Framing Race Talk in World History Classrooms

A Case Study of the Haitian Revolution

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Introduction

Renowned Haitian Scholar, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, in his classic book, *Silencing the Past* (1995), surmised that the Haitian Revolution was an unthinkable history. His thesis centered on two firsthand accounts of French colonists, a few months before the major slave insurrection that began the revolution, who believed that enslaved Africans and their descendants on the island were tranquil and obedient, even going as far as to say, "a revolt among them is impossible" (Trouillot, 1995, p. 72). Trouillot surmised that this belief system "was based not so much on empirical evidence as on an ontology, an implicit organization of the world and its inhabitants" (1995, p. 73). The implicit organization and his reference to ontology denotes how race and racism classified humanity in Haiti and around the world. As the new world developed through colonialism and imperialism, ideas around race and humanity developed almost simultaneously.

These racial ideas, aided by philosophers, some being French, began to classify humanity, which categorized those who were White, European,

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and male as "Human" while those native to Africa or the Americas were the lowest form of humanity or as Charles Mills (1997) noted, subhumans. It was inconceivable to some French colonists in Saint Domingue (for the sake of simplicity, Haiti will be used hereafter) to envision subhumans fighting and winning freedom, "let alone formulate strategies for gaining and securing such freedom" (Trouillot, 1995, p.73). It was racial ideology and identity that played a salient role in how the Haitian Revolution evolved and how all of its citizens responded.

Defining Race and Racism

Race, as a historical and social construct, is a concept that has categorized groups of people based on their physical characteristics, like skin color, to set in place systems of power (Fredrickson, 2002; Kendi, 2016; Omi & Winant, 2014). Race is fluid and considers time and space where its ideas and definitions are in constant transformation (Haney-Lopez, 2000; Kendi, 2016; Omi & Winant, 2014). The construct of race speaks to the ways in which people are defined by their perceived skin color as well as the systems of thought, control, and oppressions/privileges that are associated with that skin color. Our notion of race is one that is highly flexible and malleable to the needs and desires of a white oriented world. In fact, the flexibility and malleability are enduring characteristics of race in modern times.

Racism refers to policies, procedures and individual actions that presuppose hierarchies between racial categories, or that treat a specific racial group as inferior. Racism, therefore, is not a simple act of individual prejudice; it is a systematic belief in maintaining White supremacy through various social contexts. Tatum's (1997) definition of racism as "prejudice plus power" (p. 7) serves us well to understand how White people control the access to "social, cultural, and economic resources and decision-making, which leads to the institutionalization of racist policies and practices" (Tatum, 1997, pp. 7-8). Race, therefore, is a socially constructed, hegemonic way of arranging a society to the benefit of some and the detriment of others (Brown & Brown, 2012; Kendi, 2016; Leonardo, 2009; Mills, 1997; Taylor, 2019).

Though race and racism have various definitions, our explanation might be more relatively straightforward for classroom use. Yet, race and racism are among the most divisive and emotionally charged issues of modern times (Dubois, 2003; Omi & Winant 2014). They are difficult concepts to talk and teach about. It may be uniquely difficult to discuss race and racism in high school settings, as adolescents begin to make decisions about the meaning of their social and cultural identities.

Despite potential difficulties, social studies classrooms are and have

been described as ideal spaces to facilitate conversations about race and racism, due to their focus on history, community, and culture (Blum, 2012; Epstein, 2010; Howard, 2004; King & Chandler, 2014). Social studies classes cross multiple disciplinary and thematic borders. The best way to introduce discussions about race and racism will vary depending on the content area. Research has been slow about strategies for facilitating these conversations in world history, even though world history classrooms explore related concepts including community boundaries, practices and migrations that shape contemporary global society (Busey, 2018; Cruz & Duplass, 2009).

In this article, we focus on ways to structure conversations about racism in world history classrooms through a case study of race and racism in Haiti at the turn of the 19th century. Drawing on the events of the Haitian Revolution, we describe how identifying patterns of racial hierarchy can provide a framework for talking about race from a world-scale perspective. While pedagogical strategies for teaching about the Haitian Revolution have been discussed before (Peck-Bartle, 2020; Peguero, 1998), we emphasize how world history teachers might present the relevance of Haitian struggles for human dignity and self-determination as a way to further develop students' understandings of race. Our objective is to support world history teachers in leading conversations about race as a historical and global construct.

World History Curriculum, Race, and the Haitian Revolution

The exact nature and scope of world history classes varies from context to context. Bain and Shreiner argued, "states and local school districts use the world history label to describe curricular practices with dramatically different structures, historical content, and approaches" (2005, p. 242). Despite this variance, world history education is broadly defined as the world-scale examination of the patterns and phenomenon that connect human communities (Manning, 2003; Dunn, 2009; Marino, 2011). The purpose is to help students "understand that all societies are in a continual state of fluidity and that narratives of particular societies are invariably embedded in contexts of time and space larger than themselves" (Dunn, 2009, p. 65). While networks of international exchange have occurred since as early as 1000 C.E., the current scale and pace of globalization has strongly influenced the emergence of world history as a curricular imperative. Throughout the early 2000s, world history was one of the fastest growing courses in secondary social studies, with almost every state adding related content to its curriculum, often replacing longstanding courses on Western Civilization (Don, 2003; Bain, 2012; Bain & Harris, 2009).

There are few resources available to world history teachers who want to discuss race and racism as well as the African Diasporia in their classrooms (Busey, 2018; Caldwell & Chavez, 2020; Cruz & Duplass, 2009; Dozono, 2016). Evidence has suggested that teaching about race and racism in K-12 classrooms needs to be aided through extensive study of the topic in both teacher education and inservice professional development (Busey, 2018; King, 2018). For example, Busey (2018) developed a special curriculum/reading professional development program for Adrianna, a World history teacher seeking to improve her African-Latina and overall black history knowledge. The curriuclum, Afro-Latin Critical Studyin'program, centered materials that focued on African Diasporia knowledge, which are resources positioned to emphasize African worldviews and epstimologies from around the globe (Boutee, 2015; King, 1992). The program consisted of an extensive reading program including Gates' (2011) *Black in Latin America* and Jimenez-Roman and Flores' (2010) *The Afro-Latin@ Reader* as well as cultural curriuclum onsite visit to the Afro-Latin@ Festival in New York City. Results of the Afro-Latin Critical Studyin' program included Adrianna gaining a sociocultural/historical and racial knowledge that included critiquing Eurocentric state standards and curriculum resources, learning more about important people and events that shape Afro-Latina people, and expanding her understanding of Blackness around the diaspora. The program helped Arianna design more culturally relevant lessons and facilitate student learning and discussion about race and racism on a much more nuanced level. (Busey, personal communication, 2020).

A review of the literature and our experiences as social studies teacher educators, however, suggest that in many instances, dialogue on race in world history classrooms is eclipsed by dialogue on ethnicity or nationality. When race is mentioned, the curriculum rarely accounts for the complex, hierarchical and ongoing implications of race and racism for global society. While our review of the literature did not identify any systematic studies of the status of race or racism in world history classrooms, references to the treatment of race in these spaces paints a troubling picture: a student recalling his world history teacher's contention that "racism hardly ever happens today" (Howard, 2004, p. 493); disassociations of racism and violence in textbook discussions of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (Brown & Brown, 2010); and world history textbooks overstating the role and implications of the 1954 Brown v. Board ruling (Hess, 2005) are some examples. In a content analysis of five leading world history textbooks, Marino found that "European history dominates the content of these volumes" (2011, p. 436) and "follow a chronological approach that clearly gives primacy to a European vision of the world" (2011, p. 441). These narratives exclude the histories and

lived experiences of the ethnic and cultural groups most vulnerable to contemporary expressions of racism (Marino and Bolgatz, 2012).

More specific to Haiti, some states exclude the Haitian Revolution in its World History social studies standards. For example, New York, Florida, and Texas social studies curriculum mention little about the Haiti revolution, instead leaving room for discourse around the American, French, and Russian revolutions. State social studies frameworks in Alabama, South Carolina, and North Carolina mention the Haitian Revolution but only as connected to European ideas of the Enlightment or as regional phenomenon excluding its global impact. The official social studies curriculum is represented via the state standards and are used as a barometer as to its importance. If historical events or persons are excluded within state standards, many classroom history teachers do not teach about the event.

Another indicator of what is taught in history classrooms is the textbook. Sepinwall (2013) noted that the Haitian Revolution has seen an increased in World History textbooks over the years but also explained that the narratives associated with the war are typically outdated and superficial. She notes that World history textbooks limit the Haitian revolution in three ways.

First, much attention about the revolution centers on Toussaint Louverture with little attention paid to other historical actors or events. The sole representation of Toussaint Louverture is indicative what scholars in social studies, history education, and multicultural education have deemed heroifying and messianic/messiah master narratives (Alridge, 2006; Loewen, 2008; Sepinwall, 2013; Woodson, 2014). The notion of *messianic narratives* is applicable to Louverture, in which he, Louverture, is presented as a savior for the Haitian Black population and as one who is an "exceptional individual [and] the progenitor of a movement" as well as "superhuman… without personal weakness, struggles, or shortcomings" (Alridge, 2006, p. 665). While heroification and messianic narratives make for exciting and simple stories for young children to engage with in classrooms, these narratives limit nuanced understandings of the complexities of history and in this case the Haitian Revolution.

Second, many textbook narratives over emphasize that the French revolution, which began a few years earlier and overlapped with Haiti's revolution, as well as Enlightment thinkers, inspired and provided the idealistic language necessary for rebellion. While there may be some truth to these sentiments, especially with free Blacks on the colony, it implies that Black Haitians held limited agency in what Sepinwall (2013) has called a 'Me Free Too' ideology, which:

> implies that slaves in Saint-Domingue would not imagine revolting until they overheard talk from White Frenchmen about liberty, equality, and

> fraternity'. It also reflects certain assumptions of Eurocentric thinking more generally; it portrays non-Westerns as passive objects who act in history only when awakened by Wester ideas. (p. 91)

While 1791 is the dedicated year for the beginnings of the revolt, enslaved African's agency pre-1791 involved more subtle acts of resistant to their conditions. These acts include but are not limited to marronage, poisoning masters, and practicing Voodoo. While it is germane in social studies and history classrooms that a juxtaposition between the Haitian Revolution and the French as well as the American revolutions occur, the point here is not simply to assume that Europeans solely influenced the actions of the Haitians. As Carolyn Fick (1990) suggested, the French Revolution might have just provided the distraction and opportune moment for the Saint-Domingue slaves to revolt.

Third, except for a few mentions about U.S. occupation of the island, Haiti is largely ignored in textbooks after their independence. This exclusion of Haiti's historical legacy is important because it limits how students understand Haiti's contemporary and material circumstances as one the poorest countries in the world. A more complex rendering of the Haitian revolution provides the foundation for this inquiry.

Not only do social studies standards and World history textbooks do a marginal job in exploring the concepts of race and racism, including how race is understood in Haiti, supplementary materials like the Haitian Revolution Curriculum developed by the Choice program do also. The Choice program is part of the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University. It is one of the few organizations that develop world history curriculum complete with primary sources documents. The five-day curriculum unit includes a student reading and activity book, teacher lesson plan, handout books, and access to the Choice website that include interactive timelines and videos interviews with historians. Tadashi Dozono's (2016) study, "Historical Experience and the Haitian Revolution in the History Classroom" examined the Choice's Haitian Revolution curriculum and noted some of the problematic epistemological and hermeneutical renderings in how Haiti Revolution curriculum is developed and implemented.

From Dozono's standpoint, the curriculum was presented as 'merely an iteration of the French Revolution' (p. 38). He described several instances where the Choices curriculum reinscribed European epistemology and naturalizing European ideas as salient curriculum aims of the project. From the curriculum's archival records, primary sources documents, and background readings were overwhelming represented with White Europeans and Enlightment thinkers. He argues that these curriculum materials naturalize 'European ideas as the only ones for understanding this event [Haitian Revolution], and largely ignores

African epistemologies.' One instructional activity asked students to imagine themselves as ex-slaves but the background readings only included the histories of Tainos and the European colonizers. Little history of slave trade or the various African cultural histories. Dozono acknowledged that the curriculum provided mere mentions of Voudou and other cultural influences brought by Africans but argued that brief exposure limits students' decisions making skills for the activity.

Both Dozono (2016) and Sepinwall (2013) scholarship on the Haitian Revolution is connected to a larger concern over the limited way Black history is represented (King, 2012). While both scholars appreciate the attempts of curriculum designers that explore the Haitian Revolution, they understand the importance of the qualitative renderings of the narratives. Therefore, without distinct African epistemologies and perspectives in the curriculum, there is still a void in understanding the nuances of the Haitian Revolution, especially from the perspectives of the various Black ethnic and classed groups on the island. Additionally, typically when Black history is approached through European epistemic frameworks, aspects of race and racism are marginalized (King, 2018). Therefore, our approach to race and racism through the Haitian revolution is not simply attempting to provide teachers with knowledge but help them understand the implications to how Haiti is representative of how history is racialized.

Thinking about Racism from a World-Scale Perspective

Despite these limitations, world history classrooms remain a unique and important site to help students develop insight into how race and racism have shaped and continue to shape contemporary global society. Manning (2003) suggested that there are stories about race and racism which can only be told from a world-scale perspective. He argued,

> the rise of racial discrimination and racial segregation that began in the 1890s all around the Atlantic in apparently independent situations suggests that some underlying common cause affected all these situations. A regional or national narrative does not explain the global timing of events. (Manning, 2003, p. 6)

Thinking about global patterns and connections help to develop insight into how race and racism inform global identities, movement, governance, labor and systems of exchange. Dunn (2009) added that "persuasive answers" to many compelling questions about history, including questions about slavery and intergroup relations, require attention to "world-scale factors, variables and influences" (p. 65).

Though the exact nature and function of race and racism varies according to context, its global persistence as a way to establish hierarchies

between social groups makes it one of the most important global issues of our time (Ladson-Billings, 2003). *Patterns of racial hierarchy* are the social systems that position different racial groups "in terms of power and perceived social value" (Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008, p. 338). Drawing from Omi and Winant, these systems have occurred throughout history and around the globe, and many social hierarchies map onto or parallel the English language concept of racism. Patterns of racial hierarchy are a useful point of reference for facilitating conversations about race and racism from a world-scale perspective.

As with tracing any concept in world history, patterns of racial hierarchy demand balancing the tension between concrete and abstract, identity and difference. Asserting that there are traceable patterns of racial hierarchy means it is something definable and identifiable, which risks solidifying into a concrete identity. At the same time, one must allow abstraction from that definition, to engage each case's particular difference and historical context as a challenge to any concrete notion of racial hierarchy over time. Our conceptual framework bridges Omi and Winant's work alongside Charles Mills, to both acknowledge racial hierarchies as historical actuality, while emphasizing their impermanence and malleability.

Understanding racial hierarchies as dynamic opens up possibilities to disrupt our present system of racial hierarchy. By juxtaposing racial formations of the past, students then question the stability and inevitability of our current system. The aim in tracing patterns of racial hierarchy is not to define race as something stable and concrete across history. As Omi and Winant pointed out, race and racial meaning is never stable nor consistent (2014, p.2). Rather, what is traced is how this category functions. Omi and Winant framed racial formations as "a template for the processes of marginalization that continue to shape social structures as well as collective and individual psyches" (2014, p. 107). Because race has been a central organizing force shaping contemporary society, tracing how racial hierarchies' function in various case studies in world history enables students to question the stability and universality of the racial regime with which they are most familiar.

Historically, Haiti is an appropriate case study for the patterns of racial hierarchy framework because the revolution changed the racial world, which worked based on a dominant ideology that sought Whiteness as the apex of humanity and Blackness as subhuman. As Georges Fouron noted, the Haitian Revolution "stood as a symbol of black civilization, dignity, regeneration and power," (2006, p. 74) ideas that did not resonate much within 18th and 19th century racist ideology. Knight echoed similar sentiments when he surmised that once the 'lowest order of the society, slaves, became equal, free, and independent citizens' they

identified themselves as 'Haitian and defined all Haitian Black,' which gave a psychological blow to the emerging intellectual traditions of an increasingly racist Europe and North America' (2000, p 105). Laurent Dubois (2004) also noted that the Haitian revolution 'forever transformed the world,' as central part of ending slavery in the Western World and was foundational for democracy and human rights. Despite, what was accomplished by the Black state, the Haitian revolution is not given its just due as other revolutions in the U.S. and France revolution.

Racial politics in Haiti before, during, and after the Haitian Revolution provide a powerful space through which to examine the global nature of race, racial identity, and racism. Our purpose here is not to provide a revision of Haitian history or even provide every detail related to the war; there are several foundational books and articles that serve that purpose. Our intent is to help world history teachers situate the revolution within a racial transformational paradigm. Applying this framework allows students to engage discussions of race not as a decontextualized universal, but by engaging the particularity of the past, which then allows students to see our contemporary racial hierarchy in light of the past.

To do this, we suggest teachers adopt and adapt the following guiding questions, as applied to the case study of race and racism in Haiti before, during, and after the Haitian Revolution:

How was the racial hierarchy established and maintained?

What language or terms are used to describe racial groups?

Who belonged to what racial group? How were these determinations made?

How are these groups defined? Are these groupings codified through law, religion, and/or culture?

How were patterns of racial hierarchy resisted?

What is the contemporary legacy or form of these patterns?

What are the institutional influences (or repercussions) of Race and racism?

We find these questions pertinent given that they provide a foundational platform for world history teachers to begin thinking about various ways to talk about Haiti and its revolution with their students, specifically with patterns of racial hierarchy.

General Overview of the Haitian Revolution

The Haitian Revolution was a collection of slave revolts and military strikes, which lasted for 13 years, from 1791- 1804. Originally the colony of Saint Domingue (from 1659 to 1804), the colony was France's wealthiest, and was one of the richest in the world (Fick, 1990; Dubois,

2004). The plantation economy made the island profitable with major crop productions of coffee, cotton, indigo, and sugar. This production relied heavily on the labor of the enslaved population of African ancestry. It is estimated that more than thirty thousand Africans were stolen from West and Central Africa each year to work on the Haitian plantations. By 1791, the Black population largely outnumbered the White population by tens of thousands. Despite being outnumbered, the French were able to establish control over the enslaved population as well as free Black people through Black codes, or *Code Noir*, resulting in some of the most brutal slave societies in the world (Fick, 1990; Dubois, 2004; Knight, 2000).

In response to this brutality, enslaved Africans resisted in many ways including infanticide (killing one's own child), suicide, plots to kill master and overseer, as well as practicing a religious ritual, Vodou. The most impactful resistance came when enslaved Africans and free Blacks led a series of complex, almost simultaneous mini-revolutions across the Caribbean island. The beginnings of the revolution have been tied to the ceremony of Bois-Caiman. The meeting of enslaved individuals was led by Boukman Dutty, Jean Francois, George Baissou, and female religious leader Cécile Fatiman. The organized revolts on the island began in August of 1791 and soon thousands of coffee and sugar plantations were destroyed and the enslaved revolutionaries occupied the Northern provinces. Free Blacks joined the revolution on the Western side of the island after the National Assembly of France reneged on a May decree granting them equal rights. French forces arrived a few month later to squash the revolution. The leaders of the slave insurrection (Boukman was killed at this time) attempted to negotiate freedom, the French refused, and the revolt continued, this time with Toussaint Louverture as a major leader.

Within the next few years, Haiti found itself invaded by both the Spanish (with many former slaves fought with) and British (with many free Black fought with). It was Louverture who sided with the French after France outlawed slavery in Haiti. Louverture, having risen to the rank of general, established himself as a prominent figure on the island. After defeating the British and Spanish, Haiti remained a French colony with free Black citizens. Yet, Black citizens of the colony were still divided between the former enslaved populations and free Blacks resulting in brief wars fought between these groups.

After peace was established between Britain and France, a new French leader, Napoleon Bonaparte sent his brother-in-law, General Leclerc to Haiti to gain control of the colony, capture its leader, and effectively reestablish slavery. After Louverture was sent off to France to die, a new leader emerged, General Dessalines, and with guerrilla war tactics, the Black citizens of Haiti defeated the French forces. General

Dessalines declared independence and renamed the island Haiti in honor of the original indigenous inhabitants. As a result of their efforts, Haiti became the second independent state in the Americas after the United States, and the first predominantly Black, sovereign country in the Western world. Following the war, General Jean-Jacques Dessalines would become the first *Emperor for Life* of the country (Dubois, 2004).

Throughout its 13-year conflict, the Haiti revolution resulted in the eradication of slavery, interracial/class disputes, wars with other countries, the emergence of a pseudo slave society, and finally, complete independence for Black people (Dubois, 2004). As Nick Nesbitt noted, the Haitian revolution constructed a "society without slavery, one of a universal and unqualified human right to freedom," which makes the Haitian revolution unique to World History (2008, p. 2). Taking into account the Haitian revolution it is clear to recognize the patterns of racial hierarchy.

Patterns of Racial Hierarchy in Haiti: A Case Study

In order to explore each guiding question with students in the classroom, teachers might consider drawing from both primary and secondary source materials about the Haitian Revolution. For example, David Geggus' (2014) and Laurent Dubois and John Garrigus' (2006) sourcebooks provide rich primary documents. Teachers can pair these alongside various secondary sources by historians who have reframed the Haitian Revolution through race, beyond oversimplification as the fulfilment of the Enlightenment. Each question is then analyzed for patterns of racial hierarchy, for systems of power and social value. It is also important to emphasize to students the tension between the stability and malleability of these racial structures over time.

How Was the Racial Hierarchy Established and Maintained?

Building on Charles Mills' (1997) assertion of the racial hierarchy as historical actuality, this question helps teachers and students identify the establishment of racial hierarchy within institutions. Racial hierarchy was defined by law through the establishment of the *code noir* or black codes. According to Garrigus, the *Code Noir* was published in 1685, written by French scholars, and was based on Roman slave law (2001, p. 39). Originally, the *code noir* regulated slave life by providing rules on slave labor, food, housing, clothes, punishment as well as emancipation. But the *code noir* changed over time, an important dynamic for students to consider as to why the code changed and in whose interests. Later revisions of the *code noir* also influenced and governed some aspects

of life for free Black people of the colony. Before 1763, racial labels were defined by social status not ancestry. Therefore, many free Black people technically had the same citizenship rights as White people. Free Blacks could buy land and slaves, get an education, marry White people, and practice any profession. Yet the colonial government and the White establishment worried that a growing free Black class would be detrimental to the slave economy as well as White hegemony (Fick, 1990; Dubois, 2004; Geggus, 2001).

After 1763, racial labels on the island began to take on the racial science of the time. Colonist began have more strict racial classification system. Throughout the 1760s and 1770s, the *code noir* began to forbid the interactions with free Blacks and enslaved Africans, especially if they were caught helping slaves escape, free Blacks could be placed in bondage. Throughout the 18th century, colonial officials began to establish more restrictions through the *code noir* for free Black people. The *code noir* began to limit free Blacks from running for public office, placed restrictions on job choices, eliminated free assembly after 9 pm, and curtailed name preferences, dress and personal hairstyles, especially if those styles closely resembled White people (Fick, 1990; Dubois, 2004). Despite the restrictions placed on free Blacks, they were required to join the military.

The *code noir* changed significantly after 1763 and shifted the race classification from a social apparatus to a more scientific and biological rendering. Garrigus surmised that 1763 was an important distinction of the changed racial philosophy because of the unsuccessful campaign during the seven-year war and colonial strife. A new emphasis began to promote the notions of White purity as well as White unity and French patriotism. At the same time Blackness was linked with inferiority and immorality.

This question helps students see the structural foundations of racial hierarchy, the establishment of power and prejudice through the legal system. Teaching Haiti as a case study of racial hierarchy changes the trend/norm from comparing the Haitian Revolution's political philosophy as an iteration of the French Revolution and European Enlightenment, to an iteration of codifying white supremacy. Teachers might utilize both the translation of the code noir in Dubois and Garrigus' sourcebook (2006, p.49-54) alongside secondary source analyses of historian's contextualizations.

Tracing the establishment and maintenance of racial hierarchy through legal codes is helpful also in understanding that historical tension of identity and difference. Legal codes have this tension of an appearance of stability through the notion of legal precedence, and yet that legal precedence can rather abruptly change and be overturned. In the process of articulating specific cases of racial hierarchy, students

encounter that tension of an appearance of stability amidst the racial hierarchy's malleability and dynamism.

This could be supplemented with theoretical passages by both Omi and Winant (2014), as well as Charles Mills (1997), to help students link the historical case study to patterns of racial hierarchy and the maintenance of white supremacy. Students might then begin to see how white supremacy is maintained not in spite of, but through those changes in legal definitions of the racial hierarchy. Teachers could help students draw links between how race was codified in Haiti to British and Spanish colonial systems, as well as U.S. contemporary racialized codifications today. How does this framework compare to our contemporary U.S. context? How can it help to denaturalize our own socially constructed racial hierarchy?

What language Was Used to Describe Racial Groups?
Who Belonged to What Racial Group?
How Were These Determinations Made?

This set of questions emphasizes the social construction of these groups, and how racial hierarchy functions dynamically through social interactions. Omi and Winant's framing of racialization emphasized "how the phenomic, the corporeal dimension of human bodies, acquires meaning in social life" (2014, p. 109). These questions take analysis of the racial hierarchy from institutions to how the hierarchy functioned in daily practice, highlighting the political, social, cultural, and economic aspects of living amidst the racial hierarchy.

The racial system of Saint-Domingo/Haiti (like many colonized and racialized countries), was not simply an issue of being Black or White but consisted of a highly complex racial hierarchy system with many layers. Blackness and Whiteness was defined through a series of law that eventually gave White people privileges afforded to citizens of the colony. Saint Domingo's racial hierarchical system was influenced by a mix of socio-economics and skin color and while we understand that different historians have varied classifications of Saint Domingo's racial hierarchy, we decided to divide Whites and Blacks into five distinct classifications. People of European decent or White persons were divided into two tiers, the *grand blancs* and the *petit blancs* while people of African descent or Black persons consisted of three classifications, free Blacks or *gens de couleur* (some may even classify them as mulattoes), enslaved Africans, and maroons.

The *grand blancs* were the most powerful group and consisted of wealthy Whites who were colony administrators and part of the planter class who were land and slave owners. The White planter class emerged during the early 18th century when plantation labor became the prominent

economic system through the growth of indigo, coffee and sugar. The *petit blancs* consisted of the lower to middle class Whites who did not own land. Many of the petit blancs were part of a growing immigrant class that moved to the colony after 1763. The petit blancs consisted of two types of immigrants from France. One type were young colonists who migrated from France to make it rich as a planter. These persons were from French families who were tradesmen, lower level government officials, and merchants. Many did not adjust to the complexities of managing plantations. Instead, some took jobs as poorly paid plantation bookkeepers to attempt to network and experience. This position, however, was low pay and was not beneficial in the Haiti higher social class. The second group could be considered the French underclass. While ex French sailors and soldiers were connected to this group, many of them were servant and petty criminals. Unlike earlier generations of colonist, the economy was hard and many had to smuggle, become pirates and become ranchers. Other popular jobs by petit blancs were plantation managers and overseers, lawyers, artisans, shopkeepers, grocers, tradesmen, and teachers.

It can be argued that the *gens de couleur* were the intermediary caste between the Whites and enslaved Africans. Many of these free Blacks were of both European and African ancestry and many were conceived based on the widespread practice of concubinage or rape of enslaved females and in some cases marriage between a White male and Black female. Free Blacks who did not have European ancestry were likely to have been enslaved but received freedom in their lifetime. The free Black population was relatively large and wealthy for a slave society, making the Saint-Domingo/Haiti colony unique to the Western world. Many of *gens de couleur* were wealthy planters, as well as colonial military or police units. While free Blacks enjoyed some wealth, even more sometimes as the petite blancs, they were considered second class citizens with partial freedoms on the island.

The second tier of the lower class were the enslaved Africans, who consisted of the progeny of the enslaved born in the new world as well as those who were born and taken away from Africa. The enslaved population had to endure much cruelty that life expectancy was so low that a constant supply of Africans was needed to sustain the economy. By the start of the revolution the majority of Saint-Domingo/Haiti's population was enslaved Africans, with the largest ethnic group (about 40%) coming from the kingdom of the Kongo (Dubois, 2004; Thornton, 1991; Thornton, 1993). The enslaved population was expected to work from ages 14- 60 with a consisted work schedule from five am to sundown with breaks for breakfast and lunch. The enslaved population, however, were not passive within these contexts and expressed their displeasure of being in bondage through slave insurgencies and marronage.

The third tier of the lower class were the maroons. The practice of marronage- escaping slave plantations- took many forms in Saint-Domingo/Haiti. In this context, we are specifically highlighting the maroons who sought refuge and developed their own societies in woods or the mountains of northern Haiti. Maroons established free communities and sometimes conducted raids against plantations in the name of claiming and defending their liberty. While maroons were not recognized as legitimate societies, colony officials did sign at least one treaty with the maroons of Bahoruco that promise amnesty and liberty for the promise that they will not accept any more runaway Africans (Dubois, 2004; Thornton, 1991; Thornton, 1993). Maroonage, although small compared to other Caribbean nations, was indication of the enslaved populations desires for freedom. It could be argued that maroon societies were the precursors of the revolution.

The primary sources available, alongside recent secondary source analyses by historians, provide rich materials to immerse students in those complex layers, contradictions, and permutations throughout Haiti's racial hierarchy. David Geggus' sourcebook (2014) provides seven primary documents focused on the racial hierarchy before the revolution, allowing students to analyze how the racial groupings functioned, how power and social value circulated through gender and race amidst group interactions. A primary source in Dubois and Garrigus (2006, p. 57-62) provides a description of "people of color" or *gens de couleur* in relation to the colony's white and black populations. Several secondary sources address the systems in pre-revolution Haiti (Ghachem (2012), whereas Paul Cheney's (2017) research examined the maintenance of slavery in the broader French colonial economic system.

Through these questions, students see the dynamism within the hierarchy, noting semipermeable memranes and questions of passing. Opening discussion of the fluid racial dynamics within a changing Haitian society, students might juxtapose their own experiences, refracting notions of passing, colorism, and overlaps between race, class, and gender today. Historical inquiry through patterns of racial hierarchy can model for students how to analyze more localized variations of racialization within their particular contexts and backgrounds. Students might consider how language to describe racial categories in the US has changed over the last 100 years in various iterations, alongside investments over language, and changing the language used.

How Were Patterns of Racial Hierarchy Resisted?

In spite of the multiple and interwoven systems that maintain the racial hierarchy, this question highlights the agency of marginalized groups to resist against systems. This question challenges portrayals

of marginalized groups as passive objects and victims, engaging their insurgent actions.

The *grand* and *petit blancs* formed a common bond of racial prejudice against both the enslaved and free Black population, yet, skin color, solely, was not a determining factor for cohesion or power. The *code noir* was particularly important for the *petit blancs* because the laws gave them an advantage over a growing free Black class. In other words, their skin became their privilege (Nicholls, 1996). The free Black population, especially the mulatto population, were threats to the petit blancs racial status. Many free Blacks held a higher social standing and were more economically mobile than the majority of *petit blancs*. So much so, that the free Black planter class could hire petit blancs as managers on their plantations. After all of the provisions went into the *code noir*, "the only privilege the Whites allowed them, was the privilege of lending White men money" (Fick, 1990, p. 21). Therefore, strengthening the *code noir* to restrict free Blacks helped maintained a resemblance of peace between the *grands* and *petits* by institutionalizing White supremacy and restricting free Blacks from fully assimilating in White society. The *code noir* helped facilitate an economic system that provided an illusion of upward mobility for the *petit blancs*. However, as the colony became wealthier the *petit blancs* felt that the grand blancs limited their chances for upper social mobility (Dubois, 2004).

In many ways the Haitian revolution was a battle over racial hierarchy. The intersectional dynamics of class, race, and geography brought interracial as well as intraracial conflicts, which enthralled Saint-Domingo/Haiti into a three-sided Civil War between the White planters, *petit blancs*, and free Blacks. All groups were influenced by the "*the Declaration of Rights of Man*," which stated that in the eyes of French law, all citizens are considered equal. The White planter class, who had complaints about how the French economically oppressed the colony, naturally, felt as the Declarations applied only to them since they held powerful positions and had the most wealth. They saw an opportunity to revolt and become independent of France (Fick, 1990; Dubois, 2004; Geggus 2001).

From 1789-1791, the *grand blancs* fought for an independent Haiti and through these efforts formed alliance with both free Blacks and the *petit blancs*. The White planter class aligned with free Blacks because they held similar interest to preserve the slave state and wealth of the privilege. Free Blacks, however, also wanted the benefits of full citizenship rights (i.e. social prestige and power), which made many of the White planters uncomfortable. The White planter class aligned with the *petit blancs* to fight against pro-French Bureaucrats on the colony for autonomous control of Haiti. Again, this union came with a cost: the *petit blancs* wanted

easier social mobility, which the White planter was not going to grant. This alliance was short lived because the *petit blancs* felt betrayal by the *grand blancs* for associating with the free Black population. Plus, the petit blancs saw their White privilege disseminate because of this alliance and the Declarations, as they wanted a laissez-faire racial and social policy. Despite the illusion of a partnership with the *grand blancs*, free Blacks were still discriminated against by both White groups leading to a small revolt of the free Blacks in 1790, which was defeated by the White elite. This resulted in the hanging and torturing of the leaders of the revolt and their soldiers such as Vincent Ogé, a wealthy free mulatto merchant and Jean-Baptiste Chavannes, a non-commissioned officer in Haiti's free colored militia, who were tortured to death in the cathedral square of Cap-Français for leading a small revolt against disenfranchisement laws against free men of color (Garrigus, 2010).

While the French revolution had an impact on the behaviors of the White planters, *petit blancs*, and free Blacks, and the enslaved population were also cognizant to the calls for freedom and human equality. Although a few slave rebellions had happened on the island, it was the slave uprising of August 21st, 1791 that is regarded as the beginning of the Haitian revolution. Planned a week ahead by 200 enslaved Africans in the Northern province of Haiti and led by enslaved Africans from the Kongo, most of the northern portion of the colony was controlled by the revolutionaries within a few months (Dubois, 2004). Early 1792 saw French forces with the help of free Blacks contained the slave rebellion but with war with Britain and Spain emerging and the threat of revolutionaries siding and fighting with those countries, the French commander by 1793 freed all the enslaved Africans with the condition that they would remain loyal to the French and help fight the European insurgents.

Throughout the next decade, Haiti was an embattled colony that participated in multiple wars. First, the colony with the help of the former slaves and a new emerging leader, Toussaint Louverture, eliminated the foreign aggressors. Second, the colony was divided between north and south with two high ranking Black leaders as figure heads, Toussaint Louverture and Andre Rigaud. Louverture and Rigaud represented the two distinct Black racial classes. Louverture represented the enslaved population although he was freed before the revolution and Rigaud was a mulatto.

The bulk of both Dubois and Garrigus' (2006) and Geggus' (2014) sourcebooks on the Haitian Revolution emphasized primary documents of resistance, however Geggus' collection greatly expands students' access to a range of voices and perspectives. This very limitation of access in the archive necessitates discussion of Trouillot's (1997) historiographic work

on the production of silences in and through the archives. The patterns of racial hierarchy are not only something existing in the past, but hold power over us in the present through our limited capacity to know the past through the archive, constructed as a technology to maintain that racial hierarchy. Students could be prompted to consider where they see resistance to racial hierarchy today, and whether such resistance has been silenced or celebrated.

What Is the Contemporary Legacy or Form of These Patterns?

By late 1798, while infighting occurred between various groups, people of African descent effectively governed Haiti. Many of the French officials escaped to France, many *grand blancs* and *petit blancs* left but without the protection of the *code noir* stayed on their plantations or communities yielding little political or social influence. The struggle for power in Haiti now turned to Toussaint Louverture and Andre Rigaud with Louverture in 1800 prevailing. One of the first acts of Toussaint was establishing a Constitution for Saint-Domingo, which included the help from many former slaveholders. While the Constitution highlighted that all people regardless of the skin color were citizens, no newly freed person participated in the writing of the document.

Haiti, which was the most productive colony in the world at one time, was in a conundrum. The island's wealth was based on the plantation system and the leadership elite over the next few decades, including Louverture, expressed interest to move back to exporting crops through the plantation system. The majority population, who were formerly enslaved resisted the plantation system, instead cultivated small farms, raised livestock, and grew crops for themselves and sold them at local markets (Dubois, 2012). While the former slaves enjoyed the independence of working their farms, the state rarely benefited. To attempt to make the country profitable, the leadership devised authoritarian rule over the citizens. The plantation system was still a prevalent economic system with the former slaves being the primary cultivators of land. In many respects the only aspect that changed from the old regime was that the former slaves received income for their service. The former enslaved were also not allowed to leave, not able to buy land to sell their own crops, and were punished harshly for idleness or lack of production (Dubois, 2012). Politically, the vast majority of Haitians were excluded from the democratic process. For example, Laurent Dubois noted that the official language was French, which excluded the majority of Haitians who spoke Kreyol, 'for almost all of Haiti's history, most of the population were unable to read the laws of the country (Dubois, 2012, p.7). After independence the struggle for power between the different Black racial groups, the mulattoes and the blacks, continued and have been instrumental in the

racial makeup of the predominantly Black country today (Nicholls, 1996; Gates, 2011).

Teachers could take excerpts from Laurent Dubois' *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (2012) to provide secondary source analysis of the legacies. There are as well primary sources that reflect on the Haitian Revolution's impact in other colonies in the Americas, such as Geggus & Fiering's (2009) section on "Reverberations." Frederick Douglass' "Lecture on Haiti (1893)" (Geggus, 2014, p. 203) offers an interesting primary source linking the legacy of the revolution in Haiti to the African American experience in the U.S. The impacts of the Haitian Revolution are continuously reassessed, as evidenced in recent research such as *Reinterpreting the Haitian Revolution and its Cultural Aftershocks* (Munro & Walcott-Hackshaw, eds. 2006), *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution* (Jackson & Bacon, eds. 2010), and *The Black Jacobins Reader* (Forsdick & Hogsbjerg, eds. 2017).

What Are the World-Scale Institutional Influences of Race and Racism? What Are the Institutional Repercussions of Race and Racism?

This question reflects the global reaches of the racial contract, as frame by Charles Mills. In spite of becoming an independent nation-state, Haiti remained subject to a pattern of racial hierarchy on a global scale. As a nation, Haiti continued to be treated as less-than.

It could be argued that some of the authoritarian economic approaches were out of necessity. The independence of Haiti, defeating a European power, and the aesthetics of a government ran by former enslaved individuals and people of African descent in a world and a geographical region heavily dominated by slavery, had a tremendous economic and political impact for the new nation. Following France and England, The United States, who had achieved freedom through its own revolution from Britain two decades earlier, did not officially recognize Haiti as sovereign. After two decades of independence, France recognized Haiti after the country agreed to a royal decree which outlined special tariff rates for France and an indemnity of 150 million francs (about 3 billion dollars today, it was later reduced to 60 million francs) to France as compensation to slaveholders for their losses. The figure was an estimate of slave-owners' property value lost as a result of the war. Agreeing to these policies resulted in France recognizing Haiti as sovereign. If they did not agree to these terms, France threatened the country with a blockade and to send its military to recapture the country.

The decree was not a negotiation but an ultimatum by France. A sort of reparations to France had been discussed before with Haitian leaders as a political and economic strategy. The leaders thought that to pay the indemnity, they would gain political and diplomatic status

and would be able to export easier, therefore, prosper economically, so much that the indemnity would not be too much of a burden. Yet the elite leadership agreed to these terms without consulting with the general populace, which caused major strife because the ones who suffered the most were the Haitian farmers, former and descendants of the enslaved population. In order to pay for the debt, Haiti had to take out loans from a French bank. Conditions included repaying 30 million francs over 25 years with a 6% interest and an additional 20% fee for providing money to the country. Haiti repaid that debt for several generations. By 1898 half of Haiti's government budget went towards the reparations; by 1914, it was 80%.

While the indemnity was not the only condition that prevented economic prosperity for the newly formed country, it does provide some insight into the conditions and material realities of Haitians today. Sixty million francs is lot of money for a burgeoning country and with a great percentage going to repaying a debt to its former oppressors, that left little monies to reinvest in infrastructure, education, and other salient governmental entities.

The Haitian revolution is still relevant today as it was in the past because the result of the Haitian independence marks a clear example of how the legacy before the revolution, created and enforced by the French, is the foundation for present day Haiti. In other words, the systems enforced by the French—economic, hierarchy, oppression—have manifested to be felt and reinforced by Haitians. For example, because Haiti was at one point the most productive colony in the world through its plantation system, Haitian officials decided to make the country profitable and continue the plantations to be worked by the former slaves. Despite the fact that former slaves were receiving income for working the fields, a hierarchy was enforced in regard to blacks, those that were free before the revolution and those that were former slaves. Furthermore, the debt that was owed to France laid a historical setback that did not allow Haiti to be truly free. Indeed, Haiti was and still is oppressed through the debt enforced by France. These examples clearly demonstrate how the Haitian revolution is still relevant today and a way for social studies and history teachers to further develop students' understandings of race.

Implications

Taking into account the way that Haiti is represented in world history textbooks—over-emphasis on the French revolution when talking about the Haitian revolution clearly demonstrating Eurocentric notions; messianic/messiah narratives about Toussaint Louverture; and the exclusion of Haiti after their independence—we find it necessary and

important for social studies and history teachers to properly introduce the Haitian revolution to students. One way to introduce Haiti is to use the material that we've presented above, particularly on patterns of racial hierarchy, as a starting point to not only get the conversation going about race but also develop students' understandings on race. Because patterns of racial hierarchy are not exclusive to Haiti, this lesson would then allow teachers to make connections to other countries/colonies that have been similarly affected by racial hierarchy.

Reflecting on Omi and Winant's work on racial formation, this set of questions allows students to access the different layers of how racial hierarchy functions, evolves, impacts individuals, and how individuals respond to racial hierarchy. This work requires that teachers attend to several tensions, or cautions. The first, as mentioned earlier, is the tension between identity and difference, between helping students see patterns of racial hierarchy, while at the same time disrupting a concrete notion of what that racial hierarchy looks like across time and space.

When considering patterns of racial hierarchy in other cases in world history, these questions allow one to trace racial formation through the last five hundred years of world history, and even further back within Europe's earlier links with Africa and Asia. However, one must be careful to consider those instances directly shaped by a European epistemology of race, and those systems beyond or prior to European influence. For example, juxtaposing the caste system in ancient India would differ from juxtaposing the Spanish colonial racial hierarchy; both Spanish and French systems are linked through Enlightenment thinking (and what Charles Mills (1997) framed as the racial contract), whereas ancient India's caste system was prior to the Enlightenment and outside of European influence. Of course, this attention to particular contexts should come with any historical comparison of global phenomena, be it gender, technology, religion, etc.

There is also an important caution to not compare systems of oppression, to not ask students to determine which system was worse than another. Comparisons might be drawn between how the systems functioned, strategies of resistance applied by oppressed groups, but teachers should not ask students to compare which was worse. The benefit of juxtaposing one system of racial hierarchy against another would be to disrupt the givenness of our own contemporary system of racial hierarchy, to get students to question why our system exists in the first place, and consider means for resisting that system.

Conclusion

Though race is often conceptualized in regional and national contexts,

Winant described race as a "global phenomenon" of increasing importance, affecting "our sense of who we are" and shaping "the demands we place on social institutions" (1999, p. 99). As global communities continue to confront racism in its many expressions, the meanings associated with the term will continue to evolve. It is unlikely that any individual teacher or world history classroom community will engage in conversations about racism that offer definitive, satisfying answers for everyone involved. We do not recommend examining patterns of racial hierarchy to arrive at these types of answers. Instead, we suggest that exploring this concept in the context of world history education is one of the many ways to interrogate significant social relationships and activities, and the meaning of community, identity, humanity and justice.

Race is such a polarizing topic that many teachers avoid its coverage even when the historical narrative allows for exploration. This avoidance has caused much bad history, especially Black history, to be presented in K-12 classrooms (King, 2017). The telling of history is the story of humainity and who we consider to be human. The narratives we priviledge have as much to do with our understanding of the present as to our understanding of the past. Race is such an important historical and contemporaty construct. To leave out its importance to understanding history is tragic, irresponsible, and reinforces the power dynamic of Whiteness within official history policy. We encourage more conversations about race to help combat the erasure and misrepresentation of Black and other people of color in social studies more broadly. Without understanding "race" and its intersections we miss these revolutionaries' full humanity and they become simple historical actors void of nuance and complexity, a fate that contines to plague history teaching today.

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