fur-Trade Imperialism', *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 1, no. 1 (1990), 293–317, Wein, 'Exchange Patterns in the European Market for North American Furs and Skins, 1720–1760', in *The Fur Trade Revisited: Selected Papers of the Sixth North American Fur Trade Conference*, ed. Jennifer S. H. Brown et al. (East Lansing, 1994), 19–37, and Bernard Allaire, *Pelleteries, manchons et chapeaux de castor. Les fourrures nord-américaines à Paris, 1500–1632* (Québec, 1999). On dependency theory applied to the fur trade, see Delège, *Bitter Feast: Amerindians and Europeans in Northeastern North America, 1600–64* (1985), trans. Jane Brierley (Vancouver, 1993). For a perspective which emphasizes Amerindian agency in the fur trade, see Daniel Francis and Toby Morantz, *Partners in Furs: A History of the Fur Trade in Eastern James Bay, 1600–1870* (Kingston, ON, 1983). For a study of the southeast of the present-day US which underscores the interdependence of Amerindians and settlers, see Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685–1815* (Lincoln, NB, 1993). On Amerindians as consumers, see Ray, 'Indians as Consumers in the Eighteenth Century', in *Old Trails, New Directions: Papers in the Third North American Fur Trade Conference*, ed. Carol M. Judd, Ray (Toronto, 1980), 255–71, and Dean L. Anderson, 'The Flow of European Trade Goods into the Western Great Lakes Region, 1715–1760', in *The Fur Trade Revisited*, 93–115. See also Peter C. Mancall, *Valley of Opportunity: Economic Culture Along the Upper Susquehanna, 1700–1800* (Ithaca, 1991).

<sup>49</sup> For an overview along these lines, see Peter Mancall, Joshua L. Rosenbloom, Thomas Weiss, 'The Economic Activity of Native Americans in British North America', paper presented to 13th World Congress in Economic History, Buenos Aires (July 2002) <http://eh.net/XIIICongress/cd/papers/56MancallRosenbloomWeiss397.pdf>. On the question of Amerindian economic history more broadly, see also Daniel Usner, 'New Directions in the Economic History of American Indians', *Overcoming Economic Dependency*, Occasional Papers in Curriculum Series, no. 9 (Chicago, 1988), 229–33, and *The Other Side of the Frontier: Economic Explorations into Native American History*, ed. Linda Barrington (Boulder, 1998). For a survey of the scholarly literature on Amerindian economic life, see Patricia Albers, 'Labor and Exchange in American Indian History', in *A Companion to American Indian History*, ed. Philip J. Deloria, Neal Salisbury (Oxford, 2002), 269–86. For an older monograph examining the internal economic life of an Amerindian group, see Sara Henry Stites, *Economics of the Iroquois* (Lancaster, PA, 1905; repr. Honolulu, 2005). For an outline of the study of Amerindians as consumers, see Axtell, 'The First Consumer Revolution', in *Beyond 1492*, 125–51.

<sup>50</sup> On environmental history, see footnote 8, as well as Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York, 1999). On the impact in Europe of commodities from the Americas, Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, Sophie D. Coe, Michael D. Coe, *The True History of Chocolate* (Thames, NY, 1996), James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste, 1660–1800* (New York, 1997), Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven, 2005), Amy Butler Greenfield, *A Perfect Red: Empire, Espionage, and the Quest for the Color of Desire* (New Haven, 2005), and Mary Norton, 'Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics', *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (June 2006), 660–91. On the impact of European livestock on Amerindian societies, see Frank Gilbert Roe, *The Indian and the Horse* (Norman, OK, 1955), John C. Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture, with Comparative Material from Other Western Tribes* (Washington, 1955), Virginia DeJohn Anderson, 'King Philip's Herds: Indians, Colonists, and the Problem of Livestock in Early New England', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 51, no. 4 (October 1994), 601–24, and James Taylor Carson, 'Horses and the Economy and Culture of the Choctaw Indians, 1690–1840', *Ethnohistory* 42, no. 3 (Summer 1995), 495–513.

<sup>51</sup> Gail D. Macleitch, 'Red' Labor: Iroquois Participation in the Atlantic Economy', *Studies in Working-Class History in the Americas* 1, no. 4 (2004), 69–90; Daniel Vickers, 'The First Whalem of Nantucket', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 40, no. 4 (October 1983), 560–83. Some specialists of the fur trade have seen Amerindians suppliers as a 'forest proletariat', for example Harold Hickerson, 'Fur Trade Colonialism and the North American Indians', *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 1 (1973), 15–44.

<sup>52</sup> In the Spanish Americas, William L. Sherman, *Forced Native Labor in Sixteenth-Century Central America* (Lincoln, NB, 1979), Jeffrey A. Cole, *The Potosí Mita, 1573–1700: Compulsory Indian Labor in the Andes* (Stanford, 1985), and Peter Bakewell, *Miners of the Red Mountain: Indian Labor in Potosí, 1545–1650* (Albuquerque, 1985). In British North America, see Almon Wheeler Lauber, *Indian Slavery in Colonial Times within the Present Limits of the United States* (New York, 1913), John A. Sainsbury, 'Indian Labor in Early Rhode Island', *New England Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (September 1975), 378–93, Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670–1717* (New Haven, 2002), and Margaret Ellen Newell, 'The Changing Nature of Indian Slavery in New England, 1670–1720', in Colin G. Calloway and Neal Salisbury, *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience* (Boston, 2003), 106–36. In French North America, see Marcel Trudel, *L'Esclavage au Canada français. Histoire et conditions d'esclavage* (Québec, 1960), reprinted as *Deux siècles d'esclavage au Québec* (Montréal, 2004), William A. Starna and Ralph Watkins, 'Northern Iroquoian Slavery', *Ethnohistory* 38, no. 1 (Winter 1991), 34–57, Brett Rushforth, 'A Little Flesh We Offer You': The Origins of Indian Slavery in New France', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 60, no. 4 (October 2003), 777–808, Rushforth, 'Slavery, the Fox Wars, and the Limits of Alliance', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 63, no. 1 (January 2006), 53–80, Rushforth, *Savage Bonds: Indigenous and Atlantic Slavery in New France* (Chapel Hill, in press), and Carl J. Ekberg, *Stealing Indian Women: Native Slavery in the Indian Country* (Urbana, IL, 2007).

<sup>53</sup> Elaine G. Breslaw, *Reluctant Witch of Salem: Devilish Indians and Puritan Fantasies* (New York, 1996).

given that the study of the Atlantic slave trade has arguably provided more impetus to the development of Atlantic history – and more faithfully fulfilled the paradigm’s transnational promise – than any other field, research on Amerindian slavery could logically hold an important place in Atlantic historiography.

An Amerindian Atlantic history might also write indigenous peoples into the wider history of creolization, the common ground of fluid identities and cultural mixing that many see as characteristic of the Atlantic world. Scholars who work on hybridization in the Atlantic have privileged the experiences of the black and white inhabitants of the Americas in their efforts to uncover the early modern roots of the 19th-century American slave system, of modern racism and of African-American identity.<sup>54</sup> But other historians have amply documented Amerindian participation in the creation of *mestizo* and *métis* cultures across the Americas.<sup>55</sup> Drawing Amerindians more fully into the study of the creole Atlantic would bring the complex processes of race formation within colonial societies into sharper focus.

Although few Amerindians traversed the Atlantic, it would nonetheless be possible to reconstruct the histories of those who did. Such work could recover their social experiences, highlight the roles they played within European strategies to exploit the Americas, and illuminate the ways in which European powers coopted Amerindians and incorporated them into formal celebrations of transatlantic empire. Many of the earliest European explorers of the Americas like Christopher Columbus and Jacques Cartier kidnapped Amerindians to winter in Europe so as to learn a European language and serve as interpreters upon their return. French colonists in Brazil brought several groups of Tupi to France to participate in royal entry ceremonies, like the Brazilian natives with whom Michel de Montaigne famously tried to converse in 1562 during Henri II’s visit to Rouen. Amerindian captives marched in processions to celebrate Louis XIII and Anne of Austria’s wedding in 1612, and later in the century Louis XIV was entertained by Iroquois prisoners navigating their birch bark canoes along the canals of Versailles. French missionaries sometimes took Amerindian boys to France to be educated before bringing them back in the hopes of using them as assistants in their conversion efforts. Amerindian communities allied with various European powers also sent diplomatic missions across the Atlantic, and both the French and English courts welcomed such envoys during the 17th and 18th centuries.<sup>56</sup>

An Atlantic history encompassing Amerindian actors would also necessarily emphasize how Amerindian choices decisively shaped the possibilities open to Europeans for settlement and conquest in the Americas. As a growing body of scholarship has demonstrated, in virtually every context, the success of European settlements, campaigns of conquest, and commercial enterprises was predicated on effectively soliciting Amerindian partners or auxiliaries—Hernan Cortés’s Cempoalan and Tlaxcalan allies who marched with the Spanish to Tenochtitlán represent perhaps the most famous example of this. In his recent study of early modern Panama, Ignacio Gallup-Díaz applies what in David Armitage’s methodological typology would correspond to a kind of Amerindian cis-Atlantic history, in order to situate Spanish colonization within an Atlantic framework and reread it as the outcome of complex transactions between Tule Indians, Spanish colonists, and Dutch, English and French smugglers: ‘The Darién’s history makes sense only if it is examined from an Atlantic vantage point.’<sup>57</sup> Likewise, Amerindian calculations and decisions helped to determine the broader patterns of labor and migration in the Atlantic world. English settlers at Jamestown, for example, had planned to imitate Spanish practices in the Caribbean by relying on coerced Amerindian labor, but the strength of the neighboring Powhatan community made this an impossibility—a setback that helps to explain the logic of importing coerced labor from Africa.<sup>58</sup> This point echoes John Thornton’s larger argument that it is just as important to understand why Europeans did *not* establish settler colonies in Africa as it is to understand why they did in the Americas—because African societies were determined to prevent Europeans from settling in any great numbers, and were sufficiently powerful to preclude this possibility. The success or failure of early European colonies always depended on the

<sup>54</sup> In addition to relevant works cited in footnote 6, see for example special issue of *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 54, no. 1 (January 1997) on ‘Constructing Race: Differentiating Peoples in the Early Modern World’, Sue Peabody, ‘“A Nation Born to Slavery”: Missionaries and Racial Discourse in Seventeenth-Century French Antilles’, *Journal of Social History* 38, no. 1 (2004), 113–26, and Thelma Wills Foote, *Black and White Manhattan: The History of Racial Formation in Colonial New York City* (New York, 2004). For an interesting study which argues that the place of Amerindians in Brazilian creolization has been obscured from historians’ view because they have not fully grasped the shifting nature of racial categories in colonial Brazil, see Muriel Nazzari, ‘Vanishing Indians: The Social Construction of Race in Colonial São Paulo’, *Americas* 57, no. 4 (April 2001), 497–524.

<sup>55</sup> *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*, ed. Jacqueline Peterson, Jennifer S. H. Brown (Lincoln, NB, 1985); Jack D. Forbes, *Black Africans and Native Americans: Color, Race, and Caste in the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples* (New York, 1988); Gary B. Nash, ‘The Hidden History of Mestizo America’, *Journal of American History* 82, no. 3 (December 1995), 941–64; Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization* (1999), trans. Deke Dusinberre (New York, 2002), and Doris Garraway, *The Libertine Colony: Creolization in the Early French Caribbean* (Durham, NC, 2005). For a recent attempt to more fully integrate the various strands of cultural change, Schorsch, *Swimming the Christian Atlantic*.

<sup>56</sup> On coerced interpreters and Amerindian participation in French ceremonial, see Cornelius Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French–Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1976), 12–15; on the Rouen entry, see Michael A. Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity and Knowledge in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 2006); on the case of a well-known Montagnais, Pierre-Antoine Pastedechouan, who was educated in France as a boy by missionaries who brought him back to the Saint Lawrence to serve the missionary effort, Emma Anderson, *The Betrayal of Faith: The Tragic Journey of a Colonial Native Convert* (Cambridge, MA, 2007); and for a comprehensive study of Amerindians who traveled to Britain during the early modern era, see Alden T. Vaughn, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500–1776* (New York, 2006).

<sup>57</sup> Gallup-Díaz, *The Door of the Seas and the Key to the Universe*, 1. For a somewhat similar approach, see Gunlög Fur, *Colonialism in the Margins: Cultural Encounters in New Sweden and Lapland* (Leiden, 2006). Armitage maintains that ‘Wherever local populations encountered or collided with outsiders (not always European), “middle grounds” of negotiation and contest arose . . . which would not have existed were it not for the circulation and competition created by the thickening of the connections within the Atlantic system.’ In ‘Three Concepts of Atlantic History’, 26.

<sup>58</sup> See Edmund S. Morgan, ‘The Labor Problem at Jamestown, 1607–18’, *American Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (June 1971), 595–611, esp. 598–600.

assistance which neighboring Indians chose to provide or withhold. Amerindians also played important military roles, whether by launching attacks against settler communities, allying themselves with specific European colonial powers, or initiating wars against other Amerindian groups whose outcomes could carry important consequences for European colonies.

European empires' very range and extent in the Americas could be shaped by the geographical knowledge of the Amerindian groups with which they came into contact—and the degree to which these groups might choose to share their knowledge with Europeans. The French in the Saint Lawrence Valley, for example, had the good fortune to come into contact with unusually mobile Indian communities who entertained far-reaching political and commercial relationships with other Amerindian groups. The French not only recognized the possibilities which access to these types of information and networks offered, but succeeded in putting it to work in order to establish their own partnerships in the Great Lakes region and beyond. The opportunity to tap into indigenous knowledge was thus an important reason that the French proved able to project their influence well inland more rapidly than the Dutch or English. Similarly, the contours of the Virginia colony closely mapped onto the Powhatan zone of influence, as English colonists exploited Powhatan trading routes and were hemmed in by the hostility of Powhatan enemies.<sup>59</sup> A fuller geographical understanding of the early modern Americas, therefore, would have to take into account not only the putative boundaries of European colonies, but also the Amerindian geographies which both coexisted alongside colonial spaces and helped to shape them.

Even in contexts where European colonies enjoyed a preponderance of power, the trajectory of Amerindian–European relations can only be understood by recovering the points of view, motivations and choices of all participants. Consider the English Catholic colony of Maryland during the 1620s and 1630s, where the Piscataways found themselves progressively dispossessed of their lands by a rapidly expanding settler population. Caught between hostile Indian groups and growing numbers of colonists, Piscataway leaders weighed their options before resolving to negotiate a new status within the English colony as a way to defend their interests in this rapidly evolving context. When finally Kittamaquund, the chief of the Piscataways, submitted to the English Crown in an agreement which traded their political and religious capitulation for the right to remain in Maryland, he began English lessons, abandoned polygamy, adopted English dress, and converted to Christianity. But after Kittamaquund's death, the Piscataways tellingly renounced Christianity, all the while maintaining their close relations with the English. Their strategy was in no small degree a success: without having durably accepted Christianity, their alliance with the English made it possible to remain on their traditional lands and hold both English settlers and Indian adversaries at arms length.<sup>60</sup> Such examples suggest that the expansion of European colonies was neither irresistible nor inevitable, but depended in part on local transactions in which Amerindians too exercised considerable agency.

This skeleton outline offers two important lessons: first, it illustrates that it would be eminently possible to construct an Amerindian Atlantic history, by tracing the connections which tied Amerindians to transatlantic empires, trade flows, migrations and cultural processes; second, it underscores that a fuller understanding of the early modern Atlantic necessarily *depends* upon incorporating Amerindians squarely into the paradigm. As we have seen, taking Amerindian–European interactions into account modifies the larger narrative of early modern Atlantic history in crucial ways. The shape which the Atlantic took on between the 16th and 18th centuries depended in no small part on the choices which Amerindians as well as Europeans and Africans made. The success or failure of European colonial settlement as well as numerous sectors of colonial economies was often heavily dependent on the participation of Amerindian groups. The transfer of technologies was also a two-way process: while European knives, axes, muskets and pots profoundly modified Amerindian societies, tobacco, maize, canoes, and snowshoes did the same for European colonies.

Indeed, the contrast between the fortunes of early modern European expansion in Africa on the one hand – limited to a handful of trading ports along its coast – and in the Americas on the other – where Europeans were able to explore, settle, impose control or cultivate allies in a wide variety of regions – should itself caution us from seeing in the Atlantic an overly homogeneous or unified zone. It is therefore crucial for historians to identify the specific conditions in the Americas which made European implantation possible. The very fact that a question so predicated on endemic contexts needs to be asked in order to make sense of the Atlantic world hints at the Atlantic paradigm's limits. The insight offered by its broad transnational perspective notwithstanding, the Atlantic space's intrinsic heterogeneity makes it necessary to bring in-depth understandings of local and regional circumstances and dynamics to bear in order to analyze even the most far-flung connections.

Atlantic history, therefore, 'needs' to include Amerindians to achieve the ecumenical objectives of its practitioners. But does Amerindian history 'need' the Atlantic? If Amerindian history clearly sheds sharp light on many of the phenomena which Atlanticists themselves have sought to analyze, it is considerably less clear whether the Atlantic paradigm contributes much that is new to our understanding of the native past, or that differs substantively from the lines of research opened up by

<sup>59</sup> On the Saint Lawrence, David B. Quinn, *North America from Earliest Discovery to First Settlement: The Norse Voyages to 1612* (New York, 1977), 14; on the English in Virginia, see April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia, 2004), esp. ch. 1. My thanks to Mark Thompson for these references and for stimulating discussion on this question.

<sup>60</sup> James H. Merrell, 'Cultural Continuity among the Piscataway Indians of Colonial Maryland', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 36, no. 4 (October 1979), 548–70. See also Merrell, "'The Customes of Our Country'": Indians and Colonists in Early America', in *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*, ed. Bernard Bailyn, Philip Morgan (Chapel Hill, 1991), 117–56, esp. 129.

rubrics like 'empire', 'middle ground' or 'borderlands'. While folding the history of native peoples into the Atlantic mix would represent a salutary historiographical move, an insufficiently problematized widening of historical horizons would amount to little more than a historiographical annexation of Amerindians by Atlantic history. This carries two dangers: first, by uprooting native peoples from a history constructed in their own terms, reductive narratives of an Amerindian Atlantic risk casting away the deeply contextualized understandings of Amerindian societies which scholars working in the 'New Indian History' have worked so hard to make possible; and second, by pinning Amerindians down on the sidelines of an Atlantic ecumene, they risk obscuring other centers of gravity and connections—centers and connections which need to be studied in their own right and on their own terms, and also as important influences on Atlantic history. As we have seen, the logics of the existing Atlantic paradigm are perfectly capable of incorporating Amerindians, but only by analyzing them as 'inputs' in a set of wide-reaching Atlantic networks determined and controlled largely by Europeans and white settlers—as suppliers of commodities for Atlantic commerce, as sources of labor, and as political partners or adversaries in European colonial enterprises. Amerindians occupy an intrinsically peripheral place in this analysis, important players to be sure, but on the margins of an Atlantic world run by and for Europeans and white settlers.

Is the peripheral status of Amerindians in this picture necessarily a problem for Atlantic history? One might well argue that Amerindians in fact *did* fulfill a marginal role in this history, and that this history unfolded within an Atlantic geography organized around a European-centered center and periphery.<sup>61</sup> Certain forms of 'dependency theory' incorporate indigenous peoples into broader interpretative models in similar ways, by showing how Amerindians became integrated into transatlantic economic exchanges all the while occupying marginal roles within them.<sup>62</sup> But this reliance on a hierarchy of classifications ranging between center and periphery risks reproducing older eurocentric narratives of colonial history, albeit in more muted form, and leaving Atlantic history open to the reproach that the paradigm does not in fact provide a model for truly inclusive history.

Amerindians' marginal place in the Atlantic paradigm is more than a simple matter of location. It points to ways in which the very themes from which Atlantic history has been built, like trade, imperial administration and colonial settlement, themselves create a selective lens obscuring not only the presence of Amerindians in this history, but the nature of their relationships with Europeans and settlers as well. To date, most Atlantic-based considerations of European–Amerindian relations view these interactions from the point of view of European interests, categories and outcomes. They are thus ill equipped to consider native peoples as anything other than imperial auxiliaries or enemies, Atlantic collaborators or opponents.

### Sounding the Atlantic's limits: New France as a limit case

As the European empire most dependent on Amerindian partners, New France offers a particularly illuminating illustration of the possibilities as well as the limits of integrating native peoples into an Atlantic approach. It constitutes a test case with which to highlight not only the decisive role of Amerindians' choices in giving shape to the European presence in the Americas, but also how Amerindian-centered perspectives contribute to our historical understanding of this presence in ways that Atlantic history does not. To be sure, the French empire was to a certain extent exceptional in this respect – no European empire relied as heavily on native support – and certain other empires were also considerably more 'Atlantic' in their organization and orientation – notably Britain's. But the same processes were nonetheless at work in varying degrees throughout the Americas.

Consider the characteristics of the French imperial enterprise in North America: New France, a sparsely populated colony, built in large part on the fur trade, dependent on the support of Amerindian military allies in order to defend itself from the British menace as well as Iroquois raids, and deeply invested in the Catholic missionary enterprise among Amerindians, offers the model of a European colony, out of necessity and self-interest, weaving close ties with Indian populations. It was in this context that French and Amerindians negotiated a world of compromise and coexistence grounded in diplomatic alliances, military cooperation, Catholic missions, social interaction and the peltry exchange.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> For sophisticated uses of the concepts of center and periphery, though from colonial rather than Atlantic perspectives, see Amy Turner Bushnell, Jack P. Greene, 'Peripheries, Centers, and the Construction of Early Modern American Empires: An Introduction', as well as Bushnell's contribution in the same volume, 'Gates, Patterns, and Peripheries: The Field of Frontier Latin America', in *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500–1820*, ed. Christine Daniels, Michael V. Kennedy (New York, 2001), 1–28, and Havard, *Empire et métissages*. See also Wallerstein's world-system perspective, *The Modern World-System*.

<sup>62</sup> See for example, Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln, NB, 1983), and Delage, *Bitter Feast*.

<sup>63</sup> On French and Amerindian interdependence, see White, *The Middle Ground*, Jan Grabowski, 'Searching for the Common Ground: Natives and French in Montreal, 1700–1730', in *Proceedings of the Eighteenth Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society*, Montréal, May 1992, ed. James Pritchard (Cleveland, 1993), 59–73, Grabowski, 'The Common Ground: Settled, Natives and French in Montreal, 1667–1760', Ph.D dissertation, Université de Montréal (1993), Greer, *The People of New France* (Toronto, 1997), Havard, *Empire et métissages*, Cécile Vidal and Havard, *Histoire de l'Amérique française* (2003), 2nd ed. (Paris, 2008), and Delage, 'L'Alliance franco-amérindienne des XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles. Spécificités, changements de régime, mémoires', *Actes du Colloque international Expériences et mémoire. Partager en français la diversité du monde*, University of Bucarest, 12–16 September 2006 <http://www.celat.ulaval.ca/histoire.memoire/b2006/Delage.pdf>. Case studies that emphasize broad contexts over which such interdependence could operate include Arnaud Balvay, 'Les Relations entre soldats français et Amérindiens: la question de la traite (1683–1763)', *Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec* 35, no. 2 (2005), 17–28.

On the face of it, this history of French–Amerindian interaction could easily be plugged into that of the Atlantic. The fur trade could be viewed as one input among many in wider Atlantic commercial networks, a story of Amerindians trading furs for European goods with French interlocutors, who then exported the peltries to the metropole, where enterprising French haberdashers turned them into hats for sale to fashionable French men and women. French reliance on the military assistance of friendly Amerindian groups could be seen as an application of proven European strategies for coopting indigenous allies which had already been put to the test numerous times across the Americas. Such interpretations inscribe these alliances within a larger process, one which drew natives into armed conflicts on the North American sideshows of global conflicts which pitted the great European powers against each other, and whose principal theaters were to be found in Europe. The patterns of dense French colonial settlement, peasant agriculture and trading posts in the Saint Lawrence river valley – and, to a lesser extent, the Mississippi Valley upriver from New Orleans in the 18th century – could be interpreted as the ‘core’ of the North American bank of the French Atlantic. And thanks to several generations of scholars who have produced a sizeable literature on New France’s settler society, we today know a great deal about these colonial ‘centers.’<sup>64</sup> The enormous Great Lakes region which the French called the *Pays d’en haut* and which the French crown claimed as its own, but which was in fact peopled essentially by a wide range of Amerindian peoples, including Algonquin, Huron, Illinois, Nippising, Ottawa, Petuns and Saulteurs, among whom a handful of French missionaries, fur traders and soldiers sojourned, could in turn be seen as the ‘marchland’ of French America.<sup>65</sup> Such a history of New France would presuppose erecting an Atlanticly inflected hierarchy of geographical spaces, ranking zones as either central or peripheral. Such a model would have us pull apart the Europeanized world of white, Christian Catholic *habitants* building homesteads and putting land under the plow from the largely Amerindian world of the *Pays d’en haut* beyond. It would thus parse various points in French America based on the extent to which they had been remade in the image of Old France. It would posit a French Atlantic centered on purely French points of reference, political fulcra like Versailles, ports like Bordeaux and Nantes, prosperous plantation colonies like Saint Domingue, and imperial seats of power like Québec or even Michilimackinac, around which colonial officials, white settlers and Amerindian partners occupied distinct and varying concentric historical orbits.

How would the French–Amerindian relationship appear were it reconstructed from Amerindian points of view?<sup>66</sup> And how would such a shift in perspective call into question an Atlantic-centered understanding of New France?

When French–Amerindian interactions are measured against Atlantic-regulated yardsticks, they are necessarily reduced to terms which help to explain the constitution of an Atlantic-oriented French America. The varied contexts in which the French empire came into contact with natives, whether diplomacy, war, Christian proselytization, or the fur trade, provided both occasion and incentive for the French to mobilize their knowledge of indigenous cultures as a means to win mastery over them. Consider the annual trade fairs held each summer at Montréal from the 1650s, when a multitude of representatives of diverse Amerindian peoples canoed across the Great Lakes and Georgian Bay, up the Mississippi and down the Ottawa and Saint Lawrence. There, they paid homage to *Onontio*, the Iroquoian term for ‘great mountain’ used to identify the French governor in Canada, in order to reaffirm the grand alliance which tied France’s king to ‘his children’, to solicit his mediation in any conflicts which might have opposed particular groups within the alliance, and to receive from his hands the gifts symbolizing the friendship which linked them all together. Amerindians and merchants then exchanged beaver furs for European products.<sup>67</sup> Given how crucial the capacity to communicate with Amerindians in forums like these was to the colony’s political and commercial life, its governors and merchants either trained linguistic intermediaries or mastered the languages of their indigenous partners themselves. Viewed

<sup>64</sup> For a review of older scholarship on New France, see John C. Rule, ‘The Old Regime in America: A Review of Recent Interpretations of France in America’, *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 19, no. 4 (October 1962), 575–600; for a more recent discussion, Greer, ‘Comparisons: New France’, in *A Companion to Colonial America*, ed. Daniel Vickers (Malden, MA, 2003), 469–88, and on scholarship in France, Gilles Havard and Cécile Vidal, ‘Making New France New Again: French Historians Rediscover their American Past’, *Common-Place* 7, no. 4 (July 2007) [www.common-place.org/vol-07/no-4/havard/](http://www.common-place.org/vol-07/no-4/havard/). For surveys which focus either on the French Atlantic or New France itself, see W. J. Eccles, *The French in North America, 1500–1783* (1972), 3rd ed. (East Lansing, 1998), Philip Boucher, *Les Nouvelles Frances. France in America, 1500–1815. An Imperial Perspective* (Providence, RI, 1989). On French settler societies in North America, see Richard Colebrook, *The Seigneurial System in Early Canada: A Geographical Study* (Madison–Québec, 1966), Dechêne, *Habitants and Merchants*, Greer, *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes, 1740–1840* (Toronto, 1985), and Choquette, *Frenchmen into Peasants*. The social history of French settlers in New France is extremely well documented thanks to the Québécois school of historical demography—see Jacques Henripin, *La Population du Canada au début du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Nuptialité, fécondité, mortalité infantile* (Paris, 1954), Hubert Charbonneau, *Vie et mort de nos ancêtres. Étude démographique* (Montréal, 1975), Charbonneau et al., *The First French Canadians: Pioneers in the St. Lawrence Valley* (1987), trans. Paola Colozzo (Newark, NJ, 1993), Danielle Gauvreau, *Québec: une ville et sa population au temps de la Nouvelle-France* (Sillery, 1991), Lorraine Gadoury, *La Noblesse de Nouvelle-France. Familles et alliances* (Montréal, 1991), Yves Landry, *Orphelines en France, pionnières au Canada. Les filles du roi au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Montréal, 1992), and Louis Pelletier, *Le Clergé en Nouvelle-France: étude démographique et répertoire biographique* (Montréal, 1993). On merchants, transatlantic trade and economic life, Cameron Nish, *Les Bourgeois–Gentilshommes de la Nouvelle-France, 1729–1748* (Montréal, 1968), Dale Miquelon, *Dugard of Rouen: French Trade to Canada and the West Indies, 1729–1770* (Montréal, 1978), Miquelon, *New France, 1701–1744: A Supplement to Europe* (Toronto, 1987), Miquelon, ‘Canada’s Place in the French Imperial Economy: An Eighteenth-Century Overview’, *French Historical Studies* 15, no. 3 (Spring 1988), 432–43, John F. Bosher, *The Canada Merchants, 1713–1763* (New York, 1987), Kathryn Young, *Kin, Commerce, Community: Merchants in the Port of Quebec, 1717–1745* (New York, 1995). On the Mississippi, Carl J. Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times* (Urbana, IL, 1998).

<sup>65</sup> I borrow the ‘marchland’ concept from Bailyn, for example in *Atlantic History*, 63. For a perspective along these lines written before the historiographical advent of the Atlantic, see W. J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier, 1534–1760* (New York, 1969).

<sup>66</sup> For an example of such an approach, see Jaenen, ‘Amerindian Views of French Culture in the Seventeenth Century’, *Canadian Historical Review* 55, no. 3 (September 1974), 261–91, reprinted in *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500–1850*, ed. Peter Mancall, James Merrell (New York, 2000), 68–95.

<sup>67</sup> On the Montréal fairs, see White, *The Middle Ground*, 105–9.

through the lenses of colonial or Atlantic historiography, these fairs appear as a frontier phenomenon, an interface between French settler society and the Amerindian world beyond, a crucial mediation point in the imposition of French imperial control over Amerindian groups who were already at least nominally imperial subjects of the French king.

But contact points like the Montréal fairs were not one-sided affairs. They instead brought Amerindians and French together on the terrain of inter-cultural dialogue, a political, commercial and social partnership in which white settlers, soldiers and officials appropriated and assimilated the cultural vocabularies and practices of Amerindian societies and bowed to Amerindians' desiderata and interests as much as Amerindians submitted to the principle of French authority over New France. These relationships did not take shape as straightforward extensions of French imperial policy, commercial interests or missionary efforts, but rather as the constantly evolving outcome of negotiation and compromise. Nor did they obey perfectly the rules of diplomacy, economic exchange or Christian conversion as understood by the French, for Amerindians frequently succeeded in imposing their own categories and concepts to describe as well as to control their relationships with the French.

Take the constellation of French–Amerindian military alliances, which played so crucial a role in maintaining the French presence in North America. These partnerships cannot be fully understood as the simple consequence of European Atlantic empire, nor as an epiphenomenon of the French imperial periphery, but rather as the outcome of decidedly local, Amerindian and North American situations. Instances of cooperation or conflict were shaped as much by French weakness, native power and agency, and the extra-Atlantic vagaries of inter-Indian relations, as by French power, needs and choices. It was New France's anemic demography in comparison with Britain's populous North American colonies which pushed French royal officials to negotiate alliances in the *Pays d'en haut*. The French colony (like every European colony to some extent) relied heavily on Indian auxiliaries to fight their wars and hold their own against British colonists and armies.<sup>68</sup> The French crown directed considerable financial resources towards maintaining Amerindian alliances: not only did these expenses represent between 20 and 25% of total colonial expenditures, but they far exceeded total revenue from the fur trade.<sup>69</sup> New France's governors, painfully cognizant of the colony's hard political realities, frequently found themselves lobbying for more money from their masters in Versailles, who contested the necessity of providing costly gifts to Amerindian allies in peacetime.<sup>70</sup> As Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, the colony's governor from 1703 to 1725, put it, 'The policy of a governor of Canada does not consist so much in taking care of the French who are within the scope of his government as in maintaining a close union with the savage Nations that are his Allies.'<sup>71</sup>

Amerindian groups in turn exploited diplomacy as much as European powers did to advance their objectives.<sup>72</sup> Native communities remained forces to be reckoned with well into the 18th century in North America, and at certain moments could hold colonial expansion in check and inflict repeated defeats even on Britain's considerably more populous empire.<sup>73</sup> It was precisely Amerindian military power rather than its weakness that made indigenous allies so useful to the French crown in its conflict with Britain in North America.

<sup>68</sup> On the participation of Indian allies in conflicts opposing France and Britain in North America, see Richard R. Johnson, 'The Search for a Usable Indian: An Aspect of the Defense of Colonial New England', *Journal of American History* 63, no. 3 (December 1977), 623–51, White, *Middle Ground*, Delâge, 'War and the French-Indian Alliance', *European Review of Native American Studies* 5, no. 1 (1991), 15–20, and Haefeli and Sweeney, *Captors and Captives*.

<sup>69</sup> Catherine Desbarats, 'The Cost of Early Canada's Native Alliances: Reality and Scarcity's Rhetoric', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 52, no. 4 (October 1995), 609–30.

<sup>70</sup> See Havard, *Empire et métissages*, 393–5.

<sup>71</sup> Archives Nationales de France, Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer (Aix-en-Provence), Colonies, F3, vol. 7, fols. 178, 252–3, quoted here from Havard, *The Great Peace*, 181.

<sup>72</sup> For perspectives which emphasize in various ways Amerindian use of diplomacy with Europeans or other native groups in order to keep European empires in check, see Olive Dickason, 'Amerindians Between French and English in Nova Scotia, 1713–1763', *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 10, no. 4 (1986), 31–56, Delâge, 'L'Alliance franco-amérindienne, 1660–1701', *Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec* 19 (1989), 3–15, White, *The Middle Ground*, Jon William Parmenter, 'Pontiac's War: Forging New Links in the Anglo-Iroquois Covenant Chain, 1758–1766', *Ethnohistory* 44, no. 4 (Autumn 1997), 517–54, and Parmenter, 'After the Mourning Wars: The Iroquois as Allies in Colonial North American Campaigns, 1676–1760', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 64, no. 1 (January 2007), 39–82.

<sup>73</sup> Older historiographical schools emphasized Europeans overwhelming military superiority in the Americas—see for example Carlo M. Cipolla, *Guns, Sails and Empires: Technological Innovation and the Early Phases of European Expansion, 1400–1700* (New York, 1965), William McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force and Society since A.D. 1000* (Oxford, 1983), and Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800* (1988), 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK, 1996); for the British context, Bruce Lenman, *England's Colonial Wars, 1550–1668* (London, 2001) and Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688–1783* (London, 2001); and in North America, Douglas Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War* (New York, 1958), and Howard H. Peckham, *The Colonial Wars, 1689–1762* (Chicago, 1964). More recent overviews seek to correct overly asymmetrical estimations of the military balance, for example G. V. Scammell, *The First Imperial Age: European Overseas Expansion, c. 1400–1715* (London, 1989), George Raudzens, 'So Why Were the Aztecs Conquered, and What Were the Wider Implications? Testing Military Superiority as a Cause of Europe's Preindustrial Colonial Conquests', *War in History* 2, no. 1 (March 1995), 87–104, Raudzens, 'Why Did Amerindian Defences Fail? Parallels in the European Invasions of Hispaniola, Virginia and Beyond', *War in History* 3, no. 3 (July 1996), 331–52, Raudzens, 'Military Revolution or Maritime Evolution? Military Superiorities or Transportation Advantages as Main Causes of European Colonial Conquests to 1788', *Journal of Military History* 63, no. 3 (July 1999), 631–41, Barton C. Hacker, 'Military Technology and World History: A Reconnaissance', *History Teacher* 30, no. 4 (August 1997), 461–87, and William R. Thompson, 'The Military Superiority Thesis and the Ascendancy of Western Eurasia in the World System', *Journal of World History* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1999), 143–78. For the North American context, see White, *The Middle Ground*, Thomas Abler, 'Beavers and Muskets: Iroquois Military Fortunes in the Face of European Colonization', *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, ed. R. Brian Ferguson, Neil L. Whitehead (1992), 2nd ed. (Santa Fe, 1999), 151–74, Ian Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (New York, 1994), Matthew C. War, "'The European Method of Warring is Not Practiced Here': The Failure of British Military Policy in the Ohio Valley, 1755–1759", *War in History* 4, no. 3 (1997), 247–63, and Emerson W. Baker, John G. Reid, 'Amerindian Power in the Early Modern Northeast: A Reappraisal', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 61, no. 1 (January 2004), 77–106.



These alliances are also illegible extracted from the autonomous dynamics of inter-Indian relationships. The very conditions which made certain Amerindian groups receptive to partnership with the French, for example, were forged by the shifting balances of power among the native groups of the Great Lakes and Mississippi and Ohio valleys. The wars launched by the Iroquois against their neighbors in the first half of the 17th century helped convince beleaguered groups like the Huron to seek alliances with the French.<sup>74</sup> A coincidence of interests thus brought the French and a variety of Amerindian communities together. Amerindian military partners made it possible to project French influence beyond the Saint Lawrence valley and to reinforce their military capacities in their standoff with their British adversaries. But the French were in turn obligated to fight on behalf of their local partners when called upon if they wished to maintain their alliances, and they thus found themselves drawn into inter-Indian conflicts. Although New France's governor Frontenac fervently wished to conclude an alliance with the Iroquois in the 1680s and 1690s and secure his southwestern frontier, he abstained from doing so in repeated negotiations as long as the Iroquois refused to make peace with France's Amerindian partners. Indeed, Frontenac instead dispatched several French military expeditions against the Iroquois on behalf of friendly native groups. Peace could only come when the Iroquois confederacy agreed to conclude treaties not only with the French, but with all of France's Amerindian allies as well, as they ultimately did in the Great Peace of Montréal of 1701.<sup>75</sup> Similar imperatives were at work during the Fox Wars. Despite the fact that the French had hoped to establish an alliance with the Foxes, the Huron, Illinois, Miami, Ojibwa, and Ottawa skillfully drew the French into war against their Fox enemies. Indeed, Amerindian communities sometimes calculatedly made war and instituted or broke alliances with other indigenous groups as a means to influence French commercial and imperial expansion. As one historian of the Fox Wars puts it,

By shifting the angle of vision from French imperial aims to the local objectives of their Indian allies, it is thus possible to see the broad dynamics of French-Indian alliances in a new light. From this vantage point, it becomes difficult to view intercultural relations in binary terms, with Euro-Americans on one side, Indians on the other, and a world of mutual invention in-between on a middle ground. This was a much more complicated world where fault lines formed between peoples with competing interests but not necessarily between those with incomprehensible cultures.<sup>76</sup>

More than a simple reckoning of the North American geopolitical calculus, French–Amerindian alliances were born from demanding cultural conversations whose participants sought to conjugate their own conceptions of these relationships with their understandings of their interlocutors' points of view. Each appropriated cultural concepts and practices from the other in their efforts to gain an advantage in their negotiations – like the Indians who referred to the French king as 'father,' and the French who in turn adopted the Iroquoian term *Onontio* as the title for the governor of New France. This reciprocal cultural borrowing could define the character of the relationships in ways which the parties had not anticipated or intended. The paternalist language employed by French and Indians alike to refer to a French 'father' looking after his Amerindian 'children' did not faithfully describe a true relationship between leaders and governed, but rather represented these diplomatic, military and commercial partnerships in an Amerindian idiom of fictive kinship and friendship. Bringing a full understanding of Amerindian conceptions of kinship is by no means a mere question of semantics: for the French, who took the patriarchal character of divine right monarchy for granted, the political meaning of the French king's 'fatherhood' over their Amerindian partners was clear; for matrilineal societies like the Iroquois or the Choctaws, however, its political significance was altogether different. As one historian remarks, after concluding an alliance with the French, the Choctaws 'then proceeded to treat them as their matrilineal society taught them they should: as kind, indulgent nonrelatives who had no authority over them.'<sup>77</sup>

Warfare itself provided not only an opportunity for France and its native allies to exploit each other in order to advance their own objectives, but a terrain on which European and Amerindian combatants learned new military and cultural practices from each other. French army and militia units not only swelled their ranks with Indian auxiliaries, they were

<sup>74</sup> On Iroquois wars on their neighbors, see George T. Hunt, *The Wars of the Iroquois* (Madison, 1940), Trigger, 'The Mohawk-Mahican War (1624–1628): The Establishment of a Pattern', *Canadian Historical Review* 52 (1971), 276–86, and Starna and Brandão, 'From the Mohawk-Mahican War to the Beaver Wars: Questioning the Pattern', *Ethnohistory* 51, no. 4 (Fall 2004), 725–50.

<sup>75</sup> On French-Iroquois relations, Robert A. Goldstein, *French-Iroquois Diplomatic and Military Relations, 1609–1701* (The Hague-Paris, 1969), Richard Aquila, *The Iroquois Restoration: Iroquois Diplomacy on the Colonial Frontier, 1701–1754* (Detroit, 1983), *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and their League*, ed. Francis Jennings (Syracuse, NY, 1985), Gilles Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal of 1701: French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Phyllis Aronoff, and Howard Scott (Montreal, 2001), a considerably revised version of a work originally published in French in 1992. Historians have debated whether the Iroquois were winners or losers in the Great Peace of Montreal. Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, 155, and Brandão and Starna, 'The Treaties of 1701: A Triumph of Iroquois Diplomacy', *Ethnohistory* 43, no. 2 (Spring 1996), 209–44 favor the former position; W. J. Eccles, *Frontenac, the Courtier Governor* (Toronto, 1959; repr. Lincoln, 2003), 332–3, Francis Jennings, *Ambiguous Iroquois Empire* and Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal* lean towards the latter.

<sup>76</sup> On the Fox Wars, R. David Edmunds, Joseph L. Peyser, *The Fox Wars: The Mesquakie Challenge to New France* (Norman, OK, 1993), and Rushforth, 'Slavery, the Fox Wars, and the Limits of Alliance', quote on 79.

<sup>77</sup> On Amerindian uses of fictive kinship in diplomacy, see Patricia Galloway, "'The Chief Who Is Your Father': Choctaw and French Views of the Diplomatic Relation', in *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, ed. Gregory A. Waselkov, Peter H. Wood, Tom Hatley (1989), 2nd ed. (Lincoln, NB, 2006), 345–70, quote on 345, White, *The Middle Ground*, 84–90, George Sabo, III, 'Inconsistent Kin: French-Quapaw Relations at Arkansas Post', in *Arkansas before the Americans*, ed. Hester A. Davis (Fayetteville, AK, 1991), 105–30, Havard, *Empire et métissages*, 215–9, and pt. 2, ch. 6, esp. 360–73, Delâge, 'Modèles coloniaux, métaphores familiales et changements de régime en Amérique du Nord aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles', *Cahiers des Dix*, no. 60 (2006), 19–78, and Delâge, 'L'Alliance franco-amérindienne des XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles', 11–15. In a similar vein, Jon Parmentier argues that French-Iroquois diplomatic relations after the 1701 peace treaty hewed to the Iroquois conception of *kaswentha* as the groundwork for peaceful coexistence, in 'L'Arbre de paix: Eighteenth-Century Franco-Iroquois Relations', *French Colonial History* 4 (2003), 63–80.

profoundly changed by the experience of military cooperation. In the same way that Indians adopted European military technologies, notably firearms, and adapted their tactics to respond to European ways of war, Europeans – notably French Canadians – learned how to wage ‘irregular war’ from natives.<sup>78</sup> Some historians argue that this type of North American combat experience may even have influenced tactics on battlefields back in Europe.<sup>79</sup> And not only did individual French soldiers quickly learn to scalp from Amerindians, the French empire found itself drawn into the Amerindian scalping complex. In spite of occasional objections from a Versailles uneasy with the practice, New France’s government paid its native allies for British scalps to encourage them to continue to fight for the French. If the French believed themselves to be instrumentalizing Amerindian warriors in encouraging this circulation of scalps, natives were equally convinced that the reverse was true.<sup>80</sup>

The fur trade, too, cannot be fully understood from the narrow perspective of economic history. This very question long polarized the abundant scholarly literature on the Canadian fur trade, divided by a lively debate between on the one hand formalists like Harold Innis and Arthur Ray, convinced that the principles of neoclassical economics could be usefully applied to older historical periods and non-western cultures, and on the other substantivists like E. E. Rich and Abraham Rotstein who followed Karl Polanyi in arguing that neoclassical models were not operative in such societies.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>78</sup> For useful historiographical overviews, see Don Higginbotham, ‘The Early American Way of War: Reconnaissance and Appraisal’, *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 44, no. 2 (April 1987), 230–73, and Wayne E. Lee, ‘Early American Ways of War: A New Reconnaissance, 1600–1816’, *Historical Journal* 44, no. 1 (March 2001), 269–89. On how Europeans and Amerindians adapted to each other’s tactics, see Frederick Fausz, ‘Fighting “Fire” with Firearms: The Anglo-Powhatan Arms Race in Early Virginia’, *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 3, no. 4 (1979), 33–50, Adam J. Hirsch, ‘The Collision of Military Cultures in Seventeenth-Century New England’, *Journal of American History* 74, no. 4 (March 1988), 1187–1212, Ian K. Steele, *Betrayals: Fort William Henry and the ‘Massacre’* (New York, 1990), Steele, *Warpaths*, Armstrong Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare, 1675–1815* (Norman, OK, 1998), and Haefeli, Sweeney, *Captors and Captives*. On Amerindian military practices, see Patrick M. Malone, ‘Changing Military Technology Among the Indians of Southern New England, 1600–1677’, *American Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (March 1973), 48–63, Daniel Richter, ‘War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience’, *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 40, no. 4 (October 1983), 528–59, Donald E. Worcester, Thomas F. Schilz, ‘The Spread of Firearms among the Indians on the Anglo-French Frontiers’, *American Indian Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (Spring 1984), 103–15, Schilz, Worcester, ‘The Spread of Firearms among the Indian Tribes on the Northern Frontier of New Spain’, *American Indian Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (Winter 1987), 1–10, Leroy V. Eid, ‘“A Kind of Running Fight”: Indian Battlefield Tactics in the Late Eighteenth Century’, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 71 (1988), 147–71, Thomas S. Ablor, ‘European Technology and the Art of War in Iroquoia’, in *Cultures in Conflict: Proceedings of the 20th Annual Chacmool Conference*, ed. Diana C. Tkaczuk, Brian C. Vivian (Calgary, 1989), 273–82, Gervais Carpin, ‘Les Amérindiens en guerre, 1500–1650’, *Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec* 26, nos. 3–4 (Winter 1996–1997), 99–113, Craig S. Keener, ‘An Ethnohistorical Analysis of Iroquois Assault Tactics Used against Fortified Settlements of the Northeast in the Seventeenth Century’, *Ethnohistory* 46, no. 4 (Autumn 1999), 777–807, Roger Carpenter, ‘Making War More Lethal: Iroquois vs. Huron in the Great Lakes Region, 1609 to 1650’, *Michigan Historical Review* 27 (Fall 2001), 33–51, Wayne E. Lee, ‘Fortify, Fight, or Flee: Tuscarora and Cherokee Defensive Warfare and Military Culture Adaptation’, *Journal of Military History* 68, no. 3 (July 2004), 713–70. On Euro-American warfare, see Douglas Edward Leach, *Arms for Empire: A Military History of the British Colonies in North America, 1607–1763* (New York, 1973), Daniel Beattie, ‘The Adaptation of the British Army to Wilderness Warfare, 1755–1763’, in *Adapting to Conditions: War and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Maarten Ultee (Tuscaloosa, 1986), 56–83.

<sup>79</sup> Peter Paret, ‘Colonial Experience and European Military Reform at the End of the Eighteenth Century’, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 37 (1964), 47–59. Not all have concurred—see for example Peter E. Russell, ‘Redcoats in the Wilderness: British Officers and Irregular Warfare in Europe and America, 1740–1760’, *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 35, no. 4 (October 1978), 629–52.

<sup>80</sup> Thomas Ablor, ‘Scalping, Torture, Cannibalism and Rape: An Ethnohistorical Analysis of Conflicting Values in War’, *Anthropologica* 34, no. 1 (1992), 3–20, Peter Way, ‘The Cutting Edge of Culture: British Soldiers Encounter Native Americans in the French and Indian War’, in *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600–1850*, ed. Martin Daunt, Rick Halpern (Philadelphia, 1999), 123–48, Jean-François Lozier, ‘Lever des chevelures en Nouvelle-France: la politique française du paiement des scalps’, *Revue d’Histoire de l’Amérique Française* 56, no. 4 (Spring 2003), 513–42, and Stéphanie Chaffray, ‘Le Scalp: un objet interculturel dans le contexte colonial nord-américain (1701–1763)’, *Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec* 35, no. 2 (2005), 7–16.

<sup>81</sup> For reviews of the extensive fur trade historiography, see Sylvia Van Kirk, ‘Fur Trade Social History: Some Recent Trends’, in *Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference*, ed. Carol Judd, Arthur Ray (Toronto, 1980), 160–73, Hartwell Bowsfield, ‘Studies in Fur’, *Archivaria* 12 (1981), 121–6, and Jacqueline Peterson, John Afinson, ‘The Indian and the Fur Trade: A Review of Recent Literature’, *Manitoba History* 10 (1988), 10–18. For classic statements of the formalist school, see Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (New Haven, 1930), and Arthur J. Ray’s more tempered view in *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Hunters, Trappers and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660–1870* (Toronto, 1974), Ray, Donald B. Freeman, ‘Give Us Good Measure’: *An Economic Analysis of Relations Between the Indians and the Hudson’s Bay Company before 1763* (Toronto, 1978). For an overview of Arthur Ray’s work, see Ted Binnema, Susan Neylan, ‘Arthur J. Ray and the Writing of Aboriginal History’, in *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada’s Native Pasts*, ed. Binnema, Neylan (Vancouver, 2007), 1–17. Other formalist work include John C. McManus, ‘An Economic Analysis of Indian Behavior in the North American Fur Trade’, *Journal of Economic History* 32, no. 1 (March 1972), 36–53, Ann M. Carlos, Frank D. Lewis, ‘Indians, the Beaver, and the Bay: The Economics of Depletion in the Lands of the Hudson’s Bay Company, 1700–1763’, *Journal of Economic History* 53, no. 3 (September 1993), 465–94, and Carlos, Lewis, ‘Trade, Consumption, and the Native Economy: Lessons from York Factory, Hudson Bay’, *Journal of Economic History* 71, no. 4 (December 2001), 1037–64. Bruce Trigger has presented a broad case for rationalist interpretations of Amerindian behavior in ‘Early Native North American Responses to European Contact: Romantic versus Rationalist Interpretations’, *Journal of American History* 77, no. 4 (March 1991), 1195–215. On the substantivist side, Polanyi laid out his views notably in *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, ed. Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensberg, Harry W. Pearson (Glencoe, IL, 1957). For overviews of Polanyi’s work, see S. C. Humphreys, ‘History, Economics, and Anthropology: The Work of Karl Polanyi’, *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969), 165–212, Abraham Rotstein, ‘Karl Polanyi’s Concept of Non-Market Trade’, *Journal of Economic History* 30, no. 1 (March 1970), 117–26. For a methodological statement inspired by Polanyi, see George Dalton, ‘Economic Theory and Primitive Society’, *American Anthropologist* 63, no. 1 (February 1961), 1–25. For an early argument that Amerindian motivations in engaging in the fur trade were fundamentally different than that of their white commercial partners, E. E. Rich, ‘Trade Habits and Economic Motivation among the Indians of North America’, *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 26, no. 1 (February 1960), 35–53. For a substantivist critique of Innis’s work, see Abraham Rotstein, ‘Innis: The Alchemy of Fur and Wheat’, *Journal of Canadian Studies* 12 (Winter 1977), 6–31. See also Rotstein, ‘Fur Trade and Empire: An Institutional Analysis’ (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1967), and Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game*. Alternative theoretical perspectives which call for cultural interpretations of economic life include Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (1923–24), trans. W. D. Halls (London, 2000), and for views influenced by Polanyi, Maurice Godelier, *Rationality and Irrationality in Economics* (1966), trans. Brian Pearce (London, 1972), and Marshall D. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (1972), 2nd ed. (London, 2003). Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, and Jennifer Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver-London, 1980), argue that gender perspectives can shed considerable light on the fur trade. See also footnote 48.

Formalists treat participants in commercial relationships as rational, self-interested economic actors who have internalized transparent principles of market exchange. Many historians, however, caution against reading European economic rationality into non-western cultures, arguing that a host of quite different, albeit equally complex, social and cultural imperatives were at work when Amerindians exchanged commodities.<sup>82</sup> To understand European–Amerindian commercial encounters from Amerindian points of view, it is often necessary to analyze them as gift exchanges, social practices which both enacted ties of friendship and linked the two parties together in reciprocal bonds of obligation, rather than as market transactions. Amerindians themselves often did not view the goods they exchanged as simple utilitarian objects or commodities endowed with monetary value, but as objects invested with intense symbolic worth deriving from the social and cultural importance of the nature of the exchange itself—Micmac, for example, valued copper pots not merely for their considerable utility in daily household life, but also because of the spiritual power which they believed dwelled within them. The French too did not participate in the fur trade simply out of profit motive. Indeed, these gift exchanges – including the fur trade linking the French with Saint Lawrence, Great Lakes and Mississippi Valley Indians – were often important reaffirmations of the larger alliances tying Amerindians and French together, akin to the exchange of wampum during diplomatic ceremonies.<sup>83</sup> The ongoing conversation between French fur traders and *coureurs de bois* on the one hand, and Amerindian suppliers of peltries on the other, formed a long-standing cultural negotiation between market- and gift-exchange-oriented points of view, in which both sets of partners gradually integrated many of the imperatives and logics of their interlocutors and engaged in a syncretic form of cultural exchange.<sup>84</sup>

Perhaps the best illustration of the inadequacy of analyzing the fur trade as a component (or extension) of the Atlantic economy is the degree to which the French subordinated their peltry economy both to their own non-economic imperial needs and to Amerindian imperatives. Following France's 1701 treaty with the Iroquois, the governor of New France reorganized the fur trade in the *Pays d'en haut* in order to subordinate it to the demands of France's wider imperial policy in North America. He not only hoped to rely on the peltry exchange as a source of revenue to pay the cost of France's networks of forts in the Great Lakes, but also mandated local French commanders to watch over French fur traders so as to insure that they did not cheat or anger Amerindian trading partners—commanders even risked recall if Indians complained.<sup>85</sup>

The dissemination of Christianity by French missionaries and the phenomenon of religious conversion must also be considered from multiple perspectives. If Catholic missionaries held very clear ideas about what conversion signified, entailing for the convert a radical break with indigenous belief systems and social practices, Amerindians who accepted baptism constructed their own religious middle grounds which blended preexisting worldviews with the priests' Christian faith. Some understood conversion to be more or less compatible with their own cultural attitudes. Many Montagnais for example may have seen in baptism a ritual technique to protect themselves from famine, illness, and the dangers of war, as well as to establish new social relationships. Christian Iroquois created new religious identities which set them apart from non-Catholic Iroquois and French Catholics alike. Not only did Amerindians appropriate elements of the Christian system which Jesuits and others explained to them, missionaries found themselves obligated to radically refigure Catholic doctrine in Amerindian terms. Jesuits for example concluded that the most effective strategy for explaining the importance of Jesus to Huron in terms they could understand was to describe the Lamb of God as a mighty Iroquoian warrior. As Richard White puts

<sup>82</sup> For perspectives that call to temper analyzing the history of the Atlantic from the perspective of economic rationality, see Ronald L. Trosper, 'Traditional American Indian Economic Policy', *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 19, no. 1 (1995), 65–95, reprinted in *Contemporary Native American Political Issues*, ed. Troy R. Johnson (Walnut Creek, 1999), 139–62, and David Eltis, 'Atlantic History in Global Perspective', *Itinerario* 23, no. 2 (1999), 141–61.

<sup>83</sup> Wilcomb E. Washburn, 'Symbol, Utility, and Aesthetics in the Indian Fur Trade', *Minnesota History* 40 (Winter 1966), 198–202, Calvin Martin, 'The Four Lives of a Micmac Copper Pot', *Ethnohistory* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1975), 111–33, Bruce M. White, 'Give Us a Little Milk: The Social and Cultural Meanings of Gift Giving in the Lake Superior Fur Trade Rituals', *Minnesota History* 48 (1982), 60–71, Christopher L. Miller, George R. Hamell, 'A New Perspective on Indian-White Contact: Cultural Symbols and Colonial Trade', *Journal of American History* 73, no. 2 (September 1986), 311–28, Bruce White, 'A Skilled Game of Exchange: Ojibway Fur Trade Protocol', *Minnesota History* 50 (1987), 229–40, Bruce White, 'Encounters with Spirits: Ojibwa and Dakota Theories about the French and Their Merchandise', *Ethnohistory* 41, no. 3 (Summer 1994), 369–405, Timothy J. Shannon, 'Dressing for Success on the Mohawk Frontier: Hendrick, William Johnson, and the Indian Fashion', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 53, no. 1 (January 1996), 13–42. For general ethnographic approaches to the nature of goods and value, see Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1988), and David Graeber, 'Beads and Money: Notes toward a Theory of Wealth and Power', *American Ethnologist* 23, no. 1 (February 1996), 4–24. On the relationship between gift exchange, the fur trade, and diplomacy, see Wilbur R. Jacobs' *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts: Anglo-French Rivalry Along the Ohio and Northwest Frontiers, 1748–1763* (Stanford, 1950), which argues that Europeans successfully manipulated gift-giving in order to control natives, and for more recent perspectives which emphasize Amerindian autonomy, Abraham Rotstein, 'Trade and Politics: An Institutional Approach', *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 8 (1972), 1–28, Cornelius Jaenen, 'The Role of Presents in French–Amerindian Trade', in *Explorations in Canadian Economic History: Essays in Honour of Irene M. Spry* (Ottawa, 1985), 231–50, and Peter Cook, 'Symbolic and Material Exchange in Intercultural Diplomacy: The French and Hodenosaunee in the Early Eighteenth Century', in *New Faces of the Fur Trade: Selected Papers of the Seventh North American Fur Trade Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1995*, ed. Jo-Anne Fiske, Susan Sleeper-Smith, William Wicken (East Lansing, 1998), 75–100.

<sup>84</sup> For perspectives that analyze the fur trade as a syncretic exchange at the interface of Amerindian social and European market-oriented practices, see Donald J. Blakeslee, 'The Calumet Ceremony and the Origin of Fur Trade Rituals', *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 7, no. 2 (1977), 78–88, Arthur Ray, Donald Freeman, 'Give Us Good Measure': *An Economic Analysis of Relations Between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company Before 1763* (Buffalo, 1979), and Peter Cook, 'Vivre comme frères: Le rôle du registre fraternel dans les premières alliances franco-amérindiennes au Canada (vers 1580–1650)', *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 31, no. 2 (2001), 55–65.

<sup>85</sup> Eccles, 'The Fur Trade and Eighteenth-Century Imperialism', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 40, no. 3 (July 1983), 341–62, esp. 345–5.

it, Jesuits 'for tactical reasons, often themselves accepted native premises. . . . Indians were not so much being converted to Christianity as Christ was being converted into a manitou.'<sup>86</sup>

France's North American empire, while clearly connected to the Atlantic world, enjoyed an existence that both depended upon and was fundamentally shaped by local conditions, notably the nature of the relationships which bound French and Amerindians together. Not only did the expansion of French influence towards the Great Lakes and the Mississippi, a commercial prosperity based largely on the fur trade, and Catholic missionaries' sometime successes depend on maintaining reciprocal, mutually binding partnerships, but the very survival of New France as a French colony hinged on these alliances. As long as the French played their role as *Onontio*, by liberally distributing gifts, paying a 'just' price for beaver peltries, equitably arbitrating disputes between their different partners in the Great Lakes, responding efficaciously to their calls for military assistance against their allies's own enemies like the Iroquois or the Fox, the French could generally count on Amerindian military support against the British and could mount a credible defense of New France. Given this fragile equilibrium, French failures to cultivate these relationships could entail serious consequences. The high-handed governor of New France in the early 1750s, the marquis of Duquesne, for example, ceased respecting the Senecas' long-standing right to carry all furs and military supplies over the Niagara portage, a decision which inevitably angered the Senecas. Once the Seven Years War began, this opened the way for the British to engage in skillful diplomacy and gift-giving in order to convince a number of Amerindian communities to dissociate themselves from the French. The British thus negotiated the 1757 Easton treaty in which Iroquois, Shawnee, and Delaware promised to stay out of any war between the French and British, thereby diminishing the size of Amerindian forces who fought under France's banner. The Iroquois confederacy in turn perceived Duquesne's successor Vaudreuil to have violated their own agreements by attempting to carry the fight against the British into Iroquois territory, and ceased providing assistance to the French in retaliation. If Britain's ultimate success in the war represents a truly Atlantic triumph, to be chalked up to its enormous financial investment as well as to Prussian victories over French armies in Europe, the French defeat on the Plains of Abraham in 1759 itself was due in part to French mismanagement of their Amerindian alliances.<sup>87</sup>

The history both of New France and the Amerindian peoples of the Saint Lawrence, Great Lakes and Mississippi of course cannot be understood without reference to the Atlantic world—to the French settlers, soldiers, governors, explorers and missionaries who crossed the ocean, to the goods, firearms, Bibles, crops, animals and diseases they brought with them, and to the North American commodities which made the reverse journey, like furs and tobacco. Atlantic exchanges unquestionably had an enormous impact on Amerindians in these areas, including the dramatic effects of sickness and warfare with Europeans, of European goods like metal tools and weapons, of Catholic missionary efforts and cultural dialogue. The history of inter-Indian relations beyond the frontiers of France and Britain's empires, for example, can only be fully explained by taking their Atlantic dimension into account. The Iroquois' initial successes against their Huron neighbors has been attributed in part to their precocious access to firearms, obtained from their European commercial partners to the east and south, and to which their enemies did not yet have access. By the same token, but in a different context, the Comanche successfully imposed their hegemony over the Great Plains in the 18th century by exploiting their access to horses from colonial suppliers.<sup>88</sup>

But this history is just as incomprehensible without reference to other worlds: the Saint Lawrence, the Great Lakes, the Ohio and Mississippi river valleys and the diverse Amerindian political and social systems in place there. To treat these regions and the European–Amerindian interactions which were played out in them as one piece of the Atlantic puzzle, a small stretch along the edge of the Atlantic periphery, helps to make sense of certain aspects of this history—imperial policy as viewed from Versailles or Québec or the fur trade from the perspective of French shippers and haberdashers – but it obscures others – French dependence on Amerindian allies, the Amerindian-French cultural dialogue which shaped the

<sup>86</sup> On Montagnais conversion, Kenneth M. Morrison, 'Baptism and Alliance: The Symbolic Mediations of Religious Syncretism', *Ethnohistory* 37, no. 4 (Autumn 1990), 416–37; on Christian Iroquois, Greer, 'Conversion and Identity: Iroquois Christianity in Seventeenth-Century New France', in *Conversion*, 175–98; on Jesuit use of warrior imagery, John Steckly, 'The Warrior and the Lineage: Jesuit Use of Iroquoian Images to Communicate Christianity', *Ethnohistory* 39, no. 4 (Autumn 1992), 478–509; White, *Middle Ground*, quote on 26.

<sup>87</sup> On Duquesne, see Eccles, 'The Fur Trade and Eighteenth-Century Imperialism', 357–61. On Vaudreuil's mismanagement of the Iroquois, see Parmenter, 'After the Mourning Wars', 70–4. Eccles argues more generally that French defeat in Canada was by no means inevitable, and was grounded rather in contingent rather than structural factors, *French in America* (New York, 1972), ch. 7. I do not mean to suggest that in a broader sense France's loss of New France under the Treaty of Paris of 1764 was simply a matter of poor alliance-management. A rich historiographical tradition has long argued over the reasons for French defeat in Canada—for an overview of recent work, Harold E. Selesky, 'Imperial Wars', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 59, no. 3 (July 2002), 746–66. Steele, *Warpaths*, ch. 9–12 sees the defeat as the logical outcome of Britain's decision to focus overwhelming financial and military resources in the North American theater; Frank W. Brecher, *Losing a Continent: France's North American Policy, 1753–1763* (Westport, CT, 1998) argues poor foreign policy choices in Versailles; and in a recent comprehensive study of the Seven Years War in North America which emphasizes the significance of the broader strategic context, Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* (New York, 2000).

<sup>88</sup> On early Iroquois access to firearms, see Richter, 'War and Culture', 537–40; Worcester, Schilz, 'The Spread of Firearms among the Indians on the Anglo-French Frontiers', esp. 104–5; for a dissenting view which argues that firearms had no role in Iroquois military successes, see Brian J. Given, 'The Iroquois Wars and Native Firearms', in *Native People, Native Lands: Canadian Indians, Inuit and Metis*, ed. Bruce Alden Cox (1987), 2nd ed. (Montréal, 1988), 3–13. On the Comanche, see Richard White, 'The Winning of the West: The Expansion of the Western Sioux in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Journal of American History* 65, no. 2 (September 1978), 319–43, and Pekka Hämäläinen, 'The Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures', *Journal of American History* 90, no. 3 (December 2003), 833–62; and on the Plains more generally, Frank Raymond Secoy, *Changing Military Patterns on the Great Plains, 17th Century through Early 19th Century* (Locust Valley, NY, 1953).

character of these partnerships, or the local histories of inter-Indian relations into which the French were drawn. To construe the *Pays d'en haut* as an Atlantic periphery is as misleading as it is helpful. Zones like the Great Lakes need to be understood on their own terms, and analyzed inside conceptual frames which not only identify the importance of long-range phenomena like transatlantic trade, but which also reveal the local nature of cross-cultural interactions, acknowledge the decisiveness of non-Europeans' actions in many contexts, and – perhaps most importantly – capture not only European points of view, but Amerindian ones as well. As Gilles Havard emphasizes, 'The indigenous peoples of the Great Lakes, far from seeing themselves as actors on the European periphery, believed themselves instead to be at the center of the world.'<sup>89</sup> If New France only makes sense within an Atlantic perspective, it is no less true that the early modern French Atlantic only makes sense once we understand that in important respects it was both shaped by and peripheral to the Great Lakes world and the North American river world of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers and their tributaries.<sup>90</sup> These other worlds were no less 'central' than the Atlantic, nor do they merit historical investigation any less—although their study should pursue avenues of investigation dictated not by the lineaments of an inescapably Atlantic paradigm, but by historicized understandings of their specific characters. Broad, transnational histories of the Great Lakes or Mississippi worlds would look very different from Atlantic history in its present form.

### Conclusion: trimming the Atlantic paradigm down to size

In conclusion, three points bear emphasis. First, that Atlantic history as a broad-based historiographical project will remain incomplete if it does not fully grapple with Amerindian history. It is not possible to explain the constitution of American colonial empires and the forms they took, the European settlement of the continent, the extraction and exploitation of American resources, and even the constitution of an Atlantic world, without situating the history of Amerindian–European relations at the heart of our analysis—that is, without taking into consideration the Amerindian peoples with whom and against whom they were built. In each specific case across the Americas, Europeans and white settlers worked to cooperate and coexist with, conquer and subjugate, or displace and eradicate local groups.

Second, the Atlantic paradigm, by emphasizing mobility, fluidity, and broad transnational frames of reference, risks obscuring the realities of power. There are of course advantages to this kind of historical perspective. Proponents of Atlantic history see in it a means to liberate themselves from the conceptual frontiers of older colonial and national histories.<sup>91</sup> But here, too, there is a risk, a danger of erasing the complex and ever-changing balances of power which shaped the Atlantic basin's history. To move beyond older European colonial-centered historical narratives, for example, is a necessary step in order to write African and Amerindian actors into history. But we must be careful not to throw the infant of politics out with the colonial bathwater. Not only must the history of the Atlantic include power and politics, it must broaden its treatment of these themes to encompass all the region's historical actors. By acknowledging that politics was not exclusively 'colonial', it must incorporate the fact that Amerindians 'had politics' too. The existing Atlantic paradigm cannot account for how European powers found a foothold in the Americas, since it does not provide a means to understand the long periods of European imperial weakness and dependence on local populations in Africa and the Americas.<sup>92</sup> The Atlantic was a commercial space and a crucible for migration, cultural contact and creolization, but it was also – perhaps first and foremost – a politicized and militarized space.<sup>93</sup> As much recent work reminds us, Atlantic history should not be written at the expense of colonialism and empire.<sup>94</sup> Some scholars have recently proposed to understand the Atlantic as the history of 'entangled empires'—the story not of comparative empires, but of imperial rivalry and the interconnected fortunes of imperial configurations.<sup>95</sup> We should not forget that specific native groups – like the Iroquois in the Great Lakes, the Sioux

<sup>89</sup> Havard, *Empire et métissages*, 50: 'Les autochtones des Grands Lacs, loin de se percevoir comme des acteurs de la périphérie européenne, s'estimaient bien au contraire au centre du monde.'

<sup>90</sup> On the notion of 'river world', see Robert Englebert, 'Beyond Borders: Mental Mapping and the French River World in North America, 1763–1805' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Ottawa, in progress).

<sup>91</sup> See for example Games, 'Atlantic History', 754–7.

<sup>92</sup> Linda Colley makes this point for the British empire as a whole, in *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600–1850* (New York, 2002).

<sup>93</sup> Elizabeth Mancke, 'Early Modern Expansion and the Politicization of Oceanic Space', *Geographical Review* 89, no. 2 (April 1999), 225–36.

<sup>94</sup> See for example D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History*, vol. 1, *Atlantic America, 1492–1800* (New Haven, 1986), J. H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New, 1492–1650* (Cambridge, 1970), Elliott, *Spain and its World, 1500–1700* (New Haven, 1989), and Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830* (New Haven, 2006), Ida Altman, *Transatlantic Ties in the Spanish Empire* (Stanford, 2000), and James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670–1730* (New York, 2004). See also the following review essays: Jack Greene, 'Perspectives on American History' and 'Beyond Power: Paradigm Subversion and Reformulation and the Re-Creation of the Early Modern Atlantic World', in Greene, *Interpreting Early America: Historiographical Essays* (Charlottesville, 1996), 6–16, 17–42, Nicholas Canny, 'Writing Atlantic History; or, Reconfiguring the History of Colonial British America', *Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (December 1999), 1093–114, Trevor Burnard, 'Empire Matters? The Historiography of Imperialism in Early America, 1492–1830', *History of European Ideas* 33, no. 1 (March 2007), 87–107, and Cécile Vidal's review essay on Elliott's *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 'La Nouvelle histoire atlantique. Nouvelles perspectives sur les relations entre l'Europe, l'Afrique et les Amériques du XVI<sup>e</sup> au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle', *La Revue internationale des livres et des idées*, no. 4 (March–April 2008), 23–8.

<sup>95</sup> See the recent forum on 'Entangled Empires in the Atlantic World' in *American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (June 2007), in particular Eliga H. Gould, 'Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery', 764–86, and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, 'Entangled Histories: Borderland Historiographies in New Clothes?', 787–99, as well as the subsequent exchange in *American Historical Review* 112, no. 5 (December 2007), Gould, 'Entangled Atlantic Histories: A Response from the Anglo-American Periphery', 1415–22, and Cañizares-Esguerra, 'The Core and Peripheries of Our National Narratives: A Response from IH-35', 1423–31.

along the Missouri, or the Comanche in the Great Plains – exercised considerable commercial, political, and military power over sustained periods. Empires, in short, were not a European monopoly.<sup>96</sup> Amerindian politics will have to be ‘tangled up’ into this tale too.<sup>97</sup>

And third, while it will be necessary to fully integrate Amerindian history into the history of the Atlantic basin, historians should remain careful not to annex the former into the latter. Amerindians were ‘part’ of the Atlantic, but they were ‘part’ of other worlds as well, and the current fashion in Atlantic history risks obscuring this crucial point. Atlantic approaches which acknowledge the importance of native history can complicate our understandings of European empire and settlement in the Americas in fruitful ways, but by framing its very historical questions in European terms, they hold up Amerindians as no more than allies or obstacles in the construction of an Atlantic space in which they were by definition marginal actors. It is indispensable to continue working towards a history that acknowledges the points of view and choices of all participants in this world, and specifically reconstructs Amerindian perspectives. It is precisely this kind of historiographical approach which Daniel Richter attempts to put into practice in his recent work, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*.<sup>98</sup> Atlantic history can certainly inform this exercise, but it is important to recall that the Atlantic is not the appropriate paradigm with which to pursue Amerindian history.

The Atlantic has proven both an extraordinary stimulus to historical research into connections between Europe, Africa and the Americas and an extremely useful heuristic device to study these connections. But the more restrictive iterations of Atlantic history, by pushing an overly narrow definition of the Atlantic concept and reifying it as a system, or as an all-englobing space, risks erecting new teleologies in the place of the historical shibboleths which it purports to challenge. The historiographical idea of the Atlantic works best when it remains one analytical frame among many, an efficacious instrument of interpretation at historians’ disposal in a richly stocked conceptual toolbox which might include other concepts like ‘frontier’, ‘borderlands’, ‘middle ground’ or ‘native ground’.<sup>99</sup> It is one specific historical lens, well adapted to highlighting British transatlantic trade networks, for example, but considerably less suited to analyzing French–Amerindian relations in North America. The Atlantic is a powerful way of thinking, not a homogeneous, systemic historical space.<sup>100</sup> The Atlantic was also not *the* center, it was one among many centers, and a full history of the early modern Atlantic basin must necessarily address the other worlds which were connected in various ways to the Atlantic world on their own terms, whether Europe or Africa, the Caribbean or the Andes, the Great Lakes or the Great Plains, the Indian Ocean or the Philippines. Historians should hold themselves ready to ‘swap out’ various spatial lenses on their historiographical cameras, moving from Atlantic to hemispheric focuses, and thinking not simply in terms of oceanic worlds but also of archipelagic, coastal or river worlds—as well as woodland, mountain range or plains worlds.<sup>101</sup> The history of the Atlantic would best be written as one shaped by a multiplicity of centers and peripheries, rather than as a simple, Atlantic-centered process.<sup>102</sup> The Atlantic paradigm will only find its true vocation when it rubs shoulders on equal terms with a history of the Great Lakes system which fixes Parisian haberdashers and dapper French buyers of beaver felt hats on the outer margins of the Algonquin, Huron and Iroquois world, along with histories of the many other non-Atlantic worlds located across the Americas and beyond.

<sup>96</sup> Jennings, *The Ambiguous Empire*. Whether the Iroquois’ alliance system and zone of political power can be characterized as an ‘empire’ has been the subject of debate. On this discussion, see the articles collected in *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600–1800*, ed. Daniel Richter, James Merrell (Syracuse, NY, 1987). On the Comanche, White, ‘The Winning of the West’, Hämäläinen, ‘The Western Comanche Trade Center: Rethinking the Plains Indian Trade System’, *Western Historical Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1998), 485–513, Hämäläinen, ‘The Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures’, and Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven, 2008).

<sup>97</sup> See for example Eric Hinderaker’s study of the interaction between British, French, Amerindians and the nascent United States in the Ohio River valley, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673–1800* (New York, 1997). For a recent attempt to complicate the Atlantic category in sophisticated ways, see *The Atlantic in Global History*, including Claudio Saunt, ‘“Our Indians”: European Empires and the History of the Native American South’, 61–75, who adopts a considerably more cautious view of the extent of Amerindian autonomy than the one presented in this essay.

<sup>98</sup> Another, more radical approach would be to recuse western notions of historical methodology altogether, calling instead to adopt the Amerindian ways of understanding the past. See for example Peter Nabokov, ‘Native Views of History’, in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, vol. 1, *North America*, ed. Trigger, Wilcomb E. Washburn (Cambridge, UK, 1996), pt. 1, 1–60, and Nabokov, *A Forest of Time: American Indian Ways of History* (New York, 2002)—or in a considerably more polemical mode, Georges E. Sioui, *For an Amerindian Autohistory: An Essay on the Foundations of a Social Ethic* (1989), trans. Sheila Fischman (Montréal, 1992). See also Julie Cruikshank’s innovative study of contemporary Amerindian oral traditions, *The Social Life of Stories: Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory* (Lincoln, NB, 1998). For a cautionary voice arguing Amerindian and western conceptions of historical understanding to be incommensurable, see Morantz, ‘Plunder or Harmony? On Merging European and Native Views of Early Contact’, in *Decentering the Renaissance*, 48–67.

<sup>99</sup> In addition to works cited earlier in this essay, see Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia, 2006).

<sup>100</sup> This is a point made by Stephen J. Hornsby, *British Atlantic, American Frontier: Spaces of Power in Early Modern British America* (Hanover, NH, 2005).

<sup>101</sup> See Jack Greene, ‘Comparing Early Modern American Worlds: Some Reflections on the Promise of a Hemispheric Perspective’, *History Compass* 1, no. 1 (2003), 1–10. This is also what Greene has argued in calling for a postcolonial approach to early American history – though without reference to the Atlantic paradigm – in ‘Colonial History and National History: Reflections on a Continuing Problem’, *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 64, no. 2 (April 2007), 235–50; see the forum inspired by Greene’s article in same issue.

<sup>102</sup> Havard problematizes the history of the interaction between the French empire and Amerindian peoples in North America around the concept of multiple centers and peripheries in interesting ways, *Empire et métissages*, esp. 46–50.

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