

**Tropical Temptress to Republican Wife:
Gender, Virtue, and Haitian Independence, 1763-1803**

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The independence of Haiti from France in 1804 rested as much on a cultural transformation as on the invincibility of France's former slaves. The re-vision of brown and black women as virtuous wives and mothers was a precondition for independence from French political tutelage. In the colonial era, writers portrayed women of mixed African and European descent as dangerous "public women," promiscuous, artificial, and self-serving. After 1794 popular engravers, revolutionary politicians, and at least one novelist began to stress the private virtues of these women. Such representations suggested that colonial society conformed to the gendered division of public life found in post-Revolutionary France and the United States and made it possible to imagine an orderly -- and independent -- Haitian nation.

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The residents of French Saint-Domingue did not develop a coherent racial ideology until the middle of the eighteenth century. By this time, the colony had such a large and wealthy free population of mixed ancestry that the simple idea of "white over black" was not enough to ensure social hierarchy. The systematic, biological racism that emerged in Saint-Domingue after 1763, therefore, relied heavily on gender to separate whites from free people of African-European descent.

In the 1640s, when France first claimed it, the western coast of Hispaniola was a frontier region, inhabited by pirates, hunters, and tobacco farmers. The few black slaves these buccaneers owned worked beside indentured servants from Europe. The European population was overwhelmingly male and these masters considered the children they had with slave women to be free. The colony offered numerous opportunities for these free persons and their descendants. Ten times larger in area than Martinique and Guadeloupe combined, Saint-Domingue's mountainous interior was largely uninhabited until the 1770s. Moreover, the island's serpentine coast facilitated contraband with Spanish, English, and Dutch territories. Though Saint-Domingue's residents knew both slavery and freedom, because of these conditions social categories within the free population remained notoriously fluid well into the eighteenth century.¹

It was only after 1720 that this buccaneer lair began to emerge as a plantation giant. As it did racial categories became more important, though they remained inexact compared to later standards. Free blacks and mulattoes founded separate militia companies from whites in the 1720s, realizing they would otherwise never become officers. Royal administrators tried to regulate manumissions and they censured colleagues who married women of color. Such actions had little impact, however. In this still sparsely populated colony, French governors could barely enforce laws in the major

port towns. Although Versailles disapproved of interracial marriages, it never outlawed these unions in Saint-Domingue, though it did in other French islands. Similarly the Crown never restricted the value of property Dominguan whites could give to free people of color. By 1750, therefore, the colony had a number of free, propertied families known locally to have African ancestry but officially classified as "white."²

In 1763, however, a new colonial era dawned in French America as Versailles attempted to reform what remained of its New World empire after the Seven Years' War. A flood of lesser bureaucrats crossed the Atlantic, charged with bringing order to colonial society. They were accompanied by a tide of economic immigrants, hoping to become wealthy planters. The ministry dissolved the unpopular colonial militia and relaxed its commercial regulations, hoping to increase colonial loyalty. The end of the war also brought a quickening of the slave trade, which tripled in volume in the next twenty years.³

New populations and government initiatives spurred the colonial elite to a new self-consciousness. This process was heavily influenced by the European events Jürgen Habermas has labeled "the emergence of the public sphere."⁴ In France the expanding legal and underground press was supplying more and more readers with a wider variety of texts. The same phenomenon occurred in Saint-Domingue, which received its first permanent printing works in 1763. By the 1780s, the colony was producing its own newspapers, legal, political, and technical pamphlets, and colonial book collections were comparable to those in legal and academic milieux in France.⁵ French cities, like the booming Atlantic ports of Bordeaux and Nantes, built new plazas, markets, parks, and promenades. In Saint-Domingue too after 1763 the colonial government reconfigured port towns, constructed new fountains, administrative buildings, and public gardens. In both colony and metropole the upper and upper-middle classes founded Masonic lodges, theaters, and scientific academies, many of them linked across the Atlantic.⁶

This "public sphere" was a much an intellectual as a sociological development. By the middle of the eighteenth century the notion of "public opinion" had become an integral part of French -- and French colonial -- political rhetoric. By the 1750s, French royal judges regularly published their objections to royal policies and an underground literature amplified and radicalized their opposition.⁷ Accused of tyranny, royal ministers presented their counter-arguments in the press. Both groups appealed to "public opinion," an ideal of rational, civic-minded discussion, immune to the selfish interests of royal favorites or ambitious judges.⁸

A conflict between "despotic" administrators and "defiant" magistrates also defined public discourse in Saint-Domingue, flaring into outright revolt in 1769.⁹ The colony's two judicial Councils fought the military governors appointed by Versailles, especially after a new breed of governor abolished the unpopular militia in 1764 and then tried to re-establish it in 1765. Inspired by French rhetoric, colonial judges denounced the tyrannical and arbitrary powers of royal officials. In 1769 they appealed to the

colonial public to resist the reimposition of the militia, but this revolt failed. The defeat convinced elite colonial reformers that Saint-Domingue lacked "public spirit." Their fellow colonists suffered military rule because they were too engaged in selfish private interests to see a larger common good.¹⁰

In the 1770s, creole magistrates joined forces with royal officials to purify an emerging colonial public that both sides agreed was corrupt. In France a number of critics of the state used misogynistic stereotypes to explain "misguided" royal policies. In their rhetoric, courtesans like Pompadour, Du Barry, Polignac or even Marie Antoinette had effeminized Louis XV and XVI, warping court life with their selfish passion and narcissistic theatricality. These writers contrasted the appeal of an idealized public discussion, rational, open, and civic-minded, with the poisonous rule of these unnaturally powerful women.¹¹ Drawing on Montesquieu and especially Rousseau, those writers who worried about the corrupting influence of women on the French state created a gendered vision of the opposition between "despotism" and "liberty." Evoking classical republican imagery, Rousseau imagined a civic world of virtuous men, complemented by a domestic sphere where women would fulfill their natural roles as mothers and wives.¹² This gendered political ideal was powerfully illustrated by Jacques-Louis David's 1785 *Oath of the Horatii*, where a band of brothers prepares to battle Rome's enemies, while heavily draped women passively weep in what is almost another room.¹³ [See Appendix, Picture 1]

In Saint-Domingue a stylized misogyny drawing on these sources was even more central to elite discussions of the "public" than in France, for after 1763 colonial legislators incorporated such gender stereotypes into a new scientific racism. Inspired by contemporary French discourse, colonial elites blamed Saint-Domingue's lack of public spirit on the pernicious influence of people of color. They described free men and women of mixed ancestry using the same terms metropolitan writers employed to portray courtly decadence. While writers celebrated the colony's new parks, markets, and theaters, for example, they were disturbed by the women of color who flocked to these public spaces. For Moreau de Saint-Méry, a creole judge, amateur scientist, and persistent critic of colonial incivility, the elaborately dressed mulatto women in the streets indicated an "excess of civilization." He contrasted their spectacle with the more "innocent pleasures" of male camaraderie in the colony's new masonic lodges.¹⁴

This public display of sexually available women of color represented for many writers the far more serious issue of private vice. Almost all Frenchmen who came to make their fortune in Saint-Domingue took women of color as concubines. As colonial elites adopted the notion of a rational civic-minded colonial public, they grew alarmed at the power these brown and black women had over white men. Despite new taxes and official sanctions, colonists continued to free their favorite slave women and mixed race children. They persisted in endowing these mistresses and children with land, slaves, and, for some, European educations. In other French colonies governors and judges had been

able to limit such practices, which they described as dangerous to the white public. Saint-Domingue's colonists seemed not to care.¹⁵

Many writers concluded, therefore, that mulatto women corrupted white men with highly developed sexual skills. No account of Saint-Domingue was complete without a description of these tropical temptresses. According to the Swiss traveler Girod-Chantrons, These women, naturally more lascivious than European women, flattered by their control over white men, have collected and preserved all the sensual pleasures [*voluptés*] they are capable of. *La jouissance* has become for them an object of study, a specialized and necessary skill [used] with worn-out or depraved lovers, who simple nature can no longer delight.¹⁶

For the Baron de Wimpffen,

these Priestesses of an American Venus ... have made sensual pleasure [*la volupté*] a kind of mechanical skill and have taken it to the highest perfection. Next to them Aretino is a prudish school boy They combine the explosiveness of saltpeter with an exuberance of desire, that, scorning all, drives them to pursue, acquire and devour pleasure, like a blazing fire consumes its nourishment.¹⁷

These descriptions emphasized both nature and depravity. The Caribbean climate and African ancestry explained the sexual energy of brown women, but their mastery of the sexual arts was what Moreau de Saint-Méry, or Rousseau, might call "an excess of civilization." These Caribbean courtesans were the equivalent of Versailles's Pompadour or Polignac, sapping the strength and virtue of planters and merchants.

The emphasis on free women of color as a source of colonial corruption--both in public and private spaces--was part of a newly biological conception of colonial society. Moreau de Saint-Méry, an advocate of a virtuous national colonial public, constructed an elaborate racial calculus in the late 1780s that was reinforced by stereotypes of "effeminate" corruption.¹⁸ As influenced by the social theories of Montesquieu and Rousseau as by Buffon's natural history, Moreau described persons of mixed African and European "blood" as unstable hybrids, physically and morally degenerate. Mulatto men were beardless, sensual, and foppish, less strong than Africans and not as intelligent as whites. For Moreau the archetype of this racial group so enslaved by appetites and ambitions was the "*mulâtresse*," not the *mulâtre*.¹⁹ Though couched in biological terms, Moreau's racial ideology leaned heavily on the gendered political rhetoric of those hoping to regenerate the French monarchy.

Moreau's synthesis of Enlightenment biology and sociology reveals the ideas behind Saint Domingue new racial laws. After the failed militia revolt, his fellow judges worked with royal officials to purify the colony's new public spaces. By the 1770s, colonial lawmakers barred men of color from all militia commissions, government jobs,

and the white sections of churches and theaters. Free people of color were forbidden to wear swords, drive coaches, or wear certain types of clothing.²⁰ At the same time, legal officials began to apply the racial labels "mulatto" and "quadroon" to colonial families that had long been considered "white." In some colonial parishes, census figures for the free population of color rose dramatically in the late 1770s and 1780s, while "white" numbers dropped correspondingly as these new definitions were applied.²¹

Because nearly one hundred years of frontier society had produced so many people of mixed race, including propertied, French-educated families, simply degrading African descent was not enough to establish a coherent white community. "Effeminizing" people of mixed-ancestry created a stark division between "white" and "colored." At the same time, these misogynistic images excused the behavior of white colonists. As colonial elites grew frustrated with military rule, they attributed the absence of a principled, patriotic colonial opposition to the corruption of colonial mores by degenerate women and men of color. Barring this vice-ridden class from white society offered hope for reforming white civic spirit.

The French Revolution challenged this vision. After 1769, free men of color had become the foot soldiers of the Dominguan militia so hated by white colonists.²² But the events of 1789 established the male citizen soldier as a new political ideal in France. Free men of color used this masculine image to their advantage. Members of this class appeared before the National Assembly in Revolutionary Paris, presenting themselves as virile, virtuous husbands and fathers, as natural men, abused by a corrupt colonial society and abandoned by white fathers and brothers.²³

This argument became all but irrefutable in 1791 when Saint-Domingue's slaves launched the revolt that became the Haitian Revolution. Free men of color were France's chief ally against the uprising, though many colonial whites refused to accept them in full Revolutionary fraternity. In Martinique, rioting colonists reportedly castrated a twelve-year-old mulatto boy after men of color paraded under the tricolor.²⁴ In 1794 planter resistance became counter-revolution, when France, unable to defeat its former slaves, officially emancipated them. By 1798, black and brown generals ruled Saint-Domingue, representing themselves as French republicans fighting for liberty and fraternity.

The emergence of first brown and then black men into full French citizenship was marked by an attention to gender as well as to color. The Revolution, like the racism that preceded it, was not just about civil rights but about communities of virility and virtue. In 1797 Anne-Louis Girodet, a student of David, painted an image of Jean-Baptiste Mars Belley, a Senegalese who had risen from slavery to become a military leader and one of Saint-Domingue's first black delegates to Paris. [Appendix, Picture 2] Because pre-revolutionary racism had not effeminized African men as it had men of color, but denied their intelligence, Girodet's portrayal of Mars Belley as an ultra-masculine black patriot in tight military pants was perhaps not as radical a leap as his portrayal of the delegate's impressive cranium, explicitly compared to a bust of the abolitionist Abbé Raynal.²⁵

At about the same time, the French and Haitian Revolutionary press was beginning to reconfigure the stereotype of the black woman. In 1794, an engraving by Fougea translated David's *Oath of the Horatii* into the Caribbean. [Appendix, Picture 3] As in the 1785 painting, the printed image is starkly divided into a vigorous male world of public action and an interior feminine space, filled with emotion. A black father and his precociously virile son move towards the door with their weapon, while in another, heavily draped plane, a woman lets a second child fall from her breast as she weeps. The theme of natural black motherhood was developed with more attention in another print of the same vintage. [Appendix, Picture 4]²⁶

This conversion of slaves into virile soldiers and devoted mothers was not a complete reversal of slave-era racial imagery. Moreau de Saint-Méry and other pre-revolutionary intellectuals had portrayed blacks as Rousseauian "naturals," in order to stress the artificiality of racial mixture. African slaves were heedless and indolent, but passionate and strong. In the 1780's, Moreau suggested "the advantage that nature, or the use of palm wine, has given to negroes over other men in that which constitutes the physical agent of love. He insisted on the overwhelming power of maternal love in black women, though dissolute *mulâtresses* feared the sacrifices of motherhood."²⁷

Re-imagining the social role of Saint-Domingue's mixed-race women was a far greater challenge to slave-era gender stereotypes than these only partially revised images of virile black soldiers and devoted mothers. In 1803 a novel entitled *La Mulâtre* dismantled the cliché of corrupt feminine sexuality that had delineated the colonial public sphere.²⁸ This work attacked pre-revolutionary racial and gender conventions from its very title, which, grammatically, should read either *Le Mulâtre* or *La Mulâtresse*. The novel's heroine was not a courtesan but a woman as virtuous as any brown soldier. Its anonymous author made his political project explicit in the full title, which translates awkwardly to English as: *La Mulâtre like many white women, a work comparable to the Negro like few white men.*²⁹ Not only does this suggest the equality of brown and white women, but by comparing itself to Joseph LaVallée's 1789 novel *The negro like few white men*, the text further underlines its program. LaVallée had designed his book to rehabilitate the image of blacks, describing it as less a novel than "the story of a national character."³⁰ *La Mulâtre* is a text with similar ambitions, but its message is civic more than racial.

Like the more aesthetically and politically successful historical romances produced in mid-nineteenth-century Latin America, *La Mulâtre* is both about personal passion and the cultural identity of a new nation.³¹ Although the work is all but ignored in traditional scholarly histories of Haitian politics and culture, the figure of Mimi is strikingly similar to the important cultural figure of Erzulie-Fréa, seen by Joan Dayan as a key part of "the fictions necessary to the myth of the Haitian nation." In her work on in Haitian religion, historical consciousness, and twentieth century literature, Dayan describes this prominent vodun spirit or *loa* as "a pale mulatto, voluptuous, richly

dressed, and always speaking French, ... both virgin and Venus." *La Mulâtre's* Mimi, combining European sophistication with indigenous virtue, sorrow with sexuality, independence with chastity, evokes Erzulie at the very dawning of self-conscious Haitian nationalism.³²

The novel broadly adapts the plot and philosophical message of Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* to pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue. Set in the colony's North province in the mid-1770s, the text purports to be the correspondence of Sylvain, a white man, and Mimi, a French-educated free woman of color. After more than 500 pages, the plot ends shortly after the death of the two lovers. Like Rousseau's Julie, Mimi "lets social convention triumph over natural inclination," but, through her death, "produces a victory for a higher form of nature."³³

The attributes of *La Mulâtre's* central characters are based on post-1763 critiques of colonial mores. Sylvain, whose name has the same association with "forest" in French as in English, hews closely to Moreau de Saint-Méry's description of the "imperious, lively, and fickle character" of the white creole elite.³⁴ "The Creole, losing sight of everything that does not satisfy his baser inclinations, scorning all that is not marked for pleasure, surrenders himself to these forces. Passionate for dance, music, celebrations and anything that engages and supports his folly, he seems to live only for sensuality."³⁵ Though Sylvain is widely respected for his compassion, learning, and talent, he is also known for seducing beautiful women of color. A successful planter who abandoned a promising military career, he lives with Fany, a beautiful free black woman he describes as his first true love, and their children, to whom Sylvain is devoted. Nevertheless, he pursues Mimi for two years.

If Sylvain is instinctive passion, Mimi is reasoned virtue. Though so beautiful that Sylvain falls instantly in love with her, Mimi, whose name suggests "kiss" or "caress," is not a stereotypical *mulâtresse*. Their relationship is entirely epistolary and platonic until the end of the novel. Despite Sylvain's persistent efforts, Mimi will not become his mistress because she believes that if she surrenders he will eventually betray her, like Fany. In the novel's otherwise faithful recreation of slave-era Saint-Domingue, interracial marriages are illegal.³⁶ By linking legal prejudice to the tension between passionate and platonic love the author of *La Mulâtre* makes his heroine's principled stand even clearer and highlights the need for a new state.³⁷

Sylvain attributes Mimi's reluctance to become his mistress to her excessive concern with public opinion; he urges her instead to heed nature, the source of true virtue.³⁸ His challenge evokes the stereotype of the artificial *mulâtresse* as a "public" woman, but Mimi's response turns the image inside-out. She connects her concern for social convention with what, by 1803, had become the core ideals of the French Revolution.³⁹ Denouncing the "barbarous prejudice" that denies her a respectable marriage, she writes: "Children of the same *patrie*, we are deprived of its tenderness and blessings."⁴⁰ Though she agrees that justice should never prohibit nature's best instincts,

Mimi expresses her loyalty to that *patrie* in Rousseauian terms:

[U]ltimately social opinion overrides nature, through unjust but inevitable laws that force [individuals] to sacrifice their desires to the general will. Now, since this general will is called *Patrie*, obedience to its laws is the highest virtue. According to this principle, which is based if not in reason than at least in necessity and therefore in prudence, your doctrine would seem to all the world to lead to licentiousness, which is why I cannot adopt it, although I love you whole-heartedly. Not only do I love you but I would have you love and respect me and you would not do so if I freed myself from my duties.⁴¹

Mimi contains her desire out of respect for a social order that she recognizes to be flawed. Civic virtue triumphs over private pleasure, though her sacrifice, appropriately, is veiled in domesticity.

As the novel ends, the reversal of colonial stereotypes comes to its logical conclusion. Sylvain protests that his love is pure and natural, but he cannot control his ardor and surprises Mimi alone one night. She dies of grief ten days after their passionate encounter and Sylvain commits suicide. Mimi's death after losing her virginity proves that virtue was her life; like Rousseau's Julie she represents neither nature nor the corrupt civilization she inhabits, but an ideal society. Just before killing himself Sylvain describes to a friend the lesson he, and the reader, are to take from *La Mulâtre*: "invincible power of virtue! It has more power than all the sentiments ... even more than love itself! It took Mimi to teach me this."⁴²

Though her character overturns the gendered racism of the late slave period, Mimi echoes the political complaints of the pre-revolutionary colonial elite about the lack of a virtuous public in Saint Domingue. When Sylvain uses his connections to help her mother in a lawsuit, Mimi describes the military court as "a dark and despotic tribunal," too susceptible to personal influence.⁴³ Pre-revolutionary white colonists blamed governmental corruption on the private indulgence of men controlled by lascivious women of color. But Mimi portrays colonial institutions contributing to free colored vice. Since there was no impartial justice "How could we not be corrupted? How could girls of color not throw themselves into the arms of white men, as they have?"⁴⁴

Despite her opposition to such institutions, Mimi does not blame Saint-Domingue's military governors for racial prejudice. Instead she identifies this as the creation of a self-conscious, but flawed, public sphere.

Where and when did this odious prejudice emerge? In public only, ... It scarcely existed between individuals, which proves that the whites need to band together and have each other's support to dare show [this prejudice.] Each white, as an individual, treats women of color with respect and familiarity. But once assembled, either to act or to command, they become proud despots, imperious tyrants.⁴⁵

La Mulâtre traces the corruption of Dominguan mores to the un-natural powers of slavery. Mimi observes that "White women are glad to have a lover in a place where men have so much power over slaves! Women of color are so proud to capture one of those who affect such scorn for their class ... From this is born the lack of confidence in the virtue of these persons and from this lack of confidence, a lack of attachment."⁴⁶ Later she criticizes Sylvain's treatment of his manservant and proclaims that slavery degrades all men.⁴⁷

Yet *La Mulâtre's* abolitionism is muted, for its primary concern is to portray Mimi's sensitivity. The lovers' servants carry their letters back and forth, using subterfuges that both Sylvain and Mimi admire, but only once does a slave speak, when Sylvain quotes Mimi's black woman Fédalie to clarify a misunderstanding. The citation allows him to contrast the pidgin of this "detestable" and "perfidious" slave with the elevated sentiments that he and Mimi share. The white man writes, "I leave you to imagine the impression [Fédalie's creole words made] on a heart as passionate [as my own],"⁴⁸ but he extols Mimi's ability to express her feelings "in the most tender and persuasive terms." Indeed he is so impressed with her letters that he shows them to a friend, who pronounces Mimi's prose more elevated and compelling than Sylvain's.⁴⁹

Mimi's French education separates her not only from her slaves, but from other *mulâtresses*. She was returning from her studies in Europe when she and Sylvain first met and from his earliest letters he praises "your style, your delicacy, the elevation and nobility of your sentiments."⁵⁰ He scorns the free men of color who court her, claiming they only know love as a physical act. Mimi's education, he informs her, has refined her spirit to the point that she can know true happiness. Nevertheless he pushes her to consummate their natural love, without the "artificial bonds" of marriage.⁵¹ Mimi agrees that her schooling allows her to appreciate the platonic pleasures of their relationship, but she also notes that education gives her the strength to follow society's laws, even though these go against nature.⁵² In other words, Mimi's French education is at the root of her feminine virtue.

In attacking the colonial idea that women of mixed European/African descent were inherently vice-ridden, *La Mulâtre* completes the cycle of revolutionary redemption first activated by men of mixed ancestry. Representing Saint-Domingue as capable of producing its own virtuous republican wives and daughters, the novel shows that Haitian independence, declared the year following its publication, was more than a function of black generals' refusal to resubmit to slavery. Haitian independence shares its intellectual history and culture with the United States and France, as a participant in the Atlantic Revolution that created new public spaces for educated, propertied men and new domestic roles for bourgeois women.

La Mulâtre also shows that this nascent republicanism was deeply Euro-centric and elitist. While a private sphere of brown-skinned feminine virtue complemented the ideal of a male "public," Mimi's chaste domesticity was only accessible to those with the

education she possessed. *La Mulâtre* never suggests that women like the despised "Fédalie" might someday have that schooling.

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As Ruth Bloch has written about the United States, the shifting definition of "virtue" is behind the story of the Haitian Revolution.⁵³ Between 1763 and 1789, Saint-Domingue's white elite strengthened newly scientific definitions of race at their weakest point with misogynistic stereotypes borrowed from anti-court rhetoric. By describing free persons of mixed descent as morally effeminate, they excluded men who were culturally French from a colonial civic world they believed was dangerously weak. But this model of a biologically and morally imperfect male population of color collapsed after 1789. Fourteen years later the de-racialization of virtue was completed, when colonial courtesans were refashioned as republican wives.

If it is true for the newly independent United States that "underlying shifts in the gendered meaning of virtue expressed (even, perhaps, helped to make possible) a new understanding of republican politics,"⁵⁴ the same may be said of Haiti. *La Mulâtre* proposed that women who were neither African nor European were capable of a higher form of natural morality than self-indulgent transplanted Frenchmen. The island's indigenous citizens could build a better civilization than the French. Colonial Saint-Domingue could be independent Haïti.

At the same time, *La Mulâtre* illustrated the assumptions that would prevent Haiti from fashioning a true national public. The new nation's leaders could not imagine their society without the plantations and forced laborers, all but invisible in *La Mulâtre*, who paid for Mimi's education and her chaste seclusion. When they could not maintain this rural regime, the brown and black elite retreated to the cities to construct their own version of the enlightened urban public Saint-Domingue's colonists had dreamed of. Not until the communications technologies of the twentieth century reached the countryside could Haiti begin to create a single participatory public.

End Notes

1. On the problem of smuggling and social order see Charles Frostin, "La piraterie américaine des années 1720, vue de Saint-Domingue (répression, environnement et recrutement)," *Cahiers d'histoire* 25, no. 2 (1980):177-210, and Pierre Pluchon, *Histoire de la Colonisation Française: tome premier. Le Premier empire colonial, des origines à la Restauration* (Paris, 1991), 370-382. The classic study of racial attitudes in Saint-Domingue is Yvan Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté: Le jeu du critère ethnique dans un ordre esclavagiste* (Paris, 1967).
2. This is developed in John D. Garrigus, "Blue and Brown: Contraband Indigo and the Rise of a Free Colored Planter Class in French Saint-Domingue," *The Americas* 50 (October 1993): 233-263 and in Garrigus, "Color, Class and Identity on the Eve of the Haitian Revolution: Saint-Domingue's Free Colored Elite as *Colons américains*," *Slavery & Abolition* 17 (April 1996): 20-43.
3. Pluchon, *Histoire de la Colonisation Française* (1991), 239, 415, 586, and Charles Frostin, "Les colons de Saint-Domingue et la Métropole," *Revue historique*, no. 482 (avril-juin 1967): 381-414.
4. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989); Joan G. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1988).
5. James E. McClellan, III, *Colonialism and Science: Saint Domingue in the Old Regime* (Baltimore, 1992), 102.
6. McClellan *Colonialism and Science*, 75, 78-81, 94-96, 106-108; Jean Fouchard, *Plaisirs de Saint-Domingue: Notes sur sa vie sociale, littéraire et artistique* (Port-au-Prince, 1955), 36, 111; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 361, 879-883, 1099; Alain Le Bihan, "La franc-maçonnerie dans les colonies françaises du XVIII^e siècle." *Annales historiques de la révolution française* 46 (1974), 44-46, and Elisabeth Escalle and Marie Gouyon Guillaume, *Francs-Maçons des loges françaises aux Amériques, 1750-1850: contribution à l'étude de la société créole*, (Paris, 1992).
7. Marisa Linton, "The Rhetoric of Virtue and the *Parlements*, 1770-1775," *French History* 9, No. 2 (1995),189; Dale K. Van Kley, "New Wine in Old Wineskins: Continuity and Rupture in the Pamphlet Debate of the French Prerevolution, 1787-1789" *French Historical Studies* 17, No. 2, (Fall 1991),454-455.
8. Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1990), 171-172.
9. See Charles Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches à Saint-Domingue aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles (Haïti avant 1789)* (Paris: 1975), 297-341.
10. AN Col. F³ 192, anonymous ms. dated 1785, "Reflexions sur la position actuelle de St Domingue."

11. Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution* (1990), 198.
12. See Carol Blum, *Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue: The Language of Politics in the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 124-125; and Joan G. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1988), 70-76.
13. This is the argument presented in Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere*. It is further developed by the contributors to Lynn Hunt, ed., *Eroticism and the Body Politic* (Baltimore, 1991) especially Sarah Maza, "The Diamond Necklace Affair Revisited (1785-1786): The Case of the Missing Queen," 65-69. On David see Thomas E. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven, 1985), 236.
14. Méderic Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'isle Saint Domingue*, Blanche Maurel and Etienne Taillemite, eds. (Paris, 1984), 316, 361-62, 885, 1054, 1055.
15. For a detailed presentation of the rise of racial prejudice in Saint-Domingue versus other French colonies, see Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté* (1967), 21-105.
16. Justin Girod-Chantrons, *Voyage d'un Suisse dans les Colonies d'Amérique*, ed. Pierre Pluchon, (Paris: Tallandier, 1980), 152.
17. Cited in Pierre Pluchon, *Nègres et Juifs au XVIIIe siècle: Le racisme au siècle des Lumières* (Paris: Tallandier, 1984), 286.
18. Although he did not publish the work until 1797, Moreau insisted in his preface that he had stopped writing the *Description* in 1789. Although the revolutionary decade had changed a number of his ideas, he maintained that his only change was to remove some material, recovered by later editors, that might be offensive to individuals "already punished by public misfortunes." *Description*, 5, 10.
19. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 103-111, especially 104. For a full treatment of this theme, see John D. Garrigus, "'Sons of the Same Father': Gender, Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue, 1760-1792," in Christine Adams, Jack R. Censer, and Lisa Jane Graham, eds., *Visions and Revisions of Eighteenth-Century France* (Penn State, 1997), 137-153. On racism in eighteenth-century France, see Pierre Pluchon, *Nègres et juifs au XVIIIe siècle: Le racisme au siècle des lumières* (Paris, 1984); Pierre Boulle, "In Defense of Slavery: Eighteenth-Century Opposition to Abolition and the Origins of Racist Ideology in France," pp. 219-246 in Frederick Krantz, ed. *History from Below* (Oxford, 1988), and, most notably, Sue Peabody, *"There Are No Slaves in France": Law, Culture, and Society in Early Modern France, 1685-1789* (1996) which are important additions to the earlier survey of the topic by William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans 1530-1880* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1980).

20. Yvan Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté: Le jeu du critère ethnique dans un ordre esclavagiste* (Paris: Dalloz, 1967), 94, 100-4; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 4:225, 229, 342, 412, 466, 495; 5:384-5, 823; AN Col. F³243, p341; Col. F³273, p. 119; AN Col. F³91, p. 115; AN Col. F³189, decree of 2 June 1780.
21. See Garrigus, "Blue and Brown," 260.
22. See John D. Garrigus, "Catalyst or Catastrophe? Saint-Domingue's Free Men of Color and the Savannah Expedition, 1779-1782," *Review/Revista Interamericana* 22 (Spring/Summer 1992): 109-125.
23. See, for example, Monique Pouliquen, ed. *Doléances des peuples coloniaux à l'assemblée nationale constituante, 1789-1790* (Paris, 1989), 149-150; the anonymous *Précis sur les gémissements des sang-mêlés dans les Colonies Françaises*, (Paris, 1789), 7, or Abbé Grégoire, *Lettre aux philanthropes, sur les malheurs ... des gens de couleur de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1790) and Abbé Cournand, *Réponse aux Observations d'un habitant des colonies, sur le Mémoire en faveur des gens de couleur ...* (Paris, 1789), two works written by white Frenchmen who worked closely with Julien Raimond, a wealthy Dominguan man of color and political activist in Paris.
24. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Considérations présentées aux vrais amis du repos et du bonheur de la France, à l'occasion des nouveaux mouvements de quelques soi-disant Amis-des-noirs* (Paris: L'Imprimerie National, [March] 1791), 24.
25. Thomas E. Crow, *Emulation: Making Artists for Revolutionary France* (New Haven, 1995), 225, 227; ironically, the abolitionist sections of the popular *Histoire des deux Indes* attributed to Raynal were actually written by Denis Diderot. Raynal supported a more enlightened and efficient slavery, not emancipation. Yves Benot, "Traces de l'Histoire des deux Indes chez les anti-esclavagistes sous la révolution," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 286 (1991):141-54; Srinivas Aravamudan, "Trop(icaliz)ing the Enlightenment," *Diacritics: A Review of Contemporary Criticism*, 23:3,(Fall, 1993): 46- 68.
26. Both images are reproduced from Marcel Chatillon, *Images de la Revolution aux Antilles* (Basse Terre, Guadeloupe: Société d'histoire de la Guadeloupe, 1989).
27. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 47, 58, 60-61, 107.
28. Anne Leighton found this text in the French National Archives, Overseas Section, in Aix-en-Provence and brought it to my attention. My understanding of it has been much shaped by discussions with her. The catalog of the Overseas Section in Aix identifies its copy as part of Moreau de Saint-Méry's library. I have been unable to find other copies of the novel in the computer catalogs of major US or French research libraries. The only scholarly reference I have found to the text is a single passing reference in Léon-François Hoffmann, *Le nègre romantique: Personnage littéraire et obsession collective* (Paris, 1973), 235.

29. In French, *La Mulâtre comme il y a beaucoup de blanches, ouvrage pouvant faire suite au Nègre comme il y a peu de blancs*.
30. Like many black heroes, however, Lavallée's Itanako was an African, enslaved in the French Caribbean, but who ultimately returned home. See Hoffmann, *Nègre romantique*, 87-88.
31. See Doris Sommer, "Love and Country: Allegorical Romance in Latin America," pp. 177-202 in *Reading World Literature: Theory, History, Practice*, Sarah Lawall, ed. (Austin, 1994). It should be noted that if *La Mulâtre* belongs to Sommer's category of "national romances," it must be seen as an early representative of the type. Though it too is a historical novel about "star-crossed lovers who represent particular regions, races, parties, economic interests and the like," unlike the texts she studies it was written before national independence and does not seem to have enjoyed much official support. Like Sommer's "national novels" *La Mulâtre* relies heavily on racial mixture as a metaphor for "national consolidation," equates personal with public virtue, and appeals to nature against political and social authorities. Nevertheless, in its rejection of erotic passion, this text is far closer to Rousseau than Sommer's national allegories published half-a-century later. Sommer, 178, 180-181, 186
32. Joan Dayan, "Caribbean cannibals and whores," *Raritan: A Quarterly Review* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1989), 45. Joan Dayan, "Erzulie: A Woman's History of Haiti," *Research in African Literatures* 25, No. 2 (Summer 1994), 19.
33. Robert Darnton, "A Star Is Born," *New York Review of Books*, (October 27, 1988), 85.
34. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 38.
35. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 37.
36. In fact, such unions were legal in Saint-Domingue, though not in other French slave colonies. Although colonial elites scorned white men who married free women of color, especially after the 1760s, in some parishes interracial marriages accounted for one-fifth of all religious unions throughout the eighteenth century. Jacques Houdaille, "Trois paroisses de Saint-Domingue au XVIII^e siècle," *Population* 18 (1963), 100.
37. See Sommer, "Love and Country," (1994), 191-192.
38. *La Mulâtre* 2:120, 2:130.
39. See Marisa Linton, "The Rhetoric of Virtue and the *Parlements*, 1770- 1775," *French History* 9, No. 2 (1995), 189, 199.
40. *La Mulâtre*, 1:207.
41. *La Mulâtre*, 2:140-141.

42. *La Mulâtre*, 2:292.
43. *La Mulâtre*, 2:187.
44. *La Mulâtre*, 2:189.
45. *La Mulâtre*, 2:253.
46. *La Mulâtre*, 1:212.
47. *La Mulâtre*, 2:258.
48. *La Mulâtre*, 2:112, 2:123.
49. *La Mulâtre*, 1:118-119.
50. *La Mulâtre*, 1:22.
51. *La Mulâtre*, 2:10-11.
52. *La Mulâtre*, 2:40.
53. Ruth Bloch, "The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America," *Signs* 13:1 (1987): 37-58.
54. Ruth Bloch, "The Gendered Meanings of Virtue," (1987), 44.