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Unsilencing the Haitian Revolution: C. L. R. James and *The Black Jacobins*

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ABSTRACT

Exploring the genesis, transformation and afterlives of *The Black Jacobins*, this article follows the revision trail of James's evolving interest in Toussaint Louverture. How does James "show" as drama versus "tell" as history? Building on Michel-Rolph Trouillot's idea of "silencing the past," this article argues that James engages in an equally active and transitive reverse process of *unsilencing* the past. James's own unsilencing of certain negative representations of the Haitian Revolution is evaluated, as is James's move away from presenting the colonized as passive objects, instead turning them instead into active subjects. James should be recognized as a precursor to "history from below." It uncovers James's "writing in" of more popular leaders, masses and Haitian crowd scenes, of whom there is little archival trace. James's own making of *The Black Jacobins* over nearly sixty years is linked to the process of *rasanblaj* (re-assembly, gathering) and the search for Caribbean identity.

KEYWORDS

Rewriting; Haitian Revolution; Toussaint Louverture; Caribbean; theatre/drama; history from below

Toussaint Louverture [To French captors]: "In destroying me you destroy only the trunk. But the tree of Negro liberty will flourish again, for its roots are many and deep."¹

These lines above are spoken by visionary leader Toussaint Louverture, the ultimate protagonist in C. L. R. James's first play about the Haitian Revolution *Toussaint Louverture* (1936). The same lines are echoed in James's more famous anticolonial classic history *The Black Jacobins* (1938, revised 1963), but do not appear in James's later second Haitian drama *The Black Jacobins* (1967).² These lines are highly significant for James's first drama and both history versions of the Haitian Revolution story because they are attributed to the historic Haitian revolutionary leader and they come right at the dramatic crux of the play/history narrative as Louverture's final words upon leaving colonial San Domingo forever as a French prisoner. Prior to Toussaint's forced departure, he also referred to the phenomenon of the liberty tree from the contexts of the French and American Revolutions to inspire his compatriots to fight for freedom.³ As he declared in his "Address to Soldiers for the Universal Destruction of Slavery" in May 1797: "Let us go

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forth to plant the tree of liberty, breaking the chains of our brothers still held captive under the shameful yoke of slavery."⁴ Toussaint's liberty tree metaphor would later be echoed by President Jean-Bertrand Aristide when ousted in February 2004 – the bicentenary year of Haitian independence. The idea of the tree of liberty flourishing again can be connected with the multiple different versions of James's own Haitian Revolution stories as retold over a period of nearly sixty years. From Toussaint being the all-important central protagonist in the 1936 play, there is a progressive process of "writing out" this revolutionary.

This article explores the genesis, transformation and afterlives of James's landmark *Black Jacobins* project.⁵ Here, new developments include linking changes made throughout the genealogy of *The Black Jacobins* to the process of *rasanblaj* (re-assembly or gathering). Arguing that James's work on the Haitian Revolution is itself a complex *rasanblaj*, this article draws on the archival sleuthing that has been required to reassemble all the different manuscript versions of James's famous yet strangely little-known classic.

Caribbean quarrels and unsilencing

James's own deployment of Toussaint is mobile and constantly changes over time in response to different circumstances. His first published use of the revolutionary comes in a 1931 article, which is a response piece in a Trinidadian journal to the pseudo-scientific racism of Sidney Harland's previous article "Race Admixture."⁶ In his 1931 riposte titled "The Intelligence of the Negro: A Few Words with Dr Harland," James sketches out a biographical portrait of Toussaint. From the start, James's history-writing is dialogic and can be analysed as part of the Caribbean "quarrel" with history, as theorized by Edward Baugh.⁷ One crucial source was clearly the famous book-length rebuttal by black Trinidadian schoolmaster John Jacob Thomas, aptly titled *Froudacity: West Indian Fables Explained* (1889) of English historian James A. Froude's notorious 1888 travelogue.⁸ This travelogue unashamedly supported British rule for the Caribbean colonies and painted the Haitian Revolution as a complete disaster. Froude would later become Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford. Countering such misrepresentation of Haiti and the wider Caribbean was a major aim of James's history writing in *The Black Jacobins* where he takes aim against the "professional whitewashers" of history and "Tory historians, regius professors and sentimentalists."⁹ Indeed, James himself would later in 1969 pen an introduction to Thomas's *Froudacity*, correcting at length "Froudacious" Froude.¹⁰ There James would literally rewrite every single racist sentence about Haiti from a single page of Froude, transforming each one from passive to active voice.

From the beginning, James's focus on Toussaint responds to the historiographic "silencing," "erasure," "disavowal," "banalization," and "trivialization" of the Haitian Revolution; this silencing process would be later outlined by Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995), Sibylle Fischer (2004), and Susan Buck-Morss (2009), among others.¹¹ As Trouillot has argued, this silencing is an active and transitive process – something that is actively done to someone or something else – at all stages of the production of history, including the four crucial moments of fact creation (making sources), moments of fact assembly (making archives), moments of fact retrieval (making narratives), and the moment of retrospective significance (making history in the final instance).¹² Building on Trouillot's

ideas, this article argues that James's own making of history and drama is an equally active and transitive reverse process of *unsilencing* the past. James attempts to represent the unrepresentable – all of the silences and gaps in colonial archives, sources and history narratives previously written from the colonizer's point of view.

As James would write in 1980, the impetus for first turning to the Haitian Revolution was this:

I was tired of reading and hearing about Africans being persecuted and oppressed in Africa, in the Middle Passage, in the USA and all over the Caribbean. I made up my mind that I would write a book in which Africans or people of African descent instead of constantly being the object of other people's exploitation and ferocity would themselves be taking action on a grand scale and shaping other people to their own needs.¹³

What James outlines in this statement is his decision to shift the dominant voice of Caribbean history-telling from passive to active. Action is central to how any history is perceived: history can be seen as either events that befall us, always from elsewhere, or as things we actively do, use, or make ourselves. Particularly in the context of Caribbean quarrels with history, this active versus passive historical outlook is the crucial dividing line for representing the Haitian Revolution. James's early 1931 biographical sketch presents Toussaint as the active subject of nearly every single active verb. Louverture is here action personified: the ultimate action man. James lists Toussaint's many achievements in the 1931 article, piling actions breathlessly through quick-fire parataxis in short sentences. Strings of active verbs represent the revolutionary springing from one action to the next at a breakneck speed. Action is the subject of the biographical passage, but it is also a key constitutive feature of the means of representation when sketching out the bare bones of Toussaint's biography.

Toussaint Louverture takes centre stage (1936)

James's play *Toussaint Louverture* was performed only twice in March 1936 at the Westminster Theatre in London with famous African-American actor, singer and political activist Paul Robeson in the lead role. The playscript was only first published in 2013 by Duke University Press. In 2005, Christian Høgsbjerg found a typescript of this play among the Jock Haston papers at Brynmor Jones library, University of Hull.¹⁴ Until now, most scholarship tended to focus on a single manuscript. My work adds a comparative dimension to the scholarship on James's first 1936 and second 1967 *The Black Jacobins* plays by Nicole King, Høgsbjerg, and Reinhard Sander.¹⁵ James's collaborative way of working led to different scripts of both plays in various states of genesis being found around the world. No doubt, there are still other scripts out there yet to be discovered. For the *Toussaint Louverture* play, the National Library and Information System Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (NALIS) script only discovered in autumn 2014 by Høgsbjerg and first processed and digitized by NALIS in 2016 comes closest to the actual performance script.¹⁶ This is the only one of the ten scripts consulted which was dated, and this date – September 1935 – allows us to chart the evolution as the play moves closer towards performance. Helpfully, this script is also inscribed in James's hand with a dedication to Harry Spencer, James's great friend in Nelson, Lancashire (Figure 1):

Nelson was an important site for the making of what would become *The Black Jacobins*. This place ignited James's own political awakening – it was where he first turned to radical

Sept 12 1935.
 Scarborough.
 From Nello.
 For Harry.
 With best
 wishes & many
 thanks for
 love of things

Figure 1. C. L. R. James, script dedication to Harry Spencer (1935). C. L. R. James, “Toussaint Louverture: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History” (Series 14, Box 6, MFN14837), courtesy of the Sir Learie Constantine Collection, National Library Information Services (NALIS), Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Marxist politics and “reading very hard” books by Karl Marx and Leon Trotsky. Spencer stumped up the cash for James’s first research trip to Paris, France. Out of the raw research from his Paris trips was born both the 1936 play and the 1938 history.

James himself described how on coming to England in 1932, fiction-writing drained out of him to be replaced by politics when he became a Marxist and a Trotskyist.¹⁷ Drama is very important in the scheme of James’s sixty-year-long *Black Jacobins* project

because his Haiti-related writings both begin and end life as plays. Drama is, this article argues, a special literary category with particular qualities that would appeal to a fundamentally political person like James. Theatre has been described as the most public of the arts and as “second cousin” to politics with a special “politics-ready” quality.¹⁸ This intrinsically political role of theatre as a representing machine also connects it with action, as characters and historical events from long ago can be brought to life when performed by flesh-and-blood actors in the present tense of theatre’s liveness as if these actions were happening here and now.

Toussaint Louverture – the first play’s main revolutionary – appears in all but one scene after his death where he is invoked at length. James here privileges Toussaint as the ultimate personification of, or metonym for, the Haitian Revolution. After coming to politics in England, James increasingly politicizes his deployment of Toussaint and uses the Haitian Revolution for vindication purposes as a great success story and as a vehicle for propaganda. Indeed, the very subtitle of the *Toussaint Louverture* 1936 play is: *The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History*. The emphasis is on the Haitian Revolution’s success in fighting against all the great powers of the day – including Napoleon Bonaparte’s French troops, the British and the Spanish – and winning complete independence from colonial rule on 1 January 1804. The focus is on success and *The Perspective of Winning* – to borrow part of the title from his wife Selma James’s *Sex, Race and Class*.¹⁹ This is what marks *Toussaint Louverture* (1936) and *The Black Jacobins* (1938) out from many previous histories of the Haitian Revolution – some of which like Froude and T. Lothrop Stoddard’s racist accounts present the Haitian Revolution as an unmitigated *failure* and a race war. James, however, always brings class into the equation alongside race.²⁰

In both play and history, James uses the Haitian example to stage contemporary or recent resistance in Haiti during the US Occupation and in Ethiopia throughout the Italian invasion, linking both to broader anti-imperialist struggles. The Ethiopian struggle had an immense impact on James’s political work and writings, including speaking tours, newspaper opinion pieces and political pamphlets all devoted to raising pan-African solidarity over the Ethiopian crisis.²¹ James chaired the International African Friends of Abyssinia (IAFA) group in 1935, and from May 1937 onwards was involved in its later incarnation, the International African Service Bureau (IASB) as editorial director of its journal *International African Opinion*. Through its subject matter, themes and characterization, the play is used to critique foreign powers. Turning to drama gives James an effective weapon for showing in action the “incredible savagery and duplicity of European imperialism in its quest for markets and raw materials,” which dramatizes James’s 1936 article “Abyssinia and the Imperialists.”

Diplomatic intrigues are writ largest throughout the pivotal Act 2, Scene 1 where the inter-imperialistic rivalry, hypocrisy and lies of all foreign powers are omnipresent. Representatives of the great powers – France, Britain and America – meet in secret to discuss their positions and shared interests as they cross one another and the Haitian revolutionary leaders while carving up the island. Scandalous hypocrisy characterizes all two-faced imperialists throughout the play, especially US Consul Tobias Lear and British General Maitland. The way that real historical figure Lear is portrayed brings to mind the US occupation of Haiti.²² These imperialist rivals agree on one thing: the need to preserve at all costs the “dominance of the white race,” as Lear puts it. Then, when Toussaint arrives

victorious from the battlefield, all representatives of the great powers begin to shower Toussaint with false praise.

The NALIS script and the published scene in *Life and Letters Today* (spring 1936) are the closest versions we have to the performance script. Changes to Act 2, Scene 1 further spotlight the imperialist antics, treachery and racism of the great powers. These changes drive home the play's two main anti-imperialist lessons – that blacks must unite and organize their fight themselves in Pan-African solidarity, while not trusting any duplicitous imperialist power.

Paul Robeson helped James to refigure Toussaint Louverture and unsilence the success story of the Haitian Revolution. James recalled how his lead actor cut short a long speech at its climax: "A courageous chief only is wanted." As James later recalled, "When so quiet a man made a definite decision, you automatically agreed."²³ Robeson was James's collaborator and his input involved re/writing the play too. In James's recollections, Robeson "[changed] the whole damn thing" and represents "a truly heroic figure," "a monumental black star" and an immense giant.²⁴ Robeson is James's prototype of the great action man who is the vehicle for the Haitian Revolution. James represents the Haitian Revolution as drama using the play as a megaphone for his political commitments to denounce imperialism and the rise of fascism loudly. Later in 1965, James would stress the need for "straight plays bursting out of our history."²⁵ In the 1930s this search for serious straight plays bursting out of Afro-Caribbean history was more urgent still.

Making history: *The Black Jacobins* (1938)

As James made clear in *The Black Jacobins* (1938), history and drama are profoundly interconnected. His history is decidedly "theatrical" and declares: "There is no drama like the drama of history."²⁶ There is page after page of theatre-like "curious dramatic dialogue" featuring the chief "actors" including Louverture.²⁷ What happens when James revisions the past as history? James moves from showing the past as drama with actors imitating the past and audiences witnessing the past to the process of telling history. Now James the historian acts as a narrator with a more overt, controlling voice, clearly presenting actions in certain ways and expressing his political views as he cuts an explicitly Marxist path through his story. Telling the past as history enables James to add commentary in the text and footnotes, to intervene more overtly, to weave the historical narrative line, and to engage with other sources, as he deploys the apparatuses of footnotes and the new annotated bibliography. This is unlike the play which, when performed, does not come with sources and footnotes scrolling below the stage. In the history versions, the intertextual nature is more explicit, as James communicates with other histories.

One major change is made to the title. From the play *Toussaint Louverture*, we move to the history *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint Louverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. This change indicates a change in focus to a wider cast where multiple characters are concerned. Toussaint Louverture still features as the subtitle "hero," and the story of the Haitian Revolution is still mostly retold from his viewpoint. In the history, Louverture still often speaks to us in the first person directly from his letters which are quoted like dramatic monologues of a play. The history version presents a multilayered historical canvas filled with more complex characters and subplots, according to the conventions of history writing. While drama is clearly a form of literature, we can follow David Scott,

Hayden White and Alun Munslow who encourage readers to pay attention to the narrative construction of textual history itself.²⁸ Their notion of historians like James being storytellers who emplot the past as drama is useful.²⁹

James's history is the result of his research trips to the Paris archives where he undertook preparatory reading.³⁰ There, he met leading French Trotskyist and early surrealist Pierre Naville, future translator of *Les Jacobins noirs* for prestigious French publisher Gallimard in 1949.³¹ It was also there that James encountered leading Francophone black intellectuals, including Léon-Gontran Damas – the *enfant terrible* of Negritude – and West African anticolonial leader Tiemoko Garan Kouyaté.³² There too James encountered living Francophone Haitian source Alfred Auguste Nemours (1883–1955): the Haitian army general and military historian who re-enacted battles for James with large coffee cups and books in Paris cafés.³³ In the 1930s, Nemours was Haiti's permanent delegate to the League of Nations before he served as minister plenipotentiary to France in 1937. Today he is perhaps best known for his passionate League of Nations intervention in 1935 concerning Italy's invasion of Ethiopia when he proclaimed, "Be afraid of becoming one day someone else's Ethiopia." His Ethiopia-related activities in the 1930s link clearly with James's own. Eric Williams – James's erstwhile protégé, subsequent nemesis and future first Prime Minister of independent Trinidad and Tobago – also played a central role in the Paris archival work looking up references and even writing lines of *The Black Jacobins*, as James recalled in his unpublished autobiography.³⁴

David Scott brilliantly applies Hayden White's narrativist approach to some later 1963 changes to the revised history.³⁵ According to Scott, the main shift involves changing the dominant story form from "anticolonial Romance" in 1938 to "postcolonial tragedy." Romance does prevail throughout the 1938 edition, but it must be viewed through Marxist lenses because *The Black Jacobins* is a Marxist grand narrative.³⁶ To privilege only the formal characteristics or "the content of the form" makes little sense because the rewriting also belong to James's materialist Marxist conceptions and methods of history.³⁷ What is more, tragedy is already present throughout the 1938 history from the start, even if it is increased throughout the revised edition.³⁸ The strong element of tragedy in the 1938 version follows from James's highlighting of the class nature of the Haitian Revolution throughout. In comparison, James's 1936 play seems to fit better the romanticist vindicationist mould of which Scott speaks, because there Toussaint is presented as a virtually unflawed leader and there is little representation of the later problematic tensions between leaders and masses. Nevertheless, James's 1936 play is, overall, a classic Shakespearean tragedy along the lines of *Othello* with protagonist Toussaint dying alone at the end.

The ending of the history presents the today of 1938 as more ready for anticolonial struggle and emancipation across Africa than the slaves of San Domingo had ever been 150 years before. There is a keen sense of anticipation throughout the 1938 history ending. Marxism is presented as key to the anticipated anticolonial revolutionary transformation of Africa standing up defiantly, prefiguring Aimé Césaire's 1939 poem *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, which James would translate and comment on in the 1963 appendix.³⁹

Rewriting history: *The Black Jacobins* (1963)

When we follow the 1963 revision trail, these changes are integral to *The Black Jacobins* as we know it today. As an active text of the 1960s, it travels from heralding anticolonial

revolution for Africa in the 1930s to the West Indies in the 1960s and the very strong pattern of unique West Indian historical development and identity painted by James in the new appendix. This appendix is one of the high-visibility textual outsides – others include the new preface, footnotes and updated bibliography – where the rewriting is concentrated. Although these textual sites are in some cases technically the margins, they occupy prominent positions in the revised edition – at the beginning, ending, and around the edges of the original text. As the margins expand in revisions, a tug of war occurs between the text’s insides and outsides as the margins grow and compete with the text proper.

Rewriting is highly visible when James contrapuntally points out in the 1960s footnotes what he still maintains and what was successfully forecast in 1938. James’s discussions with editor Morris Philipson at Random House reveal much about the rewriting process and the 1963 changes.⁴⁰ Initially, James indicates that he would like to take out a number of obtrusive political references. Subsequently, he sketches out an embryonic version of what would eventually become the appendix, proposing the ultimate insider account of the “birth-throes of a nation,” as excitement built up to independence in 1962. His letters also express a strong sense of foreboding and disappointment over the breakup of the West Indies Federation. The appendix shows a “very strong pattern” of West Indian historical evolution and identity.

James gave a high-profile series of lectures in 1971 at the Institute of the Black World (IBW) in Atlanta. This important institute founded in 1969 was based on the idea that “the whole study of the Black experience [...] ought to be essentially defined by Black people” with a diasporic outlook.⁴¹ James’s 1971 lectures reflect on *The Black Jacobins* some time after its first (1938) and revised (1963) editions were published. One 1971 IBW lecture, tantalizingly titled “How I Would Rewrite *The Black Jacobins*,” gives a commentary on the actual rewriting he did for the 1963 revised edition where he was “poor James, condemned to footnotes,” forced to update and make changes without altering “the whole movement of the thing.”⁴² The trail of additional footnotes underlines the visionary “speculative thought” of the 1938 edition’s original forecasts while updating some temporal markers, including references to WW II and Franco’s Moors – North African soldiers used by Spanish dictator Franco during and after the Spanish Civil War.

One important set of revisions was James’s “cutting out as many of the Marxian terms as possible” – his attempts to “de-Marxify” the language of *The Black Jacobins*.⁴³ James might not have used the Marxist terms as frequently as before, but *The Black Jacobins* is based on a Marxist sense of historical development. James now does not say “Marx” as often or as explicitly, but *The Black Jacobins* remains fundamentally Marxist in its inspiration, analysis and content.

Changes also alter the history’s presentation of Toussaint Louverture to such an extent that it becomes almost a case of leaders versus masses. No longer is the reader directly called upon to admire Toussaint’s exceptional attributes. Instead, Toussaint’s flaw is emphasized as he becomes more vacillating, with fewer references to his motivations and strategy. Deletions work towards writing the revolutionary out of the narrative. Some fifteen pages are deleted in the 1960s, ten concerning Toussaint himself, although his role is always more than the walk-on part discussed by James in 1971. Toussaint speaks to us less frequently in the first person from his correspondence, pages of which are cut throughout.

James uses lengthy new footnotes to write in references to Georges Lefebvre and others.⁴⁴ Although seldom acknowledged as such, James was himself an early pioneer of history from below with his history about the Haitian slave masses. Revisions show forefather and pioneer of this approach Lefebvre's great influence. Both footnotes refer to how the masses – the obscure creatures and not the avowed chiefs – were the extreme democrats who organized themselves and shaped the revolution. In 1971, James went beyond Lefebvre, saying that he was concerned with the two thousand leaders who were there.⁴⁵ Were he to rewrite his history from scratch again, James indicates in 1971 that he would focus on completely different types of sources, closer to the ordinary ex-slaves, and that alternative popular leaders and masses would now be his starting point, along with history from below perspectives of Albert Soboul, George Rudé and others. It is significant that James and Rudé co-supervised Carolyn Fick's doctoral dissertation which would go on to become *the* history of the Haitian Revolution from below.⁴⁶

Conspicuous changes to the revised 1963 bibliography include "The French Revolution" section which retains only one sentence from the original bibliography, with James completely changing what he says about Jean Jaurès. Pride of place now goes to Lefebvre who is mentioned twice in the new timeline of French Revolution historiography.⁴⁷ Subsequently in 1971, James would continue this line of development by verbally adding Albert Soboul to indicate the downward shift of James's own attention to the black sansculottes.⁴⁸

In the new appendix James gives readers signposts to guide them towards a conception of West Indian identity: Toussaint Louverture, Fernando Ortiz, Jean Price Mars, Captain Cipriani, Fidel Castro, Vic Reid, George Lamming, V. S. Naipaul, and Wilson Harris. The composite appendix is extremely hybrid in terms of both form and content and presents James's ideal amalgamated vision of Caribbean federation, which is more inclusive than the actual short-lived West Indies Federation from 3 January 1958 to 31 May 1962. Here, James turns from history writing to literary criticism in the quest for a West Indian identity.

Reshaping the past as drama (1967)

James's second play, *The Black Jacobins* was performed 14–16 December 1967 by the Arts Theatre Group at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, and is radically different from his first 1936 play. Both plays enact the main events of the Haitian Revolution, yet the two plays share barely a single word in common. Changes made to the protagonists introduce Haitian Revolutionary crowds. Toussaint's adopted nephew Moïse goes from being completely absent in James's first 1936 play to become a major protagonist in *The Black Jacobins* (1967) play and James introduces popular leaders like Samedi Smith who Dessalines, Christophe and Toussaint call "brigands." James uses the resources of drama to "write in" alternative protagonists of whom there is little archival trace. The 1967 play shows that there are Haitian revolutions within the Haitian Revolution, with big revolutionaries like Toussaint pitted against the masses, as they fight for different goals. The whole second play hinges on Toussaint sentencing his adopted nephew Moïse to death for treason – their showdown is the play's epicentre where Toussaint's flaw is magnified. Moïse, Toussaint's political spokesman, is also a powerful political organizer. We see him translating

the written word for the illiterate masses and communicating effectively with crowds of ordinary people.

This second play premiered in December 1967 at the height of the Nigerian Civil War. Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian playwright and poet, had previously been recently appointed the first African director at the School of Drama at the University of Ibadan. Soyinka was arrested in 1967, imprisoned by federal authorities, and accused of pro-Biafran activities.⁴⁹ In Soyinka's absence, James's fellow-Trinidadian Dexter Lyndersay became director. Fragile blue airmail letters shuttled back and forth between Ibadan and James's home in London.⁵⁰ There was a lively dialogue with some heated debates.

James's heavy involvement in re/writing this play is evident from viewing the manuscripts and typescripts of *The Black Jacobins* among C. L. R. James papers in Trinidad and New York. There, piles of manuscripts and typescripts, are taped and paper-clipped together with alternative scenes covered with James's distinctive scrawl.⁵¹ Through these changes, James continued to rework the play, proposing alternative scenes, and then alternative alternatives until mid-November when an exasperated Lyndersay exclaimed on 14 November 1967 "I couldn't possibly use a new scene now!"⁵² James introduced one alternative scene with his own commentary about how he had rewritten it. James's active role in re/writing the play is writ large in the comments lobbed back and forth about possible alternative scenes. Lyndersay suggested that James could use William Gibson's *The Seesaw Log* as a model for publishing all the alternative scenes and reworkings.⁵³

James was disappointed when Lyndersay point-blank rejected his epilogue, which was designed to be updatable, fast-forwarding to the present day.⁵⁴ Initially, the epilogue was explicitly set in the present-day Caribbean.⁵⁵ An early version made direct to the recent break-up of the West Indies Federation, about which Federation-supporting James was unhappy. In this Caribbean epilogue version, the Caribbean's new modern-day besuited political leaders are played by the same actors as the revolutionary leaders. These references would later be made less Caribbean-specific and more universal in subsequent epilogue versions.⁵⁶ While the other revolutionaries are suit-clad bureaucrats who hollow out all the symbols of independence, Moise is now a clear-sighted political organizer who delivers a rousing speech. When his speech is made more universal, director Lyndersay called it "platitudinous" and said it didn't really say anything.⁵⁷ One alternative epilogue ending echoes James's own cry when he stood for election in Tunapuna, Trinidad, with his Workers' and Farmers' Party which called for the redistribution of land out of foreign hands.⁵⁸

Afterlives of *The Black Jacobins*

Apart from James himself, others have updated *The Black Jacobins* for our times. How has it lived on beyond and since James? Afterlife here is a metaphorical notion to invoke the relations between the source text and its avatars.⁵⁹ Translations have taken *The Black Jacobins* to different places around the world. Naville's translation was published in 1949 by Gallimard – the prestigious French publishing giant. This landmark publication caused a stir in *Les Temps Modernes* where Louis Ménard's review in February 1950 was protested by James.⁶⁰ Such controversies created a buzz, raising the profile of *Les Jacobins noirs* across the Francophone world. In French translation the history also travelled back to

the land of its inspiration: Haiti itself. *Les Jacobins noirs* opened up Marxist historiographical vistas to Haitian historians.⁶¹ This was particularly the case for Étienne Charlier, one of James's many Haitian correspondents, whose history book *Aperçu sur la formation historique de la nation haïtienne* (1954) espoused an explicitly Marxist viewpoint – a first in Haitian historiography.⁶² Haiti was one of the many places where *The Black Jacobins* moved “in mysterious ways its wonders to perform.”⁶³ James himself described it as “a sort of Bible” in Haiti where it was “read and deeply admired.”⁶⁴ His history intertwines with those of earlier Haitian historians and boosted *tricinquantaire* fever 150 years after Haitian independence. Later, James prefaced the translation of his Haitian protégé Jean Fouchard for new English readers, also putting Fouchard in touch with Fick.⁶⁵

Another place where *The Black Jacobins* resonated was apartheid South Africa. In 1941, Marxist critic Dora Taylor reviewed *The Black Jacobins* in the popular Cape Town publication *Trek* making James's history speak to contemporary political concerns there.⁶⁶ Decades later, clandestine copies of chapters were made and distributed for discussion by Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) leaders, such as Richard Owen Dudley for their students. James's book became an “underground textbook” in South Africa, as James's comrade Marty Glaberman has noted.⁶⁷ These activities chime with the radical education programme of study circles which grew up around James and his political organizations in Detroit, Montreal and London. Sean Jacobs, founder of *Africa Is a Country* blog notes a *Black Jacobins* resurgence throughout Africa in recent years.⁶⁸

Selma James has written of how James's book was called on especially after the 2010 Haitian earthquake. She describes how readers turned to *The Black Jacobins* because they wanted to know who the Haitians were.⁶⁹ Turning back to James's history “reignited Haiti and its revolutionary past for new readers.” First democratically elected Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide told Selma James on his return to Haiti in 2011 that C. L. R. James “had put Haiti on the map” because “people didn't know where it was before.” Aristide also revealed that former South African president Thabo Mbeki had said he knew that anti-apartheid forces would win when he read the history. According to Sean Jacobs, Mbeki's *Black Jacobins* comments were part of Mbeki's political project to write South Africa back into the rest of Africa and the Black Atlantic as president of South Africa.⁷⁰

Stagings of the second play also have important afterlives. There have been important productions of the second *The Black Jacobins* play, including Yvonne Brewster's major 1986 production featuring a cast of 23 actors and a total crew of 46. This was the maiden production of Talawa Theatre company, Britain's first black theatre company, which continues today. These performances coincided with the ousting of Haitian dictator Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier on 7 February 1986. Press releases, posters and the director's programme note presented the “eerie” coincidences of the Haitian play coming “hard on the heels” of Baby Doc Duvalier's departure.⁷¹ Another coincidence was that the final performance coincided with the anniversary of Robeson's first performance as *Louverture*, exactly 50 years later. Many contemporary reviews were positive, declaring that the play had stood the test of time and retained topical relevance.⁷² Nevertheless, some reviews held the fifty-year gap against the play as evidence that it was now “dated,” “outdated,” and “discoloured around the edges,” with an “odour of theatrical mothballs.”⁷³

The Black Jacobins play has been staged at least five times across the Caribbean: 1975 and 1982 in Jamaica, 1979 and 1993 in Trinidad, and 2004 in Barbados. Three of these

Caribbean productions were staged by Rawle Gibbons, who was the first to put on the play in the region. His 1993 production coincided with a coup against Haitian President Aristide. This political theatre galvanized audiences to sign a petition calling for Aristide's return and an end to political violence. The programme contained a message from Aristide and a note about initiatives to raise Caribbean solidarity with Haiti. Actors playing tontons macoutes drove the audiences from their seats during the intermission.⁷⁴ Gibbons and Marvin George continue to develop Haitian-centered work in Trinidad through the carnival band Jouvay Ayiti (Daybreak Haiti).⁷⁵ The *Black Jacobins* story is used to create a type of *mas/mass* action, combining *mas* from Trinidad carnival with Haitian carnival *rara*. Now the Jouvay Ayiti band is performing under the banner "Return of *The Black Jacobins*," with the plan to take *The Black Jacobins* to Haiti itself.

The Black Jacobins has inspired many visual responses too. Ras Akyem-i Ramsay from Barbados has fashioned a portrait of Toussaint Louverture after James's history. This composite *Blakk-Jacobin* figure incorporates elements from other revolutionary leaders including Jean-Jacques Dessalines and the Vodou priest Boukman. What is most striking is the depiction of Toussaint's jacket which erupts with revolutionary energies (Figure 2).

One avid reader and illustrator of *The Black Jacobins* source text is Lubaina Himid, the first black woman to win the Turner Prize in December 2017. Always in dialogue with



Figure 2. Ras Akyem-i Ramsay, *Blakk-Jacobin*, 2011. © Ras Akyem-i Ramsay, courtesy of the collection of Anderson Toppin. Photo by William St James Cummins.

James, Himid has kept retelling, recreating and reimagining visual representations of, and textual references to, multiple iconic Toussaint Louvertures.⁷⁶ James's unsilencing has a visual corollary in Himid, which involves making the invisible visible. There is a prominent direct quotation from James's *Black Jacobins* featured in *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, a life-size cut-out of the revolution created by Himid in 1987 (Figure 3).

Originally, Himid had planned to create a whole cast of heroes and heroines of the Haitian Revolution, but ultimately, only one cut-out was created. This historical figure is portrayed according to classic Western heroic portraiture conventions, depicting the Haitian hero's arm tucked into his uniform; a stance recalling Jacques-Louis David's painting of Napoleon Bonaparte (1812).⁷⁷

What is also dignified is the revolutionary's military uniform. As in Ramsay's *Blakk-Jacobin*, Louverture's coat comes to life. The multilayered coat is made up of multiple paper strips in different shades of blue, while the epaulette is composed of drawing pins. Louverture's silhouette is mounted red, gold and yellow square paper pieces. As



Figure 3. Lubaina Himid, *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, paint and collage on wood, 1987. ©Lubaina Himid. Photo courtesy of the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art.

Himid makes clear: "Pattern and colour are [...] a new way of re-writing untold tales."⁷⁸ Collage is a key compositional reworking method here as she transforms Louverture's body into the battleground of racial tensions on the streets of 1980s' Britain. Collaged newspaper headlines and fragments combine to make up Louverture's politically charged body. Pieced together here are eye-catching headlines from British newspapers dating from the 1980s including "RACIST," "TORTURE," "ABUSE," "Thatcher," "Nursing home says no to brown people." Large text allows Himid to shout that racist abuse, discrimination and, and unfair immigration policies are all contemporary phenomena in UK life of the 1980s: "THIS WOULDN'T BE NEWS IF YOU HAD HEARD OF TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE." Hand-painted arrows direct the viewer to the "now" of the newspaper headlines from the "then" of Louverture. A direct quote from *The Black Jacobins* describes Louverture: "BETWEEN 1789 + 1815 WITH THE SINGLE EXCEPTION OF BONAPARTE HIMSELF, NO SINGLE FIGURE APPEARED ON THE HISTORICAL STAGE MORE GREATLY GIFTED THAN THIS MAN, A SLAVE UNTIL HE WAS 45." This caption speaks to the heroism of Napoleon's black equal.

Inspired by James, Himid has painted two multipart series *Scenes from the Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture I* (1987) and *II* (2002). Trying to fill historical gaps, Himid produces a radical feminist reworking of James's Louverture as she brings invisible black female resistance and labour into view. Himid also articulates James's own silence about Vodou: "C. L. R. James never mentions Voo-doo." A quarter century later, Himid returned to James in *Toussaint II* (2002), a commission by Iniva for British-Jamaican sociologist Stuart Hall's 70th birthday Diptychs work in dialogue to retell stories from different perspectives where multiple Louvertures come to life.⁷⁹

Reclaiming *The Black Jacobins* for Haiti, Haitian artist Édouard Duval-Carrié plays with the idea that Toussaint is a Black Jacobin. Building on James, the artist makes Toussaint the protean figure of possibility. Duval-Carrié has produced a multicoloured portrait series to reimagine and reshape the revolutionary in response to *The Black Jacobins* with, for example, the vivid pink and gold of *Le Général Toussaint enfumé* (2001) (Figure 4).

Across a range of visual artworks therefore, James's *The Black Jacobins* is an important source-text through which the many lives and faces of Toussaint Louverture among other less prominent revolutionaries have been reinterpreted, reimagined and recreated.

Rasanblaj, new narratives and the Haitian Revolution

To conclude, let us put *The Black Jacobins* in dialogue with Haitian artist-anthropologist Gina Athena Ulysse's urgent call for "new narratives" about Haiti and for *rasanblaj* – re/assembly or gathering in Haitian Kreyòl.⁸⁰ It was after the 2010 Haiti earthquake that Ulysse published her post-quake chronicle titled *Why Haiti Needs New Narratives* (2015), which challenges negative representation of Haiti as a never-ending disaster narrative. Writing long before Ulysse's 2015 call for new narratives, James grappled with this issue of how to narrate Haitian revolutionary history, and he kept revising his narratives of the Haitian past. Ulysse has also conceptualized the idea of *rasanblaj*, summing it up as "assembly, compilation, enlisting, regrouping (of ideas, things, people, spirits. For example fè yon rasanblaj, to do a gathering, a ceremony, a protest)."⁸¹ There are *rasanblaj* in Haiti now where people are coming together to protest in the streets about the ever-increasing cost of living – *lavi chè* – and the corruption of Haitian elites and politicians.



Figure 4. Édouard Duval-Carrié, *Le Général Toussaint enfumé*, 2001. ©Édouard Duval-Carrié. Courtesy of Rum Nazon, Cap Haïtien.

Rasanblaj can also refer to Haitian-style rebuilding after disasters like the 2010 earthquake and Hurricane Matthew in 2016. Rasanblaj can be a survival tactic.

Many artworks inspired by *The Black Jacobins* are also themselves *rasanblaj* – multi-layered mixed media visual responses. Rasanblaj can be both process and also product – the finished artworks are rasanblaj; visual collages that are pieced together through a painstaking process of rasanblaj. As can be seen from James-inspired artworks by Himid and Duval-Carrié, rasanblaj collages often incorporate mixed media with found items and cut-outs, such as newspaper headlines in multilayered reassembly of fragments.

Rasanblaj was also central to the acts of creating symbols of the independent Haitian nation. One foundational moment was the creation of the Haitian flag – a rasanblaj story represented in Madsen Mompremier’s canonical painting “Dessalines Ripping the White from the Flag” (1995) (Figure 5).⁸²

Here, General Dessalines is ripping the white out of the French blue-white-red tricolour and we see the Haitian blue-red bicolour being sewn back together from the old tricolour’s remnants by Catherine Flon, Dessalines’s goddaughter, making the flag symbol for the new country.⁸³ There is a prominent tree with sprawling roots, recalling Toussaint’s liberty tree reference. This tree evokes the sacred Mapou tree, the ancestral tree of knowledge and life, whose deep and numerous roots symbolize ancestral knowledge.⁸⁴ In



Figure 5. Madsen Mompremier, *Dessalines Ripping the White from the Flag*, 1995. Oil on canvas, 77.2 × 91.4 cm. Courtesy of the Fowler Museum at UCLA.

Mompremier's painting, the tree combines the upright phallic with the maternal breasts of sustenance as the new symbols of the first new Black republic are born.

Over a period of nearly sixty years, James engaged in his own act of creative rasanblaj, trying to piece together fragments of stories about Haitian revolutionaries and their leaders. This long rasanblaj process involved both history- and drama-making. James kept creatively reassembling his own stories and filling in the archive's silences. James kept re-weaving his histories and plays concerning the Haitian Revolution – as Catherine Flon sewed the Haitian bicolor flag back together – bringing new actors onto the stage of world history, looking again at the old archives and narratives from new vantage points, and asking new questions of the past. James sketched in alternative popular leaders of whom there is little archival trace, most notably Moïse, Samedi Smith and Jean Panier. James could have rewritten his history even more radically by completely redoing his archival work from the basis of different sources as he hypothetically outlined in 1971. Instead, “poor James” was mostly “condemned to footnotes” in the revised history because he did not want to change the book too much.⁸⁵ Yet, *The Black Jacobins* with its numerous and deep roots continues to spawn new saplings to unsilence the Haitian Revolution.

Gathering, re-using, recycling, and overpainting – rasanblaj – are processes central to Ramsay, Himid and Duval-Carrié's *Black Jacobins*-inspired art. Ultimately, *The Black Jacobins* is itself a rasanblaj – like a fragmented mosaic or a patchwork quilt of a collection of texts formed by James's own radical rewritings of the Haitian Revolution as both drama and history over a period of nearly sixty years. Of overpainting, Himid notes that

this technique gives her “the chance to tell a new story while still being able to hear the echoes of the old one.”⁸⁶ James’s writing about the Haitian Revolution can be thought of as an overwritten palimpsest with new layers added on top of the vestiges of previous written traces. It is precisely because the work’s 1938 “foundation would remain imperishable,” with the history remaining substantially the same for subsequent editions that the embedded vestiges became important parts of the new whole. James himself kept reactivating his palimpsestic and multilayered text-network to calibrate it with new pasts, presents and futures.⁸⁷ Following James, others too have sought to reactivate the *Black Jacobins* text-network to reflect changing presents and new futures in the light of successive pasts. Rasanblaj can be an entity, but also a process; it is a verb as well as a noun. Throughout its different incarnations, the *Black Jacobins* rasanblaj has a form that suits its message of revolution and resistance. As a changing kaleidoscopic text-network, *The Black Jacobins* keeps trying to unsilence the past of the Haitian Revolution, to give voice to silenced peoples of whom there is little archival trace, and to fill in the gaps of missing narratives and obscured histories. Fragmented remnants of James’s Haitian Revolution stories survive in archives throughout the world, most notably at Columbia University in New York, and the University of the West Indies in St Augustine, Trinidad. Textual, manuscript and archival remains there also resemble the various drafts of James’s autobiography which never settled into finished or published form. Rasanblaj also encapsulates the process of archival sleuthing needed to reassemble *The Black Jacobins* in all its diverse manifestations.

Notes

1. James, *Toussaint Louverture*, 122. Further citations are to this edition.
2. James, *The Black Jacobins* (1938; 1963). The second 1967 play has been published as *The Black Jacobins* (1976), 382–450; and (1992), 66–111.
3. On the French and American liberty tree phenomenon, see Young, *Liberty Tree*; Harden, “Liberty Caps and Liberty Trees”; Richard, *Les Emblèmes de la République*, 125–144.
4. Quoted in Bernier, *Characters of Blood*, 52.
5. This article extrapolates from my book *Making The Black Jacobins*.
6. James, “The Intelligence of the Negro”; Harland, “Race Admixture.”
7. See Baugh, “The West Indian Writer and His Quarrel with History”; Baugh, “Reflections on ‘The Quarrel with History’”; Dubois, “History’s Quarrel,” 213–230.
8. Thomas, *Froudacity*; Froude, *The English in the West Indies*. On Thomas, see Smith, *Creole Recitations*.
9. James, *The Black Jacobins* (1938), 7, 11.
10. James, “The West Indian Intellectual,” 23–49.
11. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*; Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed*; Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History*.
12. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 26.
13. James, “Foreword,” v.
14. This script is now located in Hull History Centre at U DJH/21/1. See Høgsbjerg, “Introduction,” 1.
15. King, *C. L. R. James and Creolization*, 30–51; King, “C. L. R. James, Genre and Cultural Politics,” 13–38; Sander, “C. L. R. James and the Haitian Revolution,” 277–290; Sander, *The Trinidad Awakening*, 91–114; Rosengarten, *Urbane Revolutionary*, 220–232.
16. Sir Learie Constantine Collection, National Library and Information System Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. NALIS script, Series 14, Box 6, master file number 14837.
17. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 151.

18. Samuel, "Introduction," xiii; Kelleher, *Theatre and Politics*, 10, 13.
19. James, *Sex, Race and Class*.
20. Stoddard, *The French Revolution in San Domingo*.
21. James, "Abyssinia and the Imperialists." See Quest, "George Padmore's and C. L. R. James's *International African Opinion*," 105–132; Ali and Sherwood, *Pan-African History*; Asante, *Pan-African Protest*, 46.
22. Høgsbjerg has highlighted the hypocrisy of US Consul Lear in James's first play in a 2015 paper. Høgsbjerg, "Reflections on C. L. R. James." On the US occupation of Haiti, see Renda, *Taking Haiti*; Dalleo, "The Independence So Hardly Won."
23. James, "Paul Robeson," 258.
24. Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 197.
25. James, "Introduction," viii.
26. *The Black Jacobins* (1938), 301.
27. *Ibid.*, 155.
28. See Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*; White, *The Content of the Form*; Munslow, *Narrative and History*.
29. See White, "Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth," 37–53.
30. On James's visits to Paris, see Høgsbjerg, "Globalising the Haitian Revolution in Black Paris"; Forsdick, "The Black Jacobin in Paris."
31. James, *Les Jacobins noirs*.
32. See James, "My Knowledge of Damas Is Unique," 131. On Kouyaté, see Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, 241–305; Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State*; Langley, "Pan-Africanism in Paris."
33. James, "1932–1938," Autobiography. University of the West Indies "C. L. R. James Collection [Sc 82]" (henceforth UWI), Box 16, Folder 338; James, "Foreword," in *The Black Jacobins* (1980), v–vii. See Forsdick, "The Black Jacobin in Paris."
34. James, Autobiography. UWI, Box 14, Folder 309.
35. Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*.
36. See James, "Romanticising History."
37. On refashioning, see Scott, *Refashioning Futures*.
38. On the pervasiveness of tragedy from the start, see Glick, *The Black Radical Tragic*.
39. Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*.
40. See correspondence of C. L. R. James and Morris Philipson (1960–1962). UWI, Box 7, Folders 181–182.
41. See Nielsen, "On the Wings of Atlanta," 297–310.
42. James, "Lectures on *The Black Jacobins*," 103.
43. James to Philipson. Mount Lambert, Trinidad, 11 March 1961. UWI, Box 7 Folder, 181.
44. James, *The Black Jacobins* (1963), 276n6, 338n39.
45. James, "Lectures on *The Black Jacobins*," 107–108.
46. Fick, *The Making of Haiti*; Fick, "C. L. R. James, The Black Jacobins, and *The Making of Haiti*," 60–69.
47. James, *The Black Jacobins* (1963), 384–385.
48. James, "Lectures on *The Black Jacobins*," 77. See also James, "Black Sansculottes," 159–162.
49. See Soyinka, *The Man Died*; Soyinka, *Ibadan*.
50. Correspondence between Dexter Lyndersay and James can be found in UWI, Box 10, Folder 240 and UWI, Box 7, Folder 190.
51. See the scripts and materials related to *The Black Jacobins* play housed in UWI, Box 9, Folders 228–230; UWI, Box 12, Folder 280. See also the script held by Columbia University Library, C. L. R. James papers, MS#1529 (Box 5, Folder 14).
52. Dexter Lyndersay to C. L. R. James. Ibadan, 14 November 1967. UWI, Box 10, Folder 240.
53. See James's commentaries on the rewriting process: UWI, Box 9, Folder 228; UWI, Box 9, Folder 229. Gibson, *The Seesaw Log*.
54. Lyndersay to James. Ibadan, 31 October 1967. UWI, Box 10, Folder 240.
55. UWI, Box 9, Folder 230.

56. For other epilogue versions, see UWI, Box 9, Folders 228 and 229; Columbia; the script held at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (SG MG 53); copy 1 from Pennsylvania State Special Collections Library (VF Lit 0581 R); copy 2 from Pennsylvania State Special Collections (Blockson Collection, unclassified).
57. Lyndersay to James. Ibadan. 8 October 1967. UWI, Box 10, Folder 240.
58. UWI, Box 9, Folder 229. The Workers' and Farmers' Party was formed in October 1965 by James, Stephen Maharaj (former Democratic Labour Party leader), Dalip Gopeesingh and George Weekes of the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union (OWTU). See Look Lai, "C. L. R. James and Trinidadian Nationalism," 199.
59. On afterlives, see Cave, *Mignon's Afterlives*; Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott*; Holland and Scholar, *Pre-histories and Afterlives*.
60. Ménard, "Les Jacobins noirs"; James, "Correspondence."
61. Trouillot, "Haitian Historiography," 451–477.
62. Charlier, Aperçu sur la formation historique de la nation haïtienne.
63. James, *The Black Jacobins* (1980), vii.
64. James to Morris Philipson. St Michael, Barbados, 30 November 1961. UWI, Box 7, Folder 182.
65. James, "Preface."
66. See Taylor, "Literary Re-view"; Sandwith, *World of Letters*, 97, 158.
67. Martin Glaberman, quoted in Rosengarten, *Urbane Revolutionary*, 229; McLemee, "C. L. R. James."
68. Rachel Douglas, Interview with Sean Jacobs. 27 September 2017. See his blog *Africa Is a Country*, <http://africasacountry.com>.
69. James, "The Black Jacobins, Past and Present," 74.
70. Jacobs, interview with Douglas.
71. Riverside Studios, Press Release 2 7 February 1986. Victoria and Albert Theatre and Performance Archives, Talawa Theatre Company 8.2.1 Press Releases. Yvonne Brewster, *The Black Jacobins* programme. February 1986. UWI, Box 8, Folder 219.
72. Price, "Slave Uprising Topical"; "Black History Lesson." See also "Performance More Than Stands the Test of Time."
73. De Jongh, "Slaves to Fortune."
74. Smith, "Black Jacobins: Review," 27; Ramcharitar, "Black Jacobins," 24.
75. George and Gibbons, "Jouvay Ayiti."
76. See Bernier et al., *Inside the Invisible*.
77. Ibid., 81–82; Meyer, "Re-dressing Classical Statuary"; Kovalchik, "Why Was Napoleon Usually Painted with a Hand in his Coat?"
78. Bernier et al., *Inside the Invisible*, 84, 132–133; Himid, "Artist's Statement," 39.
79. Bernier et al., *Inside the Invisible*, 110.
80. Ulysse, "Why Rasanblaj, Why Now?"; Ulysse, "Rasanblaj Continua"; Ulysse, *Why Haiti Needs New Narratives*.
81. Ulysse, "Introduction."
82. For an excellent analysis of this painting and the representation of Catherine Flon, see Willson, "Unmaking the Tricolore."
83. According to Philippe Girard, Dessalines designed Haiti's blue-red flag before the Arcahaye conference of 18 May 1803. See Girard, "Birth of a Nation"; Fombrun, *History of the Haitian Flag*.
84. On the Mapou tree, see Mehta, "Re-creating Ayida-Wèdo."
85. James, "Lectures on *The Black Jacobins*," 103.
86. Bernier et al., *Inside the Invisible*, 225.
87. On *The Black Jacobins* as a text-network, see Gillman, "Black Jacobins and New World Mediterraneans," 159–182.

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