
Sweeney F.

[The Haitian Play: CLR James' Toussaint Louverture, 1936.](#)

International Journal of Francophone Studies 2011, 14(1-2), 143-166

Copyright:

This is the authors accepted manuscript of an article that has been published in its final definitive form by Intellect Ltd, 2011

DOI link to article:

http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/ijfs.14.1-2.143_1

Date deposited:

10/05/2017

Embargo release date:

01 May 2012

The Haitian Play: C. L. R. James' *Toussaint Louverture*, 1936

Fionnghuala Sweeney

University of Liverpool

Keywords

C. L. R. James; Toussaint Louverture; drama; performance; Robeson; anti-colonial; London; authentication; audience; death scene; diaspora; modernism.

Abstract

The play *Toussaint Louverture*, staged in London in 1936, was the first in a series of interventions by C. L. R. James into the representative politics and historical implications of the Haitian revolution. The theme was most famously to recur in *The Black Jacobins* (first published in 1938), a text whose shifting frames of reference and lines of emplotment have become central to contemporary discussions of the current postcolonial moment (Scott, 2004).

Despite the attention accorded *Jacobins*, the play has received little critical notice, largely because of the absence of a script authenticated as that originally performed in 1936, but never copyrighted or published. Using a range of archive evidence, this article argues that a document held in the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, is, first, a copy of the text that formed the basis of the performance; and, second, a document whose circulation helps position James within the complex network of activity that constituted the black Atlantic response to the political and cultural opportunities of the early twentieth century. It considers the critical reception of the play, the significance of the London metropolitan setting, and the ways in which the plot may have been designed to anticipate, and play to, an audience self-

image rooted in ambivalence to its own past, yet drawn to increasing possibilities of the politically and aesthetically ‘new’.

Resumé

Cet article étudie la pièce *Toussaint Louverture*, dont la mise en scène à Londres en 1936 fut la première intervention par son auteur C. L. R. James sur les conséquences historiques et politiques de la Révolution haïtienne. James reprend ce thème dans son texte célèbre *The Black Jacobins* (1938), dont la trame narrative et ses références ambiguës jouent un rôle significatif dans les discussions contemporaines qui traitent de la question postcoloniale (Scott, 2004).

Malgré ce surgissement de débats autour du texte *The Black Jacobins*, les critiques n’ont pas manifesté autant d’intérêt pour la pièce, peut-être à cause du manque du texte authentique de la première mise en scène de 1936. Cet article, à l’appui de nombreuses preuves qui se trouvent dans les archives, soutient qu’un document qui se trouve chez ‘the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center’ est le texte dont s’est servie la première représentation. Ensuite, l’article postule que la transmission de ce document a permis à James de se situer dans les réseaux intellectuels qui se formaient à travers l’Atlantique noire pendant les premières décennies du vingtième siècle. L’article trace la réception critique de la pièce, le cadre historique de la représentation dans la métropole de Londres, et la manière dont l’auteur a rédigé le complot afin d’anticiper l’auto-image ambivalent des spectateurs à propos de leur passé colonial.

Fionnghuala Sweeney is Lecturer in Comparative American Studies at the University of Liverpool. Her research is on nineteenth-century Afro-American and US literature, and on

black Atlantic literary modernism. She and Kate Marsh are co-organizers of the ongoing discussion ‘Afromodernisms’ at the University of Liverpool.

Contact details: Fionnghuala Sweeney, Latin American Studies, University of Liverpool, L69 7WW, UK. fsweeney@liv.ac.uk

I

‘One approach to the stirrings of the cultures of black internationalism’ writes Brent Hayes Edwards, ‘is to consider the ways in which during and after the war, metropolitan France was one of the key places where African Americans, Antilleans, and Africans were able to “link up”’. ‘Paris’, he concludes, ‘is crucial [to the study of black cultural activity in European metropolises] because it allowed boundary crossing, conversations and collaborations that were available nowhere else to the same degree’ (Edwards, 2003, pp. 3–4). In 1933, Trinidadian C. L. R. James, then resident in the UK, embarked for Paris with ninety pounds donated by his friends Harry and Elizabeth Spencer in his pocket to spend six months in the French archives researching the history of the Haitian Revolution (James, 1963, p. xv).¹ Of his time in Paris, little is known. But his French sojourn provided the raw material for *The Black Jacobins*, whose dual focus on focus on content – historical empiricism – and method – an autonomy of thought and inference – underpinned the work’s challenge to articles of historical faith, enlightenment political ideals, marking it out as a seminal instance of black internationalist cultural and discursive practice.²

Yet it was from the staid surroundings of London rather than the giddy exchanges of Paris that *Jacobins* and much of James’ other work from the 1930s and his left-wing anti-

¹ The bibliography of *The Black Jacobins* lists Les Archives Nationales, Les Archives du Ministère de la Guerre, Les Archives du Ministère des Colonies, Les Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères and La Bibliothèque Nationale as the location of his French primary sources (James 1963: p. 327).

² I am indebted here to Roy D Morrison’s discussions of ‘Black Enlightenment’ and related questions of ‘empirical correlation’ between post – Enlightenment history and the verifiable facts of lived experience (Morrison 1978).

colonial position emerged. Largest of the European metropolises, capital of the world's largest colonial empire and arguably the nation whose status as a space of liberation for Afro-Americans in the nineteenth century was akin to that enjoyed by France in the early twentieth, 1930s London provided residents from the diaspora with a range of political opportunities very different to those available in Paris. Much like its corresponding Parisian cohort, London's contemporary Afro-diasporic community, a 'close-knit community of intellectuals transplants from colonial societies' (Von Eschen, 1997, p. 12), had a radical bent, comprising internationalist strains of anti-imperialism and panafricanism, in a resident community that included West Indians C. L. R. James and George Padmore, future Kenyan president Jomo Kenyatta, then a member of the politically visible West African Students Union (WASU) in London, and African Americans Eslanda Robeson, Paul Robeson and Lawrence Brown. But British culture was far less inclined to spectacular excess than its European counterpart, providing more limited opportunities for experimentation in the visual and performative arts. Most notably, it remained on the margins of many of the futurist political discussions epitomized in and following the series of manifesto-lead aesthetic movements to emerge in Europe in the 1920s and 30s. To the contrary in fact, British aesthetic politics were often conservative in outlook, expressing at most tentative optimism regarding the political possibilities of metropolitan modernity.

Yet this was the time and place in which James developed his own particular 'aesthetic ideology' (Bogues, 1997, p. 26), one which informed futurist interventions in history, literature and theatre. That ideology, Anthony Bogues argues, sought out 'political categories marked by their creative ability to discover new social and political forms,' (Bogues p. 27). In retrospect it is clear that the publication of *Jacobins* in 1938 was not a singular event: the work formed part of an interwar cluster of writing by James exploring the possibilities of literary form as well as of politics, one which included the political pamphlet,

The Case for West Indian Self-Government (1933), the play *Toussaint Louverture* (1934, 1936), *Abyssinia and the Imperialists* (1936), and *A History of Negro Revolt* (1938) as well as *The Black Jacobins*. These texts are, in their various ways, centred on the means by which black history might provide a model for revolution, emphasizing political and territorial claims to independent black statehood, and identifying the Negro presence as the cornerstone of political modernism in Europe and America. Collectively, they constitute, as David Scott so eloquently puts it of *The Black Jacobins*, ‘an indignant vindication of the neglected achievements of blacks and of the justice of their anti-colonial claims to self-determination and political sovereignty’ (Scott 2004, p. 64).

The cluster comprised an array of discursive nodes focused on historicizing the black presence around the Atlantic, and anchoring that presence within the complex web of relationships linking spheres of empire, Atlantic metropolises and the possibilities of politics—to one another and to the peripheral modernities they had generated. Not only do they exist, in Perry Anderson’s terms, in close ‘proximity to social revolution’ (Anderson 1984: p. 104), they actively seek to conjure a revolutionary future through their thematic emphasis on the achievements of the past, and on the need for political action in their writing, reading and performative presents.

To describe this group of James’ interwar texts as a cluster is therefore to underline the importance of locating each in the context of its writing, its performance, and in relation to others in the discursive chain. This article works from the proposition that, taken together, these texts connect the British, the French, the Antilles, Europe and Africa in a network of conjunctural solidarities predictive of the decolonization that was to occur after the war. As

coded responses to the circumstances of their production, they also provide snapshots of their political and aesthetic moment.³

Given the nature of James' aesthetic ideology, and the interlinked character of his writing and political projects, then, the singularity of any textual performance must be understood by the way it positions itself in relation to a wider corpus in which meaning and political opportunity coalesce. On a practical level, just as the various framing devices and shifting patterns of emplotment that occur in inter- and post-war editions of *The Black Jacobins* generate historically specific meanings, those meanings are further inflected by their relationship to contemporaneous works within the oeuvre. James' play, *Toussaint Louverture*, was conceived before he left Trinidad and completed following his return from the Paris archives in 1933–34, the centenary of the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies. The original version of the play in its textual and performative incarnations marks the genesis of the ideas that were eventually to emerge in *Jacobins*. First performed in London in 1936, this representation of slave revolt against the tyranny of slavery, and subsequently of empire, staged at the heart of the British empire in the midst of an emerging European political crisis, was also marked by a sophisticated engagement with contemporary aesthetic politics.

That James first imagined history as drama is telling. As Bill Schwarz argues, James' turn to history stemmed from the conviction that '[o]nly by knowing themselves as historical individuals . . . could West Indians come to terms with their predicament,' (Schwartz, 2003, p. 4). Staging historical individuals, staging revolution in 1930s London, can only have helped crystallize the nature of that predicament at a moment of increasing political tension, when the possibilities of independence were increasingly tangible, and a war against fascism,

³ Scott shows that some of the literary qualities of *Jacobins*, specifically James' strategic use of different models of emplotment—romance and tragedy—in the various editions of the work are tailored to the historical circumstances from which they emerged: attempts to mould the past into a narrative inexorably leading to a future of freedom (romance) or providing a logic which debunks the teleology of history, and reframing the shortcomings and setbacks of the political present as a series of cyclically emerging challenges to the desired ideal (tragedy) (Scott 2004).

in which the British empire would be the key player, all but inevitable. Indeed, marshalling the aesthetic space of the London stage as a place of revolutionary enactment, articulates, in plain view, a rhetoric of generic collaboration with metropolitan modes of representation, as well as one of radical political ambition.⁴ But the risks of that endeavour also suggest that to read the play exclusively as a stage on the road to *Jacobins*, rather than as an equal instance of ‘diasporic practice’ (Brent Hayes 2003), would be reductive, and fail to address the ways in which literary form always provides a model of meaning that frames, rather than being subservient to, narrative or thematic concerns.

II

Despite the accessibility of drama and a growing recognition of the importance of black performance to any understanding of the aesthetic politics and politicized aesthetics of modernism between the wars, however, little attention has been accorded either the contextual politics or the representative consequence of *Toussaint*, James’ earliest representation of slave revolt. Such scholarship as exists addresses either the published version of *Toussaint* (two examples entitled ‘The Black Jacobins’ exist), or the revised and relatively well-known version of the play, performed in Ibadan, Nigeria in 1967, which bookends the second edition of *Jacobins*, published four years earlier in the aftermath of the Cuban revolution, and containing the oft-noted afterword, ‘From Toussaint L’Ouverture to Fidel Castro’ (James 1963: pp. 305–26).

This has in large part been because of the absence of a copy of the play which can be authenticated as that originally performed by the Stage Society at London’s Westminster Theatre, and the subsequent critical need to rely on later, revised editions of the play. Two identical published versions of the play are available: one in the anthology of Caribbean plays edited by Errol Hill (1976) the other in the *CLR James Reader*, (1994), edited by Anna

⁴ The point of reference for this suggestion is Mary Louise Pratt’s work on the nature of the cultural artefact produced in the ‘contact zone’ (Pratt 1992).

Grimshaw (James in Grimshaw 1992, pp. 67–111). It was generally believed that the typescript of the play found in the C. L. R. James Papers, which forms the basis of these published versions, was that of the play originally sponsored by the Incorporated Stage Society in 1936, with minor modifications introduced to the later version.⁵ An unpublished text of the modified play performed in Ibadan exists in the manuscript collection at the Schomburg Library, New York, ‘copyrighted,’ as Frank Rosengarten notes, ‘[and] used by the Nigerian theatre company under the direction of Dexter Lyndersay’ (Rosengarten, 2008, p. 220).

Recently, however, Rosengarten has made a compelling case for the existence of another, very different version of the play, pointing to significant discrepancies between the play described in contemporary reviews of the original performance, and the script published in the Hill and Grimshaw anthologies. The existence of another version can, he rightly argues, ‘be inferred from remarks made by London critics who attended the opening performance of the play . . . starring Paul Robeson in the title role of Toussaint L’Ouverture’ (Rosengarten p. 220). Specifically he notes a review of the play that referred to Robeson’s ‘powerful evocation of Toussaint’s death in a French Prison,’ and points to the absence of any such death scene in the published versions of the play (Rosengarten p. 221).

The potential significance of Toussaint’s death scene is difficult to underestimate to any discussion of James the dramatist or, indeed, of Robeson the tragedian. Further, if the published play is not that originally performed, our understanding of the relationships between the London metropole and its Afro-Atlantic sojourners, between contemporary cultural engagements with radical histories and their political potential, and of the symbolic significance of black performance to politically futurist strains of Anglo-American aesthetic practice, is incomplete. In fact, the extent to which dialogue around these issues has been

⁵ The papers were acquired by Columbia University in 2007 and have been unavailable to outside researchers since.

curtailed is far greater than the presence or absence of any one scene might otherwise indicate. Pre-dating the publication of *Jacobins* by at least two years, the script on which the original performance was based should not only provide insight into the kinds of dramatic and historical concerns which occupied James during the period in which he was writing his seminal history, it inevitably forms part of a wider network of texts, performances and individuals reciprocally imbricated in the art and politics of the 1930s, and part of a circumatlantic renaissance in black letters. The original version of *Toussaint Louverture*, then, were it to exist, would enable a reconstruction of the textual and performative lives of the play—the script from which the actors, director and producer worked; and the drama they enacted—as separate but inter-related interventions into Atlantic literature and Atlantic history.

Mary Lou Emery has recently noted the existence of two typescript versions believed to be the original text of the play. The first is that contained in the C. L. R. James Collection in the Special Collections Library of the University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad; the second in the Richard Wright Papers in the Beinecke Library at Yale University, (Emery, 2007, 143, p. 260). Two further typescript versions are worthy of note. The Archives and Special Collections section at the University of Hull Archives notes a ‘Typescript, (original, with annotations,)’ of the play *Toussaint L’Ouverture: the story of the only successful slave revolt in history: a play in 3 acts*, in the catalogue of the Jock Haston Papers. Lastly, the Alain Locke Papers at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington DC, contain a document filed under ‘James, CLR. Toussaint L’Ouverture play 1936.’ A typescript of the play *TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History, A Play in 3 Acts* (hereafter referred to as MS version) forms the bulk of the file.

A useful exercise, outside the remit of this particular discussion, would be to compare the different typescripts with one another. On the face of it, it would appear that the manuscript in the papers of Jock Haston — Trotskyist and associate of James in the 1930s — and that in the Locke papers may be copies of the same version of the play. What I wish to do here, however, is to explore whether it is possible using the available evidence to establish a correlation between the script of the play contained in the Locke papers, and the London performance of 1936. A definitive version of the interwar script would enable a renewed discussion of the relationship between diasporic political modernism and the literary and dramatic forms of its expression, help reconstitute the emerging narrative around the representational importance of the Haitian revolution at the time of writing, and establish more clearly ‘James’s intellectual position and his power as a dramatist in 1936,’ (Cudjoe, nd., p. 127). Perhaps as importantly, it would enable a discussion of the performance itself.

The document held in the Moorland-Spingarn Archives, comprising a cover sheet, and 109 pages of typescript, hand corrected and annotated in ink, differs substantially from that produced in either the Hill anthology or the Grimshaw *Reader*. The typescript details three acts: Act I contains four scenes; Act II, two scenes; and Act III, five scenes. It is without the Prologue that opens the Hill and Grimshaw (hereafter HG) versions, whose Acts are configured as 4:4:2, rather than 4:2:5. Some scenes from the MS and HG versions overlap, while not being identical. Act I, Scene one, is set in Bullet’s villa in both versions; Act II, Scene 1 (MS) and Act II, Scene 2 (HG) have some overlap; while Act II, Scene two (MS) and Act II Scene three (HG) are similarly located in Bonaparte’s office and residence in Les Tuileries, Paris, in 1800. The final Acts in both versions are, however, quite different. Scenes one and two of the HG version are set in the Headquarters of Dessalines in 1802 and 1803 respectively. In contrast, the MS version of Act III, Scene one is set in ‘Toussaint’s hut in the mountains in early 1802’ (MS p. 73); scene two on ‘March 24th, 1802. About six o’

clock in the evening. The fortress of Crete-a-Pierrot in San Domingo,' (MS 80); scene three 'Late in 1802. Leclerc's villa on the outskirts of Cap Francois,' (MS 86); scene four, 'Late in 1802. Toussaint's cell in a prison in the Alps.' (MS 96); and scene five, 'May, 1802. The large dining-hall in the semi-official Hotel-de-la-Republique, Cap Francois,' (MS p. 103.)

James' authorship of this script may be inferred for a number of reasons. The cover sheet contains the title 'Toussaint* [*sic*] louverture [*sic*] by C.L.R. James. 9 Heathcote St London W.C.1,' in bold, pen and ink handwriting which matches samples of James' signature available from his correspondence. It is overlaid on smaller, fainter writing in the same hand, which reads 'Haitian Play By C.L.R. James, 9 Heathcote St, London W.C.1.' This has been crossed out, as has the note, again in the same hand, to 'Return to Mrs Paul Robeson, 19 Buckingham St, Adelphi, W.C. 2.' The final semi-legible note on the sheet, which has again been crossed out, reads: 'Rehearsal. First 24th. 2.30 Westminster. (illegible word) A... (illegible) Friday 27 at 5. 19 B St. CLR James.'

Paul Robeson, who played the lead in the original play, was resident with Eslanda Robeson at 19 Buckingham St, W.C.2 in 1935. Although he and Eslanda spent late 1935 and early 1936 in Hollywood for the filming of the hit musical *Show Boat*, they returned to London in January 1936 and, as Martin Duberman writes, 'went directly into rehearsals for the James play' (Duberman, 1988, p. 197), presumably at the Westminster Theatre where the play was scheduled to be performed.

Often sidelined in discussions of the black Atlantic renaissance, Eslanda Robeson, a significant intellectual in her own right, also saw to the family's business affairs and did much of the background research for Paul Robeson's theatrical roles (Duberman p. 582). Indeed there is much to be said about Eslanda Robeson's contribution to black Atlantic modernism that cannot be said here. However, if we assume James' authorship of the script, then the note to 'return to Mrs Paul Robeson' on the cover page indicates that the text

circulated between James and the Robesons in the lead-up to the period of rehearsal, and that that circulation may have been an important part of the evolution of the eventual staging.

Certainly the Robeson's were in possession of a script while in California shooting *Show Boat* in late 1935. They showed it to the film's director, James Whale, as well as to Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II. Kern and Hammerstein were so impressed that they immediately bought the film rights to a playscript referred to in correspondence as *Black Majesty*. The title was the same as that proposed by the Russian filmmaker, Sergei Eisenstein, in 1934 during the Robeson's visit to Moscow, but which, like its Hollywood cousin, was never made (Duberman 1967; Robeson Jr., 2001, pp. 213, 236).

According to Paul Robeson, the Hollywood production was to be 'a musical play . . . based on 'Black Majesty,' the story of Emperor Henri Christophe' (Foner p. 105), while Foner cites Eisenstein's intention to focus his film on General Jean Jacques Dessalines (Foner p. 510). By contrast, Paul Robeson Jr. believes both films were to centre on the life of Toussaint Louverture. The different understandings of what – or more precisely who – was to be the main subject matter of these productions is indicative of a burgeoning aesthetic interest in Haitian revolutionary history in the interwar period. Beyond this, it suggests that just who would emerge as the hero of that history, whether the symbolic cargo of black revolutionary subjectivity was to be carried by Christophe, Dessalines or Toussaint, was still anyone's guess.

To return to the script itself, however, the handwriting on the coversheet of the typescript appears to match the hand in which the corrections and revisions in the body of the script are written, making it possible to infer that this may be a working draft of the play passed to the Robesons for evaluation, comment, or as the working script for rehearsals once production had been agreed. There are several other pieces of substantiating evidence for this. The programme produced by the Incorporated Stage Society for the performances of

‘*TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE* A Play in Three Acts by C.L.R. James,’ on 15 and 16 March, uses the same spelling of Louverture—without the apostrophe—as appears in the typescript, although this is at variance with James’ subsequent usage in *The Black Jacobins*. There, as Kara Rabbitt notes, James guards, ‘against tradition, the original spelling of ‘L’Ouverture’—emphasizing the meaning of ‘opening’— even though he [James] explains that Toussaint himself quickly dropped the apostrophe’ (Rabbitt in Cudjoe and Cain (1995) p. 133). If, as Rabbitt argues, *The Black Jacobins* narrates ‘the rising up of a creative capacity of the people, overlooked by, yet epitomized in, the figure of Toussaint Louverture’ (Rabbitt p. 130), then the Toussaint of *Jacobins* is metonymically representative of a popular, Promethean desire for liberty and urge to statehood, an embodiment of a self-fashioned political subjectivity anchored to that Promethean umbilicus. He is, however, simultaneously able to repeat and refract the imperial performance his historical role as the ‘black Napoleon’ requires.

In the playscript, the retention of ‘Louverture’ resists French linguistic constraints by closing the very gap it signals, allowing the play to position itself as both, ‘the story of [the Haitian]. . . revolution, and . . . substantially true to history’ (Programme, 1936, p. 3), whilst at the same time staging a closure: its central subject is Toussaint, metonymically conceived yet historically impenetrable, empirically unknowable. The title therefore also anticipates the generic presence of Toussaint, re-embodied on stage by the actor — here Robeson — charged with inhabiting and projecting Toussaint’s symbolic and historical meaning in the self-authorship of performance.

The traditional spelling is retained the programme, and in the invitation issued in to members of the audience to attend a subsequent ‘Discussion on ‘Toussaint Louverture,’ on 19 March, at Oddenino’s, a posh French restaurant (part of the Café Royal) on London’s Regent Street (Programme p. 3). Outside the theatre, the play was carefully located at the centre of a

wider discussion linking black revolutionary history, and Toussaint as one of its major figures, to internationalist tendencies in the London cultural scene. Fittingly, the discussion was hosted by playwright and theatre critic, Hubert Griffith, author of, amongst other things, *Red Sunday: A Play in 3 Acts* (1929) which chronicled the events of the Russian revolution (Nicholson, 1999, p. 18). It was an event at which the author of *Toussaint*, James, was also to speak, illustrating the access he was gaining to elite cultural circles in London, and helping to position the play within a countercultural strain of radical drama in the city.

The usefulness of the Programme as a piece of substantiating evidence, however, stems from the fact that it establishes the internal structure of the play's three-acts. There is no prologue. Act I contains two scenes; Act II two scenes; and Act III, four scenes. This is at variance with the manuscript which, as noted, is structured 4:2:5 rather than 2:2:4. Yet it is clear from the information contained in the programme, from the description of the settings for individual scenes and the lists of characters appearing in each, that there is a direct correspondence between the scenes included in the play as finally performed and those available in the draft manuscript. Act I:1 for example is described in the programme as occurring in: 'The depths of a forest in the French portion of the West Indian Island of San Domingo, August 6th, 1791,' (Programme p. 2). In the manuscript, Act I: 2 begins:

August 6th, 1791. The depths of a forest. A little clearing is dotted with groups of Negro slaves. They, the Negro slaves, are the most important characters in the play. Toussaint did not make the revolt. It was the revolt that made Toussaint. The Negroes crowd close together, some carrying torches. Most of them are nearly naked, wearing either a loin-cloth or a shirt. All are dirty and unkempt. On a rough platform stand two of their leaders, Boukman, a gigantic Negro, Jean-Francois, and, on the step below

them, Toussaint. As the curtain rises Boukman is addressing the crowd. All through the scene there is the steady beat of drums, (MS p. 9).⁶

Not only does this anticipate some of the arguments James was to make with regard to, for instance, Toussaint's rise in *The Black Jacobins* ('Toussaint did not make the revolution. It was the revolution that made Toussaint,' (James, 1963, p. x)), it correlates exactly with the list of characters in the official programme - Boukman, Jeannot, Dessalines, Jean-Francois and Toussaint, who, along with the huddles of slaves, are the sum of those who appear in this scene featuring only black characters and which opened the performance at the Westminster. The correspondence between Act 1:2 in the programme and 1:3 in the manuscript is also exact, as is that between 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 in the programme and 2:1, 2.2, 3:2, 3:3 and 3:4 in the manuscript. The programme describes the last scene as taking place in 'Leclerc's villa on the outskirts of Cap Francois, May, 1802,' (Programme p. 3), while the last scene in the manuscript occurs instead in 'May 1802. The large dining-hall in the semi-official Hotel de la Republique.' (MS p. 103.) Nevertheless, the characters appearing in these scenes are the same – detailed as Leclerc, Pauline Leclerc, General Lemmonier Delafosse, General Pétion, Christophe, Dessalines and Captain Verny in the programme, and appearing more or less in that order in the script.

The play performed in March 1936, then, was not a different but rather a pared down version of this script. The scenes from the manuscript that are not indicated in the programme are few. The first of these, Act 1:1, is set on a 'moonlight evening. The veranda of M. Bullet's villa on the outskirts of Cap Francois,' (MS p. 1), though it bears little resemblance to Act I:1 of the HG version, which begins in the 'Living Room of M. Bullet, a plantation owner: 1791.' (James in Grimshaw, p. 68). Its omission from the 1936 performance in fact

⁶ The stage directions for Act I:1 (the previous scene,) describe: 'A moonlight evening. The veranda of M Bullet's villa on the outskirts of Cap Francois, the largest town in the West Indian island of San Domingo,' MS 1, and the forest referred to has therefore already been located in Haiti.

strengthens the opening of the play, which begins in the forest, with a scene in which the thematics of primitivism, revolution, and potential models of leadership, coalesce. Rather than the civilized, urban, domestic space of the Leclerc household, which might have provided an interim point of access for London audiences (and whose familiarity with the colonial experience might have begun and ended with just such vistas from just such verandas) the play represents figures of tropical enslavement with an immediacy calculated to invoke the shock of difference; generating a moment of colonial encounter inside the Westminster playhouse that combines the overdetermined symbolism of the forest, the darkness, religious ritual, blood sacrifice and the presence only of embodied blackness on stage.

It is this theatrical framework – in which radically different systems of meaning (the confrontation of scopic authority with representative subjection, the positioning of the metropolitan audience in relation to the imagined periphery) come into contact (Pratt 1992) – that provides the background to Toussaint's reluctance to cast away the Christian god and drink from the cup of blood offered to him by Boukman, (MS pp. 11–12.) Dramatically, to have retained the scene at the Leclerc villa as the play's opening scene would have been to negate James' project of locating the black masses as key actors in the history of modern revolutionary dissent, and evaded an immediate audience encounter with a history of enslavement not that different from Britain's own. What Paul Miller has described as the Toussaint of *The Black Jacobins*' 'enlightened hesitations' (the 'failure of enlightenment, not of darkness') (Miller, 2001, p. 1083; James, 1963, p. 288), lie at the very heart of the forest scene, as does James' later logic of historical action which positioned the black masses at the forefront of history: placing 'The Property' before 'The Owners' and the San Domingo before the Paris Masses (James, 1963, np.).

The two other omitted scenes are Act I: 4, set in early 1794 in the mountain retreat of Toussaint's wife (MS pp. 30–43), (MS p. 38); and Act 3: 1, again set in Toussaint's hut in the mountains in early 1802 (MS pp. 73–79). The former presents Bullet's and then Maitland's attempts to bribe Toussaint into restoring slavery, followed by what the author acknowledges as 'an almost verbatim report of the sittings of the [French Assembly on] 3rd and 4th February, 1794.' The latter likewise confronts Toussaint, within his own home, with a series of oppositions to his leadership, first from his sons, and later, when Toussaint is off-stage, in a conversation between Christophe and Coignon, in which Coignon, apparently seeking to convince Christophe to seize the reins of power from Toussaint, argues that Toussaint has 'drunk deep of unchecked power. And unchecked power corrupts and destroys. His [Toussaint's] personal domination of San Domingo is threatened. But the liberties of the people are not' (MS p. 79).

Tyranny and its consequences were at the forefront of political discussion in London in 1936. Dramatically, therefore, if claims to political sovereignty across the colonial world forwarded in a range of fora including the theatre were not to be dismissed out of hand, care needed to be taken to ensure that Toussaint the hero did not degenerate into Toussaint the despot. Equally, the country on whose history the play was based was not just a dramatic fantasy: the Haitian state provided a real-world referent and a model against which the consequences of independence might be gauged. It was therefore important that Haiti be represented as having emerged from politically acceptable forms of struggle and to retain the dignity of its distinction as the first independent black nation.

That James wished to forward Haiti as a model not just for revolution but for contemporary statehood is illustrated by the commentary contained in the 'Author's Note' on the play's programme. The play, he writes,

is the story of [the slaves'] . . . revolution, and is substantially true to history. The independence so hardly won has been maintained. The former French colony of San Domingo, to-day Haiti, is a member of the League of Nations, and Colonel Nemours, its representative, a man of colour, presided over the eighth assembly of the League, (Programme p. 3).

This claim concerning the play's 'truth to history' signals an investment in a dramatic outcome yoked not just to historically verifiable fact, but to a palatable, rational version of the Haitian present, one that would provide comfort to a British audience facing the possible dissolution of the empire and the growing inevitability of a European war. That present needed to be commensurate with a possible future in which the audience, and not just the imagined nations-to-be of the British empire, would be appropriately repositioned. For, as the author's note indicates, the play was intended not just as an object lesson in black heroism, the triumph of the human spirit over adversity, or as an example of how the shackles of empire might effectively be cast off. It sought to construct the possibility not just of a postcolonial future for the extensive areas of red on the contemporary world map; it needed, in the interests of being heard, to posit a set of blameless future friendships based on mutual respect and shared culture between the former heart of empire and its once-upon-a-time colonial subjects, subjects who would remain true to imperial type in the aftermath of independence.

Almost as significant as the revolution itself are the ongoing good relations between Haiti and its former colonial parent: 'The French take a deep interest in a people whose language, cultural traditions and language are entirely French,' the audience is assured. Indeed, '[t]he Haitians look on France as their spiritual home and', proof that there are no hard feelings and in order to assuage any nervousness generated by the contemporary rumblings in Europe, '[m]any of them fought in the French army during the war of 1914-18,'

(Programme p. 3). Like the various prefaces to *Jacobins*, the author's note contained in the programme – a prefacing statement intended to be read before the performance began – tells a story concerning James' negotiation of the aesthetic politics of audience reception.

In order to carry any conviction, the implicit assertions of the preface would need to have been matched by a corresponding sensitivity to a range of contemporary British audience concerns in the dramatization itself, short-circuiting potentially radical presentist interpretations of the performance by restricting audience inferences and assuaging fears regarding, for example, the motives lying behind colonial insurrection, what the long-term political effects of the colonies becoming independent nation states were likely to be and how current colonial subjects might position themselves in relation to the former centre once independence had been achieved.

It is worth examining the omitted scenes with this in mind. Act I: 4 in the manuscript, though referring to events important historically, adds little to the dramatic logic of the play, which moves inexorably towards Toussaint's death and the subsequent birth of the Haitian state, symbolized in the flag devised by Dessalines from a French tricolour from which the white has been torn (MS p. 109), and marking the beginnings of the new racially black state. In the second half of the scene, the insertion of the debate lifted from the records of what occurred in the French Assembly is heavy-handed, and displaces the revolutionary action, which otherwise occurs exclusively in the Caribbean. More significantly perhaps, the scene dwells on the cynicism of the British attempt to persuade Toussaint to eschew his loyalty to revolutionary France, and facilitate a British takeover of the island that would result in a return to slavery for all but Toussaint and his army:

Maitland: All of us who have, or will have property and responsibility must join together to defend this island from anarchy.

Toussaint: In other words, you want me to help you to restore slavery in this island.

Maitland: Not for all the blacks, Colonel Louverture. . . . You will be equal to any white man. The British Government has consented to take over the island, and we guarantee the rights and privileges of all those who fight with us, (MS p. 32).

In *The Black Jacobins*, James was to debunk the cherished belief that British enthusiasm for the abolition of slavery sprang from noble humanitarian concerns, by alleging that Britain's abolitionist stance was largely economically motivated (James, 1963, p. 53). The omission of this scene means that critiques of this kind are entirely absent from the play, which shows remarkable care for a range of contemporary British sensitivities. Equally notable by their absence are episodes when Toussaint, in-between fighting off the French and Spanish, had to contend with the repeated perfidy of British attempts to take San Domingo and reinstitute slavery, a significant omission given the structure of the play, which depends on a more-or-less linear chronicle of events. Of course, in the public space of contemporary theatre, questions of representation, characterization and action were pre-eminent. It is also possible to argue that, in drama, the symbolism of resistance acts metonymically, and that therefore any and all resistance to enslavement or abjection could be represented through strategic exemplification, removing the need to detail the treachery of one damn empire after another. Equally, however, the decision to omit this scene with its less than flattering references to the British as enslavers, may have been for tactical as well as dramatic reasons.

Related inferences may be made regarding the second of the omitted scenes. Act 3 in the manuscript version features heightened action and a tendency towards melodrama. Scene one of this version, omitted from the performance, is written in a much lower key. It is again set on Toussaint's home ground and involves further temptations, this time involving an invitation to return to the French fold by conceding authority to Leclerc rather than continuing to battle for political and military control of the island. Despite the entreaties of Mme Louverture and one of his sons, Isaac, and Coignon's advice to reconcile himself to

France, Toussaint remains firm in his conviction that any such concession will ultimately result in the re-introduction of slavery.

The scene makes little sense without the backdrop provided by Act 1: 4, with which it is linked thematically and in terms of the complexity of the historical account it supplies. It is difficult therefore to imagine how, in the absence of 1: 4 this later scene might be integrated to the play. This is particularly the case as, unlike the earlier scene in which Toussaint's rejection of British advances underlined his political purpose and the clarity of his moral position, here his conviction is all too easily called in question, leaving him vulnerable to charges of tyranny. That Christophe, long loyal to Toussaint, and with much to fear from the reintroduction of slavery, should appear to at least suspect Toussaint of such tyrannous intentions, is enough to raise doubts concerning Toussaint's motives. At the end of the scene, in an exchange with Coignon, Christophe is flattered by the assurance that Leclerc, 'knows your reputation – not only as a soldier, but as one accomplished in the arts of peace – by far the most cultured of all the black generals, and the one most devoted to French civilisation,' (MS p. 78). The ironies of subsequent history notwithstanding, in this scene, as the curtain slowly descends, it is Christophe, rather than Toussaint, with whom the choice rests regarding, '[t]he future of this beautiful island, [and] the lives of thousands of its inhabitants' (MS p. 79). Toussaint's suspicion that Leclerc's intentions are little different to those of the British before him are not vindicated, displacing or at least confusing Toussaint's role as protagonist, introducing a marked ambivalence around any reading Toussaint's actions as exclusively heroic.

There is a certain dramatic logic then attendant on the omission of these scenes from the final production when the political intent of the play and the relationship it hoped to construct with its Stage Society sponsors, are taken in to account. Founded in 1899 'to regenerate the Drama', the Society mounted private Sunday performances of new and

experimental plays with little chance of commercial success by ‘dramatists of independent mind’ (*Times*, 1935, np.) Like the other theatre clubs in the city, the Society staged the plays it sponsored in private venues to which only members had access; they were therefore able to avail of ‘a loophole in the censorship restrictions [a]s... they were outside the Lord Chamberlain’s power, and plays which could not be licensed for public performance were frequently performed’ (Nicholson p. 18). In 1930, with the rise of other London theatres, specifically *The Gate*, with similar remits, the Society narrowly escaped dissolution following a vote of its council. In 1936, a reconstituted council employed the services of Miss Flora Robson, who immediately took ‘an active part in choosing the three plays announced for the coming season,’ of which *Toussaint Louverture* was one (*Times*, 1935, np.).

Hoping for critical success and a subsequent commercial run in the West End, James would have had good reason to wish to avoid the Lord Chamberlain’s disfavour. In the 1920s and 1930s, there were even accusations that ‘the Lord Chamberlain was quite deliberately engaged in isolating... the theatre from the intellectual and imaginative life of the time.’ (Nicholson p. 4). After four private performances at the Arts Theatre Club, for example, Hubert Griffith’s *Red Sunday*, starring Robert Farquharson as Lenin and John Gielgud as Trotsky, had been refused a licence (Nicholson p. 18). Reviews of the play notwithstanding, any chance of a public run would have probably disappeared had *Toussaint Louverture* been overly assiduous in its attention to the detail of British history, or too enthusiastic in analogizing San Domingo’s former relationship with France to that currently obtaining between Britain and its colonies.

The Stage Society was however set to benefit from the second production of its thirty-seventh season. Whether because of the continuing respect in which the Society was held, or because of the coup the Society and James had managed to stage by signing Paul Robeson to the title role – probably a combination of both – prenotices of the play appeared in all the

major newspapers. The play received significant publicity in October and November of 1935, just after the programme for the coming year had been announced. *The Observer* of 27 October, 1935 carried the notice of Robeson's upcoming role, reminding readers that '[t]he subscription to the Society, covering the price of tickets for the three plays of the season, is one guinea (or two guineas for the best seats)' and that '[t]he address of the Society is 32, Shaftesbury-avenue.' On 8 March, the paper cautioned that 'Mr Robeson's personal popularity is immense, and there will probably be some hundreds of people who would like to join the Society... merely for the sake of seeing him in this remarkable play', while the *Daily News Chronicle* of 11 March noted that 'the play... will be the occasion of Mr Robeson's only London stage performance this season'. For reasons perhaps also to do with Robeson's presence on stage, the performances were widely reviewed – in national broadsheets, regional newspapers, and as far afield as New York, Malaya and Jamaica in the weeks following the staging. As Rosengarten has demonstrated, the reviews contain evidence of the the manner in which the play was staged, the quality of the performances, and of how it was received. As he has also observed, they provide evidence of the plot and details of particular scenes, including several mentions of Robeson's rendition of Toussaint's death in a French prison (Rosengarten p. 221).

Act 3: 4 in the MS manuscript, corresponding to 3: 3 in the programme, is just such a scene, (MS pp. 96–102). Set in a prison cell in the Alps, Toussaint's final episodic appearance is written to maximize the melodramatic effect of his death by stressing the sadistic neglect of his gaolers, who abandon him to a lonely death in abjection and exile. Before the curtain rises, 'Toussaint is heard singing hymns with Mars Plaisir,' the retainer who has accompanied him for much of the play, but who is lead off to another prison in chains early in the scene (MS p. 97). Stripped of the consolation of company, and this last marker of his Caribbean origin and political status, Toussaint must then contend with the

mercenary advances of Caffarelli, aide-de-camp to the First Consul. Caffarelli, who seeks, of all things, to know where on Haiti Toussaint might have secreted a treasure of forty million francs, becomes yet another vehicle by which Toussaint's enlightened revolutionary principles, and additionally in this instance, his probity, may be reaffirmed.

The messianic note is prevalent throughout the dramatization of Toussaint's character and the symbolism that surrounds it. This final temptation, the promise of news of Toussaint's wife and children, coupled with the threat that slavery will be reintroduced, becomes yet another opportunity to demonstrate Toussaint's commitment to freedom from slavery, regardless of the political consequences – the sacrifice of the relationship with post-revolutionary France – or the personal cost. The scene reveals once again a pressing dramatic urge to vindicate Toussaint by presenting him within a narrative in which, even without the contextual or temporal structures of power, family or a future, he retains his symbolic capital as an agent of history and a vessel of revolutionary spirit. The interests of the drama and the tastes of the audience might have been better served by a final soliloquy from Toussaint at this point, one reflecting on his actions and the course of history as he finally succumbs to cold and starvation; perhaps providing a more considered appreciation of his historical role, and at least a modicum of introspection. The melodramatic conversation that occurs with Caffarelli rehearses points already well established elsewhere in the play. Yet, apparently without prompting, Toussaint's final words, spoken just after the clock has struck three on the second night of his abandonment in the cold, without food or water, mark his realization of a fatal political mistake. 'Oh, Dessalines! Dessalines!' he cries in his last moments, 'You were right after all!' (MS p. 102).

From the notices the play received, it is clear that, for all its shortcomings, the death scene was jam to Robeson, who had been attracted to the role of Toussaint for political reasons but also because of the paucity of dramatic roles available to lack actors at the time.

The *Evening News* lamented the fact that ‘Mr. Robeson’s noble voice and presence have nothing to bring to life.... Even the hero’s tragic end in a French prison... is robbed of grandeur by trivial detail.’ But the *Glasgow Herald* wrote with approval of the scene in which [Mr Robeson’s] fine singing voice was heard.’ The critic of the *Morning Post*, reflecting on the portrayal of Toussiant’ ‘death in the alpine prison of Joux,’ confirms that ‘A little ‘spiritual,’ beautifully sung by Mr. Robeson in the prison scene, gave a refreshing touch of naturalness.’ An unsigned review in *The Times* of 17 March noted that ‘the action is genuinely visualized by Mr Robeson alone,’ going on to describe, ‘the sympathy evoked by Mr Robeson in his prison cell . . . not for a tricked negro but for a statesman paying a price for his ideal.’

The Moorland Spingarn manuscript includes a scene that correlates with the death scene described in contemporary reviews, including stage directions that stipulate hymns being sung as the curtain rises. In conjunction with the other supporting evidence – the correspondence between the script and the published programme with regard to the setting, casting and structure of the play, with the exception of two omitted scenes; the nature of the plot and the specifics of the action noted in the reviews; and the notes regarding rehearsal and signatures on the cover page – it can be inferred that this version is an original copy (doubtless one of several) of the play written by James and performed in 1936.

III

The question of how the manuscript may have made its way into Alain Locke’s possession refocuses attention on the textual and individual networks at play at this moment of black renaissance. Just as the circulation and relocation of persons enabled the emergence of new political and artistic communities in the period, associated ideas and texts were also generated, reframed and constituent of the circumatlantic response to the experience of twentieth-century modernity, and the shifting relationship to black history and the politics of

the contemporary moment. There is more than one possible explanation for how the manuscript ended up in Locke's hands, and the provenance of the document and the possible routes of its physical transference each provide an interesting aperçu on the intersection of transatlantic black modernities. Author of the *New Negro*, and lynchpin of the Harlem Renaissance, Locke was a long-time friend and associate of Paul and Eslanda Robeson, who may have passed their copy of the play to him, perhaps as part of the discussions in which they were involved around planning a Negro Theater in the United States. No direct evidence of this has been found, and either the correspondence between Locke and the Robesons was limited, or few or none of the letters they exchanged have survived. But there was certainly U.S. interest in James' play. A letter from Carl Van Vechten to Eslanda Robeson dated 19 November 1941 suggests that Van Vechten, also involved with Locke in trying to set up a Negro Theater company, was in search of James' play. 'Dear Essie,' he writes, 'I was afraid that play wasn't published. However, C. L. R. James is here and maybe I can dig him for a typed copy! Or maybe you have one!' There is no subsequent correspondence in Eslanda Robeson's papers that might shed light on what happened next, but it may have been Van Vechten who passed the play to Locke having received a copy from Eslanda Robeson, or from James himself.

Another possibility is that C. L. R. James passed the script onto Locke. There is little to indicate that the two corresponded while James was in London. However, the two men were at least acquaintances during the period James was residing in the United States. A letter dated 2 February 1953, addressed to 'My dear Locke,' at Howard, refers to 'that day [I saw you] in 1951 on Sixth Avenue with my little son.' The letter refers to 'this book of mine [on Melville].... to which I have given many years,' expressing James' wish that 'American scholars should discuss the book,' and the view that 'you with your British experience and with your wide circle of friends and acquaintances can recognise the need for this' Another

letter from the same file, addressed only ‘Dear Sir or Madam,’ draws ‘to your attention the enclosed work, Renegades, Mariners and Castaways, written by myself.’ This appears to be a form letter requesting support for James’ appeal against deportation proceedings under the McCarran Act, and asks the recipient to consider whether ‘after reading this book, you find there is any way in which you can be of assistance,’ in which case ‘you will be performing a public duty of international importance’ (James to Locke, nd).

Renegades, Mariners and Castaways was first published in 1953, and it seems reasonable to assume that the personal letter referred to that work and was enclosed by James with the form letter in acknowledgement of his acquaintance with Locke. It confirms that James knew and corresponded with Locke, and that he circulated his work among his acquaintances and those of ‘public reputation’ in the US. The passing on of unpublished work in manuscript form is of course a somewhat different matter. However, Locke’s public profile, and ongoing interest and involvement in projects promoting African American culture, art and artists, make it at least plausible the James may have given the script to Locke in the hopes that it would form the basis of another performance of the play, or indeed a film script.

These suggestions regarding the transmission of the playscript are of course just that. Another project that goes beyond the immediate scope of this article involves an investigation seeking to establish definitively how the manuscript came to be in Locke’s possession. A further, comparative study of the routes taken by all the typescripts believed to be versions of the play produced in 1936 would provide a useful map of the routes, mechanisms and individuals involved in the apparently loosely bound but politically functional associations linking individual creative endeavours, in ways not currently apparent, to a wider modernist aesthetic sensibility.

Whatever the provenance of the document in the Locke papers, the script is consistent with the extant evidence regarding the 1936 London performance of a play presenting the emergence of the Haitian state at a moment at which, in anti-colonial terms, the future was yet to come. In her discussion of the 1967 version of the play, a version often considered to be of limited dramatic merit, Nicole King argues that, ‘the time has come to consider the play [*Toussaint Louverture*] outside of formalist/aesthetic frames of greatness and value . . . *as an event* in a specific time and place’ (King in Gair, 2006, p. 27, my italics). In the times and spaces of the anti-colonial internationalism emerging between the wars, later consolidated in the anti-colonial nationalisms of the post-war period, the play as well as the history positions itself as a series of targeted episodic responses whose formal shifts reflect the specifics of the political moments of its enactment.

One significant aspect of any recovery of the 1936 version is that the play and its performance can provide a window onto the ways in which black Atlantic intellectuals negotiated the complex terrain of the British interwar metropole. That terrain was moderated by the relationship that obtained between art and politics in Britain, one very different to the deregulated, expressively free, futurist context provided by Paris. It was one in which the realm of performance on particular continued to be regulated by conservative state authority. Perversely perhaps, this provided access to structures developed to circumvent censorship, and whose tendencies were therefore often countercultural by nature. Organizations such as the Stage Society simultaneously offered the opportunity to operate within this counterculture, and helped place James in the milieu of the London cultural elite.

But the emergence of a reliable version of the misplaced script also enables a much needed return to the aesthetic and formalist concerns that attend this work in another context: that provided by the literary and performative modernisms that held sway at the moment at which James’ first chose ‘to locate Haiti visibly on the proscenium of history’ (Torres

Saillant, 2006, p. 134), suggesting it may be placed within wider currents of diasporic cultural practice. For James' dramatic interest in Haiti was not exceptional. *Toussaint Louverture* was only one of many plays signalling an interest in Haiti's revolutionary past to emerge in the 1920s and 30s, including Eugene O'Neill's *Emperor Jones*, and the Federal Theater Project's radical 'Voodoo' *Macbeth* (1936) directed by Orson Welles and William Du Bois' *Haiti* (1938), amongst others. Each of these dramatizations was keen to cast black Atlantic actors – in both senses of the word - in often conflicted narratives of modern subjectivity, statehood and revolutionary citizenship.

The plot of *Toussaint Louverture* leads not just inexorably towards statehood and citizenship, it also gestures towards the utopian social order that might be hoped to attend them. James use of a definite *telos* is significant, appealing imaginatively to the panafricanist idealism and territorial ambition shared by many of his diasporic cohort in London, who, as Von Eschen has established, 'grasped the vulnerability of colonialism and predicted its collapse over the next decade' (Von Eschen p. 12). Equally significant as far as much of his British audience was concerned is how, by invoking that teleology, he is able to normalize the will to nation, establishing statehood as the universal expectation of historical struggle, of which the Haitian struggle is metonymically indicative. Arguably then, James' early dramatization of the Haitian revolution as the historical lynchpin around which the foundational narrative of postcolonial statehood might turn, is, like his histories, tied to the modern political emergence of a self-liberating, if 'conscripted,' black subject (Scott 2004). Conceived, like *Jacobins*, within what Paul Gilroy describes as 'the tradition of oppositional reflection' (Gilroy, 2004, p. 34), this version of the play inevitably draws meaning from the different political conditions and historical predicaments of its enactment. James' history of enlightenment and revolution, *The Black Jacobins*, has come to be understood as a continuum across which our shifting consciousness of the historical past, and the action it enables, may

be plotted. *Toussaint Louverture*, 1936, is part of that same continuum. It is also a point of origin in James' work on blackness, modernity and revolution, a foundational moment in the public staging of the historically aware black subject as a complex political presence on the social and political landscape of the twentieth century.

References

Anderson, Perry (1984), 'Modernity and Revolution', *New Left Review* 144.1, pp. 96–113.

Bogues, Anthony (1997), *Caliban's Freedom: The Early Political Thought of C L. R. James*. London, Chicago: Pluto Press.

Cudjoe, Selwyn (nd.), 'C. L. R. James Misbound,' *Transition: An International Review* 58, pp. 12–7.

Cudjoe, Selwyn and William Cain, eds. (1995), *C. L. R. James: His Intellectual Legacies*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Daily News Chronicle (1936), 11 March.

Duberman, Martin (1988), *Paul Robeson: A Biography*. New York: The New Press.

Edwards, Brent Hayes (2003), *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation and the Rise of Black Internationalism*, Cambridge, Mass and London: Harvard University Press.

Emery, Mary Lou (2007), *Modernism, the Visual, and Caribbean Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Evening News (1936), 17 March.

Foner, Philip ed (1978), *Paul Robeson Speaks: Writings, Speeches, Interviews, 1918–1974*. London, Melbourne, New York: Quartet Books.

Gilroy, Paul (2004), *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Glasgow Herald, (1936), 19 March.

Grimshaw, Anna ed. (1992), *The C. L. R. James Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.

James, C. L. R. (1963), *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. Vintage Edition, Random House.

James, C. L. R. 'The Black Jacobins', Anna Grimshaw ed. (1992), *The C. L. R. James Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp.

James, C. L. R. (1936), *TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE: The Story of the Only Successful Slave Revolt in History, A Play in 3 Acts*, Alain Locke Papers. Box 164-186, Folder, 'James, C. L. R. Toussaint L'Ouverture play', Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

James, C. L. R. (1936), *Toussaint L'Ouverture: the story of the only successful slave revolt in history: a play in 3 acts* (1936), Papers of Jock Haston (1913–1986), including records of the Revolutionary Communist Part and other Trotskyist Groups, Archives and Special Collections, University of Hull, UK.

James, C. L. R. (1953), Letter to Locke, 2 February, Alain Locke Papers.

James, C. L. R. (1953), Letter to 'Dear Sir or Madam', Alain Locke Papers.

King, Nicole (2006), 'C. L. R. James, Genre and Cultural Politics,' in *Beyond Boundaries: C. L. R. James and Postnational Studies*, Christopher Gair ed., London, Ann Arbor: Pluto, pp. 1–38.

Miller, Paul B (2001), 'Enlightened Hesitations: Black Masses and Tragic Heroes in C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins*,' *Modern Language Notes* 116, pp. 1069–90.

Morning Post (1936), 17 March.

Morrison, Roy D. (1978), 'Black Enlightenment: The Issues of Pluralism, Priorities and Empirical Correlation', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 156.2, pp. 217–40.

Nicholson, Steve (1999), *British Theatre and the Red Peril: The Portrayal of Communism 1917–1945*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press.

Pratt, Mary Louise (1992), *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge.

Programme (1936), 'Toussaint Louverture, A play in three Acts,' London: Incorporated Stage Society.

Rabbitt, Kara M. (1995), 'C. L. R. James's Figuring of Toussaint-Louverture: *The Black Jacobins* and the Literary Hero', *C. L. R. James: His Intellectual Legacies*, eds. Selwyn Cudjoe and William Cain, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, pp. 118–35.

Robeson, Paul Jr. (2001), *The Undiscovered Paul Robeson: An Artist's Journey, 1898–1939*, New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Rosengarten, Frank (2008), *Urbane Revolutionary: C. L. R. James and the Struggle for a New Society*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Schwartz, Bill (2003), 'Crossing the Seas,' *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*, ed Bill Schwartz, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 1–30.

Scott, David (2004), *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

The Observer (1935), 27 October.

The Observer (1936), 8 March.

“The Stage Society: A Negro Play” (1935), *The Times*, October, np.

The Times (1936), 12 March.

The Times, (1936), 17 March.

Torres-Saillant, Benito (2006), *An Intellectual History of the Caribbean*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Van Vechten, Carl to Paul Robeson with note to Eslanda Robeson (1941), 19 November, Correspondence, Box A-Dia, Folder S-Z. Eslanda Robeson Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

Von Eschen, Penny (1997), *Race Against Empire. Black Americans and Anti-colonialism, 1937–57*, New York: Cornell University Press.