

The Department of French & Italian presents
a lecture by



Doris L. Garraway

Northwestern University

Some Paradoxes of the Haitian Revolution: The Case of Pompée Valentin, "Baron" de Vastey (1781-1820)

3:30 pm, Friday April 24, 2009

Maple Room

Indiana Memorial Union

About the lecture: Though "silenced" for centuries in Western historiography, the Haitian Revolution is now often regarded as the most radical revolution of the Age of Revolutions, one that exposed the limitations of the French Revolution's rhetorical embrace of universal liberty and challenged European colonialism and the racial order of slavery in the Americas. Yet the specificities of the Haitian Revolution -- notably, its universalist claims and its establishment of an "empire" followed by a "kingdom" -- are still arguably incompatible with current theoretical understandings of revolution, anti-colonialism, and radical emancipation. I will first briefly outline some of the ways in which the Haitian Revolution resists dominant categories through which modern revolutions have been understood.

Turning to the writings of Baron de Vastey (1781-1820), the leading propagandist under the monarchy of Henry Christophe, I will then examine how one of the revolution's most impassioned interpreters defended Haiti's revolutionary birth, its sovereignty, and the legitimacy of its monarchical government in an attempt to argue for its belonging within the modern Atlantic world.

About the Speaker: Doris Garraway is Associate Professor of French in the Department of French and Italian at Northwestern University. Her research and teaching interests include French Caribbean and Haitian literature and historiography, the Haitian Revolution in literature, early modern French travel literature, and French and Francophone cultural theory.

Her book, *The Libertine Colony: Creolization in the Early French Caribbean* (Duke, 2005; reprint 2008), examines narratives, histories, legal texts, and fictions of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French slave societies, with particular emphasis on the role of gender and sexuality in social relations of domination and constructions of race.

She is the editor of *Tree of Liberty: Cultural Legacies of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (University of Virginia, 2008), which includes her recent work on universalism and nationalism in Haitian revolutionary discourse. She has published articles on colonial and postcolonial Caribbean literature and culture in the *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, *Callalou*, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, and *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, and a forthcoming essay on the Enlightenment critique of colonialism (La Hontan and Diderot) will appear in the edited volume *The Postcolonial Enlightenment* (Oxford, Feb. 2009). She is a past recipient of a fellowship from Northwestern's Kaplan Center for the Humanities, and was an affiliate at the Center in 2007-08.

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Sponsored by the Mary-Margaret Barr Koon Fund of the Department of French & Italian, the Department of African American and Africa Diaspora Studies, the Department of History, and the African Studies Program.

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