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Philippe R. Girard, *The Slaves Who Defeated Napoleon: Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian War of Independence, 1801-1804*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011. ix + 444 pp. Maps, tables, figures, notes, bibliographic essay, glossary, and index. \$45.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN 978-0-8173-1732-4; \$45.00 U.S. (eb). ISBN 978-0-8173-8540-8.

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The Slaves Who Vanquished Napoleon, or the Officers Who Defeated Themselves?

In his famous 1995 essay, “An Unthinkable History: The Haitian Revolution as a Non-Event,” Michel-Rolph Trouillot considered why the Haitian Revolution had been neglected for so long by Western historians. He argued that racism was so prevalent among eighteenth-century Europeans, including the *philosophes*, that they could not conceive of slaves as thinking “men” capable of organized revolt. Finding the Haitian Revolution to be “unthinkable,” they therefore sought to ignore it. Trouillot added that even if modern Western historians do not share their predecessors’ overt racism, they have often treated the Revolution in a comparable way. Trouillot identified two tropes in modern historiography on Haiti by foreigners: “formulas of erasure” and “formulas of banalization.” Where the former omitted the Haitian Revolution from history books, the second acknowledged the Revolution but dismissed its significance.[1]

In the seventeen years since Trouillot published this essay, the field of Haitian revolutionary studies has changed considerably.[2] For one thing, it is no longer true that Western scholars ignore the Haitian Revolution. The number of works on the subject by non-Haitians has exploded; it has also become a staple part of college courses on the French Revolution and on world history, at least in Anglophone countries. The awarding in 2010 of both major North American French-history book prizes (SFHS’s David Pinkney Prize and the AHA’s J. Russell Major Prize) to Jeremy Popkin’s *You Are All Free: The Haitian Revolution and the Abolition of Slavery* (which followed Laurent Dubois’s winning the Pinkney in 2005 for *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804*) signaled unmistakably that Haiti and the French Caribbean are now viewed as integral to French history. Foreigners’ attitudes toward Haiti’s revolution have changed in other ways. No longer is there a chasm between sympathetic readings of the event by Haitian scholars and hostile interpretations by foreigners. Non-Haitians such as Carolyn Fick, Franklin Knight, David Geggus and Laurent Dubois have increasingly acknowledged the Revolution’s global historical significance. As Dubois wrote in 2004, “[B]y creating a society in which all people, of all colors, were granted freedom and citizenship, the Haitian Revolution forever transformed the world. It was... a crucial moment in the history of democracy, one that laid the foundation for the continuing struggles for human rights everywhere.”[3]

Philippe Girard’s new book is in some ways a backlash against the new scholarship on Haiti. Girard is decidedly less sympathetic toward the Haitian Revolution’s leaders than are many other recent chroniclers of the event. He believes that heroic analyses of the Revolution’s significance have gone too far; in his analysis, the Revolution’s leaders were not motivated by ideology, but by greed. Arguing that other works on Haiti have been colored by their authors’ “racial, political or national bias,” Girard lays

out his own subject position: “As a twenty-first-century scholar, I have little patience for the racism and labor exploitation that underpinned Bonaparte’s colonial project in Saint-Domingue and can only rejoice at the thought that the former slaves won the war. As a white native of Guadeloupe, however, I tend to view French imperialism in a more positive light than is customary among my academic colleagues, especially those of Haitian descent. As a thirtysomething educated French male, I am also prone to empathize with the young officers who died so far from the *patrie*, when other observers might look at them as greedy, oversexed monsters” (pp. 9-10). Such an emphasis on the positive aspects of French imperialism may raise eyebrows among specialists in French colonial history. While recent work on France’s second empire has acknowledged that colonialism could benefit some colonial subjects while exploiting others, few historians have made a similar case for the brutal slave society of Saint-Domingue. Nevertheless, though some aspects of Girard’s book are contrarian in ways that may not convince others in the field, his book has a number of valuable features, and is an essential contribution to scholarship on Haiti’s War of Independence.

Girard’s goals are laid out clearly in the book’s introduction. He aims to present a “comprehensive, definitive history of the Haitian war of independence from an international perspective” (p. 7), in contrast to studies focused on the “minutiae of guerrilla warfare” (p. 8). He seeks to use what he calls “the latest tools of the historian’s craft, multiarchival research in particular” and to focus on the Revolution’s understudied final years (p. 7). Girard also suggests that other studies have treated race simplistically. He says that when he began his research, “I assumed that...[o]n one side would be black slaves yearning for freedom and nationhood; on the other would be racist white Frenchmen eager to preserve slavery and colonial rule” (p. 9). Girard seeks to minimize race as a factor in the Revolution: he argues that it would be better “to cast aside all attempts at categorization and study revolutionary Saint-Domingue as the sum of hundreds of thousands of individual histories” (p. 9).

In addition to these goals, the study has several underlying themes. Scholars have long held that Napoleon sent an expedition to Saint-Domingue in 1801-1802, led by General Leclerc, to depose Toussaint Louverture and to reinstate slavery. Girard seeks to complicate this view by suggesting that the restoration of slavery was contingent; the decision was made on the ground by the expedition’s leaders rather than being a definitive order from Napoleon. Furthermore, Girard suggests that Toussaint helped bring his fate upon himself through impudence and “duplicitous behavior” (p. 43), without which Napoleon would have allowed Saint-Domingue to remain free and French. Girard highlights numerous other contingencies in the expedition, and argues that there were several missed opportunities at which either Bonaparte or Louverture could have averted war. Moreover, Girard finds, the expedition suffered from poor planning, and from Leclerc’s incompetent leadership. Finally, he aims to demonstrate that the Revolution’s leaders were at least as motivated by greed as were French planters and military leaders, and that their decisions lie at the root of Haiti’s poverty.

Girard’s narrative is organized in helpful fashion, with nineteen chapters breaking down the War of Independence season by season. Chapter one (“The Black Napoléon: Toussaint and the 1801 Constitution”) examines the writing of this document. The author suggests that Louverture’s decision to write a constitution for the colony was an imprudent one which forced Napoleon’s hand: “Bonaparte would surely react with fury...and send a punitive expedition” (p. 28). Chapter two, cleverly titled “The White Toussaint: Bonaparte’s Decision to Invade Saint-Domingue,” extends the arguments Girard made in a 2009 *FHS* article.^[4] Girard denies that Bonaparte launched the expedition to appease frustrated planters and his wife Josephine. He finds that many planters were pragmatic and had reconciled themselves to emancipation as a *fait accompli*. Girard maintains that Napoleon and his officials wanted to depose Toussaint, not in order to restore slavery, but only because he was acting too independently. Girard also suggests that Napoleon saw Louverture as a kindred spirit and that Bonaparte’s and Louverture’s plans for Saint-Domingue were similar. If Napoleon had managed Toussaint’s ambitions more skillfully, Girard argues, “the two men could have sealed an alliance immensely beneficial to them and to their people” (p. 41).

In chapter three, Girard turns to the planning for the Leclerc expedition. He highlights Leclerc's inexperience and how his "utter ignorance of colonial affairs made him overconfident" (p. 61). Girard also emphasizes the many "logistical, political and epidemiological factors" that Bonaparte overlooked, from supplies to yellow fever (p. 65). Chapter four looks at additional contingencies as the expedition crossed the Atlantic. In addition, Girard asserts that Louverture misled his people about Napoleon's intentions: "Louverture had refused to publicize Bonaparte's many commitments to emancipation and planned to appeal to the laboring classes by claiming that the French had come to restore slavery" (p. 81).

In chapters five and six, Girard explores other contingencies affecting the expedition once it arrived. Louverture's sons, who had been studying in the metropole, accompanied the expedition, and Louverture was eager to see them. However, Leclerc refused to "give peace a chance" by letting the boys disembark, out of overconfidence that he could capture the island rapidly and did not need to please Louverture (p. 86). The notion that his sons were being held hostage aggravated Louverture's suspicion that the expedition was hostile. Girard speaks of Toussaint's "taste for deception" and how he tricked Leclerc in battle (p. 88). Bonaparte and Leclerc had anticipated an easy victory, but Louverture drew their forces into a protracted struggle. Girard describes the burning of Le Cap as the beginning of a "scorched-earth policy" by which Haiti's leaders destroyed their wealth rather than allow it to be seized by the French (p. 92). He also looks at other aspects of Leclerc's problems, including the foolishly hostile way in which he treated American merchants from whom he desperately needed supplies. Girard further emphasizes that Napoleon's inept planning left Leclerc's men ill-equipped to survive sustained fighting.

Leclerc's spring 1802 campaign forms the subject of chapter seven. French soldiers assumed that they could easily defeat an "incompetent rabble" of ex-slaves, but they soon found themselves fighting in a challenging environment (p. 113). Girard notes that Leclerc's army included former slaves who believed that the French would not restore slavery and wanted to "be on the victor's side" (p. 122). Toussaint's forces included some white Frenchmen, as well as black women. Girard is eager not to portray the fighting as a racist war begun by whites: "the war was a complex tangle in which an individual's ideals and ambitions were as significant as his racial affiliation" (p. 123). He asserts that it was the "rebels" (as he terms Toussaint's troops) who began racialist violence rather than Leclerc's army. The unfortunate soldiers who arrived from France had a "color-blind outlook," since most had "probably never seen a person of color until they embarked." They were therefore shocked by "atrocities against white civilians" (p. 127).

In chapters eight, nine and ten, Girard focuses on the period from May to August 1802. In chapter eight, he lays out what he calls the "three Gs" that attracted French officers to Saint-Domingue: "gold, girls, and glory" (p. 142). As the officers "began a concerted assault on the virtue of the colonists' wives," disillusionment set in amongst planters (p. 141). Girard notes that metropolitan officers also dreamed of the profits they could earn if slavery was restored, and set out to acquire plantations through any possible means. Leclerc had one of his few victories at this time, tricking Louverture into captivity and exile. Chapter nine examines the outbreak of yellow fever among French troops in summer 1802. Girard argues that this epidemic could have been mitigated with better planning and more supplies. Greedy officers embezzled money that should have gone to hospitals, in order to decorate their residences with fancy chandeliers. Chapter ten turns to Leclerc's efforts in summer 1802 to confiscate all weapons on the island, and to the uprising this effort sparked. Even while insisting that Leclerc still did not intend to restore slavery, Girard acknowledges that the timing of the disarmament campaign—which coincided with an effort to get former slaves back to work as "free cultivators" on sugar plantations—made many fear imminent re-enslavement. The arrival of news from Guadeloupe of the French army's brutal reimposition of slavery there only aggravated the situation.

Chapter eleven examines the mounting number of defections in the French army in fall 1802, by men of mixed race and others. As the French grew more suspicious of disloyalty, Leclerc and his men “ramp[ed] up violence” and atrocities (p. 211). Girard argues that the more dejected Leclerc became (first by the campaign’s failures and then by the terrifying realization that he was succumbing to yellow fever), the more “pitiless” he became (p. 219). In the last weeks of his life, he had “genocidal plans” to massacre nearly all of Saint-Domingue’s blacks, but died before he could bring them to fruition (p. 222). In chapter twelve, about the winter of 1802-1803, Girard turns to Leclerc’s successor, the even more ruthless Donatien-Marie-Joseph de Vimeur de Rochambeau. Unlike Leclerc, Rochambeau was eager to restore slavery immediately. Girard details the French army’s “notorious” crimes during this period (p. 241), which nevertheless proved ineffective. Not only did starving French soldiers end up eating combat dogs for lack of other provisions, but they began to face a more unified opponent; and Louverture’s lieutenant Jean-Jacques Dessalines began consolidating his control over rival factions.

The events of the winter and spring of 1803, as Dessalines added still more factions to his command, are analyzed in chapters thirteen and fourteen. Though Girard says that Dessalines fought his rivals “inglorious[ly]” (p. 256), he “succeeded beyond anyone’s expectations” (p. 253). He also notes that Rochambeau massacred mixed-race officers and sexually assaulted their wives, and that he likely aimed to exterminate all the people of mixed race in the colony. Even at this stage of the war, Girard finds contingent factors at work. He maintains that Dessalines’s men would not have declared independence and could have maintained their allegiance to France if only Napoleon had disavowed Rochambeau’s actions.[5] Girard also looks at Toussaint’s captivity and death, and at Napoleon’s dawning realization that Saint-Domingue was lost. “Damn sugar, damn coffee, damn colonies!” Bonaparte is said to have exclaimed (p. 272).

Chapter fifteen addresses the outbreak of war with Britain and its implications for Rochambeau’s men. The author examines Dessalines’s efforts to form alliances with Britain and the United States. Although Dessalines did not succeed in either effort, he benefitted from the blockade that Britain imposed on France, as well as from British merchants’ willingness to sell to him surreptitiously. In the next chapter, Girard discusses “Life in Besieged French Towns” in the summer of 1803. Amidst shortages, many colonists died of starvation or fled the island. The rebels completed their “scorched-earth campaign” to deprive Rochambeau’s men of sugar profits; Girard argues that this continued the “colony’s economic death spiral” (pp. 293-294). Girard also emphasizes the horrifying corruption of Rochambeau’s army, which demanded large sums from white merchants and executed those who did not pay.

The book’s final chapters trace the end of French rule in the colony. They cover Dessalines’s capture of the final towns controlled by the French (chapter seventeen), and the early days of independence (chapter eighteen). In chapter nineteen, he tracks the migrations of fleeing white planters and soldiers, as well as Dessalines’s efforts to conquer the Spanish side of the island. The chapter also surveys relations between France and Haiti until the 1825 indemnity agreement (in which France finally recognized Haitian independence, but in exchange for a 150-million-franc indemnity).

In his conclusion, Girard re-emphasizes his main themes and nuances others. He repeats his assertion that race was less important in the Revolution than scholars have assumed. He also reiterates his view that modern Haitian poverty stems from the plantation-burning tactics of Haiti’s leaders and because Dessalines eliminated the white managerial class. “Today,” the author laments, “Haiti, the fabled Pearl of the Antilles, is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and a net importer of sugar” (p. 344). Qualifying somewhat his formulations earlier in the book, Girard concludes that “[r]estoring slavery was probably not one of Bonaparte’s immediate objectives” (p. 343).

Girard’s book is written in a gripping style, with vivid language. Girard has a gift for lively turns of phrase, and shows with great skill the twists and turns of the war. His book is also impressively researched, incorporating archival documents from around the world, written in French, English,

Spanish and Kreyòl. The most valuable aspect of the book is the level of detail it provides about each phase of the war. This overview is more thorough than any other book in English; the summary offered here only scratches the surface of his findings.[6] Girard's discussion of how Napoleon might have been willing to leave emancipation intact in Saint-Domingue is a useful nuancing of existing scholarship; his analysis of Leclerc's failings, and of the differences between Leclerc and Rochambeau, is also extremely helpful. Another of the book's strengths is its emphasis on contingent factors. Here, Girard adds to Jeremy Popkin's findings about the central role of contingency in Haiti's revolution.[7] The bibliographic essay at the end of the volume is also useful.

Despite the study's many valuable features, scholars are likely to take issue with a number of its arguments. Specialists on Haitian history have voiced discomfort with Girard's perspective before, most notably in J. Michael Dash's 2008 review of one of Girard's earlier books.[8] In some ways, Girard's thinking has changed in recent years. For instance, he offers a more nuanced position on the killings of whites ordered by Dessalines than in his previous work. In a 2005 article, Girard termed the struggles of Haiti's slaves against their former slaveowners a "genocide" against whites.[9] Here, he seems to back away from this claim, and focuses on French atrocities as much as Haitian ones. He concedes that Dessalines did not seek to kill all whites, and that those he did massacre "were killed not because they were white, but because they were French" (p. 324). This evolution brings him closer to scholars such as Geggus and Dubois who have suggested that if anyone's plans can be classified as genocidal, it would be those of the French.[10]

Nevertheless, Girard's thinking on other issues, such as the origins of Haitian poverty, still differs sharply from others in the field. In contrast to Girard's position that it was Haitian leaders' decisions that caused Haiti's post-independence hardships, most scholars have emphasized the foreign reaction to the Haitian Revolution. They point to how other nations strove to isolate Haiti, not to mention the crippling effect of the 150-million-franc indemnity.[11] Girard's lament for Saint-Domingue's lost glory as the "pearl of the Antilles" (which echoes the framework of his earlier book on Haiti) is also problematic.[12] As Jean-Germain Gros has written, "[T]he 'glorious' past of Haiti was not in fact so for most Haitians, who were forcibly plucked from their environment and thrown into the maelstrom of the most brutal form of slavery, and this abduction is partly responsible for Haiti's terrible present." [13]

Scholars are also likely to take issue with Girard's treatment of Toussaint Louverture. Though Girard may have found evidence that Napoleon was not hell-bent on reimposing slavery, it is unclear why he accuses Toussaint of lying to his followers when he suggested that Bonaparte wanted to re-enslave them. Despite Bonaparte's lofty pronouncements about "the sacred principles of liberty and equality" (p. 46), Napoleon never extended the National Convention's 1794 decree abolishing slavery to colonies like Mauritius. He was also perfectly willing to reimpose slavery elsewhere in the Caribbean. Indeed, as Laurent Dubois has noted, Toussaint "had reason to be concerned" that France would revoke emancipation.[14] In addition, Girard sometimes seems to echo too closely the sources he used which were written by whites. For instance, he refers to Toussaint as "duplicitous" and "disloyal," without considering whether Toussaint had reason to disregard orders from metropolitan officials, or to try to mislead them.

More generally, scholars are likely to be skeptical of Girard's argument that "monetary gain and politics have often trumped race as the underlying issue of Haitian history" (p. 342). While it is certainly helpful to remind readers that skin color was not always determinative of alliances, Girard's effort to deemphasize ideologies of liberation—and to substitute greed as Toussaint's and Dessalines's main motivator—will likely be viewed as an attempt to deflate the reputations of these leaders and, by extension, the importance of the Revolution itself. Other scholars have certainly questioned the centrality of race in Haitian history, and have had spirited debates about whether it or class is a more useful lens of analysis.[15] However, to suggest that race was of such limited importance that it would

be better to avoid it and instead “study revolutionary Saint-Domingue as the sum of hundreds of thousands of individual histories” (p. 9) will likely be viewed as overstated. Indeed, Girard’s depiction of Toussaint and Dessalines as men driven by greed, not principles, puts him squarely at odds with those scholars (such as Franklin Knight, Nick Nesbitt, Laurent Dubois and Susan Buck-Morss) who have argued for the Revolution’s philosophical radicalism.[16]

Ultimately, the book reveals less about “the slaves who defeated Napoleon” than about the French officers who lost to them. Girard wants to help a popular audience understand, as he puts it, how a group of “barefoot rebel slaves” defeated Bonaparte’s army (p. 345). But he is more successful at capturing colonists’ thinking than at reading sources against the grain to get at former slaves’ point of view. Some of Girard’s descriptions of ex-slaves sound dismissive (for instance, “Also needed were the specialized skills that eluded a coachman like Louverture [or] a tile-layer like Dessalines” [p. 21]). Girard also makes statements such as “[f]ormer slaves who had once believed their masters to be endowed with extraordinary powers had long since learned that theories of racial superiority were false” (p. 307), but without citing evidence that enslaved Africans had ever believed slaveowners to be racially superior. Ultimately, Girard’s interests lie more in diplomatic and military history than in postcolonial theory or history from below.[17]

In addition, Girard sometimes describes existing scholarship in an imprecise way. There is a disjuncture between the bibliographical essay at the book’s end, where Girard acknowledges the work that other specialists have done (see for instance p. 433, where he praises the work of others who have complicated Manichean ideas about race in the Revolution), and the book’s introduction, where he portrays himself as doing this work for the first time. If he has an academic audience in mind, it also seems strange to inform the reader that Toussaint Louverture was a slaveowner as if this is a new finding (p. 9); existing studies have already sought to demythologize Toussaint.[18]

The study thus needs to be read with care. Though the book’s extensive research and level of detail make it essential reading for anyone interested in the Haitian Revolution’s final years, scholars are likely to take issue with many of its overarching arguments. Still, Girard has highlighted the paucity of in-depth work on the Revolution’s final phase and his book will be a key point of departure for anyone turning to the topic in coming decades.

NOTES

[1] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “An Unthinkable History: The Haitian Revolution as a Non-Event,” in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1995), pp. 70-107.

[2] For a fuller analysis of recent historiography on Haiti, see Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, *Haitian History: New Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[3] Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 7. See also Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990); Franklin Knight, “The Haitian Revolution,” *American Historical Review* 105/1(2000): 103-115; and David P. Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

[4] Philippe R. Girard, “Napoléon Bonaparte and the Emancipation Issue in Saint-Domingue, 1799–1803,” *French Historical Studies* 32/4(Fall 2009): 587-618.

[5] Compare on this point Julia Gaffield, “Haiti and Jamaica in the Remaking of the Early Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 69/3(July 2012): 583-614, which suggests that

Dessalines's planning for independence was well advanced by summer 1803. For an extended discussion of Dessalines's diplomatic and commercial negotiations with Britain and the U.S., see Julia Gaffield, "'So Many Schemes in Agitation': The Haitian State and the Atlantic World" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2012).

[6] Important studies in French include Claude B. Auguste and Marcel B. Auguste, *L'expédition Leclerc, 1801-1803* (Port-au-Prince: H. Deschamps, 1985); Yves Bénot, *La démente coloniale sous Napoléon* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991); and Yves Bénot and Marcel Dorigny, eds., *Rétablissement de l'esclavage dans les colonies françaises, 1802: ruptures et continuités de la politique coloniale française (1800-1830)* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2003).

[7] See Jeremy D. Popkin, *You are All Free: The Haitian Revolution and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[8] J. Michael Dash, "The (Un)kindness of Strangers: Writing Haiti in the 21st Century," *Caribbean Studies* 36/2(2008): 171-178. Dash argued that Girard's perspective implied that "had the war of independence not occurred Haiti...would be like Martinique and Guadeloupe today, contentedly dependent on metropolitan largesse." Dash further contended that Girard's book "takes writing on Haiti to a new low" (p. 173). See also Charles Forsdick's comments in "Burst of Thunder, Stage Pitch Black": The Place of Haiti in US Inter-War Cultural Production," *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 15/1(2011): 7-18.

[9] Girard, "Caribbean Genocide: Racial War in Haiti, 1802-4," *Patterns of Prejudice* 39/2(2005): 138-161.

[10] See Geggus, "The Haitian Revolution in Atlantic Perspective," in Nicholas P. Canny and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World, c.1450-c.1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 544; and Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012), pp. 42-43.

[11] See the overview of scholarship on post-independence Haiti in Michel Hector and Laënnec Hurbon, eds., *Genèse de l'état haïtien (1804-1859)* (Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2009). See also the survey of scholarship on this question in Sepinwall, *Haitian History*, especially pp. 103-114 (and my own position on pp. 1-7).

[12] Girard, *Paradise Lost: Haiti's Tumultuous Journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World Hot Spot* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[13] Jean-Germain Gros, *State Failure, Underdevelopment, and Foreign Intervention in Haiti* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. xiv.

[14] Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*, p. 35; see also Jeremy Popkin's discussion of Napoleon's interest in "keeping his intentions concealed" (Popkin, *A Concise History of the Haitian Revolution* [Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012], p. 118).

[15] For an overview of this debate, see Matthew J. Smith, "From *Dessalines* to *Duvalier* Revisited: A Quarter-Century Retrospective," *Journal of Haitian Studies* 13/1(2007): 27-39.

[16] The book's jacket features a blurb by Dubois, but it focuses on the book's impressive research and detail rather than its interpretive framework. In his own scholarship, Dubois (and his Duke colleague, Deborah Jenson) have offered accounts of Dessalines that diverge sharply from Girard's. Where Girard argues that Dessalines was a "social nonentity," and was "feared and hated" but "not respected" (p. 248),

Dubois has called Dessalines someone who is “justly venerated” for his role in Haitian independence and who sought “to create a radically new order.” See Deborah Jenson, *Beyond the Slave Narrative: Politics, Sex, and Manuscripts in the Haitian Revolution* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011) on Dessalines’s “radically anticolonial ideology” (p. 85 and passim); Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*, pp. 48, 43; and Dubois, “Dessalines Toro d’Haïti,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 69/3 (July 2012): 541-548. See also Madison Smartt Bell’s forthcoming study of Dessalines; Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009); and Nick Nesbitt, *Universal Emancipation: the Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008).

[17] For an example of scholars using French sources creatively to understand slave experience, see Fick, *The Making of Haiti*.

[18] See Girard’s acknowledgement of work reevaluating Toussaint in his “Jean-Jacques Dessalines and the Atlantic System: A Reappraisal,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 69/3 (July 2012): 552n2.

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