**Haiti and comics: the search for (new graphic) narratives**

In the defiantly entitled *Haiti Rising*, a collection of essays that appeared shortly after the earthquake of January 2010, the artist, musician, author, record producer and general *provocateur* Bill Drummond wrote a chapter on the country’s post-disaster art market. In this, he underlined – as have many others – the asymmetries of power on which this trade is based.[[1]](#footnote-1) Drummond developed his analysis further, however, by suggesting – via the report of a conversation he claims to have had with the Grande Rue artists André Eugène and Louko (the second of whom died in the disaster) – that Haitian cultural producers actively exploit the various expectations of North American consumers, challenging and destabilizing in the process the notions of ‘authenticity’ and of ‘art brut’ often associated with external critical responses to the work of groups such as *Atis Rezistans*. In the same volume, also writing on the theme of ‘art in the time of catastrophe’, the novelist Madison Smartt Bell illustrates a similar observation by recalling a French cartoon he has seen in the country:

On the wall of a beach resort hotel near Cap Haïtien in the north of Haiti, there’s a wicked little cartoon by a well-known French artist whose name I do not recall: a cheerful *blan* (foreign) customer is purchasing art from a couple of Haitian artists or artisans who are sawing off suitably sized sections of typical Haitian scenes from a plank, or a sort of endless *bande dessinée*, that recedes on trestles all the way to the horizon and probably beyond. The satirical intent of the drawing, of course, is to show that a lot of Haitian art is no more and no less than a market commodity. How bad, how diminishing, is that? The inexhaustibility also implied by the sketch might, at this point in the history of disaster, be encouraging.[[2]](#footnote-2)

What is particularly striking in Smartt Bell’s example – a *mise-en-abîme*, inserting a comic within a cartoon – is the ways in which, on a number of different levels, comic art becomes both the medium and the message of his analysis. It is not only a means of reflecting on the resilience and strategic flexibility of Haitian cultural production, but also a way of illustrating – albeit obliquely – the processes of that production itself.

The equation of artistic creation with this ‘sort of endless *bande dessinée*’ clearly introduces a humorous dimension to the discussion of the earthquake’s impact on cultural production in Haiti. The evocation of the comic implies not only the continued co-existence of the artistic and the artisanal, of ‘high’ and ‘popular’ culture, but also betokens the creative ingenuity persistent among those artists seeking to supply external demand in the wake of disaster. Equally important for the purposes of the current article, however, is the specific deployment of the *bande dessinée* in this context, i.e., the resort to a graphic genre, juxtaposing text and image, whose visibility has (for reasons that will be explored below) increased in Haiti following the earthquake, but whose presence as an established and home-produced form in Haitian culture arguably remains still only nascent. As a reaction building on Smartt Bell’s vignette, this article reflects on the ambivalent presence of the *bande dessinée* in a Haitian context. In part, it draws on the recent engagement with the comics form from a variety of postcolonial perspectives, welcoming this as a critical development in both postcolonialism and studies of comics itself, but seeing it also as one from which Haiti (and indeed the wider Caribbean) has often been regrettably absent.[[3]](#footnote-3) While there has been increasing attention in scholarship to postcolonial approaches to the *bande dessinée*, as well as to comics produced in ‘postcolonial’ contexts more generally, the representation of Haiti in the genre has rarely been studied, and Haitian *BDs* similarly remain relatively neglected. By way of example of this oversight, a pioneering and critically incisive volume in this field – *Postcolonial Comics: Texts, Events, Identities* – provides a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, and as such reflects this general lack of engagement with *bande dessinée* in a Caribbean frame. The inherent challenge of the collection to postcolonialize the study of comic art nevertheless has clear implications for any attempt to study Haiti in this frame.

The current article seeks to explore ways in which this gap in scholarship might be addressed by: (i) exploring – in comparative and transnational frames – some of the key external representations of Haiti in comic form, especially in the USA and France, across a period of over 150 years; and (ii), by extension, considering the increasing importance of the *bande dessinée* in Haitian culture and society themselves. As such, it seeks to contribute to the ongoing disruption of those understandings of studies of comic art that often privilege paradigms based on US-European production and manga. It suggests at the same time – through a focus on links between comics and key turning points in Haitian history and cultures (such as the Revolution of 1791-1803 or the 2010 earthquake) – that what Binita Mehta and Pia Mukherji dub ‘graphic interventions within specific moments of historical crises’ can indeed permit new understandings of ‘postmodern trauma, the possibilities of solidarities and protest in transnational communities, or the politics of new visual technologies’.[[4]](#footnote-4) This is an approach inspired in part by that of the editors of *Postcolonial Comics*, themselves, who suggest that research at the intersection of postcolonialism and comics requires the close attention to con/textualities (understanding *bande dessinée* as ‘instances of postcolonial textuality or as aspects of public culture in the postcolony’) central to the current study. Such a critical approach invites at the same time a historical reflection on the questions of (re)definition, production and representational asymmetries with which this article began.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Daumier and Cham: Haiti and nineteenth-century French caricature**

As is often the case with Haiti, critical attention to self-representation tends to be eclipsed by a predominant interest in representation from outside. The portrayal of Haiti in comic art – as well as the relative paucity of the production of *bandes dessinées* in the country itself – tends to encourage repetition of the same patterns evident in study of literature and historiography. In an acerbic article on contemporary portrayals of the country, Michael Dash alludes to the ‘(un)kindness of strangers’, outlining the ways in which ‘[n]ot only does Haitian history seem doomed to repeat itself, but [writers] on Haiti seem destined to repeat each other’.[[6]](#footnote-6) These patterns of self-referential representation, often dislocated from the place and culture they seek to portray, have a long history. In the aftermath of its independence (1804) and the imposition of a crippling debt (1825) that would contribute to the systematic underdevelopment of the country, Haiti featured heavily in satirical illustrations in the French press. Following the logic of Dash’s analysis, these cartoons maligned the country through racialized and often racist mechanisms of representation with little if any root in Haiti itself; and they also simultaneously diminished their subject – in an early historical illustration of what Paul Farmer has called the ‘uses of Haiti’ – via a process of instrumentalization that used a detour via Haitian otherness to critique France itself.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Whilst for the most part not approximating formally to modern *bande dessinée* (they depend on the juxtaposition of text and image, for instance, and do not deploy speech bubbles), images of Haiti circulated throughout the later nineteenth century as caricatures and political cartoons, in particular drawing the Caribbean nation into domestic discussions of the February Revolution as well as of the abolition of slavery in 1848 and of Napoleon III’s *coup* of 1851. Darcy Grigsby has provided a detailed analysis of the representation of Haitian subjects in this period, considering the ways in which Haiti was privileged in discussions of blackness in the body politic, and highlighting the extent to which Faustin Soulouque, self-appointed emperor of the country for almost a decade from 1849, served as a means of ridiculing (now almost five decades after independence) Haitian aspirations to statehood.[[8]](#footnote-8) Racist caricatures in publications such as *L’Illustration* and *Le Charivari* by artists including Cham were highly visible in the press, and led to an increasing elision of fictionalization and any sort of political reality.[[9]](#footnote-9) Honoré Daumier also contributed Haiti-related material to *Le Charivari*, using images of Soulouque throughout the 1850s to critique the regime of Louis Napoléon during the Second Republic and into the Second Empire, invoking – in Elizabeth C. Childs’s terms – ‘the distancing mechanisms of the exotic to veil political criticism in seemingly safe and foreign terms’.[[10]](#footnote-10) Exploiting exaggerated and racialized facial features, and mimicking delusions of imperial grandeur, these images tended to treat Haiti as a detour in domestic concerns, a visual repository of received ideas about blackness and unimaginably precocious postcoloniality that (literally) denigrated the Haitian state whilst using it for oblique criticism of elements of French political culture.

As Grigsby notes, however, it was ‘not only the Haitian villain, but the Haitian hero [who] played a prominent role in Paris between the 1848 Revolution and the 1851 Empire’.[[11]](#footnote-11) As a result of the success of the play *Toussaint L’Ouverture*, Soulouque was even briefly eclipsed in visual representations by Lamartine’s eponymous protagonist, the leader of the Haitian Revolution and precursor of its independence. The drama had been written in 1840, but only made it onto the Parisian stage after the (second) legislative abolition of slavery in the French colonial empire in 1848, a process in which Lamartine – as Minister of Foreign Affairs – had played a key role.[[12]](#footnote-12) Recent critical attention to his play *Toussaint L’Ouverture* has underlined the ways in which the work destabilized received notions of blackness, promoted anti-racist republicanism, and sought actively to challenge any self-congratulatory rhetoric of abolitionism by underlining the importance of the resistance of the enslaved, aspects that had already led certain contemporary critics to attack the drama as anti-French.[[13]](#footnote-13) The popularity of Lamartine’s work with Parisian audiences triggered a visual backlash by the caricaturists mentioned above, with *L’Illustration* – previously a vocal supporter of abolitionism – producing two full pages of images in April 1850 that expressed astonishment at the play’s success in the eyes of French audiences. In her discussion of this material, Grigsby highlights the focus on the representation of blacking up, exploring an actively parodic approach to the transformations this implies; but she stresses at the same time the continuing respect for the revolutionary Haiti of Louverture in contrast to the perceived farce of Soulouque’s contemporary regime. Grigsby concludes: ‘Soulouque had been denied bivalency, the oscillation between villain and hero, but Toussaint had long been accorded a greater semantic density; here was a tragic black hero whose complexity matched that of blackface on stage’.[[14]](#footnote-14)

It is striking to see this over-determination of Haitian subjects present in another contemporary but little-studied engagement with Lamartine, Cham’s comic version of his play in *Le Punch à Paris*. This appeared across six pages in April 1850.[[15]](#footnote-15) A marker of the success – and perceived threat – of *Toussaint Louverture* is the extent to which the play was subject to parody. *Traversin et Couverture*, a dramatic rewriting by Varin et Labiche, was performed in April 1850, transforming Lamartine’s work into a blend of melodrama and farce, and Cham actively contributed to this tradition with his graphic narrative ‘TOUSSAINT SALE FIGURE’.[[16]](#footnote-16) The very title of the work echoes – with its reference to facial skin pigmentation – the referencing of blackface in other contemporary representations as well as (in pitching the parody ‘contre tout ce qui est blanc) the reading of the play as hostile both to white Frenchness and French whiteness. Cham’s principal target would appear to be the play’s author himself, for by April 1850 Lamartine was no longer in political office and had arguably deployed Louverture both as protagonist in defence of his own political legacy and as critique of his adversary Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte (soon to become Emperor Napoléon III). The sequence of Cham’s images concludes with a three-quarter-page ‘caricature philosophique’ of ‘M. Lamartine en contradiction avec lui-même’, which the satirist glosses along these lines: ‘Abolissant l’esclavage en avril 1848 – Vendant le nègre Toussaint en 1850’.[[17]](#footnote-17) Louverture – portrayed in an exaggerated parody of a French officer’s uniform, with accentuated lips and pointed nose – is led by the dramatist via a rope around his neck to the offices of Lamartine’s publisher, Michel Lévy. This reduction of revolutionary history to a more venally motivated farce is reflected in the main body of the narrative, where – across five rapidly sketched acts – Cham undermines any political intent in Lamartine’s play by sending up its melodramatic dimensions. There is a tearful separation of Louverture from his niece Adrienne; a disguise scene in which the protagonist approaches as a beggar his sons recently returned from France (General Leclerc mistakes him for Robert Macaire, the fictional swindler previously created by actor Frédérick Lemaître, now portraying Louverture himself); and the execution of the revolutionary’s nephew Moïse. The parody concludes with a comically chaotic compression of the Haitian War of Independence into two *cases*, in which Lamartine is added to the French casualties, and the reader is reminded of the illusion of black face on which the play depends: ‘La pièce traînant en longueur, Toussaint, pour en finir, saisit le drapeau noir, écrase des blancs, enfonce l’auteur et rentre chez lui se débarbouiller’.[[18]](#footnote-18) Lamartine succinctly described Louverture in his play with the often repeated phrase: ‘Cet homme est une nation’, but the dignity of his protagonist – for whom the choice between resistance and surrender achieves, as it would in the work of others such as C.L.R. James, tragic proportions – is in Cham’s graphic representation trivialized, domesticated and reduced to caricature.

**Graphic representations of Toussaint Louverture**

As if in anticipation of the Eighteenth Brumairethe following year, Cham thus presents history repeating itself as farce, with Louverture himself claiming succinctly, as early as Act 2: ‘Mon rôle est ridicule’.[[19]](#footnote-19) The parody of Lamartine in *Le Punch à Paris* belongs, however, to a longer and more varied tradition of visual representations of Toussaint Louverture, stretching back to contemporary illustrations in biographies and eyewitness accounts written while the revolutionary was still alive (including iconic images such as Maurin’s lithograph from 1837), and culminating in the recent creative engagement evident in the work of prominent contemporary artists of the African diaspora including Edouard Duval-Carrié, Lubaina Himid and Kimathi Donkor.[[20]](#footnote-20) Within that substantial corpus, Cham nevertheless inaugurated a narrative strand dependent on the sequential use of images integrated in various ways with text to tell the life story of Louverture – or at least to recount specific segments of his life and the turning points whereby it was structured.

Although not often read in terms of the structures of graphic narrative, a very different work, Jacob Lawrence’s 41-panel life of Toussaint Louverture (produced in 1938 in the context of the Harlem Renaissance), has also been read as ‘similar to a comic strip’.[[21]](#footnote-21) The analogy is a good one for the series uses bold colour and form, and deploys a sequential, story-board approach to its historical content. Images are juxtaposed with captions to provide an account of Haiti and its Revolution, beginning with the arrival of Columbus in 1492 and culminating with the crowning of Dessalines as emperor in 1804. In an account of a retrospective of Lawrence’s work in 1987, Kay Larson links the apparent simplicity of the artist’s work to the graphic genre, claiming: ‘at first glance these paintings resemble comic strips’.[[22]](#footnote-22) She goes on to tease out the complexity of a series of images that create a powerful narrative force through the use of simplified, flat shapes and collage-like images.

Lawrence’s account of Louverture was produced in the aftermath of the US occupation of Haiti, and was one of the first to harness the narrative of revolution and emancipation to the African-American struggles emerging in the interwar years.[[23]](#footnote-23) The panels deploy comic-book aesthetics to encapsulate the extreme brutality of the plantation regime (the scene of flogging in panel 10 is a striking illustration of this), but also to reflect the dynamism of rebellion and struggle (Bel-Argent, Louverture’s charger, streaks across panel 21, evoking the assault on the English at Artibonite; panel 23 is dense with black troops bearing arms, on the march to capture San Miguel, reflecting the transformation of the once enslaved into a formidable fighting force; figureless, panels 31 and 32 use stark images of approaching vessels and burning buildings to suggest the arrival of Leclerc’s counter-revolutionary forces in 1801 and Henri-Christophe’s burning of Le Cap as he refused to surrender). Images also depict isolation and defeat, most notably the almost identical panels 37 and 39 reveal Louverture imprisoned in the Château de Joux: in the first staring through the bars of the cell, in the second lying dead on his bed.

Lawrence’s work exemplifies the intertexuality often evident in literary and historiographic depictions of Louverture: several panels owe much to formal portraiture, and draw into their comic-book style a different aesthetics, that of the representation of martial prowess, evident in the magnificent profile of panel 20 (drawn from Maurin’s 1837 image), and in panel 26 (a three-quarter portrait of Louverture at the capture of Mirebalois, reminiscent of the earlier work of Edinburgh lithographer John Kay from 1802). As such, the series seeks to bring the story of Haiti to wider audiences, and *Toussaint L’Ouverture* is very much in the tradition of similar contemporary endeavours, not least Orson Welles’s production of *Voodoo Macbeth*, staged in Harlem in 1936 as part of the Negro Theatre Unit of the Federal Theatre Project.[[24]](#footnote-24) Subsequent black artists have developed Lawrence’s approach to Haitian history through sequences of narrative images, one of the finest examples of which is in the work of Lubaina Himid. *Scenes from the Life of Toussaint L’Ouverture* – made up of fifteen pictures, watercolour and pencil on paper – shows a series of moments from the revolutionary’s life, ranging from the domestic to the martial.[[25]](#footnote-25) Lacking the logic of linear narrative of Lawrence’s series and incorporating characteristic flashes of humour (‘who’, asks the caption to image 2, ‘will do the laundry?’), Himid’s work forms an integral part of her wider project: ‘challeng[ing] dominant and oppressive versions of history, and in so doing, continually seek[ing] to rescue Black historical figures from an ever-threatening obscurity.’[[26]](#footnote-26) As such, *Scenes from the Life* can be read in (if not necessarily as part of) a wider corpus of comics and *bandes dessinées*.

These works often share pedagogical aims, but have different emphases especially when issues of gender are considered as Louverture regularly serves in them as an exemplum of black masculinity. Mid-twentieth-century examples of such an approach are also to be found in the graphic art of the United States. The second issue of *Real Life Comics*, released by Pines Publishing in 1941, included the life of Louverture among what the publication’s subtitle called ‘the adventures of the world’s greatest heroes’.[[27]](#footnote-27) A further example is a *Golden Legacy* issue, produced by Fitzgerald Publishing in 1966 on the ‘Saga of Toussaint L'Ouverture and the Birth of Haiti’, a comic reflecting the ways in which the leader of the Haitian revolution was conscripted in graphic form as a role model for young African Americans. In its hagiographic manoeuvres, the *Golden Legacy* issue smooths out many of the historiographic controversies of Louverture’s life – including the motivations for, and strategies deployed as a result of, his *volte-face* that led to a change of allegiance from Spain to France; the ideological conflicts that underpinned his leadership of the final stage of the Revolution, often known as the Haitian War of Independence; the context of his arrest and deportation to France in 1802. The comic adopts a heroic mode, casting Napoleon as villain and compressing Dessalines’s final push for independence into a concluding panel dominated by a single frame in which a spectral Louverture overlooks his faceless successor.

An even more striking example of the conscription of the Haitian heroes to contemporary contexts is found in a 1985 French *bande dessinée*, *Toussaint Louverture et la révolution de Saint-Domingue (Haïti)*, illustrated by Pierre Briens and written by Nicolas Saint-Cyr.[[28]](#footnote-28) Produced in the context of preparations for the bicentenary of the French Revolution, during whose celebrations there were even attempts to ‘pantheonize’ Louverture, the album contributes to contemporary revisionist efforts to recruit the Haitian leader to a French republican narrative.[[29]](#footnote-29) These suggest that the Haitian Revolution was little more than a subsidiary event in its overarching French counterpart and not – as scholars such as Nick Nesbitt have recently claimed, through their studies of the intersections between republicanism, anti-colonialism and the will to emancipation – a radical destabilization of the French revolutionary project and clear illustration of its limits.[[30]](#footnote-30) Briens and Saint-Cyr deploy the stylistic and technical features of contemporary *franco-belge* production to offer a detailed overview of the shift from pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue to post-revolutionary Haiti (the book ends with the country’s re-adoption of this pre-conquest designation, the Taíno term meaning ‘land of high mountains’). Key events such as the Bois Caïman (the *vodou* ceremony often claimed to be place at which the Revolution began) lend themselves to graphically lurid treatment, and gratuitously erotic imagery is deployed when, for instance, Louverture’s rival Jean-Louis Villatte captures Governor Laveaux in his bed before temporarily imprisoning him in Cap Français. Repeated focus on the drumming of the formerly enslaved rebels lends itself to striking typographic treatment of the onomatopoeic sounds that result, but the album ultimately seeks to maintain a level of historiographic accuracy whilst privileging the French dimensions of the international struggle in the 1790s over the future of Saint-Domingue. The volume opens, for instance, with the arrival on board ship of news of the French Revolution, then focuses briefly on the harsh treatment of those free men of mixed ethnic descent such as Vincent Ogé who demanded equal rights for the colony’s coloured population, but ultimately concentrates on the military and diplomatic aspects of the event that followed the outbreak of Revolution in August 1791. There is close attention in the final third of the volume to the War of Independence, which allows representation of the series of battles making up this final stage of the Revolution, but also a focus on the figure of Pauline Bonaparte, the wife of the leader of French expedition Leclerc. The album concludes with a largely romanticized version of Toussaint’s arrest and death, providing little reflection on the historiographic conundrum of the reasons for his capture, and using a large *case* on the penultimate page to portray the iconic image of the Château de Joux, ‘sa prison glaciale sur un rocher du Jura’.[[31]](#footnote-31) The brutal final stage of the War of Independence – and the French struggle to reimpose slavery – is reduced to two panels in a single strip, and the final image of the volume appears to portray a street scene in modern Haiti, complete with drums, tropical fruit and dancing. Louverture is locked into his frozen, early nineteenth-century grave; the contemporary country is represented as abstracted from its revolutionary roots; and the meanings of Haiti for contemporary France are conveniently evacuated.[[32]](#footnote-32)

**Beyond Louverture: Haiti, the Enlightenment and abolition**

Louverture has continued to attract the attention of graphic artists, with one of the most recent graphic representations being in the UK-published children’s comic *The Phoenix*, in which the Haitian revolutionary appeared – as a ‘butt-kicking bookworm who fought the French, smashed the Spanish and bashed the British to found the first (and only) free republic of former slaves – in the series ‘Corpse Talk’.[[33]](#footnote-33) In this comic, inspired by the chat show format (the feature ‘brings the dead famous to life’), the focus is on Louverture’s exceptionalism, manifest in his literacy and tactical sophistication. The Revolution is presented in five strips, with particular attention given to Louverture’s change of allegiance from the Spanish to the French, and also to his capture and deportation. ‘Corpse Talk’ seeks to compress Louverture’s life into two pages, and may be read as a contribution to what is increasingly seen as the development of the revolutionary’s global iconicity.[[34]](#footnote-34) Notwithstanding its inherent playfulness, the comic strip may be seen to use the graphic form to present the spectrality of Louverture, the ways in which his embodiment of what Nick Nesbitt has called the ‘idea of 1804’ continues to persist as a challenge to any system that seeks to limit the ‘universal right of all human beings to freedom as the positive capacity for self-determination on a global, and not merely local, scale’.[[35]](#footnote-35)

This reading is more explicit in the most recent graphic rendering of the Haitian Revolution: *Drums of Freedom: The Saga of the Haitian Revolution* (2015), by the Guyanese writer and illustrator Barrington Braithwaite.[[36]](#footnote-36) Based on careful consultation of the rich historiography of the struggle for Haitian independence, and drawing in particular on C.L.R. James’s *Black Jacobins*, Braithwaite provides in five chapters and an epilogue a densely detailed visual account that is perhaps the most nuanced representation of the Revolution produced in graphic art thus far. Like James, he offers a sweep of Haitian history, beginning with Columbus’s arrival and Mackandal’s eighteenth-century rebellion before shifting to a detailed account of the Revolution, War of Independence and their aftermath. Like James also, it locates Louverture’s struggle within a wider Atlantic and intercontinental frame, underlining the pragmatic and testing choices – such as the order to execute his nephew Moïse on the grounds of rebellion – he was forced to make. The page presenting Louverture’s death at Joux is rich in terms of iconography and text. Reminiscent of its theatrical staging by Edouard Glissant in *Monsieur Toussaint*, it portrays the dying protagonist surrounded by hallucinated images of his Haitian past. At the same time, it stresses the contrast between Louverture and Napoleon Bonaparte, with the former – to his death – ‘anchored to the tenets of liberty and equality’, whilst the latter ‘sets the stage for the savage colonization of Africa; the brutal carnage of the trenches of WW1, and the final sum of the idolatry of racial supremacy in the macabre scourge that was Adolf Hitler’.[[37]](#footnote-37) Such historical analysis is extravagant, and a similar thesis by Claude Ribbe in *Le Crime de Napoléon* led to controversy in France,[[38]](#footnote-38) but Braithwaite deploys comic art to reassert the place of Haiti in world history whilst also suggesting reasons for the country’s systematic silencing in the writing of that history: ‘The colonial world would bring Haiti to its knees economically, but she stands tall before the goddess of justice as the drums of freedom vibrate where ever enlightened souls dwell’.[[39]](#footnote-39)

Although Louverture does not – unlike Dessalines more recently in the work of Karl Heins Desroches (of which more below) – achieve the status of superhero, his persistent presence in comics and *bande dessinée* – as well as in other digital media such as video games (he appears, for example, as a character in ‘Age of Empires III: The War Chiefs’) – betokens a more general visibility of Haiti in recent popular culture, especially in the USA. The Revolution as seen in *BD* and comics is not, however, only recounted via an exclusive focus on his often exceptionalized character. More recent representations include the sixth and seventh volumes of Bourgeon’s *Passagers du vent* (2009, 2010),[[40]](#footnote-40) evidence of a wider shift in French-language comics from an association of slavery with maritime history to an interpretation that allows the enslaved to become ‘les acteurs potentiels de leur propre liberté’.[[41]](#footnote-41) As the title of *La Petite fille Bois-Caïman* suggests, the focus of the two *albums* is on Haiti and its revolution, but with these approached obliquely. Whereas the fifth volume of the *Passagers du vent* series, *Le Bois d’Ébène*,[[42]](#footnote-42) had ended with the protagonist Isa apparently stranded in Saint-Domingue, the sixth and seventh (published a quarter of a century later, in 2009 and 2010 respectively), focus on her great-granddaughter Zabo, fleeing Civil War New Orleans to rejoin her family in the bayou. Reunited with her great grandmother, Zabo’s narrative becomes entangled with flashbacks to 1780s Saint-Domingue and an account of the traumatic events surrounding Isa’s experience of the August 1791 Bois Caïman ceremony. The two albums thus juxtapose accounts of the Haitian Revolution and the American Civil War, creating a transhistorical and transgenerational narrative in which the similarities between the two protatonists Isa and Zabo are located in a wider frame of multidirectional memory and hemispheric American history, with both of these developed in the context of Atlantic slavery and its aftermath.

**From Zombies and ‘Voodoo’ to the Haitian everyday**

These recent developments in *BD* portrayals of the Haitian Revolution and its wider context, especially in the work of Bourgeon, constitute a considerable development beyond other representations of the country and its history and culture in non-Haitian cultures, notably in North America. In a recent discussion of ‘finding Haiti in comic book literature’, Edwin Magloire describes the way in which most US representations of Haiti – through Marvel figures such as Brother Voodoo, Sister Voodoo and Doctor Voodoo – foreground clichés about *vodou* and zombification.[[43]](#footnote-43) In one of the earliest examples he identifies – ‘Dead who swim’ (1944) – the character Namor the Sub-Mariner reacts in this way to a reference to Haiti: ‘Haiti! Haiti! is famed among all the West Indian people for its zombies’. Such an equation was perpetuated subsequently by Marvel in the supernatural superhero ‘Brother Voodoo’ (the character Jericho Drumm, more recently known as ‘Doctor Voodoo’), who first featured in *Strange Tales* in 1973, and was associated primarily with New Orleans although his travels took him to Haiti. The country’s association with ‘voodoo’ extends more widely, and Magloire identifies a reference to the Joker in *Batman: The Killing Joke* that seeks to explain the character’s insanity through reference to possession by the Haitian vodou *lwa* Bawon Samdi, and also cites a character Medjine Parker, in the Lucifer series, a Haitian orphan accused by her adoptive father of having brought a ‘demon’ with her to the US.

As Elizabeth McAlister has recently claimed, such representations are widespread:

Zombies show up in pop songs and are stock characters in comic books and graphic novels. they appear in video games such as the Resident Evil series and in the Resident Evil movie spin-offs. Since 2000, about 100 movies and scores of video games have featured undead, cannibal zombies.[[44]](#footnote-44)

Popular cultural manifestations perpetuate certain strands of the patterns of representation evident in the nineteenth century but further intensified by authors such as William Seabrook during the US occupation of Haiti.[[45]](#footnote-45) The foundations of this tradition are to be found in quasi-anthropological literature, but its popularization occurred through Hollywood’s embracing of the zombie theme in the interwar period.[[46]](#footnote-46) These exogenous practices of description – reducing Haiti to images of barbarism and violence – remain widespread in comics,[[47]](#footnote-47) although there is increasing evidence – including in *bande dessinée* – of an endogenous retort, transforming phenomena portrayed negatively, such as zombification and *vodou*, as symbols of a more ‘positive Haitianness’.[[48]](#footnote-48) A parallel reaction among visitors to Haiti is to be found in a form cognate to the *bande dessinée*, the *carnet de voyage*, where artists have increasingly counteracted the lurid representational tendencies of much previous (particularly North American) popular culture by developing more neutral observations of the Haitian everyday.

A number of *carnets de voyage* published around the bicentenary of the country’s independence, such as *Titouan en Haïti* (2003) and Nicole Augereau’s *Tap Tap Haïti* (2004), are to be read in relation to earlier graphic representations, but also as a corrective to a rich and often distortive tradition of Western travel writing on the country.[[49]](#footnote-49) The sailor and artist Titouan Lamazou visited Haiti in the late 1990s, and produced a *carnet* in dialogue with the visual arts in Haiti, and also with a number of contemporary artists whom he met and with whom he worked (including André Pierre, Préfète Duffaut and Louisiane Saint-Fleurant).[[50]](#footnote-50) His volume opens with images of a series of *vévés* used in vodou ceremonies, but these are cited as graphic evidence of Haitian familiarity with ‘la chose graphique’, and are drawn into a wider assemblage of sketches, photographs and other iconographic material assembled during the journey. Lamazou follows the linear progress of his journey – Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, Pestel, Cap Haïtien – juxtaposing images of the artists he encounters (and of their work) with the ethnographic and architectural material commonly found in *carnets de voyage*. He focuses on means of transport, not just the boats in which his professional interests meet, but also the brightly-painted *tap-taps*, the collective taxis that often feature in accounts of urban Haiti.

The ubiquity of these vehicles in echoed in the title of a volume that appeared the year following Lamazou’s *carnet*, Nicole Augereau’s *Tap Tap Haïti*. Augereau – co-author also of a volume inspired by a stay in Marrakech, and currently listed by her publisher as preparing a book on the Haitian singer Manno Charlemagne – describes her stay in Haiti as a *stagiaire* at the *lycée français* in Port-au-Prince.[[51]](#footnote-51) Unlike Lamazou, whose *carnet* mixes his own colourful and at times impressionistic paintings with photographs and other sketches, *Tap Tap Haïti* deploys a more conventional *ligne claire*, with pages split into *cases* of varying size, and with text juxtaposed with images which recount the artist’s slow acclimatization to her surroundings. The narrative is more one of dwelling than travelling, and whilst there is an initial focus – in the section of the *carnet* following arrival in Santo Domingo – on streetscapes and movement around the city, the book’s main section presents the stay in Port-au-Prince. The tone is often ambivalent and even ironic as Augereau describes the closeted and anxious existence of French ex-pats in the Haitian capital, as well as of tourists subject to physical restriction as their cruise ships land to the confines of Labadie. References to history, to the media and (as in *Titouan en Haïti*) to local visual art open up the narrative, and observation of the linguistic and iconographic landscapes of the country reveal the ways in which traces of the past persist in the visual field of the present. As her *carnet* reaches its conclusion, Augereau is struck by the absence of *vodou* from her narrative, and the final pages contain an acknowledgement of her own ‘image confuse du vaudou, mêlée d’ignorance et de curiosité’,[[52]](#footnote-52) making a clear reference to the Western popular cultural representations to which this is linked. The concluding images – drawn from street art, inspired by contemporary artists including Hector Hyppolite, and also recalling images from Maya Deren’s film *Divine Horsemen* – picture members of the *vodou* pantheon, and emphasise the historical roots of the religion, its political instrumentalization and its contemporary manifestations. As with Lamazou’s work, it is also possible to detect the impact of Haitian aesthetics on Augereau’s graphic style, suggesting that other modes of external representation of the country are possible.

**Comics post-earthquake**

One of the striking aspects of Augereau’s *Tap Tap Haïti* is the way in which it captures – in the form of the *carnet de voyage* – street scenes and architectural detail now lost in the wake of the January 2010 earthquake. The question of drawing Port-au-Prince *post-*disaster is raised starkly by Fabory Mara in ‘Une ville tout de même’, his project of creating a *carnet de voyage* of contemporary Haiti: ‘comment le dessiner’, he asks, ‘sans faire du désastre un spectacle?’[[53]](#footnote-53) Mara’s aim is to ‘croquer ces espaces urbains décomposés et ces lignes brisées’, using the formal resources of his chosen genre to capture processes of destruction and reconstruction – but seeking also to avoid an exclusively external gaze by drawing ‘à travers le regard de ses habitants’.[[54]](#footnote-54) His sketches are accompanied by a self-reflexive account of his practice, in which he foregrounds collaboration with local artists, including those associated with *atis rezistans*, the collective based in Grand Rue, Port-au-Prince. Although Mara’s conclusion relates to the inability of the *carnet de voyage* to capture the disaster and its aftermath, his creative intervention nevertheless reflects the increasing visibility of comics, *bande dessinée* and cognate genres in debates about contemporary Haiti. *Bédéistes* were among those who sought collectively to raise funds for and awareness about the country in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake,[[55]](#footnote-55) while cartoons in publications such as *El Listin Diario* also provided a site in which the persistent racism towards Haitians evident in the Dominican Republic manifested itself.[[56]](#footnote-56) The form has also functioned strongly as a means of education in post-earthquake Haiti, used notably by agencies such as UNESCO who adopted a comic strip recounting the character Ti Joel as a contribution to the fight against cholera (an outbreak subsequently proved to have been caused by UN peacekeeping troops from Nepal who carried local strains of the disease with them).[[57]](#footnote-57) Another United Nations body, the UNDP, produced the comic *Bon Kalite Sove lavi* to communicate the benefits of respect of building regulations.[[58]](#footnote-58) Much of this activity, whilst providing much-needed fora for the dissemination of work by contemporary Haitian artists such as Chevelin Pierre, serves a primarily pedagogical purpose. *Tents beyond Tents*, a project led by the Dutch-based activists of the Cartoon Movement in which again Chevelin was involved, suggests different approaches, with April Shemak detecting in this work ‘an alternative cartography’ that challenges the dehumanizing tendencies of much contemporary digitial mapping and reinscribes the struggles of everyday life into spaces often left blank.[[59]](#footnote-59) Produced for an international audience, *Tents beyond Tents* constitutes a form of ‘comics-mapping’, representing refuge spaces in graphic form via testimonies and portrayal of the inhumanity of everyday living conditions.[[60]](#footnote-60)

Despite the involvement of an educated Haitian artists and scénariste, *Tents beyond Tents* remains aware of its own limitations and in particular its own relative privilege. Shemak focuses on the work’s concluding *case*, an image of an unnamed and silent woman staring at the reader:

It is a gaze that challenges the comfortable vantage point of the reader/viewer/voyeur to consider the implications of what we are seeing, which is that there is no solution in sight for displaced Haitians. At the same time, this image is in tension with the role of reportage in the comics since this woman does not speak, which reveals the limits of comics as a space of testimony. She represents those voices that remain silenced.[[61]](#footnote-61)

This issue of silencing relates back to the dynamics of representation addressed at the opening of the article. Although these NGO-funded graphic interventions often involve local artists, their control remains international, and another important development post-earthquake is the visible emergence of a more independent Haitian comics industry. Central to the preceding study has been an illustration of and reflection on the representational asymmetries evident in the area of Haiti and comic art, according to which it is evident that Haiti has – now for over a century and half – been more subject to external graphic representation rather than serving as a source of representations in its own right. The corpus of comics, *bandes dessinées* and cognate forms devoted to the country is remarkably eclectic, but tends to be characterized by a conscription of Haiti to serve purposes and speak to audiences elsewhere. The story of comics *in* Haiti itself is yet to be written, and although there are traces of the genre at various moments in recent history, the absence of an established and home-grown comics industry is increasingly apparent. **Haiti itself does not, unlike other parts of the Francosphere, have a well-established *BD* tradition, but it is possible nevertheless to construct the outline of the form’s emergence in this national context.**[[62]](#footnote-62)

**The artist often identified as the country’s first *bédéiste* was André Le Blanc, born in Port-au-Prince in 1921, but active for many years as a cartoonist in the USA (where he worked as an assistant to Will Eisner) and also in the 1950s in Brazil. Le Blanc is remembered in the history of comics not for his Haitian origins, but as the illustrator of *La Bible en bandes dessinées* (1963; published in English as the *Picture Bible*). Another pioneer of Haitian origin,** Victor Emmanuel Roberto Wilson (born 1928), was active as an artist elsewhere, in his case in Quebec, although he had been involved in a comic called *Zobopes* (meaning ‘ghosts’ in Creole) before leaving the country in the early 1950s. The number of *bandes dessinées* published in Haiti itself has, however, historically been low. Georges Anglade describes a school friend Lionel, ‘disappeared’ under the Duvaliers, who had shown great talent for producing comics, and whose loss deprived Haiti of a great talent in the area:

Comme cela,un dimanche midi à l’aéroport, ils ont enlevé douze albums de la Mafalda de Quino, rayé la collection des Tintin d’Hergé,escamoté Astérix et enlevé Achille Talon à son papa à lui... car,c’étaient bien ceux-là ses pairs et ses œuvres en puissance.[[63]](#footnote-63)

A key figure among the artists who managed to live in exile under the Duvaliers, Hervé Télémaque, **included cartoon aesthetics amongst the multiple influences in his work in the *nouveau réalisme* movement and beyond, to the extent that his art has been described as ‘akin to comics themselves’**.[[64]](#footnote-64) The satirical power of BD gave way nevertheless to Duvalierist propagandist purposes in the aftermath of their dictatorship. In the turmoil following the ousting of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991, a comic entitled *Il était une fois… François Duvalier* began to circulate, vaunting the achievements of the previous regime and harnessing the popularity of the genre to erase the democratization that had followed Jean-Claude’s departure in 1986 earthquake. Such developments suggest that previous Haitian aversion to *bande dessinée* was rapidly being eroded.[[65]](#footnote-65)

These fragments of a history of the genre are increasingly eclipsed by rapid developments in the past decade, accelerated by attempts at cultural reconstruction following the 2010 earthquake. Contemporary diasporic artists such as Guy Michel have been active for some years in the French comics industry (as a collaborator on popular series such as Les Contes du Korrigan), but without evidence of their origins apparent in their art. Work in the genre is also now being developed in the country itself by contemporary Haitian artists such as Chevelin Pierre (who has also drawn for the NGO-published *Chimen Lakay* mentioned above), as well as by others in his atelier including Kendy Joseph (who seek to assert a national tradition that challenges previous external representations whilst endeavouring to present Haitian culture and society to a wider external audience).[[66]](#footnote-66) One of Chevelin’s most prominent works is *Bizango*, a series of albums focused on supernatural forces present in Haiti since the time of the Revolution; Kendy’s *Zafè Lakay* addresses similar issues, but through the adventures of a group of young Haitians that fits into a comic tradition evident since the emergence of the genre; and also produced from the same studios are two albums by Karl Heins Desroches about Amwari, a Dessalinean superhero dressed in the colours of the Haitian flag, who discovers his powers during a visit to Citadelle Laferrière and channels the force of the Revolution into the present. *Le Nouvelliste* finds in these developments evidence of an ‘essor de la bande dessinée en Haiti’,[[67]](#footnote-67) and not only are comics prominent in the annual ‘Livres en folies’ festival, but an organization to promote their visibility, the Fondation de bande dessinée haïtienne, was founded in 2006. The stated aim of FOBDHA is to: ‘favoriser la création des bandes dessinées reflétant la réalité haïtienne, encadrer nos dessinateurs pour les valoriser et faire de la bande dessinée un gagne-pain’,[[68]](#footnote-68) i.e., to develop the profile of comics as a legitimate element of contemporary Haitian artist production, and to support a professionalized BD culture that would not only contribute to the creative economy but also challenge stereotypes produced and perpetuated in the genre elsewhere.

Contemporary BD production in Haiti is gaining visibility and achieving recognition at international comics fairs. Digital dissemination is part of this success, for it allows artists to avoid the challenges of physical production and circulation endemic in Haitian publishing, subverting the Eurocentrism of the industry.[[69]](#footnote-69) It is possible that – in the terms of a 2011 article in *Le Nouvelliste* – these developments will have a significant impact, and begin in a Haitian context to ‘sortir la bande dessinée de sa léthargie’, to redress at last the asymmetries of a representational imbalance that has lasted, as I have argued, for over 150 years. In contemporary Haiti, comics are already increasingly evident as a medium for the exploration of issues previously addressed elsewhere: in this article written in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, it was noted: ‘le devoir des historiens de la mémoire historique ne revient pas uniquement à des historiens mais aussi à des bédéistes’.[[70]](#footnote-70)

In an important and widely cited collection of essays, *Haiti Needs New Narratives*, Gina Ulysse has outlined the ways in which – after the earthquake of January 2010 – those studying the country need to contribute to challenging long-standing stereotypes and often archaic representations of Haiti and Haitians. *Bande dessinée* is increasingly contributing to such a manoeuvre.[[71]](#footnote-71) The publisher’s’publicity for the volume claims that, for Ulysse, the ‘Haiti of the public sphere is a rhetorically and graphically incarcerated’.[[72]](#footnote-72) Although the meaning of the ‘graphically’ does not explicitly refer to comics, it is clear that the capacious and flexible genre of the *bande dessinée* has the emancipatory potential in contemporary Haiti to provide a space for the exploration and recounting of new national narratives. These are narratives – disseminated in new forms and to new audiences – that will challenge misrepresentations of the past whilst allowing the imagination of possible futures.

1. Bill Drummond, ‘What is this earthquake for?’, in Martin Munro (ed.), *Haiti Rising:* Haitian History, Culture and the Earthquake of 2010 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), pp.174-82. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Madison Smartt Bell, ‘Art in the Time of Catastrophe’, in Munro, *Haiti Rising*, pp.166-73 (p.167). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Most of the current work on comics in Haiti and elsewhere in the French Caribbean is available on line. For a good overview, see Christophe Cassiau-Haurie, ‘La BD caribéenne francophone en mal d’auteurs et d’éditeurs’, available at: http://www.africultures.com/php/index.php?nav=article&no=8066 [accessed 30 June 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Binita Mehta and Pia Mukherji(eds), ‘Introduction’, in *Postcolonial Comics: Texts, Events, Identities* (New York and London: Routledge, 2015), pp.1-26 (p.13). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Mehta and Mukherji, ‘Introduction’, p.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. J. Michael Dash, ‘The (Un)kindness of Strangers: Writing Haiti in the 21st Century’, *Caribbean Studies*, 36.2 (2009), 171-178 (p.171). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See Paul Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Darcy Grigsby, ‘Cursed Mimicry: France and Haiti, Again (1848-51)’, *Art History*, 38.1 (2015), 68-105. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Cham was the pen name of Charles Amédée de Noé, the caricaturist and lithographer, one of whose ancestors is said to have freed Toussaint Louverture from enslavement. See Jean-Louis Donnadieu, Un grand seigneur et ses esclaves. Le comte de Noé entre Antilles et Gascogne (1728 – 1816) (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Elizabeth C. Childs, *Daumier and Exoticism: Satirizing the French and the Foreign* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), p.111. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Grigsby, ‘Cursed Mimicry, p.92. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. On French abolition, see Lawrence Jennings, *French Anti-Slavery: The Movement for the Abolition of Slavery in France, 1802-1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. For recent discussions of the play, see Clint Bruce, ‘Displacing Dessalines, or the Transatlantic Geographies of Lamartine’s *Toussaint Louverture*’, *Romance Studies*, 33.3-4 (2015), 192-207, and Mouhamédoul A. Niang, ‘La dramaturgie lamartinienne ou le postcolonial avant la lettre: le marronnage comme résistance dans Toussaint Louverture’, *Nineteenth Century French Studies*, 42.3 (2014), 190-205. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Grigsby, ‘Cursed Mimicry’, p.100. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Cham, ‘TOUSSAINT SALE FIGURE, pièce en vers et contre tout ce qui est blanc, mêlée de strophes, d'apostrophes et catastrophes’, *Le Punch à Paris*, 3 (1850), p.65-69. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See Charles Varin et Eugène Labiche, *Traversin et Couverture* (Paris: M. Lévy frères, 1850). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Cham, ‘TOUSSAINT SALE FIGURE’, p.69. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Cham, ‘TOUSSAINT SALE FIGURE’, p.69. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Cham, ‘TOUSSAINT SALE FIGURE’, p.66 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. For a discussion of representations of Louverture, see Fritz Daguillard, *Mystérieux dans la Gloire: Toussaint Louverture (1743–1803)* (Port-au-Prince: mipanah, 2003); David Geggus, ‘**The Changing Faces of Toussaint Louverture: Literary and Pictorial Depictions’ (2013), available at:** http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/John\_Carter\_Brown\_Library/exhibitions/toussaint/index.html [accessed 30 June 2016]; and Helen Weston, ‘The Many Faces of Toussaint Louverture’, in *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World*, edited by Agnes I. Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 345-73. It is significant that none of these studies include a focus on comics. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Joanne Mattern, *Jacob Lawrence* (Edina, MINN: Abdo Pub., 2005), p.18. Patricia Hills, who provides a useful overview of the series, also sees the panels of the work as ‘like storyboards for a movie, with his style giving each panel its dynamism’. See p.74. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Kay Larson, ‘Bound for glory’, *New York Magazine*, 19 October 1987, pp.112-13 (p.112). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. On other examples of African-American artistic engagement with Haiti, see Krista A. Thompson, 'Preoccupied with Haiti: The Dream of Diaspora in African American Art, 1915-1942’, *American Art*, 21.3 (2007), 75-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. See Charles Forsdick, ‘“Burst of thunder, stage pitch black”: the place of Haiti in US inter-war cultural production’, *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, 14.5 (2011), 7-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. http://www.artscouncilcollection.org.uk/artist/himid-lubaina [accessed 30 June 2015]. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. See ‘Lubaina Himid MBE’, available at: http://new.diaspora-artists.net/display\_item.php?id=43&table=artists [accessed 30 June 2015]. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Such works complement representations in other visual media studied by Lindsay J. Twa, in *Visualizing Haiti in U.S. Culture, 1910-1950* (New York: Routledge, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Pierre Briens and Nicolas Saint-Cyr, *Toussaint Louverture: le Napoléon noir* (Paris: Hachette; Edi-monde, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. In Toussaint Louverture and the bicentenary of the French Revolution, see ‘The Black Jacobin in Paris’, *Journal of Romance Studies*, 5.3 (2005), 9-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. On the interconnections between the French and Haitian Revolutions, see C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2001), and Nick Nesbitt, *Universal Emancipation: The Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment*. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Briens and Saint-Cyr, *Toussaint Louverture*, p.47. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. On France and Haiti, see Charles Forsdick, ‘Haiti and France: Settling the Debts of the Past’, in Kate Quinn and Paul Sutton (eds), *Politics and Power in Haiti* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 141-60. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. ‘Corpse Talk’, *The Phoenix*, 151 (2014), 24-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. See Charles Forsdick, ‘Toussaint Louverture in a Globalized Frame: Reading the Revolutionary as Icon’, *Contemporary French & Francophone Studies/SITES*, 19.2 (2015), 325-34.. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Nick Nesbitt, ‘The Idea of 1804’, *Yale French Studies*, 107 (2005), 6-38 (p.7). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Barrington Braithwaite*, Drums of Freedom: The Saga of the Haitian Revolution* (New York: Davie Press, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Braithwaite*, Drums of Freedom*, p.118. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. See Claude Ribbe, *Le Crime de Napoléon* (Paris: Privé, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. For a discussion of the ‘silencing’ of the Haiti Revolution, see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, MASS: Beacon Press, 1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. François Bourgeon, *Les Passagers du vent 6: la petite fille Bois-Caïman. Livre 1*, and *Les Passagers du vent 7: la petite fille Bois-Caïman. Livre 2* (Paris: 12 bis, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. See Philippe Delisle, ‘La traite négrière du XVIII siècle dans la bande dessinée “franco-belge”: d’une image édulcorcée à une vision historico-critique’, in Paul Chopelin and Tristan Martine (eds), *Le Siècle des lumières en bande dessinée* (Paris: Karthala, 2014), pp.123-45 (p.137). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. François Bourgeon, *Les Passagers du vent 6: le Bois d’Ébène* (Grenoble: Glénat, 1984). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Edwin Magloire, ‘Finding Haiti in Comic Book Literature’, 22 April 2016, available at: http://woymagazine.com/2016/04/22/finding-haiti-in-comic-book-literature/ [accessed 30 June 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Elizabeth McAlister, ‘Slaves, cannibals, and infected Hyper-Whites: the race and religion of Zombies’, *Anthropological Quarterly*, 85.2 (2012), 457-86. See also Stephen O’Donnell, ‘The Revenant Signifier: The Zombie in Comics and Cinema’, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Dundee, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See J. Michael Dash, *Haiti and the United States: National Stereotypes and the Literary Imagination* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. On this subject, see Franck Degoul, ‘“We are the mirror of your fears”: Haitian identity and zombification’, trans. Elisabeth M. Lore, in Deborah Christie and Sarah Juliet Lauro (eds), *Better Off Dead: The Evolution of the Zombie as Post-Human* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), pp.24-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. See, for example, a recent volume in the German Beserker series: Stephan Hagenow, *Todesgrüsse aus Haiti* (Esslingen: Gringo Comics, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Degoul, ‘“We are the mirror of your fears”’, p.38. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. These volumes complement *Une journée haïtienne* (Montréal: Mémoire d'encrier; Paris: Présence africaine, 2007), an important collection of short stories edited by Thomas C. Spear¸ that similarly seeks to explore the ways in which everyday life in Haiti is no more exotic when understood on its own terms than that of any other location. Spear [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Titouan Lamazou, *Titouan en Haïti* (Paris: Nouveaux loisirs, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Nicole Augereau, *Tap Tap Haïti* (Poitiers: FLBLB, 2004). For details of current projects, see: http://flblb.com/auteur/nicole-augereau/ [accessed 30 June 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Augereau, *Tap Tap Haïti*, p.77. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Fabory Mara, ‘Une ville tout de même’, *Bouts du monde: carnets de voyage*, 25 (2016), 126-33 (p.127). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Mara, ‘Une ville tout de même’, p.128. There are echoes between Mara’s approach and the work of Yanick Lahens in the immediate period following the earthquake, who adopts in a text such as *Failles* (Paris: S. Wespieser, 2010) an aesthetics of literary fragmentation that seeks to capture the cityscapes of Port-au-Prince without reducing any impression of their brokenness. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. See, e.g., *100 Dessins pour Haïti* (Brussels: Casterman, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. See Daly Guilamo, ‘Dominican funnies, not so funny: the representation of Haitians in Dominican newspaper comic strips, after the 2010 earthquake’, *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 5.9 (2013), 63-82. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. ‘Haiti: UNESCO publishes comic book to help fight cholera and to promote hand washing’, http://www.unesco.org/new/en/no\_cache/unesco/themes/pcpd/dynamic-content-single-view/news/french\_only\_haiti\_unesco\_publishes\_comic\_book\_to\_help\_fight\_cholera\_and\_to\_promote\_hand\_washing/#.V13dxY-cHIU [accessed 30 June 2016]. A special issue of the creolophone comic strip *Chimen Lakay*, produced by the International Organization for Migration, was also devoted to the issue of cholera: https://issuu.com/iomhaiti/docs/chimen-lakay-3\_14nov\_ [accessed 30 June 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. ‘*Bon Kalite Sove Lavi*: première bande dessinée sur la construction en Haïti’, http://www.ht.undp.org/content/haiti/fr/home/presscenter/articles/2012/09/10/-bon-kalite-sove-lavi-premi-re-bande-dessin-e-sur-la-construction-en-ha-ti.html [accessed 30 June 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. See April Shemak, ‘The Cartographic Dimensions of Humanitarianism: Mapping Refugee Spaces in Post-Earthquake Haiti’, [*Cultural Dynamics*](https://www.researchgate.net/journal/0921-3740_Cultural_Dynamics), 26.3 (2014), 251-75. Several *planches* of *Tents beyond Tents*, the title of which alludes to the Haitian proverb ‘beyond mountains there are more moutains’, are included in *New Internationalist*, January-February 2012, pp.20-25. The full work is available here: http://www.cartoonmovement.com/comic/29 [accessed 17 June 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Shemak, ‘The Cartographic Dimensions of Humanitarianism’, p.263 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Shemak, ‘The Cartographic Dimensions of Humanitarianism’, pp.270-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. For a discussion of *bande dessinée* in the French Caribbean, see **Christophe Cassiau-Haurie**, ‘La bande dessinée en Guadeloupe, Martinique et Guyane : lorsque la belle endormie se réveille...’, available at: http://takamtikou.bnf.fr/dossiers/dossier-2011-la-bande-dessinee/la-bande-dessinee-en-guadeloupe-martinique-et-guyane-lorsque [accessed 26 May 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Georges Anglade, *Rire haïtien: les lodyans de Georges Anglade; Haitian laughter: a mosaic of ninety miniatures in French and English*, trans. Anne Pease McConnell (Coconut Creek, FL: Educa Vision, 2006), p.167. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. See Peter Black and Laurence Grove, *Comics & Culture* (Glasgow: BHP Comics, 2016), p.54. Work by Télémaque appeared in the exhibitions ‘Vraoum! trésors de la bande dessinée et art contemporain’ at the Maison rouge in Paris in 2009, and ‘Comic Invention’ in Glasgow, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. See Garry Pierre- Pierre, ‘Return To Evil Duvalierism Is Rearing Its Head In Haiti Once More Under Its Military Leaders’, Sun Sentinel, 24 May 1992, http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1992-05-24/news/9202100092\_1\_jean-bertrand-aristide-duvalier-regime-haitians [accessed 30 June 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. For a 2015 interview with the artist, see ‘Chevelin Pierre: une vie bien dessinée’, http://www.maghaiti.net/chevelin-pierre-une-vie-bien-dessinee/ [accessed 30 June 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. ‘Essor de la bande dessinée en Haiti’, *Le Nouvelliste*, 20 May 2013, http://lenouvelliste.com/lenouvelliste/article/116953/Essor-de-la-bande-dessinee-en-Haiti.html [accessed 30 June 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. ‘FOBDHA pose la première pierre’, http://lenouvelliste.com/lenouvelliste/article/62455/FOBDHA-pose-la-premiere-pierre [accessed 30 June 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Another highly active and visible contemporary *bédéiste*, Alain Possible (Teddy Keser Mombrun), has commented on his influences in a way that undermines any francophone assumptions of a Haitian debt to the *école franco-belge*: ‘Je suis plutôt intéressé aux BD modernes. Astérix, Blake et Mortimer sont très classiques, voire académiques. On ne peut les imiter. Mes BD sont plus relax. Je serais tenté de croire qu'elles se rapprochent de Kid Paddle, les Simpson, le petit Spirou.’ See ‘Alain Possible et ses coups de coeur BD’, available at: http://lenouvelliste.com/lenouvelliste/article/71843/Alain-Possible-et-ses-coups-de-coeur-BD (accessed 17 June 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. ‘Sortir la bande dessinée de sa léthargie’, available at: http://lenouvelliste.com/lenouvelliste/article/94888/Sortir-la-bande-dessinee-de-sa-lethargie [accessed 17 June 2016]. There is also evidence of interest among diasporic artists: for instance, w**hen asked in a 2012 interview about current projects, Edwidge Danticat replied, in the context of comments on new directions her work was taking mid-life:** ‘I would love, and I mean LOVE, to do a graphic novel à la Marjane Satrapi, whose work I absolutely adore. I have a graphic novel script, but if anyone is interested in collaborating, please call.’ See http://www.wildriverreview.com/Literature/Interview/Edwidge-Danticat/Create-Dangerously/Nagy/McConnell/January-2012 [accessed 30 June 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Gina Athena Ulysee *Why Haiti Needs New Narratives: A Post-Quake Chronicle* (Middletown, CONN: Wesleyan University Press, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Available at http://www.upne.com/0819575449.html [accessed 30 June 2016]. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)