

## Reading Toussaint Louverture: Literary and Historical Perspective

Chair: Doris Y. Kadish, University of Georgia

Mary Anne Garnett  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

### Toussaint Louverture as Christian Hero in Lamartine and Martineau

This paper will examine not the ultimately unknowable nature of Toussaint's religious beliefs, but rather two literary representations of those beliefs in which he is portrayed as a Christian hero: Lamartine's drama in verse *Toussaint Louverture* (1850) and Harriet Martineau's historical romance *The Hour and the Man* (1841). Both authors feature priests as important secondary characters whose conversations with Toussaint elucidate his struggles with his conscience over crucial decisions that will determine both his own fate and that of his cause. Lamartine's *père Antoine* functions not only as a spiritual guide, highlighting the right course of action in Toussaint's struggle between his duty to his people and his paternal love for his sons, but also, much like the chorus in a Greek tragedy, he functions as the ideal spectator and commentator of the events the public is witnessing. As a Catholic priest and white authority figure, *Père Antoine*'s role is also critical to the representation of Toussaint as a Christian hero, a modern Moses who will lead his people to the promised land that he himself will not live to enter. In contrast, Harriet Martineau, a descendent of French Huguenots, has Toussaint ultimately freeing himself from the tutelage of his Spanish confessor, the royalist Father Laxabon, by listening to the "voice within" that is stronger than that of the priest. Lamartine and Martineau thus provide representations of Toussaint as a religious hero in conformance with their own religious beliefs and the expectations of their respective publics.

Doris Y. Kadish  
University of Georgia

### Constructing the Abolitionist Father: Germaine de Staël and Isaac Louverture

A comparison of how Germaine de Staël and Isaac Louverture recounted the lives of their celebrated fathers Jacques Necker and Toussaint Louverture, two of French history's most celebrated opponents of slavery, can help to define the parameters within which late-eighteenth century and early-nineteenth century thinkers conceptualized colonial and post-colonial identities. Like their fathers, Germaine and Isaac were products of a patriarchal society in which the authority that was vested in male figures or institutions—the French government, God, and the father—went unquestioned. Within their adherence to patriarchal standards, however, both Staël the daughter and Louverture the son—again, like their famous fathers—resisted colonialist exploitation and the inhuman treatment of blacks. The specific forms of resistance that interest me in this paper, and the basis of the comparison that I wish to draw between the two scions of early French abolitionism, concern the discursive construction of familial relations. Although paternalistic in nature, these constructions open the door for a kind of sentimental identification with blacks and women that transcends and deconstructs the patriarchal attitudes of the time.

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Daniel Desormeaux  
University of Kentucky

### L'invincible tactique des Mémoires d'Isaac Louverture

"Cette communication propose de s'interroger sur le vrai caractère politique des célèbres mémoires d'Isaac Louverture, le fils de Toussaint. Rédigé indubitablement sous la Restauration, mais publié en appendice dans l'Histoire de l'expédition militaire des Français à Saint-Domingue, sous Napoléon Bonaparte. Suivi des Mémoires et notes d'Isaac Louverture, sur la même expédition, et sur la vie de son père d'Antoine Métral (1825), ce récit à l'air d'une petite fenêtre ouverte sur les origines mythiques de Toussaint Louverture, sur l'état d'esprit politique du fils de Toussaint et surtout de sa volonté de gérer la gloire posthume du père par tous les moyens. En comparant ce fameux texte à deux autres documents inédits d'Isaac, notre analyse cherchera à peser le pour et le contre du recensement suivant de Jean Tulard: "Récit du fils de Toussaint-Louverture, élevé en France, sur la guerre de Saint-Domingue. On distingue mal l'apport d'Isaac dans cette relation manifestement rédigée par Métral."

Deborah Jenson  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

### Napoleonic Kidnappings, from Toussaint Louverture to the Son of Henry Christophe

The seizure, deportation, and imprisonment of Toussaint Louverture and his family by the government of Napoleon Bonaparte are well known and have been commemorated in texts from Wordsworth's "To Toussaint Louverture" to Madison Smartt Bell's Haitian Trilogy. Less well known is the story of the abduction of the eldest son of Haitian Revolutionary Henry Christophe. This paper assesses the traumatic intercultural dynamics of kidnapping and the oblique strategies and structures necessary to the witnessing of kidnapping through a narrative by former slaves collected in the notes of ethnographer Moreau de Saint-Méry.