

Why Haiti is Maligned in the Western World: The Contemporary Significance of Bois Caïman and the Haitian Revolution

Por qué Haití es visto como maligno en el mundo occidental:
La importancia contemporánea de Bois Caïman y la Revolución Haitiana

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ABSTRACT

In this article, Paul C. Mocombe, the author, juxtaposes the historical events of Bois Caïman of the Haitian Revolution against Pat Robertson's statement, following the January 12, 2010 earthquake that devastated Haiti, that the Republic of Haiti's natural and social circumstances are a result of a pact that the people made with the devil to gain their independence from France, to argue that Robertson's statement captures the "underlying" reason for the West's anathema for the island of Haiti and the Haitian people: Haiti's reluctance to completely accept the Christian metaphysics of their former white colonizers.

Key words: *Ideological domination, Haitian Revolution, Haiti, Underclass, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Boukman Dutty, Bois Caïman.*

RESUMEN

En este artículo de la reflexión, Paul C. Mocombe, el autor yuxtapone los eventos históricos de Bois Caïman sobre la Revolución Haitiana a la afirmación de Pat Robertson—proferida después del terremoto del 12 de enero del 2010, el cual destruyó a Haití—quien considera que las circunstancias naturales y sociales de la República de Haití son el resultado de un pacto con el diablo hecho por el pueblo para ganar su independencia de Francia. Se argumenta que la afirmación de Robertson captura la razón "subyacente" del anatema del mundo occidental sobre la isla de Haití y los haitianos: la negativa de Haití a aceptar completamente la metafísica cristiana de sus anteriores colonizadores blancos.

Palabras clave: *Dominación ideológica, Revolución Haitiana, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Boukman Dutty, Bois Caïman.*

Introduction

On Tuesday afternoon January 12, 2010 around 4:53pm an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.0 hit the Caribbean nation of Haiti about 10 miles west of the capital, Port-au-Prince. According to all experts this was the largest quake recorded in the area since 1751. The earthquake left the capital and its surrounding areas completely ravaged and devastated. Death toll ranges were as low as 50,000, to as high as 200,000 people. The following day, Wednesday January 13, 2010, American televangelist Pat Robertson appeared on the Christian Broadcasting Network's "The 700 Club" where he stated.

Something happened a long time ago in Haiti, and people might not want to talk about it. They were under the heel of the French. You know, Napoleon III, or whatever. And they got together and swore a pact to the devil. They said, we will serve you if you'll get us free from the French. True story. And so, the devil said, okay it's a deal. Ever since, they have been cursed by one thing after the other. That island of Hispaniola is one island. It is cut down the middle; on the one side is Haiti on the other is the Dominican Republic. Dominican Republic is prosperous, healthy, full of resorts, etc. Haiti is in desperate poverty. Same island. They need to have and we need to pray for them a great turning to god and out of this tragedy I'm optimistic something

good may come. But right now we are helping the suffering people and the suffering is unimaginable. (p.1)

Robertson's "true story" is actually a bastardization of the spiritual events of Bois Caïman, which Haitians celebrate as the beginning of the Haitian Revolution in August of 1791. In this article, I juxtapose the historical and spiritual events of Bois Caïman against Pat Robertson's statement to argue that Robertson's statement captures one of the "underlying" reasons for the West's contemporary anathema for Haiti: Haiti's reluctance to completely accept the Christian metaphysics of their former white colonizers.

The Haitian Revolution

Contemporarily, the island which Haiti occupies in the Caribbean is inhabited by two independent nation-states: the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Initially, the island was occupied by the Tainos indigenous people. In 1492 Christopher Columbus claimed the island for Spain. The Spanish occupied the island and renamed it *Española* (written in English as Hispaniola). They exploited the island's gold mines and reduced the Tainos to slavery. After fifty-years of Spanish rule the Tainos, who numbered about 3,000,000 to 4,000,000 prior to the advent of the Spanish, were decimated through the hardship of their condition as slaves, organized massacres, and diseases they contracted from the Spaniards, who, within the global

capitalist mercantile system, used the Tainos to produce agricultural products for Spain (James, 1989).

The genocide of the Tainos on the island was one of the most brutal in recorded history. As a result, Bartolomew de Las Casas, a Spanish priest, protested against the massacre of the Indians and demanded the cessation of the injustices committed against them. He advocated for the importation of blacks from Africa to work on the mines as a means of ending Indian slavery on the island. Thus, in 1503, the first blacks landed on the island. These initial blacks were indentured servants from Spain and not from Africa. Eventually, by 1697 blacks and the French would subsequently displace the Spanish on the western side of the island of Hispaniola.

In 1625, the first French adventurers landed on the island of La Tortue (Tortuga Island) in the northern part of what is today the Republic of Haiti. Later, they began exploring and settling on the main land to eventually displace the Spanish from the western part of the island through warfare. Tired of their attack, and also because of the results of war in Europe, Spain signed with France the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697, ceding to the latter the western part of the island. The French renamed their possession St. Domingue. The French developed St. Domingue into the richest colony in the world through the production of sugar. To build this wealth within the global

capitalist mercantile system, France imported thousands of slaves from Africa who were submitted to virtually the same abuses and mistreatments imposed on the Tainos by the Spanish.

The importation of Africans in large numbers would change the demographic composition of St. Domingue. St. Domingue's population was divided into three main groups, the whites or "Blancs", the "Affranchis", a group composed of free blacks and mulattoes, and the great masses of imported African slaves who constituted 75% of the population. By 1789, the colony's population comprised between 400,000 and 500,000 blacks, compared to about 25,000 whites and 40,000 mulattoes (James, 1989; Buck-Morss, 2009). A great number of mulattoes were the offspring's of the union between "Blancs" and African women who were raped by their slavemasters. In many instances, slavemasters adopted these children and provided them with the necessities of life. These offsprings would in-turn inherit the wealth of their fathers. Thus, by the end of the 18th century, the mulattoes would own around 25% of the colony's plantations and wealth, and most of them went to France to get a higher education. Nevertheless, in spite of their wealth and education, the mulattoes, because of their color, were considered inferior to the blancs or whites by law and were discriminated against. For example, they could not enter certain professions, law, medicine, etc., wear European clothes, or sit among the whites in church.

As a result of these discriminatory practices in Haiti, conflict arose between the Affranchis and the whites throughout the 18th century with the former claiming civil and political equality with the latter who wanted to maintain the status quo of white domination. Simultaneously, the whites were demanding from France the right to participate in the running of the colony. They wanted to make of St. Domingue a country that would be autonomous from France. Both groups would voice their grievances at the time of the French revolution in 1789, which proclaimed the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

For the most part, the enslaved Africans, field slaves directly from Africa and those conceived on the plantations, who constituted the majority on the island, were neither a part of the conflict between the Affranchis and the whites, nor this claim for liberty, equality, and fraternity. The African slaves manifested their rejection of their condition through different forms of resistance. Enslaved Africans poisoned their masters; others committed infanticide to save their offsprings from the hellish conditions of slavery. The most successful and persistent form of slave protest was marronage. Marronage consisted of slaves running away from the plantation to hide in the mountains of the island or in its forests to reproduce their African cultural forms and practices. From their retreat, the maroons conducted raids on the plantations and often would come out at night to poison or kill their masters.

One of the most famous Haitian maroons was François Mackandal (James, 1989; Buck-Morss, 2009).

Mackandal was a houngan, or vodou priest, from Guinea. At night, he would attack plantations, burning them and killing their owners. During his six-year rebellion, he and his followers poisoned and killed as many as 6000 whites. In 1758, however, the French captured him and publicly executed him on the public square of Cap Francais. In 1791, as the whites and the "Affranchis" continued on their war for greater participation in the running of the colony and for equality, the black majority entered into a full-fledge rebellion that would ultimately result in the creation of the nation-state of Haiti and the abolition of slavery on the land. Boukman Dutty, another houngan following the path of Mackandal, organized, on August 14, 1791, a meeting with the slaves in the mountains of the Northern corridors of the island. This meeting took the form of a spiritual vodou ceremony at Bois Caïman in the northern mountains of the island. According to Haitian folklore, it was raining and the sky was raging with clouds; the slaves began the ceremony by confessing their resentment for their condition (James, 1989; Buck-Morss, 2009). A woman started dancing languorously in the crowd, taken by the spirits of the loas or African Gods. With a knife in her hand, she cut the throat of a pig and distributed the blood to all the participants of the meeting who swore to kill all the

whites and mulattoes on the island. On August 22, 1791, the blacks of the North entered into a rebellion, killing all the whites and mulattoes they met and setting the plantations of the colony on fire (James, 1989; Buck-Morss, 2009).

The French quickly captured the leader of the slaves, Boukman, and beheaded him, bringing the rebellion under control. Just like Mackandal, however, Boukman had managed to instill in the African blacks the idea of his invincibility. Thus, the French exposed his head on Cap's square to convince the slaves that their leader was really dead. The death of Boukman, although it had temporarily stopped the rebellion of the North, it failed, however, to restrain the rest of the blacks from revolting against their condition. Toussaint L' Overture, a free literate black Affranchis, and Jean-Jacques Dessalines, an enslaved African, would assume the leadership of the revolt after the death of Boukman.

Toussaint L' Overture, proved to be a military genius and a formidable leader. He organized the masses of slaves and a few Affranchis free slaves and mulattoes into an organized army. With political manipulation and military campaigns, he would gain notoriety in the colony. During the period of 1791 to 1800, Toussaint outmaneuvered the French, the Spaniards and the English. He managed to eliminate all his enemies until he was the only power left in St. Domingue. By 1801, he governed the whole island, and

proclaimed himself governor of the colony. A constitution was soon drawn-up that same year declaring St. Domingue an autonomous French possession where slavery was abolished.

Napoleon Bonaparte, wary of Toussaint's great power in the colony, sent 82,000 of his battle proven troops commanded by his brother-in-law, a fleet of warships, canons, munitions and dogs in order to quell the rebellion. Two years of war ended in a stalemate; however, the French treacherously arrested Toussaint L' Overture during a meeting in June 1802. He was exiled to France and died in the Fort de Joux prison high in the cold Alpine mountains of Jura in April 1803 (James, 1989; Buck-Morss, 2009).

With the arrest, and eventual death, of Toussaint, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, an African slave, born in Haiti, whose dislike for the whites and Affranchis was not shared by L' Overture, emerged as the new leader of the Haitian Revolution, bringing it to its ultimate climax, the first black independent republic in the world on January 1, 1804. Haiti's thirteen year revolution against colonialism and slavery was the first successful black movement resulting in an independent state headed by blacks. On January 1, 1804 Dessalines, to honor the memory of the Tainos who had been massacred by the Spanish, renamed the island its original Tainoian name, Haiti or Ayiti (mountainous land). Since these glorious events, however, Haiti has been the

pariah of the West bearing the mark of the poorest country in the Hemisphere.

Haiti Since 1804

The impending defeat of the French in Haiti is widely credited with contributing to Napoleon's decision to sell the Louisiana territory to the United States in 1803. Haiti is the world's oldest black republic and the second-oldest republic in the Western Hemisphere after the United States (Buck-Morss, 2009). Although Haiti actively assisted the independence movements of many Latin American countries, the independent nation of former slaves was excluded from the hemisphere's first regional meeting of independent nations in Panama in 1826, and did not receive U.S. diplomatic recognition until 1862 the year in American history of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by the US President, Abraham Lincoln. In fact, since its independence the French and the US have played significant roles in undermining the political development of the island nation-state.

In 1825, French officials arrived and informed the Haitian government that they were willing to recognize the country as a sovereign nation but it would do so on account that they pay compensation and reparation in exchange for the revolution. Although Dessalines, prior to his death, had refused to pay the indemnity for the revolution, the Haitians, under the leadership of the Affranchis mulattoes, who assassinated Dessalines, agreed.

The French government sent a team of accountants and actuaries into Haiti in order to place a value on all lands, all physical assets, the 500,000 citizens who were formerly enslaved (including members of the Cabinet who were also valued because they had been enslaved people before independence), animals, and all other commercial properties and services. The sums amounted to 90 million gold francs. Haiti was requested to pay this reparation to France in return for national recognition. The Haitian government agreed; payments began immediately. Thus began the systematic destruction of the Republic of Haiti. The French government bled the nation and rendered it a failed state. It was a merciless exploitation that was designed and guaranteed to collapse the Haitian economy and society. Haiti was forced to pay this sum until 1947 when the last installment was made. During the long 19th century, the payment to France amounted to up to 70 % of the country's foreign exchange earnings. In the years when the coffee crops failed, or the sugar yield was down, the Haitian government borrowed on the French money market at double the going interest rate in order to repay the French government. When the Americans invaded the country and disbanded its parliament in the early 20th century, 1915, one of the reasons offered was to assist the French in collecting its reparations. Hence, the collapse of the Haitian nation resides at the hands of France and America, especially. What France did openly in the nineteenth and

early twentieth-centuries, the United States continued clandestinely up to the twenty-first century by forcing Haiti into signing provisions that opened up Haiti's markets to foreign investments that wiped out Haiti's agricultural economy.

After the revolution, two separate regimes—north and south—emerged, but were unified in 1820. Two years later, Haiti occupied Santo Domingo, the eastern, Spanish-speaking part of Hispaniola. In 1844, however, Santo Domingo, with the assistance of the Americans and the Spanish, broke away from Haiti and became the Dominican Republic. With 22 changes of government from 1843 to 1915, Haiti experienced numerous periods of intense political and economic disorder, prompting the United States' military intervention of 1915. Following a 19-year occupation, U.S. military forces were withdrawn in 1934, and Haiti regained sovereign rule under a provisional constitution drafted by Franklin D. Roosevelt, which made Haiti dependent upon American food aid for its sustenance.

From February 7, 1986—when the 29-year dictatorship of the Duvalier family, backed by the CIA, ended—until 1991, Haiti was ruled by a series of provisional military governments trained and supported by the United States to protect its interests under the rule of the mulatto elites on the island. In March 1987, a constitution was ratified that provided for an elected, bicameral parliament; an elected president that served as head

of state; and a prime minister, cabinet, ministers, and supreme court appointed by the president with parliament's consent. The Haitian Constitution also provides for political decentralization through the election of mayors and administrative bodies responsible for local government. Essentially, under the guise of the United States the mulatto military and economic elites attempted to convert Haiti into a Western liberal democratic capitalist state dominated by American industrial investments (major league baseball, among many others) and food aid, which the island could not afford given its growing unemployed urban population displaced from rural areas by American agribusinesses.

In December 1990, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a former Catholic priest, won 67% of the popular vote in a presidential election that international observers, with the exception of the US government and France, deemed largely free and fair. Aristide took office on February 7, 1991, but was overthrown that September in a violent coup led by army elements and supported by many of the country's mulatto economic elites. The coup contributed to a large-scale exodus of Haitians by boat to the United States. From October 1991 to September 1994 a de facto military regime governed Haiti. Various OAS and UN initiatives to end the political crisis through the peaceful restoration of the constitutionally elected government failed. On July 31, 1994, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution

940, which authorized member states to use all necessary means to facilitate the departure of Haiti's military leadership and to restore Haiti's constitutionally elected government to power. The United States' military took the lead in forming a multinational force (MNF) to carry out the UN's mandate by means of a military intervention. In mid-September, with U.S. troops prepared to enter Haiti by force, Gen. Raoul Cedras, a mulatto, and other top leaders agreed to accept the intervention of the MNF. On September 19, 1994, the first contingents of what became a 21,000-member international force touched down in Haiti to oversee the end of military rule and the restoration of the constitutional government. President Aristide and other elected officials exiled in the US returned on October 15, 1994 under the Bill Clinton administration provision that they open up the Haitian markets to American industrial and manufacturing jobs and agricultural products such as rice, pigs, chicken, etc. The American agribusinesses, Tyson food among others, subsidized by the American government, destroyed the island's agricultural economy and led to mass migration of Haiti's African rural population to an overpopulated capital city, Port-au-Prince.

Aristide, in a coup led by the United States and France, partly because of his, raising of the labor wage in Haiti, failure to follow-up on his commitment to implement the neoliberal policies of the Clinton administration, leftist leanings,

and suit in the World Court to obtain the 90 million francs, with interest, from France, was eventually deposed in February 2004 and sent into Exile in South Africa. He was replaced by his protégé President Rene Preval who was governing the nation when the earthquake struck the overpopulated capital city of Port-au-Prince, where the displaced African population of the rural areas had migrated to in search of the industrial jobs promised by the neoliberal policies of the Bill Clinton administration.

Bois Caïman

Since 1804, the political history of Haiti under the guise of the Affranchis mulattoes only sparingly captures its socio-political significance in a world capitalist world-system initially constituted by enslaving, marginalizing, and colonizing people of African descent. It renders insignificant the purposive-rationality of the African masses. In other words, Haiti's political history captures the agential initiatives of the Affranchis, who owe their political power to the marginalized agential initiatives of the enslaved Africans, who met at Bois Caïman, and Jean-Jacques Dessalines.

At Bois Caïman, as previously mentioned, the Jamaican-born houngan Boukman Dutty initiated the Haitian Revolution on August 14, 1791 when he presided over a vodou ceremony in the area, which is located in the mountainous Northern corridors of the island. Accompanied by

a woman taken by the spirits of the loas, gods, they cut the throat of a black pig and had all the participants in attendance drink the blood. According to Haitian traditions, Boukman and the participants swore two things to the loas present in the woman if they would grant them success in their quest for liberty against the French. First, they would never allow for inequality on the island; second, they would serve the loas and not the white man's god "which inspires him with crime:"

Bon Dje ki fè la tè. Ki fè soley ki klere nou enro. Bon Dje ki soulve lanmè. Ki fè gronde loray. Bon Dje nou ki gen zorey pou tande. Ou ki kache nan niaj. Kap gade nou kote ou ye la. Ou we tout sa blan fè nou sibi. Dje blan yo mande krim. Bon Dje ki nan nou an vle byen fè. Bon Dje nou an ki si bon, ki si jis, li ordone vanjans. Se li kap kondui branou pou nou ranpote la viktwa. Se li kap ba nou asistans. Nou tout fet pou nou jete potre dje Blan yo ki swaf dlo lan zye. Koute vwa la libète k ap chante lan kè nou. The god who created the sun which gives us light, who rouses the waves and rules the storm, though hidden in the clouds, he watches us. He sees all that the white man does. The god of the white man inspires him with crime, but our god calls upon us to do good works. Our god who is good to us orders us to revenge our wrongs. He will direct our arms and aid us. Throw away the symbol of the god of

the whites who has so often caused us to weep, and listen to the voice of liberty, which speaks in the hearts of us all (Buck Morss, 2009).

That night the slaves revolted first at Gallifet Plantation, then across the Northern Plains. Toussaint L' Ouverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines would join the rebellion after Boukman was captured and beheaded by the French. And as the proverbial saying posits, the rest is history. Under the African Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who crowned himself emperor for life, Haiti became the first black republic in the world in 1804 and the second republic after the United States of America in the Western Hemisphere. Dessalines, instead of reproducing the agricultural slave system the French established with their sugar plantations, essentially nationalized the land. He first redistributed some of the land among the black masses, who setup independent small farms, as they had in Africa, where they were able to provide for their own sustenance. Second, he used the rest of the land to produce sugar for the global market by conscripting the men to either work on the state owned sugar plantations or serve in the Haitian army. (It should be mentioned that Dessalines refused to sell the sugar to the French, and would only sell to Britain , Spain, and the United States).

Against the Master/Slave Dialectic Traditional interpretations of the Haitian revolution and it's aftermaths attempt

to understand it's denouement through the sociopolitical effects of the French Revolution when the National Constituent Assembly (*Assemblée Nationale Constituante*) of France passed la Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen or the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in August of 1789 (Buck Morss, 2009). The understanding from this perspective is that the slaves, many of whom could not read or write French, understood the principles, philosophical and political principles of the Age of Enlightenment, set forth in the declaration and therefore yearned to be like their white masters, i.e., freemen seeking liberty, equality, and fraternity, the rallying cry of the French Revolution. Although, historically this understanding holds true for the mulattoes or Affranchis who used the language of the declaration to push forth their efforts to gain liberty, equality, fraternity with their white counterparts, this position is not an accurate representation for the slaves who met at Bois Caïman and Jean-Jacques Dessalines.

In the late eighteenth century, the Affranchis pushed forth for liberty, equality, and fraternity with their white counterparts at the expense of the enslaved Africans who were not only discriminated against by whites but by the Affranchis and mulatto elites as well. In fact, what role should mulattoes play in the Revolution is at the heart of a bitter disagreement between Toussaint and Dessalines (James, 1989; Buck-Morss, 2009). The latter, given the brutality he experienced as

a first generation Haitian slave, which stood in contradistinction to Toussaint's experience as a free Affranchis, wanted to kill many of the free and mulatto Affranchis along with the whites because he (Dessalines) felt they played a role in their yearning to be like their white counterparts in oppressing the enslaved African masses and given the opportunity they (Affranchis) would reproduce the slavery system on the island; Toussaint, however, believed that their (Affranchis) technical and governing skills would be sorely needed to rebuild the country after the revolution and the end of white rule on the island. Although Dessalines's position would become dominant after the capture of Toussaint, his assassination by a plot between the mulatto, Alexander Pétion and Henri Christophe, would see to it that the Affranchis's purposive-rationality for equality of opportunity, distribution, and recognition with their white counterparts would come to historically represent the ideals of the Haitian quest for independence and nationhood. This purposive-rationality of the Affranchis is, however, a Western liberal dialectical understanding of the events and the Affranchis's sociopolitical and economic power positions on the island.

The events at Bois Caïman and Jean-Jacques Dessalines's actions, I want to suggest here, do not represent this attempt to fit the social agency of the African participants of Bois Caïman within this master/slave dialectical thinking or the universal history of the West as

represented in the praxis of the Affranchis. Instead, the events at Bois Caïman and Jean-Jacques Dessalines's actions, represent a rejection by the African participants of white culture, economy, and god for the actualization of an African ethos as a "class-for-itself," a group of people with their own gods, economy, and culture, who rejected the inhumanity of the whites and their gods. It is this postmodern attempt to (re) constitute an African ethos of socioeconomic liberation into the eighteenth-century world, while rejecting the inhumanity of whites, their culture, economic-system, and god that Pat Robertson refers to as a "pact to the devil." The difference between what the Africans at Bois Caïman and Jean-Jacques Dessalines wanted and the aspirations of the mulattoes or Affranchis can be summed up through a parallel or complimentary analysis of the dialectical master/slave relationship of the black American experience with their white masters in America.

Discussion and Conclusions

Black Americans subjectified/objectified in the "Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism" of American society were completely subjectified and subjugated on account of race and class positions (Mocombe, 2004, 2009). W.E.B Du Bois relying on the racial and national ideology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century theoretically, enframed by Hegel's master/slave dialectic, conceived of the ambivalence that arose

in him, as a result of the "class racism" (Étienne Balibar's term) of American society, as a double consciousness: "two souls," "two thoughts," in the Negro whose aim is to merge these two thoughts into one distinct way of being, i.e., to be whole again.

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, —a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, —an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, —this longing to attain self conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of

white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face. This, then, is the end of his striving: to be a coworker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, to husband and use his best powers and his latent genius (Du Bois, 1995 [1903], pp. 45-47).

This double-consciousness Du Bois alludes to, in this famous passage of his work *The Souls of Black Folk*, is not a metaphor for the racial duality of black American life in America. Instead, it speaks to Du Bois's, as a black liberal bourgeois Protestant man, ambivalence about the society because it prevents him from exercising his true American consciousness because of the society's anti-liberal and discriminatory practices, which over time forced Du Bois to adopt "pan-African communism" against his early beliefs in liberal bourgeois Protestantism (Mocombe, 2009; Hare, 1991).

Contrary to Du Bois's later "pan-African communist" message against assimilation, however, to make themselves whole the majority of black Americans did not yearn for or establish (by averting their gaze away from the eye of power or their white masters) a new object formation or totality, based on the "message" of

their people, which spoke against racial and class stratification and would have produced heterogeneity into the American capitalist bourgeois world-system; instead, since there was no other “message” but that of the society which turned and represented the “original” African message of their people into inarticulate, animalistic backward gibberish, they (blacks) turned their gaze back upon the eye of power (through protest and success in their endeavors) for recognition as “speaking subjects” of the society. Power hesitantly responded by allowing some of them (the hybrid modern “other”) to partake in the order of things, which gave rise to the black identity, the liberal black bourgeoisie or hybrids, which delimits the desired agential moments of the social structure for all blacks (Frazier, 1939, 1957, 1968; Myrdal, 1944; Kardiner, 1962 [1951]; Hare, 1991; Moynihan, 1965; Murray, 1984; Mocombe, 2009). Thus the black American as a structurally differentiated “class-in-itself” (black underclass) within the American protestant bourgeois master/slave order did not reconstitute American liberal bourgeois capitalist society by recursively organizing and reproducing their Africanisms in American society as theorists of the adaptive-vitality school suggest with the notion that black protest against slavery was a product of both their Africanisms and their Americanisms (Asante, 1988, 1990a, 1990b; Billingsley, 1968, 1970, 1993; Blassingame, 1972; Gilroy, 1993; Gutman, 1976; Herskovits, 1958 [1941]; Holloway, 1990a, 1990b; Levine,

1977; Nobles, 1987), instead black protest for equality of opportunity, distribution, and recognition is a product of the black Americans’ internalization of the liberal bourgeois Protestant social norms and values of the American Protestant capitalist social structure. Thus black protest integrated the black subjects, whose ideals and practices (acquired in ideological apparatuses, i.e., schools, law, churches (black and white)), as speaking subjects, were that of the larger society, i.e., the protestant ethic, into the American Protestant capitalist social structure’s exploitative and oppressive order—an order which promotes a debilitating performance principle actualized through calculating rationality, which may result in economic gain for its own sake for a few predestined individuals (Cohen, 2002; Mocombe, 2009).

The black American, like the early Du Bois of *the Souls* prior to his conversion to pan-African communism, in a word, became like their white masters within the master/slave dialectic, which constituted their historical experiences, a liberal bourgeoisie seeking wealth and status like their white counterparts. The same can be said for the Affranchis of Haiti, who, with their adoption of the (economic, social, and political) liberalism of the blancs on the island, sought for equality of opportunity, distribution, and recognition with their blanc counterparts, which essentially meant economic wealth and power at the expense of the enslaved black African masses on the island. This

was not the aim of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Boukman, and the other participants at Bois Caïman, however. The former, Affranchis, like their black American liberal bourgeois counterparts, wanted equality of opportunity, distribution, and recognition from, and with, their former white masters by recursively organizing and reproducing their (the slave masters) liberal agential moments; the latter, Boukman, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and the Africans of Bois Caïman did not, but instead sought freedom to practice their traditional African ways of life against the purposive-rationality of their former white masters. In fact, after independence Dessalines allowed the masses to own small plots of land in the provinces where traditional forms of African agricultural techniques and organization were utilized by the people to provide for their own sustenance. This process of Africanization would be undermined by the Affranchis or mulatto elites, following their assassination of Dessalines, who once again (re) integrated the Haitian economy into the global capitalist economy by first reinstating the (sugar) plantation type agricultural system among the masses so as to pay the 90 million francs to France for the revolution. Second, there was a simultaneous movement to industrialize the island by accepting, forcefully, foreign direct investment from the West, America in particular, who undermined the agricultural economy of the island through their subsidized agribusinesses, which forced Haiti to seek both foreign direct

investment and food from the West to the detriment to their own agricultural productive capacities.

Hence, the forceful integration of the Haitian economy into the global capitalist economic world-system by France, America, and the mulatto elites seeking wealth and status gave rise to the deagriculturalization of Haiti for cheap industrial and service (tourism) work that led to the mass migration of the Haitian peasantry to the overpopulated capital city of Port-au-Prince looking for work, and a decline of food production on the island, which was fulfilled by American agribusinesses. Interestingly enough, contemporarily, the push by the mulatto elites is for cheap industrial jobs in the city of Port-au-Prince, and tourism on the agricultural lands abandoned by the peasantry when they migrated to the city further incorporating Haiti into the global capitalist world-system as they will remain dependent on importing their food supplies, from American agribusinesses, which the labor force will still be unable to afford given their meager wages.

This process of integration into the global economy that led to Haiti's misery began with the descendants of the Affranchis or the mulatto elites seeking wealth and status with their white counterparts at the expense of the African masses on the island seeking simply freedom and not equality of opportunity, distribution, and recognition with blancs or the mulatto elites. They (the African masses)

already possessed equality of opportunity, distribution, and recognition under Dessalines's nationalization system. The Affranchis and the mulatto did not, however, and sought to use the resources (land, labor, and capital from foreign direct investment) of the island to achieve the wealth and status of their white counterparts in France and America.

Essentially, the Frankfurt school's "Negative Dialectics" represents the means by which the Du Bois of *The Souls*, the majority of liberal bourgeois black Americans, and the Affranchis of Haiti confronted their historical situation. The difference between the "negative dialectics" of Du Bois of *The Souls*, the majority of liberal bourgeois black Americans, the Affranchis, and the discourse or purposive-rationality of the enslaved Africans of Bois Caïman is subtle, but the consequences are enormously obvious. For the Frankfurt school, "[t]o proceed dialectically means to think in contradictions, for the sake of the contradiction once experienced in the thing, and against that contradiction. A contradiction in reality, it is a contradiction against reality" (Adorno, 1973 [1966] p. 145). This is the ongoing dialectic they call "Negative Dialectics:"

Totality is to be opposed by convicting it of nonidentity with itself—of the nonidentity it denies, according to its own concept. Negative dialectics is thus tied to the supreme categories of identitarian philosophy as its point

of departure. Thus, too, it remains false according to identitarian logic: it remains the thing against which it is conceived. It must correct itself in its critical course—a course affecting concepts which in negative dialectics are formally treated as if they came "first" for it, too (Adorno, 1973 [1966] p. 147).

This position, as Adorno points out, is problematic in that the identitarian class convicting the totality of which it is apart remains the thing against which it is conceived. As in the case of black Americans and the Affranchis, their "negative dialectics," their awareness of the contradictions of the heteronomous racial capitalist order did not foster a reconstitution of that order but a request that the order rid itself of a particular contradiction and allow their participation in the order, devoid of that particular contradiction, which prevented them from identifying with the totality, i.e., that all men are created equal except the enslaved black American or the mulatto. The end result of this particular protest was in the reconfiguration of society (or the totality) in which those who exercised its reified consciousness, irrespective of skin-color, could partake in its order and obtain wealth and status. In essence, the contradiction, as interpreted by the black Americans, and just the same the Affranchis, was not in the "pure" identity of the heteronomous order, which is reified as reality and existence as such, but in the praxis (as though praxis and

structure are distinct) of the individuals, i.e., institutional regulators or power elites, who only allowed the participation of blacks within the order of things because they were “speaking subjects” (i.e., hybrids, who recursively organized and reproduced the agential moments of the social structure) as opposed to “silent natives” (i.e., the enslaved Africans of Bois Caïman). And herein rests the problem with attempting to reestablish an order simply based on what appears to be the contradictory practices of a reified consciousness. For in essence the totality is not “opposed by convicting it of nonidentity with itself—of the nonidentity it denies, according to its own concept,” but on the contrary, the particular is opposed by the constitutive subjects for not exercising its total identity. In the case of liberal black bourgeois America, the totality, American racial capitalist society, was opposed through a particularity, i.e., racism, which stood against their bourgeois identification with the whole. In such a case, the whole remains superior to its particularity, and it functions as such. The same holds true for the Affranchis of Haiti, but not for Boukman and the other participants of Bois Caïman who went beyond the master/slave dialectic.

In order to go beyond this “mechanical” dichotomy, i.e., whole/part, subject/object, master/slave, universal/particular, society/individual, etc., by which society or more specifically the object formation of modernity up till this point in the human archaeological record has been constitu-

ted, so that society can be reconstituted wherein “Being” (Dasein) is nonsubjective and nonobjective, “organic” in the Habermasian (1984 [1981]; 1987) sense, it is necessary, as Adorno points out, that the totality (which is not a “thing in itself”) be opposed, not however, as he sees it, “by convicting it of nonidentity with itself” as in the case of black America and the Affranchis or mulattoes, but by identifying it as a nonidentity identity that does not have the “natural right” to dictate identity in an absurd world with no inherent meaning or purpose except those which are constructed by social actors operating within a sacred metaphysic. This is not what happened in black America or with the Affranchis or mulattoes of Haiti, but I am suggesting that this is what took place with the participants of Bois Caïman within the 18th century Enlightenment discourse of the whites and Affranchis.

The liberal black American and the Affranchis by identifying with the totality, which Adorno rightly argues is a result of the “universal rule of forms,” the idea that “a consciousness that feels impotent, that has lost confidence in its ability to change the institutions and their mental images, will reverse the conflict into identification with the aggressor” (Adorno, 1973 [1966]p. 94), reconciled their double consciousness, i.e., the ambivalence that arises as a result of the conflict between subjectivity and forms (objectivity), by becoming “hybrid” Americans or mulattoes desiring to exercise

the “pure” identity of the American and French totality and reject the contempt to which they were and are subject. The contradiction of slavery in the face of equality—the totality not identifying with itself—was seen as a manifestation of individual practices, since subjectively they were part of the totality, and not an absurd way of life inherent in the logic of the totality. Hence, their protest was against the practices of the totality, not the totality itself, since that would mean denouncing the consciousness that made them whole, which prevented them from achieving the wealth and status of their white counterparts. On the contrary, Boukman and the participants at Bois Caïman decentered or “convicted” the totality of French modernity not for not identifying with itself, but as an adverse “sacred-profaned” cultural possibility against their own “God-ordained” possibility (alternative object formation), which they were attempting to exercise in the world. This was the pact the participants of Bois Caïman made with their loas, Gods, when they swore to neither allow inequality on the island, nor worship the god’s of the whites “who has so often caused us to weep.” They were simply seeking freedom to exercise their traditional African ways of being-in-the-world against the debilitating effects of an emerging global capitalist liberal world-system constituted by the physical labor of the world’s people of color.

Haiti has never been able to live out this pact, however, given the liberal bourgeois

Affranchis's, backed by their former colonizers, America and France, claims to positions of economic and political power positions, which have resulted in the passage of modern economic rules and laws that have integrated Haiti into the global capitalist economy and caused once again the majority of the people to weep in dire poverty, while the Affranchis and mulatto elites gain economic gain so as to live like their white (blanc) counterparts. So Pat Robertson, if we are to use his metaphysical discourse, is essentially wrong. Haiti has "been cursed by one thing after the other" not because they "swore a pact to the devil," but because, in keeping with the religious signification of Robertson's position, the former enslaved Africans have not instituted the pact they swore to their Gods, loas, at Bois Caïman because the mulatto elites have instituted wage-slavery on the island through the integration of Haiti into the global capitalist world-system

under American hegemony. This has led to a class disparity in Haiti in which 90-95 percent of the population live on less than one US dollar a day, and as a result they are unable to provide for their families because the wage industries provided by foreign capital from the US pay them as such so that the mulatto elites can achieve wealth and status in the global capitalist world-system at their (black masses) expense.

So the by-products of the structural forces promulgated by the global capitalist world-system under American hegemony are divinely interpreted by Pat Robertson as punishment for the Africans choosing two-hundred years ago to revolt and break away from its debilitating class effects to establish their own divinity and social system. It is for this arrogance, for positioning the loas of the enslaved Africans onto the historical landscape that was and is the Haitian Revolution

and its product, République d'Haïti, that those, like Pat Robertson, of the Western world who have adopted the historical manifestation of the Jewish God under the guise of the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, malign Haiti and the Haitian people. The African masses of the island are directed by a structuring structure grounded in their vodou spiritualism—which stands against and is evaluated by a white global Protestant capitalist social structure "that looks on in amused contempt and pity" at their plight, which to a large extent rests on the desires of the Affranchis for liberty, equality, and fraternity with their former white masters, France—in search of freedom in a world in which the mulatto elites are seeking wealth and equality of recognition with their white counterparts at their (African masses) expense as they (African masses) labor for them and foreign interest so that they (mulatto elites) can obtain that wealth and status.

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