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The anti-dialectical signification of Erzulie Danthor and Bois Caiman of the Haitian Revolution

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ABSTRACT
This work focuses on how and why the purposive-rationality of the originating moments of the Haitian Revolution at Bois Caiman is an anti-dialectical, as opposed to a dialectical, movement against enslavement as offered by traditional interpretations of the Revolution. The author concludes that the intent, as reflected in Boukman’s prayer, of the originating moments of the Haitian Revolution at Bwa Kayiman (Bois Caiman) was not for equality of opportunity, distribution, and recognition with whites by reproducing their norms and structure, as in the case of the Affranchis under the purposive-rationality of the mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois blacks, but for the reconstitution of a new world order or structuring structure ‘enframed’ by an African spiritual and linguistic community, Vodou and Kreyol, respectively, grounded in, and ‘enframing,’ liberty and fraternity among blacks or death. In fact, the author posits that it is the infusion of the former worldview, liberal bourgeois Protestantism via the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, on the island by the mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois free persons of color, Affranchis, looking to Canada, France, and America for equality of opportunity, distribution, and recognition that not only threatens Haiti and its practical consciousnesses, Vodou and Kreyol, contemporarily, but all life and civilizations on earth because of its dialectical economic growth and accumulative (neoliberal) logic within the finite space and resources of the earth.

Introduction

Haiti is not a Francophone country. It is, as the former Prime Minister of Haiti, Laurent Lamothe (2012–2014), opined, ‘Africa in the Caribbean.’ The majority, two-thirds, of the social actors who would come to constitute the Haitian nation-state were African-born among a minority of mulattoes, gens de couleur, Creole, and petit-bourgeois blacks (Affranchis) on the island interpellated, embourgeoisé, and differentiated by the language, communicative discourse, modes of production, ideology, and ideological apparatuses of the West (the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism social class language game). As such, given their interpellation and embourgeoisément via the language (French), communicative discourse, modes of production (slavery, agribusiness, mercantilism, etc.), ideology (liberalism,
individualism, personal wealth, capitalism, racialism, private property, Protestant Ethic, etc.), and ideological apparatuses (churches, schools, prisons, plantations, police force, army, etc.) of the West, the latter, Affranchis, became ‘blacks,’ dialectically, seeking to recursively reorganize and reproduce the ideas and ideals, the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism social class language game, of the European whites in a national position of their own amidst slavery, racism, and colonialism. As the colonial administrators informed the ministry of the marine of the Affranchis as early as the 1750s,

[t]hese men are beginning to fill the colony and it is of the greatest perversion to see them, their numbers continually increasing amongst the whites, with fortunes often greater than those of the whites … Their strict frugality prompting them to place their profits in the bank every year, they accumulate huge capital sums and become arrogant because they are rich, and their arrogance increases in proportion to their wealth. They bid on properties that are for sale in every district and cause their prices to reach such astronomical heights that the whites who have not so much wealth are unable to buy, or else ruin themselves if they do persist. In this manner, in many districts the best land is owned by the half-castes … These coloreds, [moreover], imitate the style of the whites and try to wipe out all memory of their original state. (Quoted in Fick, 1990, p. 19)

Fick (1990) goes on to highlight about the report,

[t]he administrator’s report went on to predict, somewhat hyperbolically, that, should this pattern continue, the mulattoes would even try to contract marriages within the most distinguished white families and, worse, through these marriages tie these families to the slave gangs from which the mothers were taken. (p. 19)

Fick further notes of the Affranchis,

[b]y 1789, the affranchis owned one-third of the plantation property, one-quarter of the slaves, and one-quarter of the real estate property in Saint Domingue; in addition, they held a fair position in commerce and in the trades, as well as in the military. Circumstances permitting, a few had even ‘infiltrated’ the almost exclusively grand blanc domain of the sugar plantation by becoming managers of the paternal estate upon the father’s return to Europe or even inheritors of property upon the father’s death … The affranchis imitated white manners, were often

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<th>Table 1. Differences between the Catholic/Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism and the Vodou ethic and the spirit of communism in Haiti.</th>
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educated in France, and, in turn, sent their own children abroad to be educated. Having become slave-holding plantation owners, they could even employ white contract labor among the petits blancs. (1990, pp. 19–20)

As the colonial administrator sarcastically observed the coloreds had an original state, which they were attempting to ‘wipe out’ of their memory. This original state, was not solely a reference to their conditions as descendants of slave laborers or former slaves themselves, but is also a reference to their African practical consciousness. The former, African-born majority, were not blank slates, but brought with them from Africa their African languages, communicative discourses, ideologies, ideological apparatuses, and modes of production (form of social and systems integration), what I am calling the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism social class language game, to the island, which they recursively reorganized and reproduced on the plantations and as maroon communities in the provinces and mountains when they escaped (Bellegarde-Smith & Michel, 2006; Deren, 1972; Desmangles, 1992; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Fick, 1990; Genovese, 1974; Métraux, 1958; Ramsey, 2014; Rigaud, 1985; Trouillot, 1995). As Desmangles (1992) notes of the communities the African majority would constitute,

These communities were small, formed initially by Africans who congregated along ethnic lines. As the plantations increased in size and required a larger labor force, the number of maroons increased proportionately, so that by the end of the eighteenth century representatives of other ethnic groups joined the communities; soon, they federated to form … ‘maroon republics.’ By and large, the various ethnic groups represented within each republic formed separate secret societies or fraternities based on ethnic origins. Each secret society possessed its own ancestral traditions, which it poured into the religious and cultural fabric of its republic; in the contact between these different ethnic cultures, the maroons hammered out for themselves new religious beliefs and practices based on the old … Hence, marronage can be seen as a phenomenon that bears witness not only to the slaves’ political and social resistance to slavery, but also to the preservation and maintenance of widely divergent ethnic religious traditions from different parts of Africa. (p. 35)

The Vodou ceremony of Bois Caiman, 14 August 1791, was the gathering and unification of representatives of these ‘maroon republics,’ a congress, to address their grievances against the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and spirit of capitalism of the whites and Affranchis, constitute the Haitian nation based on the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism social class language game, and commence the Revolution on 22 August 1791 (Fick, 1990; Genovese, 1974). The negotiations of the African maroon leaders with the whites and Affranchis, for more free days for the Africans to work their lots and less institutional violence on the plantations, during the Revolution must be seen as an attempt to balance the two forms of system and social integration as opposed to an internal struggle between the interest of the leaders of the Revolution and that of the masses as proposed by Fick (1990). Both sides failing to compromise left the war for independence on the island as a struggle between two forms of system and social integration, the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the whites and Affranchis on the one hand; and the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism of the Africans on the other.

Hence, following the Revolution, whereas, the Affranchis would come to recursively reorganize and reproduce their being-in-the-world as structurally differentiated black ‘other’ agents of the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism social class language game seeking equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with whites amidst worldwide slavery, racism, and colonialism. The majority of the half million Africans in the mountains and
provinces were not blacks, i.e. a structurally differentiated ‘other’ defined within the lexicon of signification of whites based on their skin pigmentation, lack of culture/civilization, and desire to be like whites. They were Africans interpellated and ounganified/manboified by the modes of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse of their African worldview or structuring structure, i.e. the Vodou Ethic and spirit of communism social class language game, which they reproduced in the provinces and mountains under the leadership of oungan yo (priests), manbo yo (priestesses), gangan yo/ dokté fey (herbal healers – medicine men and women), and granmoun yo (elders) (Bellegarde-Smith & Michel, 2006; Deren, 1972; Desmangles, 1992; Fick, 1990; Genovese, 1974; Métraux, 1958; Rigaud, 1985). Against the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the Affranchis with its emphasis on individualism, personal wealth, and capitalist exploitative labor, the Africans sought balance, harmony, and subsistence living. In the words of a racist colonial observer who saw the futility of attempting to establish a regimen of labor that would impose upon the freed slaves of Saint Domingue a European, occidental mode of thought and of social organization, central to which are the virtues of work, in and of itself, of competitiveness, profit incentives, and ever-expanding production; in short, the virtues of the Western capitalist ethic as practiced by the whites and Affranchis,

Unambitious and uncompetitive, the black values his liberty only to the extent that it affords him the possibility of living according to his own philosophy. (Quoted in Fick, 1990, p. 179)

The ‘philosophy,’ Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism, of the blacks diametrically opposed/oppose the Western capitalist ethic of the whites and Affranchis highlighted here by the colonial observer. It is the failure of the Affranchis, once they gained control of the Revolution and subsequently the nation-state and its ideological apparatuses, to either (re) constitute Haiti via the philosophy/practical consciousness of the Africans or eradicate it completely (via their anti-superstitious campaigns) as they sought and seek to reproduce the ideas and ideals (Western capitalist Ethic) of their former colonial slavemasters amidst their own racial class tensions, between the Creole free blacks and the gens de couleur, mulatto elites, which maintains Haiti, after over 200 years of independence, as the so-called poorest country in the Western hemisphere.

Following the Haitian Revolution the majority of the Africans, given their refusal to work on plantations or agribusinesses (corvée system), migrated to the provinces and the mountains, abodes of formerly established ‘maroon republics,’ and established a ‘counter-plantation system’ (Jean Casimir’s term) based on husbandry, subsistence agriculture, and komes, i.e. the trade and sell of agricultural goods for income to purchase manufactured products and services. The mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois free blacks, a Francophile neocolonial oligarchy, countered this counter-plantation system through their control of the ports, export trade, and the political apparatuses of the state, which increased their wealth through the taxation of the goods of the African peasants. As Du Bois (2012) observed of the process, the former enslaved Africans,

[t]ook over the land they had once worked as slaves, creating small farms where they raised livestock and grew crops to feed themselves and sell in local markets. On these small farms, they did all the things that had been denied to them under slavery: they built families, practiced their religion, and worked for themselves … Haiti’s rural population effectively undid the plantation model. By combining subsistence agriculture with the production of some crops for export, [komes,] they created a system that guaranteed them a better life, materially and socially, than that available to most other people of African descent in the Americas throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But they did not succeed in establishing that system in the
country as a whole. In the face of most Haitians’ unwillingness to work the plantations, Haiti’s ruling groups retreated but did not surrender. Ceding, to some extent, control of the land, they took charge of the ports and the export trade. And they took control of the state, heavily taxing the goods produced by the small-scale farmers and thereby reinforcing the economic divisions between the haves and the have-nots. (p. 6)

This counter-plantation system the African majority established against the spirit of capitalism social class language game, i.e. economic gain for its own sake, individualism, personal wealth, private property, labor exploitation, etc., of the Affranchis, mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois free blacks, who were interpellated, embourgeoisé, and differentiated by the mode of production, ideology, and ideological apparatuses of the West, I seek to argue here, was not a reaction to slavery or the material resource framework of the island as presented by Du Bois and Casimir. Instead, it was and is a product of the ideology (konesans) of Vodou and its Ethic of communal living or social collectivism, democracy, individuality, cosmopolitanism, spirit of social justice, xenophilia, balance, harmony, and gentleness, which united all of the African tribes shipped to the island during the slave trade. What I am calling the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism social class language game of the Africans was, and is, reified and recursively reorganized and reproduced via the ideology of Vodou; its modes of production, komés, husbandry, and subsistence agricultural; and ideological apparatuses, lakous or lakou yo in Kreyol (yo in Kreyol is used to pluralize terms and concepts), lwa yo, ounfo (temples) peristyles, sosyete sekré (secret societies), vèvè, herbal medicine, proverbs, songs, dances, musical instruments, Vodou magic and rituals, and ancestor worship.

The African Religion of Vodou, in other words, gave rise to the spirit of communism or communal living based on subsistence agriculture, husbandry, and komés, which the Africans, acting as both subjects and agents of the language game, transported with them to the Americas (Desmangles, 1992; Fick, 1990; Genovese, 1974). In Haiti, under the leadership of oungan yo (priests), manbo yo (priestesses), ganjan yo/dokté féy (herbal healers), and granmoun yo (elders), they recursively reorganized and reproduced this structuring structure and its modes of production via ideological apparatuses, i.e. Lakous, lwa yo, peristyles, herbal medicine, proverbs, songs, dances, musical instruments, secret societies, Vodou magic and rituals, vèvè, ancestor worship, and ounfo, used to interpellate and ounganify/manboify the human actors on the plantations, in the provinces, and mountains of the island (Bellegarde-Smith & Michel, 2006; Deren, 1972; Desmangles, 1992; Fick, 1990; Genovese, 1974; Métraux, 1958). As such, by communism I do not mean the social relations of production emanating from the dialectical contradictions of capitalist relations of production as outlined by Marx and Marxists of the early twentieth-century. Instead, the spirit of communism I refer to here speaks to the agricultural and communal form of individual, social, and material relations (purposive-rationality) produced by the metaphysical, psychological, and sociological logic (konesans – knowledge) of the religion of Vodou by which the Africans went about recursively reorganizing and reproducing their material resource framework prior to its interruption by slavery, the slave trade, racism, colonization, and the Affranchis’s attempt at nation building based on the language, communicative discourse, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and modes of production of the West (see Table 1). An ethos, the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism social class language game, which emphasizes balance, harmony, perfection, and subsistence living over the economic gain for its own sake, individualism, wealth, private property, and exploitative logic of the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism social class language game of the whites and Affranchis (Bellegarde-Smith & Michel, 2006; Deren, 1972; Desmangles, 1992; Fick, 1990; Genovese, 1974; Métraux, 1958; Rigaud, 1985).
Background of the problem

Traditional interpretations of the Haitian Revolution, and subsequent to that the constitution of Haitian identity, attempt to understand them, like the constitution of black diasporic and American practical consciousnesses, within the dialectical logic of Hegel’s master/slave dialectic (Buck-Morss, 2009; Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Fick, 1990; Genovese, 1974; James, 1986; Nicholls, 1979; Ramsey, 2014; Trouillot, 1995). Concluding that the Haitian Revolution represents a struggle by the enslaved Africans of the island who internalized the liberal norms, values, and rules of their former French masters, for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution within and using the metaphysical discourse of their former white slavemasters to convict them of not identifying with their norms, rules, and values as recursively (re) organized and reproduced by blacks. Haitian identity/practical consciousness, as such, was and is a simulacrum, of European practical consciousness and identity, which is universalized and presented as the nature of reality as such. This position, predominantly held by white Westerners, is usually juxtaposed against the postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial approaches of Haitian and other black bourgeois intellectual elites (i.e. Aimé Césaire), which highlight the hybridity, ambivalence, négritude, syncretism, and créolité, of the Revolution and Haitian consciousness (Bellegarde-Smith & Michel, 2006; Desmangles, 1992; Fick, 1990; Genovese, 1974; Trouillot, 1995).

Both interpretations, contrary to the position of Haitian intellectuals such as Roumain (1940) and Price-Mars (1928), who advised the Haitian intelligentsia class to look to the provinces and the peasant classes to constitute Haitian culture, identity, and nation-state, are problematic in that they ethnocentric and racist. They both overlook the initial African practical consciousness of the majority of the Africans on the island for either the practical consciousness or discourse and discursive practices of the mulatto and petit-bourgeois black elites, Affranchis, looking (because of their interpellation and embourgeoisement) to Europe, Canada, and America for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution, or for their (Affranchis) logic of postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial theories to undermine that African presence in favor of notions of hybridity, créolité, négritude, syncretism, intersectionality, double consciousness, etc.

In their assumption of control of the state and its ideological apparatuses, i.e. schools, churches, police force, laws, military, etc., in other words, the Affranchis, as the whites before them, attempted to repress, ‘silence,’ through anti-superstitious laws to outlaw Vodou and economic policies to undermine its mode of production, the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism social class language game of the Africans for their own Euro-centered purposive-rationality, even though, paradoxically, many of them exercised aspects of the latter in secrecy (Desmangles, 1992; Du Bois, 2012; Fick, 1990; Ramsey, 2014; Trouillot, 1995). Furthermore, their dialectical, postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial textual productions, as seen in the works of Louis-Joseph Janvier, Thomas Madiou, Beaubrun Ardouin, Hérard Dumesle, and Anténor Firmin among many others, minimized and minimize the African structuring structure to highlight hybridity, créolité, négritude, ambivalence, and contradictions. In other words, they accentuate and substantiate the European practical consciousness as recursively reorganized and reproduced by whites, mulattoes, and petit-bourgeois blacks, but minimize the African in the ambivalence, creole, négritude, and hybrid language of postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial discourses, which are still, dialectically, Western in origins and constitution.
There is no creole, nègritude, ambivalent, hybrid, etc., consciousness by which Haitians reified and reify their social structure and went/go about recursively reorganizing and reproducing its ideas and ideals as their practical consciousness. Instead, Haitians, the minority Affranchis, either recursively reorganize and reproduce as an ‘other’ the ideas and ideals of the Republican state, the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism social class language game, as their practical consciousness or those of the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism of the mass majority. Postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial discourses are the language, ideology, and communicative discourse of post-industrial Catholic/Protestant capitalist social relations of production recursively reorganized and reproduced by the Affranchis in the language of créolité, hybridity, indigénisme, nègritude, double consciousness, etc., for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with their former colonizers and slavemasters. That is to say, ambivalence, hybridity, liminality, créolité, nègritude, double consciousness, etc., are the psychological processes, concepts, pathologies, and practical consciousness of the Affranchis bourgeoisies as they desire and struggle for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with whites by reproducing their ideas and ideals as their practical consciousness in order to convict them (whites), amidst their racism and discrimination, for not identifying with their values and norms as revealed by black practices. As though by highlighting their alleged ambivalence, double consciousness, nègritude, and syncretism as opposed to the singular ‘African’ otherness, reflected in the practical consciousness of the masses, which allowed for them to be discriminated against to start with, affords them, Affranchis, their desires (equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution) and the sympathy of whites.

Theory and method

The argument here is that the purposive-rationality of the originating moments of the Haitian Revolution at Bois Caïman originates out of the Vodou ethic and the spirit of communism social class language game of the masses and their Vodou leadership, oungan yo, manbo yo, gangan yo/dokté fey, and gran moun yo, and diametrically opposed the purposive-rationality of the liberal agents of the whites and Affranchis on the island. The latter three sought to recursively reorganize and reproduce the practical consciousness of their former white slavemasters for equality of opportunity, distribution and recognition, while the agents of the former did not. Instead, at Bois Caïman, the originating moment of the Haitian Revolution, Boukman Dutty, Cecile Faitman, Edaïse, and subsequent to them Macaya, Sans Souci, Sylla, Mavougou, Lamour de la Rance, Macaque, Alaou, Coco, Sanglaou, and Jean-Jacques Dessalines among many others, sought to recursively reorganize and reproduce their African practical consciousness, Vodou, Kreyol, and communism embedded in the counter-plantation system, husbandry, and komes of the Haitian/Africans against the purposive-rationality of their former slavemasters and the Affranchis. In fact, it is the usurpation of the Revolution by the Affranchis that would give the Revolution (and Haitian consciousness/identity) its (postmodern, post-structural, postcolonial) liberal bourgeois Catholic/Protestant orientation, which makes Hegel’s master/slave dialectic, postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial theories appropriate heuristic tools for understanding the subsequent developments of the Haitian Revolution and nation-state following Bois Caiman and the death of Jean-Jacques Dessalines in 1806. This (postmodern, post-structural, postcolonial) liberal bourgeois Catholic/Protestant orientation is the basis for the subsequent exploitation and
oppression of the African masses on the island by the Affranchis seeking, like their black American and diasporic counterparts, continual equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with their former white masters through the re-enslavement (via the tourist and textile industries, sports, and agribusinesses) of the African masses who grow poor and sick so that a few of their fellow citizens can live lavishly within the liberal bourgeois Protestant capitalist world-system under American hegemony.

This latter traditional liberal bourgeois (postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial) interpretation of the Haitian Revolution and the purposive-rationality of the Affranchis attempts to understand their denouement through the sociopolitical effects and dialectical logic 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. The understanding from this perspective is that the enslaved Africans, many of whom could not read or write French, were a blank slate who 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 and women’ seeking liberty, equality, and fraternity, the rallying cry of the French Revolution. Although, historically this understanding holds true for the mulattoes and free educated blacks, Affranchis, who used the language of the declaration to push forth their efforts to gain liberty, equality, and fraternity with their white counterparts while attempting to hold on to slavery. This position, however, is not an accurate representation for the 201 representatives of the one Taino and nineteen enslaved African tribes/nations, ‘maroon republics,’ and their Vodou leadership who organized and assembled (minokan in Vodou) at Bois Caiman, Macaya, Sans Souci, and Jean-Jacques Dessalines who would assume the reins of the Revolution following the capture and death of the Affranchis, Toussaint Louverture.

Although Dessalines, unlike Sans Souci, Macaya, and many of the African leaders who assembled at Bois Caiman, was an ‘illiterate’ (in the Western sense) Creole, the argument highlighted by oral historian Byyaniah Bello and the Vodou community is that as a field slave, he was interpellated and ounganified (my term for internalization of the Vodou worldview) by the ideology (Vodou) and ideological apparatuses (Lakou, peristyles, lwaes, Kreyol proverbs) of the Africans as opposed to the ideology and ideological apparatuses of the French and Affranchis. As such, his early (1804–1806) reins as emperor of the country was an attempt, like the Africans of the maroon republics who negotiated with the whites and Affranchis during the Revolution, to constitute a new nation-state amidst two opposing worldviews or structuring structures, the Vodou Ethic and spirit of communism of the African masses and their leadership on the one hand, and the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and spirit of capitalism of the Affranchis on the other. Dessalines did not simply attempt to recursively reorganize and reproduce the ideas and practices of the whites as embodied in the ideology and practices of the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and spirit of capitalism as I am suggesting that the Affranchis would do in constituting the Haitian nation-state following his death. Instead, he attempted, with the aid of his lwa mét tét (Vodou spirit), Ogou Feray, to weigh and reconcile the ideals of both worldviews amidst their antagonism as represented by the Affranchis desire for a liberal/capitalist state based on plantation export agriculture, and the subsistence agriculture, husbandry, and komes of the African masses.

Conversely, the Affranchis, embodied in the persons of Toussaint, Boyer, Pétion, and Christophe, for examples, like their black bourgeois counterparts in North America and the
diaspora, pushed for liberty, equality, and fraternity with their white counterparts at the expense of the Vodou, communal discourse, and Kreyol language of the Vodou leadership, oun gan yo, manbo yo, gan gan yo, and gran moun yo, who were not only discriminated against by whites but by the slave-owning mulattoes and free blacks as well who sought to reproduce the French language, Catholic Religion, and liberal capitalist (mercantile) laws of their former slavemasters on the island. In fact, what role should mulattoes and free blacks play in the Revolution is at the heart of a bitter disagreement between Toussaint and Dessalines. The latter, Dessalines, a oun gan, Vodou priest, given the brutality he experienced as a field slave, which stood in contradistinction to Toussaint’s experience as a literate free Affranchis, wanted to kill many of the free and mulatto Affranchis along with the whites because Dessalines discerned that they played a role in their yearning to be like their white counterparts in oppressing the enslaved African masses, and given the opportunity they would reproduce the slavery system and the ideas (structuring structure) of the whites on the island (Buck-Morss, 2009; Du Bois, 2004, 2012). Hence Dessalines, like the African Jeannot who Toussaint and Jean Francois would murder for his brutality against the whites, promoted a form of racial slaughter grounded in ‘an eye for an eye’ ethical discourse, ‘we have rendered to these true cannibals [(the whites)], war for war, crime for crime, outrage for outrage; yes, I have saved my country: I have avenged America’ (Jean-Jacques Dessalines cited in Buck-Morss, 2009, p. 143).

It is not enough, however, to view Dessalines’s discourse and discursive practices along the inverted black nationalist and pan-Africanist lines of Marcus Garvey, Malcolm-X, Henry Highland Garnet, Martin Robinson Delaney, and W.E.B. Du Bois as highlighted by Buck-Morss (2009) and Nicholls (1979). To do so, would make his position a structurally differentiated dialectical response to enslavement, i.e. an ‘other’ seeking to recursively reorganize and reproduce the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism in a national/racial position of his own. My position here is that his response, like the Africans Jeannot’s and Sans Souci’s positions, was ‘enframed’ by the structuring logic, Vodou Ethic and spirit of communism social class language game, of the masses and their Vodou leadership on the one hand and that of the Affranchis on the other. As such, his movement as highlighted in the discourses of the Haitian oral historian Byyaniah Bello and Vodouizan, Max Beauvoir, was not only racial, but it was also class-based enframed by the cultural and structural logic of the Vodou ethic and the spirit of communism as constituted at Bois Caiman as it stood against the spirit of capitalism of the whites and Affranchis. Dessalines, under the guidance of his Vodou Iwa mét tét (Vodou spiritual guide), Ogou, was seeking land and economic reform, racial and cultural pride, and social justice for the African masses on the island ‘whose fathers were in Africa’ at the expense, some believe, of the interests of the mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois black property owners on the island who assassinated him for doing so (Du Bois, 2004, 2012; Dupuy, 1989; Nicholls, 1979). As Dessalines declared,

the sons of the colonists’ have taken advantage of my poor blacks. Be on your guard, negroes and mulattoes, we have all fought against the whites; the properties which we have conquered by the spilling of our blood belong to us all; I intend that they be divided with equity. (Dessalines quoted in Nicholls, 1979, p. 38)

In order to commence his nationalization project, Dessalines, following the Revolution, did not seek to recursively reorganize and reproduce the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism of the French. Instead, he rejected everything that was French, i.e. language, culture, and system of organizing existence, for the metaphysics and practical consciousness
of the Vodou leadership who originated the Revolution. He, guided by Ogou, nationalized the land; disallowed whites, outside of the 5000 polish and Germans who fought with him during the Revolution, ownership of land on the island; amidst state owned plantations he allowed the masses land to reproduce their subsistence agriculture, husbandry, and komes; named the island Ayi-ti to honor the Taino natives and African ancestors who spilled their blood during the Revolution; erected a red and black flag to represent the people and the blood they spilled for their freedom; removed all racial and class distinctions by denoting all persons on the island blacks divided between laborers and soldiers; and sought to make the entire island of Ayiti an independent black nation for all blacks in Haiti and the diaspora. As Leslie G. Desmangles highlights,

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

These efforts, i.e. his eye for an eye morality, establishment of an empire ruled by an oungan, honoring the Taino and African ancestors, social justice, communal living, social collectivism, equitable distribution of resources and salaries, and consultation with his lwa mét têt, etc., which the Affranchis deplored as it took away their properties and status, were a byproduct of his interpellation and ounganification/manboification via the ideology and ideological apparatuses, Lakou, peristyles, etc., of the Vodou Ethic, and not an arbitrary reaction to his treatment as a field slave.5 In other words, they emanated from his African mind or structuring structure (form of system and social integration), which the Affranchis rejected while in many instances practicing aspects of its religiosity in secrecy.

Unlike Toussaint, who was interpellated and embourgeoised by his slavemaster via the church and his schooling, Dessalines was predominantly interpellated and ounganified/manboified in the language, communicative discourse, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and mode of production of his African parents and Aunt Mantou, who were not reactionary natives to their material conditions. Instead, they were subjects/agents of the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism social class language game, which they went about recursively reorganizing and reproducing on the island via the Vodou religion; its mode of production, subsistence agriculture, husbandry, and komes; and ideological apparatuses, lwa yo, lakous, herbal medicine, proverbs, songs, dances, musical instruments, ounfo, and peristyles. They interpellated and ounganified/manboified Dessalines within the aforementioned practical consciousness amidst his interpellation in the Western structuring structure as a field slave, which he would escape from when he turned 30 years of age. Dessalines, following his escape, continued his ounganification/manboification in the African maroon communities of the North under the leadership of Francois Papillon, Jeannot, and Georges Biassou. As such, with his assumption of the leadership of the Haitian nation-state following the Revolution, Dessalines attempted to constitute it within two opposing structuring structures, the Vodou
ethic and the spirit of communism social class language game on the one hand, and the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism on the other, both assuming to represent the nature of reality as such. That Dessalines would go about suppressing elements of Vodou following the Revolution is not on par with what Toussaint and the rest of the Affranchis – with the exception of Faustin Souloque and Francois Duvalier – would go about doing to remove it entirely from the nation-state. Instead, Dessalines attempted to minimize the effects of political instability and magic done against him by the Petwo elements of Vodou (Desmangles, 1992, p. 45).6

Toussaint, a practicing gangan/dokté fey himself, however, also interpellated and embourgeoisied by the ideology and ideological apparatuses of the West, believed that the technical and governing skills of the blancs (whites) and Affranchis would be sorely needed to rebuild the country, along the lines of white civilization, after the revolution and the end of white rule on the island. In fact, Toussaint was not seeking to constitute the island as an independent country, but sought to have the island remain a French colony without slavery. Hence, Toussaint rejected the practical consciousness of the Vodou leadership and the masses for the structuring logic of the West. Although Dessalines’s position would become dominant after the capture of Toussaint in 1802, his (Dessalines’s) assassination by a plot between the mulatto, Alexandre Pétion, and petit-bourgeois black, Henri Christophe, who sought to pattern their leadership after Toussaint, would see to it that the Affranchis’s purposive-rationality would come to historically represent the ideas and ideals of the Haitian quest for independence and the Republic, which it produced. After the death of Dessalines, the country became divided between north and south, and between two rival political factions led by two ambitious men – tyrants who maintained political power solely by military force. Henri Christophe crowned himself king of the northern kingdom of Haiti in 1807 and ruled until 1820; his political rival Alexandre Pétion served as president of the south between 1807 and 1818. Haiti was reunited politically in 1822 during the presidency of Jean-Pierre Boyer (1818–43). Pétion’s former personal secretary and minister … In both the south and, particularly, the north, the first part of the history of independent Haiti is a story of servitude supported by a militarized agriculture whose government was drawn from the mulatto class. Their despotic rule early in the republic paved the way for the emergence of a rigid new social structure in which former affranchis were to become an elite distinctly separated from the black masses. (Desmangles, 1992, p. 38)

This purposive-rationality of the Affranchis, to adopt the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and spirit of capitalism social class language game of whites by recursively reorganizing and reproducing their God, language, French, and exploitative ways of being-in-the-world, liberalism and capitalism, is, however, a Western liberal dialectical understanding of the events and their desire (captured in their postcolonial, post-structural, and postmodern discourses) to be like their white counterparts, which stands against the anti-dialectical purposive rationality of Boukman, Fatima, Edaïse, the rest of the maroon Africans who congregated for the Petwo Vodou ceremony at Bois Caiman/Bwa Kayiman, and the subsequent positions of Macaya, Sans Souci, and Jean-Jacques Dessalines. (It should be mentioned that many of the African-born soldiers and leaders, such as Jeannot and colonel Jean-Baptiste Sans Souci, distrusted the Creole Africans – seemingly because of their desires to be like the whites, vacillations during the war, and ties to the whites – such as Dessalines and Christophe, and in many instances refused to fight under their leadership. In fact, Christophe would murder Sans Souci, and name his famous palace in Milot after him, on the count that he refused to recognize his leadership.)
The events at Bois Caïman and Jean Jacques Dessalines’s position, I want to suggest here, do not fit well within the attempt by many Western scholars, blacks and otherwise, to conceptualize the social agency of Dessalines, the African participants of Bois Caïman, and the masses they would interpellate and ounganified/manboified within the Hegelian master/slave dialectical, postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial thinking of the Affranchis. Instead, the events at Bois Caïman represent an anti-dialectical rejection by the Vodou leadership of white culture, language, God, mode of production, ideology, and ideological apparatuses for the actualization of their African ethos (structuring structure), the Vodou ethic and the spirit of communism, as a ‘class-for-itself,’ a group of people with their own Gods, language, mode of production, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and culture, who rejected the inhumanity of the whites, their gods, ideology, ideological apparatuses, exploitative modes of production, and communicative discourse (see Table 1). What the African Vodouizans insist is that,

No living person has the right to possess another, for possession means the mounting and the controlling of a person’s will … It means that the possessed person’s gwo-bon-anj is temporarily displaced by the influence of a foreign element whose incommensurable power accords that person the capacity to perform feats that are humanly impossible under ordinary circumstances. The possessed lose their memory, intelligence, and responsibility for their actions, and no living person can impose such a will on the living. (Desmangles, 1992, p. 81)

Be that as it may, the Africans, because of their ‘philosophy,’ constantly fought against slavery, and sought to be free with allegiances to Bon-dye, Iwa yo, and the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism as it stood against the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism social class language game of the whites and Affranchis.

Sociologically speaking, in other words, two worldviews or ethos (form of system and social integration) for organizing the material resource framework emerged in Haiti during and following the Revolution (see Table 1). Both worldviews, the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism social class language game on the one hand, and the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism social class language game on the other, are distinct from one another, and the former is neither a structurally differentiated practical consciousness, nor does it emerge out of the dialectical unfolding of the Western worldview. It emanates out of the Vodou metaphysics, psychology, and sociology of the Africans who sought to recursively reorganize and reproduce it in their new environment. This Haitian/African structuring structure (form of system and social integration) remained on the island, as the dominant discourse and discursive practice, until the death of Jean-Jacques Dessalines when the mulatto elites and petit-bourgeois blacks assassinated him and made dominant the Catholic, aristocratic, and feudal (republican) order of France, and subsequently, the Protestant Ethic and spirit of capitalism social class language game of America. The latter would come to dialectically displace the former, as it stood against the Vodou Ethic and spirit of communism of the Haitian masses, which they (the Affranchis) sought to erase/’wipe out’ by co-opting and incorporating it in the European objects of thought as irrational, backwards, damned, and informal. Albeit the Vodou Ethic and spirit of communism was not eradicated or converted into Africanisms as found among other blacks in Africa and the diaspora. Instead, it remained in the provinces, mountains, and urban slums reified (via its ideology, ideological apparatuses, and mode of production, which were used to interpellate and ounganified/manboified the masses) as the dominant discourse and discursive practice, i.e. practical consciousness, of the majority of Haitians against the practical consciousness of the Affranchis,
who attempted and attempt to replicate French/American practical consciousnesses via the apparatuses of the Haitian state and its ideological apparatuses. Contemporarily, they, the Affranchis, attempt its (the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism) incorporation into the state through the postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial logic of créolité, hybridity, etc. in their continual desire for equality of opportunity, recognition, and distribution with whites, not as an enframing ontology by which to interpellate and constitute the human actors of the state. That is, the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism of the masses is co-opted and incorporated in the modes of production, language, ideology, ideological apparatuses, and communicative discourse of the bourgeois state as a means for profit in the capitalist world-system under American hegemony where it is used to entertain tourists.

Discussion and conclusions

Essentially, the Frankfurt school’s ‘Negative Dialectics’ represents the means by which the Affranchis of Haiti confronted and confront their historical situation. The difference between the ‘negative dialectics’ of the Affranchis, and the discourse or purposive-rationality of the enslaved Africans of Bois Caïman and Jean-Jacques Dessalines 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, 2000 [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, 2000 [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 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 Hegelian totality, i.e. that all men are created equal except the Affranchis. 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. In essence, the contradiction, as interpreted by 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 re-establish 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 the Affranchis, the totality, Haitian society under French rule, 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. Although this logic holds true for the Affranchis of Haiti, it did not hold true for Boukman, the other participants of Bois Caïman, and Dessalines 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 archeological record has been constituted, so that society can be reconstituted wherein 'Being' (Dasein, Martin Heidegger's term) is nonsubjective and nonobjective, 'organic' in the Habermasian 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 the Affranchis, 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, via their bodies, language, ideology, and ideological apparatuses, by social actors operating within a reified sacred metaphysic. This is not what happened with the Affranchis or mulattoes of Haiti, but I am suggesting that this is what took place with the participants of Bois Caïman and Jean-Jacques Dessalines within the eighteenth century Enlightenment discourse of the whites and Affranchis.

The liberal 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, 2000 [1966], p. 94), reconciled their ambivalence that arises as a result of the conflict between subjectivity and forms (objectivity), by becoming petit-bourgeois ‘hybrids’ desiring to exercise the ‘pure’ identity of the 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. On the contrary, Boukman, the participants at Bois Caïman, and Dessalines 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/Iwa, Erzulie Danthor, 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.’ In fact, according to Haitian folklore, the Iwa, Erzulie Danthor, who embodied Faitman, or Mambo Fatiman, descended from the heavens and joined the participants of Bois Caïman when they initially set-off to burn the plantations in 1791, but her tongue was subsequently removed by the other participants so that she would not reveal their secrets should she be captured by the whites. Haiti, outside of the provinces, has never been able to live out this pact the participants of Bois Caïman made to Erzulie Danthor, 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 rules and laws grounded in the Protestant Ethic and
the spirit of capitalism that have caused the majority of the people to weep in dire poverty as wage-laborers in an American dominated Protestant postindustrial capitalist world-system wherein the African masses are constantly being forced via ideological apparatuses such as Protestant missionary churches, industrial parks, tourism, and athletics, for examples, to adopt the liberal bourgeois Protestant ethos of the Affranchis against the Vodou ideology and its ideological apparatuses of the houngans and manbos of the provinces.

Notes

1. Former Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe speaking at the 22nd Ordinary Session of the African Union, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 30 January 2014.
2. For me, building on the work of Max Weber within a structural Marxist framework, the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism is the basis of social integration for the modern capitalist world-system. As such, the Catholicism of modernity, and Haitians, is hybridized with the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism. Hence my use of the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism nomenclature to highlight the purposive-rationality of the whites and Affranchis of Haiti.
3. I use the terms, ounganified/manboified, similar to how Althusser utilizes the term ‘embourgeoisement’ as it pertains to the socialization process in the ‘Catholic/Protestant Ethic and spirit of capitalism social class language game’ (my term) of the West. Albeit in my usage ounganified/manboified refers to socialization within the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism social class language game of oungan, manbo, gangan, and granmoun yo. Similarly, as the nation-state system in the West would come under the leadership of agents of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism, the same holds true for kingship organizations of the African tribes and nations. Their kingship leadership and political culture emanated from their socioreligious life, i.e. the Vodou Ethic and the spirit of communism. During the Revolution, the African leadership was organized around their kingship and African military tactics, which was grounded in their religiosity (see Du Bois’s Avengers of the New World, 2004, pp. 108–109). It should also be mentioned that the majority of the early leaders were either oungan/manbo themselves or consulted with oungan yo and manbo yo.
4. Many Haitians may utilize the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism as their public face, and practice aspects (not its entire practical consciousness) of Vodou in secrecy. Others may solely practice one or the other. But the social structure was not reified as a syncretism of the two, which in turn interpellated and ounganified/manboified the masses as agents of the two via its ideological apparatuses. The two social structures emerged together, albeit the Catholic/Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism had more power given its ideological apparatuses, i.e. army, police force, etc.
5. In the Vodou pantheon of 401 Iwa yo, Jean-Jacques Dessalines is associated with Ogou Feray.
6. As heads of the Haitian nation state, Faustin Soulouque and Francois Duvalier, following Dessalines, openly, incorporated Vodou in their administrations and forms of governance.

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