Alex Dupuy, *Rethinking the Haitian Revolution: Slavery, Independence, and the Struggle for Recognition*. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019. xxii + 155 pp. (Cloth US\$85.00)

In *Rethinking the Haitian Revolution*, Alex Dupuy offers a critique and a counterpoint to some established verities within the study of the Haitian Revolution and early nineteenth-century history, providing a useful journey through central interpretive issues surrounding the Revolution and broader theoretical debates about economy and society in the Caribbean.

He begins, in Chapter 1, by engaging with Marx's writings on the question of slavery, citing a passage in *Capital* that includes "the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins" as part of the sixteenth-century "dawn of the era of capitalist production" (p. 17). He then goes on to cite Marx's argument about the centrality of colonies in the development of "world trade" and the way in which modern European nations managed to "disguise slavery at home and import it openly into the New World" (p. 23). The chapter also comments and builds on the work of Immanuel Wallerstein and Eric Williams. Dupuy's core argument is that "Saint-Domingue and the other French Caribbean colonies were fully integrated in the capitalist world market" and "contributed to the accumulation of capital" in Europe while limiting it in Saint-Domingue (p. 23). This represents a useful injection of Saint-Domingue's particular history into ongoing debates about the relationship between capitalism and slavery.

Dupuy then takes aim at a now-canonical argument about the impact of the Haitian Revolution: that Hegel's idea of the master-slave dialectic was shaped by an engagement with the history of the Haitian Revolution. He finds this unconvincing, even a bit risible, and argues instead that Hegel's profound racism toward Africa and ignorance about the reality of slavery in the Americas would have made it impossible for him to be influenced in this way. Dupuy therefore adds another angle to this now extensive debate.

The book's final two chapters offer a useful analysis of the Haitian national bourgeoisie and its role in the payment of indemnity to France and the broader development of the state's indebtedness during the nineteenth century. Dupuy's most important intervention here is to emphasize the role of Haitian leaders in the acceptance of the indemnity of 1825 that was paid in return for the recognition of independence by France. Drawing on the work of Jean-François Brière, he foregrounds the fact that the idea of indemnity emerged from the Haitian leadership, argues that the threat of French military force was in fact not a decisive factor in their decision to agree to it, and emphasizes instead that in agreeing to the indemnity the political leaders (particu-

larly Jean-Pierre Boyer) were essentially trying to resolve the postrevolutionary question of land and to assure the formal and complete transfer of it from the French planters into their own hands as the new Haitian oligarchy.

Dupuy also takes up the central question of Haitian agriculture during the nineteenth century. He describes the “peasant farmers” of Haiti as being “commodity producers fully integrated in the circuits of global capitalism,” but notes that the Haitian bourgeoisie was never able to “defeat the majority of the peasantry or expropriate and proletarianize them” (p. 127). The result, he argues, is that this bourgeoisie was unable to depend on the State to “develop a national infrastructure, expand public, technical, and professional education, diversify agriculture, and subsidize and promote the growth of small, medium-sized, and large industries,” and that it became impossible, therefore, to “transform Haiti from a predominantly agricultural into a more industrial economy” (p. 127).

Dupuy’s perspective on the broader question of why Haiti evolved as it did in the nineteenth century can be usefully compared to that offered by Jean Casimir in *Une lecture décoloniale de l’histoire des Haïtiens* (2018). Both tackle a similar set of problems, particularly about the impasse that developed between the Haitian State and oligarchy and the rest of the population. Dupuy seems to consider that the Haitian State’s inability to develop an industrial economy was a lost opportunity that condemned the country to a marginal place within the global economy. Casimir instead emphasizes the possibilities inherent in what he calls the counterplantation system, and argues that it is the inability of the Haitian elite to comprehend and embrace that alternative that is at the root of the country’s difficulties. Taken together, the two books offer usefully complementary meditations on precisely how and why certain economic possibilities were ultimately closed off in Haiti during the nineteenth century.

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