Rachel Douglas, *Making The Black Jacobins: C.L.R. James and the Drama of History*.

Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2019. xii + 306 pp. (Paper US\$ 27.95)

This is a short book with a large purview. Rachel Douglas has thrown her net wide and has offered those with a serious interest in C.L.R. James a catch that is unusually rich. At a time when James's legacy is made to contribute to one or another master narrative of decolonization, she has chosen the hard road, painstakingly examining the typescripts and annotations of pre- and post-publication texts of *Toussaint Louverture* and *The Black Jacobins* from 1936 to 1967 and beyond, and paying careful attention to the historical conditions surrounding staging. Her methodology takes French genetic criticism out of the library and into the performance hall; Genette's notion of palimpsest is likewise extended to transverse historical readings.

The first chapter illustrates the value of studying multiple texts of the "same" work, the various playscripts of *Toussaint Louverture*. Douglas is able to conclude from the U.W.I. archive in St. Augustine, Trinidad that "two copies of the script ... represent intermediate staging posts on the road from *Toussaint Louverture* in 1936 and *The Black Jacobins* history in 1938 to the 1963 revised edition of the history and the play *The Black Jacobins* in 1967" (p. 35). Assignment of meaning is not driven by ideology, as in "James was a Trotskyite, therefore ..."; modifications to texts (both playscript and historical) are brought into dialogue with James's principal interlocutors of the time to assess the significance of what he was writing in that moment and in that context. Table 1 (pp. 40–43) outlines four texts of *Toussaint Louverture*, one of which (the Hull script) was published by C. Høgsbjerg in 2013 at Duke University Press. The table demonstrates at a glance how the play evolved over time.

Paul Robeson's performance as Toussaint in the 1936 London production drew the Haitian Revolution into the fight for the independence of Ethiopia in the face of Mussolini's belated quest for an African empire. As James recalled in 1983, "The moment he came onto the stage, the whole damn thing changed" (p. 57). Readers may find other connections with contemporary social conflicts unexpected and less straightforward. In 1954, the 1949 Paris publication of *Les Jacobins noirs* was embraced by Haiti in its celebration of 150 years of independence. In apartheid-era South Africa mimeographed chapters of *The Black Jacobins* circulated clandestinely as samizdat among members of the Non-European Unity Movement. Thabo Mbeki, then in exile, confided that, on reading *The Black Jacobins*, he "knew that the antiapartheid forces would win" (p. 202).

Douglas has used Pierre Nora's notion of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of collective memory) effectively in assessing the posthumous fortune of James's life's work,

which both embodies a site of memorialization and usefully critiques the francocentric limitations of Nora's original concept: "[James] wrote back to colonial narratives, biased historiography, and racist articles dealing with supposedly terrible Haitian atrocities. His repeated rewriting of his Haitian narrative was an ongoing process of contestation and decolonization" (pp. 208–9).

Every research library with an interest in decolonization, Caribbean history and historiography, Marxist theory and practice, and twentieth-century theater will want to acquire this book. Its archival scope alone assures that it will not soon be equaled, much less surpassed.

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