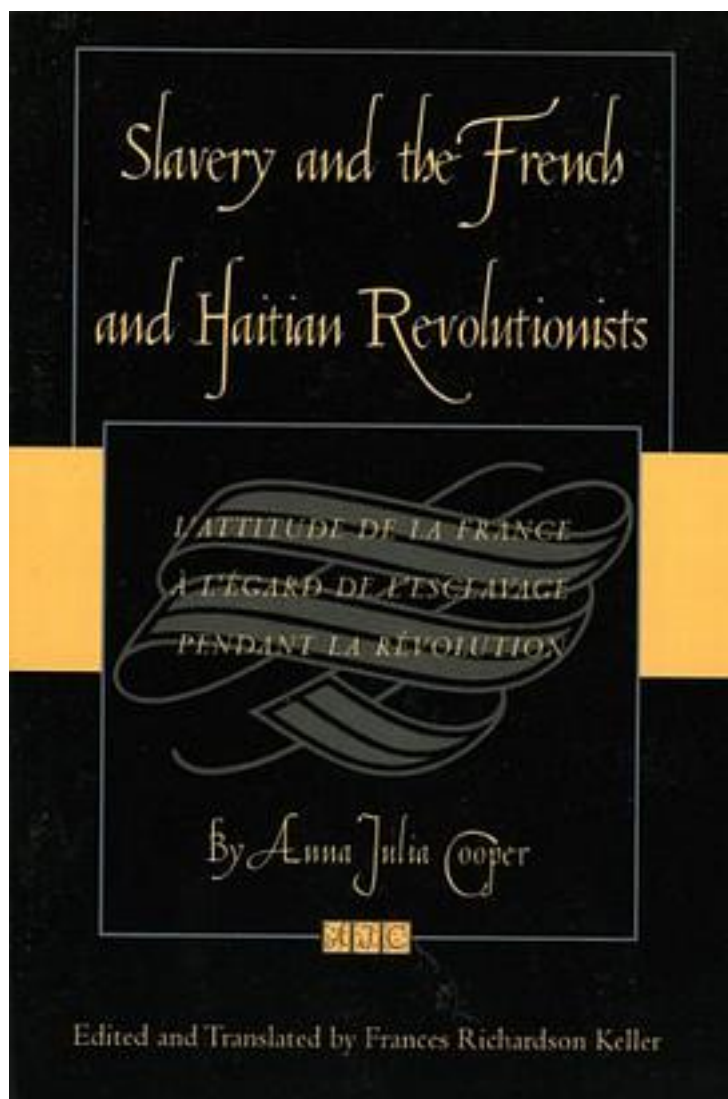


Slavery and the French and Haitian Revolutionists



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On March 23, 1925 at the age of 66, Anna Julia Cooper stood ready to defend her dissertation before a review committee at the University of Paris. Cooper's remarkable intellectual achievement was the product of years of hard work and determination, a highly unusual journey for a child born to an enslaved mother in 1858. Her dissertation, "L'attitude de la France a L'egard de L'esclavage pendant la Revolution," offered a bold interpretation of the French Revolution. In it, Cooper examined the relations between the 18th century revolutionists in Paris and the representatives and inhabitants of the richest of French colonies, San Domingue. She argued that the legalized slave trade became a critical issue in the struggle over the rights of man during the French Revolution and that when the revolutionists of Paris deflected the question of slavery in San Domingue, the people of France lost the opportunity to escalate their liberty and their equality. Cooper insisted that to understand the French Revolution and its repercussions, it is necessary to add the dimension of race. As an African American woman, her work provides readers with a unique and powerful perspective on these turbulent events during the French and Haitian Revolutions. Historian Frances R. Keller now makes this unique work available in English for students and scholars alike. Through her interpretive essays, Keller places Cooper's dissertation in the context of her life and scholarship. Keller also provides an essential historical look at the international events that led up to the bloody revolutions in France and Haiti.

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目录:

[Slavery and the French and Haitian Revolutionists_ 下载链接1](#)

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