

The Haitian Revolution

An Insignificant Revolution

By

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Abstract

This work argues that the usurpation of the Haitian Revolution by the Affranchis, petit-bourgeois black (creole) landowners and mulatto elites, from the African leadership on the island seeking total freedom from the mercantilism and liberalism of the capitalist world-system under European hegemony, rendered it (The Haitian Revolution) an insignificant black bourgeois revolution focused on racial vindicationism and equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with whites within the denouement of the aforementioned systemicity, i.e., the mercantilism and liberalism of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism. The latter move placed the Revolution on par with the American one, which was a counterrevolution to the abolition of slavery and the slave trade under mercantilism and liberalism. The work concludes that had the Revolution remained under either under the directorship of the African leadership seeking to implement their (communal) lakou system throughout the island, or the Kojèveian synthesis of Dessalines, it would have become a *sui generis* significant revolution, by universalizing class over race, thereby offering a counter systemicity to the Protestant/Catholic Ethic and the spirit of capitalism under European and American hegemony via the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism of the Africans.

Acknowledgements

This work, as with everything I pen, is done in the name of the ancestors, lwa-yo, manbo Erzulie, and my grandparents (Saul and Eugenia Mocombe)

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Introduction

Haiti is the first Black independent nation-state in the Western Hemisphere—founded in 1804 seventeen years following the American Republic—arising from the only successful slave rebellion in recorded history (James, 1986; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Buck-Morss, 2009; Mocombe, 2016, 2025; Gaffield, 2025; Daut, 2025). The island's history spans from its Taino native communities, European colonialism, the slave trade, Revolutionary period, and contemporary neocolonialism under American neoliberal/neomercantilist hegemony. Before the colonial period and slave trade, the island, known as *Ayiti* (mountainous land), later called Hispaniola by the Spanish, thrived under the indigenous communities of the Tainos who used the island for religious pilgrimages. Christopher Columbus, looking for a westward passage to India in the fifteenth century, claimed the island for Spain in 1492. Under Spanish rule, the Tainos were enslaved, and used to mine gold, which was shipped to Spain under an emerging mercantilist capitalism which gave rise to internecine imperialist wars between the then superpowers (Spain, France, England, the Netherlands, Germany, the Holy Roman Empire, and Portugal) fighting for what would become known as colonies, i.e., territories for resource extraction.

The brutality of the enslavement process along with European diseases (syphilis, smallpox, etc.) nearly wiped out the indigenous Taino population of the island. Hence, to augment the labor force, Spain began importing Africans from the continent of Africa under the nascent mercantilist capitalism which would change the demographics of the island and see it become the richest colony in the world by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (James, 1986; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Buck-Morss, 2009; Mocombe, 2016, 2025; Gaffield, 2025; Daut, 2025). Driven by capitalist (colonial) greed, the other superpowers (mainly the British, Germans, Dutch, and the French) of the time fought brutal

internecine wars with Spain for control of the island and its wealth. As a result of these imperialist internecine wars, Spain would cede the Western part of the island to France in 1697 under the terms of the Treaty of Ryswick, which ended the Wars of the League of Augsburg, which had pitted France against a coalition including England, the Netherlands, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire (James, 1986; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Buck-Morss, 2009; Mocombe, 2016, 2025; Gaffield, 2025; Daut, 2025).

France would rename the Western half of the island, Saint-Domingue, and continued the brutal mercantilist (colonial) system of the Spanish. Driven by an incredibly brutal system of African chattel slavery institutionalized via the French black codes, *Code Noir*, laws passed by King Louis XIV of France in 1685 to govern the system of slavery, property rights, and the colony's African population (known as *bossales*) in relation to the French who became Whites, mulattoes (mixed race population), and creole Blacks (Africans born on the island as opposed to the continent), the latter two known collectively as *Affranchis*, the French colony became one of the wealthiest in the world, generating massive fortunes for French bankers in the metropole, mulatto and creole Black plantation owners (the *Affranchis* class), and settler colonial White farmers of the island who grew and produced sugar, coffee, and indigo for export to France. At its peak, Saint-Domingue, under the mercantilist capitalism that saw enslaved Africans brought to the island to work the sugar, coffee, and indigo plantations, which were shipped to France where manufactured goods were purchased and imported to the colony, was responsible for a third of the entire Atlantic slave trade, which depopulated the continent on a massive scale and brutalized African men, women, and children.

According to Haitian folklore, the Haitian Revolution commenced on August 14th, 1791, at a place called Bois Caïman, Haiti, and lasted for thirteen years culminating with Emperor Jean-Jacques Dessalines's

declaration of independence in 1804 (Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Casimir, 2020; Gaffield, 2025). The traditional interpretation of the originating moments of the revolution is that representatives of twenty-one African nations, creole Blacks, and poor mulattoes met at the Bois Caïman site, under the leadership of a Muslim Imam, Dutty Boukman, and a mulattress Vodou priestess, Cecil Fatima, to discuss working conditions on the plantations, the denouement of the revolution, and appoint its military leaders who would eventually liberate the island from racial slavery and French colonial rule (Fick, 1990; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Mocombe, 2016, 2017, 2019). As Daut (2025) highlights about the event,

First, Fatiman Killed a sacrificial pig and subsequently offered the blood of the animal to the adherents to seal the pact of resistance. Boukman then reportedly delivered the call to rebel in Haitian Creole: “The god of the white man calls him to commit crimes; our god asks only good works of us. But this god who is so good orders revenge! He will direct our hands; he will aid us. Throw away the image of the god of the whites who thirsts for our tears and listen to the voice of liberty which speaks in the hearts of all of us” (p. 91).

This classic Hegelian interpretation of the Revolution is a liberal reading, which highlights the purposive-rationality of the mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois blacks, Affranchis, of the island who would go on to assume leadership roles in the revolution and write its history (Nicholls, 1979; Buck-Morss, 2009; Mocombe, 2016; Gaffield, 2025). In doing so, in both their writings on the revolution and the policies they would push forth on the island, they (the Affranchis class) rendered the Haitian Revolution an insignificant revolution with an emphasis on racial vindicationism and the ability of blacks to assume the liberal agential initiatives of their former French slavemasters for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution at the expense of the

majority of the African leadership on the island seeking liberation from the mercantilist and (emerging) liberal (class) order established on the backbone of racial and wage slavery (James, 1986; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Mocombe, 2016; Gaffield, 2025). Essentially, the Affranchis class (composed of mulattoes and creole Blacks) made race, created by the *Code Noir*, the universal they sought to attack and not class or the mode of production. In the place of the latter systemicity, many of the Africans, seventy-percent of the population (between sixty-seven percent or more given that Africans were never completely counted in the colony) when the Revolution commenced in 1791, sought to establish a communal way of living based on the “counter-plantation system” or lakou system of their Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism (subsistence agricultural production and living, harmony, and balance), while the Affranchis sought to continue the mercantile and liberal order, without (racial) slavery, for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with their White counterparts (Mocombe, 2016, 2017, 2019; Casimir, 2020; Gaffield, 2025). The latter, liberal order, for the most part, favored by the majority of the mulatto-elites invested in export/import trade; and the former, mercantile (protectionist) order, supported by the majority of the petit-bourgeois blacks (under the umbrella of black nationalism) invested in large-scale agricultural production (Nicholls, 1979; Du Bois, 2012). Post-independence, the Affranchis class sought to establish both systems by maintaining Haiti as an export agricultural state under the leadership of the creole Black and mulatto generals of the Revolution many of whom favored the slave trade and Africans remaining paid *cultivateurs* under what the Civil Commissioner of Saint-Domingue, Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, prior to independence, called the *corvée system* (Du Bois, 2004, 2012). Postindependence, all subsequent revolutionary leaders, from Dessalines, following Toussaint, onwards, against the interests of the Africans, would adopt variations of Sonthonax’s *corvée system* in one form or another (Du Bois, 2021).

This work argues that the usurpation of the Haitian Revolution by the Affranchis, petit-bourgeois black (creole) landowners and mulatto elites, from the Africans or *cultivateurs* on the island seeking total freedom from the mercantilism and emerging liberalism of the Catholic/Protestant capitalist world-system under European hegemony, rendered it (The Haitian Revolution) an insignificant black bourgeois revolution focused on racial vindicationism and equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with whites within the denouement of the aforementioned systemicity (the Protestant global capitalist world-system). The latter move placed the Revolution on par with the American one, which was a counterrevolution to the abolition of slavery and the slave trade under mercantilism and liberalism (Horne, 2014). In the case of the Haitian Revolution, the Affranchis, both mulattos and creole Blacks from Toussaint to Boyer, like their American counterparts pushed for the continuation of the slave trade; however, unlike their American counterparts, they sought to maintain the plantation economy in the form of wage-labor, i.e., the *corvée system*, which was similar to the sharecropping system the American South would implement post the American Civil War (Du Bois, 1903; Frazier, 1936; Du Bois, 2012; Casimir, 2020; Mocombe, 2016; Gaffield, 2025). The work concludes by suggesting that had the Revolution remained under either the directorship of the African leadership seeking to implement their (communal) lakou system throughout the island, or Dessalines's nationalistic Kojèveian (1980) synthesis, which, the former (lakou system) more so than the latter (Dessalines's Kojèveian synthesis), sought to counter the overall systemicity of the plantation economy under the mercantilism and liberalism of the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, it (the revolution) would have been a *sui generis* significant revolution offering a counter systemicity to the mercantilism and liberalism of the Protestant/Catholic Ethic and the spirit of capitalism under European and American hegemony via what Casimir calls the "counter-plantation system" or Mocombe's "the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism" (Mocombe, 2016;

Casimir, 2020). However, the assassination of Dessalines, by the mulatto Pétion, and the subsequent migration of the Africans to the mountains and provinces of the island maintained/maintains Haiti in a perpetual master/slave dialectic within the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, with the *Affranchis* class seeking to integrate the Africans as a cheap labor source in the (neo)mercantile and neoliberal capitalist order under European and American hegemony (Du Bois, 2012; Casimir, 2020; Mocombe, 2025; Gaffield, 2025).

Background of the Problem

Essentially, the aforementioned traditional (liberal) interpretations of the Haitian Revolution attempt to understand the sociohistorical phenomena within the negative dialectical and dialectical logic of Hegel's master/slave dialectic of the *Affranchis* who were seeking racial vindication against (racial) slavery and its discriminatory effects (James, 1986; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Buck-Morss, 2009; Mocombe, 2016, 2025; Gaffield, 2025). In other words, from this perspective the Revolution represents a dialectical and negative dialectical struggle by the enslaved Africans, who have internalized the (liberal) rules of their masters, for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution within and using the metaphysical discourse of their former white masters to either remain slaves and maintain slavery and the slave trade (the dialectical position) or convict them (the negative dialectical position) for not identifying with their norms, rules, and values as recursively organized and reproduced by the Africans who are now blacks. Although, historically this dialectical, and its negative dialectical counterpart, understanding holds true for the mulattoes and free petit-bourgeois (creole) blacks or *Affranchis* who, interpellated and embourgeoised by whites, used the language of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen set by France's National Constituent Assembly in 1789 to push forth their efforts to gain liberty, equality,

fraternity with their white counterparts as slaveholders and masters as brilliantly highlighted by Du Bois (2004, 2012). This racial vindicationist position, I posit here, is not an accurate representation of the antidialectical purposive-rationality of the majority of the Africans, and their leadership, who met at Bois Caïman, the originating moments of the Haitian Revolution, and continued their fight against the expeditionary forces sent by Napoleon in 1802, while the majority of the Affranchis class capitulated to the French (Mocombe, 2016; Casimir, 2020; Gaffield, 2025).

Unlike many of the Affranchis, the majority of the Africans and their leadership, seventy percent of whom were directly from Africa when the Revolution commenced, were and remained in their original non-circular and antidialectical position of their encountering with the white French and Affranchis class, the latter created by the 1685 *French Code Noir* on the island, which regulated the slave trade and the institution of slavery (Du Bois, 2004; 2012). They (the Africans) were choosing and chose death—over the master/slave dialectic as instituted by either the French as they encapsulated it in the colonial labor system, or the Affranchis as they constituted it (the master/slave dialectic) via the *corvée system* —for an alternative systemicity grounded in their Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism, not racial vindicationism or equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution. That is, their fight was for an alternative form of system and social integration, the Lakou system of the “Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism” (Mocombe’s term) or “counter-plantation system” (Casimir’s term), against the liberal and mercantilist capitalism of the whites and Affranchis, not for racial vindicationism and equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution (Fick, 1990; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Mocombe, 2016; Casimir, 2020; Gaffield, 2025). The Africans, *cultivateurs*, unlike the majority of the leadership of the Affranchis class, and their cry for general emancipation, prioritized the mode of production over race as the basis upon which to consti-

tute what would come to be called Haitian society (Mocombe, 2016; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Gaffield, 2025).

Theory and Method

Theoretically, this work, using the case of the Africans of the Haitian Revolution, positions Mocombe's (2019) theory of antidialectic highlighted in his structurationist sociology of phenomenological structuralism and consciousness field theory within, and against, Hegel's and Kojève's dialectical reasonings to argue against the classic liberal reading of the Affranchis and white bourgeois scholars who want to highlight the racial vindicationism and abolition of slavery via the introduction of wage-slavery in the form of the *corvée system* as the basis for the significance of the Revolution. Mocombe posits that the non-circular and antidialectical position in Hegel's dialectic is the position of each self-consciousness when they initially encounter each other at the onset of the master/slave dialectic. Whereas the master seeks to move from their antidialectical to the dialectical position in order to dominate and eliminate the original (antidialectical) position of the slave; the slave, in the logic of Kojève (1958/1980), remains in this non-circular and antidialectical position so long as they choose death and seek to fight against their enslavement for the purpose of maintaining and reproducing their original, antidialectical, position, which is social, political, ideological, and economic. In any other instances, they (the slaves) are either in the dialectical or negative dialectical positions. In the former position, dialectical, the slave seeks to maintain the status quo in order to stay alive; in the latter, negative dialectical position (which is itself still a dialectical position), made famous by the theorists of the Frankfurt School, the slave seeks to integrate the status quo by convicting the master for not identifying with their (antidialectical) norms, values, ideas, and ideals as it should be applied to not only the master but the slave, who has attained self-consciousness within

the dialectic, as well. The latter two positions (dialectical and negative dialectical), I want to argue here represents the purposive-rationality of the *Affranchis*, mulattoes and black creoles, which rendered the Haitian Revolution insignificant as they sought, like their Black American counterparts in America, to dialectically and negative dialectically recursively organize and reproduce the purposive-rationality of their former slavemasters by convicting their former masters for not living up to their norms, values, ideas, and ideals given their discriminatory effects against blacks who embodied these values, ideas, and ideals as encapsulated in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, set by France's National Constituent Assembly in 1789. However, the former, antidialectical position, is the purposive-rationality of the African nations, collectively known as *bossales* and *cultivateurs* by the *Affranchis* class, who commenced the revolution at Bois Caïman and continued to fight against General Leclerc's attempt to reconquer the island for imperial France in 1802, and is the *only* instance in recorded history where the slaves chose death (and continues to do so in Haiti's mountains and provinces), contrary to Kojève's reading of Hegel and the French Revolution, in order to eliminate (rendering it non-circular) the dialectical and negative dialectical relation that is the master/slave dialectic. Jean-Jacques Dessalines, following the Revolution, attempted to synthesize the antidialectical position of the Africans (the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism) with the dialectical and negative dialectical positions (the Protestant/Catholic Ethic and the spirit of capitalism) of the *Affranchis* through his nationalism and economic policies; however, his assassination by the latter (*Affranchis* class) negated his Kojèveian attempt, and Haiti and its revolution were rendered insignificant, post the death of Dessalines, as it became a racial vindicationist (negative dialectical) project by the *Affranchis* class, both mulattoes and creole blacks, seeking racial vindicationism and equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with whites within the mercantilist and liberal systemicity of the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism.

Discussion and Conclusions

Jean-Jacques Dessalines's assassination in 1806 returned Haiti back to its original 1791 position structured by the liberal and mercantilist capitalism of the Affranchis, the new masters who replaced the French, on the one hand; and the communal lakouism, emanating from their Vodou Ethic, of the Africans—who refused their slave status as the Affranchis attempted to reestablish—in the mountains and provinces of the country where they relocated to following the death of Dessalines, on the other (Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Mocombe, 2016, 2017). Haiti since 1806 has been in this master/slave dialectical position unable to move forward given the racial class animus of the Affranchis, temporarily, supplemented by an Arab elite, against the Africans, which they are attempting to interpellate and embourgeois for capital accumulation, exploitation, and racial vindication within the global neoliberal/neomercantilist capitalist system under American hegemony.

Today, Haiti is a periphery (vassal) state/colony within the (neoliberal/neomercantilist) global capitalist world-system under American hegemony within this continuous and circular dialectical and negative dialectical struggle of the Affranchis, now augmented with a Syrian/Arab minority, who, contemporarily, are seeking to integrate Haiti in the (Protestant) capitalist world-system through Christian (Protestant) fundamentalism, tourism, sports and entertainment, and industrial production against the *sui generis* lakou system of the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism—their original antidialectical position, where subsistence living via agricultural production is emphasized—of the majority of the Africans who are dominated and led by a black professional managerial class seeking wealth through the control of the latter processes by securing authority and legitimization of the political process and its ideological apparatuses.

To begin this analysis regarding the insignificance of the Haitian Revolution given its racial vindicationist turn under the auspices of the Affranchis class, creole Blacks and mulattoes, against the *sui generis* class position of the majority of the Africans seeking to constitute an alternative form of system and social integration grounded in the lakouism of their Vodou Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, chapter one gives a brief history of the constitution of the Haitian nation-state and society as the evolution of the oppositional struggles between the African majority, creole blacks, and mulatto elites operating within the enframing ontology of two distinct modes of production (the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism and the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism) and their languages, communicative discourses, ideologies, and ideological apparatuses. Chapter two juxtaposes the aforementioned structurationist history and constitution of the Haitian-state and society against contemporary postmodern/post-structural understandings regarding the nature and origins of Haitian identity/practical consciousness. Against postmodern/post-structural emphasis on the fragmentary or the decentered subject, this work suggests that the constitution of Haitian practical consciousness/identity must be understood predominantly as the struggle between two distinct forms of system and social integration and their agents or power elites: the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism of the African masses against the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and capitalist racial-class divisions, social relations of production, and ideological apparatuses of the two bourgeoisies as constituted by the global capitalist world-system. Be that as it may, chapters three, four, and five highlight the nature and origins of globalization under American hegemony within a Mocombeian structurationist framework, phenomenological structuralism, as it stands against the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism of the African majority on the island of Haiti. While chapter three outlines the tenets of Mocombe's structurationism, phenomenological structuralism and consciousness field theory, chapter four explains how society emerged and emerges from

the Mocombeian consciousness field. Chapter five goes on to apply Mocombe's structurationism to the emergence and constitution of the capitalist world system. Suggesting that whereas colonial Protestant global capitalism operated predominantly under European hegemony, following World War II globalization emerges as a product of the discourse of the Protestant Ethic and the discursive practices of the spirit of capitalism embedded in neoliberal policies and identity politics under American (financial) corporate (neomercantilist) hegemony reacting to, and against, the industrial Keynesianism of the New Deal Era. Conversely, chapter six highlights how the African majority of Haiti, against the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the colonial era, established what Jean Casimir (2020) calls a "counter-plantation/lakou system," an alternative form of system and social integration, grounded in what Mocombe (2016) calls, "the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism," with its own mode of production, ideology, ideological apparatuses, language, and communicative discourse. Chapter seven explores the origins and constitution of Haitian identity/practical consciousness within the dialectic of the discourse of the Protestant Ethic and the discursive practices of the spirit of capitalism on the one hand; and the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism on the other. Concluding, in this structural approach to the constitution of Haitian practical consciousness, that in the historical denouement of the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism and the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the discursive practices of the spirit of capitalism from slavery to globalization under European and American Hegemony, Haitian practical consciousness emerged and became dominated for the most part by three social class language games, the *grandon* class, composed of Western educated professionals, middle managers, former drug dealers, entertainers, and police officers; the *Affranchis* class/comprador bourgeoisie of landowners and merchants, seeking to build, own, and manage hotels and assembly factories producing electronics and clothing for the US market; and the African masses of the island, the majority of whom are peasant farmers and *komesan*

(shop owners and street vendors), whose practical consciousness, the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism and its *lakou* system, are marginalized and discriminated against by the two bourgeoisies who are interpellated and embourgeoised by the Protestant/Catholic Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the West. Chapter eight concludes the work by demonstrating how Dessalines attempted to synthesize the two positions, through his nationalism, to his detriment, as his assassination rendered the Haitian Revolution, ultimately, as an insignificant revolution, Black and mulatto bourgeois Revolution, which can be subsumed under the logical denouement of the French and American liberal revolutions.

Chapter I

The Constitution of Haitian Society

The Haitian Revolution, 1791-1804, has been highlighted in the academic literature as 1) either a distinct revolution that sought, through the abolition of slavery, to universalize (for general independence or emancipation) the humanist norms, ideas, ideals, and values of the Enlightenment, without contradictions, in the face of European hypocrisy revealed by the slave trade, colonialism, slavery, and racism; 2) or as a continuation of the liberal norms, ideas, ideals, and values of the French Revolution through the introduction of wage-slavery in the form of the *corvée system* within the global capitalist world-system and colonialism (James, 1986; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Buck-Morss, 2009; Mocombe, 2016, 2023; Gaffield, 2025; Daut, 2025). Both positions are problematic as they only highlight the interest or standpoint of the two so-called black bourgeoisies (the mulatto elites and creole blacks of the *Affranchis* class or *gens de couleur libres*, the latter term usually applied to mixed-race persons of color and the former both mixed-race and free blacks, often, respectively, referred to as the *anciens libres* and *nouveaux libres*) created by the mercantilist and liberal economic order of the French at the expense of the interests of the enslaved African masses, who the *Affranchis* class pejoratively referred to as *bossales* or *cultivateurs*, with their own form of system and social integration, the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism, seeking total liberation from both colonial slavery and wage-slavery, *corvée system*, proposed by the *Affranchis* class, which abhorred individualism and material greed (Du Bois, 2004; Hazareesingh, 2021; Mocombe, 2016, 2023; Casimir, 2020; Gaffield, 2025).

Driven by an incredibly brutal system of African chattel slavery institutionalized via the French black codes, *Code Noir*, laws passed by King Louis XIV of France in 1685 to govern the system of slavery, property rights, and the colony's African population (known as *bossales*) in relation to the French, the latter became Whites; the offspring of Whites and Africans were the mulattoes, and Africans born on the island as opposed to the continent became creole Blacks. The latter two were known collectively as *Affranchis*. Under French rule, the colony became one of the wealthiest in the world, generating massive fortunes for French bankers in the metropole, mulatto and creole Black plantation owners (the *Affranchis* class), and settler colonial White farmers of the island by producing sugar, coffee, and indigo. At its peak, Saint-Domingue, under the mercantilist capitalism that saw enslaved Africans brought to the island to work the sugar, coffee, and indigo plantations, which were shipped to France where manufactured goods were purchased and imported to the colony, was responsible for a third of the entire Atlantic slave trade, which depopulated the continent on a massive scale and brutalized African men, women, and children.

According to Haitian folklore, the Haitian Revolution commenced on August 14th, 1791, at a place called Bois Caïman, Haiti, and lasted for thirteen years culminating with Emperor Jean-Jacques Dessalines's declaration of independence in 1804 (Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Casimir, 2020; Gaffield, 2025). The traditional interpretation of the originating moments of the revolution is that representatives of twenty-one African nations, creole Blacks, and poor mulattoes met at the Bois Caïman site, under the leadership of a Muslim Imam, Dutty Boukman, and a mulattress Vodou priestess, Cecil Fatima, to discuss the denouement of the revolution and appoint its military leaders who would eventually liberate the island from racial slavery and French colonial rule (Fick, 1990; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Mocombe, 2016, 2017, 2019). As Daut (2025) highlights about the event,

First, Fatiman Killed a sacrificial pig and subsequently offered the blood of the animal to the adherents to seal the pact of resistance. Boukman then reportedly delivered the call to rebel in Haitian Creole: “The god of the white man calls him to commit crimes; our god asks only good works of us. But this god who is so good orders revenge! He will direct our hands; he will aid us. Throw away the image of the god of the whites who thirsts for our tears and listen to the voice of liberty which speaks in the hearts of all of us” (p. 91).

This classic Hegelian interpretation of the Revolution is a liberal reading, which highlights the purposive-rationality of the mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois blacks, Affranchis, of the island who would go on to assume leadership roles in the revolution and write its history (Nicholls, 1979; Buck-Morss, 2009; Mocombe, 2016; Gaffield, 2025). In doing so, in both their writings on the revolution and the policies they would push forth on the island, they (the Affranchis class) rendered the Haitian Revolution an insignificant revolution with an emphasis on racial vindicationism and the ability of blacks to assume the liberal agential initiatives of their former French slavemasters for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution at the expense of the majority of the African leadership on the island seeking liberation from the mercantilist and (emerging) liberal (class) order established on the backbone of the slave trade and racial and wage slavery (James, 1986; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Mocombe, 2016; Gaffield, 2025). Essentially, the Affranchis class (composed of mulattoes and creole Blacks), seeking to integrate the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the European Whites, made race, created by the *Code Noir*, the universal they sought to attack and not class or the mode of production. In the place of the latter systemicity, many of the Africans, seventy-percent of the population when the Revolution commenced in 1791, sought to establish a communal way of living based on the “counter-plantation system” or lakou system of their Vodou Ethic

and the spirit of communism (subsistence agricultural production and living, harmony, and balance), while the *Affranchis* sought to continue the mercantile and liberal order, without (racial) slavery but in the form of the *corvée system*, for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with their White counterparts (Mocombe, 2016, 2017, 2019; Casimir, 2020; Gaffield, 2025). The latter, liberal order, for the most part, favored by the majority of the mulatto-elites invested in export/import trade (which meant maintaining the slave trade); and the former, mercantile (protectionist) order, supported by the majority of the petit-bourgeois blacks (under the umbrella of black nationalism) invested in large-scale agricultural production (which also meant maintaining the slave trade) (Nicholls, 1979; Du Bois, 2012; Gaffield, 2025). Post-independence, the *Affranchis* class sought to establish both systems by maintaining Haiti as an export agricultural state under the leadership of the creole Black and mulatto generals of the Revolution many of whom favored the slave trade and the Africans remaining paid *cultivateurs* under what the Civil Commissioner of Saint-Domingue, Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, prior to independence, called the *corvée system* (Du Bois, 2004, 2012). Under such a labor system, *corvée system*, the *cultivateurs*, Africans continued to work on plantations, just like under colonialism; however, for their labor, they were paid in the form of crop allotments from the agricultural products produced on the plantations (James, 1986; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Gaffield, 2025).

For the most part, the mulatto elites (*gens de couleur libres*) of the *Affranchis* class sought to, dialectically, promote the Revolution as a continuation of the liberal ideas, ideals, and values of the French Revolution where their rights as enlightened slave and property owners were not recognized on the island by whites either on the island or in France (Daut, 2025; Gaffield, 2025). This latter dialectical position, which sought to highlight the contradictory practices of the Whites vis-à-vis the status and lived conditions of many of the *anciens*

gens de couleur libres, is best represented by the revolt of Jean-Baptiste Chavanne and Vincent Ogé, two mulatto land and slave owners (*anciens gens de couleur libres*) and their followers, who, beginning in 1790, attempted to use the equality clause of the language of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen set by France's National Constituent Assembly in 1789 to push forth their efforts to gain liberty, equality, fraternity with their white counterparts as slaveholders and masters in the colony (Du Bois, 2004; Daut, 2025; Gaffield, 2025). They used Blacks and mixed-race rebels, *anciens libres*, mostly free Blacks and mulatto slave and property holders, who served in the colonial militia, *maréchaussée*, in place to protect the colonial system, to push forth their fight for equality of opportunity and recognition with White slave and property owners in the colony. Consequently, their short-lived rebellion would end with their executions; however, their fight for racial vindicationism and equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution within the colonial system would remain a staple of their (mulattoes') racial-classes' grievances against the French before, during, and after the Revolution (Du Bois, 2004, 2012).

Conversely, the Blacks, usually creole and some African-born Blacks, *nouveaux libres*, born on the island, of the same (Affranchis) class sought (general independence) to, negative dialectically, universalize the humanist ideas, ideals, and values of the French Revolution in order to have their humanity recognized by both the whites and the mulatto class so that they in-turn could become enlightened slave and property owners through the abolition of slavery but the maintenance of the slave trade and colonial system in the form of wage-slavery, i.e., *corvée system* (Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Casimir, 2020; Mocombe, 2016, 2023; Gaffield, 2025). Henry Christophe, Toussaint, and many of the Black generals, including Dessalines, of the revolutionary army, once they acquired land and slaves, shared this negative dialectical position, which sought to convict the society of not living up to its norms, values, ideas, and ideals given the treatment of Blacks as

slaves (Daut, 2025; Gaffield, 2025). Essentially, their negative dialectical purposive-rationality differed from the dialectical positions of the mulatto class in that they wanted the rights of both the whites and mulatto classes without slavery but within the plantation economy with the Africans serving as wage-earners paid in crops via the continuation of the slave trade and a new wage-labor system called *corvée* (Du Bois, 2012; Casimir, 2020; Mocombe, 2025; Gaffield, 2025). The mulatto sector of the Affranchis class simply wanted their status and lived experiences recognized within the French slavocracy, which dominated the political economy of the colony.

Neither of these two dialectical positions represented the (antidialectical) norm, ideas, ideals, and values of the majority of the Africans, “Congos”, pejoratively called “*bossales*” by creole blacks, on the island whose leadership, i.e., Macaya, Sans Souci, etc., had their own form of system and social integration, the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism, not based on race, and as such made the Haitian Revolution, from the African perspective, a fight for, not only the abolition of slavery, but for a new *sui generis* humanism, i.e., an alternative social structure or universalism that was anti-individualism, abhorred material greed, and all were equal without distinctions, “*tout moun se moun*” (Mocombe, 2016; Casimir, 2020; Hazareesingh, 2021).

Unlike the black American, which became a structurally differentiated black other in America under the integrative imperatives of the black bourgeoisie (Du Bois, 1903; Frazier, 1957, 1968; Mocombe, 2016, 2017). In Haiti, given that sixty-seven percent (I vacillate between sixty-seven and seventy percent given that many Blacks were not properly accounted for in the colony) of the population were directly from Africa when the Revolution commenced, following the Haitian Revolution, many of the Africans were able to maintain and institutionalize their practical consciousnesses in the mountains and provinces of the island, via the Kreyol language, the lakou system, and

the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism, which they sought to implement throughout the country (Mocombe, 2016, 2017; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Casimir, 2020; Gaffield, 2025). Hence two opposing forms of system and social integration (i.e., social class language games), each with their own modes of production, languages, ideologies, ideological apparatuses, and (medium of) communicative discourses, would constitute the Haitian social structure post-independence (Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Mocombe, 2016; Casimir, 2020): the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism of the Africans; and the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the *Affranchis*, mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois blacks in control of the state apparatuses (Mocombe, 2016). The latter, given their interpellation and embourgeoisement in European languages, mode of production, ideology (liberalism and mercantilism), ideological apparatuses (churches, schools, police force, military, etc.), and (medium of) communicative discourse, sought to continue their participation in the global capitalist processes of the Europeans via mercantilism and liberalism and control of the state and its apparatuses of control. The former, the majority of the Africans, sought to constitute, in the mountains and provinces of the island, an alternative form of system and social integration, i.e., a libertarian communal social class language game, by which they sought to interpellate and socialize the masses, outside the state and its apparatuses of control under the *Affranchis*, for subsistence living and sustainable development of the material resource framework over capitalist exploitation and slavery.

Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the founding father of the nation-state as an empire, attempted, in a Kojèveian sense, to synthesize the two positions following the revolution (1804-1806) (Mocombe, 2023; Daut, 2025; Gaffield, 2025). That is to say, in order to commence his nationalization project, Dessalines, whether sincerely or for his own political interests given his infighting with the mulattoes and creole blacks, *anciens libres* and *nouveaux libres*, over his land and economic reforms,

which he tried to offset with the purposive-rationality of the Africans, many of whom were still waging a guerrilla war from the mountains of the island against the mercantilist and liberal aims of the Affranchis, following the Revolution, did not seek to solely recursively reorganize and reproduce the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the Affranchis, but was also mindful of the desires of the Africans for land and their own economic system (Desmangles, 1992; Gaffield, 2025). As Leslie G. Desmangles highlights,

[d]uring the first three years after independence (1804-1807) under Jean-Jacques Dessalines's administration, Haiti was united economically and politically.... At the outset of his administration, Dessalines... divided the citizens of the country into two categories, the laborers and the soldiers. Fearing the return of the French army, Dessalines... organized all those who had actively participated in the war of independence into an army of 25,000 men.... Those who had been on the plantations during the war continued as laborers and cultivated the large acreages the government had annexed from the white planters.... The newly militarized agriculture... produced largely sugar, cotton, and coffee, which mulatto overseers divided according to certain state-established criteria.... The overseers were to transmit one-half of the crops to the state: one half of this was used for export, and the other half paid the rent on the land. Another quarter of the total crop yield was retained for the workers' salaries, and the remaining quarter paid the salary of the plantation overseers (1992, pgs. 38-39).

These efforts were also balanced by his attempt at so-called land reform (nationalization of the land), which sought to nationalize and redistribute the remaining lands of the island equitably amongst the Affranchis and African majority where both would be allowed to do

as they pleased (Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Mocombe, 2016; Casimir, 2020). This synthesis, large plantations under state ownership with equitable distribution of crops as wages, i.e., the *corvée system*, with redistribution of land amongst soldiers and laborers for private use, which I have identified elsewhere as Haitian socialism (libertarian communism), Dessalines attempted to utilize to balance the capitalist greed of the *Affranchis*, *anciens libres* and *nouveaux libres*, with the “counter-plantation,” communalism/communism, and Vodou traditions of the Africans (Mocombe, 2016, 2024; Casimir, 2020; Gaffield, 2025).

This Kojèveian constitution of Haiti by Dessalines did not sit well with the *Affranchis* who desired their pre-war status and wealth, which tied them to the Catholic/Protestant (mercantilist and liberal) global capitalist world-system. Instead of focusing on fortification of the island, national production, food security, and agricultural production for local consumption as Dessalines attempted to do with his equitable redistribution of land among the population, the *Affranchis* assassinated him over his land and economic reforms, and the masses of Africans fled to the mountainsides and provinces of the island (Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Mocombe, 2016; Casimir, 2020; Hazareesingh, 2021; Gaffield, 2025).

With the assassination of Dessalines, the majority of the productive lands were divided among the mulatto elites, who took over their fathers’ lands and estates, and the black commanding officers of the revolution (Du Bois, 2004, 2012). They kept intact the export based economic arrangements which existed under colonialism and Toussaint’s *corvée* regime with the mulatto elites—because of their status as mulattoes—serving as the middle persons between the nation-state and outside merchants. What emerged in Haiti, following the Revolution, was the same colonial (mercantilist/liberal free-trade) class structure under the leadership of the *Affranchis* (as opposed to the Europeans) and their adversarial partnership with an emerging foreign

white merchant class, which assisted in the acquisition of manufactured goods, petit-bourgeois blacks who converted their plantations into agribusinesses, and the Africans in the provinces and mountains whose products were heavily taxed by the emerging nation-state under the leadership of the *Affranchis* (Du Bois, 2012; Gaffield, 2025).

Haiti, since 1804, has been marked by this struggle between agents of these two forms of system and social integration, the Protestant/Catholic Ethic and the spirit of capitalism and the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism, with the merchant and landowning classes (agents of the former) constantly seeking to supplant the Vodou Ethic and spirit of communism of the African majority via what Karl Polanyi (1944) calls the fictitious commodities (land, labor, and money) of (liberal-bourgeois) capitalism: the commodification of the land of the island, the labor of the African masses, and money (dollarization of the economy), which ties Haiti to the global Protestant capitalist world-system of the Europeans and Americans (Casimir, 2020; Mocombe, 2016). In other words, Haiti, since independence, has been caught between the libertarian communism (*Lakouism*) of the Africans in the mountains and provinces; the mercantilism, guised under the umbrella of black nationalism, of the landowning *Affranchis*, both blacks and mulattoes; and the liberalism of a merchant class (Arabs, mulattoes, and a few blacks) seeking to (neo) liberalize trade and promote identity politics as they control the export and import trade on the island. The latter two seek control of the state and its apparatuses backed by their American and European handlers (a rentier oligarchical transnational class) seeking to neoliberalize the country and its institutions or state apparatuses of control, while the former seeks, and has sought, a new humanism, which is resolutely anti-individualism and material greed, grounded in what Mocombe calls the “Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism” and Jean Casimir refers to as the “counter-plantation system” (Du Bois, 2004, 2021; Mocombe, 2016; Casimir, 2020).

Contemporarily, the continuous struggle between the mulatto (and Arab) merchant/professional class and the black landowning managerial classes for control of the state and its apparatuses, at the expense of the African masses in the provinces and mountains whose children they organize (as gangs), arm, and use against each other as they migrate to Port-au-Prince amidst American (the Hegemon of the global capitalist world-system) neoliberal policies seeking to displace the masses off their land for identity politics, diversified consumerism, i.e., tourism, agro and textile industries, and athletics (basketball and soccer), and trickle-down economics, continues to be a hindrance for the constitution of a sovereign Haitian nation-state amidst global climate change. The former two, interpellated and embourgeoised in Western ideological apparatuses, seek to constitute Haiti and the Haitian state, with the aid of whites (France, Canada, and America), as an export-oriented periphery state within the capitalist world-system under American (imperial/mercantilist) hegemony through Christian Protestant fundamentalism, the queerification and feminization of the labor force (*fanm se poto mitan peyi an*), privatization of state assets and services, austerity measures, militarization, and liberalization of trade with France, Canada, and the United States (Du Bois, 2012; Mocombe, 2016, 2025). This neoliberal/neomercantilist/neocolonial process stands against the desires of the masses of African men and young boys who have been gangsterized and ghettoized, via their exposure to the lifestyle of the Black underclasses of the West and America through their medium of communicative discourse (TV, social media, and hip-hop culture) in the urban slums, provinces, and mountains while seeking to maintain their *komes*, subsistence agriculture, and husbandry, which are deemed informal, against the gentrification of the country. The new *grandon* (professional-managerial class) class, composed of educated professionals, former drug dealers, entertainers, and police officers attack the former *Affranchis* class, which is now a comprador (oligarchical) bourgeoisie (composed of Arab merchants) seeking to build, own, and manage hotels (to promote “so-called” Haitian