PART ONE

1

Rituals of History

The child of savage Africa,
Sold to fall under the colonist's whip,
Founded independence on the soil of slavery,
And the Hill, in its voice, echoed the language of Racine and Fénélon!

—M. Chauvet, *Chant lyrique,* 1825[1]

"Rid us of these gilded Africans, and we shall have nothing more to wish," Napoleon Bonaparte wrote to his brother-in-law General Victor-Emmanuel Leclerc in 1802. Though successful in Guadeloupe and Martinique, Napoleon's soldiers, commanded first by Leclerc and then by Donatien Rochambeau, failed to reestablish slavery in Saint-Domingue. The only locale in history for a successful slave revolution, Saint-Domingue became the first Black Republic in 1804. As the Martiniquan writer and politician Aimé Césaire put it, "The first epic of the New World was written by Haitians, by Toussaint, Christophe, and Dessalines."[2] When Jean-Jacques Dessalines articulated the meaning of "independence" for Haiti, he realized what Césaire called a transformative, "prodigious history" of the Antilles. Dessalines tore the white from the French tricolor—"Mouché, chiré blanc là qui lan drapeau-là" (Tear out the white from the flag, Monsieur)[3]—as he would remove the name Saint-Domingue from the former colony. He called the new nation "Haiti," from the original Amerindian word (*Ayti*) for the island meaning "mountainous lands."

On January 1, 1804, in Gonaïves, Dessalines proclaimed indepen-

dence. Speaking in Creole, he recalled French atrocities and urged Haitians to fight to the death for their country. Boisrond-Tonnerre, Dessalines's "high-brown" secretary, demanded—in a formal French that recalled Maximilien de Robespierre's speeches in 1792—"a solemn abjuration of the French nation" in the name of Dessalines: "If there remains among you a lukewarm heart, let him retire, and tremble to pronounce the oath that must unite us. Let us swear to the whole world, to posterity, to ourselves, to renounce France forever and to die rather than live under its domination; to fight to the last breath for the independence of our country."[4] In the attempt to drive a wedge between France and Haiti, Dessalines ordered nearly 3,000 French men, women, and children killed with hatchets, sabres, bayonets, and daggers. No gunshot was allowed, no cannon or musketry. Silence and calm were necessary so that from one town to the next no one would be warned of the approaching slaughter.

Yet no declaration of independence, whether spoken in French or Haitian Creole, could sever the bonds between the former colony and its "Mother Country." Speaking of this massacre, which began in February (after the French had been promised protection) and ended on April 22, 1804, Dessalines declared in French: "Haiti has become a red spot on the surface of the globe, which the French will never accost." The violence was consecrated in the language of those who had been annihilated. We should not underrate the horror of this ventriloquy: the implications of a liberation that cannot be glorified except in the language of the former master. Even as Boisrond-Tonnerre warned of the dangers not of the "French armies," but "the canting eloquence of their agents' proclamations," he perpetuated the rhetoric he condemned. Dessalines's proclamation of April 8 (drafted by his mulatto secretary-general, Juste Chanlatte) is also a highly stylized, Jacobin document. By avenging himself on the "true cannibals," the Haitian, no longer vile, earned his right to "regeneration" and understood at last what it meant to breathe "the air of liberty, pure, honorable, and triumphant." Dessalines concluded by making the Haitian Revolution transferable to the Americas: "We have rendered to these true cannibals, war for war, crime for crime, outrage for outrage; yes, I have saved my country; I have avenged America."[5]

For whom does Dessalines speak? The majority of the revolutionaries did not know French (it is claimed that Toussaint Louverture knew how to read and write, but Dessalines, like Henry Christophe, was illiterate and could barely sign his name). Yet historians, both Haitian and foreign, present them, with some exceptions, as able to speak

French. When Boisrond-Tonnerre declared independence in the name of Dessalines on January 1, 1804, he recognized this linguistic colonialism with lyric prescience: "The French name still darkens our plains." Though French shadowed Haiti, with writers articulating the Haitian Revolution retrospectively in French, Creole also shared in the task of coercing difference into governable homogeneity. During the revolution, Creole was imposed as the national language by the Creole (Haitian-born) leaders Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe. This emerging language, initially used as a means of communication between slaves and masters, was an amalgam of French vocabulary and syntactic contributions from West Africa, as well as Taino, English, and Spanish. The African-born former slaves, who spoke one of at least two or three African languages, were silenced and subjugated to the Creole linguistic monopoly, a creolization that made for a linguistic accord conducive to political control by Creoles.[6] What strikes a reader of the various French proclamations during and after the revolution is the astonishing homogeneity of what was said, no matter who speaks or for what purpose. Debates in the revolutionary assemblies in Paris, the words of Georges-Jacques Danton and Robespierre especially, once printed in newspapers in Saint-Domingue, were recycled as formulas or favored shibboleths by those who took on the burden of politics and the prerogative of French in the new republic.

Called variously "Black France" by one nineteenth-century observer (Jules Michelet), this "France with frizzy hair" by another (Maxime Raybaud), and merely a "tropical dog-kennel and pestiferous jungle" by Thomas Carlyle, Haiti forced imagination high and low: expression moved uneasily between the extremes of idealization and debasement. In the background of this textualized and cursedly mimetic Haiti, however, remained certain legends, blurred but persistent oral traditions that resisted such coercive dichotomies as genteel and brute, master and slave, precious language and common voice. Though Haiti's "Africanness," like its "Frenchness," would be used by writers for differing purposes, the business of *being Haitian* was more complex—and the slippages and uneasy alliances between contradictions more pronounced—than most writerly representations of Haiti ever allowed.

Romancing the Dark World

A series of articles on Haiti appeared in the *Petite Presse* in Paris from September 8 to December 31, 1881. Written by the black

Martiniquan, Victor Cochinat, the columns reported on everything from vodou to the military, calling attention to the Haitians' love of artifice, their propensity to exaggerate and mime, and their apparent indifference to the continuing and bloody revolutions that followed independence in 1804. Cochinat also turned to vodou and to tales of cannibalism and magic in order to prove to his French audience that Haiti remained unregenerate.[7]

Louis-Joseph Janvier published his alternately strident and elegiac response to Cochinat in Paris in 1883.[8] Janvier, born in Port-au-Prince, descended from peasants, was the first in his family to be educated. In 1877, when he was twenty-two, he received a scholarship from the Haitian government to study in France. There he remained, for twenty-eight years, until 1905. His collection of meditations, called *La République d'Haïti et ses visiteurs,* contained long passages from the abolitionist Victor Schoelcher, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and M. Victor Meignan, and a preface packed with quotations from Jules Michelet, René de Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo, Ernest Renan, Georges-Jacques Danton, Alphonse de Lamartine, and Henry Christophe. Janvier claimed that Haitians were on the road to civilization, arguing that the bloodiest political crimes in his country simply proved that "Haiti always imitates Europe."

> Be indulgent, oh sons of western Europe!
>
> Recall—I am citing at random, unconcerned about chronology—recall the Sicilian Vespers, the *holy* Inquisition . . . the Albegensian massacre, the war of the Two Roses, the massacre of Strelitz, the sacking of ghettos, the religious wars in England, which is to say the papists hanged by the anti-papists, and the anti-papists burned by the papists, Saint-Bartholemew, the days of September 1792, the 10th of August, the red Terror, the 13th Vendemiaire, the 18th Brumaire, the white Terror, the June days of 1848, December 2, 1851; the month of May 1871. . . . be indulgent.[9]

The historian Michelet was Janvier's idol, "this sublime thinker." When confronting the succession of coups d'état that imperiled the young nation, Janvier claimed Haiti to be the incarnation of history in Michelet's sense of resurrection: "The history of Haiti is a series of marvelous resurrections."

That Haitian independence had to be sealed in a ritual of blood and vengeance made even more urgent the need to "rehabilitate the black race," to prove that in Haiti everything is French. If we recall Dessalines's proclamation abjuring the French nation after the massacre, which he called his "last act of national authority," we can

appreciate the high costs of such symbolic violence. The imagination of future generations of Haitians would be handicapped by the theatricality of the past.

When Janvier wrote his defense of Haiti, the population was about 90 percent peasants. Romanticized for their pastoral innocence and endurance, those whom foreigners had condemned as remnants of "dark Africa" were transformed by Janvier into French-speaking, God-fearing laborers. The ground upon which he constructed his fable of the Haitian nation—proud, vital, earthy, and black—they served as an appropriate symbol of the new Haiti: a gothic Eden resurrected on the ashes of colonial Saint-Domingue. Whether they inhabited the plains or the *mornes* (hills), the peasants Janvier idealized were fiercely independent, attached to their lands and devoted to their gods. Yet Janvier's sense of "the Haitian" depended on his refutation of vodou, which he denounced as "primitive." He assured his readers that all Haitians were now Catholic or Protestant, that all traces of barbarism had disappeared, and that most Haitians spoke French. After all, Janvier concluded, "French prose, Haitian coffee, and the philosophical doctrines of the French Revolution are the best stimulants of the Haitian brain."[10]

Black Skin, White Heart

The turning of Saint-Domingue into Haiti, colony into republic, demanded a new history that would be written by people who saw themselves as renewing the work of the French who had once abolished slavery and declared slaves not only *men* but *citizens.* Yet the reactionary conceptual flotsam of the Old Regime, and the appropriate tags of "civilization," "order," and "dignity" would clash with a "fanaticism" that had no proper language and no right to history. Could the history of the Haitian Revolution be told in the language of France? As Haitian historians attempted to gain access to "civilization," someone else's language (and at least part of the history that went with it) was necessary to their entitlement.

In his 1774 *The History of Jamaica,* the Jamaican Creole Edward Long turned to an Africa he had never seen, wrote of its unimaginable savagery, compared negroes to orangutans, and did his best to prove "the natural inferiority of Negroes." Yet, there was one chance for the black individual to distinguish himself from his dark surround. Long

tells the story of Francis Williams—a native of Jamaica and son of Dorothy and John Williams, free blacks—who, once educated into literature, defined himself "as a *white* man acting under a *black* skin." Williams had been chosen to be

> the subject of an experiment, which, it is said, the Duke of Montague was curious to make, in order to discover, whether, by proper cultivation, and a regular course of tuition at school and the university, a Negroe might not be found as capable of literature as a white person.[11]

Williams gets a "new" language. He acquires a convertible history. That he composes his poetry in Latin should alert us to the artifices possible in a New World that could be more ancient than the Old. Writing "An Ode" to Governor George Haldane, he disclaims the color of his skin in order to gain acceptance for his poem. Toward the end of the ode, recognition, or proof of rehabilitation, depends not only on the labor of language but the sudden disavowal of an epidermal trait: "Tho' dark the stream on which the tribute flows, / Not from the *skin,* but from the *heart* it rose."

> "Oh! *Muse,* of blackest tint, why shrinks thy breast,
> Why fears t'approach the *Caesar* of the *West!*
> Dispel thy doubts, with confidence ascend
> The regal dome, and hail him for thy friend:
> Nor blush, altho' in garb funereal drest,
> *Thy body's white, tho' clad in sable vest.*"[12]

If the justification of slavery depended on converting a biological fact into an ontological truth—black = savage, white = civilized—the descendant of slaves must not only pay tribute to those who enslaved but *make himself white, while remaining black.* Further, acquisition of the forever unreal new identity is paid for by negation of the old self.

What is significant about Williams's "An Ode" is that he talks both to his black Muse and his white patron: he keeps her black, "in garb funereal drest," yet he also makes her white, assuring his "muse" and his white readers: "Thy body's *white, tho' clad in sable vest.*" Finally, the poet concludes, "the sooty *African*" will be white in "manners," in the "glow of genius," in "learned speech, with modest accent worn." These adornments constitute the whiteness that transforms the heart and, once this has happened, turns the man inside out.

The complex working out of personal identity through a duplicity or doubling of color proves crucial to the making of a nation, and

shapes the way the first two major Haitian historians, Thomas Madiou and Beaubrun Ardouin, introduced themselves. Though a mulatto who lived in Paris for ten years, Ardouin focused on his African ancestry. He announces himself in his introduction as "Descendant of this African race that has been so long persecuted," and at the end of his eleven-volume history (published between 1853 and 1860), he exclaims: "Glory to all these children of Africa. . . . Honor to their memory!"[13] Madiou, also mulatto, lived in France from the age of ten until he was twenty-one. Unlike Ardouin, who defended the *affranchis* (freedmen) and ignored their interest, after the decree of May 15, 1791, in preserving slavery, Madiou refused to account for Haitian history in accord with the "official" mulatto view. He would later be claimed by Haitian ideologues as the *noiriste* historian of Haiti. His fiery assessment of Dessalines as a Haitian Robespierre, "this angel of death," based on interviews in the 1840s with former revolutionaries, departed from the critical disdain of the more moderate and elite *éclairées* (enlightened). If Dessalines was savage, Madiou countered that he remained the "Principle incarnate of Independence; he was barbaric against colonial barbarism."[14]

For both Madiou and Ardouin the labor of writing history demanded that the historian be seen as human while remaining Haitian. They turned to France and the white world, but claimed blackness and repaired the image of Africa, by making Haiti—purified of superstition, sorcerers, and charms—the instrument of reclamation. Throughout Haitian history the recovery or recognition of blackness (*négritude* or *noirisme*) never depended exclusively on color or phenotype.[15] Reading Madiou's and Ardouin's introductions to their histories, it is difficult to specify their color. Sir Spenser St. John—Great Britain's minister resident and consul general in Haiti, intermittently from 1863 to 1884—reminded his readers in *Hayti, or the Black Republic,* in a tautology that makes indefinite the need to define: "Thomas Madiou (clear mulatto) . . ."; "M. Beaubrun Ardouin (fair mulatto) . . ."[16] Their ability to reclaim and represent their "native land" to a foreign audience depended on their variously authentic and partly spurious claims of color but, most important, on the wielding of proper language. Both Madiou and Ardouin concluded their introductions by apologizing not for color but for style. In Ardouin's case, especially, the apology helped him to prove his nationality, affirmed by nothing less than his resolutely faltering or broken French. He articulated, perhaps for the first time, what Edouard Glissant much later would

name *antillanité,* and what Césaire, speaking about his choice to write poetry in French and not in Creole, would qualify as French with the *marque nègre.*

If this work finds some readers in Paris, they will see many infelicities of style, still more faults in the rules of grammar: it will offer them no literary merit. But they should not forget that, in general, Haitians stammer the words of the French language, in order to emphasize in some way their origin in the Antilles.[17]

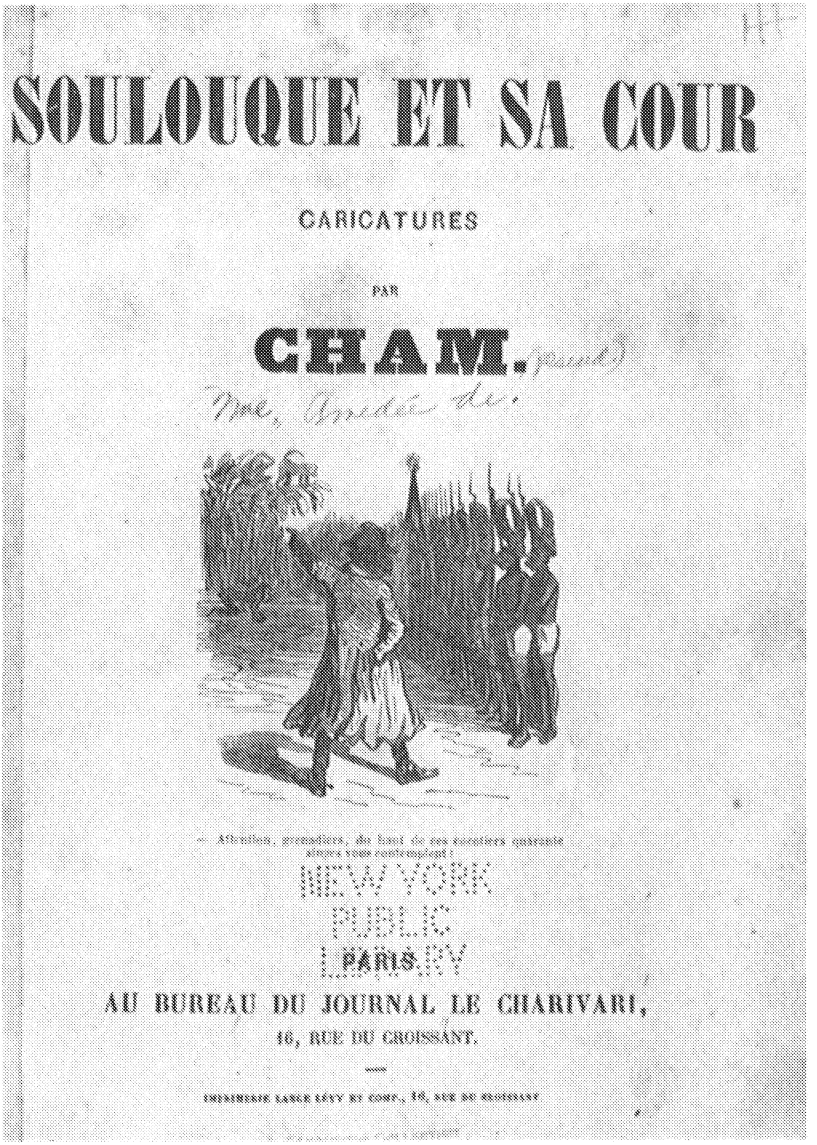
Ardouin had no doubt remembered Madiou's introduction. In *Histoire d'Haïti* Madiou had addressed his readers:

I beseech the reader to show himself indulgent concerning the style of my work; all I did was attempt to be correct, since at 1,800 leagues from the hearth of our language, in a country where nearly the entire population speaks Creole, it is quite impossible that French would not suffer the influence of those idioms I have meanwhile tried to avoid.[18]

Between Civilization and Barbarism

In Port-au-Prince on April 16, 1848, the very black and illiterate President Faustin Soulouque began the massacre of mulattoes he suspected as conspirators. In Paris a "prince-president," Louis Napoleon, who had just emerged from the other side of the barricades and blood of the June 1848 revolution, exclaimed, "Haïti, Haïti, pays de barbares!"

Soulouque, following Dessalines's and Napoleon Bonaparte's imperial example, declared himself Emperor Faustin I on August 25, 1849. Spenser St. John thought this act typical of a racially particular obsession: "All black chiefs have a hankering after the forms as well as the substance of despotic power."[19] Imitating his French model, Soulouque crowned himself, then crowned the empress, and created a nobility of four princes, fifty-nine dukes, two marquises, ninety counts, two hundred barons, and thirty knights. About three years later, in France, Louis Napoleon became emperor and brought the Second Republic to an end. The nephew of Napoleon—Karl Marx's "caricature of the old Napoleon"—did not have it easy. When he declared himself emperor a year after the coup d'état of December 2, 1851, he



Soulouque and His Court, *by Amédée de Noé (pseudonym: Cham). Paris, 1850. Courtesy Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.*

found himself not only described as Hugo's "Napoléon le petit" but compared to the Haitian Soulouque.

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1851), Marx compared what he called "the best" of Louis Napoleon's "bunch of blokes" to "a noisy, disreputable, rapacious bohème that crawls into gallooned coats with the same grotesque dignity as the high dignitaries of Soulouque."[20] Referring to the counterfeit Bonaparte, Victor Hugo wrote a poem about "A monkey [who] dressed himself in a tiger's skin" ("Fable or History," *Les Châtiments,* 1853). Though most obviously referring to the dubious royalty and bombast of Louis Napoleon, the horrific slaughters of Hugo's poem could not fail to remind readers of Soulouque's outrages. Hugo's parting shot in "Fable or History" could be taken as a product of racialist ideology: "You are only a monkey!"

Gustave d'Alaux (the pen name of Maxime Raybaud, the French consul during part of Soulouque's reign), wrote *L'Empereur Soulouque et son empire,* parts of which appeared as a series of articles in the metropolitan *Revue des Deux-Mondes* (1850–1851) and finally as a book in 1856. He introduced his readers to a place where you could find "civilization and the Congo," and "newspapers and sorcerers."[21] Even the American Wendell Phillips, rendering homage to Toussaint and the Haitian Revolution in 1861, reminded his listeners in Boston and New York how much events in Haiti mattered to the new Napoleon in France: "the present Napoleon . . . when the epigrammatists of Paris christened his wasteful and tasteless expense at Versailles, *Soulouquerie,* from the name of Soulouque, the Black Emperor, he deigned to issue a specific order forbidding the use of the word."[22]

A later Haitian historian, Dantès Bellegarde in *La Nation haïtienne* (1938), lamented that the reputation of Soulouque suffered from the illegitimate actions of Louis Napoleon. Soulouque's character was defamed when the French, seeking a safe way obliquely to attack power, made him the vessel for their disdain of their own emperor. Bellegarde's words are crucial to understanding how different history might be if we jostle our ideas of cause and effect:

> The crowning of the emperor, celebrated with unmatched magnificence, resulted in cruel jokes about Soulouque in the liberal French press and thus avenged the coup d'état of December 2, 1851, by Prince-President Louis Napoleon. And when, by the plebiscite of November 20, 1852, he had himself proclaimed emperor, they accused him of having aped [*singé*] Faustin I, and the more one blackened Soulouque, the more odious appeared the imitation of his grotesque act by the old member of the Italian Carbonari. The ha-

tred of Napoleon the Little, as the poet of the *Châtiments* referred to him, contributed much to giving the chief of the Haitian State his unfortunate reputation as a ridiculous and bloodthirsty sovereign.[23]

Rereading events in France through the quizzing glass of Haiti is to clarify the reciprocal dependencies, the uncanny resemblances that no ideology of difference can remove. Who are the *true* cannibals? Who is "aping" whom? Recall Dessalines's words after his massacres of the French: "Yes, we have repaid these true cannibals, war for war, crime for crime, outrage for outrage." The question must have haunted Beaubrun Ardouin when he found himself in Paris, having escaped from the murderous Soulouque, happy to find himself in the "Republic" he praised in a letter to Lamartine, only to see liberty turn again into monarchy: the country he had turned to as example for his "young Haiti" flipping over, again, into empire. Ardouin, more opportunist than Madiou and an accomplished bureaucrat, had few problems with the change, as long as he was in France and not in Haiti. But he still had to justify his country to a people, many of whom were busy condemning Napoleon III, the very emperor he praised, and gladly advancing their attack by compounding black and white, Haiti and France, Soulouque and Louis Napoleon.

To justify revolution when despots were being recycled as simulacra was no easy matter. And to celebrate Haiti when Joseph Arthur de Gobineau had just published *De l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853–1855), a book that uses Haiti to signal the degeneracy of the black race ("depraved, brutal, and savage"), is a task we should not underestimate. The first volume of Ardouin's *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti,* published in 1859, enjoyed such success that a second printing followed within a year.[24]

No Easy Liberty

Ardouin no doubt appreciated the business of politics. Friend and partisan of the tough mulatto, Major General Jean-Pierre Boyer (an *ancien affranchi*), who governed Haiti from 1820 to 1843, Senator Ardouin had negotiated the initial financial settlement with France in 1825: 150 million francs indemnity to be paid in five years to the dispossessed French planters of Saint-Domingue in order to obtain French recognition of the independence of its former colony,

which was given in a royal ordinance from King Charles X. This edict, which conditionally recognized the Republic of Haiti as a "Free, independent and sovereign state," was backed up by force, leaving no doubt that the rhetoric of sovereignty would always be subject to severe qualification. France conveyed its recognition to President Boyer by a fleet of fourteen warships bearing 494 guns.[25]

But Madiou, never one to mince words, imagined what the heroes of the revolution would do if they left their tombs only to see the French flag flying in the cities of the new republic, while Haitians curried favor and became indebted to the descendants of colonial torturers. But it was Boyer's *Code Rural* (signed at the National Palace in Port-au-Prince on May 6, 1826) that reduced most Haitians, especially those who did not occupy positions of rank in the military or civil branches of the state, to essentially slave status. A small fraction of Haiti's population could live off the majority, collecting fees—with the help of their lackeys, the rural *chefs de section*—for produce, for the sale, travel, and butchering of animals, and even for the cutting of trees. In *Les Constitutions d'Haïti* (1886), addressed primarily to a Haitian audience, Janvier described Boyer's code as "slavery without the whip." Jonathan Brown, an American physician from New Hampshire who spent a year in Haiti (1833–1834), recalled his impressions of Boyer's regime in *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (1837): "The existing government of Hayti is a sort of republican monarchy sustained by the bayonet."[26]

Boyer did not like "vice" or "laziness" displayed in dancing, festivals, or unsupervised meetings among the population. He demanded order, propriety, and hard work. He would have agreed with Ardouin who later condemned vodou in his *Etudes* as "the barbarism . . . that brutalizes souls." Borrowing from the *Code Henry* (that of Christophe in 1812), Boyer reinstituted strict regulations of punishment, work schedules, and forced labor. The *Code Rural* contained 202 articles, aimed at delimiting and identifying those who are "bound" to the soil. Article 3, for example, prescribes cultivation for those who "cannot justify their means of existence."

> It being the duty of every Citizen to aid in sustaining the State, either by his active services, or by his industry, those who are not employed in the civil service, or called upon for the military service; those who do not exercise a licensed profession; those who are not working artisans, or employed as servants; those who are not employed in felling timber for exportation; in fine, those who cannot justify their means of existence, shall cultivate the soil.[27]

In 1843 and 1844 there were two revolutions that Ardouin would later describe as the "tragedy" of his generation: the popular army of Praslin, led by Charles Rivière-Hérard, and, the next year, the Piquet rebellion (named for the *piquiers,* the stakes or spears made by the militant peasant cultivators), led by the black Southerner and police lieutenant Louis-Jean Acaau "to defend the interests of the poor of all classes." The crises of 1843 and 1844 compelled Ardouin to write his history. The "Proclamation de Praslin," though ostensibly speaking for the people, and condemning Boyer's officials (including Ardouin) as traitors, was really a document contrived by Rivière-Hérard and other mulattoes, disgruntled Boyerists who wanted some of the power. The struggle of Acaau's *l'armée souffrante* (the suffering army), along with the resistance of members of the black elite, like Lysius Salomon, resulted in Rivière-Hérard's overthrow. Salomon's petition to the provisional government of Rivière-Hérard (June 22, 1843) is a marvel of recall and revision: "Citizens! Dessalines and Pétion cry out to you from the bottom of their graves. . . . Save Haiti, our communal mother; don't let her perish . . . save her. . . . The abolitionists rejoice and applaud you."[28]

Recognizing that it would be useless to resist these variously contrived liberation movements, Boyer had addressed the Senate for the last time on March 13, 1843, before leaving—like subsequent overthrown Haitian presidents—for Jamaica. Then began five years of instability comprising four short-lived presidencies. The phenomenon of Faustin Soulouque and Haiti's crisis of legitimacy resulted from what could be called a *comedy of color.* The mulatto oligarchs of Haiti reacted to the possibility of yet another revolution by contriving what became known as *la politique de la doublure.* The politics of the understudy allowed the light-skinned elites to remain in power, but under cover of blackness. The *dédoublement* of color, the *splitting in two,* qualifies Francis Williams's ritual of conversion. If the Jamaican black Williams proclaimed his *white heart with a black skin,* in Haiti, mulattoes in the turbulent 1840s were the heart of power, while selecting black skins as masks.

After a trinity of elderly and tractable black illiterates (Philippe Guerrier, 87 years old, directed by Beaubrun and Céligny Ardouin; Jean-Louis Pierrot, 84; and Jean-Baptiste Riché, 70), Soulouque (then 59) was chosen by those whom Spenser St. John called "the enlightened Ministers of the late General Riché." Beaubrun Ardouin, as head of the Senate, proposed the illiterate, black, and apparently malleable

General Soulouque as president of Haiti on March 1, 1847. When, a year later, Soulouque killed Ardouin's brother Céligny—the former minister of Haiti to the French government—Ardouin returned to France where he wrote his *Etudes.* But he never lost, even in exile, the capacity to name heroes or to please his patrons. Whether praising the republic of 1848 or the subsequent empire of Napoleon III, Ardouin held fast to France. But he carefully excluded the slave owners, those who fought for the colonial system, from those he called "the true French."

Who is the true Haitian? Ardouin's answer to the question gives definition the utility of not defining. Though he claimed himself as a "Descendant of Africa" and condemned the injustices of the colonial government against "the men of the black race which is my own," he asserted that the road to being Haitian must progress away from the dark continent toward his present audience, those he appreciated as representing enlightened France. He remained uncomfortable with "oral and popular traditions," and most of all with "superstitious practices derived from Africa." Again and again, he emphasized those things that made Haiti worthy of the France he esteemed (and identified Haitians who thought like him as most qualified to command): same religion, language, ideals, principles, customs, and, he concluded, "a taste preserved for French products." For France, he writes, "has deposited the germ of its advanced civilization." Now, under "the reign of a monarch [Napoleon III] enlightened and just," Haiti can profit from the "lights [*les lumières*] of its former mother country."

"Sucking from the breasts of France," as Ardouin had once put it in a letter to Lamartine (who, as minister for foreign affairs in the provisional government of 1848, would definitively abolish slavery in the French colonies), Haiti would turn, emptied of its gods and its magic, to both "the revolution of 1789 . . . this torch of French Genius" and to the Napoleonic eagle. On January 15, 1859, General Fabre Nicholas Geffrard overthrew Soulouque. Ardouin returned briefly to Haiti and then departed again for Paris as minister plenipotentiary.[29]

Dessalines, Dessalines Demanbre

On October 17, 1806, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, "chef suprême des indigènes," the first president and emperor of Haiti, was