

Literary Representations of the Haitian Revolution: A Teaching Resource for Pierre Faubert's *Ogé ou le Préjugé de Couleur* and Émeric Bergeaud's *Stella*

By Erin Zavitz

I. Introduction

Published in Paris within three years of each other, Pierre Faubert's play, *Ogé ou le Préjugé de Couleur: Drame Historique* (1856) and Émeric Bergeaud's novel, *Stella* (1859) are two of the earliest literary representations of the Haitian Revolution by Haitian authors. While poets and essayists had celebrated the revolution and its heroes in print for decades, *Ogé* and *Stella* are, respectively, the first theatrical production and book-length fictional treatment of Haiti's foundational event. Moreover, their publication occurred concurrently with lengthy historical treatises by Haiti's early historians.¹ The play and novel illuminate how Haitians decided to portray the revolution across genres. Yet, the two texts, along with nineteenth-century Haitian poetry, have received little scholarly attention. Disregarded as French imitations, state propaganda, or simple precursors to the "real" Haitian literature of the twentieth-century, nineteenth-century Haitian texts have largely been ignored in scholarly publications and the classroom. Even the recent comparative work of Raphael Dalleo relegates nineteenth-century authors to a footnote (Dalleo, 246). He contends that a public sphere did not exist until the first U.S. Occupation (247). Over a century of earlier publications were not worthy his attention because authors had to rely on the state as their public and this curtailed critique and free thought (246). Dalleo limits Haitian authors to a national public sphere and fails to explore how an Atlantic readership may have functioned as an additional sphere as it did for the Anglophone Caribbean. Nineteenth-century writers were engaged in creating a national literary tradition; however, their audience was larger than elite, French-literate Haitians (Reinsel, 10-11). They were also actively involved in countering European and American images of the island nation and garnering the support of abolitionists. As a consequence, Haitian publications had a second audience of French-literate readers in the former metropole, Great Britain, and America. Thus, we cannot dismiss nineteenth-century texts because of writers' associations with the Haitian state.

This teaching guide for Pierre Faubert's play and Émeric Bergeaud's novel begins to counter these omissions. The play and novel share the same subject, the Haitian Revolution; however, each author approaches the event through a different lens. Faubert's play focuses on an early revolt led by Saint Domingue's *gens de couleur* in 1790, while Bergeaud recounts the entire revolution from 1789 to 1804. The recent re-publication of *Stella* and the digitization of both texts (links to the digital versions are included in the guide) make them easily available for use in various French or Francophone literature courses. First, their different historical foci raise questions on how to narrate the revolution, particularly in light of negative foreign publications and Haiti's continued international ostracism. They could be read alongside French publications on the revolution in literature courses, such as Victor Hugo's *Bug Jargal* or Alphonse

¹ Particularly important is the multi-volume history by Bergeaud's own cousin, Beaubrun Ardouin, published in Paris between 1853 and 1860.

Lamartine's *Toussaint Louverture*. The historical themes, specifically color prejudice, could also be linked with contemporary publications on slavery—Claire de Dufort Duras's *Ourika* (1823) and Marie Fontenay de Grandfort's *L'Autre Monde* (1855).² Except for *Ourika* and *Bug Jargal*, the texts were published in the aftermath of the peaceful end of slavery and enfranchisement of non-whites in the other French Caribbean colonies and offer larger discussion of race relations and slavery in French and Francophone literature.³ Second, the texts serve as important examples of Haiti's early national literature and are valuable contributions to the growing study of Francophone Caribbean literature. Some of the earliest French Caribbean publications, they refocus our attention beyond the commonly used twentieth-century authors from Martinique and Guadeloupe (Maryse Condé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Aimé Césaire). More importantly, the two texts could be used in courses on Haitian literature to fully explore the evolution and development of literary traditions.

This guide is divided into a collection of “modules” accessible below to allow the instructor ease of full review and freedom of choice. The modules include: synopses of the texts, authors' biographies, historical context, common themes and close readings, and bibliography. Each section also includes a suggested reading list and links to other related documents and/or images in the Digital Library of the Caribbean (www.dloc.com). Instructors may browse through each module to find the relevant material on the novel and play for a course.

II. Synopses

A. *Ogé ou Le Préjugé de Couleur*

Online: <http://dloc.com/AA00009687>

Set in 1790, the play opens with a conversation between two French planters, the Vicomte de la Ferrière and the Marquis de Vermont, about the potential marriage of their children. Ferrière's daughter, Delphine is due to return from her studies in France and the gentlemen surmise the next logical step is marriage. The Marquis's son, Arnold, who has spent his life in Saint Domingue and represents the decadent white creole, enthusiastically agrees explaining that any woman would want to quickly become his wife (45). Their musings are interrupted by the household slave Annette who bears the news that free men of color recently returned from Paris have revolted. As the men exit, Delphine and her aunt arrive at the house after their journey from France. The revolt of Vincent Ogé, Jean-Baptiste Chavanne, and Alfred (a fictional third leader invented by Faubert) outside the northern port-city of Cap Français is the central action of the play. Yet, around the armed struggles, the reader learns of the secret love between Delphine and Alfred who met in Paris and the moral crisis of racial discrimination that poisons the French colony.

² In his preface, Faubert himself places his work in conversation with Grandfort's text and literary scholar Anna Brickhouse has begun to work on reading the two texts together, see *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Duras's *Ourika* would complement the two other works and expand the conversation of race and slavery in nineteenth-century Francophone texts. *L'Autre Monde* is also available digitally through Google books and printed copies of *Ourika* in English or French are readily accessible.

³ France abolished slavery in 1848.

B. *Stella*

Online <http://dloc.com/UF00089373>

Bergeaud's *Stella* is a combination of allegory and historical narrative. The novel begins with a brief description of the then two dominant images of Saint Domingue: natural fecundity and plantation slavery. Bergeaud proceeds by introducing the main characters: l'Africaine, le Colon, the brothers Romulus and Rémus, and Stella. Each of these five is more than just a character in the story but an archetypal figure of revolutionary Saint Domingue. L'Africaine, the mother of Romulus and Rémus, stands in for slaves in general and is the symbol of mother Africa. Le Colon represents French planters and the colonial system. Stella, a blue-eyed, blonde-haired French girl, is liberty who travels from France to Saint Domingue. Lastly, Romulus and Rémus are an amalgamation of the four main revolutionary leaders, Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, André Rigaud, and Alexandre Pétion. Alongside them appear real historical figures such as the French general Rochambeau. This blending of fiction and history continues in the organization of the novel. After presenting the five main characters, Bergeaud's plot follows the timeline of the Haitian Revolution complete with footnotes to name specific battles, cities, and generals. Thus, the conclusion of the novel is no surprise, Haitian independence. He takes artistic liberty, however, in portraying characters' motivations and influences throughout the revolutionary struggle. Le Colon, a representative of French colonialism, is to blame for the feud between the brothers and for bringing in the corrupting force of color prejudice. More importantly, Stella as the idea of liberty brought from France suggests an intriguing analysis of the relationship between the French and Haitian revolutions and the ideological agency of Haiti's revolutionary leadership. Her role is one of the potential discussion themes outlined in that section. From the slave huts of le Colon's plantation, where we meet l'Africaine and her sons, Romulus and Rémus, to the celebrations of independence, Bergeaud weaves together an allegorical tale of Haiti's violent birth.

III. Authors' Biographies

Though details on their lives are incomplete, the following brief biographies provide a summary of available information. Whether or not Bergeaud and Faubert crossed paths in Port-au-Prince or in Paris, they were both members of the French-literate mulatto elite. Their social and economic status placed them in similar circles with other authors, specifically the brothers Ardouin and Nau who were actively engaged in creation of a national literature. While this position was advantageous for intellectual growth, their connection with the mulatto elite and the former government of president Jean-Pierre Boyer made them political targets. The power struggles among black and mulatto factions in the 1840s forced both authors to flee Haiti. Writing in exile provided a privileged space to celebrate the Haitian past and critique the present. French literary scholar Léon-François Hoffmann explains Bergeaud's exile in St. Thomas allowed him to develop the image of a new leader for Haiti, the novelist, not the politician (Hoffmann, *Essays*, 113). Faubert's exile in Paris, Anna Brickhouse contends, helped him find a place in a transAmerican, or perhaps even trans-Atlantic, public sphere (236). In either case, as Amy Reinsel points out for Haitian poets of the same generation, exile cultivated strong feelings of nostalgia that led to celebrating the beauty and wonders of Haiti's past in face of current political strife (60-61).

A. Émeric Bergeaud (1818-1858)

Bergeaud was born in the southern city of Les Cayes in 1818. At this time, the country was divided into a northern kingdom ruled by Henri Christophe (who was primarily of African descent) and a republic led by Jean-Pierre Boyer (a mulatto). A third schism had occurred in the south under the mulatto revolutionary leader André Rigaud. When Rigaud returned to the island in 1810 he founded his own state in southern Haiti, *l'Etat du Sud*. Upon Rigaud's death, Bergeaud's uncle, Jérôme Maximilien Borgella, became the state's leader; however, realizing the precarious situation of Haiti as a divided island, Borgella helped reintegrate the southern state into the republic based in Port-au-Prince. As a young man Bergeaud worked for his famous uncle, who was then commander for the region of Les Cayes. His uncle's life would later become the foundation of mulatto historian Beaubrun Ardouin's multi-volume history of Haiti. Ardouin was Bergeaud's cousin, a fellow intellectual, and the publisher of *Stella* following Bergeaud's death in 1858. Thus, Bergeaud's genealogy places him squarely in the elite mulatto circles of nineteenth-century Haiti, a position which is important in terms of representation of the revolution and emphasis on unity. More importantly, with the fall of Jean-Pierre Boyer in 1843 and the ascension of Faustin Soulouque, a former slave, in 1848, Bergeaud's connections and his involvement in a failed coup made him a potential target of Soulouque's anti-elite violence. He fled the country in the spring of 1848 and lived in exile on the island of Saint-Thomas until 1857. Here, Bergeaud wrote *Stella* with the images of the recent Haitian conflict fresh in his mind. In the final year of his life, Bergeaud traveled to Paris in the hope of receiving medical treatment. During his visit he gave Ardouin a copy of the manuscript, and, following his death, Ardouin published the novel with a Parisian press. A second printing occurred in 1887 under the guidance of Bergeaud's widow, and this edition is available on the Digital Library of the Caribbean. A third edition has recently been published by the Swiss Éditions Zoé with a preface and the 1859 introduction by Beaubrun Ardouin.

B. Pierre Faubert (1806-1868)

Also a native of Les Cayes, Faubert was the son of a revolutionary war general. As he explains in the play's dedication, thanks to his mother he received an education in France. Faubert returned to Haiti, where he quickly rose in the ranks of Jean-Pierre Boyer's government. He began as the president's *aide de camp* and then his personal secretary. During the final five years of Boyer's rule, 1837-1842, Faubert was the director the national high school in Port-au-Prince. And it was here that he first performed the play *Ogé* with his students on February 9, 1841. Faubert wrote the piece to celebrate Haiti's past and illustrate the danger of color prejudice. He also hoped to show foreign visitors, such as the French abolitionist Victor Schoelcher, that color discrimination did not exist in independent Haiti. Two years after the performance, power struggles in Haiti forced Faubert to flee to Paris where he published the play along with a collection of poems. In his introduction, he explains that he is writing in reaction to Schoelcher's claim that the play was a piece of propaganda ordered by President Boyer (Faubert, 13). Faubert adamantly denies the claims and includes a section of notes at the end of the publication to further justify his actions. Faubert's motivations and his focus on free people of color raise questions for discussion about how intellectuals chose to represent the revolution in writing. Unlike contemporary mulatto intellectuals, Faubert never returned to live in Haiti, though he became a diplomat for Geffard who overthrew Soulouque in 1859. He helped the president negotiate the concordat with the

Vatican which granted Haiti recognition and the right to have Catholic priests start schools. A complicated step in Haiti's development, the concordat allowed for the growth of education, though still primarily in urban centers and for wealthier Haitians. Nevertheless, this system was neo-colonial in nature because Haitians learned not their own language or history but French and France's glorious past. Faubert, a member of Haiti's elite, celebrated the country's initial steps towards revolution in the play; however, he died a pauper in the suburbs of Paris in 1868.

Suggested reading:

Volume one of the encyclopedic *Histoire de la Littérature Haïtienne* by Raphaël and Pradel Pompilus (Port-au-Prince: Editions Caraïbes, 1975) provides biographical detail for both authors (for Bergeaud, 192-200 and Faubert, 92 and 280-88) along with summary of the texts and excerpts.⁴ Anne Marty's preface in the 2009 edition of *Stella* also has an informative discussion of Bergeaud's life and intellectual climate of nineteenth-century Haiti, see Bergeaud, Émeric. *Stella*. 3rd edition. Paris: Éditions Zoé, 2009. A more detailed discussion of Faubert's life can be found in Robert Cornevin, *Le Théâtre Haïtien: Des Origines à Nos Jours* (Ottawa: Editions Leméac, 1973) 87-90.

IV. Historical Context

The historical context for both texts is two-fold. First, published in Paris in the 1850s, the play and novel represent attempts by Haitian intellectuals to combat the negative press surrounding the country's image under emperor Faustin I (Faustin Soulouque), and the continued internal struggles in Haiti's elite. Second, because these are fictionalized accounts of the Haitian Revolution, it is necessary to provide a brief discussion of the complicated and tumultuous events that led to the country's founding.

Haiti, 1850s

The play and novel appeared in Paris within three years of each other, 1856 and 1859 respectively. Faubert at the time of publication was living in exile. Bergeaud, who had completed his manuscript the year before while also in exile, did not live to see his novel in print. Each author had fled Haiti because of government purges led by Emperor Soulouque against mulatto intellectuals. To contextualize their exile and writings it is necessary to step back a decade to the 1840s and the fall of one of Haiti's longest ruling leaders, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Boyer's presidency, 1818-1843, was a period of national growth as well as the creation of new obstacles in Haiti's development. The most notable and infamous include the unification of the entire island and the signing of a recognition treaty with France that burdened the country's economy with a large indemnity. By the 1840s a considerable opposition had formed and the country plunged back into warfare. The winning group of elites began a policy of placing black rulers in power and ruling from behind the scenes. In 1847 the aging puppet president, Riché, passed away and the political elite searched for a replacement, another malleable black. They chose a member of the National Guard, Faustin Soulouque. Born into slavery, Soulouque was an illiterate sexagenarian and viewed by the elite as "the dull head of the Guard" (MacLeod, 36). However, Soulouque quickly surprised his "electors" and took control of the government. To

⁴ This series is difficult to access but does provide valuable details on both authors.

consolidate power he attacked his opposition, which he saw as the predominantly mulatto urban mercantile and intellectual classes that included Faubert and Bergeaud. Soulouque oversaw violent purges of his opponents, which were not unusual for Haiti or Latin America at this time, and pronounced himself emperor in 1849 and established a nobility. Though ridiculed in the international press, historian Murdo MacLeod argues Soulouque's coronation and court represented "a symbol of true independence" to former slaves who could now hold titles of their own (43). Regardless, for the authors Soulouque's violence and poor leadership illustrated that pride and color prejudice weakened Haiti's international standing.



Comparative images of Soulouque:

"Emperor Faustin Soulouque," <http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/leaders/soulouque.htm>

Honoré Daumier (1808–1879) "*Actualités. Soulouque trouvant qu'à Paris, la location des cases est beaucoup trop chère,*"

http://www.clements.umich.edu/exhibits/online/colorline/caricature_slideshow.html

XVI's calling of the Estates General⁵—the assembly of the three estates: nobility, Church, and common people summoned to address government changes—in Paris, the planters held secret meetings to elect deputies to send to Paris to represent their agenda. The planters had long suffered under the weight of government-controlled trade policies that favored merchants. Free trade would mean increased benefits to planters. In addition, they sought local control in politics and wanted representation back in France. Of course, the grands blancs were not in consensus and as events escalated in France, they found themselves on various sides of the revolutionary struggle.

Unlike their wealthy counterparts, the petits blancs could not send representatives to Paris. Nevertheless, in Saint Domingue they advocated for voting rights based on European heritage and a larger political voice. Whites of all classes, however, quickly joined in the revolutionary fervor, and began the first stages of the Haitian Revolution.

2. Free People of Color/*Gens de Couleur*

Similar in size to the white population, there were approximately 30,000 free people of color on the eve of the revolution. They included established mulatto families who owned land and slaves and newly freed African slaves. Vincent Ogé and Jean-Baptiste Chavanne, leaders of the 1790 uprising, came from the wealthier, educated, and property owning group of gens de couleur. Free people of color made up a large proportion of the colonial militia and some could rival grands blancs in education and wealth. However, they faced increasing restrictions on employment, trade, even dress—the planters wanted to maintain social divisions and did not want free women of color to “blur” the lines of fashion.

Similar to the white planters, the gens de couleur lobbied in Paris for political representation. Prominent among them was Ogé, one of Saint Domingue's few free colored merchants. His efforts met with rejection, and in 1790 Ogé sailed back to Saint Domingue armed, not with weapons as the planters feared, but with new ideas of citizenship. Belonging was redefined as fighting for *la patrie* or homeland (Garrigus, 26). Ogé was quickly able to put his notions of citizenship to work with the help of Chavanne and his connections with frustrated free colored militiamen in northern Saint Domingue. Initially successful at repelling the government troops, the men later fled through the mountains to the Spanish side of the island. Here, the Spanish governor arrested them and sent Ogé, Chavanne and twenty-two other men back to the French to await a trial in Cap Français (Garrigus, “Thy Coming Fame,” 35). As leaders of the revolt, Ogé and Chavanne faced a horrific public execution that colonial officials hoped would serve as an example to any other radical revolutionaries.

Instead of ending turmoil in the colony, the gruesome death of Ogé and Chavanne led the National Assembly in Paris to grant equal status to gens de couleur born of free parents in 1791. More radical change happened the next year in response to the slave uprising. Granting citizenship to all free people of color, representatives in Paris hoped that ending racial discrimination among the free population would create an alliance between the gens de couleur and Saint Domingue's whites. The alliance would be short lived; however, the legacy of the gens de couleur's early struggles, specifically Ogé's connection of citizenship and militia service,

⁵The assembly of the three estates nobility, Church, and common people summoned to address government changes.

would become a powerful force both during the revolution and Haiti's state formation (Garrigus, "Thy Coming Fame," 38). To be a patriotic Haitian meant the willingness to take up arms and defend the country's fragile independence.

3. Slaves

Numbering near 500,000 in 1791, the slaves fueled the prosperity of the colony. Divided across the 8,000 plantations the slave experience varied greatly. In the five year period, 1785-1790, leading up to the revolt in August 1791, 30,000 new slaves arrived each year (Geggus, 7). Thus, Saint Domingue's slave population had a large portion of new slaves from diverse communities in West and Central Africa. The new arrivals faced worsening conditions because of the expansion of coffee plantations, the closing of the maroon frontier, and decreasing manumission rates.⁶ Moreover, slaves actively observed the new divisions among and between the colony's free populations brought on by the revolution in France. These factors and others led slaves around the northern port of Cap-Français to rise up. Their motivations for revolt are far from transparent. Nevertheless, requests included an additional day off or even full freedom that the slaves believed the King of France had recently given them. Leaders such as Georges Biassou and Jean François maintained royalist leanings and fought first in the name of Louis XVI and then for the Spanish king, Charles IV. The great revolutionary leader Toussaint Louverture followed a similar path and only in 1794 did he switch back over to fight for the French Republic and take up the call for emancipation.

C. Phases

As the grievances of the various groups suggest, the timeline of the Haitian Revolution is far from simple. To manage a discussion of major shifts, though, you can divide it into three sections. For more details and a thorough break-down of the chronology see the suggested readings at the end of the section.

- 1789-91: period of political maneuvering of whites and free people of color, establishment of local government assemblies in Saint Domingue, and slave revolt in the north
- 1792-1802: Period of foreign wars with Great Britain and Spain and civil war between Toussaint and Rigaud
1793, French commissioners Sonthonax and Poverel abolished slavery in the colony, the following year the National Assembly in Paris ended slavery throughout the empire
- 1802-1804: War of Independence
French fleet returns under Leclerc, Napoleon's brother-in-law with 10,000 troops, died of yellow fever and replaced by Rochambeau
Toussaint sent to France, died in Fort de Joux prison
Dessalines and Pétion unite to defeat French forces after learning that French expedition sent to reinstate slavery
By French surrender in late November 1803 over 40,000 soldiers perished

⁶ The maroon frontier refers to the ability of slaves to runaway and find isolated pockets of land where they could form maroon, or runaway, communities.

D. Radical Results

The Haitian Revolution stands out as containing the first successful slave revolt and creation of the second independent state in the Americas. Yet, for each separate group the revolution brought other noteworthy accomplishments:

- For whites it introduced the first instance of colonial representation in the metropole
- For free people of color the end of racial discrimination
- For slaves emancipation, the first in an important slave society
- For the Caribbean, Haiti's struggle is unique in comparison to other islands that gained independence through the colonial power's legislative actions

Suggested Reading:

For Soulouque and nineteenth-century Haiti few comprehensive works exist. Murdo MacLeod's article, "The Soulouque Regime in Haiti, 1847-1859: A Reevaluation," *Journal of Caribbean Studies* 10.3 (1970): 35-48, is a dated but useful introduction. In addition, David Nicholls's *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996) provides historical context for the whole period and a discussion of mulatto/black debates over how to write Haiti's history.

Geggus, David P. *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. The first chapter gives a thorough but concise discussion of the revolution and is an ideal introduction to the history. If you chose to spend more time on the revolution itself, two other texts worth considering are C.R.L. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 2nd edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1963) and Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2004).

John Garrigus's recent work on Vincent Ogé provides detail on the revolt and Ogé's background, see "Vincent Ogé Jeune (1757-91): Social Class and Free Colored Mobilization on the Eve of the Haitian Revolution," *The Americas* 68.1 (2011): 33-62 and "'Thy Coming Fame, Ogé! Is Sure': New Evidence on Ogé's 1790 Revolt and the Beginnings of the Haitian Revolution," in *Assumed Identities: The Meanings of Race in the Atlantic World*, ed. John D. Garrigus and Christopher Morris (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2010).

V. Common Themes

Discussion of the play and novel could take many directions depending on their use in your course. The following section outlines several common central themes—color prejudice, Haitian unity, the role of women in revolutions, and the relationship between history and fiction. I have also done close reading and analysis of key passages that deal with the theme of color prejudice. These sections complement the provided historical context and could lead to an engaging discussion of literary representations of race and color in Saint-Domingue and nineteenth-century Haiti.

Color prejudice

As the biography section explains, both authors were writing from a seat of privilege as French-literate mulattos. Thus, the play and novel portray color prejudice as evil and, unfortunately, something that continues under the tyrannical rule of the black emperor Soulouque. The authors'

assumption is that their writing will raise awareness of this issue but that a change of government would truly end discrimination.

- Color prejudice is the motivating force for both Faubert and his central characters. He states in the introduction that Ogé's revolt "appeared to him to aptly inspire noble sentiments in his students and at the same time make them see all that is absurd and hateful in color prejudice" (qui me parut propre à inspirer de nobles sentiments à mes élèves et à leur faire voir en même temps tout ce qu'il y a d'absurde et d'odieux dans le préjugé de couleur, 12-13). The three leaders, Ogé, Chavanne, and Alfred, enact Faubert's patriotic and noble sentiments that will triumph over discrimination. An initial scene is the intimate meeting between Alfred and Delphine, the daughter of Le Vicomte, on the eve of the uprising (53-59). From the dialogue the audience learns that they knew each other in Paris where they passed "les beaux jours" together (54). Upon returning to Saint Domingue, though, Alfred is horrified by the discrimination he faces and has decided to take action. He declares: "the most generous of projects, that of forcing our oppressors to recognize our rights: when one feels in the depths of his soul that one is equal to others, should one suffer the yoke of humiliation they have imposed on you?" (le plus généreux des projets, celui de forcer nos oppresseurs à reconnaître nos droits: lorsque l'on sent profondément dans l'âme qu'on est l'égal des autres, peut-on souffrir qu'ils vous imposent un joug humiliant?, 56-57). Alfred beseeches Delphine to understand his position and the weight of his suffering. As he exits the scene to join the insurgents who are marching nearby, he asks her to remember their happiest moments because they will not meet again (59).
- Alfred sacrifices his love for Delphine for the higher ideal of equality, and thus embodies the righteousness Faubert hopes to share with his students. As the only fictional insurgent leader, Faubert employs Alfred as the play's moral guidepost to avoid any potential historical criticism (for other examples see Alfred's forgiveness of the white planters in Act II, Scene III). Moreover, Faubert's use of the gender-neutral third-person singular pronoun "on" in Alfred's declaration suggests a larger application of racial equality beyond the privileged circles of Saint Domingue's mulatto elite. Read alongside the chants of the insurgents "to liberate their race" and "equality or death" (pour affranchir leur race/Egalité ou la mort, 61), Alfred's "on" could include all of Saint-Domingue's Afro-descendants. Though Ogé declined Chavanne's recommendation of arming slaves, Faubert's historical drama re-interprets events to create a greater sense of racial harmony to reassure contemporary audiences of the end of color discrimination. The play's publication over a decade later also serves to criticize the anti-mulatto leanings of Soulouque and emphasize the role of early mulatto efforts at equality in the larger struggle for Haitian independence. The noble sentiments of the play's fictional hero Alfred must be rekindled for Haiti to progress in the nineteenth century. To help students think more critically about Faubert's representations, the class can read John Garrigus's chapter on Ogé for better historical grounding. As Garrigus points out by the 1840s, Ogé had lost most of his mystique for the mulatto elite, thus why would Faubert focus on his revolt?

- Color prejudice in *Stella* appears later in the narrative's development. Bergeaud subtly introduces the theme in lessons on pride from the novel's namesake and liberty's allegory, Stella. Describing Romulus and Rémus's victory over le Colon's troops, Bergeaud moves to Stella's internal reflection on the brothers and their future project. Only she can realize that le Colon has escaped the battle unharmed, while the brothers are blinded by *orgueil*, pride (72). Bergeaud shifts again from Stella to the narrator who further warns about pride calling it "the demon against which Stella's enlightened friendship was resolved to warn her naive companions" (le démon contre lequel l'amitié éclairée de la jeune fille avait résolu de prémunir ses naïfs compagnons, 72-73). Stella proceeds to recount a moral tale of the evils of pride, concluding: "See pride and its fatal effects. It embeds itself in the heart following any success; and, if it is not promptly suppressed, it perverts the whole" (Voilà l'orgueil et ses funestes effets. Il s'introduit dans le coeur à la suite d'un succès quelconque; et, s'il n'est promptement étouffé, le pervertit tout entier, 75). Through Stella and the narrator, Bergeaud presents the dangers of pride and foreshadows future conflicts. The lesson also moves beyond the time period of the novel and is Bergeaud's critique of current Haitian society and politics.
- The link between pride and color prejudice appears in the appropriately named chapter, Colonial Machiavelism. Pride and jealousy leave the brothers exposed to greater dangers. It is le Colon who is the bearer of the most odious prejudice and he persuades Romulus that his brother, jealous of Romulus's authority, is an enemy (115). Le Colon explains, "You differ from your brother by the color of your skin...you are of a darker skin tone than him: that is why he believes you are morally placed beneath him, and he suffers with pain that you commanded him" (Vous différez de votre frère par la couleur de la peau...vous êtes d'une nuance d'épiderme plus foncée que la sienne: voilà pourquoi il vous croit moralement placé au-dessous de lui, et souffre avec peine que vous le commandiez, 115-16). Unlike the discrimination in Faubert, which pits white planters against gens de couleur, Bergeaud portrays a prejudice between blacks and mulattos that would resonate in contemporary Haiti. Through the omniscient narrator, Bergeaud neatly places the blame for color prejudice on the French and the colonial system. Moving from the dialogue between Romulus and le Colon, the narrator exclaims, "Skin color prejudices are malicious nonsense; color discrimination is a lie...Let us curse nonetheless the diabolic inventions accredited to the colonists' machiavelism" (Les préjugés d'épiderme sont de malveillantes stupidités; la haine de couleur est un mensonge...Maudissons toutefois ces inventions diaboliques accréditées par le machiavélisme des colons, 116). The narrator first dismisses color prejudice as a lie and absurdity and then proceeds to tell the reader that it is a product of colonists' plotting. Bergeaud's use of the verb *maudire* stresses the narrator's anger and horror at the concept of color prejudice. He also conjugates the verb for the first person plural, thus potentially including all Haitians in the narrator's disgust of discrimination. However, Bergeaud inserts "toutefois" after the verb, suggesting that color prejudice continues in spite of its stupidity. As the chapter progresses, le Colon becomes the duplicitous character who has introduced the malevolent idea of prejudice and the blame for discrimination cannot be placed on Romulus or Rémus. Why would Bergeaud choose to characterize discrimination as a colonial invention?

Haitian unity

The opposite of color prejudice, in both cases unity across class and color lines is the only option for success. A discussion of unity could be an ideal follow-up to the authors' treatment of color prejudice.

- Faubert places the theme of unity within debates over the rights (pages 63-65 and 80-82). His introduction also stresses unity among Haitians of all colors. Ogé, though a free mulatto, becomes a hero all Haitians should remember.
- The conclusion of *Stella* is a clearer example of the value of unity. Following the brothers' feud, brought on by color prejudice and le Colon's machinations, Bergeaud demonstrates how the brothers can only defeat their enemy by reuniting (203).

Role of Women

The principal actors in both texts are men. Yet, what role do women play in the struggle for independence? Here the novels seem to disagree about the potential of women in creating revolutionary change.

- In *Ogé*, Faubert develops the planter's daughter Delphine as a critic of Alfred's (and the other free men of color) revolt. In their one scene alone, Delphine begs Alfred to leave the fight because it will most surely mean death (56-58). Alfred, however, forsakes love for a higher cause, equality. Delphine later tries to persuade her father not to harm the rebels (95-97). Her inability to either support violent revolution or change men's minds leaves her impotent in a convent at the end of the play. What does this say about women's role in the revolution? Would the conclusion be different if Delphine was a free woman of color? Why does Faubert match his tragic hero with a French woman?
- In *Stella*, the two female characters embody revolutionary potential. First, the brutal death of l'Africaine at the hands of the le Colon and her journey from Africa serve as an initial motivating force for the brothers (12). It is Stella, the physical form of liberty, who truly illustrates the power of women to create change (for her role in French Revolution see 50-51 and in Haiti 308). However, Stella is white and French, thus her catalyzing presence suggests that for true change Saint Domingue needed an external influence and that local women did not hold the same potential. Bergeaud gives women a more active role in the revolutionary struggle, yet the two women are exceptions. L'Africaine descends from a royal family in Africa and Stella is the human form of liberty. How does Bergeaud's characterization of females both inspire and inhibit revolutionary actions of Haitian women? Both, Stella and l'Africaine motivate the brothers through stories of their lives, what does this say about the role of women in Haitian society? How do they compare/contrast with Delphine?

Writing the Revolution: History or Fiction?

The final theme concerns which genres Haitians chose to recount their country's founding. The publication of the play and novel coincided with the printing of Haiti's first multi-volume histories. Why did Bergeaud and Faubert turn to fiction while their colleagues chose history?

- To begin discussion, you can direct students to the introductions of both texts. Why did each author select his respective genre? What advantages or disadvantages do drama and novels have? In terms of subject matter, why did they choose fiction to deal with a history?

- VèVè Clark's chapter on theatrical representations of the Haitian Revolution is a useful starting point for thinking about *Ogé*. Although she does not discuss the play in detail, she provides three categories for dramas about the revolution: representation or mimesis, misrepresentation, and re-presentation (241). Faubert admits that his play is not entirely historically accurate. So, would students place the drama in representation or misrepresentation? Clark also offers a valid conclusion on the value of the plays: "Given the complexities of state rule, no three-to five-act drama can pretend to be documentary; rather these plays devoted to the details of the Haitian Revolution provide a series of cautionary tales" (254). Does her analysis apply to *Ogé*, if so, how?
- The recent work of Christiane Ndiaye on *Stella* helps address the question of genre, specifically in regards to Bergeaud's treatment of history. As the close reading above begins to show, he shifts frequently between dialogue, the omniscient narrator, and a second historian narrator. Classified as a novel, Ndiaye proposes that it be considered an epic that blends oral history, written history, and literature (21). She further contends that Bergeaud's techniques could be read as part of debate with the emerging field of Haitian history on how to write Haiti's history. If accessible, reading Ndiaye's chapter with *Stella* opens up a new avenue for discussion on the format and genre of the text.
- To end the conversation of history v. fiction, students should read the authors' notes. What purpose do the notes serve and why include them in works of fiction? Does the inclusion of notes change students' classification of the texts? For a helpful discussion of Faubert's notes see Anna Brickhouse, *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere*, chapter 6.

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