

## Harriet Martineau's *The Man and The Hour* (1841), *Traditions of Palestine* (1830) and *Society in America* (1837): Toussaint Louverture, Napoleon and Jesus

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### Abstract

This paper demonstrates the influence of Martineau's *Society in America* (1830), *Traditions of Palestine* (1830) and Thomas Carlyle's *Hero Worship* (1840) on her fictional biography of the leader of the Haitian Revolution, Toussaint Louverture. In her *Society in America* (1837), Harriet Martineau expresses the sentiments of the growing feminist abolitionist movement that championed the Black heroes of the anti-slavery movement while making analogies to white women's lack of civic rights. In her *The Man and the Hour* (1841), she presents the point of view of the leader of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), Toussaint Louverture, as a conscientious leader seeking to free his people from white colonial oppression. Martineau seeks to condemn the institution of slavery and at the same time offer a revisionist view of the Haitian leader as one who, ironically, in her fictional biography abhors violence. Martineau's portrayal of Toussaint in her fictional biography makes comparisons with both the Black leader's nemesis, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Jesus, as models that define Toussaint's character and accomplishments. Martineau's novel represents a remarkable feminist achievement in presenting the Haitian Revolution from the perspective of its most important hero, Toussaint.

**Keywords:** Haitian Revolution, feminism; abolition, slavery, Harriet Martineau, Toussaint Louverture, Napoleon, Jesus

## **Introduction**

In her *Society in America* (1837), Harriet Martineau expressed the sentiments of the growing feminist abolitionist movement that championed the Black heroes of the anti-slavery movement while making analogies to white women's lack of civic rights. In her *The Man and the Hour* (1841), she presents the point of view of the leader of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), Toussaint Louverture, as a conscientious leader seeking to free his people from white colonial oppression. The popularity of this fictional biography lags to this day behind key abolitionist fictional works, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), largely because of the violent history of race-based Haitian massacres committed by both blacks and whites against one another. In her fictional biography of Toussaint, Martineau seeks to condemn the institution of slavery and at the same time offer a revisionist view of the Haitian leader as one who, ironically, abhors violence. At the same time, Martineau's portrayal of Toussaint in her fictional biography also makes comparisons with the Black leader's nemesis, Napoleon Bonaparte, as well as Jesus, to whom he aspires to emulate, as models. Martineau's novel represents a remarkable feminist achievement in presenting the Haitian Revolution from the perspective of its hero, Toussaint Louverture, and in giving him a revisionist biography with a hagiographic status. Martineau's novel was written at the beginning of her career as a sociologist and political activist.

## **Martineau's *The Man and the Hour* and Carlyle's *On Heroes***

Martineau's view of the achievements of Toussaint were influenced by Carlyle's *History of the French Revolution* and *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Hero in History*. Luke Sayers makes an extensive comparison between the two works and Martineau's portrayal of Toussaint, while noting that Carlyle himself did not objectify Toussaint as anything more than a "three-fingered Jack" or a "sooty African" in his *Chartism* (1839) (Sayers 2021). Martineau takes the bloody events of the Haitian Revolution and transforms the historiography into an apotheosis of hagiography in a way that was never acceptable in American abolitionist texts. She rightly portrays Toussaint as the anti-hero of Napoleon's Cult of Emperor who has the power to wield just as much power in public opinion decades after his death. If Napoleon represented the antithesis of democratic justice and equality, Toussaint represented the black hero who confronted the overwhelming tide of European colonialism and waged a war against injustice that ultimately succeeded.

Carlyle's chapter divisions would also have inspired Martineau. The chapters of the hero as divinity, prophet, poet, priest, man of letters and king would certainly have appealed to her own assessment and classification of Toussaint's accomplishments. However, Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1831) also mentions the "heroic heart" that sees throughout time and embraces a *Communion of Saints*, wide as the world itself, and as the history of the world" (Carlyle 1863). According to Carlyle, "A thought never did die yet" which its creator had not created out of the entire history of the past to transmit to the future. Thus, the act of writing

and publishing and drawing on history transforms the heroic thought from the past to the future. While Martineau expressed opinions in conflict with Thomas Carlyle, their shared appreciation of history is significant. On February 12, 1838, Martineau indicated in a letter to Carlyle that they had evidently discussed common issues that concerned them both: “I cannot agree with you as to the worthlessness of “theory” & politl [sic] economy, & am as far as ever from being disposed to let the race suffer when they may be helped (as I conceive) by our using our understandings about the social facts we witness, & acting upon the science thus gained” (Logan, ed., *Collected Letters*, vol. 2, 2016, p. 15). Carlyle’s “World Phoenix” could be understood to encompass a body of work that includes both contemporary writing and reshaping of the past to create the future. In this way, Martineau understood how her own writing and biography of Toussaint would not only inspire her readers to join the abolitionist cause, but also to help shape the organic future by spreading the morality of her hero.

Vodou was a uniquely Haitian syncretic religion that combined African and Christian religious beliefs. At one time, Toussaint was an ardent practitioner, and he encouraged its rituals. However, during the late period of his reign, he actually banned it in an effort to control social unrest under his rule (Hazareesingh 2020, p. 178). The practice of Vodou undoubtedly increased his popularity and encouraged support during his rise to power, but during his administration phase, he imposed unpopular laws that governed forced plantation labor, in effort to make the country economically viable in an international marketplace. Martineau’s hagiography does indeed reflect aspects of hero and the divinity of the man who had the capacity to affect his entire people with his message. The people in turn were impressed by the hero’s devotion to their cause. According to Carlyle, the hero is a recurring principle in human history that galvanizes the support of the people to follow the example of the hero who leads them to a greater and higher destiny:

And now if worship even of a star had some meaning in it, how much more might that of a Hero! Worship of a Hero is transcendent admiration of a Great Man. I say great men are still admirable; I say there is, at bottom, nothing else admirable! No nobler feeling than this of admiration for one higher than himself dwells in the breast of man. It is to this hour, and at all hours, the vivifying influence in man's life. Religion I find stand upon it; not Paganism only, but far higher and truer religions,—all religion hitherto known. Hero-worship, heartfelt prostrate admiration, submission, burning, boundless, for a noblest godlike Form of Man,—is not that the germ of Christianity itself? The greatest of all Heroes is One—whom we do not name here! Let sacred silence meditate that sacred matter; you will find it the ultimate perfection of a principle extant throughout man's whole history on earth (Carlyle, 1840, p.11-12).

Toussaint’s contemporaries noted his remarkable superhuman abilities, not only to influence his followers, but his indefatigable energy, which, like that of Napoleon, enabled him to achieve superhuman feats of endurance and conquest. His aid-de-camp made speeches that hailed Toussaint as the republican hero and successor to Spartacus in speeches made on Feb 5, 1800 and again in 1801 (Hazareesingh, 2020, p. 178). During his rise to political power, he

orchestrated public celebrations that encourage a hero worship of him that approached divinity. These ceremonies were based on the new republican liberties that his regime promised that were synthesized the hero worship of a deity. For example, his modern biographer Sudhir Hazareesingh notes that a procession of civic and religious authorities formed a procession on the outskirts of town and held aloft a canopy that he was to walk beneath in a procession in his honor. He first refused by claiming that this special treatment, claiming that it identified him as a deity, but in fact, that is what the celebration achieved. After walking through a series of triumphal arches (after the Ancient Roman tradition), he was awarded a medal with the inscription, “After God, it is him” (Hazareesingh, 2020, p. 156). It seems that Martineau believed that it was time to place Toussaint among the other great leaders who shaped the tide of history towards equality, such as Martin Luther.

Hazareesingh notes that this same slogan had been applied to Makandal, the leader of the first 1751 uprising. Vodou ceremonies were important in promoting the goals of the revolutions and gaining support from the slaves. During such ceremonies, Makandal, was hailed as a god who had come to deliver his African people from persecution and enslavement. Hazareesingh notes that the revolutionary ceremonies of Toussaint’s time synthesized Catholic, Vodou and republican hero worship. Another tactic that Toussaint employed to garner support to his cause was the Freemasons. Although he may not actually have been a member, he included their symbol in his signature. The Freemasons ideals were similar to those of the republicans and derived from Enlightenment values which included fraternity and solidarity, and among their members were Toussaint’s brother Paul and the military commander of Port-Républicain, Christophe Huin. As a result of the close affinity between the values of the Freemasons and the republican movement, and their traditions of secrecy and political activism, a number of the leaders and revolutionaries had joined the masonic lodges in Haiti (Hazareesingh 2020, p. 157).

According to Hazareesingh (2020), Toussaint regularly invoked vodou and Christianity in his speeches and ceremonies, as well French revolutionary egalitarian motifs. Following the defeat of the British in 1798 who held town of Mole Saint-Nicholas, Toussaint held a ceremony in which he planted a liberty tree. His speech, however, references the vodou loa, Gran Bwa or Great Wood, a spirit of the forest. The African slaves had introduced vodou by the 1750s and used it to form social groups. Toussaint was familiar with the religion’s deities and rituals, which combined West African beliefs with native Taino traditions. Herbal medicine was associated with the vodou loa, Loko, and practiced in marron communities. Toussaint was widely regarded as a healer who invoked the power of vodou deities. He used his knowledge of herbal medicines to heal outbreaks indigenous illnesses, such as malaria, scurvy and yellow fever (Hazareesingh 2020, p.157). Toussaint was also known to invoke Makandal, the leader of the first slave uprising in Haiti in 1751, as a vodou spirit. The vodou religious seamlessly synthesize both Catholic and libertarian beliefs from the time of the 1791 Revolution. When Toussaint led his battle campaigns, he tied a knotted red scarf around

his neck that symbolized the loa, Ogoun Fer, the war spirit, who was regarded as his guiding spirit and adviser (Hazareesingh 2020).

### **Abolitionist History and *Society in America* (1837)**

Harriet Martineau's fictional narrative in *The Man and the Hour* (1841) is inspired by recent events in abolitionist history that included slave revolts in British colonies in Barbados (1816) and Jamaica (1831) that forced the British begin the process of complete abolition. Martineau's interest in the abolitionist movement stemmed from the recent abolition of slavery in British colonies in the Caribbean in 1833 although it was not fully implemented until 1838. Former slaves were forced to work for their former masters for low wages until this time. Previously in 1807, Britain had passed the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade in Parliament although it was still carried out by French slave traders. Her narrative references much earlier examples of emancipation from slavery, like Mum Bett, who demanded that her rights of citizenship outlined in the Massachusetts Constitution be recognized after she was beaten by her master. Represented by a white abolitionist attorney, Theodore Sedgwick, the slave sued her master in the Court of Common Pleas *Brom and Bett v. Ashley* in 1781, won her freedom plus 30 shillings in damages, and took the new name of Elizabeth Freeman. However, Martineau omits the early date and the more recent history of gradual abolition among most of the Union states, (other than Massachusetts), which was still in the process of implementation alongside Britain's gradual emancipation plans.

Martineau's sympathy for the African American condition is also evident in her pivotal work, *Society in America* (1837). This work which is based upon a two-year tour of the United States. In this text, she devotes two chapters to the conditions of African Americans and women in America. The author analyzes the backward condition of each and contrasts them to the ideals of the American constitution that guarantees equality to all citizens. In this respect, her ideology aligns with the white feminist writings of Mary Wollstonecraft and Germaine de Staël. Martineau paves the way for the feminist movement of the nineteenth century which combined the abolitionist platform with the feminist platform for equal rights and voting privileges. She concludes her chapter on women with the affirmation of the democratic principle found in the American Declaration of Independence: "The principle of equal rights is all we have to do with here. It is the true democratic principle which can never be truly controverted, and only for a short time evaded. Governments can derive their just powers only from the consent of the governed" (Martineau 1837, p. 154).

Martineau references the radical historical transition from monarchy to a democracy by asserting that "Washington's super-royal voice greeted the New World from the presidential chair" while "the old world stood still to catch the echo" (Martineau 1837, p. 154). This sentiment is repeated in the context of her next publication about Toussaint, who was inspired by examples of both the American and French Revolutions. Martineau assesses false claims made by a Bostonian that people of color and blacks enjoy total equality with whites, and she concludes her chapter on African Americans by declaring that the growing abolitionist

movement will restore the claims to equality made by the American Constitution for races and gender. In response to the claim that “colored people” were “well treated” and their children were educated and that they enjoyed the enfranchisement of citizenship, Martineau retorts that the schools for colored children are “shut up” or “torn down” because whites will not tolerate the education of black children. She offers a second example in which a black family was prohibited from sitting in their church pew in a white church and the assertion of one Connecticut judge who claimed that Blacks were not citizens. What shocked Martineau and others was the glaring contradiction between the egalitarian principles that fueled the American Revolution and the present prejudice against blacks in America. Martineau offers further evidence of this disparity in race from Thomas Jefferson’s claim infants, women and slaves were excluded from the definition of citizenship in American democracy. Indeed, Martineau equates women’s “lack of will and property” with that of slavery, writing: “if the slave disqualification, here assigned, were shifted up under the classification of women, their case would be nearer the truth than as it now stands” (Martineau 1837 vol 1, sec VII). Applying Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence syllogism that the authority of just governments is derived from the consent of the people to the exclusion of women from the rights of citizenship, Martineau concludes, “The principle of the equal rights of both halves of the human race is all we have to do with here. It is the true democratic principle which can never be seriously controverted... Governments derive their just powers only from the consent of the governed” (Martineau 1837, vol. I, sec. VII). The government is, therefore, not “just,” as neither women nor slaves can give their consent to the government since they lack rights of citizenship.

Martineau begins her fictional biography of Toussaint, *The Man and the Hour* (1841) by describing the idyllic island of Hayti as pristine paradise and Garden of Eden prior to the arrival of Christopher Columbus and massacre or enslavement of the native Tainos. In the novel, Henri Christophe, who would become Haiti’s emperor following its independence, expresses this sentiment: “this island...when it lay blooming in the midst of the ocean, fresh from the will of God, thronged with gentle beings who had never lifted up a hand against one another...It was Hayti when it received, as into paradise, the first whites who came into our hemisphere, and who saw in our valleys and plains, the Eden of the Scripture” (Martineau 1841, p. 179). Santo Domingo, Christophe continues, was the appropriate name for the island during the current crisis of civil war of blacks against whites: “While it holds its conquered name, there will be heart-burnings” since “vice crept into it, and oppression turned its music into sighs, and violence laid it waste with famine and the sword” (Martineau 1841, p. 179).

Diplomatic relations with France, however, remained strained. Napoleon ordered an expedition to reclaim Haiti from Toussaint who declared the nation’s independence from France while America, following its trade embargo of 1797, was persuaded to restore trade in 1800-1801 under President John Adams. Toussaint expresses his concern that Bonaparte’s rise to power and militarism will impact the fledgling independence of the new black nation: “if Bonaparte respects the liberties of the French no more than to reduce them from being a

nation to being an army, he will not respect the liberties of blacks, and will endeavor to make them once more slaves” (Martineau 1841, p. 178).

### **Comparison between Toussaint and Jesus**

Martineau also shaped her portrayal of Toussaint on her portrayal of Jesus in her earlier narrative fiction *Traditions of Palestine* (1830). Much like her later fictional biography of Toussaint, Martineau uses characterization to develop the emerging aura of Jesus as pivotal figure who changes the course of history and religious philosophy (Lecourt 2018). In Martineau’s novel, Toussaint can be compared to Jesus as a divine prophet in his mission to free enslaved Africans from the dirge of slavery. Like Toussaint’s followers, the followers of Jesus perceive the divine mission of the Messiah in his leadership skills and oratory: “It was a voice of gentleness and love; a voice so unlike that of the scribes in their teachings, that many who had before felt it sink down into their hearts, breathed forth, while they bowed the head” (Martineau 1830), p. 54). In the context of the growing American abolitionist movement, Toussaint emerges through Martineau’s fiction as a fledgling leader of the movement whose example should be shared and spread to motivate others to join the cause of freedom and emancipation. For example, in *The Man and the Hour*, the character, General Hermona, observes the loyalty of Toussaint’s men: “Their attachment to your is singular. I no longer wonder at your achievements in the field.” Toussaint replies: “In me they may see one whom, while obeying, they love as a brother” (Martineau, 1841, p. 75). However, Toussaint’s relationships with his subordinates and his family are more familial as they are portrayed by Martineau as pursuing a simple existence as fishermen, much like the first followers of Jesus. Jesus followers discuss the role of the Messiah to deliver them from the Romans; in a similar manner, Toussaint is portrayed as the divine savior of his people who delivers them from white colonial slavery. In Martineau’s historical fiction, Bonaparte and the French army become like the Romans who seek to destroy the simple hallowed land of Haiti and enslave or obliterate its otherwise peaceful inhabitants who seek only carry out subsistence level fishing and farming. Martineau also makes a subliminal reverse analogy between the Roman farmers who – like Cincinnatus – would leave their farms to fight for the Republic. While Toussaint declares his independence from Bonaparte, other contemplate the general’s greatness and attest to his decency in times of war: “What majesty he carries with him through all his conquests! How whole nations quail under his proclamations!” Martineau contrasts Bonaparte’s proclamation that he was the “Man of Fate” prophesied by the Koran during his campaign in Egypt with her character Laveaux’s statement that Toussaint was the “black chief predicted by Raynal,” the French philosopher who predicted that a leader would emerge to free Africans from colonial slavery (Martineau 1841 p. 50, 75; Hunt 1996). Likewise, Napoleon’s statement that “men must account to him their secret thoughts because nothing was concealed from him” is contrasted by Martineau with Toussaint’s statement to

the “Mulattoes in the church at Cap that, from the other side of the island, his eye would be upon them, and his arm outstretched, to restrain or punish” (Martineau 1841 p. 264-265).

The massacre of whites is treated in the conditional for the most part by Martineau and is portrayed as an abhorrent act that forces Toussaint and his followers to abandon their Christian moral principles. Incredulously, Martineau’s Toussaint asserts that if the whites have been cruel to the negroes, “our duty is clear – to bear and forebear, to do them good in return for their evil. To rise against them cunningly, to burn their plantations and murder them – to do this is to throw back the gospel in the face of Him who gave it!” (Martineau 1841 p. 34). By making a comparison between Toussaint and Jesus who seeks to lead his people to freedom, Martineau ameliorates the violence of the Haitian Revolution which persisted as the most significant threat to whites who continued to own slaves in the Americas. Martineau continues to discourage a sensationalizing of the massacre by references to the morals of Toussaint and his followers. When Jean mentions the recent history of the French Revolution in which the king was apprehended on the flight to Varennes, “Toussaint, who always uncovered his head at the name of the king, now bent it low in genuine grief” (Martineau 1841 p. 34). When Jean points out that the white slave owners defy the king and are traitors, Toussaint asserts that they are still “less guilty than those who add ravage and murder to rebellion” (Martineau 1841 p. 34). In fact, Toussaint repeated says that he is opposed to killing whites. The term, “massacre” is only used in the context of the Massacre River, (Martineau 1841 p. 35) the boundary between the French and Spanish territories, while the verb, “kill” is only used in the conditional as an act that is only considered possible. By contrast, in her novel, *Demerara* (1832), an early fictional work that established her anti-slavery views, Martineau includes a graphic description of a lynching of a slave: “Before the slave hunters could see what happened, a fierce blood-hound lunged at Willy’s throat and brought him down, once having tasted blood, the animal was not be restrained by whistles, shouts or blows till the long death grapple was over. When the mangled negro had ceased to struggle, and lay extended in his blood, the hound slunk back into the bushes...” (p. 178-179). On the other hand, possibility of poisoning cattle, murdering the master’s children and setting fire to the sugar cane fields is raised as possible actions that are not seriously considered by the slaves since it violates their standards of moral conduct. Since these are the very activities that characterized the Haitian Revolution, Martineau’s portrayal of slavery in fiction glosses over basic facts about the violence of revolution and retaliation against whites in her effort to generate sympathy for the abolitionist movement. However, a slave who refuses to be honest and work hard is understandable given that his moral code could never apply to the context of slavery so long as he was a slave. When Alfred advises Cassius to be “faithful to your master,” Cassius retorts, “Faithful? I have never stolen his sugar --- I have never murdered his children --- I have never even listened to those who talked of burning his canes or poisoning his cattle” (Martineau 1832 p. 54-55). By contrast, the slave owner, Mitchelson, who is delayed upon his return to his home, is “scared with visions of burning cane fields, of a murdered wife and insulted children” (Martineau 1832 p. 120). When Cassius prays, he hopes that the crops fail and that his master becomes

poor so that the bonds and suffering of slavery end, and also “let him die in his sleep this night, and then there will be many to sing to thee instead of wailing all the night” (Martineau 1832 p. 124-125).

Toussaint is portrayed as a Christian martyr rather than a leader of a revolt, who seeks first and foremost to uphold the tenants of Christianity. Imprisoned by the French, Toussaint laments: “I erred in...not making myself a king, and separating my country from France. My people might have been laying aside their arms...but at what a cost? Their career would have begun in treason and in murder...We began our career of freedom in fidelity, in obedience and in reverence towards the whites and therefore we may take to ourselves the blessing of Him who made us to be free...” (Martineau 1841 p. 368). The Christological aura of Toussaint outweighs any militant tactical maneuvers to free the island from the French assault and casts him in the role of a white protector more than a freedom fighter against white oppression.

Aphra Behn’s *Oronooko* (1688) probably served as a model for Martineau who idealizes Toussaint’s status without directly addressing the massacres of the white colonists. In focusing on the development of Toussaint’s character and his commitment to the cause of freedom, Martineau avoids sensationalizing the fear and suffering of the white colonists who are the subject of Leonora Sansay’s novel, *Zelica* (1820). *Oronooko*, the son of an African king, is trained as a general and receives preferential treatment after he is sold into slavery due to his education and administrative abilities. He eventually leads a slave revolt in Surinam but surrenders and kills his own lover rather than allow her to be enslaved and mutilates himself before being quartered and dismembered. The emphasis on the disruption of his family life, his natural talents and administrative and military abilities, and ultimate defeat make it a model for the Martineau’s narrative of Toussaint who is also tricked, deprived of his family and dies in captivity. Although the violence of Behn’s novel did not appeal to Behn’s contemporaries, and her novel was reworked as a sentimental play about love and anti-slavery by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the author’s identity as an early feminist supporter of abolition who used fictional narratives to address a broad audience established this genre for later authors like Martineau. In fact, some 18 years after the publication of Sansay’s *Zelica, the Creole*, Martineau’s novel seeks to support the cause of abolition whereas Sansay’s novel gives readers a graphic account of what whites might expect if a widespread slave revolt erupted in America. The idea that abolitionist writings might encourage slave revolts was a sentiment expressed directly to Martineau during her tour of America. Writing to the American Lydia Maria Childs on January 10, 1838, Martineau wrote, “at Washington; & that I had heard, as a plain matter of fact, from every person I met, from Mr Madison down to Mrs Gilman,<sup>4</sup> that the abolitionists were exciting the slaves to insurrection, and it never occurred to either Miss Jeffery or myself to doubt it till we got to Medford [Mass.]. I have no doubt that I wrote under this false impression, & that my letter to Mr Loring wd [sic] now appear to me just as it does to you” (Logan 2016, vol. 1).

The absolute adulation of the man who defeated the French and united Spanish Santo Domingo with French Haiti sparked reservations about the character and accomplishments of the leader, who enforced the labor of the “cultivators,” a new status given to former slaves. Antonio del Monte y Tejada’s (1892) *Historia* argues that although Louverture was “the most distinguished negro of all those who have held command of this island” he exercised dictatorial powers in forcing “the negroes to work under fear of penalty” which could include beatings and even execution if they did not achieve their required quota of produce (p. 171, 173). Seeking to solve the economic dilemma in the political economy of abolitionism certainly appealed to Martineau who wrote to William Fox in 1832: “A glorious letter from the immortal Jas Cropper. Two sheets full of Polit: Econy – liberal, true, clear & Xn. A bundle of books & pamphlets about the Polit: Econy of slavery, & offers of further information when I like” (Logan 2016 vol. I p. 117). Cropper, both a Quaker and a West Indian trader, formed an anti-slavery society in 1823. According to Michael Jordan (2005), “Its strategy first and foremost would be to obtain information on the state of slavery in British and foreign colonies in the West Indies and in North and South America, in order to prove the argument that free labour was cheaper than slave labour but that the expense of cultivation would also be lessened by the amelioration of the hard treatment of slaves.” Cropper’s own involvement as a Liverpool trader and emphasis on the economic benefits of abolition made his views morally suspect in the eyes of abolitionists. His abolitionist involvement developed in response to his knowledge of the economics of the West Indian slave trade and sugar production. Cropper was inspired by humanitarian concerns but based his views on the economy which he believed to be affected negatively from using free slave labor and increasing production which would only lower prices and hurt the interests of investors. He argued that if bounties and preferential duties that supported the West Indian production were removed by Parliament it would remove the incentive to use slave labor since the prices would rise along with wages paid to labor. He estimated that the abolition of slavery would save the British government over a million pounds British Sterling per year. These funds could then be transferred to ease the transition away from slavery to paid labor in a free economy where markets determine the cost of goods and labor (Davis 1960). Thomas Clarkson’s two-volume *History of the Slave Trade* was published a year after the slave trade was outlawed in British colonies in 1807, but from 1795 onwards Clarkson, who was ordained as a church deacon, had devoted himself to the cause of abolition and he was made the vice-president of Cropper’s abolition society.

At the same time, her interest in the emerging American abolitionist movement remained key in Martineau’s abolitionist platform. She continued to exchange information and progress with friends. For example, she wrote to Ellen Needham on December 8, 1839, about the founding of the Oberlin Institute in Ohio in 1833 in response to oppression of blacks by anti-slavery proponents in Cincinnati. This was also a topic she addressed in her recent publication, *Society in America*:

The great principle of the institution is the admission of qualified persons of every rank, every kind of religion, every shade of colour. It is the only school open to the coloured race as freely as to the whites. It is beyond comparison the noblest institution in America, – the one most feared by the slavery-upholding legislatures, as the strong hold of freedom of thought & speech. It has sent out pastors & teachers to the people of colour in the United States, & also to our West Indian colonies, & among the 10,000 blacks settled in Canada. The Oberlin is the great hope for the education of the coloured race every where. (Logan 2016, vol. 2, p. 40)

### **Comparison between Toussaint and Napoleon**

Martineau's hagiography is based upon her comparison of Toussaint with Napoleon. Since the two were recognized as the two most significant military leaders of their time, who engaged one another in the conflict of the Haitian Revolution. Martineau contrasts Napoleon's negative profile with the hero profile of Toussaint. Initially, Napoleon, too, had been hailed as a heroic military figure who extended the Jacobin Revolution of democracy and freedom to Italy in his campaigns of 1796. However, once Napoleon assumed imperial authority and withdrew the emancipation of slavery in French colonies, his heroic aura waned with the rise of Toussaint, his nemesis. In addition to these ideological motivators, Napoleon Bonaparte became a common point of reference since his ascension to power in 1801 coincided with Toussaint's assumption of gubernatorial duties in Haiti. Philippe Roume, the French agent in Saint-Dominique, claimed that Toussaint "was even greater than Bonaparte." According to Roume, Toussaint possessed the same qualities that had made Napoleon successful, including courage, bravery, genius, surprise tactical strategies and great foresight (Hazareesingh 2020, p.189). Roume had sent a pamphlet detailing the success of Napoleon campaigns while noting the similarities between the two leaders. Thus, Toussaint acquired some degree of hero worship among his contemporaries. Both men had taken power by force, defeated more powerful armies, and designed new constitutions for their nations.

The identification with hero worship and Napoleon was echoed by Harriet Martineau in her fictionalized biography of Toussaint, *The Man and the Hour* (1841), in which Toussaint observes: "The services I have rendered prove that it was indeed the voice of God that called me...You know who it was that said that I am the Bonaparte of St. Domingo, and that the colony could not exist without me. It was your brother functionaries who said it; and never did they say anything more true" (p. 154). In fact, Toussaint's political negotiations were quite complex, given that his sons were being educated in France, and Napoleon wanted to recruit black officers in an effort to maintain his control over the colony and its revenues but also to maintain strong position against the British. The dissolution of colonial ties between Santo Domingo and France was precipitated by Toussaint's constitution for an independent nation. Martineau portrays Toussaint as ingenuous in his commitment to the egalitarian principles of the French Revolution in racial equality and emancipation of slaves while Napoleon betrays the noble principles of the French Revolution that first enabled his rise to

power. Toussaint affirms, “I will be thoroughly faithful to my allegiance, till Bonaparte is unquestionably unfaithful to the principles by which he rose” (Martineau 1841 p. 178).

## **Conclusion**

Martineau’s portrayal of Toussaint was intended to galvanize the abolitionist movement in America, which she had recently observed firsthand in her tour of America. In seeking to write a hagiography of the leader of the Haitian Revolution, Martineau references to his nemesis Napoleon from Carlyle’s *Hero Worship*, as well as her own fictional novel about Jesus and his followers, *Traditions of Palestine*. The timing of her fictional biography of Toussaint, *The Man and the Hour* (1841) following the recent complete abolition of slavery in the British Caribbean in 1838 lends authority to her abolitionist platform for America as well. Considered the first female sociologist, Martineau responded to Carlyle’s views on Hero Worship while adding her own unique classification of hero for Toussaint Louverture, as one who seeks to emulate Jesus before all else. Martineau also demonstrates her faith in the emerging field of sociology to solve complex political issues concerning race and the abolition of slavery.

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