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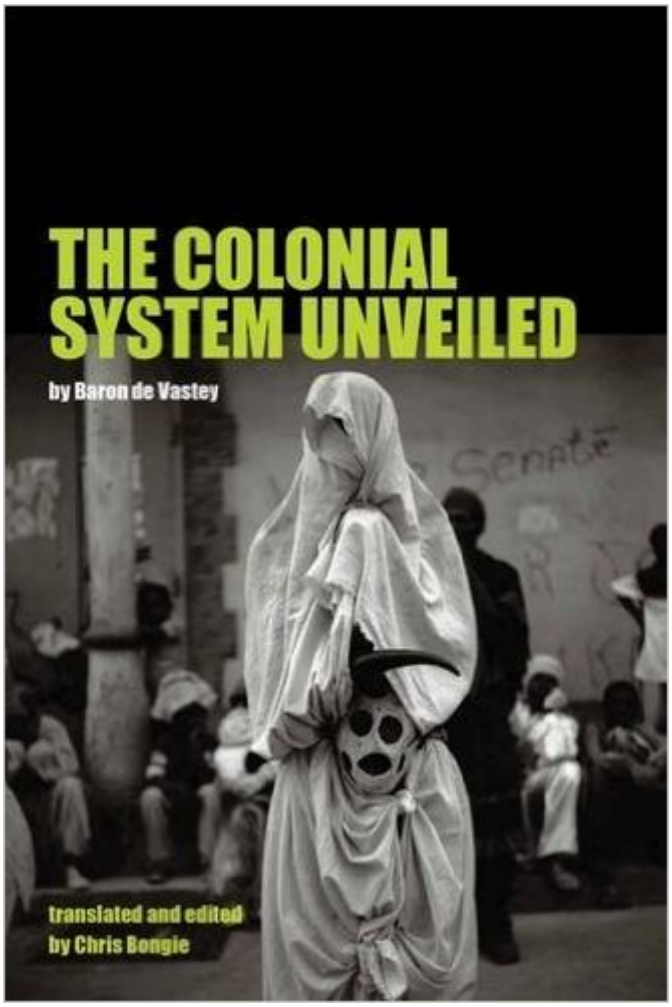
The Colonial System Unveiled



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Synopsis

Long neglected in mainstream history books, the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) is now being claimed across a range of academic disciplines as an event of world-historical importance. The former slaves' victory over their French masters and the creation of the independent nation of Haiti in 1804 is being newly heralded not only as a seminal moment in the transnational formation of the 'black Atlantic' but as the most far-reaching manifestation of 'Radical Enlightenment'. The best known Haitian writer to emerge in the years after the revolution is Baron de Vastey (1781-1820), who authored over ten books and pamphlets between 1814 and his murder in 1820. His first and most incendiary work, Le systÃ¨me colonial dÃ©voilÃ© (1814), provides a moving invocation of the horrors of slavery in pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue. Its trailblazing critique of colonialism anticipates by over a hundred years the anticolonial politics (and poetics) of CÃ©saire, Fanon, and Sartre. Translated here for the first time, Vastey's forceful unveiling of the colonial system will be compulsory reading for scholars across the humanities.

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