

*Picturing Aid in Haiti:*  
**Reflections on the Making of a Work of Graphic Reportage**

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## ABSTRACT

***Picturing Aid in Haiti:*  
Reflections on the making of a work of graphic reportage**

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This research-creation PhD thesis contributes to recent debates about what journalism could (or should) be in today's fast-changing media landscape by focusing on graphic reportage, a journalistic approach that relies on the drawn medium of comics. In order to assess how working in this drawn form might affect the practices that journalists use in their work, I reflect critically on my process of making *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, a work of graphic reportage about humanitarian interventions in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. I carried out fieldwork for this graphic project in 2013 in Port-au-Prince, where I recorded a series of interviews with Haitians who lived for more than three years in a displacement camp. During this fieldwork, I also interviewed humanitarian workers and local landowners, and I documented what I observed through notes, photographs and sketches. Based on this research, I wrote the script for a graphic book, and I began illustrating and designing sample panels and pages of graphic reportage. In my research for this graphic project, I consciously sought out information and points of view often neglected in international news coverage of humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti. Reflecting on the interviews and observational research I carried out in Haiti, I show in this thesis that the approach of graphic reportage facilitated this process. Discussing specific excerpts from my graphic project, which serves as a platform for the words, stories and images that different interviewees contributed to this project, I demonstrate that this drawn form of journalism can open up space for exploring the perspectives of people like displaced Haitians whose voices, agency and histories are often missing or negated in the news. Through specific examples from *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, which also foregrounds some of the complex dynamics involved in my own process of researching, writing and visually representing aid in a Haitian camp, this thesis also shows that graphic reportage has the potential to encourage greater reflexivity in journalism.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my father, John Macdonald, who played a greater role than it is possible for me to express here in cultivating my interest in the problem of Haiti's representation in Western media.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION - THE MAKING OF <i>PICTURING AID IN HAITI</i> .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 - THE PRACTICE(S) OF JOURNALISM: A LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>17</b>
The practices of "objective" news reporting .....	17
<i>News coverage of disasters and humanitarian interventions.....</i>	<i>23</i>
So what are the alternatives? .....	29
<i>From objectivity to truth? .....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Alternative journalism.....</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>The New Journalism.....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Graphic reportage.....</i>	<i>41</i>
<b>CHAPTER 2 - RESEARCH QUESTION AND STRATEGIES .....</b>	<b>52</b>
Media frames and ungrivable lives.....	52
Research objectives and question.....	56
Research strategies .....	56
<i>Fieldwork .....</i>	<i>56</i>
<i>Writing the script for a graphic book.....</i>	<i>69</i>
<i>Drawing and designing sample illustrations and pages of graphic reportage.....</i>	<i>71</i>
Research-creation/journalism practice-as-research.....	71
Reflexive ethnographic approaches .....	75
Critical perspectives on humanitarian interventions .....	78
Writing as a method of inquiry .....	81
Visual methodologies .....	82
Drawing as method.....	84
<b>CHAPTER 3 - GRAPHIC REPORTAGE AS METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>86</b>
The fieldwork for <i>Picturing Aid in Haiti</i> .....	86
Illustrating the blind spots of "reporting".....	102
Exploring different perspectives on images .....	104
Writing in the language of graphic reportage.....	106
Drawing on media images.....	114
<b>CHAPTER 4 - REFRAMING HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS IN HAITI .....</b>	<b>121</b>
Presenting perspectives missing in the media .....	123
Ethically representing people who fear speaking out in the media.....	125
Highlighting histories ignored in mainstream journalism.....	128
Foregrounding my positionality and process of framing .....	130
Revealing the process and politics of translation .....	132
Presenting different views on images.....	137
Challenging dehumanizing media frames .....	138
<i>Contesting media narratives about "victims" in "Camp Penn" .....</i>	<i>139</i>
<i>Denaturalizing humanitarian categories and statistics .....</i>	<i>148</i>
<i>Reframing the IOM's drone view of the camp.....</i>	<i>158</i>
<i>Picturing Aid in Haiti's broader implications.....</i>	<i>161</i>

**CONCLUSION.....164**  
**REFERENCES.....172**

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. "Welcome to Camp Penn", Vanity Fair, July 1, 2010.....	3
Figure 2. Sketch of Cassandra.....	95
Figure 3. Sketches of Marie-Pierre's eyes.....	95
Figure 4. Sketch of Cassandra's eyes.....	95
Figure 5. Sketch from my fieldnotes.....	104
Figure 6. Sketch from my fieldnotes 2.....	104
Figure 7. Views of the golf hole.....	113
Figure 8. IOM Haiti Mission, Aerial photo of Terrain de Golf camp.....	118
Figure 9. Screenshot from ID-PR.com, April 2013.....	122
Figure 10. Woman speaking out.....	126
Figure 11. Life under tarps.....	127
Figure 12. Cleaning supplies.....	145
Figure 13. Women carrying sick camp resident to hospital.....	146
Figure 14. Alamy stock photo, 2010.....	146
Figure 15. Drawing based on IOM drone image.....	158
Figure 16. Detail from my sample graphic pages about uncounted deaths.....	159

## INTRODUCTION

### THE MAKING OF *PICTURING AID IN HAITI*

As a researcher with a background working as a journalist, I thought I knew what I was getting myself into when I began experimenting with graphic reportage. This approach is generally defined as a form of journalism by its practitioners (Archer, 2011; Sacco, 2012). Yet unlike other forms of journalism, graphic reportage relies on the drawn medium of comics, which comics theorist/practitioner Scott McCloud defines as narrative storytelling through images and text arranged in sequential order (McCloud, 1994).<sup>1</sup> Graphic reportage was first popularized in English by the books of Joe Sacco, a self-described "comics journalist" (Sacco, 2001, 2004, 2007a, 2007b, 2010). And in recent years, this approach, which has alternately been referred to as graphic journalism (Polgreen, 2011), comics journalism (Sacco, 2010), investigative cartooning (Mackay, 2008) and *BD reportage* (Baron, 2014), has come to occupy an increasingly important place in the media landscape in Canada and Quebec, as well as in the U.S., France, Belgium and the U.K. Sacco and other practitioners working in this drawn form have emphasized that they use many of the techniques that journalists have traditionally used in their work (Archer, 2011; Sacco, 2012; Cagle). When I decided to produce a work of graphic reportage as part of my research for this thesis, I thus initially thought of what I was doing as a form of journalism.

This work of graphic reportage is called *Picturing Aid in Haiti*. As I will explain a bit later, this graphic project is designed to be read alongside my thesis itself. I carried out fieldwork for this project in Port-au-Prince in 2013, three years after Haiti was hit by a devastating earthquake that destroyed an estimated 30 percent of the housing in the Haitian capital, which is also Haiti's most densely populated city (Schuller, 2016). In the immediate aftermath of this earthquake, which struck on January 12, 2010, Haitians took refuge from the falling debris of their homes and neighbourhoods in makeshift encampments on what seemed like every available piece of land. To this day, very little of the housing that was destroyed in this disaster, which left about one in

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<sup>1</sup> By definition, graphic reportage is thus something quite distinct from the editorial cartoons that often appear in newspapers, which typically contain one single frame or panel with an image and sometimes text, rather than a narrative told through a whole sequences of such panels. By virtue of its reliance on the language of comics, this approach also distinguishes itself from other illustrated forms of journalism.

seven Haitians homeless, has been rebuilt. Meanwhile the cost of rent in cities like Port-au-Prince, which was already relatively unaffordable for many Haitian families even before the disaster, has skyrocketed. In this context, many of the families whose homes had been destroyed found themselves stranded for years in the camps where they'd taken refuge in the days after the earthquake.

It was in one of the largest of these camps in Port-au-Prince that I began my fieldwork for my graphic project. This encampment, which has since been closed through a relocations program, was officially known as Petionville Camp. Like most of the camps where Haitians took refuge in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, Petionville Camp was formed by earthquake survivors themselves. However, while many such encampments in Port-au-Prince sprung up on relatively small parcels of land, the residents of this particular camp had taken refuge in one of the largest open spaces in Haiti's overcrowded capital city. Namely, a private golf course belonging to an exclusive club called the Petionville Club. This club, whose current CEO is a U.S. citizen who formerly owned a chain of sweatshops in Haiti, was initially founded under a 19-year U.S. marine occupation (1915-34) that rewrote the Haitian constitution so that U.S. nationals could own land in Haiti (Schmidt, 1971; Petionville Club, n.d.). As I found out over the course of my fieldwork, a giant concrete wall, guarded by armed private security guards, had separated the golf course from the surrounding neighbourhoods prior to the 2010 earthquake. However the Petionville Club's wall collapsed in the disaster. And in the days and weeks that followed, tens of thousands of Haitian earthquake survivors scrambled over the concrete rubble to take refuge on the expanse of grassy rolling hills that had served as the club's golf course.

In April of 2010, J/P HRO, a private charity group co-founded by U.S actor Sean Penn was appointed as "Camp Manager" of this encampment on the Petionville Club's golf course. Due to Penn's involvement, Petionville Camp became what one Associated Press reporter aptly characterized as "the most famous camp in post-quake Port-au-Prince" (Katz, 2010), attracting more international media attention than almost any other encampment of displaced Haitians. Yet while there were an estimated 60,000 Haitian citizens who lived in the camp, in media stories, Penn was often implicitly cast as the main protagonist in this Haitian community (Beau, 2010, May 8; CBS News, 2010, March 16; Piazza, 2010, October 26; Troutman, 2010, May 18; Oprah

Winfrey Network, 2012, January 29; Heller, 2011, March 25; Anderson Cooper 360, February 10, 2010; Klarreich, 2010, April 12; Fox & Daniel, 2012). The magazine *Vanity Fair* published a feature story in which this encampment of Haitian earthquake survivors was tellingly referred to

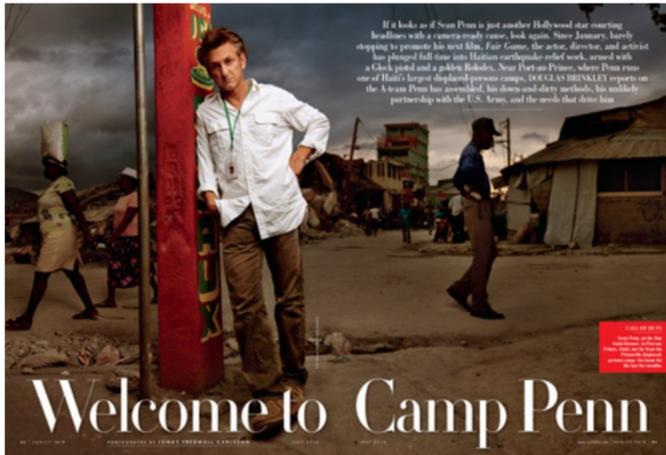


Figure 1. "Welcome to Camp Penn", *Vanity Fair*, July 1, 2010

as "Camp Penn" (Brinkley, 2010, July 1). In this coverage, there was very little attention to the history of the golf club, nor to its position in either historical or ongoing relations of U.S. imperialism in Haiti. When I decided to begin my fieldwork for my graphic project in Petionville Camp, my goal was to try to document information as well as perspectives that had been neglected in this media coverage.

Over the course of three research trips to Port-au-Prince in 2013, I recorded a series of long-form interviews with nine Haitian women and men who lived for more than three years in Petionville Camp, as well as with a former elected leader of the camp. During this fieldwork, I also recorded interviews with two international humanitarian professionals, as well as with a shareholding director of the Petionville Club and a former Haitian government official. I also carried out observational research for this graphic project in the camp, as well as in various other research sites I visited in and around Port-au-Prince, including the Petionville clubhouse. And I documented what I observed through notes, as well as photographs and sketches. Based on this research, I then wrote the script for a book-length work of graphic reportage. Using the visual reference material I produced during my fieldwork, and additional images I located through online research, I also began making illustrations for this in-progress graphic book, and designing sample pages of graphic reportage that incorporate both my drawings and text from my script.

Despite the academic context in which I undertook this graphic project, I initially saw this project almost as an extension of my journalism work in the areas of alternative media and investigative reporting—two realms in which journalists have long strived to document information and

perspectives neglected in mainstream news reporting. In my own work in these two (far from mutually exclusive) domains of journalism, interventions in Haiti were somewhat of a longstanding theme. In the research I carried out as part of this journalism work, which had sometimes involved reporting trips to Haiti, I often relied on interviews and observational research. I also routinely took notes, and I also sometimes recorded what I observed visually, either through photographs or video.

There has been much written on the importance of reflexivity in such qualitative research (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000). While reflexivity has been defined in slightly different ways in different fields, it is generally understood to involve both a critical awareness by researchers of the role their own methods, frameworks of understanding and social location play in the "findings" of their research, and textual strategies for reflecting on these issues in their writing (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000). And this has long been argued to be particularly crucial in contexts where researchers are working in marginalized communities in which they are privileged outsiders (as I was in my past work as a white Western journalist visiting Haiti). In the field of anthropology, where many researchers have long worked in precisely such situations, reflexivity has sometimes been defined as

the capacity of any system of signification to turn back upon itself, to make itself its own object by referring to itself ... Reflexive knowledge, then, contains not only messages, but also information as to how it came into being, the process by which it was obtained (Myerhoff and Ruby, 1982, p. 2).

However, as a journalist, I had learned to approach my work in a very different way. As Barbie Zelizer, a media scholar who is also a former journalist, has observed, journalism has long been conceived, not least by journalists, primarily as an activity of “rational information relay”, enabling “information, evidence, reasoned testimony and deliberation” (Zelizer, 2010, p. 4, 3). While amongst themselves, journalists may sometimes informally use the phrase "I'm working on a story" as a shorthand for the diverse activities of research, writing and visual presentation in which they routinely engage, they also discuss this work in terms that are quite different from the language in which storytelling is discussed in many other fields. Namely, journalists are generally trained to talk about their work as a process of reporting factual information.

This was much the way I had always conceived of the work I carried out as a journalist: namely, as a process of "reporting". In the notes I took during my research for my journalism articles, I generally focused on writing down pertinent factual information. And when I used images in my work, I generally saw them primarily as a kind of visual evidence to support my reporting. In informal discussions with friends and acquaintances, including other journalists, the complex dynamics involved in this work were a topic of frequent conversation. Over drinks with other Western journalists working in Haiti, conversations often turned to the problem of how we were perceived, and received, as *blan* (white foreigners) in Haiti. Over the course of the reporting trips I'd made to Haiti as a journalist, I had heard people call out "*blan*" to me as I walked down the street too many times to be able to count. And as a *blan* freelance journalist visiting Haiti, I had also noticed that I consistently enjoyed a level of access to official sources that I had never experienced in my work as a freelancer in Canada and the U.S. These day-to-day interactions had a painfully obvious connection to the relations of neo-colonialism in Haiti that had often been an important theme in my journalism work. Yet perhaps partly because of the way I had learned to approach my work, as a process of "reporting", I had rarely explicitly made note of these interactions in the notes I took as part of my work. And even in the journalism articles I wrote that were explicitly about historical as well as ongoing relations of neo-colonialism in Haiti, I had never talked about the way these relations played out in my own work as a journalist visiting Haiti.

Nor had I ever really talked in this journalism work about the multiple levels of translation involved in researching and writing these stories, which albeit published in English, typically featured statements that my Haitian interviewees had originally made to me either in Haitian Creole or in French. Given that I am fluent in French, which is one of the two official languages of this former French colony, I can communicate very easily with Haiti's elites (some of whom also speak English, which is my mother tongue). However, particularly in poorer communities, many Haitians do not speak French. Although I have over the years acquired a basic fluency in Haitian Creole, the language spoken by most Haitians, my Creole language skills are limited. Meanwhile, I have almost always published my journalism work in English, a language many Haitians do not speak.

Largely due to the fact that, as a freelance journalist, I have never had a budget to hire professional translators, I have often just translated what interviewees tell me in Creole (or French) into English as best I can myself. In my video work, these translations have typically appeared in the form of textual subtitles that accompanied the audio-video recording featuring my interviewees' original statements, as is the common practice in visual journalism and documentary film-making. However in my journalism articles, such processes of translation were generally rendered completely invisible. And neither in the articles nor the videos I produced as a journalist had I ever really reflected on the dynamics of translation involved in my process of interviewing Haitians, and trying to render their words accessible to English-speaking audiences in places like Canada and the U.S.

In my academic work, I had often analysed the language used in works of journalism as sites in which the terms of what counts as reality for differently situated communities are constructed, negotiated and sometimes contested. And like many academics in the field of media and communication studies, I was also interested in the role of news images in the broader cultures within which they were produced and interpreted. However, perhaps partly because of the way in which I understood my work as a journalist as an activity that was primarily about rational informational relay, I had learned to approach the language and images I used in my own journalism work quite differently. While I had often explicitly sought in this work to challenge the language and narratives used in mainstream news reporting, I had often implicitly positioned the language I used in my own writing as a relatively neutral medium for conveying factual information. And both in the documentary videos I'd produced over the years as a journalist and in the journalism articles I'd published with accompanying photographs or video clips, I had generally presented the images I used in my work primarily as if they were simply visual evidence of the events, people and places upon which I was reporting.

I initially conceived of the work involved in researching, writing and illustrating *Picturing Aid in Haiti* very much in the same way I had always thought about my work as a journalist--as a process of "reporting". However, in this thesis, I will show that I was able to do something very different in this work of graphic reportage than I typically had in my past journalism work.

Discussing specific examples from my graphic script, illustrations and sample pages of graphic reportage, I will show that *Picturing Aid in Haiti* foregrounds the problem of my position as a *blan*. Relatedly, while the social dynamics involved in my work had never been an explicit focus in my journalism work, this narrative of my graphic script is very much *about* the dynamics involved in my research in Petionville Camp, where my project became entangled in a contentious struggle between some of the camp residents who participated in my research and a range of other parties with stakes in how this Haitian community was represented to English-speaking audiences in North America—including the golf club, Penn's charity group, and an L.A. entertainment publicity firm contracted to manage Penn's image as a celebrity.

Moreover, I will demonstrate that, instead of positioning language as a neutral medium for the transmission of facts, this graphic project foregrounds language as a site of struggle over what counts as a fact as well as over the terms in which factual information is named and discussed by differently situated people. Similarly, I will show that, rather than positioning images simply as visual evidence of reality, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* explores images as sites of struggle over different (and sometimes incommensurate) views and perspectives on reality.

I will thus propose in this thesis that, by its very form, graphic reportage can encourage journalists to adopt more reflexive practices of research, writing and visual presentation in their work. Based on my experience of making *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, I will also propose that this drawn approach has the potential to address some particularly concerning problems that have been observed in more standard forms of media coverage of humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti.

As I will discuss in the next chapter of this thesis, scholars have long expressed concerns about the way humanitarian interventions in the global south are framed in Western media (Razack, 2004; Benthall, 1993; Malkki, 1996). This media coverage has been faulted for silencing and dehumanizing the people targeted by such interventions in ways very similar to the discourses through which European colonialism was historically legitimated and rationalized in Western cultures (Brauman, 1998; Razack, 2004). Such coverage has also been critiqued for effacing

histories and ongoing dynamics of colonialism, the latter of which are not infrequently perpetuated by humanitarian interventions themselves (Brauman, 1998; Razack, 2004).

These patterns of silencing, dehumanization and dehistoricization took a particularly extreme form in Western news coverage of humanitarian interventions in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. This disaster triggered one of the largest international humanitarian responses to date, with unprecedented levels of aid pledged by donor governments as well as private citizens the world over (Schuller, 2016). According to the Office of the UN Special Envoy to Haiti (2012), official donors allocated 13.34 billion dollars for Haiti's recovery. Meanwhile, private individuals worldwide donated an estimated 3.06 billion dollars to charity appeals for Haitian earthquake survivors (UN Special Envoy to Haiti, 2012). Celebrities took an active role in raising the profile of these humanitarian relief efforts, including through a high-profile re-recording of Michael Jackson's song "We Are the World" (Mason, 2011). And on the eve of the 2010 Oscars ceremony at which he presented the awards for "best actor", U.S. actor Sean Penn unveiled his own plan to "help Haiti", through his new charity group J/P HRO (the NGO co-founded and directed by Penn that, as I mentioned earlier, was appointed as Petionville Camp's "Camp Manager") (Schuller, 2016). Yet as anthropologist Mark Schuller (2006) observed in his book *Humanitarian Aftershocks in Haiti*, much of the most vital initial response to this disaster came from Haitians themselves, who liberated countless of their fellow citizens from concrete slabs of collapsed homes and schools, and pooled together what resources they had to assist one another. However, studies of U.S. and Canadian news coverage of this earthquake suggest that these crucial forms of mutual aid were largely ignored in English-language news stories, which tended to focus instead on the responses of Western governments, NGOs and celebrities (Balaji, 2011; Mason, 2011).

The voices of earthquake survivors were often notably absent in these stories (Ulysse, 2010), where Haitians were often portrayed as "helpless" "victims" being rescued by white humanitarian workers (Balaji, 2011, p. 51) or "passively waiting" for Western aid (Mason, 2011, p. 107). While there were very few reported incidents of violence in Haiti in the aftermath of the quake (Ehrenreich, 2010; Schuller, 2016), these relatively rare incidents attracted disproportionate attention in international media (Romero and Lacey, 2010, January 16; cbsnews.com, 2010, January 17; Anderson Cooper 360, 2010, January 18; CNN.com, 2010, January 18; Stone, 2010,

January 15; Grillo, 2010, January 19; BBC, 2010, January 18; Beaubien, 2010, January 20). And despite the relatively peaceful and orderly way in which Haitians responded, studies have shown that words such as "violence" and "chaos" were extremely common in many U.S. and Canadian news stories (Balaji, 2011, p. 50; Mason, 2011). Moreover, while there was much international media attention to the role of governments like those of France, the U.S. and Canada in the humanitarian response to the earthquake, news stories about these "aid donors" often failed to mention the role of these same governments in the long history of neo-colonialism in Haiti that many scholars have identified as a crucial factor in the scale of the devastation caused by this earthquake (Dash, 2010; Mason, 2011; Dubois, 2011; Podur, 2012).

As I will show in the next chapter of this thesis, this coverage was symptomatic of some of the problems scholars have observed in Western news coverage of other humanitarian responses to disasters that have resulted in large-scale displacements of racialized people. Yet a number of scholars (Mason, 2011; Fischer, 2010; Ulysse, 2010; Clitandre, 2011) have pointed out that this coverage also often reproduced a more specific pattern through which the voices, history and humanity of the citizens of Haiti, the world's first black republic, have long been negated in the West.

By portraying Haiti as a threatening land of violent chaos, whose citizens could only be saved by white Westerners, these news reports also worked in subtle as well as not-so-subtle ways to legitimate highly inappropriate humanitarian responses to the earthquake. These responses, which might themselves be analysed as manifestations of ongoing dynamics of neocolonialism in Haiti, included the disproportionate emphasis that the U.S. and Canadian governments placed on security in their initial responses to this disaster. Revealingly, the U.S. government immediately sent in its *military* to deal with this humanitarian crisis. This decision would have important ramifications for the emergency response to the earthquake. For one of the first actions U.S. troops took, upon arriving in Haiti, was to seize control of the international airport--a move that, according to *Médecins Sans Frontières*, caused important delays in the arrival of live-saving aid supplies in Haiti, as the U.S. military prevented certain aircraft carrying these supplies from landing (Aislinn and Leonard, 2010, January 19; Ehrenreich, 2010). Similarly, one of the Canadian government's first responses to the earthquake was to send armed soldiers to protect the

Canadian embassy compound in Port-au-Prince (Stone, 2010, January 15). If news stories that inaccurately portrayed post-earthquake Haiti as a scene of violent chaos helped make the U.S. and Canadian governments' decisions to prioritize security in their initial responses to the earthquake appear more rational than some have suggested that it was, images of passive Haitian "victims" being saved by famous white Westerners worked in a similar way to normalize some of the most disturbing aspects of the internationally-financed rebuilding efforts in post-earthquake Haiti. For Western governments overwhelmingly channeled the money they pledged for Haiti's post-earthquake rebuilding through Western NGOs, at the expense of Haiti's own public institutions and community organizations (Schuller, 2016).

During the initial year after the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, some level of basic humanitarian assistance was provided to the residents of many camps like Petionville Camp that were formally "managed" by an NGO. While the residents of other camps often lacked such basic services as water (an issue I will discuss further later in Chapter Two), free potable water, distributed by Oxfam, was initially available in Petionville Camp, and J/P HRO operated a medical clinic where camp residents could access free basic healthcare.

However, given that such basic services remain relatively inaccessible to many Haitians living in other communities in Haiti, both the Haitian government and intergovernmental agencies were concerned that such camps would become permanent. So in 2011, most basic services were terminated in Haiti's camps. And agencies working with displaced Haitians began working to close these camps, through relocations programs. Officially, these programs are referred to as "return" programs, for displaced individuals are in theory supposed to have a choice of returning to their home community. Yet as I already noted, very few of the homes that were destroyed in the earthquake have been rebuilt.

Almost all of these official relocations programs that were used to close Haiti's camps were designed only to help offset the cost for eligible families living in targeted camps to rent a home for just one year. The original model for these programs was an initiative launched by the Haitian government, which was designed to relocate displaced Haitians from six major camps in prominent public parks and squares in the Haitian capital into 16 neighbourhoods. The basic

model for this program, which was called 16/6, has since been adopted by scores of international agencies and NGOs working with displaced Haitians. These programs, which offer twelve months of subsidized rent to eligible families living in camps targeted for closure, have been widely criticized by scholars and rights advocates (Schuller, 2016). For given that very little of the housing that was destroyed in the 2010 earthquake has been rebuilt, these temporary subsidies offer, at best, only a very temporary solution to the housing crisis in post-earthquake Haiti.

In his book *Humanitarian Aftershocks in Haiti*, Schuller emphasizes the important role that optics played in these official efforts to close Haiti's camps, which "became visible symbols of the humanitarian crisis" and ongoing "visual reminders of the failures within the international aid response" (Schuller, 2016). Moreover, in a context in which the Haitian government was trying to market Haiti as being "open for business", as former Haitian president Michel Martelly (2011) put it, the camps were considered "an eyesore that got in the way" (Schuller, 2016, p.4). Relatedly, amongst various agencies, there was what Schuller characterizes as "blind support for shutting down camps at all costs" (Schuller, 2016, p.12). As I began my fieldwork in Petionville Camp in January 2013, one of these relocations programs, administered by J/P HRO and financed in part by the World Bank, was just getting underway in the camp.

By offering a platform for the words of some of the residents of Petionville Camp who participated in my research, and delving into histories and ongoing dynamics of neo-colonialism, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* highlights perspectives and historical context that had often been missing in Western news coverage of humanitarian interventions in post-earthquake Haiti. This was in part a conscious choice. Yet as I will demonstrate in this thesis, the form of graphic reportage also played an important role. Reflecting critically on the making of *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, my thesis will show that this drawn medium in many ways facilitated my goals of documenting information and points of view that had been neglected in the media. Moreover, I will demonstrate that this drawn approach helped me to foreground the problem of my own positionality, and the complex dynamics of representation and language involved in my process of researching, writing about and visually representing humanitarian interventions in a Haitian camp. Through specific examples from *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, I will show that the form of graphic reportage thus allowed me to challenge the dehumanizing narratives, images and

language through which displaced Haitians have often been framed in the media in a way that was much more reflexive--and ultimately, more powerful--than would have been possible in another form of journalism.

Yet in addition to simply making an argument about the potential of this drawn approach, I will also *illustrate* this potential, through *Picturing Aid in Haiti* itself, which is designed to be read alongside this standard academic component of my thesis that you are currently reading. As I specified earlier, this graphic project includes the script I wrote for the graphic book I hope to eventually publish based on this research, as well as the sample panels and pages of graphic reportage that I have so far completed for this in-progress graphic book.

The fact that I was allowed to submit this graphic project as an integral part of a PhD thesis in Communication is attributable to a growing recognition of the potential of academic research that takes forms other than standard academic prose. As part of a larger questioning of traditional academic benchmarks for measuring productivity, research that involves the production of such non-standard academic outputs is playing an increasingly important role in fields such as media and communication studies in places such as Québec, Canada, the U.K and the U.S. (Chapman and Sawchuk). Such research, known as "arts based research" in the U.S., and "practice-based research" in the UK, is the specific contexts of Québec and Canada, generally designated by the term "research creation."<sup>2</sup> In this context, there is increasing recognition in the fields of media and communication studies of the potential research that involves either experimentation with different media forms and practices, and/or the production of innovative media projects. And there has also been growing interest amongst journalism scholars in the possibilities for non-traditional academic projects of a journalistic character to be recognized as contributing to knowledge (Niblock 2007, 2012).

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<sup>2</sup> The category "research-creation" derives from a term translated literally from the French term *recherche-cr ation*, used by the Fonds de recherche du Qu bec – Soci t  et culture (FRQSC) to designate its research funding programs targeting university-based artists. Loosely the equivalent of what is in the U.S. called "arts-based research," a term for which there exists no literal translation in French, "research creation" has increasingly come into favor not just in French, but also in the English language, in the discourses of academic and arts funding bodies across Canada in recent years.

As I will discuss in Chapter Two, reflexivity is seen as particularly crucial in such research (Niblock, 2007), which aims to "illuminate and innovate current practices" of journalism (Niblock, 2012, p. 507). In this spirit, Niblock (2007) explains that those producing works of journalism as part of their research are expected to reflect critically on their practices both in an accompanying academic text and in their journalism work itself. However, as I will show in Chapter One, the types of critical textual reflections on issues of positionality, language and representation that play a vital role in reflexive academic research strategies are relatively rare in journalism. By showing that graphic reportage can, by its very form, encourage such critical reflections in journalism, my thesis will contribute to this recent work to develop methodological frameworks for research involving the production of works of journalism. By the same stroke, this thesis also strives to contribute to a broader body of critical scholarship on the practices that journalists use in their work, which, as I will discuss in the next chapter, scholars have often faulted precisely for its lack of reflexivity.

In Chapter One, I will situate my research on graphic reportage in this broader critical literature on the practice(s) of journalism. I will begin with an overview of this scholarship, in which the practices institutionalized in the Anglo-American news reporting model have long been a particular preoccupation. Reviewing some of the scholarship on this news reporting model and its particular conception of objectivity and related conventions of research, writing and visual presentation, I will show that these reporting practices have often been faulted for privileging the perspectives of large bureaucratic institutions, and obfuscating the role that values and interpretations inevitably play in news stories. Reviewing a second body of literature, on the discourses and practices of humanitarian agencies, I will also show that this model of purportedly "objective" news reporting presents particular problems in contexts where journalists are covering humanitarian interventions. And reviewing some critical literature on U.S. and Canadian news coverage of such interventions in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, I will show that these problems were particularly evident in this coverage. Notably, this coverage often provided an uncritical platform to the views of officials, and failed to include the perspectives of Haitian earthquake survivors, who, as I noted earlier in this chapter, were also often represented as helpless "victims" dependent on Western saviours.

In my literature review, I will also discuss some relevant scholarship about various journalistic approaches that break from the mould of the conventional news reporting model. This scholarship suggests that even in these "alternative" approaches, journalists do not necessarily engage in more reflexive practices. I will conclude Chapter One by discussing some recent literature on graphic reportage. Significantly, scholars writing about this illustrated approach have often noted that, unlike much other journalism, works of graphic reportage tend to be highly reflexive (Chute, 2016; Stafford n.d.). Scholars have often attributed this reflexivity of graphic reportage, which has been particularly noted in the work of Joe Sacco, to the form of drawn comics. Yet based on a close reading of some recent writing by Sacco himself, I will argue that this reflexivity of graphic reportage might best be understood by attending to the way in which working in this graphic medium affects the practices that journalists use in their work.

In Chapter Two, I will introduce the question that guided my thesis research, in which I sought to assess how working in the form of graphic reportage affected my own process of framing humanitarian interventions in *Picturing Aid in Haiti*. In this second chapter of my thesis, I will also talk about the strategies I used in researching, writing, illustrating and designing my in-progress graphic book, as well as the strategies I used to reflect critically on its making. The approach of this research is informed by some of the recent work I mentioned earlier on reflexive methodologies for research involving the production of works of journalism (Niblock, 2007; 2012). In order to reflect critically on the making of *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, I drew on some of the critical literature reviewed in Chapter One on the practice(s) of journalism, and media coverage of humanitarian interventions. In reflecting on the fieldwork I carried out in Haiti, and on my process of writing, illustrating and designing my graphic project, I also drew on some relevant literature from the field of ethnography, and some critical scholarship on the dynamics of humanitarian interventions, and particularly interventions in camps. I will conclude Chapter Two by discussing this work, whose concerns with the politics of writing and visually representing fieldwork (including fieldwork in camps) are particularly pertinent for theorizing the dynamics involved in the making of *Picturing Aid in Haiti*.

In Chapter Three, I will reflect on my process of researching, writing, illustrating and designing *Picturing Aid in Haiti*. As a researcher with a background working as a journalist, I will reflect

particularly on how this drawn approach affected the practices of research, writing and visual presentation that I was accustomed to using in my journalism work. I will show that working in a drawn medium in many ways facilitated my goals of documenting information and perspectives that had been neglected in Western news coverage of humanitarian interventions in camps such as Petionville Camp. Discussing specific examples from my fieldwork, I will demonstrate that this graphic form allowed me to access people as well as research sites I likely would not have been able to access in a more standard journalism project. This drawn approach presented particular advantages for exploring the perspectives of Petionville Camp residents, whose voices had, as I have already mentioned, generally been missing in Western media. Moreover, this drawn medium, which also facilitated my access to the Petionville Clubhouse, offered important benefits for exploring histories and ongoing dynamics of U.S. imperialism that had similarly been neglected in media coverage of humanitarian interventions in Petionville Camp. Reflecting on the making of *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, I will also show that working in this drawn form, which relies heavily on dialogue, encouraged me to pay particular attention to my position as a white Westerner, and the complex dynamics involved in my process of researching, writing about, and visually representing humanitarian interventions in Haiti.

In Chapter 4, I will demonstrate that the form of graphic reportage allowed me to address the shortcomings of Western media coverage of Petionville Camp in a particularly layered and reflexive way in *Picturing Aid in Haiti*. Discussing specific examples from my graphic script, illustrations and sample pages, I will show that, partly due to its graphic form, this project highlights perspectives and critical context that had been neglected in the media, while also foregrounding the problem of my positionality, and the dynamics of language, translation and visual representation involved in its own making. I will also demonstrate that this graphic approach allowed me both to critically examine and to challenge the dehumanizing narratives, language and images through which the residents of Petionville Camp were often framed in Western media. Based on my experience of making *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, I will argue that, by its very form, graphic reportage has the potential to encourage greater reflexivity in journalism. I will also propose that this drawn approach offers a particularly promising means of addressing the problems scholars have observed in more standard forms of media coverage of humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti.

This written component of my research-creation thesis whose four main chapters I have just outlined is designed to be read alongside *Picturing Aid in Haiti* itself. The different components of this graphic project, which as I mentioned includes a graphic script, sample drawings and sample pages of graphic reportage, are assembled in a separate document. Given that it is in Chapter Four that I discuss and analyze *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, this graphic project (and particularly my graphic script) should ideally be read alongside (or just prior to) reading the fourth chapter of my thesis.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE PRACTICE(S) OF JOURNALISM: A LITERATURE REVIEW

By reflecting on how the form of graphic reportage affected the practices I used in making *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, this thesis seeks to contribute to a broader body of critical scholarly literature on the social and political implications of journalism practices. In this chapter, I will review some of this literature, in which the conventions of research and writing that news reporters in countries such as the U.S., Canada and the U.K. are expected to adhere to in their work have long been a particular preoccupation. These news reporting practices have been shown to privilege the perspectives of bureaucratic institutions, often to the exclusion of other points of view, and to obfuscate the role that journalists and their own interpretations inevitably play in news stories. Reviewing some related literature on news coverage of disasters and humanitarian interventions, this chapter will demonstrate that these practices present particular problems for news coverage of humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti. In particular, these practices have been shown to dehistoricize such interventions and to silence people like Haitian earthquake survivors, by presenting them as dehumanized "others" who must be spoken for by Western humanitarians. In this chapter, I will also review some critical writing by scholars as well as journalists themselves on three journalism approaches that have sometimes been positioned as critical alternatives to the Anglo-American model of news reporting: investigative reporting, the journalism of alternative media and the New Journalism. In reviewing this literature, I will show that even in these "alternative" approaches journalists do not necessarily reflect critically on their own role in what they report, and in some cases their work may replicate some of the problems with conventional news coverage of humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti. Reviewing some recent literature on graphic reportage, I will argue that graphic reportage would seem to offer a rare example of a reflexive journalism approach with the potential to address these problems.

#### **The practices of "objective" news reporting**

In countries such as Canada, the U.S. and the UK, the production of news has long been structured by a particular conception of journalistic objectivity. There has been much written over the years about this concept and its associated objectivist writing conventions both by scholars

and, increasingly, by journalists themselves. There is little consensus on the meaning of journalistic objectivity, which has sometimes been used interchangeably with "detachment", or conflated with the notion of reality itself (Mindich, 1998, p. 2, 6-7). Indeed, in their book *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and The Public Should Expect*, Bill Kovach, a former Washington bureau chief at the *New York Times* and Tom Rosenstiel, the founder of the Project for Excellence in Journalism, called objectivity "one of the great confusions of journalism" (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 8).

According to Stephen Ward (2004), an emeritus journalism professor at the University of British Columbia who previously worked as a bureau chief at the Canadian Press, the genealogy of this concept can be traced back to the norms of factuality and impartiality invoked by newspaper editors in 17th century England, to legitimate their activities in the eyes of both sceptical readers and governments nervous about publicity. In his book *The Invention of Journalism Ethics: The Path to Objectivity and Beyond* (2004), Ward argues that it was not until the early twentieth century that factuality, impartiality, detachment and independence would be codified into the strict set of norms, rules and practices he refers to as "the doctrine of objectivity" (2004, p. 214). This doctrine --first institutionalized in the North American press -- mandates that journalists be neutral observers, and report "just the facts" by keeping themselves, their values, and their interpretations out of their stories. Under these rules, journalists are also required to exercise fairness, nonpartisanship and balance, by ensuring that they cover two sides of any story. In this model of "objective reporting", the only allowable opinion is that attributed to someone considered an authoritative source or one who "can speak for a group or institution" (Ward, 2004).

Ward has argued that this "doctrine of objectivity" was first institutionalized by the first telegraph newswire agencies, which defined news as "neutral units of information, transmitted down a telegraph wire for profit" (Ward, 2004, p. 20). In early telegraphic reports, information understood as most important was placed at the beginning in anticipation of technological failures that might interrupt the message. In order to sell these reports to the widest possible array of newspapers, regardless of political ideology, they were marketed as strictly neutral reports of facts. Based on an understanding of the journalist's role at the agencies as being to impartially

"communicat[e] facts", much like "a recording machine", agency reporters were mandated to use a neutral third person tone, and a concise plain-language style (Ward, 2004, p. 195).

This formula and style instituted by the wire agencies was then mimicked by newspapers whose owners and editors similarly sought to claim that their reports were fact-based, value-free communications. The adherence to third person voice, and neutral tone, stripped of signs of subjectivity, would be similarly mandated in the writing of newspaper reporters. Like wire agencies, North American newspaper editors "sought a metaphor in the apparent passivity and perfect impartiality of machines", stipulating that "the objective reporter should not taint data with subjective interpretation" (Ward, 2004, p. 198). Editors would go on to defend "reports as objective--allegedly the factual statements of a passive observer" (Ward, 2004).

Common assumptions about the medium of photography also played a role in strengthening the doctrine of objectivity in the 20th century, when the hand-drawn illustrations that had previously been the predominant mode of visual representation in newspapers and magazines were replaced by photographs.<sup>3</sup> For unlike illustrations, photos were understood as "objective images of the world" (Ward, 2004, p. 196). Just as the inverted pyramid and telegraphic news reports that "appeared to provide a passive reflection of events as they occurred", the news photograph "'proved' the factuality of the newspaper report because the camera was assumed to copy the event without the intervention of human bias (Ward, 2004, p. 196).

According to Ward, this ideal of journalistic objectivity drew heavily on the common understanding of scientific objectivity that prevailed in popular culture at the time, as entailing a "passive, careful observation of facts" (Ward, 2004, p. 198). This conception, which has since

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<sup>3</sup> These drawn images that accompanied news articles in the popular press prior to the 20th century do not typically fit McCloud's (1994) definition of comics, which, as I explained in my introductory chapter, is a mode of storytelling that relies on *sequential* images. For this reason, I consider these news illustrations to be a distinct phenomenon from the approach I refer to in this thesis as graphic reportage. However, alongside the single panel editorial cartoons that have long appeared on newspaper editorial pages, these early news illustrations are nonetheless an important reminder that the role of drawing in journalism long predates the work of contemporary "comics journalists" like Sacco. There are a number of scholars who have written about the role of drawn images in the nineteenth century press (for example, see Brake and Demoor, 2009), and there is also much literature on both historical and contemporary examples of single-panel editorial cartoons (for example, see Caswell, 2004 and Seymour-Ure, 2008). However delving into this broader history of drawing as a journalistic practice is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis.

been widely discredited, reflected positivist assumptions that facts could be separated from values and interpretation, and that defined "a fact as a hard nugget of data that no one could invent or manipulate", while assuming "the truth of a factual statement followed from a direct correspondence of the sentence and the state of affairs that it describes" (Ward, 2004, p. 78). Inspired by this positivist conception of scientific objectivity, news editors sought to establish a similar formula that professional journalists could adhere to, to ensure the objectivity of their reports. The doctrine of objectivity thus redefined journalism as an essentially passive and neutral activity of recording facts--ignoring the obvious role of human activity, and human interpretation, entailed in any form of reporting.

There has been much critical scholarly work on the ideological dimensions of this purportedly "objective" model of news reporting. In her book *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (1978), Gaye Tuchman drew on Dorothy Smith's conception of ideology as "interested procedures" which are blind to "their own self-fulfilling prophecies" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 197) to analyse the news reporting practices she observed during her ethnographic fieldwork in U.S. newsrooms. Tuchman argued that the practices of news work are ideological in the sense that they can "be viewed as a procedure for sorting out and arranging conceptually the living actual world of people so that it can be seen to be what we know it ideologically" (Tuchman, 1978, p. 179). One important such set of ideological procedures involved in news work are the practices that news reporters' use to determine what is "newsworthy" (1978, p. 13).

The classifications that reporters rely on in deciding what events and people will be reported as "news" are deeply engrained in the professional ideology that guides the work of professional journalists. Critical studies of these "news values" have consistently found that professional journalists tend to prioritize events involving elite persons and dramatic conflicts (Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Harcup and O'Neill, 2011). For journalists define personalities as more newsworthy than structures, while political strategies are deemed more newsworthy than policy analysis. Meanwhile events are assumed to be news while "long-term processes, conditions or contexts" are seen as unnewsworthy (Hackett, 2010, p. 182).

Critical sociological studies of news reporting practices have consistently found that these practices tend to privilege the perspectives of officials from bureaucratic institutions, typically to the exclusion of other perspectives. In his study of the practices of daily news reporting in U.S. newsrooms in the 1970s, news sociologist Mark Fishman (1980), found that the journalists he studied often only exposed themselves to bureaucratic sources of information. For instance, writing about a reporter he followed as part of his study, Fishman observed that the information sources that this journalist relied on during the period of the study almost all had a “formally organized, governmental bureaucratic character” (1980, p. 51). Due to the important role bureaucratic agencies played in the production of news, these institutions “establish structures of knowledge consisting of what there is to know in the first place” (Fishman, 1980, p. 52).

Very similar patterns were observed in a major study of crime coverage in the UK in the 1970s. Based on their study of news coverage of the "moral panic" around mugging in English cities, Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts argued in their book *Policing the Crisis* that people like police department spokespeople and politicians are positioned as "primary definers" in news stories, and that their particular definitions of issues such as crime set "the limit for all subsequent discussion by framing what the problem is" in the news media (1978, p. 59).

Moreover, bureaucratic sources also have an important impact on what journalists consider to be a fact in the first place. In his book *Manufacturing the News* (1980), Fishman found that the accounts journalists treated as a priori “factual” (requiring no further investigation or substantiation) were limited to bureaucratic accounts, typically documents in agency files, officials talking “on the record”, or formally organized activities in meetings (Fishman, 1980, p. 86). Meanwhile, nonbureaucratic accounts were systematically regarded by the journalists in Fishman's study as "soft data", "unconfirmed reports", "speculation", which required further investigation before they were published.

Fishman argued that the journalist’s general criterion of facticity is “something is so because somebody says it” (Fishman, 1980, p. 92). Yet the “somebody” has to be “somebody entitled to know what they say”, a “competent knower”, typically a bureaucrat or an agency official (Ibid).

As Fishman emphasizes, bureaucratic hierarchies thus constitute “hierarchies of credibility” for journalists (1980, p. 94). He observed that “reporters will globally doubt nonbureaucratic accounts” (1980, p. 101), and when faced with a nonbureaucratic source, they will check all aspects of the account against bureaucratic accounts. “The assumed competence of the news source is the matter of concern for reporters and not necessarily the procedures whereby the news source (or the reporter) arrives at the assertion” (Fishman, 1980, p. 92-3). The practices of "objective" news reporting thus work to reproduce dominant relations of power and dominant ideologies in contemporary societies through these structures of access that privilege the voices and "primary definitions" of other powerful institutions.

Zelizer (2010) has observed that images occupy a strange and contradictory place in this news reporting model. For as an essentially rationalist modernist project, modern journalism tends to be understood by its practitioners as being wholly driven by words. Yet images (and particularly photographs) are also regarded as the most “true” type of journalistic evidence.

As one photo agency director summarized the reigning assumption of his newsroom clients:

It’s true because it’s in the papers. It’s even more true because it’s in the photograph  
(cited in Zelizer, 2010, p. 16).

When news editors judge an event to be particularly significant, news organizations thus tend to display larger as well as greater quantities of images. This apparent contradiction may be partly related to the important role that vision plays in the epistemology of journalism, as well as in the Western cultures in which the institutions of modern journalism took root. For the modern press is based a “trustee model”, in which “a public trusts journalists to go and ‘see’ in its place, and report impartial news, that is, the news that any witness of good faith would have reported” (Muhlmann, 2010, p. 34). And the notion of “seeing” is particularly crucial to the figure of “the reporter” who has been characterized as the “pillar of the modern conception of journalism” (Muhlmann, 2010, p. 34). Reporters are by definition “on-the-spot witnesses and not commentators from afar” (Muhlmann, 2010, p. 34). Moreover, “this valorization of tangible experience appears as a guarantee of the ‘truth’ of whatever is recounted” (Muhlmann, 2010, p. 34). Yet while this central place that vision occupies in journalism's epistemology may be partly responsible for the important role that images play in the news, the truth claims enacted through photojournalism are also intimately bound up with popular perceptions about photographs. For

photos tend to be valued in journalism, as they often are more broadly in popular culture, for their perceived indexical relationship with "reality", or at least with how reality appeared at a particular moment in time (Zelizer, 2010; Sontag, 1977). This common idea continues to play a particularly important role in shaping perceptions of the role of images in the field of journalism, in which photographs are typically valued exclusively for their denotative function, or their purported capacity to "reflect what 'is there'", show "things 'as they are'", and "capture life on its own terms" (Barbie Zelizer, 2010, p. 3).

The Anglo-American news reporting model has long been theorized as a particular problem for news coverage of the global south. For according to the "news values" that guide the work of reporters at news organizations based in places like the U.S. and Canada, wars and other disasters are typically one of the few types of occurrences that make people living in the global south "newsworthy" at all. As news sociologist Herbert Gans observed in the specific case of U.S. news coverage,

Most news in America, as elsewhere, is domestic... Other countries typically make the news only when they are the site of unusually dramatic happenings, such as wars, coups d'etat, or major disasters (1979, p. 32).

### ***News coverage of disasters and humanitarian interventions***

There has been much critical work over the years on the way such disasters are represented in the news in places like the U.S. and Canada. This coverage has often been critiqued for its sensationalism, its reliance on formulaic Eurocentric cultural narratives, and its failure to include historical context (Benthall, 1993; Cottle & Nolan, 2007; Razack, 2004; Moeller, 1999; Brauman, 1998; Malkki, 1996). These patterns have often been observed to take a particularly extreme form in Western media coverage of disasters involving large-scale displacements of racialized people. Moreover, such coverage has often been faulted for silencing the voices of local survivors, as well as casting them as masses of passive "victims". These patterns of representation were observed in Western media coverage of the first large scale humanitarian intervention in Africa, during the crisis in Biafra (Brauman, 1998). And Liisa Malkki (1996) observed these problems in Western news coverage of the humanitarian crisis following the genocide in Rwanda, in which over half a million Rwandans lost their lives, and several million more were displaced. Analysing Western media coverage during the genocide, and in the three months that followed this horrific

conflict, Malkki observed that there were typically no "sustained narrative inputs" from the refugees themselves in these news stories (1996, p. 393). A similar pattern of representation was observed by scholars writing about media coverage of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Writing about her own experience as a journalist covering this disaster for a U.S. news organization, Murali Balaji writes that she faced pressure from her editors to "'bring the tragedy home' for Americans" by omitting details that complicated simplistic narratives about how "our aid was saving the storm-ravaged natives," and in which South Asian tsunami survivors were presented as "Others incapable of helping themselves" (2011, p. 58-59). Meanwhile, as Olofsson and Rashid (2008) observed in their study of Swedish news coverage of the tsunami, Western journalists often privilege the experiences and perspectives of white Western tourists over those of racialized locals affected by such disasters.

Nor has this pattern of coverage, in which race has been noted to work as an important subtext, only been observed in media coverage in the global south. Studies of U.S. media coverage of Hurricane Katrina, for instance, emphasized the way in which black residents of New Orleans displaced by this disaster were framed both as objects of pity through news images that portrayed "African-Americans in the role of helpless victim" (Kahle et al, 2007, p. 86), and as "violent barbarians" through media reports that emphasized violence, rapes and looting by black hurricane survivors (Zizek, 2005). U.S. media coverage of the aftermath of Katrina was also critiqued for downplaying structural factors such as economic inequality, housing segregation and unequal access to education that presented barriers for recovery after this disaster, particularly for many poorer residents of New Orleans.

Scholars writing about U.S. and Canadian news coverage of humanitarian interventions in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake have argued that these problems of silencing, dehistoricization and dehumanization were often repeated in a particularly extreme form in this coverage (Mason, 2011; Balaji, 2011). In her study of U.S. media coverage of this disaster, Murali Balaji found that major U.S. news organizations "routinely covered the actions of the American/European do-gooders at the expense of Haitians' efforts at helping their countrymen in the wake of the disaster" (Balaji, 2011, p. 61). According to Balaji's study, whose findings I also mentioned briefly in the introductory chapter of this thesis, Haitians were overwhelmingly cast as helpless

objects of pity in this coverage, which also featured "countless images of white aid workers" rescuing Haitians from the rubble, "as well as stories of Americans rushing to Port-au-Prince to answer an heroic duty" (Balaji, 2011, p. 51). And Balaji found that this problem took a particularly extreme form in the mediation of celebrity-led philanthropic efforts, which "emphasized the humanity of the philanthropists rather than that of the victims" and sometimes also paradoxically had the effect of turning Haitian citizens into "a commodity used to sell songs and other products" (Balaji, 2011, p. 62). A similar pattern was documented in a study of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)'s online news coverage of the earthquake in Haiti, which found that Canada's English-language public broadcaster repeatedly portrayed Haitians as "victims" "passively waiting" for aid from countries like Canada (Mason, 2011, p. 107). Moreover, as I mentioned in my Introduction to this thesis, these studies found that words such as "violence" and "chaos" were extremely common in many U.S. and Canadian news stories (Balaji, 2011, p. 50; Mason, 2011). This coverage was also faulted for making "Haitians hyper-visible as poor, desolate and violent", while also rendering "history invisible", by failing to provide relevant historical context (Mason 2011). Moreover, as Gina Athena Ulysse (2010) observed in critically reviewing some of this news coverage in the newsletter of the North American Council on Latin America (NACLA) (2010), Haitians were rarely given a chance to speak for themselves.

As I mentioned in the introductory chapter of this thesis, these media representations have been analysed as bearing important continuities with both broader colonial patterns of representation, and with longstanding tropes through which Haiti specifically has historically been constructed in Western cultures (Mason, 2011; Fischer, 2010; Ulysse, 2010; Clitandre, 2011). However, some of these problems can also be traced back to the limitations that have been theorized in the Anglo-American news reporting model. In her book *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death* (1999), Susan D. Moeller has argued that the problems that have been observed in the traditional model of news reporting in countries like the U.S. are in many ways exacerbated when Western reporters are covering disasters in the global south. In the wake of significant cuts to the foreign news reporting budgets of Western news organizations, such reporting is increasingly no longer being carried out by journalists living in the country, but rather by "parachute" journalists, who travel from country to country covering crises. Mark Pedelty, who studied the international press corps in El Salvador, observed that such journalists,

who typically do not speak the local language, often experience a resulting “sense of vertigo”, which they try to cure with “quick-source therapy, visiting bureaucratic centers of power that are all too willing to condense complex situations into easily digestible bites” (Pedelty, 1995, p. 111).

International journalists' particular dependency on official sources would seem quite relevant to consider in analysing some of the problems with the way the 2010 earthquake in Haiti was represented in U.S. and Canadian news, through stories casting Haitian earthquake survivors as "passive victims" being saved by "Western saviours." For when covering humanitarian interventions, news reporters have been noted to rely heavily on sources from humanitarian agencies and NGOs, who have themselves been faulted for portraying their interventions through such narratives (Cottle and Nolan, 2007). In his book *Disasters, Relief and the Media* (1993), anthropologist Jeremy Benthall showed that humanitarian agencies have long relied on images and narratives that cast humanitarians as "heroic saviours" and their beneficiaries as "helpless passive victims" in their own publicity and fundraising materials (Benthall, 1993, p. 177). And these agencies have also been faulted, including by Rony Brauman, one of the founders of *Médecins Sans Frontières*, for publicizing their work to Western media audiences through stories about Western humanitarians "saving" people in the third world (Brauman, 1998, p. 18).

Communications scholars Simon Cottle and David Nolan (2007) have observed the ways in which these binary discourses play out in the contemporary communications practices of humanitarian agencies, as they strive to compete for resources and media attention in the increasingly competitive field of humanitarian aid by catering to both the nationalist outlook and news values of Western media organizations. Based on interviews with communications officers at a number of international humanitarian groups, Cottle and Nolan observed heavy competition amongst groups seeking to be the “authoritative media source” (Cottle and Nolan, 2007, p. 865-866). Reflecting an internalization and institutionalization of a “media logic” which requires the “packaging information and images in conformity to the media’s known predilections,” humanitarian groups are increasingly preoccupied with “deploying celebrity and publicity events” (Cottle and Nolan, 2007, p. 866-7). Humanitarian groups thus play up ‘home’ connections. As one Australian Red Cross communications officer put it, the Australian staff and volunteers working in the third world are the “stars of our organization in many ways and usually our best

bet in securing media coverage, you know, a local hero from your neighbourhood is now working in a disaster zone or conflict zone” (cited in Cottle and Nolan 2007, p. 870). Due partly to Western journalists' tendency to be “drawn selectively to images of distress...rather than issues of structural disadvantage”, Cottle and Nolan note the way these humanitarian NGOs' communications practices “splinters the category of global humanity into ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘active saviours’ and ‘passive victims’, reinforcing symbolically “a highly Western-led and Western-centric view” (Cottle and Nolan, 2007, p. 863, 871).

Cottle and Nolan attribute these problems they observe in humanitarian NGOs' communications practices to growing competition in the field of humanitarianism. Yet as Luc Boltanski has observed, such dehumanizing images of the suffering of “others” have longer roots than contemporary media. In his book *Distant Suffering: Morality, media and politics* (2004), Boltanski traced the power of such images back to the moral philosophy of the Enlightenment, noting that the "spectacle of distant suffering" has long been central to what Hannah Arendt's referred to as "the politics of pity". This politics, which emerged at the time of the French Revolution, was based on a fundamental “distinction between those who suffer and those who do not,” as well as “a focus on what is seen and on looking, that is, on the spectacle of suffering”—a politics not centred on “action” but on the “observation of the unfortunate by those who do not share their suffering, who do not experience it directly and who, as such, may be regarded as fortunate or lucky people” (Boltanski, 2004, p. 3). Such a politics is, Boltanski stresses, “clearly distinguished from” “a politics of justice” (Boltanski, 2004, p. 3). Crucially, it does not make reference to history, and is grounded solely in the present misery of the suffering others.

In this “politics of pity,” Boltanski observes that the “spectacle of distant suffering” was always inherently “asymmetrical and distributes the humanity of the different partners unequally”...“mastery is distributed entirely on the side of the subject who is describing” (Boltanski, 2004, p. 24). The fact that these suffering others are seen as “distant” and “other” by the spectator who observes them is not incidental to the philosophy of action articulated by Enlightenment thinkers such as Adam Smith.

It is inherent in a politics of pity to deal with suffering from the standpoint of distance since it must rely upon the massification of a collection of unfortunates who are not there in person. For when they come together in person to invade the space of

those more fortunate than they and with the desire to mix with them, to live in the same places and to share the same objects, then they no longer appear as unfortunates and, as Hannah Arendt says, are transformed into '*les enragés*' (Boltanski, 2004, p. 13).

Boltanski has argued that this othering "politics of pity" is central to the project of modern humanitarian, which perhaps not coincidentally, was developed simultaneously with various European colonial projects in different parts of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean (Brauman, 1998).

These "othering" tendencies of contemporary humanitarianism have been shown to play out in particularly extreme ways in the context of humanitarian interventions designed as responses to mass displacements. In his book *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government* (2011), Michel Agier observed that when the status of "refugee" was first defined by the UN, in the Geneva Convention of 1951, it reflected a universalistic aim of "protecting" the stateless. However, since that time, when Western countries sought to position themselves as asylums "for the 'good' victims of Communism", "a function of control (whether in the application of asylum policies or in the management of camps) came to accompany that of protection, and very often to dominate it" (Agier, 2011, p. 11). And relatedly, as Liisa Malkki writes, there has "emerged a substantially standardized way of talking about and handling "refugee problems" among national governments, relief and refugee agencies, and other intergovernmental organizations" (Malkki, 1996, p. 385-6). In her article "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism and Dehistoricization", Malkki traced some of the most significant problems she observed in news coverage of Rwandan refugees back to the language and representational tropes through which refugees are discussed by these various agencies, observing critically that "these standardizing discursive and representational forms (or, perhaps more precisely, tendencies) have made their way into journalism and all of the media that report on refugees" (Malkki, 1996, p. 386).

Malkki observed that humanitarians tend to approach particular displaced individuals and groups not as specific people but rather as "pure victims in general: universal man, universal woman, universal child, and, taken together, universal family" (Malkki, 1996, p. 378). And Malkki observes that this "dehistoricizing universalism creates a context in which it is difficult for people in the refugee category to be approached as historical actors rather than simply as mute victims"

(Malkki, 1996, p. 378). In "universalizing particular displaced people into 'refugees'--in abstracting their predicaments from specific political, historical, cultural contexts--humanitarian practices tend to silence refugees" (Malkki, 1996, p. 378).

Malkki also observes that news coverage often follows a very similar pattern. Namely, "when there is testimony about refugees" in news media stories, this testimony often paradoxically works to silence the refugees (Malkki, 1996, p. 390). For journalists tend not to rely on refugees themselves for testimony, but rather on "refugee experts", "relief officials" or "well-placed Western diplomatic sources" (Malkki, 1996, p. 390). In her article, Malkki asks,

How often have we seen the media image of a (usually white) U.N. official standing in a dusty landscape, perhaps in Africa, surrounded by milling crowds of black people peering into the camera, and benevolently, efficiently, giving a rundown on their numbers, their diseases, their nutritional needs, their crops, and their birth and mortality rates? (Malkki, 1996, p. 390)

While noting that such officials are generally motivated by honest intentions of providing reports that are "informative" and "balanced", Malkki observes that such expert voices "operate precisely to erase knowledge" (Malkki, 1996, p. 390). Or, more precisely, the knowledge they produce through their official reports structured around narratives of humanitarian intervention and "raw human needs" work to preclude the kind of knowledge that might come from listening to displaced people themselves.

Malkki does not expressly talk about the role journalists' practices play in these patterns of representation. Yet, much like the problems scholars observed in news coverage of humanitarian interventions in Haiti, this issue would seem to be intimately related to the privileged place that the Anglo-American news reporting model has long accorded to the perspectives of officials from governments and other large bureaucratic agencies.

### **So what are the alternatives?**

Due to the important role that the conventions of "objective" news reporting play in the production of news in places like the U.S., Canada and the U.K., these conventions continue to be an important preoccupation in the critical scholarship on journalism. However, even within the English-speaking countries in Western Europe and North America where the Anglo-American

journalism model traditionally prevailed, these conventions have long been rejected by journalists espousing different conceptions of journalism. Dating back to the muckrakers of the early 20th century, investigative reporters have long been particularly critical of this traditional model of objective news reporting, and particularly the requirement that journalists use a neutral tone, and rely primarily on sources such as institutions and officials (Rosner, 2008; Pilger, 2004). Arguing that journalism should aim to hold the powerful to account, investigative journalists advocate instead for a more adversarial stance towards authoritative sources. The New Journalism, a narrative journalism approach of the 1960s whose practitioners also explicitly rejected traditional requirements for journalists to use a neutral tone, also contested the traditional reporting model, by embracing the first person voice (Wolfe & Johnson, 1973). Alternative media practitioners, who espouse a more critical perspective on the existing social order than their "mainstream" professional counterparts, have also long questioned and often consciously rejected the notion of "objectivity" (Atton, 2009). The traditional concept of journalistic objectivity is also facing renewed challenges with the growing influence of new online and mobile media platforms. For the rise of these digital media platforms has coincided with an uptick in practices that explicitly break from the objectivity doctrine, including the growing use of the first-person voice on platforms like blogs, social media, and in emerging digital forms of investigative reporting.

### ***From objectivity to truth?***

In recent years, some influential journalists have argued that the notion of journalistic objectivity is so untenable that it should be abandoned altogether, as what Jon Katz, one prominent new media journalist, characterized as a "false God" (Katz, 1996). Others defend objectivity as an ideal, but advocate major revisions to the codes and rules by which it has historically been institutionalized in North American news reporting. Even journalists and educators who argue that objectivity is still a useful ideal for journalists are critical of traditional stipulations for "objective reporters" to abide by "the supposedly neutral style of newswriting" (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007). Such mandates are seen to be increasingly out of step with current practices in journalism. Moreover, in recent years, there has been growing recognition of the benefits of interpretation and analysis in journalism.

In 1996, the Society for Professional Journalists, who had up until that point enshrined objectivity as the central tenet of their influential Code of Ethics, dropped the term (Mindich, 1998, p. 5-6). As *Chicago Tribune* publisher Jack Fuller observed in a book published the same year, "almost nobody talks about objective reporting anymore" (Fuller, 1996, p. 14). In his book *News Values: Ideas for an Information Age*, Fuller articulated a strong critique of the traditional journalistic conception of objectivity, remarking that,

In its purest usage, the term suggested that journalism meant to be so utterly disinterested to be transparent. The report was to be virtually the thing itself, unrefracted by the mind of the reporter. This, of course, involved a hopelessly naive notion from the beginning (Fuller, 1996, p. 14).

Kovach and Rosenstiel have similarly distanced themselves from the requirement that journalists always remain "neutral" and abide by "the supposedly neutral style of newswriting" (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 83). Tellingly, objectivity is not amongst the ten fundamental "elements" or principles of journalism identified in *The Elements of Journalism*. In a related vein, in his book *The Invention of Journalism Ethics*, Ward made a forceful case for reforming, if not altogether abandoning, journalism's traditional conception of objectivity (Ward, 2004).

Yet despite these significant moves in the field of journalism to rethink the notion of journalistic objectivity and its associated writing conventions, an idealized notion of scientific objectivity continues to serve as an important reference point in discussions amongst many influential journalists. This is particularly evident in Kovach and Rosenstiel's book (2007), in which they argue that the problem is not so much the ideal of objectivity, but rather the way it has been misinterpreted in journalism, based on the false premise that individual journalists can be objective. The authors of *The Elements of Journalism* point out that Walter Lippmann, who was an early advocate of journalistic objectivity, was highly aware of the biases and prejudices of the journalists of his day; in fact, this was precisely why he advocated objectivity as a professional value. In his influential writing on the subject of objectivity, Lippmann (1931) argued that journalists should adhere to more rigorous, science-like methods. Kovach and Rosenstiel strongly adhere to this conception of journalistic objectivity, and, ultimately, call for a return to Lippmann's version of journalism, as a "discipline of verification", whose methods should be modeled on the hard sciences (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007).

Not unrelatedly, the traditional journalistic conception of objectivity has in many quarters of professional journalism simply been replaced by other similar concepts. And perhaps the most significant replacement concept is that of truth. For instance, when the Society for Professional Journalists eliminated the word "objectivity" from their Code of Ethics, they replaced it with the words "truth, accuracy and comprehensiveness" (Mindich, 1998, p. 5-6). Of the ten fundamental "elements" or principles of journalism identified in Kovach and Rosenstiel's book, their list begins with the commandment that "journalism's first obligation is to the truth" (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 6). In *News Values: Ideas for an Information Age*, Fuller similarly emphasized the importance of truth as a value in journalism, insisting that "journalism's duty to the truth requires it to present a full depiction of reality--good and bad" (Fuller, 1996, p. 91). Or as he elaborates elsewhere in his book, it requires that journalists provide "a full depiction of all the mind-and-language independent objects that presumably constitute social reality" (Fuller, 1996, cited in Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 184).

The goal of seeking truth could be argued to have certain advantages over journalism's traditional ideal of objectivity. Yet as philosophers have long emphasized, the truth is also a notoriously elusive ideal. And as communications scholars James Ettema and Theodore Glasser pointed out in their book *Custodians of Conscience: Investigative journalism and public virtue*, the way in which journalists' "duty to the truth" is commonly discussed in journalism, in terms of mandates that journalists provide "a full depiction of reality" or of "mind-and-language independent objects", is extremely naive (Ettema & Glasser, 1998). Such discussions are underpinned by positivist assumptions that have been widely challenged by scholarship on the philosophy of sciences, as well as feminism and post-structuralism, about the possibility of separating knowledge from the values embedded in any knowledge-seeker's language and frameworks of understanding.

As Ettema and Glasser point out,

any attempt to gain truly important knowledge of human affairs [...] is built on a foundation of facts that have been called into existence, given structure, and made meaningful by values. The separation of fact and value is inevitably breached by all but the most elementary and isolated bits of information about the social world. (Ettema & Glasser 1998, p. 11).

In parts of their book, Kovach and Rosenstiel acknowledge some of the problems with the way the truth has often been discussed in journalism. They observe that while truth might best be understood "as a goal—at best elusive" (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 45), journalists have often spoken of it as if it were "something that rises up by itself, like bread dough" (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 41). They also acknowledge that the ideal of truth-seeking has historically been operationalized in a very narrow way in journalism, where this elusive goal has often been understood merely as a mandate requiring that journalists record facts accurately. In the absence of any reflection on the broader implications of these facts, such a facticity can, they point out, constitute "a kind of distortion all its own" (as in the case of stories that pointlessly emphasize the race of suspects, and thus play to racial stereotypes) (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 42).

Kovach and Rosenstiel acknowledge the need for journalists to address such problems in their work by being more open about their methods and techniques of reporting, and more honest about the limits of their knowledge. Yet they also acknowledge that this "runs contrary to what most journalists do" (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 95). They observe that

traditionally, journalists were taught never to raise a question the story could not answer. Make stories seem airtight, even omniscient. Never appear unknowing. Write around the hole in the story (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 95).

In *The Elements of Journalism*, Kovach and Rosenstiel call for journalists to address these problems by embracing what they refer to as a "spirit of transparency" (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 92). The term "transparency" has also played a crucial role in recent discussions amongst journalists, scholars and educators about contemporary journalism values (Phillips, 2010). There is much that is commendable about the practices advocated by proponents of "transparency" in journalism, which include providing the public with more information about the source of one's information, and about how one went about one's reporting.

Yet Ettema and Glasser (1998) have analysed such metaphors of glass as part of the enduring legacy of journalism's traditional concept of objectivity. They observe that, while fewer journalists now use the term "objectivity", many continue to adhere to an "ideal of language as strictly denotative and purely referential" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 184). And for Ettema and Glasser, one of the most revealing signs of journalists' (as well as the public's) allegiance to this

ideal is the prevalence of metaphors of glass in discussions about the role and responsibility of journalism. Such visual metaphors, which position journalism as "a *window* on the world, a *mirror* of society, a *lens* that brings the personalities, problems and policies of the day into focus", crop up with particular frequency "when journalistic practice comes under hostile public scrutiny" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 184). And they cite as a particularly revealing example a *New York Times* editorial critiquing a docudrama, which claimed that "the difference between news and fiction is the difference between a mirror and a painting" (New York Times, 1985, 20E, cited in Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 184).

Ettema and Glasser have argued that these metaphors "quietly convey important normative claims about the news, especially when journalistic practice comes under hostile public scrutiny" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998 p. 184). Building on the work of philosopher Richard Rorty (1979), they trace these metaphors back to similar metaphors of glass that played a crucial role in 17th century concepts of the mind, in which "to know is to represent accurately what is outside the mind" (Rorty, 1979, p. 3, cited in Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 185). Ettema and Glasser read these recurrent metaphors of glass in journalistic discourse as a sign that "even if the term *objectivity* is out of vogue, its legacy endures" (1998, p.184).

Ettema and Glasser (1998) have shown that this legacy of objectivity endures even in the work of investigative reporters who consciously distinguish their approach from that of daily news reporting. Over the course of more than a decade, these two communications scholars engaged in conversations with award-winning investigative journalists in the U.S. whose work had garnered particular attention and respect amongst their peers. In their study, Ettema and Glasser (1998) found that the investigative reporters who participated in their research relied on more rigorous methods than those used in daily news reporting. Quoting from some of the investigative reporters who participated in their study, they also showed that these journalists quite consciously sought to address some of the limits of daily news reporting, by checking the veracity of official claims rather than merely reporting these claims as news, as well as by going "beyond" pre-packaged information and messages from official sources (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 10).

Yet Ettema and Glasser also found that while investigative reporting often strives to evoke moral indignation about social injustices, investigative reporters "retain a diffuse sort of deference to objectivity as a basic norm of their professional culture" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 11). Moreover, in order to amplify their calls for moral indignation, investigative reporters paradoxically often rely on "certain stylistic features of journalistic objectivity" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 185). As such, journalists working in the area of investigative reporting

expend significant intellectual effort reconciling their craft's stated norm of moral disengagement with their all-too-apparent moral craftwork. They struggle to conceptualize their work in strictly empirical terms--as nothing other than an accurate report of unambiguous facts (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 185).

The authors found that investigative reporters spend considerable time and energy in locating, selecting, interpreting and applying "standards for assessing the performance of officials and institutions" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 185). The reporters who participated in Ettema and Glasser's study sought out such standards by consulting laws, formalized regulations, codes and guidelines, as well as organizations and individuals with recognized expertise, and sometimes these journalists also engaged in making statistical comparisons. In their study of the work of investigative reporters, Ettema and Glasser show that these standards "emerge from the investigator's hard work in locating, selecting, simplifying, interpreting, and in those ways helping to establish the threshold of right and wrong" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 72). However, Ettema and Glasser observed that this interpretive process tends to be elided in final published works of investigative reporting, in which "such standards appear self-evidently credible and obviously appropriate to the situation at hand" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 72). The authors of *Custodians of Conscience* refer to this process as "the objectification of moral standards." And they also suggest that the moral authority of the law plays a particularly important role in this objectification of standards, as do "common sense interpretations of fairness and decency" held by these journalists and their imagined local audiences (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 72).

In a similar vein, Ettema and Glasser also found that in writing and producing stories based on journalistic investigations, reporters often try to construct their narratives around characters they believe will resonate with commonly held conceptions of innocence and guilt. The basic narrative form of these stories is "the dramatic encounter between victim and villain" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 115). Regardless of the specific details of the particular injustice documented in any

given work of investigative reporting, such stories thus typically entail two crucial features. First, these stories must establish "the innocence of those good citizens who have been victimized by some systemic problems" and second, they must show "the guilt of those reprehensible lords of civic vice (often, though not always, bureaucrats) who have caused the problem or else failed to address it" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 115). By applying this narrative formula, investigative reporters seek to evoke the moral indignation of their imagined audiences without explicitly acknowledging the role their own moral vision and values play in their work.

Ettema and Glasser found that investigative reporters often go to considerable lengths to portray those they claim have been wronged as "innocent victims" (or at least as "innocent enough" to make the wrong they have suffered "an obvious injustice") in their stories (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 115). The authors of *Custodians of Conscience* emphasized that the innocence of such "victims" had "to be painstakingly made real through narrative" in these stories (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 115). And similarly, "just as the full reality of innocence must be constructed within and through narrative, so must the reality of guilt" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 121).

Ultimately, Ettema and Glasser found that the journalists they studied constructed their investigative stories in such a way as to lay the blame on "the system" and "officials in charge" of it (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 121). Yet in such stories, "assessments of what exactly has gone wrong with the system are not developed in much detail" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 128). Even in "stories of 'system wide problems', the individual experience is emphasized, while the social issue is marginalized" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 128). Despite investigative journalism's explicit goals of public accountability, these stories thus often paradoxically fail to clearly articulate how institutions being investigated ought to be held accountable (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 129). Ettema and Glasser explained this pattern as a product of these stories' narrative form. For whereas "the details of individual suffering" are "high drama" in such stories, "the details of how the system operates" would be "anticlimactic" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 128). Ultimately, the authors of *Custodians of Conscience* found that these stories "tend to affirm conventional interpretations of right and wrong by applying them, with little analysis or critique, to the situation at hand." They thus argued that "even if this genre of journalism is not a witless apologist for dominant values", the moral vision embedded in its narrative form "is a culturally

*conservative* vision in the most fundamental sense of the term--that is to say, committed to the conservation of such values as fair play, common decency, and individual liberty" (Ettema & Glasser, 1998, p. 114).

While Ettema and Glasser's critical study of investigative reporting focused specifically on domestic stories in the U.S., some of the practices they observed would seem to raise some concerning questions in contexts where such journalists are reporting on humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti. Given the important role that "victims" play as characters in the narratives of investigative reporting, these stories may also work to reproduce some of the most significant problems that have been observed in media discourses about such interventions.

In recent years, a number of critical communications scholars and journalism educators have called for journalists to adopt more reflexive practices in their work (Hackett, 2010; Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2007; Rosen, 1998, 1999; Skinner, Gasher & Compton, 2001). Peter Parisi for instance has advocated an approach to journalism education that "would treat journalism as a site of public discourse and foreground the question of epistemology, examining journalistic story telling 'as a specific rhetorical form, not a transparent stenography of the real'" (Parisi, 1992, p. 5–7). Moreover, as Parisi elaborated, such an approach would also familiarize students with critical contemporary thought in the social sciences, in which 'Truth is not "found" but is defined by the very methodologies, languages, technologies, cultural assumptions, economic imperatives, and literary systems through which it is sought and represented" (1992). Similarly, Les Switzer, John McNamara and Michael Ryan have advocated for journalism students to be equipped to reflect critically on the cultural and political implications of their own role as storytellers, by learning about the "powerful symbolic force" of news narratives (Switzer et al., 1999, p. 29–30). Meanwhile, David Skinner, Mike Gasher and James Compton have argued that journalists would also benefit from more familiarity with ethnographic research methods, which would allow them to deal more "responsibly [...] with the alternative values, belief systems, social systems, traditions and histories of the people they write about," including by allowing their subjects to "speak for themselves" (Skinner et al, 2001, p. 352). In a related vein, a number of scholars in media and journalism studies have sought to identify concrete examples of more reflexive journalism practices.

### *Alternative journalism*

Scholars have sometimes cited alternative media as an example of a more reflexive journalistic approach (Atton, 2002; Atton and Hamilton, 2008; Harcup, 2013). In the context of growing scholarly interest in alternative media (Atton, 2002; Couldry & Curran, 2003; Jeppesen, 2016;), there has also been much written on what Chris Atton has referred to as "alternative journalism" (Atton, 2008; Atton & Wickenden, 2005; Harcup, 2003). In his article "What is Alternative Journalism?", Atton theorized alternative journalism as "contemporary practices within alternative media that present ways of reporting radically different from those of the mainstream" (Atton, 2003, p. 267). In this article, Atton observed that "alternative journalism is practiced in a multiplicity of hybridized, context-specific and contingent ways" (Atton 2003, p. 269). Yet he also emphasized the important role that notions of social responsibility often play in the journalism of alternative media, in which mainstream journalism's "ideology of objectivity" is replaced with "overt advocacy and oppositional practices" (Atton 2003, p. 269). Atton also observed that alternative journalism practices tend to involve "first person, eyewitness accounts by participants", as well as a "'radical popular' style of reporting and collective and anti-hierarchical forms of organization which eschew demarcation and specialization" (Atton 2003, p. 267).

In a study comparing alternative and mainstream media coverage of a riot in the UK, journalism scholar Tony Harcup found that alternative journalists relied far less on official sources than did their mainstream counterparts (Harcup, 2003). The alternative journalists whose work was the focus of Harcup's study also broke from traditional news reporting conventions by quoting at length from non-official sources, as well as by sometimes writing in the first person voice and explicitly challenge mainstream media accounts of events. Based on this study, Harcup argued that alternative journalism favours voices from below, rather than the traditional "primary definers" who tend to prevail as sources in mainstream news.

However, in a subsequent study of sourcing at an alternative media publication in the U.K., Chris Atton and Emma Wickenden (2005), found somewhat less significant differences between alternative and mainstream journalism. Atton and Wickenden (2005) showed that the alternative journalists whose work was the focus of their study tended to approach official sources quite

differently from mainstream journalists. Official sources did not set the terms of reference in the way they often do in mainstream news, but were instead often critiqued in this alternative publication. Yet the authors also argued that "a counter-elite dominates sourcing practices" and "the deployment of these sources is just as reliant on expertise, authoritativeness and legitimacy as are mainstream sourcing routines" (Atton and Wickenden 2005, p. 347). For instance, they showed that this alternative journalism publication rarely quoted non-official sources who did not belong to this "counter-elite", which was comprised of specific grassroots activist groups (Atton and Wickenden, 2005, p. 347). Equally concerning, Atton and Wickenden argued that the alternative journalists whose work they observed often positioned *themselves* as primary definers.

While research on alternative journalism practices has often focused on local and domestic news coverage, Atton and Wickenden's study also touched on an international example. For during the alternative journalism training one of the authors observed as part of the research for the study, trainees had been provided guidance in how to locate appropriate sources for a news story about a political crisis that wracked Haiti in 2003-4. The authors recalled that "The only official source we were recommended to consult was the World Bank, and this only to corroborate the details of the bank's activities in Haiti with the complaints raised by "people on the ground" (Atton & Wickenden, 2005, p. 352). Yet these "people on the ground" were a group based in the UK purporting to be "representative of the expression of the Haitian people's desire for real democracy and justice" (Atton & Wickenden, 2005, p. 352). While Atton and Wickenden did not specifically analyse the implications of the sourcing routines they observed for alternative media coverage of crises in places like Haiti, their findings nonetheless raise some concerning questions about the way in these journalism practices legitimated a UK group's claims to speak for "the Haitian people". This critical study would seem to raise some quite serious questions about the claims some scholars (including Atton himself, in some of his earlier work) have made about the reflexivity of alternative media practices.

### ***The New Journalism***

The New Journalism movement would also, at least in theory, seem very relevant to the calls some scholars have made for journalists to demonstrate greater reflexivity in their work. In an article about this approach, sociologist Thomas Meisenhelder (1977) identified the new

journalists' writing strategies as a model for modes of sociological writing that break from the similar conventions of objectivity that long structured the production of social science research. And Richardson similarly cites the New Journalism as an inspiration for her own reflexive ethnographic writing methods (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). A particular focus in this literature on the New Journalism is the way in which its writers broke from the conventions of "objective news reporting" by embracing the first person voice.

However, Janet Malcolm, a prominent writer in the New Journalism movement, has written about some concerning problems with such uses of the first person voice in journalism. In research based on interviews and methods of participant observation, researchers often use the first person voice to reflect on the problem of their own positionality, and how their presence may have impacted their findings. However, in Malcolm's book *The Journalist and the Murderer* (1990), in which she reflects on the complex ethics involved in journalists' relations with their sources, she observed that what journalists write about their own role in their reporting may have very little connection with what they themselves actually did or said in particular exchanges with their sources. In discussing the ways in which the first person voice is used in journalism (including in her own works in the New Journalism genre), Malcolm observed that,

unlike the 'I' of autobiography, who is meant to be seen as a representation of the writer, the 'I' of journalism is connected to the writer only in a tenuous way [...] The journalistic 'I' is an overreliable narrator, a functionary to whom crucial tasks of narration and argument and tone have been entrusted. He is an emblematic figure, an embodiment of the idea of the dispassionate observer of life (Malcolm, 1990, p. 159).

In this way, Malcolm thus argued that the use of the first person voice in approaches such as that of the New Journalism may in fact obfuscate the complex ethical issues entailed in journalists' relationships with their sources. The New Journalists' use of the first person voice thus cannot be read as a sign that these journalists' are necessarily more reflexive than other journalists about their own role in their reporting. And indeed, Malcolm, who published her highly critical reflections on these problems with journalistic writing after being sued over making up some of the quotes she attributed to her sources, cites revealing examples of the first person voice being used in journalistic texts in ways that profoundly misrepresent journalists' exchanges with interviewees.

While journalists working in areas such as the New Journalism, investigative reporting and alternative media typically break from the conventions of objective news reporting, based on the literature I reviewed in this chapter, it seems doubtful that any of them really qualifies as a reflexive approach. Moreover, given the important role that narratives about victims have been shown to play in investigative journalism stories, and the platform that alternative journalism has sometimes been shown to provide to a "counter-elite" of Western activists (some of whom claim to speak on behalf of people in countries such as Haiti), journalists working in these approaches may also replicate some of the most concerning problems that have been observed in Western news coverage of humanitarian interventions like those in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. As I will discuss later in this chapter, in reviewing some recent literature on graphic reportage, this illustrated journalistic approach would seem to offer a rare example of a reflexive journalism approach, which I will propose might also have some potential for addressing the problems that have been observed in news coverage of such interventions.

### ***Graphic reportage***

As I mentioned in the introductory chapter of this thesis, graphic reportage was first popularized in English by the books of Joe Sacco (Sacco, 2001, 2004, 2007a, 2007b). In recent years, a number of other practitioners have published works in this form, including Josh Neufeld (2009), Dan Archer (Archer and Saval, 2009), Susie Cagle (2011a; 2011b), Patrick Chappatte (2009; 2013; 2016), Andy Warner (2015; 2016; 2017), and Darryl Holliday and Erik Rodriguez (2013). However, much of the existing scholarship on graphic reportage focuses exclusively on Sacco's work (Worden, 2015; Chute, 2016; Nyberg, 2006; Walker, 2010).

Sacco's books of graphic reportage draw on interviews and observational research in places ranging from Palestinian refugee camps, to immigrant detention centres in his native country of Malta. As literary theorist Hillary Chute observed in reviewing a range of Sacco's comics journalism work in her book *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form*. (2016),<sup>4</sup> this journalism distinguishes itself by its focus on the lives of "ordinary people" whose perspectives are often "elided in mainstream media and journalistic enterprises" (Chute, 2016, p.

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<sup>4</sup> In *Disaster Drawn*, Chute discusses the work of a number of other practitioners working in the form of graphic narrative, but she doesn't look in depth at any practitioners besides Sacco who consciously position their work as a form of journalistic reporting.

201). In this sense, graphic reportage would seem to have important parallels with longstanding traditions of alternative media. Yet unlike the alternative journalism that Atton and Wickenhem observed in their (2005) study, in which the "alternative" journalists simply replaced mainstream media's "primary definers" with a "counter-elite" of activists, the sources of Sacco's comics journalism often include a diverse range of people not formally involved in any political organization. Moreover, against a backdrop of media narratives that often work to stereotype the populations of Muslim-majority countries, Sacco's journalism has also been noted for "compelling an acknowledgement of the specificity of the other" (Chute, 2016, p. 198-200), as well as for its attention to histories often obviated in news reports.

Scholars have consistently noted the ways in which his books *Safe Area Garazde: The War in Eastern Bosnia* (2001) and *Palestine* (2007) explore issues of structural violence, as well as historical context often neglected in mainstream news (Worden, 2015; Chute, 2016). And his more recent book *Footnotes in Gaza* (2009), which draws on oral histories of Palestinian civilians who survived a massacre more than fifty years earlier that had been neglected in official and historical records, might as a whole be read as a critical exploration of histories obviated in mainstream journalism. The "footnotes" designated by the book's title are a reference to a massacre of Palestinian civilians in 1956 that had been neglected both in history books and in the media (Cockburn, 2009). Sacco and his collaborator Chris Hedges had tried to mention this event in an article for the magazine *Harpers*. The massacre, which played a defining role in the lives of thousands of Palestinians, was first relegated to a footnote by Sacco and Hedges' editors at *Harpers*, and then cut out altogether in the editing process.

Analysing the ways in which *Footnotes in Gaza* draws on, and juxtaposes, human testimonies with documents located through archival research, Chute has argued that the entire book might be analysed as "a counterdocument, a countermodality to the kind of archive Sacco encountered in the official records of the United Nations and the Israeli Defense Forces" (Chute, 2016, p. 243). For instance, in *Footnotes in Gaza* (2009), the discrepancies Sacco encounters in the accounts of different sources he interviews become an object of reflection for the narrator. The story, as it emerges, is contradictory, revealing something of the limits of the journalistic evidence generated by any oral testimony, while also, on a more profound level, "rais[ing] the question of what

constitutes the production of history" (Chute, 2016, p. 246). While this book won the Ridenhour Prize, an award recognizing outstanding works of investigative reporting (www.ridenhour.org, 2010; Kellogg, 2010), it thus presents a much more complex view of "truth" than that typically found in the language of investigative reporting. Unlike the investigative journalists whose work Ettema and Glasser analysed, Sacco's work thus foregrounds some of the profound difficulties -- often eclipsed in the language in which truth is discussed in journalism-- of arriving at any simple, noncontradictory "truth". Moreover his comics journalism "is openly reflective about itself, actively acknowledging the instability of knowing---and the problem of transmitting knowledge" (Chute, 2016, p. 198).

As is common in investigative journalism, Sacco's work is clearly underpinned by his values, and his interest in bringing to light the stories of people facing terrible injustices. Yet he does not present those he interviews simply as "victims". Moreover, the ethics of his own work to represent the suffering of "others" are often an explicit theme in his work. The introduction of Sacco's book *Palestine* references the long, problematic legacy of visual journalistic representations of Palestinians, through depicting a typical news story on "Palestinian terrorism"--the frame through which Palestinians are so often represented to North American audiences, and through which Sacco himself recalls forming his first--highly stereotyped--impressions of the conflict in the Middle East. Yet Sacco's *Palestine*, featuring the journalist-cartoonist's first-hand account of his interactions with the Palestinians he meets over the course of three months in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, offers a very different view of Palestine than the usual visual clichés of terrorists or victims. Indeed, Sacco's work has been noted for its attention to the details of particular lives that get left out, obviated, or ignored" in media narratives (Chute, 2016, p. 198-200). Chute emphasizes the "painstaking attention to detail" in Sacco's drawings, which "are shaped by what we might think of as an ethnographic aesthetics of precision and accuracy" (Chute, 2016, p. 216). Moreover, she observes that "Sacco locates people in time and, importantly, space; the topography and architecture are precise" (Chute, 2016, p. 216). "At every level of his work, Sacco is driven to convey particularity" (Chute, 2016, p. 216).

Moreover, Sacco also reflects on the difficult ethical questions surrounding the representations of "the other" at play in his own work. For instance, Chute emphasizes the way Sacco's work calls

attention to the "situation of testimonial address" (Chute, 2016, p. 205), by presenting interviews in the form of a dialogue between the comics journalist and his interviewees. And in certain scenes he depicts from these exchanges, he seems to open up his own project to a radical questioning. For instance, in one of the introductory scenes of *Palestine*, he seems to reflect critically on his own role seeking out and chronicling Palestinian suffering. And for what end? "Watch your local comics book store!" he remarks mockingly (Sacco, 2015, p.10).

Sacco's work also draws attention to the social relations in which international journalists are implicated. And in particular, his work spotlights the role of his translators or "fixers," the locals upon whom reporters working in countries where they do not speak the local language must rely to interpret not just words, but places, events. While these local individuals' role in international journalism is typically rendered invisible in the dominant journalism model, Sacco makes these often overlooked locals, and his relationships with them, a key focus of his stories (Maher, 2015). *The Fixer* (2009), one of Sacco's books on Eastern Bosnia, for instance, revolves entirely around the story of his relationship with Nevens, one of these indispensable local resource people. Foregrounding the importance of this character in translating--in the broadest sense, cultural, linguistic--Bosnia for Sacco, *The Fixer* also profoundly problematizes the idea that as an outsider, Sacco is able to arrive at anything resembling the "truth" of the story.

Given the efforts Sacco makes in his work to reveal his reporting process to his readers, his approach would seem particularly relevant to the broader shifts in journalism values discussed earlier in this chapter, associated with a growing emphasis on informing audiences about how news stories are crafted. Yet Sacco's openness about his reporting process is thus something much more radical than current strategies of "transparency" in journalism. As Richard Todd Stafford insightfully remarks, "if Sacco's image attains credibility, it is precisely because he is open about his shortcomings as a person, as a witness and as a reporter" (2011).

Sacco's strategies for writing himself into his own stories have sometimes prompted scholars to compare his approach to the New Journalism (Worden, 2015; Nyberg, 2006; Versaci, 2007; Stafford, 2011). Indeed, Sacco has often cited the work of certain prominent new journalists as inspirations in his own work (Sacco, as cited in Winton, 2010; Sacco, as cited in Gilson, 2005).

Yet he effectively addresses the problem of the journalist's dual position as filter and subject of the journalistic narrative that Malcolm discussed in her critical writing on the use of the first person voice, including in her own work in this genre, by highlighting "scenes of enunciation and exchange in addition to the hard information revealed in those exchanges" (Chute, 2016, p. 208). Sacco's emphasis on the problem of his own presence is very different from the way that Malcolm critically observed that the journalistic "I" is often used in journalism, as an over-reliable narrator who sometimes masks rather than reveals the journalist's role in his or her own reporting.

The drawn medium of graphic reportage has often been analysed as a particularly important factor in Sacco's work. For instance, scholars writing about Sacco's work have emphasized the significance of the way that drawn images tend to be read, in contrast to photographs, as subjective and interpretive representations (Nyberg, 2006; Williams, 2015). Richard Todd Stafford for instance has pointed out that "illustrations are perceived as less real than photographs, film or video--they constantly remind the viewer that they are constructed" (Stafford, 2011, p.10). Similarly, Chute writes that "drawing's connection to 'reality' is perceived as immeasurably weaker than the photograph's, which is often understood to be an index of a certain truth because it possesses mechanical objectivity" (2016, p. 20). Chute also insightfully observes that "drawing accounts for what it looks like, and also for the sensual practice it embeds and makes visible" (Chute, 2016, p. 20). This makes drawings that bear witness quite different from photographic forms of witnessing, because "Marks made on paper are an index of the body in a way that a photograph, 'taken' through a lens is not" (Chute, 2016, p. 20).

Chute has also theorized the form of comics storytelling as being central to Sacco's strategies for exploring these obviated histories. As many scholars, as well as practitioners, have observed, comics have a very distinct temporal and spatial structure, which effectively translates units of time into space on the page. And Chute has argued that this "unique spatial grammar" "offers opportunities to place pressure on traditional notions of chronology, linearity and causality--as well as on the idea that 'history' can ever be a closed discourse, or simply a progressive one" (Chute, 2016, p. 4). Moreover, Chute argues that graphic narrative form open up a very different set of possible relationships between text and image than those that usually prevail both in

journalism and in academic research, which Chute has argued allows nonfiction graphic narrative writer/artists to question what counts as evidence in the first place.

For Chute, comics form is also crucial to Sacco's strategies for exploring and revealing the duality of the journalist's role in his story. For she observes that "comics makes possible the simultaneity of view, of perspective" (Chute, 2016, p. 209). This "allows one to be simultaneously visually working in the register of the first and third person, the filter and the subject" (Chute, 2016, p. 210). Relatedly, those working in the form of graphic narrative are, unlike journalists working in most other media forms, able "to step outside of what they see in front of them to also picture themselves, reminding us that all journalism is limited (literally about perspective)" (Chute, 2016, p. 210).

For Chute, the striking reflexivity of Sacco's work is similarly inseparable from his medium of comics storytelling and what she identifies as "its most basic syntactical element, drawn frames" (Chute, 2016, p. 208). In her broader discussion of the significance of comics frames in *Disaster Drawn*, she observes that,

while all media do the work of framing, comics manifests material frames--and the absences between them. It thereby literalizes on the page the work of framing and making, and also what framing excludes (Chute, 2016, p. 17).

Moreover, she adds, "comics offers attention both to the creation of evidence and to what is outside the frame" (Chute, 2016, p. 17). Chute proposes that this has significant implications for journalism. For she argues that "In its most fundamental procedures, comics calls attention to itself as a medium that is engaged in the work of literally framing events and experiences, and as such is a figure for the mediating work of journalism itself" (Chute, 2016, p. 208).

The typically very thoughtful reflections that Sacco himself has articulated about his approach in numerous interviews over the years have contributed much to this scholarship on comics journalism. Yet in an essay published in the preface to his 2010 book *Journalism* (2012), Sacco offered a rare written account of the theory and methods that inform his approach. Like many scholars who have written about his work, Sacco highlights the importance of comics form in his approach of graphic reportage. For instance, like these scholars, he himself contrasts his medium

of drawings, which he observes are typically read as interpretive and "by their very nature subjective", with "photographs, which are generally perceived to capture a real moment literally" (Sacco, 2012, p. xi). And he also acknowledges that reporting in this drawn medium may appear paradoxical to those who see "objective truth" as central to journalism's mission.

Yet he explains the significance of this drawn form in a subtly yet significantly different way than much of the scholarship. For while scholars such as Chute (2016) have emphasized the importance of the formal elements of this visual medium, Sacco (2012) emphasizes that working in this illustrated approach also impacts on the practices of research, writing and visual presentation that he uses in his work.

Despite the high degree of reflexivity that scholars have observed in Sacco's graphic reportage, he has sometimes discussed his work in terms that are strikingly similar to those that journalists have often used in presenting their work to the public. Invoking a conception of journalism not unlike Kovach and Rosenstiel's (2007) definition of "the essence of journalism" as a "discipline of verification", Sacco emphasizes the importance he places in his work on meeting "the journalist's standard obligations--to report accurately, to get quotes right, to verify claims" (Sacco, 2012, p. xii). And indeed, he notes that he embraces many of journalism's standard methods for witnessing, verifying, and reporting facts. These methods including taking notes in the field, recording interviews, and extensive background research.

Moreover Sacco has argued that reporting in this drawn form of journalism actually often in practice entails a particularly extensive process of verification. As he explains, "A writer can breezily describe a convoy of UN vehicles as "a convoy of UN vehicles" and move on to the rest of the story" (Sacco, 2012, p. xii). He contrasts this with the work of the journalist working in the visual medium of comics:

A comics journalist must draw a convoy of vehicles, and that raises a lot of questions. So, what do these vehicles look like? What do the uniforms of the UN personnel look like? What does the road look like? And what about the surrounding hills?  
(Sacco, 2012, p. xii)

He thus observes that the comics' journalists' "reporting" process must go far beyond what might be satisfactory evidence for a print article, entailing not just interviews and eyewitness

observations, but also extensive research in archives, libraries and on the internet. Reporting in a drawn medium also requires that journalists obtain a range of specific details from eyewitnesses they interview. For instance, Sacco observes that

When relying on eyewitness testimony, I ask pertinent visual questions: How many people were there? Where was the barbed wire? Were the people sitting or standing?  
(Sacco, 2012, p. xii)

Much like journalists working in many other media forms, the comics journalist thus enacts authority by positioning himself as an eye-witness on behalf of the public. In defending the merits of his visual approach over the traditional news reporting model, Sacco asserts, "As much as journalism is about 'what they said they saw', it is about 'what I saw for myself'" (Sacco, 2012, p. xiv).

Like growing numbers of journalists, Sacco openly rejects the traditional journalistic conception of objectivity, which he critically refers to in his essay as "American journalism's Holy of Holies" (Sacco, 2012, p. xiii). He expresses scepticism about the notion that journalists can ever approach a story of any significance "without any preconceived ideas at all" (Sacco, 2012, xiii). And he is particularly critical of the Anglo-American news reporting model's traditional mandates for "objective" journalists to seek out authoritative sources. Sacco also distinguishes his approach from this traditional news reporting model by emphasizing that in his own work he is mainly concerned with the perspectives of "those who seldom get a hearing" in mainstream news (Sacco, 2012, p. xiv). Yet like many journalists working in areas such as investigative reporting, Sacco critiques mainstream news reporting routines by invoking his duty as a journalist to seek "the truth". As he explains in distinguishing his approach from mainstream journalism, "The powerful should be quoted, yes, but to measure their pronouncements against the truth, not to obscure it" (Sacco, 2012, p. xiv).

Despite the contrasts discussed earlier in this chapter between the investigative stories that Ettema and Glasser analysed and Sacco's graphic reportage, Sacco thus paradoxically explains his approach in terms that powerfully resonate with the language that investigative reporters use in discussing their work.

What might explain the contrast between the way in which Sacco seems to understand his work, in terms that are strikingly reminiscent of those so commonly used by journalists, and the much more reflexive approach that scholars have observed in his work itself? Some of Sacco's own comments about his work hint at one possible answer, which would seem to be closely related to the way in which working in the medium of comics storytelling impacts the practices he uses in his work.

Significantly, Sacco has explained his alternative pattern of sourcing as being, at least in part, related to the way in which drawing affects his work. In discussing his approach, he makes it clear that his decision to focus on the perspectives of "those who seldom get a hearing" in mainstream news is largely a conscious decision (Sacco, 2012, p. xiv). Yet the form of drawn comics also plays a role. For he observes that reporting in comics, a medium that lacks the cultural status of more "serious" forms of journalism, can, in practice, complicate his access to elite sources (Sacco, 2012).

Sacco (2012) also discusses his strategies of positioning himself in his work as being, at least in part, related to the medium in which he works. He explains that while it would technically be possible for him not to include himself in his journalistic narratives, his implicitly interpretive and subjective drawn medium would make this difficult. Thus he usually doesn't even try. Instead, he "embrace[s] the implications of subjective reporting and prefer[s] to highlight them" (Sacco, 2012, p. xiii). Moreover, Sacco explains that "By admitting that I am present at the scene, I mean to signal to the reader that journalism is a process with seams and imperfections practiced by a human being—it is not a cold science carried out behind Plexiglas by a robot" (Sacco, 2012, p. xiii). By drawing himself as a character in his work, he explains that he gives himself "journalistic permission" to show his interactions with those he meets. And he remarks that "Much can be learned from these personal exchanges, which most mainstream newspaper reporters, alas, excise from their articles" (Sacco, 2012, p. xiii).

Moreover, as Sacco (2010) has noted, this approach helps him to reflect on the dynamics of his work, as a Western "comics journalist" in places like Palestine. As he once explained in an interview,

If you have yourself in the story, then you can really show human interaction in a better way, and that's kind of what it's about, especially if you're a foreigner. You're a foreigner in their land, there's going to be a gap, and you want to explain that gap and you want to show it (Sacco, as cited in Winton, 2010).

Sacco's own writing about his work supports the arguments that scholars such as Chute (2016) have made about the role that the drawn form of comics plays in the reflexivity of graphic reportage. Moreover, some of Sacco's insightful observations about his own process of producing works of graphic reportage suggest that the experience of producing works of graphic reportage might be a particularly valuable source of knowledge about *how* this reflexivity comes about.

In this chapter, I reviewed a range of literature on the practices that journalists use in their work. I began by discussing some critical scholarship on the conventions of research and writing institutionalized in the Anglo-American model of news reporting. Critical scholars have long faulted these conventions of purportedly "objective" news reporting for privileging the perspectives of bureaucratic institutions, at the expense of other points of view, and for eliding the role that journalists and their own interpretations inherently play in news stories. Citing some studies of Western news coverage of humanitarian interventions in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, I showed that these problems were very apparent in U.S. and Canadian news stories about these interventions, which often ignored the perspectives of Haitian earthquake survivors, and cast Haitians as passive victims dependent on Western saviours. I then reviewed some literature on various journalism approaches that have sometimes been positioned as critical alternatives to conventional news reporting practices. These approaches include investigative reporting, the journalism of alternative media and the New Journalism. Discussing some critical scholarship on the practices of Western journalists working in these alternative journalism models, I showed that even these "alternative" approaches nonetheless some important limitations that would seem particularly significant when it comes to representing humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti. While the New Journalism and alternative journalism break in important ways from the conventions of "objective" news reporting, the literature I reviewed in this chapter raises some doubts about whether either of them should really be qualified as a reflexive approach. Moreover, given the important role that narratives about victims have been shown to play in investigative journalism stories, and the platform that alternative journalism has sometimes been shown to provide to a "counter-elite" of Western activists (some of whom claim

to speak on behalf of people in countries such as Haiti), journalists working in these approaches may also replicate some of the most concerning problems that have been observed in Western news coverage of humanitarian interventions like those in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. I concluded this chapter by reviewing some recent literature on graphic reportage. While this literature has focused exclusively on the work of a single practitioner, based on some of the observations scholars have made about Sacco's works of graphic reportage, I argued that this drawn approach would seem to offer a rare example of a reflexive journalism approach. Discussing some of Sacco's insightful observations about his own work, I also proposed that the experience of producing works of graphic reportage might be a particularly valuable source of knowledge about *how* this reflexivity comes about. Following from this idea, the next chapter discusses the strategies I used in producing my own work of graphic reportage as part of my research for this thesis.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **RESEARCH QUESTION AND STRATEGIES**

In contrast to the way in which journalism is often discussed by journalists themselves, as primarily an activity of rational informational relay, in this thesis, I understand journalists' work as entailing a complex process of framing social realities. In this chapter, I will introduce the concept of "media frames," which plays a central role in my analysis of what is at stake in the practices of research, writing and visual presentation that journalists use in their work. I will also identify the questions that guided my research, which focuses on how this graphic approach affected my own process of framing humanitarian interventions in a Haitian camp. I will then explain the strategies I used in this research. I will also situate this approach in a broader body of work by scholars in fields such as communication and journalism studies to develop reflexive methodologies that involve the production of media projects or works of journalism, in addition to more standard types of academic outputs. And I will also discuss some relevant work from the field of ethnography that informed my reflections on both the fieldwork I carried out for this project in a Haitian camp, and my process of writing, illustrating and designing this project.

#### **Media frames and ungrievable lives**

Journalists have long been argued to play an important role in "framing" the terms of what counts as reality in the dominant cultures of countries such as Canada and the U.S. (Tuchman, 1978; Gitlin, 1980; Entman, 1993). The concept of framing was first developed by sociologist Erving Goffman (1974), who theorized frames as cognitive structures that guide the representation of everyday events. Tuchman (1978) was one of the first scholars to apply Goffman's concept of framing to the work of journalists. A number of scholars have since taken up the question of journalists' role in framing the social realities upon which they "report". Sociologist Todd Gitlin (1980) described "media frames" as being "composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters" (p.6), which also tend to reject or downplay "material that is discrepant" (p. 49). These frames, which are "largely unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports" (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). For Robert Entman, meanwhile, "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way

as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (1993).

In reviewing the literature on media framing, William Gamson, David Croteau, William Hoynes and Theodore Sasson (1992) observe an ambiguity in this scholarship, which they relate to two different meanings of the word frame, which can imply either the delimiting boundary of a picture, or the underlying structure of a building. While they note that much of the scholarship discusses media frames solely in the latter sense, as a latent structure, Gamson et al emphasize that in Goffman's original (1974) conception of the frame, it was also understood to have a delimiting function like that of a picture.

In her book *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (2009), philosopher Judith Butler emphasizes this dual sense of the frame--as an act of delimiting, as well as a structure of interpretation. While much past scholarship on this issue has focused on specific media representations, Butler cautions that the operation of framing cannot necessarily be detected by looking at the explicit contents of media texts and images. For this field is "constituted fundamentally by what is left out, maintained outside the frame in which representations appear" (Butler 2009: 73). Rather than a problem of specific media representations, this raises a broader issue that Butler calls "representability" (Butler 2009, p. 72). She elaborates that

Prior to the events and actions represented within the frame, there is an active if unmarked delimitation of the field itself, and so of a set of contents and perspectives that are never shown, that it becomes impossible to show and these constitute the non-thematized background of what is represented and are thus one of its absent organizing features (Butler, 2009, p. 73).

Butler thus theorizes the media frame "as active, as both jettisoning and presenting, and as doing both at once, in silence, without any visible sign of its operation" (2009, p. 73).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Butler's conception of media frames, which informs the analysis of this thesis, has some significant differences from that of scholars such as Entman, for whom the frame consists only of specific words and images used by public figures (including journalists) that have the "capacity to stimulate support of or opposition to the sides in a political conflict" (Entman, 2003, 417). Media frames are understood in much broader terms in this thesis, as they are in Butler's work (2009). From this perspective, which recognizes the impossibility of representing any social reality either in words or images without at the same time framing it, all media narratives, language and images implicate media frames. This broader conception of media frames has important implications for my approach to the question of how specific media frames might be challenged. While Entman (2003) emphasizes the potential for journalists to contest such frames through "counter-frames" that offer alternative storylines, in this thesis, as in Butler's work,

Butler's theorization of media frames would seem to be particularly significant for analysing news coverage of humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti. For Butler emphasizes that media frames have a direct bearing on the question of what "allows a life to become visible in its precariousness and its need for shelter" but "keeps us from seeing or understanding certain lives in that way" (Butler, 2009, p. 51). Observing that there is often a very different response to violence by those labeled "terrorists" than there is to state-sponsored violence, whose victims' lives and deaths are sometimes not registered at all in the media, Butler analyses these differential responses as evidence of the existence of "norms, explicit or tacit, governing which human lives count as human and living, and which do not" (Butler, 2009, p. 74). These norms, which she notes are "themselves often racialized", have a direct bearing on "the question of when and where a life is grievable, and, correlatively, when and where the loss of a life remains ungrievable and unrepresentable" (Butler, 2009, p. 74). She emphasizes the role of "powerful forms of media" in the enactment of these norms (Butler, 2009, p. 74). As Butler explains, "The problem concerns the media, at the most general level, since a life can be accorded a value only on the condition that it is perceivable as a life, but it is only on the condition of certain embedded evaluative structures that a life becomes perceivable at all" (Butler, 2009, p. 51). These norms that make it possible to recognize some lives but not others as grievable human lives "operate in many ways", according to Butler, to "give face and to efface" lives that are recognizably human, including through narrative and visual media frames that "leave substantial losses outside the frame" (Butler, 2009, p. 75). In discussing the role narrative and visual media frames play in rendering some peoples' lives less recognizably human than others, Butler cites a range of examples from media coverage of wars waged by Western militaries and their allies. Through these examples, which include the language Israeli military spokespeople and Western news reporters have used in the media to describe Palestinian civilians as "human shields", as well as the photographs taken by photojournalists "embedded" with the military, Butler shows that some people's lives (notably those of racialized people killed and tortured in these wars) are repeatedly framed as less than fully human in the media. And building on Goffman's concept of framing, she emphasizes that "our capacity to respond with outrage, opposition and critique will depend in part on how the

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effective interventions to contest specific frames necessarily also involve strategies that draw attention to the process of framing itself.

differential norm of the human is communicated through visual and discursive frames" (Butler, 2009, p. 77).

The specific examples that Butler cites in showing how media frames can render it difficult to apprehend some lives as grievable human lives are in many ways quite different from those through which the intended beneficiaries of humanitarian aid in places like Haiti are framed in Western media. Perhaps most significantly, some of the media frames that most concern Butler in *Frames of War* (2009) originate in the language and perspectives of military institutions themselves, who hardly make a secret of the fact that their wars proceed on the basis that some lives count more than others. One might thus not expect to find quite the same set of problems in media coverage of humanitarian aid. For military sources typically play a much less important role in such coverage, which, as noted in the previous chapter, often relies heavily on official sources from humanitarian agencies. In contrast to military institutions, such agencies generally define their missions according to principles of a common humanity. However, as I will discuss later in this chapter, scholars such as Didier Fassin have shown that humanitarian action and communication strategies often, in practice, proceed, much like military action, on the basis of an *a priori* differential evaluation of human beings. Perhaps not unrelatedly, Butler's theorization of media frames would seem particularly relevant for analysing Western media coverage of humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti.

As I showed in reviewing the literature on Western news coverage of disasters and humanitarian interventions in the previous chapter, this coverage has been faulted for omitting relevant historical context, ignoring the perspectives of people like Haitian earthquake survivors, and portraying the latter as passive "victims" dependent on Western humanitarians (Clitandre, 2011; Dash, 2010; Ulysse, 2010; Balaji, 2011; Mason, 2011). Rather than merely providing Western news audiences with factual information about humanitarian responses to disasters like the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, this coverage thus also works to *frame* humanitarian interventions, as well as the people targeted by such interventions. Moreover, the narratives, language and images that scholars have observed in much Western media coverage of humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti suggest that this coverage constitutes an important site in the reproduction of the differential norm of the human that is of central concern in Butler's analysis of media frames. For

these narrative and visual tropes often work to frame racialized disaster survivors as somehow less fully human than the (typically white) aid workers pictured coming to their rescue.

### **Research objectives and question**

My research is motivated by some of the same critical concerns that a range of scholars whose work I reviewed in the previous chapter have raised about Western media coverage of humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti. In this thesis, which is also informed by the critical scholarship on journalism practices reviewed in the previous chapter (Tuchman, 1978; Fishman, 1980; Pedelty, 1995), I understand these patterns of silencing, dehistoricization and dehumanization as being, at least in part, related to the practices that many journalists use in their work. What most interests me about graphic reportage is its potential to affect these journalistic practices of research, writing and visual presentation.

My interest in this graphic form of journalism draws inspiration from Chute's (2016) work on graphic narratives and their potential for representing histories and perspectives often neglected in mainstream media narratives about disasters. Following from Sacco's insightful observations about his own work in this drawn form, what particularly interests me in this thesis is how graphic reportage might impact the way journalists go about researching, writing about and visually representing humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti. In the specific context of my own graphic project, how did working in this graphic form affect my process of framing such interventions? Later in this chapter, I will discuss some relevant work from fields such as ethnography that informed my approach to answering this question in my thesis. However, first I will talk about the strategies I used in researching, writing, illustrating and designing *Picturing Aid in Haiti*.

### **Research strategies**

#### ***Fieldwork***

I carried out fieldwork for *Picturing Aid in Haiti* over the course of three research trips to Port-au-Prince between January and December of 2013. The first of these fieldwork trips, which was five weeks long, took place in January and February of 2013. I returned to Haiti for about three weeks in June of 2013, and then made my final research trip, which was just under a month long,

between November and December of 2013. Initially, I had planned to begin my fieldwork in Corail, a remote settlement to which thousands of displaced Haitians who had initially taken refuge in another camp were relocated in April of 2010, through an official relocations program. Officials had initially hailed this relocations program as a "model" resettlement scheme. However, a divisive conflict over leadership in Corail rendered it all but impossible for me to ethically proceed with my planned research in this location.<sup>6</sup> So after consulting with the Research Ethics Unit at Concordia University's Office of Research, I instead began my fieldwork in Petionville Camp, the camp where Corail's residents had initially taken refuge.

I carried out my research in accordance with research ethics protocols approved by Concordia's University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC). As per the requirements of these protocols, I received permission from Petionville Camp's elected Camp Coordinator prior to beginning my fieldwork. And before I began to try to recruit any prospective research participants, I also made several preliminary visits to the camp. This allowed me to get a sense of how different parties responded to my presence as a *blan* or foreign white researcher in the camp --an issue I will discuss in more detail a bit later in this chapter, where I also talk about the strategies I used in my research to deal with some of the issues raised by this problem of my positionality.

Over the course of my fieldwork, I recorded interviews with nine long-term residents of Petionville Camp. The recruitment of many of these Haitian interviewees proceeded along the lines of what researchers often refer to as "the snowball technique," in which research participants themselves suggest other prospective interviewees who are then recruited to participate in a given study. As I will discuss in more depth later in this chapter, some of the first Petionville Camp residents who agreed to participate in my research played a particularly active

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<sup>6</sup> Like many other encampments of displaced Haitians, Corail had a local committee of elected representatives, known as camp leaders, who served as intermediaries between the camp's general population and the myriad agencies and private NGOs working in this "model" community of relocated Haitian earthquake survivors. However, by the time I visited Corail in January 2013, at the beginning of my fieldwork, the community was divided by a serious conflict over who Corail's rightful elected leaders were. This made it difficult for me to fulfill the requirements of Concordia University's ethical protocols, which require that researchers working in communities considered to be vulnerable secure prior permission from elected community leaders. For in the context of these heated debates over issues of leadership, seeking authorization from any leader would have positioned me in the very middle of this highly divisive power struggle in Corail.

role in this recruitment process. As per the requirements of the ethics protocols that guided this project, I sought the informed consent of everyone I interviewed, and gave each research participant a choice as to whether or not they were identified. In the case of the Petionville Camp residents I asked to participate in my research, I sought this informed consent orally, in Creole. All nine camp residents who participated in this research asked that their identities be protected. Some of these research participants explicitly explained that they were afraid that their families could face violent retaliation if they spoke out publicly about some of the concerns they raised in these interviews (an issue I will discuss in more depth in the next chapter, where I also detail the concerns these camp residents spoke about).

During these interviews, both the camp residents and I spoke in Creole. Given that Creole is a language in which I have some basic fluency, yet also sometimes have trouble understanding when people are speaking very quickly, issues of translation emerged frequently in these interviews. My Creole-speaking research participants and I dealt with these issues in various ways. I would often interject during these interviews to ask my research participants to repeat or explain anything I hadn't understood. And some of my Creole-speaking interviewees also adapted their speech patterns to make it easier for me to understand what they said, by speaking relatively slowly and clearly. The first set of these interviews took place in the camp, typically in the tarp shelters where some of the camp residents I interviewed lived. However, for reasons I will discuss later in the chapter, I stopped doing research in the camp itself after the end of my first phase of fieldwork. The interviews I recorded with camp residents in June and November-December 2013 thus all took place outside the camp, typically in private homes.

Over the course of my fieldwork, I also interviewed two international humanitarian professionals, both of whom also opted not to be identified in this project. I met the first of these humanitarian workers at a social function at an English-language library housed in a building attached to the Petionville Clubhouse. After this social event, at which we'd exchanged contact information, I followed up with her by telephone to request an interview. Upon her suggestion, we recorded this interview at her house in Port-au-Prince. The second international humanitarian professional I interviewed for this project was a data analyst at the International Organization for Migration (IOM). I made contact with this humanitarian worker by telephone, after first sending an

interview request through a contact form on the website of the IOM's Haiti Mission. I recorded this interview at the headquarters of the IOM's Haiti Mission, in Tabarre, a suburb of Port-au-Prince. Both of these interviews took place in English.

During my fieldwork, I also recorded an interview with Haiti's former planning minister, Leslie Voltaire. I reached out to this former government official, whose cell phone number I had obtained from a mutual friend, by telephone. Upon his suggestion, we met at the cafe-terrace of the Kinam II hotel. Due to the fact that I am far more fluent in French (Haiti's first official language as well as the language of its former colonizer) than I am in Creole, and that the former minister seemed equally at ease in both languages, this interview took place entirely in French.

During this fieldwork, I also interviewed Petionville Club's former Camp Coordinator, Renald Romelus. I met Renald on one of my first visits to Petionville Camp, where we exchanged contact information. I then followed up with him by telephone and requested an interview with him. Upon Renald's suggestion, we recorded this interview, which also took place in February 2013, in his home. This interview took place largely in French. (I had introduced myself to the former camp leader in my halting Creole, but as Renald also spoke French, French quickly became our main language of interaction.)

During my fieldwork, I also recorded a series of interviews with Don Moore, a shareholding director of the Petionville Club. I met Don in the Petionville Club's clubhouse in late January of 2010, when I made my first visit to this site. After exchanging contact information with him during our initial encounter in the clubhouse, I followed up with this golf club director by telephone to request his participation in my research. Upon Don's suggestion, we met back at the Petionville Clubhouse to record an initial interview in February 2013. And days later, I recorded a follow-up interview with Moore, on the terrace just outside the clubhouse. Given that Don is, like myself, a native English-speaker, we both spoke in English throughout these interviews. During my fieldwork, I also made contact with Petionville Club CEO William (Bill) Evans III. I first met Bill during my first visit to the clubhouse, in January 2013. While Bill declined my request for a formal interview (the CEO told me that he would first need to obtain permission

from Sean Penn), he spoke to me at length more informally for this project. My interactions with Bill, a U.S.-born American citizen, similarly all proceeded in English.

The interviews I carried out for this project, which I generally began with relatively open-ended questions, often proceeded largely as conversations. I recorded all of these interviews with a digital audio recorder with multidirectional recording capabilities. I tried to listen to each audio recording as soon as I possibly could after the interview itself, which helped me to prepare relevant follow-up questions for subsequent interviews. And after each of the three phases of my fieldwork, I transcribed, and where needed translated, these interviews--a process which also provided me with quite extensive documentation of what I myself had said in my exchanges with my interviewees. My process of translating and transcribing interviews with Creolophone research participants, which often required that I listen to these audio recordings six or seven times, also sometimes drew my attention to information or comments I had missed during the interviews themselves. Re-listening to these Creole interviews similarly allowed me to capture nuances and layers of meaning in what my interviewees told me that I had missed the first time I listened to these recordings.

In addition to these interviews, I also carried out observational research both in the camp and in the Petionville Clubhouse. And throughout my fieldwork, I recorded notes on what I observed. I would typically write these fieldnotes at the end of a day visiting a site such as the camp or the clubhouse. During this process, I tried to record my recollections about relevant interactions and conversations that occurred outside of the context of any formal interview setting. This included exchanges with my research participants that occurred outside of formal interview settings. It also included my interactions and conversations with dozens of camp residents I spoke to while visiting the camp but never formally interviewed, as well as with Bill Evans and another Petionville Club director who spoke to me only outside of formal interview settings. In these fieldnotes, I also tried to make note of what I regarded as relevant exchanges with various friends and acquaintances I spent time with during my research trips, including other Western journalists as well as Haitian journalists working for international as well as Haitian media organizations. These latter exchanges took place in various sites, including in the homes of some of the friends and acquaintances with whom I stayed during my research. I will say more about the contents of

these fieldnotes in the next chapter, where I will also reflect on how working in the form of graphic reportage affected the note-taking practices I was accustomed to using in my journalism work.

Alongside these notes I produced based on my observations about the physical and social spaces I visited during my fieldwork, I also sometimes took photographs of these sites. Given the long history of Western journalists and aid agencies taking often quite nonconsensual photographs of disaster "victims" in sites like Petionville Camp, I was initially quite hesitant to bring out my camera in the camp at all, and often kept it out of sight in my backpack. And as none of the camp residents who participated in this research felt it would be safe for them to be identified in this project, when I did take photos in the camp, these consisted shots of the camp in which no people were identifiable.

However, upon the request of some of the displaced Haitians participating in my project, I began, quite early on in my fieldwork, taking photographs of my research participants and their family members for their own personal use. Although produced entirely outside of the context of the research project itself, these photographs, which I had developed at a print shop in Montreal and brought my research participants print copies of when I returned to Haiti, allowed me, long before I completed my thesis project itself, to offer something concrete to the research participants who had invested so much of their time and energy in this project.

In addition to taking photos of what I observed during my fieldwork, I also made a point of always carrying around a sketchbook with me. And as part of my research process, I began experimenting with incorporating drawings and sketches into my fieldnotes. I used two somewhat different approaches to produce these sketches and drawings. One approach was to draw what I observed in real time "in the field" itself, and the other was to make sketches based on my recollections of particular moments of my fieldwork. I would make these latter types of sketches while writing my field notes at the end of a day visiting a site such as the camp or the clubhouse. As was the case in the photographs I took during my fieldwork, I made sure not to draw any of my research participants in ways that allowed them to be identified. And in the latter stages of my research, I began working with some of the research participants with whom I had

been able to develop a relatively strong collaborative relationship, to experiment with visual strategies for representing them in photographs without revealing their identifying features. In the next chapter, I will talk more about the role that these practices of visual documentation played in my research, as well as about the role that some of my research participants played in the production of some of these pictures.

On the first visits I made to Petionville Camp, many camp residents initially seemed to assume I was a representative of some sort of aid group. I was also on more than one occasion mistaken for a specific senior staff person at J/P HRO, the NGO directed by actor Sean Penn that had been appointed as the "Camp Manager" of this encampment. On one of my first visits to the camp, I was accompanied by a former camp resident called Jean. I had met Jean on a previous trip I'd made to Haiti as a journalist and when I reconnected with him when I returned to Haiti to begin my fieldwork, he offered to show me around the camp. As we walked through Petionville Camp, Jean, who took the lead in introducing me to the residents of the camp, clearly identified me to everyone we spoke to as a student working on a thesis. Yet each time we stopped to talk to a group of camp residents, a small crowd would begin to form in a circle around us. And at each stop, women and men of all ages immediately began talking to us about all manner of problems they faced living in Petionville Camp.

This response was no doubt related to my being a *blan*--which likely created an inflated sense of my importance, even if I was a student with no affiliation with any international organization. Indeed, according to Haitian sociologist Illionor Louis, camp residents' response to black Haitian students doing research in Haiti's camps has been strikingly different. In fact, this sociologist, who is a professor at the *Université d'État d'Haïti*, told me that his Haitian students have sometimes had a hard time getting residents of Haiti's camps to talk to them at all. At one point during the day, Jean and myself happened to cross paths with a black Haitian man doing research for a report by a major international organization about conditions in the camp. Yet strikingly, the camp residents seemed less interested in telling this actual representative of an international organization, who happened to be a black Haitian, about their grievances than they were in recounting them to me, as a *blan* student. Compared to the crowds that formed around Jean and myself anytime we stopped to talk to any residents of Petionville Camp, there was relatively little

response to this Haitian researcher's presence.

If my position as a *blan* in the camp contributed to the camp residents' interest in speaking to me, it also sometimes seemed to lead them to address themselves to me *as victims needing assistance from white foreigners*. For instance, displaced Haitians who saw me walking by in their camp repeatedly called out to me, "*Blan! Bay nou ed!*" ("White foreigner! Give us aid") or "*Blan! Bay nou 5 dola!*" ("White foreigner! Give us five dollars!"). And on one occasion, a camp resident expressed dismay, upon learning that I was in Petionville Camp doing research for my thesis, that I was not there to start an orphanage. She promptly scooped up her neighbour's baby, who had been playing in the dirt near where we were sitting, and held him in front of my face, as if this dusty, naked black infant himself was proof of the important service a *blan* like me could provide by founding orphanages in Haiti. Through this gesture, this woman staged a view for me that was strikingly reminiscent of the visual trope of the naked third world baby that has long been central in the fundraising and publicity materials of Western aid groups.

These responses that my presence elicited in Petionville Camp were in many ways not surprising. There had been numerous international aid groups working in in this particular camp. Before J/P HRO was appointed as "Camp Manager", Petionville Camp had formally been "managed" by Catholic Relief Services (CRS). And at least in the initial months after the earthquake, a range of other international aid groups, including *Médecins Sans Frontière*, Oxfam and Save the Children, had also had an active presence in the camp. And English-speaking Caucasians like myself occupied dominant positions both in the agencies appointed to "manage" this particular camp, and in the broader international humanitarian response in post-earthquake Haiti (tellingly, English was the *lingua franca* of many of the "cluster" meetings through which different aid agencies coordinated their work). It is thus no wonder that camp residents sometimes mistook me for a representative of J/P HRO or some other international organization. Nor should it be particularly surprising that some of the residents of Petionville Camp addressed themselves to me as victims needing aid. As Fassin has observed, not only do humanitarian agencies tend to represent their targeted beneficiaries as "victims"; for a variety of reasons, their beneficiaries themselves also tend to position *themselves* as "victims", particularly when addressing themselves to the representatives of these agencies (Fassin, 2007).

My position as a *blan* raised no small number of issues for my research in Petionville Camp. This included some potential ethical issues, as well as a broader set of problems around the politics of representation. For if camp residents mistook me for a representative of an international aid group, and particularly a representative of the agency appointed to "manage" their camp, I feared this could raise false expectations that any prospective research participants and their families would receive extra aid benefits as a result of their participation. No less significant, if the camp residents I interviewed addressed themselves to me as "victims" in need of the assistance of white foreigners, my project ran a very real risk of reinforcing the dehumanizing media frames I had set out to try to challenge.

I dealt with these two closely related problems arising from my position in the camp in various ways. First of all, I made a significant effort, from relatively early on in my fieldwork, to correct any mistaken impressions that I was some sort of international aid worker. For instance, when I heard camp residents calling out to me with appeals for aid, I would respond by clarifying that I was not an NGO but a student: "*Mwen pa yon ONG! Mwen etidyan!*" A response that often generated laughter from at least some bystanders, and thus sometimes facilitated further dialogue about what a *blan* student was doing in their camp. I also tried, as I proceeded with my research in the camp, to make it as clear as possible to all prospective research participants as well as to the Camp Coordinator that I was very open to hearing perspectives on international aid that went beyond dichotomous discourses about Western saviours and Haitian victims. I did this both through informal interactions with Haitians I met in the camp and through a formal statement explaining the objectives of my research project which I read aloud to each of my prospective research participants in Haitian Creole as part of my process of seeking their informed consent prior to beginning any interviews. In this statement, which I wrote in English, and then had professionally translated into Creole, I explained that in media coverage of international aid in places like Canada, we rarely heard the perspectives of people like Petionville Camp's residents. And I also explained that in making my graphic project, I was hoping to test out whether the form of graphic reportage might help international journalists to better communicate the perspectives of people like this camp's residents.

On my first visit to Petionville Camp in January 2013, I met Antoine<sup>7</sup>, a camp resident who seemed both interested in my research project, and dismayed when he noticed the way he saw others were responding to me, with appeals for aid. Encouraged by his response, after a brief discussion, I exchanged contact information with him. During my first weeks of fieldwork in the camp, Antoine spent considerable time showing me around the camp. He was aware that I had already spoken to the Camp Coordinator, who occupied the highest position in the elected leadership structure established by the Western NGOs working in Petionville Camp. However he recommended that I *also* talk to a very different kind of leader in the camp: Marie-Pierre, a resident of Petionville Camp who played a very active role in community organizing work in the camp *outside of* this formal leadership structure. He also very helpfully arranged for me to meet this Haitian woman. Marie-Pierre, who also agreed to participate in my research, in turn, introduced me to three other camp residents, including her daughter Therese and a woman I refer to in this research as Cassandra. And in addition to agreeing to be interviewed herself, Cassandra also helped connect me with two other camp residents who also agreed to participate. Both Marie-Pierre and Cassandra invested particular time as well as energy in this research project. And during the first phase of my fieldwork in Haiti, Cassandra even offered up her own makeshift tarp shelter for many of the interviews I recorded with her and various other camp residents.

During this first research trip, I recorded a preliminary set of interviews with seven long-term residents of Petionville Camp. While most of these interviews were one-on-one, a number of them, particularly those recorded under Cassandra's tarp, consisted of discussions in which multiple research participants contributed simultaneously, often building on what the others said, or clarifying or occasionally debating a point raised by another. In my interviews with these camp residents, many of my questions were, at least initially, about their perspectives on both international humanitarian aid and Western journalists in the camp. During these interviews, I also asked some of the camp residents about their perspectives on the golf course and its history. Yet, as I will discuss in the next chapter, in addition to merely answering my questions, many of these camp residents also used these interviews as a platform to raise a host of specific concerns

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<sup>7</sup> This is not his real name. In order to protect the identities of the camp residents who participated in my research, all of these research participants are referred to by pseudonyms both in this thesis and in my graphic reportage project.

of their own. As I will also show in Chapter Three, some of the issues these displaced Haitians raised in these interviews also had an important impact on the lines of inquiry I pursued in some of the interviews I recorded with other research participants.

On this preliminary research trip, in January-February 2013, during which I recorded my first set of interviews with seven residents of Petionville Camp, I also made contact with Jacqueline Koch, a communications officer at J/P HRO, the NGO co-founded and directed by actor Sean Penn that, as I already mentioned, was appointed as the "Camp Manager" of Petionville Camp. I first met Jacqueline at the Petionville Club in January 2013, where she happened to be having drinks with some of her colleagues from Penn's group on the evening I first visited the clubhouse. After Bill introduced me to her at the clubhouse bar, J/P HRO's communications officer gave me her business card. And in February 2013, we happened to run into each other again, at the same social function at the English-language library where I met one of the humanitarian workers I interviewed. During this second informal exchange between myself and Jacqueline, which occurred near the end of my first research trip, I told J/P HRO's communications officer about the goals of my graphic reportage project. During this conversation, I also expressed a strong interest in interviewing a representative from J/P HRO during the second phase of my fieldwork. About a month after my first research trip, I had received an email from Jacqueline asking when I was planning to return to Haiti. I had responded to this email, which I interpreted at the time as a friendly message,<sup>8</sup> explaining that I was still finalizing my travel plans, but that I would keep her posted once I had a better sense of when I would be back in Port-au-Prince.

During this follow-up research trip, I had been planning to carry out further fieldwork in Petionville Camp. However, I had to rethink these research plans, after hearing some disturbing news just days after receiving Jacqueline's email. I learned this news via an email from Antoine, who was one of the only camp residents who participated in my research who sometimes had access to the internet. In his email, Antoine informed me that

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<sup>8</sup> In this email, whose subject header was "Greetings from J/P HRO", Jacqueline urged me to "give us a heads up" when I was next going to be back in Haiti, saying she'd "be happy to coordinate with my colleagues to assist you for any interviews or camp visits in the interest of furthering your thesis research" (J. Koch, personal communication, March 20, 2013) Given the tone of the communications officer's email, which she signed off by saying "Looking forward to seeing you back in Port-au-Prince!" (J. Koch, personal communication, March 20, 2013), I initially interpreted it as a friendly message.

*J/P ye gen yon gwo reyinyon yo te fet sou do e yo te moutre tout moun yo foto ou sou gran ekra, reunion sa te fet kote yo te invite tout leader nan kan an Delma 40 yo di ou se espyon e yon move moun rekomande leaders yo po yo plus vijilan kom mwen konnen wap vini nan mwa Avril fok ou we mwen avan pou nou pale avan monte teren an Isabel paske mwen pa swete anyen mal rive ou.*

J/P had a big meeting yesterday, and they showed everyone photos of you on a big screen, at a meeting held in the area of Delma 40 where they invited all the leaders of the camp. They said you were a spy and a bad person recommended leaders to be more vigilant as I know you are coming in April you should see me first we should speak before you go back on the land Isabel because I don't wish any bad things to happen to you.

I immediately called him. On the phone, Antoine gave me more details. In addition to the verbal warnings that had been made to the camp leaders, he'd also seen posters in two of J/P HRO's offices, with a photo of me, as well as my name, instructing anyone who saw me in the camp to immediately report to J/P HRO. Brenville, the elected Camp Coordinator, who had been present at the March 2013 meeting at which J/P HRO had reportedly warned the camp leaders about me, later confirmed these reports, and told me he had also seen the posters for himself.

In his email, Antoine had said he didn't want anything bad to happen to me. Really however I think we both knew that it was people like him, who lived in the camp, and might have already been seen with me, who would be most at risk if there was any retaliation to my research. Antoine asked me to call J/P HRO myself, to find out what this was all about. He had copied out three local Port-au-Prince telephone numbers the poster instructed people to call if they saw me in the camp, which he read out to me on the phone. I copied down the numbers, and agreed to call J/P HRO immediately. Both Antoine and myself were very anxious to find out why the Camp Manager seemed so concerned about my research. However, given that I had recently received what I considered to be a friendly email from J/P HRO's communications officer, I proposed to Antoine that it might be better for me to call Jacqueline rather than the numbers on the poster. Sounding relieved, Antoine agreed.

However, when I went to call Jacqueline, using the contact numbers listed on her business card, I saw that the telephone numbers Antoine had copied out from the posters were in fact *her* cell phone and office numbers. Reached by telephone on one of these numbers, J/P HRO's

communications director neither confirmed nor denied the existence of the posters that had been seen in Penn's group's offices. However, tellingly, when I expressed my concerns about the issue, the first thing J/P HRO's communications officer asked me was who exactly had told me about these posters. (Information that I of course could not provide, given that I had committed to protecting my research participants' identities).

In order to minimize any potential risks that the Petionville Camp residents who participated in my research might face, following these events, if any camp authorities found out about their participation, I immediately discontinued my plans to do any further research in the camp itself. When I returned to Haiti, in June of 2013, I organized a debriefing session in a private home outside the camp for these camp residents, in order to consult with them about whether or not they wished to continue participating.

While I was completely caught off guard by J/P HRO's response to this research project, many of these residents of Petionville Camp seemed quite unsurprised to hear that the Camp Manager had issued public warnings to discourage camp residents from participating in this project. And, as I will discuss in the following chapter, some of my Haitian research participants analysed this response as symptomatic of a broader set of issues surrounding representation in Petionville Camp.

During the follow-up trip I made to Port-au-Prince in June 2013, I was able to connect with just six of the seven Petionville Camp residents I had interviewed during the first phase of my research. After discussing the warnings that J/P HRO had reportedly issued about my research with these six camp residents, each of them confirmed that they nonetheless wished to continue participating in the research. Moreover, despite (or perhaps in part because of!) these reported signs of the Camp Manager's disapproval, three camp residents I had previously never even met, but who had heard about the posters in J/P HRO's offices, turned up at our debriefing session, and expressed interest in this project.

During the second phase of my research, I recruited two additional research participants from the camp, including one of the camp residents I had never previously met who turned up at the

debriefing session, and his wife. During this second phase of my research, as well as during the final phase of my fieldwork, in December 2013, all my interviews with Petionville Camp residents took place in private homes outside of the camp, where it seemed less likely that these camp residents would be seen talking to me by third parties, such as the camp leaders or J/P HRO itself, who were in a position to retaliate against their participation in this research.

In accordance with the ethical principles that professional journalists are generally expected to abide by in their work, which require that any person or organization criticized in a work of journalism have a fair opportunity to respond, I requested an interview with a representative of J/P HRO as part of my research for this work of graphic reportage. In requesting this interview, I followed J/P HRO's standard procedures for such interview requests, which Jacqueline had explained to me when we first met. As per J/P HRO's communications officer's instructions, I sent this interview request directly to Jacqueline, by email. She responded by asking me to provide more details about the goals of my research, and to send the exact questions I wanted to ask during the interview (J.Koch, personal correspondence, December 16, 2013). I responded with all of the requested information. However J/P HRO declined the request, in an email that Jacqueline cc-ed to an L.A.-based publicist at ID-PR, a private entertainment firm contracted to manage Sean Penn's image as a celebrity (Ciepley & Barnes, 2011, April 6) that also handles all of J/P HRO's press and media inquiries (*J/P HRO.org*, 2018).

### ***Writing the script for a graphic book***

Based on the interviews and observations I recorded during my fieldwork, I then wrote a script for a book-length work of graphic reportage. In order to complete this script, I had to engage in some further research, for my research participants had sometimes raised issues about which it seemed important for me to provide readers with more context. So I had to seek out further documentation by consulting various reports and articles, most of which I located through online research. Moreover, given the Camp Manager's refusal to speak to me, I also had to find information about J/P HRO's work in Petionville Camp via online sources, including news articles, J/P HRO's own website and various social media sites such as Facebook and YouTube where Penn's group is active. After transcribing and translating my interviews, and completing this additional research, I began writing the script in early 2014 and completed a rough,

unformatted, draft in January 2015. Based on feedback from friends who read it over at this early stage, I completed another, unformatted, draft later in 2015. This graphic script is organized into chapters, as graphic books commonly are. The script consists of five main chapters, whose titles are all indicated in the table of contents at the beginning of *Picturing Aid in Haiti*.

In contrast to the established formats that govern the writing of scripts for various other cultural forms such as plays, films and television programs, there is no standard format for a script for a work of graphic reportage. I consulted various online guides I found to formatting graphic novels. However the sample scripts included in these guides varied in striking ways, with some including highly detailed directions about the imagery that should accompany each panel, and some including relatively sparse information about visuals. While some of the major comics publishers have their own formatting guidelines, which are designed to facilitate the production of comic books involving a specialized division of labour, in which writing and illustration are carried out by different people, these guidelines are not necessarily appropriate in most works of graphic reportage, in which these different types of labour are carried out by a single practitioner. However in formatting the script for *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, I nonetheless tried, where appropriate, to follow what had been identified as best practices in the guides I located.

Following these guidelines, I formatted the script so that each page of the script corresponds to a page in the work of graphic reportage I hope to eventually publish--something I anticipated would enhance the legibility of the script, but that also, crucially, would make it easier for me to cite and discuss it in my thesis. And I also formatted the script so that it would be easy for readers to distinguish between the textual language of the work of graphic reportage itself, and the written cues about images that I included in the graphic novel script. I also formatted dialogue and other textual language differently, to allow readers to distinguish between these two different types of textual elements. After experimenting with several slightly different formats in the spring and summer of 2017, I completed a formatted version of the script in July of 2017, which is 97 pages long.

### ***Drawing and designing sample illustrations and pages of graphic reportage***

As I was writing and editing the script, I also began drawing and designing sample illustrations and pages of graphic reportage to accompany specific passages of text from the script. In order to produce these visual elements of *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, which to date include two dozen sample illustrations and four sample pages of graphic reportage, I first had to search out and locate visual reference materials beyond the photographs and sketches I completed during my fieldwork. These supplemental images, which I felt I needed to accurately draw specific places, objects and scenes visually in my comics project, included additional photographs, as well as maps and videos depicting Petionville Camp and other communities of displaced Haitians. I generally began searching for these images through search engines such as Google. In searching for this additional visual reference material, I also sometimes consulted books, reports and different online and physical archives.

Drawing on this additional visual reference material, as well as on the photographs and sketches I had made during my fieldwork, I then began the process of translating specific sections of the script into the visual medium of comics. The illustrations I completed for this project all began with pencil drawings. I made the illustrations for the first set of sample comics panels and pages I produced on marker paper, reworking my pencil drawings with pens and markers. I then scanned these drawings and textual captions using a photo scanner, and used Photoshop to adjust the levels of brightness and contrast of each drawing and caption. I then layered these drawings and textual captions together in Adobe InDesign, which I used to lay out and design each sample panel and page of my project. However, as this production process turned out to be quite time-consuming, I began experimenting with different strategies for producing the visual elements of the project. The approach I developed and used to produce all the latter sample illustrations and pages of graphic reportage also began with pencil drawings, but instead of reworking these drawings with pens and markers, I scanned these original pencil drawings.

### **Research-creation/journalism practice-as-research**

As I mentioned in the introductory chapter of this thesis, there is a growing recognition in the fields of media and communication studies of the potential of research that takes forms other than standard academic prose. In an article about such non-traditional academic research approaches,

known in Québec and Canada as *recherche-cr ation* or research creation, communications scholars Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuk have argued that these approaches are especially relevant for research on emerging media forms and practices (Chapman and Sawchuk, 2012). These approaches, which are typically undertaken by scholars who are also practitioners, are “often associated with new media experimentation,” as Chapman and Sawchuk explain, with non-traditional academic projects or “theses” often integrating a creative work or process of media production as an indispensable part of the inquiry (Chapman and Sawchuk, 2012). Chapman and Sawchuk underscore that these emerging non-traditional approaches often require “a form of directed exploration through creative processes that includes experimentation, but also analysis, critique and a profound engagement with theory and questions of method” (Chapman and Sawchuk, 2012). In this model,

Knowledge is produced as creative works and not simply through their analysis and interpretation. It is in this sense that such creative work can be understood as a strong form of intervention--contributing to knowledge in a profoundly different way from the academic norm (Chapman and Sawchuk, 2012).

Relatedly, as I mentioned in the introduction to my thesis, scholars in the area of journalism studies have been working to develop and theorize research approaches that involve the production of works of journalism (Burns, 2002; Niblock, 2007, 2012). Such approaches, which journalism scholar Sarah Niblock defines as “journalism work which sets out to illuminate and innovate current practices, such as interviewing techniques, choice of sources, angle, structure and other presentation methods,” have been referred to in this scholarship as “journalism practice-as-research” (Niblock, 2012, p. 22-23). In such research projects, which are becoming increasingly common in the work of journalism scholars who also have backgrounds working as journalists, Niblock has proposed that “the journalistic process might also be regarded as the research process” and “its understanding can only be achieved by direct reference to the journalistic outcomes” (Niblock, 2012, p. 506). Alternatively, she proposes “we might see the finished journalism artefact as the solution to a question, and in this way a scholarly thesis is required to justify the solution. The journalistic process might therefore be termed a research process inherently” (Niblock, 2012, p. 506).

Niblock has emphasized the importance of reflexivity in such approaches of journalism practice-as-research (Niblock, 2012, p. 507). Much like other research approaches involving the

production of nontraditional academic outputs, journalism practice-as-research requires scholar/practitioners to write reflexively about the work of journalism they produce as part of their research in a more traditional academic format. The reflexivity journalism scholar/practitioners are expected to demonstrate in this academic writing is in many ways similar to the reflexivity scholars using other research approaches are required to exhibit in their work. Yet reflexivity has also been defined in a more specific way in the context of journalism practice-as-research, as a critical strategy for scrutinizing and reflecting upon journalism practices (Niblock, 2007). As such, scholar/practitioners producing works of journalism as part of their research must, like any other reflexive researchers, be aware of their own role in "the construction of meanings throughout the research process", and devise strategies for exploring the ways their own involvement in their research "influences, acts upon and informs" their findings (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999, p. 228, cited in Niblock, 2007). Yet as journalism practice-as-research strives to contribute to knowledge about the implications and limitations of contemporary journalism practices, reflexivity also has a more specific meaning in this approach, which requires scholar/practitioners to focus particularly on the practices of knowledge production and meaning-making they were trained to use *as journalists*. In this context, "reflexive research" thus "refers to the journalist who may choose to reflect back upon their own editorial decision-making, in order to interrogate their own practice over time or at a given moment" (Niblock, 2007, p. 23).

Moreover, in addition to reflecting critically on their journalism practices in their academic writing, scholar-practitioners must also exhibit a critical and reflective approach in their journalism projects. The ideal of the "critical practitioner" has played an important role in recent discussions of how journalism projects produced as part of research should also be informed by critical reflections. As another journalism scholar/practitioner and educator, Lynette Sheridan Burns, has elaborated in her discussion of what she refers to as "reflective practice in journalism", the "critical practitioner" must be "fully cognisant of the context for and implications of their journalism, in order to strive for the highest standards of practice" (2002, p. 22). However some recent work on "reflective practice in journalism" has been faulted for not specifying the nature and depth of the reflections involved in this practice, as well as for failing to engage with relevant bodies of scholarly work (Niblock, 2007). Moreover "reflective practice" has sometimes been

defined in ways that are entirely different from reflexivity as it is understood in broader academic discussions (Niblock, 2007).

The concepts of reflexivity and reflexive journalism practice both play an important role in the approach of my thesis. Building on the discussions of reflexivity in anthropology and other fields cited in the introduction to this thesis, I understand reflexivity in this project as necessarily entailing a critical awareness of my role in the construction of knowledge in my research, as well as textual strategies for reflecting critically on my own methods, interpretations and positionality. And building on Niblock's (2007, 2012) work to develop reflexive methodological approaches for research by scholar-practitioners in journalism studies, I also understand reflexivity in this project as a critical strategy for scrutinizing and reflecting upon the journalism practices I used in producing my graphic project. However, in this thesis, I also sought to address some of the weak points that have been highlighted in some recent discussions of reflective practice in journalism, by grounding my reflections on this experimental research process in the critical scholarly literature on journalism practices reviewed in the previous chapter.

While the practices and stylistic conventions used in traditional forms of news reporting have long been a particular concern in this literature, it would have been inappropriate for me to use news reporting practices as my principal point of comparison in reflecting on the practices I used in producing a work of graphic reportage. For as an approach that has typically been practiced by freelancers, graphic reportage tends to be produced under very different conditions than those that structure news reporters' work. And in particular, graphic journalists do not face the same kinds of time constraints on their work as news reporters (Stafford, 2011). As freelancers working outside of formal news organizations, they work in conditions of greater financial precariousness, but also have more independence to choose their own subject matter, as well as to engage in formal experimentation with writing and visual presentation style. My own process of producing a work of graphic reportage as a PhD student entailed a similar level of independence, with the attendant financial precariousness of this particularly time-intensive type of freelance work offset in very significant ways by the academic funding I was able to secure for my research. For this reason, in reflecting on the practices I used in producing my graphic project, I often found it more useful to compare these practices of research, writing and visual presentation to

those involved in the production of other forms of journalism that have often taken root outside of news organizations. In reflecting on my process of producing this project, I thus engaged particularly with some of the critical literature reviewed in the previous chapter on the practices of investigative reporting, alternative journalism and the "new journalism"--all of which have historically been practiced outside of mainstream news organizations. And as I was, throughout this experimental research process, my own principal research instrument, I often compared the practices involved in the production of this work of graphic reportage to those I was accustomed to using in my own past work as a freelance journalist working in the areas of alternative journalism and investigative reporting.

### **Reflexive ethnographic approaches**

In reflecting on my fieldwork in Haiti and on my process of writing a graphic script based on the interviews and observations I recorded during this fieldwork, I also engaged with a range of critical work from the field of ethnography. Ethnographers have long observed that the techniques journalists use in their process of "reporting" have certain parallels with the methods used in ethnographic fieldwork (Bird, 2005; Pedelty, 2010). Since the 1980s, there has been much discussion amongst ethnographers about the complex dynamics of power involved in ethnographic fieldwork, particularly in contexts where researchers are working in communities in which they are privileged outsiders (as I was in my research in a Haitian camp). And there has also been a growing recognition of the ways in which these dynamics are enmeshed in the problem of *writing* about fieldwork (Clifford, 1988).

The production of ethnographic research as well as other types of research in the social sciences was long structured by a set of objectivist and realist stylistic conventions that have important similarities with those institutionalized in the Anglo-American news reporting model (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Like news reporters in places like Canada, social science researchers were traditionally expected to write in the third person voice, in a neutral tone, and to position their writing as "objective" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). While literature was associated with "fiction, rhetoric and subjectivity", the social sciences sought to align themselves with the language of science, whose words were assumed to be "objective, precise, unambiguous, noncontextual and nonmetaphorical" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 960). Like journalists,

social scientists also have a long history of using photographs as a form of "visual evidence", and of presenting photographic visuals in their research through realist stylistic conventions that are highly reminiscent of those of photojournalism (Rose, 2012). Meanwhile, much as in the case in journalism, text has historically often been used to "explain" images in social science research, while images are often implicitly presented to illustrate a writer's arguments, or as "evidence" of phenomena written about in textual form.

There has been much critical discussion amongst ethnographers about these objectivist and realist conventions, and the role they played in early "ethnographic strategies of authority" (Clifford, 1988; Pink, 2014). These strategies, which have striking parallels with the strategies of writing and visual presentation through which journalists enact authority as "eyewitness reporters", were intimately linked to the development of methods of participant observation in the 20th century. In his critical work on ethnographic authority, anthropologist James Clifford (1988) observed that while these strategies have changed and evolved over the years, there have been certain enduring problems in ethnographers' writing. Amongst these is the tendency for ethnographers to "disappear" in their reports. Meanwhile, by writing about exchanges with various "others" that occurred in particular moments of exchange, "the dialogical, situational aspects of ethnographic interpretation tend to be banished from the final representative text" (Clifford, 1988). Moreover, while Clifford highlights that local informants often serve as "crucial intermediaries" in the work of ethnographers, they are "typically excluded from authoritative ethnographies" (Clifford 1988: 40).

Images, and particularly photographic images, have also long played an important role in the work of ethnographers (Pink, 2014). And the ways in which ethnographers working in fields like anthropology historically approached the visual dimensions of their work have important parallels with the strategies of visual presentation that journalists have long used in their work. Namely, such photographic images were, much as they still are in photojournalism, valued in ethnography for their presumed indexical relationship with the realities observed by the ethnographer. While the books anthropologists wrote based on their fieldwork were historically positioned as authoritative accounts of "other cultures", the photographs included in these books were often positioned as visual evidence of these "others". This is in many ways quite similar to

the way in which journalism works to legitimate its written stories, through photographic images presented according to realist conventions, showing that facts reported in print "really happened". Moreover, much in the same way that news images are connected with the authority of the journalist as "eyewitness reporter", the photographs ethnographers historically included in their texts worked to prove that they were "really there" in the sites of their fieldwork (Clifford, 1988).

Since the 1980s, there has been much critical work amongst ethnographers to rethink these objectivist and realist conventions. These moves were prompted in large part by a broader set of debates about the role of Western anthropologists in various projects of European and American colonialism in different parts of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean (Asad, 1979). These critical discussions have also been informed by post-structuralist and post-modern scholarship emphasizing the role that values and language play in the production of knowledge, as well as by critiques by feminists and post-colonial theorists of the ways in which typically white and male researchers historically presented their work as "objective" knowledge of "others". This reflexive turn has resulted in an increased recognition of the need for researchers to attend to the question of their own positionality, and the "situational limitations" of their claims to knowledge (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 961). In this context, there have been important moves to reconceptualize ethnography as necessarily involving "a constructive negotiation involving at least two, and usually more, conscious, politically significant subjects" (Clifford, 1988, p. 41). From this perspective, the findings of ethnographic fieldwork can never be separated from the interpretations and narratives through which ethnographers (and their interlocutors) make sense of their fieldwork, which is inherently shaped by the relations of power between researchers and their subjects. And in some ways the most highly charged questions about these research findings are connected with the strategies ethnographers use in citing those they interview. For such strategies can either work to give voice to, or to silence, the perspectives and interpretations of differently situated stakeholders in ethnographic research.

Such reflexivity has been argued to be particularly important in the context of fieldwork in camps. As anthropologist Michel Agier (2011) has observed, based on his own experience of doing research in camps for refugee and displacement camps in various countries in Africa, such fieldwork typically involves a particular complex set of dynamics. For in addition to involving "a

dual relationship between investigator and investigated", those researching camps often also encounter another set of actors who are also mediators: the various agencies that administer or work in camps (Agier, 2011, p. 67). "Rather than a single third party, this is in a general fashion the diffuse presence of representatives of the 'international community'" (Agier, 2011, p. 67). Moreover, he emphasizes the "omnipresence" of these mediators and the complex issues raised by their relationships with Western researchers, who most often belong to a very similar social world. He also emphasizes the role of these third parties in the construction of the social space of the camp. "They themselves conceived and directed the manufacture of this space ... they manage it and control the persons present even while assisting them; they will decide one day to close the camp -- meaning in some sense the end of the field for the ethnologist" (Agier, 2011, p. 68). Moreover, these representatives of the "international community", who often functionally control researchers' access to spaces such as camps, introduce into the research "the moral values, principles and terms that come from the institutional and doctrinal world of the interveners" (Agier, 2011, p. 68).

### **Critical perspectives on humanitarian interventions**

In reflecting on my own fieldwork in Petionville Camp, I also drew on a range of critical work about the values, principles and terms institutionalized in humanitarian interventions. As sociologist and anthropologist Didier Fassin has observed, the notion of a humanity common to all people plays a crucial role in the principles of modern humanitarianism (2007). Relatedly, humanitarian agencies commonly define the mission of their interventions as "saving lives" (Fassin, 2007, p. 512). If taken at face value, humanitarian principles and values would thus seem incompatible with the types of media frames that Butler critiques for rendering some lives ungrievable. And indeed, humanitarians have sometimes defined their work as being in opposition to "established political powers" who wage wars in which human lives are inevitably lost (Fassin, 2007, p. 511). Against this military "politics of death", in which the lives of those killed on "the other side" are routinely not counted or acknowledged, humanitarians thus propose a "politics of life" (Fassin, 2007, p. 511). Yet Fassin has argued that this humanitarian "politics of life" also rests on an a priori differential evaluation of human beings. This dualism is evident in two differentiating constructions of life in humanitarian discourse, in which the lives to be saved are always distinguished from the lives of those who intervene. Fassin emphasizes the

philosophical distance between these two constructions of life, which correspond to the categories that Giorgio Agamben theorized as "zoe" or "bare life" and the "bios" or "the political life that is freely asked" (Agamben, 1998, as cited in Fassin 2007, p. 507). While the lives to be saved are constructed as "'populations' who can only passively await the bombs and aid workers", the lives being risked are those of "citizens of the world' who come to render them assistance" (Fassin, 2007, p. 507). This humanitarian "politics of life" also involves "producing public representations of the human beings to be defended", typically "by showing them as victims rather than combatants and by displaying their condition in terms of suffering rather than the geopolitical situation" (Fassin, 2007, p. 501). In this process, which Fassin also theorizes the "essentialization of victims", "both the Chechan fighter and the Palestinian stone-thrower become suffering beings who can only be described in terms of their physical injuries and psychological trauma" (Fassin, 2007, p. 517).

These problems have been observed to take a particularly extreme form in humanitarian interventions in refugee camps (Malkki, 1996), as well as in camps for the growing numbers of people around the world who, like Haiti's camp residents, have been displaced by disasters but who are denied the rights accorded to those recognized as refugees. In his book *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government*, Agier argues that "humanitarian organizations have made a specialty for themselves of 'managing' these spaces and populations apart"--through a type of invention that very often "borders on policing" (Agier, 2011, p. 4). In analysing these types of interventions, which he refers to as "humanitarian government", Agier draws on Giorgio Agamben's theorization of camps as "spaces of exception", where national, territorial law is suspended and replaced by police power, and human rights are systematically denied. Scholars have shown that this analysis is particularly appropriate for analysing humanitarian interventions in the specific context of Haitian camps (Kaussen, 2011; Schuller 2016).

As Valerie Kaussen (2011) critically observed in an article for *Monthly Review*, these camps were indeed governed as "states of exception". Technically, Haitian law applied to the residents of these camps, who were after all Haitian citizens living within their own country. However "in practice, the 'rights' of these individuals do not have the full backing of the law but depend on the

goodwill of the organization or person in charge—often with the support of the Haitian National Police, privately hired gunmen, and the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)" (Kaussen, 2011). Moreover, as Kaussen has remarked (2011), the system for delivering aid to camp residents was "disturbingly termed 'camp management'". Indeed, in some camps, including Petionville Camp, which as I have mentioned was formally managed by J/P HRO, NGOs were appointed as "Camp Managers".

The system for delivering aid in Haiti's camps was coordinated through a body called "Camp Coordination and Camp Management" (CCCM), a UN-affiliated "cluster" or grouping to which various international agencies and private NGOs working in these camps belonged. While the cluster system, which was supposed to coordinate aid delivery, established and communicated guidelines and rules, both membership and compliance were entirely voluntary. As such, the CCCM coordinated but did not "oversee, evaluate, or seek to guarantee aid delivery" in Haiti's camps (Kaussen, 2011). And indeed, a study of services provided in camps revealed that only 35 percent of camps actually had a "Manager", and the rest received only occasional aid or none at all (Schuller, 2010). Moreover, despite a lethal epidemic of cholera in Haiti, which began after a UN contractor dumped raw sewage containing fecal matter from cholera-infected Nepalese UN peacekeepers in a river that connects directly with one of Haiti's principal water sources, water was distributed in only forty percent of the camps (Schuller, 2010). Meanwhile, NGOs tended to focus on only the camps that it was easy for them to access, a situation that led to a chronic neglect of camps in certain poorer neighbourhoods such as the seaside slum of Cité Soleil that were considered to be "dangerous" by these NGOs (Schuller, 2010). Reflecting the pattern that Agier (2011) has analysed in humanitarian interventions in camps elsewhere, Haiti's camps were thus constructed as "states of exception" (Kaussen, 2011).

Schuller has critiqued the aid strategies various international agencies and NGOs pursued in Haiti's camps for excluding displaced Haitians themselves, and particularly displaced women living in camps, from decision-making. And he has also faulted these organizations for implementing "'solutions' that deepened dependency, dehumanized or infantilized the population" (Schuller, 2016, p.12). He devotes a whole chapter of *Humanitarian Aftershocks in Haiti* (2016) to the system of camp committees that was created by humanitarian agencies. These committees,

which were typically dominated by men, served as intermediaries between the agencies and the camp's general population. "Although knowing very little about these committees, foreign agencies granted them absolute power to select recipients" (Schuller, 2016, p. 13). Schuller also observes that these committees, which were "a new social phenomenon in Haiti", were referred to by many IDPs as "*pòch pwela*", or "pockets of tarps" (Schuller, 2016, p. 15). Schuller interprets this Creole expression as a critique of these "opaque and unaccountable structures" (2016, p. 15).

### **Writing as a method of inquiry**

In order to analyse how working in the form of graphic narrative affected my process of writing about these humanitarian interventions in post-earthquake Haiti, my thesis is also informed by some relevant work on reflexive forms of ethnographic writing. In response to some of the issues that have been raised with traditional ethnographic authority, there has been considerable experimentation in the field of ethnography with different strategies of writing and citation that might better acknowledge the active role different research participants play in (co)producing, negotiating and sometimes contesting meaning in ethnographic research. Narrative forms that diverge from traditional academic writing conventions play a key role in these reflexive ethnographic writing strategies. In discussing some of these strategies, Clifford (1988) places particular emphasis on what he refers to as the "discursive paradigm" of ethnographic writing. This "discursive" approach consciously strives to highlight the research contexts and situations of interlocution that were often omitted in these classical ethnographic texts. In recognition of the agency of research subjects, some of these texts present the research process in the form of a dialogue staged between the researcher and a research subject. Others, meanwhile, represent "the overall course of the research as an ongoing negotiation" (Clifford, 1988, p. 44). Drawing inspiration from Bakhtin's polyphonic novel, which offers a "textual space where discursive complexity, the dialogical interplay of voices, can be accommodated", these latter ethnographic texts also strive to give "visible place to indigenous interpretations" as contributions to textual dialogism and polyphony (Clifford, 1988, p. 44). Clifford's work on such experimental ethnographic writing approaches serve as a key point of reflection and comparison in my analysis of how working in the form of graphic reportage--a narrative form that similarly relies heavily on dialogue--affected my process of writing about my fieldwork.

In reflecting on my process of writing my script, I also engage with sociologist and ethnographer Laurel Richardson's work on what she calls "creative analytical practices" (CAP) (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). In this approach, in which writing is recognized as a method of inquiry in its own right, the author moves "outside conventional social scientific writing" in order to "learn about the topics and about themselves that which was unknowable and unimaginable using conventional analytical procedures, metaphors, and writing formats" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 962-93). Based on the premise that "how we are expected to write affects what we can write about", CAP ethnographies consciously break from the traditional objectivist conventions of social science writing Richardson, cited in Richardson and St. Pierre 2005). These approaches also often involve an active process of testing out and developing new metaphors for the production of knowledge that complicate or actively challenge the ones social scientists have often used in discussing their theories and methods.<sup>9</sup>

### **Visual methodologies**

My reflections on my process of taking photographs as well as illustrating and designing my graphic project are also informed by recent work on critical and reflexive visual research approaches in fields such as ethnography as well as geography (Pink, 2014; Rose, 2012). Photographs have long been valued in social science research for some of the same reasons they are in journalism. Namely, for their propensity to "carry a great deal of information" that would be difficult to convey through written words alone (Rose, 2012, p. 305). However, in recent years, there have been efforts to devise more critical approaches to using visual materials. As geographer Gillian Rose explains in her book *Visual methodologies* (2012), these approaches are based on a recognition that practices of looking are themselves deeply embedded in cultural frameworks of understanding, and that there are important differences in the ways that people see and make sense of the world around them, which sometimes hinge on their particular social location. In these emergent visual research approaches, it is thus seen as particularly crucial to consider one's "own way of looking at images" (Rose, 2012, p. 17). This concern with reflexivity in visual methodologies is grounded in longstanding feminist critiques of the situated and embodied nature of visions of the world that historically presented themselves as universal and

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<sup>9</sup> For instance, in contrast to the language social scientists often use to talk about research approaches that combine different methods as "triangulation", Richardson has proposed an alternative metaphor for understanding the way CAP approaches bring together different ways of knowing: that of crystallization (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005).

objective, and attendant calls for researchers to "become more answerable for what we learn how to see", as Donna Haraway once put it (Haraway, 1988, cited in Rose, 2012, p. 17). Such emergent critical visual research methodologies stress the need for researchers to be cognizant of their own interpretations of any images they use in their research, and of the complexity involved in interpreting the meaning of photographs, which, from a critical perspective, can never be taken simply as "evidence" of an objective material reality (Rose, 2012, p. 16). And indeed, these approaches often explicitly seek to explore differently situated research participants' own ways of seeing and understanding the social and geographic spaces in which they live (Rose, 2012, p. 306). For instance, the approach of photo elicitation enlists research participants in taking photographs and explaining their significance to the researcher (Rose, 2012, p. 306). In a related vein, when using visuals in research formats that combine images and words, such critical approaches require that researchers carefully consider the relationship between the visual and textual elements of their projects (Rose, 2012, p. 322-323).

As Rose has observed, producing images of the subjects of a research project, particularly one in an especially marginalized community, inherently raises ethical issues. From the standpoint of academic ethics frameworks, the immediate questions researchers are generally expected to address in their research design has to do with provisions for protecting the identities of anyone who may be placed at more than minimal risk. Yet such research also raises a broader set of issues about how "vulnerable" research participants are pictured in such research, who is representing them, and to whom. For this reason, visual researchers have advocated that such research might best be carried out by "developing a collaborative relationship with those being researched" (Rose, 2012, p. 335). And some visual researchers have also suggested that visual methods may actually be beneficial for such collaborations, "because making images always entails some sort of negotiated relationship between those making images and those being pictured" (Rose, 2012, p. 336). Given that the people I interviewed for my graphic project included displaced Haitians living in a camp, this potential Rose identifies for visual research methods to foster collaborative relationships between researchers with members of marginalized communities would seem especially relevant.

## **Drawing as method**

In order to analyse how working in the drawn medium of graphic reportage affected the strategies of visual representation I used in making *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, I also engage in this thesis with some critical work on the long under-theorized role of drawing in ethnographic research. Ethnographers have long relied on hand-drawn maps and sketches to document what they observe during their fieldwork. Yet much in the same way that photographs have long been privileged over drawings in journalism, photographic images have long occupied a more prominent position in the final representative texts of ethnography than their hand-drawn counterparts. However in his book *I Swear I Saw This: Drawing in Fieldwork Notebooks, Namely My Own* (2011), anthropologist Michael Taussig makes a powerful case for reconsidering the role of drawing in ethnographic research. Reflecting on his own process of making a sketch during his fieldwork in Colombia, Taussig remarks that "eye and memory are painstakingly exercised or at least exercised in new ways" in this drawing process (Taussig, 2011, p. 89).

In theorizing the role drawing process plays in his own fieldwork, Taussig (2011) cites art critic John Berger's observations about how drawing encompasses a very different temporality than photography. Berger has argued (2005), reflecting on his own process of sketching his father as he lay on his deathbed, that, unlike a photographic image, which is typically taken in a single moment, the production of a drawing involves a whole cumulative series of moments of looking. A drawn image thus "involves, derives from, and refers back to, much previous experience of looking" (Berger, 2005, p. 44). For this reason, drawing has long been understood as a practice that enhances one's process of visual observation. As Berger has argued elsewhere, "it is the act of drawing that compels the artist to look at the object in front of him, to dissect it in his mind's eye and put it together again, or, if he is drawing from memory, that forces him to dredge his own mind, to discover the content of his own store of past observations" (Berger, 1953, p. 53). Berger, who characterized drawing as a process of "discovery", supported his argument by pointing out that, in the teaching of drawing, it is widely recognized that

the heart of the matter lies in the specific process of looking. A line, an area of tone, is not really important because it records what you have seen, but because of what it will lead you on to see. Following up its logic in order to check its accuracy, you find confirmation or denial in the object itself or in your memory of it. Each confirmation or denial brings you closer to the object [...] (Berger, 1953, p. 53).

Drawing thus requires not only careful visual observation of what one is drawing; this practice also involves engaging in a particularly intense way with the materiality of the bodies, environments or objects one is drawing. Drawings, and particularly the private "working drawings" that artists create as part of their preparatory work for a more "finished" work of art thus typically "reveal the process of their own making, their own looking" (Berger, 1953, p. 53). As such, Berger has argued that a drawing constitutes "an autobiographical record of one's discovery of an event -- either seen, remembered or imagined" (Berger, 1953, p. 53). Or to put it otherwise, "a drawing of a tree reveals not a tree but a tree being-looked at" (Berger, 2005, p. 44).

Taussig makes a very similar point about the distinct temporality of drawing, saying of the drawn images in his own fieldnotes, which "double the act of seeing with one's own eyes",

"Doubling the image through drawing, stroke by stroke, erasure by erasure, amounts to a laborious seeing...History is repeated in slow motion and the clumsiness of the artist adds to this *seeing seeing* (Taussig, 2011, p. 89).

For Taussig, a sketch in one's fieldnotes is thus not just a record of what one saw in the field; it also offers a glimpse into the researcher's process of seeing what one takes the time to observe closely enough to draw.

I began this chapter by discussing the concept of media frames, which plays a central role in my analysis of what's at stake in the practices of research, writing and visual presentation that journalists use in covering humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti. I also identified the main question that guided my research, in which I am particularly interested how working in the form of graphic reportage affected the way I framed such interventions in my own graphic project. The chapter then provided some basic context about the humanitarian interventions that were underway in Haiti in 2013, during my fieldwork, and discussed the strategies I used in making *Picturing Aid in Haiti*. I also situated this work of graphic reportage in a larger body of research in fields such as media and communication studies that takes a form that diverges from academic norms. I also situated this project more specifically in some recent conversations in the area of journalism studies about research that involves the production of works of journalism. And I concluded this chapter by discussing a range of relevant work from fields such as ethnography that informed my reflections on my process of making *Picturing Aid in Haiti*.

### CHAPTER 3

#### GRAPHIC REPORTAGE AS METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will reflect critically on my process of researching, writing, illustrating and designing *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, my prototype for a book-length work of graphic reportage. Reflecting on the research I carried out for this project, I will show that the drawn medium of graphic reportage facilitated my goals of documenting information and perspectives neglected in international news coverage of Haiti. I will also demonstrate that working in this drawn form encouraged me to reflect more throughout my process of researching and producing this project than I was accustomed to doing in my work as a journalist on the problem of my positionality, and the politics of language and representation involved in my work.

##### **The fieldwork for *Picturing Aid in Haiti***

During the fieldwork I carried out for my graphic project, I was able to document critical context as well as perspectives that had often been missing in the media. For, as I mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, as a PhD student researching a work of graphic reportage, I was able to access both people and spaces it would likely have been more difficult if not impossible for me to access had I been working in a more standard form of journalism. My status as a white, foreign student was likely a factor in this access. However the drawn medium in which I was working also seemed to play a role.

In one of the interviews I recorded with Cassandra, she told me that she generally *avoided* journalists who came into Petionville Camp. Yet significantly, this otherwise media-shy displaced Haitian woman *was* willing to be interviewed for my graphic journalism project. There are many factors--not least of them my position as a white foreign student--that may have contributed to the willingness of camp residents like Cassandra to speak out about their concerns in this project. Yet the drawn form of this project also seemed relevant to Cassandra. For instance, she told me she would never have spoken about the concerns she raised in these interviews if she was being interviewed for a radio or TV story.

Cassandra told me that, if she'd been able to, she would have published her own report about everything she'd seen in the camp. And indeed, in the interviews that I recorded with her and other displaced Haitians who participated in this research, they did provide something like a report on international aid in Petionville Camp. Living conditions in the camp were one of the major issues that the camp residents talked about in these interviews. In the initial aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, many of the camp residents I spoke to had received tarps from groups such as MSF, which they'd used to construct makeshift shelters. However within six months, they told me that these tarps they'd been given had generally begun to wear through. And since then, the camp's residents had weathered through three of Haiti's annual rainy seasons, as well as three hurricane seasons, and two major tropical storms. Of the camp residents I spoke to, Cassandra was the only one who had managed to obtain a replacement tarp from an aid group. And she emphasized that this was only because she had managed to appeal to one of J/P HRO's employees who happened to be walking through the camp and to see her just after her tarp had been torn apart in the middle of the night by a tropical storm, leaving Cassandra and her school-age son completely exposed to the elements in the midst of a torrential downpour and tropical gales.

In the initial year after the earthquake, various NGOs had provided basic services to the camp's residents. Oxfam provided free potable drinking water in Petionville Camp--a service that became particularly vital in the context of the cholera epidemic that broke out in Haiti in October of 2010. And according to Cassandra, there were some basic food staples that were, on two occasions, distributed by CRS, the first camp manager. And during the first year after the earthquake, they had also been able to access free healthcare, through a health clinic that J/P HRO established in the camp. However such services were terminated in camps throughout Haiti in 2011, two years before I began my fieldwork.

Many of the camp residents I interviewed, a number of whom were the parents or guardians of small children, emphasized the extreme difficulties of feeding their families. In the first interview I recorded with Marie-Pierre, she told me that her daughter Lina had died in the camp, after a long period of illness. Marie-Pierre said her daughter had long suffered from anemia. And when they arrived in the camp, Lina, who had five small children, was still breast feeding her smallest child. Lina fell ill during the first rainy season they spent living under tarps in the camp. Marie-

Pierre told me that she'd tried to nurse her daughter through herbal remedies, and she also brought her to hospital, where Lina was diagnosed with some sort of heart condition. According to Marie-Pierre, the doctor who saw Lina told her that she needed to rest somewhere very peaceful where she wouldn't be stressed. But living as they were in the camp, Lina's mother observed that this was impossible. Lina died in the camp in March 2012, just after a year after basic humanitarian services were cut off in the camp.

Lina's death, which her sister Therese also blamed on the living conditions in the camp, was also an important topic in follow-up interviews I recorded with Marie-Pierre, as well as in my interviews with Therese. And after another young woman died in the camp during the first phase of my fieldwork, the question of deaths in the camp, and what caused them, also became a broader theme in the interviews I recorded with other research participants.

I learned about the death of this second young woman from Cassandra one morning when I arrived in the camp. I immediately asked if she'd died of cholera, but Cassandra thought it was more likely related to malnutrition. And a camp leader who spoke to me in more detail that day about this young Haitian woman's death similarly blamed malnutrition. Cassandra and Marie-Pierre both told me that they knew "many people" who died in the camp where they lived. It seems highly unlikely to me that this issue would ever have come to my attention had Marie-Pierre and Cassandra not expressly talked about these deaths. For even in the years since, I have seen no coverage whatsoever of the issue of deaths in Haiti's camps.

The lack of security in the camp was also an issue that many of the camp residents raised. Some of the women living in the camp told me that rapes and sexual assaults were very common in the camp, and this was particularly a problem faced by girls and younger women living in the camp. And Cassandra also told me that there had also recently been cases of gun violence in Petionville Camp, in which adults and children alike had been killed or badly injured.

Another issue camp residents raised was about various agencies' systems for determining who was eligible for what scant aid was distributed in the camp. This was a particular concern for one specific research participant, Claudette, who told me that she had never been able to receive any

aid whatsoever because she was never formally registered by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the intergovernmental agency responsible for registering the residents of Haiti's camps as "Internally Displaced People" or IDPs. Claudette, who'd initially taken refuge in another camp, had arrived in Petionville Camp after the IOM had finished registering the camp's residents. And as there was no more space in the camp for her to put up her own tarp, she had stayed under the tarp of an acquaintance, and later, moved under another tarp, belonging to a man who no longer lived in the camp. As a result, Claudette told me she had never been able to receive any aid whatsoever.

During these interviews, I asked some of the camp residents about their perspectives on the golf course and its history. However, when I tried to explain my interest in the golf course's origins in the Marine occupation of Haiti to some of the displaced Haitians participating in my research, it quickly became clear that they were unfamiliar with the specific historical details about the interlocking histories of the U.S. occupation and the golf course that had initially drawn my interest as a researcher. However, this historical information resonated in ways I had not anticipated with their much more recent (and indeed ongoing) lived experiences of neo-colonialism in this site.

Cassandra had never previously heard about the formal relationship between the Petionville Club and the 19-year U.S. Marine occupation of Haiti. However, for decades, this middle aged woman had lived very close to the golf course. And in one of the first interviews I recorded with her, she mentioned that a whole community of Haitian families who had bought land in the area had been violently evicted in the late 1990s, when their homes were bulldozed in a police operation the Haitian government carried out at the behest of the Petionville Club. If it had not been for Cassandra, it is likely that I would never have found out about this incident. For in the dozens of media stories about this camp I read as part of my research for this project, this incident was never mentioned.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> There was just one passing mention, in a *New York Times* article by Deborah Sontag (2010), of the club's "troubled history" with its neighbours.

With Cassandra's assistance I managed to locate François, a camp resident whose home she told me had been destroyed in this operation. After Cassandra helpfully connected me with him, François and I arranged a time for an interview so he could tell me more about these home demolitions. This interview, which I carried out near the end of the first phase of my fieldwork, in mid February 2013, took place in the small makeshift shelter where François and his family lived in the camp. In this interview, I asked François about the details he recalled of this event, which he said had left 48 families, including his own, homeless. However, in addition to merely responding to my questions about these home demolitions, François also provided a broader analysis of what he saw as the significance of this event. Emphasizing that the Haitian constitution prohibits any evictions for which a landlord has not proven, in a court of law, that they hold the title to the land in question, he stressed the extra-judicial nature of these home demolitions, for which neither the Petionville Club nor the Haitian government had sought the required authorization from a judge. In this interview, he also analysed the Haitian government's own role in these home demolitions as evidence of the Haitian state's tendency to privilege the interests of blan over the rights of their own citizens. François also talked at length in this interview about a protest that he had been involved in organizing against these evictions. And he also told me about he and his neighbours' (ultimately unsuccessful) efforts to challenge these evictions through the courts, during which, according to François, they found out that the Petionville Club did not actually hold legal title to the land in question.

During this first phase of my fieldwork in Petionville Camp, a program was just getting underway to "relocate" the camp's residents from the Petionville Club's former golf course. This program, which ultimately culminated in the camp's closure in February 2014 (and paved the way for the reopening of the U.S.-owned golf course), was financed by the World Bank and administered by Penn's J/P HRO. Under the terms of this relocations scheme, which was modelled on the relocations programs various agencies have used to close scores of other camps throughout Haiti, eligible families who lived in the camp were offered one year of subsidized rent on condition that they leave the camp and sign a lease with a private landlord.

The camp residents I interviewed raised a range of concerns about this relocations program. In theory the rental subsidies were supposed to provide each eligible displaced family with a

subsidy that would cover one year's rent. However, some of my research participants expressed extreme scepticism about whether this subsidy would be sufficient to cover the cost of renting an apartment. They also critically assessed these programs' impact on cost of housing in Port-au-Prince, which, as I mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, was already relatively unaffordable for many Haitian families even before the earthquake. And some raised the question of how their families were going to be able to afford to pay their rent after the 12-month subsidy ran out.

Some of the interviewees for my project also critiqued these programs from the standpoint of the dignity of those being relocated. Under the terms of some of the earlier relocations programs, such as 16/6, the rental subsidy was initially paid to displaced Haitians identified as the heads of their households. However, many organizations that later adopted this model, including J/P HRO, paid the sum directly to these relocated families' new landlords, which some of my research participants found to be a somewhat infantilizing approach. Moreover, this twice-displaced Haitian man assessed that these programs seemed to be helping the landowners more than displaced Haitians. And Marie-Pierre articulated a similar critique of the program. During one of the interviews I recorded with her, she pointed to a section of the camp from which displaced Haitian families had already been relocated, exclaiming that the *blan* had cleared all this land for their golf course, but there was nowhere for the camp's residents to go.

In addition to talking about the aid provided by various international groups that worked in the camp, Cassandra and Marie-Pierre also talked about the important role that camp residents had played in assisting one another in their camp. For instance, the first time Cassandra's tarp shelter was destroyed in a storm, she recalled that it was her neighbours in the camp who helped her to repair it. Marie-Pierre meanwhile emphasized the proactive ways in which women from Petionville Camp had responded to the outbreak of cholera, a disease that, while deadly, is treatable if detected early, as well as being preventable with proper sanitation. She recalled that she and other women had organized brigades of volunteers to clean the latrines in the camp, and they also carried people showing symptoms of the disease to hospital for immediate treatment.

Perhaps partly due to the fact that I had explained to the camp residents I interviewed that the question of how people like them were represented to media audiences was an explicit concern in my research, issues of representation emerged as an important theme in these interviews. Yet as the research proceeded, it became clear that some of the displaced Haitians participating in this research had a set of concerns about representation that were somewhat different from my concerns as an English speaking PhD researcher whose primary research interests had historically centred around news media and journalism. These concerns, which Cassandra and Marie-Pierre raised again and again, revolved particularly around the issue of how they were represented in J/P HRO's fundraising and publicity materials. Marie-Pierre for instance could cite numerous instances in which she had been photographed without consent by J/P HRO. Similarly, Cassandra recounted with evident displeasure that she'd been filmed against her will when she went to collect the tarp and some other supplies that J/P HRO had gave her after her tarp had been ripped apart in a storm.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, these Creole-speaking research participants and I dealt in various ways with the issues of language and translation that inevitably arose in these interviews, due to my limited fluency in Creole. Nonetheless, we sometimes had to struggle to make ourselves understood to one another, in the face of differences in the ways we named and made sense of the world that were sometimes not purely linguistic. This happened in quite a notable way when I asked Marie-Pierre and Cassandra about their experiences with journalists in the camp. I was initially confused when they responded by saying something to me that sounded, at east to my Anglophone ears, like "*Journalis champayn*." Translating the term into English as "Champagne journalists", I was puzzled. I had often heard people using terms like "corporate journalists" or "elite media", to highlight many journalists' disconnection from diverse communities of potential readers. Yet never had I heard anyone referring to them as "Champagne journalists". However, eventually I realized that what these two Haitian women were actually saying was *Journalis pa Sean Penn* (Sean Penn's journalists). (Pronounced in Creole, the U.S. actor's name sounds remarkably like the notoriously expensive French sparkling wine). And as Marie-Pierre and Cassandra began to articulate some of their grievances against the "*journalis pa Sean Penn*," I realized they were using the term journalist in a sense that was much broader than the way I would usually have used it, to include the various communications professionals

employed by J/P HRO. This research process thus inevitably worked to challenge my initial conception of the object of my research, which expanded in important ways as a result of my exchanges with people like Marie-Pierre and Cassandra (not least by stretching to include the media representations produced by humanitarian agencies as well as traditional news organizations.)

The concerns that my research participants raised about the dynamics of communication in Petionville Camp prompted me to begin asking journalists I knew about their past experiences writing and producing stories about the camp. And in talking to some of these journalists, I found out that the LA-based entertainment publicists responsible for managing requests for media interviews in this Haitian camp had often imposed a set of particularly stringent conditions. For instance, one Haiti-based researcher and consultant I met during my fieldwork who had assisted in the production of a U.S. documentary TV program featuring footage from the camp told me that J/P HRO had required that this TV crew sign a form giving J/P HRO the right to select any prospective Haitian interviewees for the program. According to this consultant, Penn's group also reportedly insisted that an organizational representative be present at any interviews the TV crew recorded in the camp. Meanwhile, a Port-au-Prince-based photojournalist I spoke to during my fieldwork told me that J/P HRO had once required him to seek authorization from an entertainment publicist at ID PR prior to taking any photographs in the camp for an assignment for a U.S. magazine. When the journalist telephoned this entertainment publicist at ID PR's offices in LA, he was informed that J/P HRO would own the copyright to any photographs he took in the camp.

I never directly asked any of the Western journalists I spoke to during my fieldwork why they had sought the permission of Penn's group in the first place when looking to report on Petionville Camp. However one of these journalists made a revealing remark during one of my informal exchanges with him that may in some ways illuminate this somewhat puzzling issue of why on earth journalists would comply with these conditions that a private entertainment publicity firm thousands of miles away had sought to impose on their work. Namely, this journalist explained to me that his editor wanted him to tell "the story of Sean Penn running a tent camp". One can imagine that journalists trying to report on Petionville Camp within the confines of such Western-

centric storylines might have felt a certain pressure to comply with the orders of the Californian entertainment publicists. For to defy their directives might have precluded access to the Western celebrity they were expected to cast as the main protagonist in any story about this Haitian camp.

Throughout my fieldwork in Petionville Camp, I tried hard to avoid raising any false expectations about my graphic project. As I discussed in the previous chapter, in addition to the efforts I made, from the beginning of this research, to dispel some camp residents' mistaken impression that I was a representative of some sort of aid group, I had clearly informed all my research participants that this was a project I was undertaking as a student working on a thesis. However, one day, during an informal conversation between myself and Cassandra, she turned to me and asked what my university was going to do to help the residents of Petionville Camp. I was immediately concerned. For in her question, I heard precisely the kind of false hope I had tried to be careful to avoid raising.

I answered as honestly as I could, explaining that all my university was going to do was to evaluate the graphic project that I was going to make based on the testimonies of people like Cassandra. She responded by telling me that she believed that getting information out to the world was also a form of aid. Recognizing my graphic PhD project was, to say the least, likely not going to be the most effective vehicle for raising public awareness about the important concerns that Cassandra had raised in this research, I asked her if she'd ever thought of speaking out about these issues to a journalist, whose work might have a better chance of reaching a larger audience. She looked at me aghast. Given the climate of insecurity in the camp, Cassandra told me that she feared for her life as well as that of her child. For this reason, she was afraid to speak out publicly about her concerns.

Working in a drawn medium made it relatively more straightforward to protect the identities of people like Cassandra than would have been the case had I been working in more common visual form of journalism such as photography or video. As I discussed in the previous chapter, both in the sketches I made "live" in the field (like the ones of Cassandra and Marie-Pierre that appear in Figures 2, 3 and 4), and in those I made in my fieldnotes based on recollections (for examples of

these, see Figures 5 & 6 on page 102), I made sure not to draw any of my research participants in ways that allowed them to be identified.



Figure 2. Sketch of Cassandra

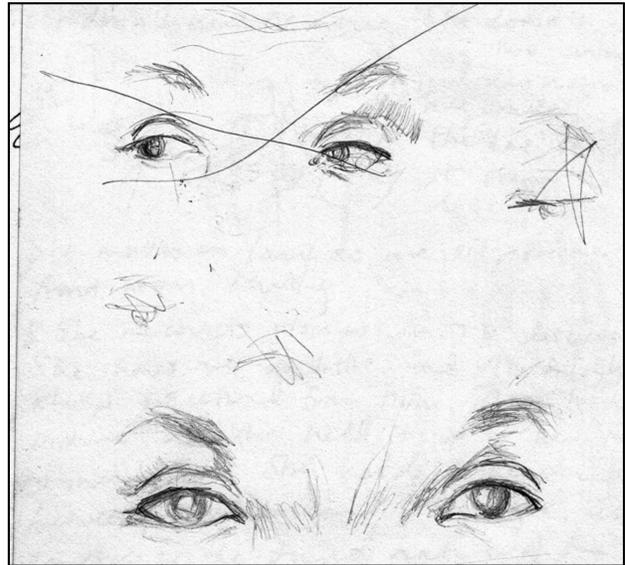


Figure 3. Sketches of Marie-Pierre's eyes

If taking a photo of someone generally involves a certain negotiation between the person taking the picture and the one being photographed, this is much more true of making a live drawing of someone. Due to the length of time involved in making such drawings from life, it would have been impossible for me to draw any of my research participants without their collaboration. For this reason, I only requested to draw research participants with whom I felt I had already built a sufficiently collaborative relationship. I always asked permission before making these drawings, much as I had in taking photos. Yet unlike taking a photograph, which generates an image right away, this process of drawing created opportunities for consulting with my research participants *as* I was drawing them. If my research participants I drew didn't like the

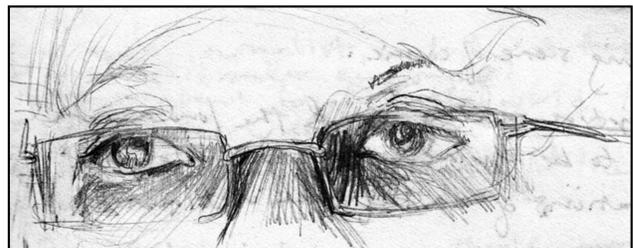


Figure 4. Sketch of Cassandra's eyes

early results of my efforts to draw them, I would discontinue the drawing, and cross it out. And if they consented, we could then try again from a different angle or perspective. This opened up opportunities in my drawing process for active negotiation between myself and my research participants about my strategies for visually representing them in my graphic project. This process, in which I experimented with picturing willing research participants in such a way that their identifying features would not be revealed, thus played an important role in the ethics of this project, which I conceived of not merely as involving formal legalistic procedures dictated by REBs, but also as involving an ongoing set of negotiations with the displaced Haitians I interviewed as part of my research.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the issues some of the camp residents I interviewed raised in these interviews had an important impact on the lines of inquiry I pursued in some of the interviews I recorded with other research participants. And in fact, I first reached out to the two humanitarian professionals I interviewed for this project specifically in order to follow up on some of the issues I had learned about from talking to people such as Cassandra, Marie-Pierre and Claudette. When a conversation struck up between me and the first of these humanitarians, Emily, at a social event at an English-language library attached to the Petionville Clubhouse, she happened to mention to me that she had been involved in registering displaced Haitians in camps. And during the interview I recorded with this humanitarian worker, in the spacious home where she lived in a suburb of Port-au-Prince, I asked her some specific questions about some of the issues surrounding the registration process that the camp residents participating in my research had raised. Similarly, I reached out to the second humanitarian, Julia, who worked as a data analyst at the IOM, in order to follow up with her about the issue of deaths in Haiti's camps.

While Sacco has observed that the form of his work sometimes makes it difficult for him to access the kinds of official or institutional sources often privileged in mainstream journalism, this was not a major problem that I encountered in researching my graphic project. With the notable exception of the Camp Manager, the institutional sources from whom I requested interviews all agreed to speak to me for this project. Yet the graphic form of this project sometimes seemed to have an impact on how certain institutional sources responded to this project. Interestingly, this

graphic form seemed to have a particular effect in my interview with Leslie Voltaire, the former Haitian planning minister.

I had spoken to this former government official, who is also an urban planner and architect, only very briefly by telephone before I interviewed him, and this short telephonic exchange, in which Voltaire agreed to let me interview him for my thesis project, had focused chiefly on the question of where to meet. So I didn't have a chance to inform the former government minister about the graphic form of my thesis project until we actually met for the interview, at the location (proposed by Leslie Voltaire) upon which we'd agreed: the cafe-terrace of the Hotel Kinam in Port-au-Prince. As I informed Leslie Voltaire that I hoped to interview him for a graphic project, I wasn't at all sure of how he'd respond. Recalling what Sacco has written about how working in the form of comics journalism sometimes seems to limit his access to official sources, it seemed to me entirely conceivable that the former planning minister would politely decline to participate.

Yet Leslie Voltaire responded, with a wry grin, that he did not think it at all inappropriate to represent the official response to displacement in the form of *bande dessinée*. He pointed to a nicely landscaped park just across from the hotel where, just a few months prior, there had been an encampment of homeless earthquake survivors visible from this very terrace where we were sitting. "It's a visual solution", he remarked, gazing out at the vanished camp in the park located right across from the terrace of this luxury hotel that is a common meeting place for Haitian officials and blan journalists.

In my research for this graphic project, not only did working in this graphic form not seem to hinder my access to institutional sources. At least in the case of the IOM data analyst, it also seemed to sometimes facilitate my access to the relatively critical private views of this institutional source, who also provided crucial context about her agency's statistical data that had often been missing in the media.

Upon my arrival at the IOM's Haiti Mission, an unremarkable squat building near the new U.S. embassy, as well as MINUSTAH's principal base camp in Tabarre, I was greeted at the front lobby by the data analyst, who led me to a generic office room for the interview. Before we

began the interview, the data analyst mentioned that she was typically required to seek approval for media interviews from the IOM's public relations office. Such institutional protocols, which are designed to ensure that statements that the staff of agencies like IOM make in the media conform to the scripts of pre-established institutional messages, have often been theorized as imposing important constraints on the perspectives represented in media reports. However these protocols were not applied to the interview I recorded with this IOM data analyst for my comics reportage project. And perhaps for this reason, the data analyst often spoke about humanitarian interventions in Haiti to me in this interview in terms that were often sharply more critical than her agency's official talking points.

Given that I had explained in my email that I was wanting to ask the IOM about its data on people living in camps in Haiti, the data analyst began the interview by explaining the system through which the agency produces its statistics on Haiti's IDP population. After she'd provided an overview of the different components of this system, I asked her how deaths of Haitians living in camps are counted in this system. She gave me a strikingly frank answer. Namely, she told me that they were not counted at all. The data analyst explained that while the agency carried out a census of individuals and families living in Haiti's camps when it registered these camp residents as "Internally Displaced People", the detailed information it gathered during this census, which included, in most cases, contact information for each family, is not used in the production of official statistics on Haiti's displaced population. Rather, these statistics are based on aggregate data the agency produces by counting the number of tents in Haiti's camps, sometimes with the aid of drones. The data analyst was very upfront with me about the limitations of these statistics. For instance, she emphasized that displaced Haitians who benefited from official relocations programs account for only a small fraction of the decrease the agency has documented in Haiti's estimated camp population. When I asked if there was any way of distinguishing between displaced Haitians who had really left the camp, and those who, like Marie-Pierre's daughter, had died in the camp, she confirmed that there was not, adding that even on the registration form the IOM uses to re-register displaced Haitians as part of the process of closing camps, they don't ask if any family members died.

It seems unlikely that the data analyst would have had the liberty to talk to me quite so openly about the limits of the IOM's statistics on displacement in Haiti had our interview had to be pre-approved by her agency's public relations department. For this crucial context about how and why the IOM counts Haitians living in camps has often been missing in the IOM's press releases, where the IOM's Haiti Chief of Mission has claimed that "the dramatic fall in numbers is a direct result of the humanitarian community rallying around to provide tangible solutions" (L. Dall'Oglio, cited in IOM, 2012, May 2). The IOM has also presented the decrease in the number of people living in camps like the one where Marie-Pierre's daughter died as a reason for "optimism" (IOM, 2012, February 28), and, as the IOM Chief of Mission put it in one communiqué, "hopeful signs that many victims of the quake are getting on with their lives " (Dall'Oglio, cited in IOM, 2010, December 9, para. 5). Significantly, this context has also generally been missing in the media, where these statistics have been widely cited, and sometimes also presented as evidence of "progress" (*New York Times*, January 11, 2014; *Miami Herald*, January 11, 2014).

In the interview I recorded with the data analyst, she also talked about other aspects of humanitarian interventions in Haiti in terms that were often considerably more critical than her agency's official talking points. When I asked her about the programs that agencies like IOM and J/P HRO used to relocate Haitians from camps, the data analyst began by talking about the official rationale of these programs, which were designed to close Haiti's camps. Yet when I raised some of the concerns that the camp residents participating in my research had expressed to me, she expressed her own, relatively more critical, private views on these relocations efforts. And as the interview proceeded, she ended up sharing some of her own critical observations about the role of police and soldiers in the relocations efforts, which, in one instance she compared to a "military operation". A comparison that similarly would likely not have been approved by the IOM's public relations officers.

That this interview did not have to go through IOM's public relations office, and that, relatedly, the data analyst spoke to me so openly about her views of the relocations programs, and the limits of her agency's own statistics, might be explained in part by the fact I was recording the interview as a PhD student, rather than as a professional journalist. Yet the graphic form of this project may

well also have been a factor. For this form seemed to be a point of interest for the data analyst herself, who at one point during the interview asked me if I was familiar with the comics the IOM itself had produced.

The graphic form of my project also seemed to have benefits for my access to the private club that had formerly used the site where the camp was located as a golf course. Two Port-au-Prince-based Western journalists I spoke to during my fieldwork each independently told me that they had sometimes faced obstacles in even accessing the Petionville clubhouse. However, I did not experience any such difficulties in my research for my graphic project.

When I first met Bill, during my first visit to the clubhouse, in January 2013, I explained that I was in Haiti doing research for a graphic project I was making as part of my thesis and that Western media coverage of humanitarian interventions in Haiti was a major concern in this research. Perhaps for this reason, during my first conversation with Bill, he talked to me extensively about his own concerns about such media coverage. During this informal exchange, in the Petionville Clubhouse, the CEO expressed particular frustrations about certain Western journalists he suspected had wanted to publish stories that would have portrayed the club in a negative light, by emphasizing the contrast between the members and owners of the exclusive club, and the impoverished Haitians living in the camp down below. However he did not initially seem to have any such concerns about my project. And on the first evening I spent in the Clubhouse, he was initially extremely hospitable. While Bill declined my request for a formal interview (the CEO told me that he would first need to obtain permission from Sean Penn), he spoke to me at length more informally, including during a guided tour he offered me of the Petionville Club's property.

My relative ease of access to the Petionville Clubhouse may in part have been related to the fact that I was producing this project as part of my PhD research. Given that both of the Western journalists who reported having difficulties accessing the club were male, my gender may also have facilitated my access to this club. Yet the drawn form of my project also seemed to have some importance for the club's owners, and particularly for Don Moore. For while this

shareholding director of the Petionville Club told me he never allows anyone to photograph him, he was willing to let me *draw him* for my graphic reportage project.

Through a series of interviews I recorded with this shareholding director of the Petionville Club, I was able to document information about the club's role in historic as well as ongoing dynamics of U.S. imperialism in Haiti that had often been neglected in media coverage of Petionville Camp. Like my interviews with Petionville Club's residents, the interviews I recorded with Don proceeded largely as conversations. The questions I initially asked Don were about the history of the Petionville Club. Over the course of the interviews, we also talked extensively about the humanitarian interventions in post-earthquake Haiti, and particularly the interventions in Petionville Camp.

In the first of these interviews, Don mentioned that the club was co-founded by his grandfather, a U.S. businessman who arrived in Haiti under the U.S. Marine occupation of Haiti (1915-34) and stayed on after the Marines left. He also gave me details about the club's current membership, which includes many of Haiti's wealthiest individuals. (Moore, who inherited land from his grandfather as well as another U.S. national who co-founded the club, told me that he himself owns several large swathes of prime Port-au-Prince real estate). Don also talked about some crucial context that had often been missing in media coverage of these interventions. For instance he emphasized a crucial function that the U.S. military served in the camp that had generally been missing in U.S. and Canadian media stories about Petionville Camp. Namely, the U.S. military, which had expressly been invited by the Petionville Club to set up a base camp on the golf course-turned-displacement-camp, was, at least from the perspective of this director, there "keeping the people at bay".

While, as I mentioned earlier on, documenting information and perspectives neglected in international news coverage of humanitarian interventions in camps like Petionville Camp was one of the explicit goals of my research for my graphic project, working in this drawn medium thus in many ways facilitated these goals. For in researching this project, I was able to access both people and spaces it would likely have been more difficult if not impossible for me to access had I been working in a more standard form of journalism. Yet, as I mentioned earlier, this access

was also likely related to my status as a *blan* student in the camp. Significantly, I found that working in the form of graphic reportage also led me to reflect much more on this issue of my positionality than I ever had in my work as a journalist.

### **Illustrating the blind spots of "reporting"**

The research and writing strategies I used to produce my fieldnotes at the very beginning of my research greatly resembled the note-strategies I was accustomed to using in my journalism work. Much as I was used to in writing "reporting notes", I focused on writing down pertinent factual information. And much like I would have if I were a journalist interacting with a "source" (as the people journalists cite in their work are more commonly referred to in journalism), when this information was gleaned from conversations with someone I talked to outside of the context of a recorded interview, I tried as best I could to accurately paraphrase or quote what the person said in my notes.

However, very early on in my research, it dawned on me that it was going to be extremely difficult to complete my graphic project based on these types of notes. For while my journalistic note-taking strategies allowed me to gather much pertinent information, they also left a gaping blind spot. Namely, these reporting notes left me with no record of anything I myself said in many of my exchanges with the people who would, in a journalism project, be considered my "sources". Nor, to be perfectly honest, was there any record at all of my role in many of these social exchanges. As Janet Malcolm (1990) compellingly argued, this blind spot is very characteristic in journalists' reporting process. Yet in the research for my graphic project, this blind spot presented an immediate practical problem. For without any record of my own role in my reporting process, or meaningful reflections on how people responded to me in my fieldwork, I knew it would be very difficult to include myself in the story I was planning to tell through this work of graphic reportage project.

I responded to this dilemma by adopting a very different kind of writing practice in my research, relative to the approach I was used to using in my journalism work. While the factual information I gleaned about topics like conditions in the camp and the relocations program remained vitally important in my notes, I also sought to document my own role in my research process, by taking

notes on the responses I and my project elicited in the camp and clubhouse where I conducted my fieldwork, as well as my social interactions with the people who would, in the context of a regular journalism project, be considered my "sources" of information.

Perhaps partly because it would have been difficult to incorporate such details into a standard journalism piece, in my reporter's notebook, I had never even mentioned the way Haitians responded to me as a *blan*. In contrast, these day to day interactions, and the broader problem of my positionality in this research, occupy considerable space in the fieldnotes I wrote during my research for my graphic project. This focus on my interactions with those I met during my fieldwork also opened up a space in my notes for reflecting on the complex dynamics and negotiations involved in the research for this project. Over the course of my fieldwork for this project, my note-taking practices thus shifted from the approach I was used to using in my journalism work to a writing practice that had much more of a resemblance to contemporary ethnographic writing. In my notebook, I recorded what I observed in the sites where I carried out formal interviews (Petionville Camp, the clubhouse and various people's homes). Yet I also made notes on what I observed in various other sites I visited over the course of my fieldwork in Haiti, including the guest-houses where I stayed in Port-au-Prince over the course of my three research trips, bars and restaurants where I would meet up with friends and contacts, who included a number of Western journalists I had met during my work as a journalist in Haiti.

Given that I anticipated that the drawn form of this project would also draw my readers' attention to the question of my own role and interpretations in this project, I also tried to reflect in my fieldnotes on how my own interpretations affected this research process--something that I generally became most aware of when my assumptions and frameworks of understanding were challenged by my research participants. The fieldwork for my comics journalism project thus had certain parallels with the reflexive methodologies that have become increasingly common in qualitative academic research.

Moreover, I found that drawing contributed in important ways to my process of documenting what I observed during my fieldwork. The "painstaking" process of looking and recalling that has been theorized as central to the practice of drawing (Berger, 1953; Taussig, 2011; Chute, 2016)



Figure 5. Sketch from fieldnotes

found particularly significant in my fieldnotes based on my recollection of what had been said, to *draw* the same interaction, I also needed to be able to recall details about the physical space in which this exchange took place, and about who else was present in the space. Drawing thus compelled me to pay far more attention to what I observed than I did in writing or taking photographs. And by heightening my awareness of the visible aspects of the spatial and social contexts of my work, which of course never existed in a vacuum from broader relations of power, this process also encouraged me to think in a more concrete way than I otherwise might have about my positionality in different sites of my fieldwork.

had very significant implications for my research in Haiti. For instance, I found that making a drawing of a particular interaction or scene I observed in a site like the camp or the clubhouse consistently required that I remember a set of additional details that I did not need in order to record such observations in writing alone. For instance, while I could write about an exchange I had



Figure 6. Sketch from fieldnotes 2

### Exploring different perspectives on images

While I had initially regarded my process of taking photographs during my research as a strategy of visual documentation that would allow me to draw things I observed more accurately, this process also allowed me to document different ways of seeing. As I went about documenting the things and places I observed during my fieldwork through photographs and sketches, my research participants sometimes actively contributed to this visual research process, by bringing their own visual reference materials to the table, or offering suggestions about what they thought I should

focus on. These included particular objects, as well as physical spaces and different kinds of documents.

One displaced Haitian man participating in my research, for instance, gave me a tour at one point of Petionville Camp's latrines and showers, so I took some photos of these facilities, whose conditions he and many other camp residents I spoke to had repeatedly complained about. And as both Cassandra and Francois pointed out the site where his former neighbourhood had been demolished, I also took pictures and shot some video footage in the place whence this Haitian community had been violently evicted.

On several occasions, camp residents also made a point of showing me the identity cards they had been issued by various humanitarian agencies. When Marie-Pierre introduced me one day to a woman living in the camp whose rights to humanitarian assistance were no longer being recognized by the Camp Manager because she had temporarily left the camp to give birth, this young mother immediately showed me a registration card she had been issued by the IOM. I would later find out that this IOM card was the first of a series of cards that families living in camps like Petionville Camp needed to be able to show Camp Managers like J/P HRO in order to qualify for any kind of aid benefit. However, as this young mother, worried about the risks of giving birth in a camp, had taken refuge at the house of some relatives to have her baby, she had never received any of the subsequent ID cards needed to maintain her status. And tellingly, the very first thing she did when I arrived, as a white foreigner, at her tarp, was show me one card she had been issued in which her status had been recognized. Similarly, Marie-Pierre showed me her family's original IDP registration card, listing seven family members, when she talked about the death of her daughter, who had been included on the first card her family was issued by the IOM. (She also showed me to the latest card her family was issued, since Lina's death, in which only 6 family members were listed).

Another person who involved himself in a particularly active way in my process of gathering visual reference material during my fieldwork was the CEO of the Petionville Club. On the guided tour Bill offered me of the Petionville Club's property, through which he explained that he wanted me to see "the golf course's perspective," he expressly invited me to bring along a camera.

As we set off for this tour from the Petionville Clubhouse, Bill guided me up along a grassy ridge overlooking what had been his golf course. As we walked, he pointed out some piles of debris that he blamed some of the humanitarian groups for leaving on his golf course, and he encouraged me to take pictures.

Eventually, we arrived at a small rocky outpost looking down over a cluster of tarps under which some of displaced Haitian families were still living. "You should take a shot here," Evans instructed me, explaining that we were standing at the eighth tee. Having never myself golfed, or frankly even ever watched it on TV, I hadn't a clue what he meant by the term "eighth tee". The CEO responded to my confusion by explaining that this was the place from which one would usually take a shot at the eighth hole. Yet it was very difficult to see the eighth hole, under the tarps of the displaced families who remained in the camp. So as I raised my camera, and focused the viewfinder, the CEO tried to point it out to me.

In addition to photographing what my research participants and others I spoke to during my fieldwork wanted me to picture in my project, I also tried to record what they said about the significance of what they were showing me, by taking detailed notes about their comments, or, where possible, making a digital audio recording. While the visual research methods I used in producing this graphic project were very different from those of photo-elicitation, some of my research participants did, to varying degrees, play a role in the production of some of the images used in my project.

### **Writing in the language of graphic reportage**

As I began writing the script based on my interview transcripts and fieldnotes, I was very aware that journalism's traditional objectivist stylistic conventions, which mandate that "objective reporters" write in the third person voice, and adopt supposedly "neutral" language, would have seemed somewhat out of place in this project. For by virtue of this project's reliance on the medium of drawings, which have been argued to call attention to subjectivity and interpretation, this project has connotations that are quite the opposite of these objectivist conventions. These cultural connotations of my medium would also have made it difficult for me to present my work using the kinds of metaphors through which journalism has historically enacted authority, by

positioning itself as a "mirror on reality" or a "window on the world". At first, I anticipated that this writing process would be similar to that involved in my previous work writing articles in the field of investigative reporting--a tradition of journalism that, as discussed in Chapter One, has long broken from these objectivist conventions, while also staking out its own claims to "the truth". As I began writing this script, I sometimes found myself falling back on the narrative conventions I was accustomed to using in my work in the area of investigative journalism, in which one's research process is typically constructed as a story about uncovering, revealing or exposing the truth about some injustice. However, partly because the types of narratives and metaphors used in investigative reporting seemed very out of place in a medium associated with subjectivity and interpretation, I had to find a very different way of writing about my research in this project.

Over the course of the process of writing my script, I began experimenting with using a set of metaphors very different than those I was accustomed to using in my work as an investigative reporter. In contrast to the metaphors through which investigative reporters often position their work as an activity of "uncovering", "exposing" or "casting light on" "the truth", in writing this project, I consciously drew on some of the language often used in critical media scholarship, in which the work of journalists is understood less as an activity of reporting factual information than of producing "images" and "representations" (Gamson et al, 1992). I did not end up using these exact terms in my script (although in an early draft of the script, the title of Chapter Two was "Representing 'Victims'"). However, in writing the titles of the project, and individual chapters, I used a closely related word--"Picturing", which like the term "media images", connotes the level of ideas and cognition as well as visual reproduction, thus inviting attention to journalism's role in ideology and culture in a way that the metaphors of glass and light often invoked by journalists do not.

While the fact that I was producing this visual journalism project in the context of a PhD program in communication studies was no doubt a factor in my decision to use this relatively critical terminology in presenting my work, the medium in which I was working also played an important role. For I anticipated that, by virtue of the drawn form of graphic reportage, my role in "picturing" the social realities I wanted to show through this project would be relatively more

apparent to my readers than it would have been if I had been working in a more standard form of visual journalism. And while using this term in the title of a documentary film or a work of photojournalism might have seemed somewhat pedantic, the word "Picturing" somehow just seemed to *fit* as a title for a work of graphic reportage. This writing process thus had certain similarities with Richardson's "creative analytical practices" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 1995), in, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, the author breaks from traditional objectivist writing conventions, and often actively engages in a process of testing out and developing new metaphors.

In writing this script, I also presented my process of researching this project in a way that was very different from the language I had been accustomed to using in talking about my journalism work, as a process of "reporting". In contrast to the narrative structure of my past journalism work, I will show in the next chapter that this graphic script tells a story that is, above all, about the dynamics of power, as well as dialogue and negotiation, involved in the production of any work of journalism. Writing about the negotiations involved in one's fieldwork has long been promoted by critical ethnographers, as a means of addressing some of the problems with the writing conventions associated with traditional ethnographic strategies of authority (Clifford, 1988). It was likely in part due to my engagement with this ethnographic literature, as I was struggling with the narrative structure of my script, that I first began experimenting with writing about my research in Haiti in this way. Yet as I began to re-structure my script into a story about my research for this graphic project as a process of negotiation between myself and differently situated humanitarian stakeholders, I found that the medium of graphic storytelling worked particularly well for communicating this type of narrative. For not only did the interpretive, subjective connotations of this drawn medium resonate with the emphasis in such narratives on issues of interpretation and positionality. Given that dialogue also plays a crucial role in graphic narrative, writing about my research in this medium also allowed me to present specific dialogical exchanges from my fieldwork.

I structured the narrative of my graphic script around the stories both Cassandra and Marie-Pierre told me about their own experiences of humanitarian interventions in their camp. These two displaced Haitian women also both play an important role as characters in the narrative of my

script. In order to tell a story about the fieldwork I carried out for this work of graphic reportage, I also cast myself as a character in this graphic script.

In the process of writing this script, I experimented with different strategies for citing the interviews I recorded during my fieldwork in Haiti. For as I realized very early in this writing process, the medium of comics storytelling profoundly complicated the citational practices I was accustomed to using in my writing as a journalist. According to these standard practices of citation used in print journalism, quotations do not typically stand alone, and it is common practice to cite just a couple of words from an interviewee in a sentence composed largely by the journalist. It is also very common to paraphrase an interviewee's words. And in the case of statements made in a language other than English, the interviewee's original words are typically excluded altogether in written forms of journalism, which often fail to even mention the process of translation. Yet in the medium of graphic reportage, in which words are often most effectively conveyed through dialogue, there is far less room for words that merely describe what others say. I thus had to rely much more in this project than I usually did in my writing as a journalist on my interviewees' own words. And this, in turn, prompted me pay more attention than I might have otherwise to differences between the terms and languages used by the different individuals I talked to during my research.

The name of the camp where I carried out my fieldwork was one of these sites where questions around linguistic translation quickly became extremely political. In the process of writing my graphic script based on the interviews I recorded during this fieldwork, I became aware of an important difference that might have otherwise entirely eluded me between the way I myself and certain research participants referred to the camp. For instance, in the interviews I recorded with camp residents, I generally referred to the camp as "Petionville Camp", which was the name I had seen in the North American English language media reports through which I myself had first learned about this camp of displaced Haitians living on the Petionville Club's former golf course. Or alternately, I would refer to it simply as "*kan an*"--which is Creole for "the camp." Yet some of my research participants referred to it in quite different ways in these recorded interviews. For instance some of the displaced Haitians who participated in this project kept referring to this site where they'd taken refuge after the earthquake as "*teren an*". At first, I believed that my research

participants' references to "*teren an*" might be short for "*Terrain de Golf*", which was in fact the camp's official name (French for "Golf Course"). Yet like the French word "terrain", *teren an* can also be translated to mean "the land". And what some of the displaced Haitians who participated in my research were talking about really *did often seem to be land*. Given the contentious issues surrounding land ownership in this site, the issue of how to translate "*teren an*" was far from a merely technical linguistic problem. It was also a political issue, inextricably entangled with the long history and ongoing dynamics of US imperialism in Haiti.

It was only as I began writing the script that I even noticed the fact that some of my research participants had consistently referred to what I kept calling "*kan an*" ("the camp") as "*teren an*" ("the land"). If I had been writing a print journalism article, it would have been easy to disregard such discrepancies. However, when I began writing my graphic script, such differences between the terms used by differently situated people I'd spoken to during my fieldwork immediately jumped out at me. Because graphic narratives rely so heavily on dialogue, and, relatedly, this encouraged me to cite extensively from my interviewees' own words, it would have been hard not to notice these differences. By its very form, graphic narrative thus rendered such disjunctures (which in cases like that of the name of the camp, were sometimes at once linguistic and political) highly apparent.

Similarly, presenting interviews in the dialogic form of graphic reportage drew my attention to some significant differences in the language different research participants used in discussing the residents of Haiti's camps. In the interviews I recorded with the two humanitarian professionals who participated in my research, these humanitarians generally referred to these camp residents as "Internally Displaced People" or "IDPs". Both these humanitarian professionals emphasized that determining who counted as an IDP was a far from straightforward process. People who'd lost their homes in the earthquake had to be living in recognized camps in order to be considered "IDPs". However, as Emily, the first humanitarian I interviewed, emphasized, many Haitians were, even before the earthquake, living in highly precarious conditions that greatly resembled displacement camps. In the interview I recorded with Emily, she told me that, in practice, this meant that "it was difficult to say who lives in the camp, who lives in the neighbourhood, who deserves to have the status of an IDP":

Is somebody who lives in a little metal shack on the other side of the street from the camp that maybe has T-shelters, not an IDP as well? So there were lots of decisions that needed to be made.

As the IOM data analyst explained, Haitians living in officially recognized IDP camps were registered and counted by the IOM through a system formally known as the Displacement Tracking Matrix or the DTM. This began with a process known as the registration, which was first carried out by the IOM in the initial aftermath of the earthquake. This registration involved a kind of census, through which the agency recorded detailed information about Haitian families and individuals living in camps.

Yet reminiscent of the way that Malkki emphasized that humanitarian workers she spoke with during her fieldwork seemed to be constantly seeking to measure and evaluate the "refugeeness" of refugees (Malkki, 1996), Emily told me that "registering an IDP is not something that happens once and then it's over". Rather, in the interview I recorded with Emily, she emphasized that this was an ongoing process that often in practice involved *deleting* IDPs from the official list of beneficiaries:

it happens every 2 months. So the IOM teams were roving around. Every 2 months they came to the same camp to give basically an updated status, to delete beneficiaries, or delete IDPs from beneficiary lists, where they had left the camp, or where they had gotten a T[emporary]-shelter from someone, and some organizations would feedback into this registry list.

Given that Emily had been directly involved in this process of "deleting" IDPs, I asked her at one point about the case of a young displaced mother I had interviewed during my fieldwork who feared she would no longer be on the list of beneficiaries for the rental subsidies being administered in her camp because she had left for several weeks to give birth at a relative's house. Emily, who did not appear at all surprised, responded by saying, "The list would be downsized, that's pretty much the goal."

Meanwhile, the IOM data analyst explained that the main set of official statistics on Haitians living in camps are produced through what she described as an entirely "separate component" of the DTM, involving the "rapid assessment and counting of displaced people." And these statistics allow the IOM to assess the progress of humanitarian relocations program, according to an

"indicator" or quantitative measure of assessment, which is the "decrease of people living in camps." The two humanitarian professionals I interviewed also emphasized the political, legal and institutional context of the category "IDP". They both emphasized that unlike refugees, IDPs have not crossed an international border. The IOM employee I interviewed also noted that IDPs do not have the same rights to international protection as those recognized as refugees.

I never heard anybody who actually lived in the camp use the term "IDP" either in referring to themselves or other camp residents. Rather, the camp residents I interviewed for this project tended to refer to various members of their families and community using either first names, or identifying them as neighbours or family members. The Petionville Club's directors, meanwhile, used entirely different terms from either the humanitarian officials or the displaced Haitians I spoke with. For landowners like Don, those the IOM called "IDPs", and my research participants called their "neighbours", were people "squatting my land" (D. Moore, Interview, February 12, 2013). Anticipating that such discrepancies would also strike any reader of *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, I tried to reflect as much as I could on these issues of language and interpretation in writing my graphic script. In the next chapter, where I discuss specific excerpts of this script, I will return to this question of how the form of graphic reportage affected the way I reflected on the politics of language in *Picturing Aid in Haiti*.

Even if I had wanted to, it would have been very difficult to avoid explicitly talking in this script on my status as a *blan* in Haiti. I became cognizant relatively early on in this writing process of the ways in which my drawn renditions of some of the scenes I wrote about in this script would themselves work to raise the question of my positionality. Significantly, the first sample page of graphic reportage I completed as part of my research, which I finished laying out before I had completed the script, depicted a scene from the guided tour that Bill offered me of the Petionville Club's property. On this page, called "Views of the golf hole", the golf club CEO and I, who are both white North Americans, are pictured standing on the "eighth tee," overlooking the camp below, whose residents are all black Haitians (See Figure 7 on p. 113). As I will discuss in the next chapter, even in the absence of any textual references to my status as a *blan* in Haiti, the visual signifier of race worked in such drawn depictions to raise the question of my positionality in relations of social, spatial and racial domination in sites like Petionville Camp. Anticipating

that such graphic renditions of my fieldwork would also likely draw my readers' attention to the problem of my positionality, I responded by talking very openly in my script about my status as a *blan*, and about some of the issues this presented in my fieldwork. I will return to this issue of how working in a drawn form encouraged (indeed even compelled) me to reflect on the problem of my positionality in the next chapter, where I will discuss some specific examples from both my graphic script and from my sample drawings and pages of graphic reportage.



Figure 7. Views of the golf hole

### **Drawing on media images**

When I began searching out additional visual reference material online for my graphic project, I anticipated that the images I located through this visual research would simply allow me to accurately draw some of the places, people and events to which I or my research participants make reference in this project. However, the various photographs, satellite images, videos I located online ended up playing a somewhat more complicated role in this project. For in addition to allowing me to locate images that would serve as reference material for my drawings, this research process also revealed much about broader struggles over the visual representation of specific places, people and events I sought to depict in my graphic project.

For instance, when I did a Google Image search for the camp in Place St. Pierre that Leslie Voltaire had mentioned, one of the first images that came up was a photograph published by an online Haitian media outlet (HaitiLibre.com, 2011) from a press conference that Haiti's then-president Michel Martelly had held in this park. Through a press release that I also located through online research, I found out that it was at this press conference in Place St. Pierre, which was the first camp closed through the Haitian government's flagship relocations program 16/6, that Martelly had made one of his first public announcements about the "progress" that had been made through this program (*Bureau de Communication de la Présidence, 2011*). This press conference took place after the displaced Haitians and their tarps had all been cleared out of this prominent public park, and Place St Pierre had been restored into a park suitable for official photo-ops. The image of this emptied former camp in the park, which had been tastefully landscaped prior to the photo-ops Martelly staged at his press conference, thus played an important role in both the Haitian government's official communications and in media representations of "16/6".

Given that there was thus no trace of the camp itself in this image of Martelly's press conference, it ultimately had rather limited value for my efforts to draw the camp in Place St. Pierre, which was the purpose for which I'd originally sought out this photograph. Yet this visual research process gave me an appreciation of the broader context of Leslie Voltaire's critical reference to this now-vanished encampment. More specifically, contemplating the image of the emptied camp where Martelly had held his press conference in Place St. Pierre, alongside the text in which the

government had announced this press conference (*Bureau de Communication de la Présidence, 2011*), gave me a better appreciation of this former camp's position within a broader set of official discourses about the Haitian government's relocations program. And ultimately, this context struck me as so significant for grasping the meaning of the former government minister's claim that 16/6 constituted a merely "visual solution" that I ended up revising my script in order to mention that the encampment in Place St. Pierre had been the first camp closed through the Haitian government's official relocations program, and that the Haitian government had held a press in this particular camp.

The visual research I carried out while searching for images of cleared sections of Petionville Camp had a similarly transformative impact on my project. When I began searching out such images, to use as visual reference material for a drawing of an empty section of the camp to which Marie-Pierre pointed, while making a critical comment about the relocations program, I expected these images would simply help me to accurately depict this section of the camp from which displaced Haitians had already been relocated. During this research, I found some relevant footage of an emptied section of the camp in a YouTube video produced by J/P HRO. Yet in addition to showing me what this emptied section looked like, this video also suggested much about the significance of such images in the official communications of the camp manager. This video, released by J/P HRO in November of 2013, was about Penn's group's relocations program in Petionville Camp. In this video, a man wearing a J/P HRO t-shirt explained that there had been more than 60,000 people living in this camp. However, there were now fewer than 500 families left in Petionville Camp, he said in the video. As footage of a cleared section of the camp appeared on screen, this man from J/P HRO also referred to this decrease in the number of people living in Petionville Camp as "great progress". More than merely providing me with visual reference material to use in drawing the empty section of the camp that Marie-Pierre had pointed to, this video also revealed much about the central place that images of such cleared sections of the camp occupied in the Camp Manager's official narrative on its "progress". And this seemed so crucial for grasping the broader context of Marie-Pierre critical remarks on this program that I decided to write about this video in my script.

Similarly during my online research for my graphic project, I happened to come across a video that Penn's group posted on YouTube slightly after Cassandra said she was interviewed by the J/P HRO staff person who had wanted her to say only good things about J/P HRO's work. Watching this video, which was called "13 stories for 2013", I saw that Cassandra's testimony had been entirely excluded in this video, which concluded with a proclamation from a male camp leader declaring that "The People applaud J/P HRO". This seemed so significant, from the standpoint of the concerns that Cassandra had raised, that I ended up making reference to this video in the script.

As Rose (2012) has emphasized, critical visual methodologies require that researchers consider the broader context of the images that they use in their work. From this perspective, the meanings of specific images are understood to hinge in important ways on other images, as well as the textual and verbal languages through which the meanings of images are expressed, negotiated and sometimes challenged. While this was not initially my intent, the online visual research in which I engaged in producing my graphic project allowed me to explore these contexts of the images I planned to draw, and to situate these visuals in a broader landscape of other media images and their (sometimes contested) meanings. Producing sample illustrations and pages of graphic reportage involved a drawing process that was in some ways similar to that involved in my fieldwork itself. Like the drawings and sketches I made "live" in the field, or based on memory, this latter drawing process also required very careful observation of what I was drawing. And much in the way that drawing during my fieldwork enhanced my observations of the things, situations, people and places I was drawing, this latter process of making drawings based on various kinds of visual reference material encouraged me to pay particular attention to details about these images about which I might not have otherwise have been as cognizant.

If the process of writing my comics script laid bare for me the extent to which the language and terms I used in my writing were sites of struggle, this visual research process similarly heightened my awareness of the fraught politics of visual representation involved in the production of my comics journalism project. For partly because of the particularly intense process of looking that Berger (1953, 1985) has argued lies at the heart of the practice of drawing, even before I actually began these illustrations, I often came to pay close attention not just to

*what* these photographs and videos showed, but also *how* they went about showing particular people, places and events. Looking carefully enough at different kinds of images I used in my research to be able to draw them thus had important implications for what I saw both in the images I produced during my fieldwork, and in various photographs, satellite images, videos I used as additional visual reference material. Just as looking at what I observed closely enough to be able to draw it had real effects on what I was able to observe during my fieldwork, this careful process of looking that is a precondition of drawing also drew my attention to the perspective from which these images were produced. And this process of looking at these found images carefully enough to draw them also called my attention to both differences and similarities in the framings and perspectives amongst these found images, and the photographic and drawn images I had produced during my fieldwork. And by encouraging me to attend to the perspective embedded in my visual reference material, and to the question of how the photographs and videos I was drawing from implicitly worked to frame what they presented as reality, this intense process of looking also encouraged me to consider the problem of what was *not* visible in the frame.

The intensive kind of seeing that Berger (1953) and Taussig (2011) analyse as a precondition for drawing had particularly important implications for my process of exploring the ways in which displaced Haitians were represented in the images used in the production of statistics on Haiti's camp population. Amongst the photographs that I used as visual reference material in the drawings I completed were a series of aerial photographs I found online. Such images, often produced by drones, played an important role in the system through which official statistics on Haiti's IDP population was produced. In the interview I recorded with the IOM data analyst, she had mentioned that the IOM used such images, which it produced by flying its drone over camps like Petionville Camp, to count the number of displaced Haitians living camps. When I carried out further research online on the "Displacement Tracking Matrix" system that the IOM used to count Haiti's camp population, I came across one of these aerial images of Petionville Camp. This photograph, which I found online in an IOM PowerPoint, appears to have been produced by the drone the IOM sometimes flew over Petionville Camp (see Figure 8).



Figure 8. IOM Haiti Mission, Aerial photo of Kan Terrain de Golf

This photograph was featured in a presentation called "Lessons From Haiti: Innovation in Tracking and Housing Internally Displaced People" that a representative of the IOM Haiti Mission delivered at the Brookings Institute, a think-tank in Washington D.C., in December 2012. As can be seen in the heading of the slide, the IOM's Haiti Mission included this photo, which shows Petionville Camp (or Terrain de Golf, as it was referred to in the IOM's statistics), in a part of their presentation that was specifically about the methodology of the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (or DTM, as it is called in the slide). As the data analyst I interviewed during my fieldwork explained to me, the IOM used such aerial imagery to count the number of tents in camps like Petionville Camp, which they would then use to estimate the number of Haitians living in the camp. These photos thus played a key role in the methodology of the DTM, through which the IOM produced the main set of official statistics on Haitians living in camps.

Initially, I saw such aerial images as a particularly valuable type of visual reference material for one of the illustrations I completed as part of my project, in which I sought to give my readers a sense of the size and shape of the camp's surface area. And as I became more interested in the methodology of the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix, I also saw aerial images produced by

the agency's drone as having an additional significance, because of the role these images played in the agency's process of counting Haiti's camp population. However as I began looking at these aerial images, and particularly at the IOM's drone image of Petionville Camp, carefully enough to draw from them, I noticed something else about these images used in the production of official statistics on Haiti's camp population that I might never have noticed had I had not been looking closely enough at these photographs to make my drawing. Namely, this drone perspective rendered it all but impossible to see the people living in the camp.

This process of looking carefully, which Berger (1953, 1985) and Taussig (2011) have both theorized as central to the practice of drawing, was in some ways akin to the type of looking that Rose (2012) argues is a key criteria for a critical visual methodology. In elaborating the critical approach she urges visual researchers to adopt in their work, Rose insists on the importance of looking more closely at images than many social science researchers traditionally have, writing that "it is necessary to look very carefully at visual images" (2012, p. 16). I found that the drawn medium of my project inherently encouraged me to engage in such a careful practice of looking at the images from which I drew in this work of graphic reportage.

In drawing and designing sample panels and pages of comics journalism, it would have been difficult, even if I had wanted to, for me to rely in this project on the visual strategies of presentation used in more standard forms of journalism, in which images are typically most valued as "visual evidence". For unlike photographs and video footage--which are valued for the indexical relationship they are believed to have with reality--drawings are typically read as subjective and interpretive. For this reason, I knew that even carefully drawn studies of photographic reference material I drew as part of my research thus call attention to themselves, in a way the originals did not, to their status as highly interpretive and subjective representations, produced by a human hand. As I illustrated and designed the visuals for this project, I was very conscious of these connotations of my drawn images. And these connotations played an important role in the visual strategies of presentation I used in this project, in which I tried to be as cognizant as I could about the role my own interpretations played in my way of looking at the images I used in the production of this project. Building on Berger and Taussig's insightful observations about the practice of drawing, one could say that drawing or sketching inherently

encourages this type of consciousness of what one sees. As a record of "*seeing seeing*", as Taussig puts it (2011), a drawing also arguably communicates this process of looking involved in its creation in a way that is quite different from the photograph, the type of image form more commonly used in visual research methods.

In this chapter, I reflected critically on my process of making a work of graphic reportage based on my fieldwork in Petionville Camp. While documenting information and perspectives neglected in international news coverage of Haiti was one the explicit goals of the research I carried out for this graphic project, I showed that the drawn medium in which I was working facilitated this process. I also demonstrated that working in this drawn form encouraged me to reflect more throughout the making of this project than I was accustomed to doing in my work as a journalist on the problem of my positionality, and the politics of language and representation involved in my work. As I will show in the next chapter, where I discuss specific examples from *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, this graphic approach thus allowed me to address the problems that scholars have observed in more standard forms of media coverage of humanitarian interventions in a particularly layered and reflexive way.

## CHAPTER 4

### REFRAMING HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS IN HAITI

As I explained in the introduction to this thesis, *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, the book-length work of graphic reportage I plan to eventually publish based on my PhD fieldwork, is still a work in progress. As I detailed in Chapter Two, I have, to date, written a script for this graphic book, made two dozen sample illustrations, and laid out four sample pages of graphic reportage. There is still a substantial amount of work (particularly in the area of drawing, layout and design) that remains to be done to finish this graphic book. However, taken together, the different written, drawn and mixed-media components of my graphic project that I have so far completed nonetheless make it possible to draw some preliminary conclusions about how this drawn approach affected my own process of framing humanitarian interventions in Haiti. Discussing specific examples from my graphic script, illustrations and sample pages, I will show that, partly due to its graphic form, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* highlights perspectives and critical context that had been neglected in the media. Moreover, I will also demonstrate that this work of graphic reportage foregrounds the problem of my positionality, and the complex dynamics of representation language, and translation involved in my process of framing these interventions. As a result, I will also show that my graphic project works on multiple levels to challenge the dehumanizing narratives, language and images through which the residents of Petionville Camp were often framed in Western media. Based on my experience of making *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, I will propose that this graphic approach offers a particularly promising means of addressing the problems scholars have observed in more standard forms of media coverage of humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti. I will also argue that, by its very form, graphic reportage has the potential to encourage greater reflexivity in journalism.

As I showed in reviewing the literature on media coverage of disasters and humanitarian interventions in the first chapter of this thesis, this coverage has long been faulted for neglecting relevant historical context, as well as for silencing and dehumanizing the people targeted by such interventions. As some of the examples that I have discussed in earlier chapters of this thesis attest, these problems were particularly evident in both official and media discourses about Haitians living in camps like Petionville Camp. For instance, as I discussed in my introductory

chapter, English language news stories about Petionville Camp generally failed to mention the golf club's role in historical and ongoing relations of US imperialism in Haiti. Moreover, Petionville Camp's residents were often portrayed in this coverage as passive victims dependent on the assistance of famous Westerners like Sean Penn. Meanwhile, Penn was often cast as the main protagonist in this camp, despite the fact that there were 60,000 Haitian citizens who lived there. By placing such disproportionate emphasis on the agency of a U.S. actor, and ignoring that of Petionville Camp's residents, this coverage worked to frame these Haitians as somehow less fully human than the white Western celebrity shown coming to their rescue.

As can be seen in the screenshot from ID-PR's website shown in Figure 9, this L.A.-based entertainment publicity firm has taken credit for its role in publicizing J/P HRO through some of this media coverage, including *Vanity Fair's* feature article called "Welcome to Camp Penn" (id-pr.com; April 20, 2013). In reviewing media stories about Petionville Camp, I never saw any mention of the fact that J/P HRO's media relations were formally coordinated by this entertainment publicity firm contracted to manage Penn's image as a celebrity. Nor did this coverage alert readers to the rules and protocols the California agency's entertainment publicists expected journalists to follow in covering the camp. In addition to framing the residents of Petionville Camp as passive victims in "Camp Penn", this coverage thus also rendered invisible ID-PR's role in the production of this dehumanizing media frame.

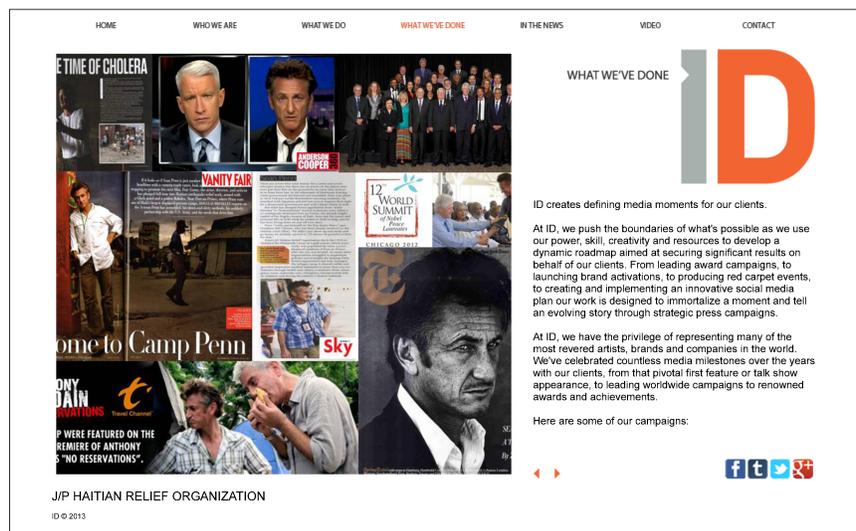


Figure 9. Screenshot from ID-PR.com, April 2013

No less significant, the bureaucratic categories and statistics through which the residents of camps like Petionville Camp were often discussed in Western media similarly worked to dehumanize these camp residents. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the deaths of camp residents like Marie-Pierre's daughter Lina were not even counted in the main set of statistics on the population of Haitians living in these camps for people classified as Internally Displaced People. Moreover, as I showed in Chapter Three, it was impossible to actually see the humans living (and dying) in these camps in the aerial images that agencies like IOM used to count Haiti's camp population. Yet as I mentioned in the previous chapter, these statistics, showing a decrease in the number of Haitians living in camps, were often presented in the media as evidence of "progress" in Haiti's recovery since the earthquake.

Partly due to its graphic form, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* addresses these patterns of dehistoricization, silencing and dehumanization in a particularly layered and reflexive way.

### **Presenting perspectives missing in the media**

In contrast to much Western media coverage of humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti, my graphic script accords more space to the perspectives of local people targeted by such interventions than it does to officials from Western governments, NGOs or international bureaucratic institutions. In this script, I cite various different people I spoke to over the course of my fieldwork, both in the context of formal interviews, and during more informal exchanges. However, I cite particularly extensively in this script from my interviews with some of the residents of Petionville Camp, whose perspectives were, as I discussed in the introduction to this thesis, often missing in the media. And my script accords particular space to the perspectives of Haitian women living in the camp, who as I noted in Chapter Two, were often particularly marginalized in decision-making in these camps as well as in Western media coverage.

While this alternative pattern of citation was in part a conscious choice, the graphic form of this project also played a role. For as I showed in the previous chapter, this drawn medium helped me to both access and build relationships with camp residents who would have been afraid to be interviewed for a TV or radio broadcast. Moreover, as I discussed in Chapter 3, presenting my research in the dialogic form of a graphic script also encouraged me to rely extensively on my

interviewees' own words. For this reason, much of my script works as a platform for the words of the displaced Haitians who contributed to my research. *Picturing Aid in Haiti* also sometimes cites people who worked at bureaucratic agencies. However, due to the ways in which this graphic form facilitated my access to these individuals' private views, my script also presents the relatively critical information and perspectives they shared with me about these agencies' work.

This made it possible to present readers with perspectives and critical context that had been neglected in media coverage of humanitarian aid in post-earthquake Haiti. For instance, in contrast to much media coverage of the relocations programs that various agencies used to close Haiti's camps, my project accords considerable space to displaced Haitians' own perspectives on these programs. I introduce these relocations programs in the introductory chapter of my script by quoting from the interview I recorded with the IOM's data analyst. In the first quote I include from my interview with this IOM employee, she refers to these rental subsidies programs as "the easiest and quickest solution" to the crisis of displacement in Haiti (Julia, cited in *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p.6). This is followed by a second quote, in which the data analyst expresses her own, relatively more critical, private views on this "solution". In the penultimate chapter, which is called "Humanitarian Ends", I return to the topic of these relocations programs. This chapter begins with a quote from the IOM data analyst, who explains the benefits these programs offer from the perspective of her employer's institutional priorities of closing camps. The chapter goes on to contrast the data analyst's perspective on this "solution for IDPs," as she refers to it, with the analyses of various displaced Haitians who participated in this research project, who criticized the programs on the grounds of their (non) sustainability, their paternalist nature, and their unintended effect on driving up the already high cost of rent in Port-au-Prince.

Drawing on some of my research participants' accounts of life in the camp since the aid cut-off that was executed in camps throughout Haiti as part of various agencies' official strategy of closing these camps, "Humanitarian Ends" also critically explores the effects of these policies on the health and wellbeing of the residents of camps like the one where I carried out my fieldwork. I quote at length in this chapter from Marie-Pierre's account about how her daughter fell ill and died in the camp a year after the aid cut-off. This penultimate chapter of my script also quotes the IOM data analyst's explanation of how such deaths are not counted in the main set of official

statistics on Haitians living in camps, which the IOM uses to evaluate the success of humanitarian relocations programs, by measuring "the decrease of people in camps" in Haiti.

As the literature on Sacco's books attests, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* is far from the first work of graphic reportage to highlight points of view ignored in mainstream news. As I showed in reviewing this literature in Chapter One, scholars have repeatedly emphasized the ways in which Sacco's work draws attention to the experiences and perspectives of people whose perspectives are often missing in the media. As I mentioned in Chapter One, Sacco himself has identified his medium of comics as a factor in his alternative pattern of sourcing, by emphasizing that this drawn medium has sometimes made it difficult for him to access the official types of sources who often prevail in more standard forms of journalism. However in the literature on graphic reportage, neither Sacco nor the scholars who have written about his work have offered any comment about how this medium might affect graphic journalists' access to people whose voices are often missing in the news. By showing that this drawn form has the potential to facilitate journalists' access to such under-represented perspectives, my research-creation project contributes to elucidating this crucial issue.

### **Ethically representing people who fear speaking out in the media**

In addition to facilitating my efforts to document points of view that had been neglected in the media, this graphic approach also had important implications for the way I *presented* these different perspectives. And one particularly significant benefit this drawn medium presented was that it made it possible for me to visually represent people who feared speaking out publicly without revealing their identities. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, all of the residents of Petionville Camp who participated in my research requested that their identities be protected. Working in a drawn form made it relatively more straightforward to represent these camp residents visually without revealing their identities than would have been the case in a more common form of visual journalism, such as photography or video.

Technically, it would have been possible for me to portray these displaced Haitians while still protecting their identities in photos or in a video. For there are a variety of techniques that journalists and documentarians have developed that allow them to visually represent interviewees

without revealing their identities. These techniques, which often involve strategies to avoid showing interviewees' faces, are actually quite common in visual and audio-visual media depictions of individuals cannot speak out publicly without putting themselves at risk (including undocumented immigrants, another category of displaced people who, due their precarious status, are often afraid to be identified in the media) (Vagnes, 2015). However as media scholar Oyvind Vagnes has observed (2015), in the specific case of visual media representations of undocumented immigrants, such strategies have an unintended effect of rendering "the non-citizens of the differential body politic...faceless" (Vagnes, 2015, p. 160). And Vagnes (2015) has argued that this raises some quite serious issues when journalists are trying to represent individuals belonging to a group already dehumanized in the media. The medium of *drawing* rendered it possible for me to navigate these inherently fraught political and ethical issues involved in visual media representations of individuals like the displaced Haitians who participated in my research in a range of different ways.

Some of my visual depictions of my interviewees, perhaps most notably my silhouetted portrait of a woman speaking out (see Figure 10 below), are reminiscent of the kinds of visual strategies often used both in photography and documentaries, where it is not uncommon for people who cannot ethically be identified in the media to be portrayed in silhouette. The woman speaking out in the drawing is visible only by her silhouetted profile--as if seen through a tent made out of bed-sheets (which was initially the only type of "shelter" many displaced Haitian families had). However, in some of these sample illustrations, the medium of drawing allowed me to portray my research participants in ways that simply would not have been possible in more standard



Figure 10. Woman speaking out

visual forms of journalism.



Figure 11. Life under tarps

While all manner of techniques that *mask* a subject's identifying features (through for instance blurring, or placing an opaque mark over the subject's face) are used in photography, film and video, it is hard to imagine an interviewee being shown with essentially a *different* face in photo-based media. Yet this is what I effectively did in some of my sample illustrations, such as the one shown in Figure 11, which I drew based on Marie-

Pierre's account of the first rainy season her family weathered in Petionville Camp. In my drawing, I tried to depict all the details that Marie-Pierre told me about this particularly difficult time. These details included her tarp rotting, and thus badly leaking, her daughter Lina falling ill, and her grandkids being sick with malaria. Although nobody is identifiable in the drawing, Marie-Pierre's face is shown with altered features, as are those of Lina and her children.

Due to the possibilities this drawn form of journalism opens up for visually representing individuals with faces while still protecting their identities, Vagnes has proposed that graphic reportage offers a "mode of witnessing" that "escapes the constraints of the audio and the photographic representations of" people like undocumented immigrants (Vagnes, 2015, p.162). Writing specifically about the way this drawn form allowed Sacco, in one of his shorter works of graphic reportage, to tell the story of an individual undocumented immigrant through "a form of direct address within the inevitable parameters of anonymity", Vagnes has observed that this drawn form of journalism makes it possible to safely and ethically represent such immigrants as individuals in a way "which is hard to imagine in any other verbal-visual form" (Vagnes, 2015, p. 161). At the same time, he notes that such drawn visual representations of the migrant who

cannot ethically be identified invite reflections on "the fraught visibility of the story's subject" (Vagnes, 2015, p. 160). For this reason, Vagnes has suggested that this drawn form of journalism may be uniquely well suited to "contest the invisibility" of undocumented immigrants. Based on my experience of using this drawn approach to visually represent displaced Haitians, I would argue that graphic reportage actually has a much broader potential. For as can be seen in my illustrations and sample pages of graphic reportage, this drawn approach can help ethically tell the stories of other people who are typically marginalized in the media, but who may be at risk if they speak out publicly.

### **Highlighting histories ignored in mainstream journalism**

*Picturing Aid in Haiti* also provides readers with historical context that had been neglected in media coverage of Petionville Camp. For instance, in the chapter of my graphic script in which I first introduce readers to the encampment of displaced Haitians who took refuge on the Petionville Club golf course, I devote considerable space to exploring the club's position in a broader history of U.S. imperialism in Haiti--a history that Western journalists covering aid in Haiti have often been faulted for neglecting (Dash 2010). And citing François' eyewitness account of the violent evictions and home demolitions the Haitian state carried out in the area at the behest of the golf club in the late 1990s, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* also highlights more recent historical context that had similarly been neglected in the media.

Much of the first chapter of my graphic script, which is called "Views of the Golf Course", is devoted to exploring this context. The chapter begins by mentioning that the club was originally founded under a 19-year U.S. marine occupation of Haiti (1915-34). (A fact which, as I discussed in my introduction to this thesis, had generally gone unmentioned in news reports about Petionville Camp). "Views of the Golf Course" also provides readers with information that prepares them to grasp the legacy of this occupation, in terms of relations of both race and property in contemporary Haiti. For amongst the background information I provide about this occupation, I specify that the U.S. Marines had sought to introduce U.S. racial segregationist policies to Haiti, and I also mention that the occupation authorities rewrote the Haitian constitution so that Americans and other foreign nationals could own land in Haiti.

"Views of the Golf Course" also explores the Petionville Club's position in this broader history of U.S. imperialism in Haiti, and situates its current shareholders in relations of power, race, space and property in contemporary Haiti. Citing from one of my interviews with Don, I mention that one of the founders of the Petionville Club was this shareholding director's own grandfather, a white U.S. businessman who first arrived in Haiti in the 1920s under the U.S. Marine occupation and stayed on after the Marines left. I also provide readers with some of the information this Petionville Club director told me about the club's other current shareholders. Including about himself, who I quote explaining that he inherited his shares in the Petionville Club, as well as large swaths of prime real estate in Port-au-Prince, from his grandfather.

As I mentioned in Chapter Three, the evictions and home demolitions the Haitian government carried out at the behest of the golf course in the 1990s had gone unmentioned in news stories about Petionville Camp. Yet information about these events occupies the better part of nine pages of my graphic script. I devote two full pages of "Views of the Golf Course" to Cassandra's own account of these home demolitions, in which she also recalled a more recent episode of violence in which a Haitian man was shot by one of the Petionville Club's private security guards (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p. 22-23). And the seven subsequent pages (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p. 24-30) present François' firsthand account of the police operation during which the homes of families like his were bulldozed, and his recollections of he and his neighbours' (ultimately unsuccessful) efforts to seek redress through both judicial means and public protests.

As discussed in my literature review in Chapter One, Sacco's graphic reportage has similarly been noted for the ways it draws attention to histories often neglected both in the media and in mainstream historiographies (Chute, 2016; Worden, 2015). In Chapter One, I also showed that there has been much recent interest in this drawn form's potential for representing such neglected histories. However recent discussions about this issue by scholars such as Chute (2016) have focused almost exclusively on the possibilities this graphic approach may open up for representing these histories through different textual and visual strategies. Yet in making my own graphic project, I found that this drawn form also played a crucial role in my process of documenting such histories.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, I likely would not have even had access to the information *Picturing Aid in Haiti* presents about the history and ongoing dynamics of U.S. imperialism in the site of my fieldwork had I been working in another form of media. For as I emphasized in Chapter Three, it was only thanks to Cassandra, who explicitly told me that she would have been too afraid to speak out in other forms of media, that I even learned about the home demolitions. Moreover, as I showed in the previous chapter, working this graphic form, which similarly facilitated my access to the Petionville Clubhouse, also helped me to document information about the golf club's founders and current members. My experience of making *Picturing Aid in Haiti* would thus seem to suggest that graphic reportage may have a more profound significance than has previously been acknowledged for representing the types of histories often neglected in the media and in mainstream historiographies.

Due to the way the form of graphic reportage allowed me to highlight points of view and historical context that had been neglected in more standard forms of media coverage, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* achieves some of the longstanding goals of alternative journalism and investigative reporting. Yet partly because I was working in this drawn medium, I presented the information and perspectives I documented in a way that was much more reflexive than is common even in these two other journalistic approaches that are often positioned as critical alternatives to the mainstream news reporting model.

### **Foregrounding my positionality and process of framing**

In my script for *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, I explicitly acknowledge my position as a white Westerner, which led me to be "seen as a total outsider in the camp where I was trying to do this research" (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p. 34). This script also details the complex dynamics I encountered, as a *blan* carrying out fieldwork for a graphic project in Petionville Camp, where my project became entangled in a contentious struggle between some of the camp residents participating in my research, and a range of other parties with stakes in how this Haitian camp was represented to audiences in places like English-speaking North America. *Picturing Aid in Haiti* also works at a visual level to highlight the problem of my positionality. In "Views of the Golf Hole", the sample page of graphic reportage I illustrated and designed based my tour with Bill (see Figure 7 on p. 113 of this thesis), I do not explicitly talk about these racial and spatial

dynamics in the narration on the page. However, as I discussed in the previous chapter, my own pale skin, as well as that of the Petionville Club's white American CEO, operate as visual signifiers in my drawings, as do the darker hued complexions of Haitians who are pictured in the camp down below. Even in the absence of any words about the matter of my positionality, this page thus calls attention to my position as a *blan* in the relations of social, spatial and racial domination that structured my fieldwork. *Picturing Aid in Haiti* also works visually to foreground the complex dynamics involved in its own process of framing. For instance, in "Views of the Golf Hole," which depicts a set of exchanges between Bill and myself during which the Petionville Club CEO urged me to take a picture of what he referred to as the golf course's "8th hole," I literally show my own process of framing a photo, according to Bill's instructions about where exactly I should point my camera.

As I discussed in Chapter One, Sacco reflects in quite a similar way in his works of graphic reportage on his position as a white Western journalist in places like the occupied Palestinian territories. And he also draws attention to his own role in framing the social realities he depicts. For instance, in his book *Palestine* (2007), he depicts himself taking photographs of some of the events and people he writes about and draws in his book.

In reviewing the literature on graphic reportage in the first chapter of this thesis, I showed that there has been much interest in the role that Sacco's drawn medium plays in his reflections on issues of positionality and framing. As discussed in Chapter One, scholars such as Chute (2016) who have carried out textual analyses of Sacco's books have often attributed Sacco's attention to the problem of his own positionality to the medium of drawing. Chute (2016) has emphasized that drawing bears a material trace of the body of the drawer in a way that is quite distinct from either typed prose or photographic or video images. Meanwhile, she has identified the form of drawn comics as an important factor in the way that such issues of framing are rendered visible in Sacco's graphic reportage. In *Disaster Drawn* (2016), she emphasizes that by its very form, which is made up of panels or frames, graphic narrative draws attention to processes of framing.

Based on my own experience of making a work of graphic reportage, I would in many ways agree with these arguments. Yet my research-creation project also elucidates an issue that would seem more difficult to get at through methods of textual analysis. Namely, that of *how* this drawn form can lead journalists to engage in such self-conscious reflections on their own positionality and process of framing.

In the specific context of my own graphic project, I explained in Chapter Three that because I was highly aware of the interpretive and subjective connotations of this drawn medium, I reflected much more than I was accustomed to doing in my journalism work on the role I and my own interpretations inevitably played in the making of this project. Similarly, I explained that my process of making drawings based on my fieldwork encouraged me to situate myself in a particularly concrete way both in the sketches I made in my fieldnotes and in my sample illustrations and pages of graphic reportage. Meanwhile, in contrast to the way I was accustomed to presenting my journalism work, as a process of "reporting", I showed in Chapter Three that this graphic form prompted me to craft a narrative about my research for *Picturing Aid in Haiti* that is, above all, about the dynamics of power, as well as dialogue and negotiation, involved in the making of my graphic project. Which is to say that this drawn medium encouraged me to talk openly about my process of *framing* aid in Haiti.

### **Revealing the process and politics of translation**

*Picturing Aid in Haiti* also reveals processes of translation that are rendered invisible in many other forms of journalism, by including the actual words my Haitian interviewees uttered in Creole or French, as well as my English translations of what they said. For instance, in the second chapter of my script, I recount an exchange between myself, Cassandra and Marie-Pierre, during which these Haitian women first began talking to me about their concerns with Sean Penn's group's communications personnel (using a word that sounded, to my Anglophone ears, "like *champagne*").

#### **Panel 1**

One day I asked Cassandra and Marie-Pierre if they still saw journalists in the camp sometimes.

*(Image of me talking with Cassandra and Marie-Pierre under a tarp.)*

CASSANDRA:           *Journalis pa yo!*  
                              [Their journalists!]

## **Panel 2**

I was confused. I mean, what did she mean by *their* journalists?

*(Image of me looking at Cassandra in confusion.)*

## **Panel 3**

But when Cassandra tried to clarify this for me I got even more confused. For she just kept repeating what sounded to me like "*champagne*".

*(Image of Cassandra telling me something in exasperation, while I stare back at her, looking even more confused.)*

## **Panel 4**

I mean, I was familiar with a range of terms implying a disconnect between journalists, particularly those at major commercial media outlets, and ordinary people. I had heard them referred to as the "elite press", the "establishment press", "the corporate media". And I'll be the first to admit that even those of us who see ourselves as doing some more independent form of reporting in Haiti tend to be very disconnected from the realities faced by people like Cassandra.

Yet never before had I heard anyone talk about *champagne* journalists.

*(Close-up image of my face, still looking confused.)*

## **Panel 5**

(Image zooms out to show Cassandra and Marie-Pierre saying, more forcefully, and looking exasperated:

CASSANDRA

and MARIE-PIERRE: *Jounalis pa Sean Penn!*

[Sean Penn's journalists.]

*(Picturing Aid in Haiti, 2017, p. 56)*

Through graphic dialogue, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* thus reveals my process of translating my Creole-speaking research participants' words. In passages like the one cited above, I also used this dialogic form to communicate the sometimes humorous problems of translation I encountered as an English-speaking researcher in Petionville Camp. And by including the words I myself uttered in some of these exchanges, in what I acknowledge to be "my far-from-perfect Creole" (*Picturing Aid in Haiti, 2017, p. 23*), I also give readers a sense of some of the real limitations of this entire research process, carried out by an Anglophone *blan* in a community of Haitian Creole-speakers.

As I discussed in reviewing the literature on graphic reportage in Chapter One, there has been much attention to the ways in which issues of translation are dealt with in Sacco's work (Chute, 2016; Worden, 2015). Yet while Sacco has consistently highlighted the role of the local translators and fixers who contribute to his work in places like Bosnia and the occupied Palestinian territories, he typically includes only English translations of the words of people like Bosnians and Palestinians (Sacco, 2001, 2004, 2007a, 2007b, 2010). By showing the original words that some of my interviewees spoke in Creole and French, before I translated their statements, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* illustrates the potential for graphic reportage to acknowledge processes of translation in a more radical way.

*Picturing Aid in Haiti* also reflects on the politics of language I encountered both in the process of translating the words of some of the Haitians I interviewed, and in my process of writing about my fieldwork in Petionville Camp. For instance, in "Views of the Golf Course", the first chapter of my graphic script, I reflect on the fraught politics of naming this camp that was alternately known as "*teren an*" and "the golf course". This first chapter of the script opens with a brief line

of narration in which I refer to "the camp" and note that a relocations program began there in February 2013. This narration is immediately followed by Marie-Pierre's critical assessment of this program, in which this displaced woman refers to the site as "*teren an*", which I translate in my script as "the land." On the following page I introduce one of camp's official names (which I use throughout the remainder of the script): *Terrain de Golf*. These differing names for the camp that appear in the first pages of "Views of the Golf Course" pave the way for a more explicit discussion about the problem of naming this site where I carried out my fieldwork. As I reflect in the narration a few pages later in "Views of the Golf Course":

English language media reports typically called the encampment of earthquake survivors who took refuge on the Petionville Club's golf course "Petionville Club Camp" or "Petionville Camp".

Yet when I spoke to Haitians living in this camp, they often referred to the place simply as *teren an*--which means "the land" in *Kreyòl*.

(*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p.16).

"Views of the Golf Course" concludes with a short section whose opening scene returns to this problem of naming the site of my fieldwork, by recounting one of my exchanges with Bill, in which the Petionville Club's CEO insisted on calling the space that others called "the camp" or "the land" by a very different name altogether: namely, "the golf course" (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p.34).

One day, the golf club's CEO offered to give me a tour of the place.

(Image of my face looking pained, looking up at a tall white man identified as) William "Bill" Evans III, CEO of Petionville Club

I was at first hesitant.

ME: Um, er, you want to give me a tour of the tent camp?

Already I knew I was seen as a total outsider in the camp where I was trying to do this research project.

Being seen parading around the camp with a wealthy white American landowner seemed like the very *last* thing I needed.

BILL: No! I want to give you a tour of THE GOLF COURSE!

(Image of me looking bewildered.)

(*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p.34).

The way I dealt with this contested field of names in my graphic project contrasts sharply with many media reports about the camp. For despite the range of names different people used in referring to this site, it was typically referred to in English-language media only as Petionville Camp.

It would technically have been possible for me to have avoided writing about the discrepancies between the names different people I talked to during my fieldwork used in referring to this camp officially known as Petionville Camp. However, the dialogic form of graphic reportage would have made this difficult. For, as I mentioned in Chapter Three, graphic dialogue rendered it very apparent when there were discrepancies between the ways different people, speaking in different languages, referred to things like the camp. Moreover, presenting my interviews in the dialogic form of a graphic script helped me to explore these issues of language and translation I encountered in writing about my fieldwork in the camp that was alternately known as the land and the golf course. For as I discussed in reflecting on my process of writing the script in the previous chapter, this graphic form opened up space for writing in a way that challenged the naive view of language that journalism, including relatively critical approaches like investigative reporting, have sometimes been faulted for propagating.

As can be seen in the passage from my script cited above, where my exchanges with Bill appear without translation, graphic dialogue also allowed me to situate myself in a set of relations of force that were, amongst other things, *linguistic*. Much in the way that the dialogic form of graphic reportage helped me reveal processes of translation, in passages like the one above, graphic dialogue also works to foreground English as the language of my interactions with this Anglophone landowner. As I have already discussed, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* works to signal the fact that I am, like Bill himself, a *blan* in Haiti. By presenting my research in this dialogic form, I was also able to highlight the closely related problem of my position as an *English-speaking blan* in this particular camp located on a golf course first established under a US military occupation of Haiti.

### **Presenting different views on images**

In addition to foregrounding the complex dynamics of language involved in my process of framing aid in Haiti, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* also explores conflicting perspectives on some of the images cited or featured in this project. As discussed in the previous chapter, during my research, I documented different views on the images of empty camps in Haiti that had played such an important role in official and media discourses about the relocations programs. Through graphic dialogue, my script works to highlight these sometimes radically different perspectives on the visual trope of the emptied camp.

The introductory chapter of my graphic script includes a scene based on my interview with Leslie Voltaire, in which he critically commented on the role of optics in the relocations strategy, against a backdrop of the emptied camp in Place St. Pierre. Through graphic dialogue, I present this former Haitian government official's critical reading of the image of this newly landscaped park that was featured in the government's official communications about its own flagship relocations program. In this scene from my script, the former official gestures to this emptied camp, as he criticizes the relocations strategy as "a visual solution" (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p.8).

The visual trope of the empty camp recurs in "Views of the Golf Course", where I explore different people's perspectives on the disappearance of the displaced Haitians who had taken refuge on the Petionville Club's former golf course. This first chapter of my script opens with a panel in which Marie-Pierre points to an area of the camp from which displaced Haitians have already been relocated, as she critically comments on how these families have been removed for a golf course. And near the conclusion of "Views of the Golf Course," Bill is quoted, gazing out at another emptied section of the camp, calling the humanitarian agency carrying out these relocations "our saviours" (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p.72).

I return to the visual trope of the emptied camp in the very last chapter of *Picturing Aid in Haiti*. This final chapter of my graphic script, which is called "Signs of Progress?," comes right after the chapter in which Marie-Pierre recounts the story of her daughter's death in Petionville Camp. This last chapter of *Picturing Aid in Haiti* includes a reference to J/P HRO's November 2013

YouTube video, which features video footage of an emptied section of this camp where Lina died, alongside a quote from a spokesperson of Penn's group, referring to the decrease in the number of Haitians living in this camp as "great progress" (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p. 85).

*Picturing Aid in Haiti* also works at a visual level to underscore such differences of perspective, by counterposing graphic dialogue with drawn images. This is particularly evident in "Views of the Golf Hole", the sample page of graphic reportage discussed earlier in this chapter as well as in the previous chapter (see Figure 7 on p. 113). By citing Bill's instructions about where I should point my camera in the form of graphic dialogue, I was able to highlight what, following Butler's analysis of the photograph as a "structuring scene of interpretation", might be theorized as the interpretive framework embedded in this particular "framing". Through graphic dialogue, "Views of the Golf Hole" explores this interpretive framework, citing the words that Bill himself used in explaining to me that I was taking this shot from "the eighth tee"..."where you shoot the eighth hole from". By juxtaposing this explanation with my illustrations showing the specific section of the camp that was visible through my camera viewfinder, I was also able to show that, from the perspective Bill encouraged me to adopt in my photo, the camp (which literally obstructed our view of the eighth hole) was implicitly framed as a problem. Or, to be more precise, the camp was framed as an obstruction of the view of what had previously been a golf course. In this way, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* explores some of the images featured in this graphic project as sites of struggle, rather than presenting them as neutral visual evidence of reality (or at least of how things really looked at a given moment in time).

### **Challenging dehumanizing media frames**

*Picturing Aid in Haiti* also draws critical attention to the dehumanizing narratives, language and images through which Haitians living in camps like Petionville Camp were framed in Western media. And perhaps even more significantly, this graphic project also works to *challenge* these media frames.

### ***Contesting media narratives about "victims" in "Camp Penn"***

The issue of how Petionville Camp was framed in Western media occupies considerable space in my graphic script. In this script, I cite the revealing remark I discussed in the previous chapter, by one of the journalists who'd reported on the camp for a major English-language newswire agency.

After Sean Penn was appointed "Camp Manager" of Terrain de Golf, the camp received extensive international media attention.

*(Image of me sitting with an unidentified white journalist.)*

JOURNALIST: Sigh. My editor always wanted the story of Sean Penn running a tent camp!

*(Picturing Aid in Haiti, 2017, p. 37)*

As I discussed earlier in this chapter, ID-PR's influence on Western media coverage of Petionville Camp generally went unmentioned in this coverage. In contrast, my graphic script explicitly raises the issue of this entertainment publicity firm's role in J/P HRO's media relations. And I also cite a Port-au-Prince-based photojournalist's account of the conditions ID-PR's LA-based entertainment publicists had imposed on him when he tried to take pictures of the camp:

#### **Panel 1**

*(Image of ID PR website showing featuring a picture of the camp on the cover of Vanity Fair magazine.)*

Throughout the three and half years Penn's NGO managed the camp where Cassandra and Marie-Pierre were living, the Camp Manager's media relations were formally coordinated by ID PR, an entertainment publicity firm contracted to manage Sean Penn's image as a celebrity.

#### **Panel 2**

*(Image of journalist talking on the phone, looking surprised).*

One Port-au-Prince-based photojournalist told me that when he tried to report on the camp, J/P HRO instructed him to call ID-PR's offices in L.A to get permission.

### **Panel 3**

*(Image of me sitting with the journalist.)*

JOURNALIST: They told me that I was only allowed to take photographs in the camp that showed "progress".

### **Panel 4**

Moreover, he was told that the copyright for any photographs he took in this encampment of thousands of displaced Haitian citizens would be the property of Penn's group.

*(Panoramic image of camp.)*

In telling the story of how Petionville Camp was framed in Western media, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* cites extensively from the critical observations that camp residents themselves contributed to my research about *their own* experiences of being framed as "victims" in J/P HRO's fundraising and publicity materials. Consider for instance this passage from my script, in which I cite from one of the interviews I recorded with Marie-Pierre.

### **Panel 1**

By the time I visited the camp, most media representations of people living in this camp were produced by Penn's charity group itself.

*(Image of me sitting with Marie-Pierre under a tarp.)*

MARIE-PIERRE: *Le li bay yon ed, yo fe foto!*

[Whenever they give any aid, they take photos!]

### **Panel 2**

Marie-Pierre recalled that she once received a flashlight from J/P HRO.

MARIE-PIERRE: *Yo bay nou ti flash. Men nou beswen fe foto. Yo mete ou lun derye lot. Klak! Yo pran foto!*

[They gave us a little flashlight. But we had to be in a photo. They put you one behind the other. Clack! They take a photo!]

*(Picturing Aid in Haiti, 2017, p. 58).*

On the same page of the script, I include another direct citation from Marie-Pierre, in which she recalled another occasion upon which she'd been photographed by J/P HRO, when the Camp Manager organized to have a visiting dentist remove rotten teeth free of charge:

MARIE-PIERRE: *Dantist nan le ak JP rache dan pou ou, yo bay yon pat.  
Yo fe foto--klak! Montre kombien dan yo rache.*

[A dentist up at JP tears out your teeth, they give you toothpaste. They take a photo--Clack! To show how many teeth they tore out.]

*(Picturing Aid in Haiti, 2017, p. 58).*

My script also provides a platform for a highly detailed account one of my research participants provided about an incident in November 2012, when one of the residents of Petionville Camp tried to communicate her own message through J/P HRO's publicity apparatus (*Picturing Aid in Haiti, 2017, p.59-63*):

### **Panel 1**

*(Image of middle aged Haitian woman standing in front of a tent in the camp.)*

One camp resident told me about a woman living in the camp who had tried to speak out about the conditions in Petionville Camp through a video made by J/P HRO itself.

### **Panel 2**

*(Image of Haitian woman seen from behind, facing a Haitian man wearing a J/P HRO t-shirt, who is holding up a video camera.)*

November 2012.

A man from J/P HRO turned up in the camp and asked her to speak in a video.

MAN FROM J/P: *Pandan ou sou kan, di kisa ou we JP fe de bon?*

[Tell us about the good work you've seen JP do while you've been in the camp.]

### **Panel 3**

*(Image of woman speaking as man from J/P HRO films.)*

WOMAN: *Bon, Jp li fe travay ki bon kan mem, paske li ede moun o nivo sante. Mem le li pa 100 pousen. Mem le, li 15 pousan, 10 pousan. Li fe l kan mem. Li ede moun la an lekol. Moun pa paye pou sa.*

[Well, JP does work that is good, because it helps people at the level of health. At the same, this help is not 100 percent. It's fifteen percent, 10 percent. But still. It helps people with the school. People don't pay for that.]

### **Panel 4**

*(Image of woman continuing to speak as man from J/P HRO lowers video camera, frowning.)*

WOMAN: *Men o nivo sekirite, la nouriti pou fanmi yo ki sou kan, zero. Paske yo pa t fe anryen.*

[But at the level of security, of food for families in the camp: zero. Because they don't do anything.]

The script also cites what my research participant told me about how the man making the video simply walked away when this camp resident persisted in raising her own concerns.

If I had been working in another form of media, I likely never would have even heard about this Haitian woman's experience of having her critical concerns about conditions in the camp censored in J/P HRO's video. For as I mentioned in the previous chapter, her testimony was not included in the video Penn's group posted on YouTube. It was thus only thanks to the camp resident who told me about this incident that I even learned about this woman's experience of being censored out of J/P HRO's video.

As I discussed earlier, working in a drawn medium contributed in important ways to my access to such camp residents. In addition to facilitating my access to displaced Haitians whose perspectives had often been missing in media coverage of Petionville Camp, the form of graphic reportage thus also allowed me to document their own accounts of being framed as "victims."

*Picturing Aid in Haiti* challenges this dehumanizing frame that often prevailed both in Western news stories about "Sean Penn running a tent camp", and in Penn's group's own publicity materials, by offering a platform for the words of the former camp residents who participated in my research. For, whether consciously or not, these former residents of Petionville Camp often spoke about their lives in the camp in terms that expressly challenged media narratives about "victims" in "Camp Penn".

For instance, graphic dialogue works as a platform for Cassandra's account of the assistance her Haitian friends and neighbours in the camp provided after her tent was destroyed in a storm:

### **Panel 1**

CASSANDRA: *Le m pa ka rete konsa, Se zami m, sa ba m yon 20 dola, sa ba mwen yon 10 dola, achte de tol nan men moun k ap pase k ap vand yo sou kan an. M achte bwa, m achte prela.*

[As I couldn't stay like that, friends of mine, they gave me 20 dollars here, 10 dollars there. I bought a sheet from someone selling them in the camp. I bought wood, I bought a tarp.]

### **Panel 2**

CASSANDRA: *Le lot moun ap pase, nan lari, yo gade pou we, yon vev ki m ye, yon gran moun, k ap fe tant lan.*

[When other people passed by, they saw me, a widow, an elderly person, who was making the tent. They said, can't we do something for you?]

### **Panel 3**

CASSANDRA: *Epwi yo komense ede m.*

[Then they started to help me.]

*(Picturing Aid in Haiti, 2017, p. 47).*

The script also cites Marie-Pierre's account of the proactive ways in which women from Petionville Camp responded when cholera broke out in the camp. After providing readers a bit of context about this cholera epidemic, which broke out in Haiti after a UN contractor dumped fecal

matter from cholera-infected UN soldiers in one of Haiti's principal waterways explaining, I quote what Marie-Pierre told me about her own role in volunteer relief efforts in the camp:

MARIE-PIERRE: *Mwen te men 10 moun nan lopital.*  
[I carried ten people to hospital.]  
(*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p. 54.)

And in the following excerpt of the script, I also cite extensively from the words Marie-Pierre used in talking about her role in organizing brigades of volunteers to clean out the latrines.

### **Panel 2**

(Split-screen image, part of which shows Marie-Pierre talking, as a small toddler waddles up to her. The other part of the image shows Marie-Pierre staring in horror at a very dirty latrine.)

MARIE-PIERRE: *Blok pa m, nou mem fe volonte nou we twalet la twop sal. Men se ti petit nou ki saswa si twalet la se pitit pitit nou ki pral met men, ki pral mete men nan bouch. kuniya mwen di bon. m pran 9 moun, ak mwen mem, fe 10.*

[In my block we did this ourselves, voluntarily. We saw the toilets were too dirty. Yet it's our children who sit on the toilet, our small children who can put their hands in their mouths. So I said ok, I'll take 9 people, with myself that made 10. ]

### **Panel 3**

They asked the Camp Manager to help with supplies.

MARIE-PIERRE: *M mande klorox yo pa genyen. M achte klorox mwen mem. m mande bale. Yo pa genyen. M pran 5 goud nan men chak moun yo, m achte yon bale pou 5 dola.*

[I asked for bleach. They didn't have any. I bought the bleach myself. I asked for a brush. They didn't have one. I collected five gourdes from each person, and bought a brush for five dollars.]

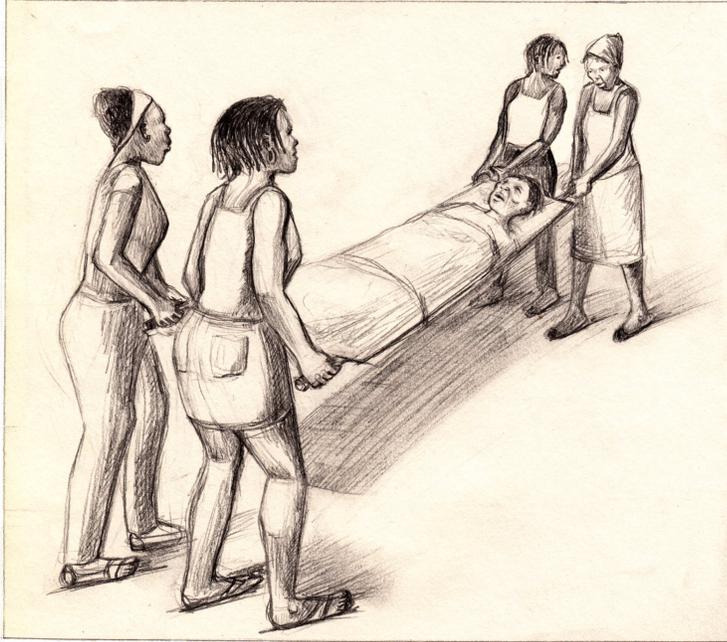
**Panel 4**

MARIE-PIERRE: *Nou pwòpte zon sa. nou pwòpte twalet.*  
[We cleaned up the area. Cleaned the toilets.]  
(*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p. 55).

Through my sample drawings, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* has begun to give visual form to these accounts of camp residents' role in assisting one another in Petionville Camp. For instance, some of these drawings depict the cleaning supplies that Marie-Pierre told me that she and other camp residents had purchased themselves and used to clean out the latrines in an effort to stem the spread of cholera (for example, see Figure 12). In another drawing, based on Marie-Pierre's account of how women from the camp brought camp residents showing symptoms of cholera to hospital for treatment, four women are shown carrying another woman on a stretcher (see Figure 13 on the next page).



**Figure 12. Cleaning supplies**



**Figure 13. Women carrying sick camp resident to hospital**

My drawing of these Haitian women carrying a sick camp resident to hospital contrast strikingly with some of the images and narratives through which Petionville Camp's residents were represented to Western media audiences. For instance, compare the illustration shown in Figure 13 to the news photograph shown below (See Figure 14). This photo appeared on the website of Alamy, a U.K.-based photography agency that sells news images to media organizations around the world, alongside an explanatory

caption that stated, "Actor Sean Penn helps a woman to a medical station in the Petionville camp in Port au Prince, Haiti" (Alamy, 2010). By focusing on the actions of a white Western celebrity, and describing camp residents like the Haitian woman shown in the photo merely as recipients of his "help", this media representation contributed to rendering invisible the agency of such women who lived in the camp.

By giving visual form to Marie-Pierre's account of these Haitian women's role in mutual forms of aid in Petionville Camp, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* works to contest this invisibility.



**Figure 14. Alamy stock photo image, 2010**

*Picturing Aid in Haiti* also works to challenge media narratives casting the residents of Petionville Camp as passive "victims" by highlighting the proactive ways in which camp residents contributed my research. For instance, in the first chapter of my script, I acknowledge the important role that Cassandra played in my process of documenting the evictions and home demolitions in the area of the golf course, by presenting the exchange through which this displaced Haitian woman first brought this incident to my attention in the form of a dialogue (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p.22-23). And near the beginning of the following chapter of the script, which is called "Picturing Life in a Camp," I emphasize the contributions that Cassandra and other residents of the camp made to my research, by providing what I refer to in the narration of my script as "something like a report about what they'd observed of international humanitarian aid in their community" (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p. 43):

**Panel 1**

[...] [I]f she'd been able to, Cassandra told me that she would have written her own report about everything she'd seen in the three years she'd lived in the camp.

*(Frontal view close-up image of Cassandra, who is looking directly out at me/the reader.*

CASSANDRA: *M pa entelektuel. M pa fe klas. Pa kon li, ekrit. Men bondye ba m yon espri pou kompran. Bondye ba yon espri pou kompran moun. m gen tan kompran sityasyon. Mwen mem, si m te nan yon posisyon de fe l, nou k ap ba yon rapo fomel, yon rapo kle, san pati pri, bagay sou kan, depi 13. M la le 12, mwen la le 13, a 5 h di matin.*

[I'm not an intellectual. I haven't studied. I don't know how to read or write. But the good Lord gave me the wits to understand. I've had time to understand this situation. If I myself was in a position to do it, we could give a formal report. A clear report, without any bias, about this camp, since the 13th of January. I've been here since the 13th, at five o'clock in the morning.]

## **Panel 2**

*(Silhouetted image of me and Cassandra under a tarp.)*

And indeed, in the interviews I recorded with Cassandra, and others who lived in the camp, these displaced Haitians did provide something like a report about what they'd observed of international humanitarian aid in their community.

*(Picturing Aid in Haiti, 2017, p. 43)*

As can be seen in the above excerpt from the script, the displaced Haitians I interviewed for this project are, in contrast to the "sources" of news reporting, or the "victims" of investigative stories, positioned as active contributors to this project. Moreover, graphic dialogue works in the above passage of my script as a platform for the words that Cassandra herself used in talking about how she would have liked to publish a report on what she'd witnessed in the camp. And as a platform for these words, through which this displaced Haitian woman powerfully challenged the structure of many mediated representations of disaster survivors, this project works on multiple levels to challenge media narratives framing people like Cassandra as passive "victims", who must be spoken for by others.

### ***Denaturalizing humanitarian categories and statistics***

*Picturing Aid in Haiti* also works to both critically examine and contest the ways displaced Haitians were framed in the language and statistics of the agencies charged with managing camps. In media reports, the term "Internally Displaced People" or "IDPs" is often presented as if it were neutral, something that can perhaps be explained by the fact that it is also an official legal category. If I had been writing a standard journalism article, in which I was merely seeking short quotes from different "sources", it would have been easy for me too to treat this bureaucratic-legalistic category as a neutral descriptive term.

Yet as Cecile Dubernet (2001) has pointed out, the category IDP is a relatively recent invention, dating back only so far as the 1990s. And both Dubernet and Agier have analysed its sudden appearance at that time as a symptom of increasingly restrictive asylum policies in places like Western Europe (2011, p. 29). As Agier has observed, those recognized with conventional refugee status, and attendant rights to protection from the international community, have become

relatively rare amongst the stateless, in the context of what he refers to as a "proliferation of categories" (22):

Refugees, displaced, disaster victims, evacuees, migrants, asylum seekers, rejected, expelled, repatriated, returned...This list has grown ever long longer in recent years.

As Agier observes, the term IDP "appeared in the discourse of international organizations in the 1990s, at the same time as the management of refugees outside their country of origin was entering a critical period, especially in Africa" (Agier, 2011, p. 29). Those classified as IDPs are now two to three to times more numerous than those recognized as refugees (Agier, 2011). And in the context of the shortcomings of international legal frameworks when it comes to the rights of those classified as IDPs, who are not granted the same international protections and assistance as those recognized as refugees, this institutional-bureaucratic category also has concrete political implications for those it so classifies.

In the introductory chapter of *Managing the Undesirables*, Agier sounds a cautionary note about the hazards of taking such "constructed categories as realities in themselves" (Agier, 2011, p. 12). In his critical discussion of the identification and classification of migrant populations, Agier builds on Eleni Varikas' work on "the devastating logic of such categorizations" (Varikas, 2007, cited in Agier, 2011, p. 28). He argues that "every act of naming and classifying is a political act" (Agier, 2011, p. 33). Moreover, he argues that the proliferation of categories such as IDP "makes the management of flows of people more complex, and the real figures more opaque, as well as the conditions of life of all those who come under these categories" (2011, p. 22). He also argues that such categories embody "an extreme distance (leaving potential refugees imprisoned in their own country) [that] makes the refugee question invisible...and thus makes possible the silent collapse of international solidarity towards them" (Agier, 2011, p. 31).

In this context, Agier warns about the dangers of making particular classes of displaced people (such as "refugees" or "IDPs") into the objects of one's research. For to accept such categories as "natural and self-evident" also means accepting the arbitrary terms that authorize "an exceptional and extraterritorial social, material and political organization -- that of the camp" (Agier, 2011, p. 68). Moreover, he warns that to take such categories as the object of one's research "would thus mean leaving out of the field of vision the humanitarian government that establishes, defines,

controls and fixes the space of life of the categories that it simultaneously recognizes and creates" (Agier, 2011, p. 68).

By its very form, graphic reportage steered me away from this pitfall about which Agier warns. Even if I had expressly wanted to present the category IDP as a natural and self-evident reality, working in this dialogic narrative form would have rendered it very difficult for me to do so. For as I mentioned in the previous chapter, the only individuals I interviewed for this project who referred to Haiti's camp residents in this way were humanitarian professionals. In writing my script, I quoted the IOM data analyst's reference to "IDPs" in the introductory chapter (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p. 5). However, given the central role of dialogue in graphic storytelling, there seemed no way to avoid including the range of alternate terms differently situated research participants used to refer to those officially classified as "IDPs". For instance, the Petionville Club director is quoted in the following chapter, referring to the people "squatting my land" (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p. 71). Meanwhile, in Chapters 1 through 5, some of the displaced Haitians who participated in this project are quoted referring to other residents of the IDP camp using either first names, or by identifying them by familiar monikers such as "*pitit mwen*" (my child) (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p. 53, 55).

In this way, graphic reportage prompted me to present the official bureaucratic language often treated as neutral in more standard forms of journalism as *just one possible form of speech*. Partly because I anticipated that graphic dialogue would thus render the term "IDP" less natural than it might have appeared in a more standard form of humanitarian reportage, I then felt compelled to explain this term, and its broader institutional and international legal context when I first introduced it in *Picturing Aid in Haiti*. In the introductory chapter of my graphic script, which quotes the IOM's data analyst referring to Haiti's camp residents as "IDPs", I thus explained that this term is how "Haitians living in officially recognized camps for people who lost their homes in the earthquake are formally known in the humanitarian world." In my introductory chapter of the script, I also addressed the broader political and legal implications of this category, by writing that:

Like refugees, IDPs are defined as people uprooted from their homes by disasters or wars. Yet because they have not crossed any international borders, they do not have

the same rights to basic humanitarian assistance from the international community as those recognized as refugees.

*(Picturing Aid in Haiti, 2017, p. 5)*

This introduction also cites some additional context the IOM data analyst provided in the interview I recorded with her:

in principle they are the responsibility of their own government. Unlike refugees that become protected under international refugee law, IDPs don't have this status, don't have a legal status.

*(Picturing Aid in Haiti, 2017, p. 5)*

As can be observed in the above excerpts of my script, writing for the medium of graphic storytelling thus allowed me to reflect much more in this project than likely would have been the case had I been working in a more standard form of journalism on the politics of categories like "IDP".

Not unrelatedly, presenting my research in the form of a graphic script also helped me to foreground the role of language and interpretation in the production of the main set of official statistics on Haiti's IDP population. As Agier has emphasized, "modalities of recognition, responsibility and recognition" enacted in contemporary humanitarian interventions in response to large-scale population displacements rely crucially on "the production and use of large numbers" (2011, p. 33). And as Schuller (2016) has observed, this was particularly true of the interventions that various agencies executed to close Haiti's camps, in which the IOM's statistics on Haiti's camp population played a particularly crucial role.

The IOM began counting the population of Haiti's camps in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, when it counted an estimated 1.5 million displaced people in Haiti (IOM, 2010). By the time of its latest report, issued in December of 2016, the agency estimated that there were 46,691 individuals living in Haiti's camps (IOM, 2016)-- a decrease of more than ninety percent of the peak population. Official relocations efforts accounted for only about a sixth of this decrease in the camp population (Centre for Economic and Policy Research, 2015, cited in Schuller, 2016). However as Schuller has critically observed, citing statements by agencies ranging from the Haitian government, to international agencies such as USAID to NGOs in

which these different organizations have all presented this decrease in the number of people living in camps as "a sign of progress",

IOM's regularly conducted censuses showing a gradual decline in the numbers of internally displaced became *the* barometer of the success of the international humanitarian response (Schuller, 2016, p.5.)

The central role these statistics played in the way various agencies' evaluated "progress" in post-earthquake Haiti can be analysed as a reflection of growing pressures for different kinds of private as well as governmental organizations to evaluate their work through what are known as "indicators", which anthropologist Sally Engel Merry defines as a "statistical measures that are used to consolidate complex data into a simple number or rank that is meaningful to policy makers and the public" (Merry, 2011, p. S86). As Merry, Kevin Davis, Benedict Kingsbury argued in their co-edited book *The quiet power of indicators: Measuring governance, corruption, and rule of law* (2015), the appeal of such indicators is generally thought to lie in the common perception that numeric data consists of a relatively "objective" measure of evaluation. Yet these indicators are inevitably shaped by normative values (Merry et al, 2015; Merry, 2011; Merry, 2016). For the question of what to count, as well as how, are inherently political as well as methodological questions. Moreover, Merry (2016) has observed that, while often regarded as an objective tool to measure organizations' work, indicators often in practice have a distorting effect on that work, as organizations using statistical measures of assessment sometimes become preoccupied with gaming these numerical systems of evaluation to "prove" that they are succeeding.

The concerns Merry raises about the politics of indicators would seem particularly pertinent for analysing the implications of the way various organizations evaluated the "progress" of the humanitarian effort in post-earthquake Haiti. For as Merry has emphasized, statistical indicators depend in the first instance on a highly political process of determining what is to count as "success". And the idea that a decrease in the number of Haitians living in camps are a sign of "progress" rests on an assumption that is particularly politically loaded as well as contested: namely, that camp closures, unto themselves, constitute a meaningful humanitarian goal. Moreover, if, as Merry has suggested, any process of measuring or counting also entails a second set of far from neutral decisions, this counting process raises a particularly fraught set of issues

when one is trying to measure success through statistics on a particular category of displaced person. For as Agier has argued, the production of quantitative data on "different categories of 'displaced persons'" is often "based on simple tautologies, i.e. on closed circuits of reasoning in which figures can only confirm the arbitrary definitions given a priori in specific political contexts according to 'the devastating logic of categorizations'" (Agier, 2011, p. 33).

There has been much critical discussion about the problem of who was and was not counted as an IDP in Haiti after the earthquake. For Haitians who lost their homes in the disaster were only registered and counted as IDPs if they took refuge and maintained a continuous presence in an encampment recognized as an IDP camp. However, there were certain encampments of displaced Haitians that were not initially recognized as camps by the IOM (Centre for Economic and Policy Research, 2015). And there were also an uncounted number of Haitians who became homeless after the earthquake, but were never registered or counted as IDPs because they did not seek refuge in camps. Moreover, once a displaced Haitian is no longer living in an officially recognized IDP camp, he or she ceases to exist as an IDP. This limitation is particularly significant given that many camp residents were forcibly evicted from the camps where they had been living by landlords who sometimes used violent and extra-judicial means to force the closure of camps (Schuller, 2016). Moreover, the distorting effect Merry argues that indicators often have on organizations' work would seem particularly concerning in the context of humanitarian agencies' work in camps for displaced people. For as Schuller has critically observed, "This singular focus on the statistic of who counts as an IDP provides a powerful incentive on the part of international actors to push people out of camps, to show that their efforts worked" (Schuller, 2016, p.5).

The stakes in the way these official statistics are presented in the media have grown considerably since U.S. President Donald Trump assumed office. For the IOM's data on the decrease in the number of Haitians living in camps has played a crucial role in the Trump Administration's official rationale for terminating Haitians' eligibility for temporary humanitarian protections that currently prevent the U.S. from deporting more than 58,000 Haitians living in the U.S. As Agier (2011) has observed, such temporary categories of protection for asylum seekers have, much like the category IDP, become increasingly common in the context of the tightening of border

controls in North America and Western Europe. Much like those categorized as IDPs, the recipients of such temporary humanitarian protections are not accorded the same rights as those officially recognized as refugees. In the U.S., such measures prevent the U.S. from deporting people to designated countries that are deemed unsafe due to armed conflict, environmental disaster and "other extraordinary and temporary conditions" (Global Justice Clinic, 2017).

Haitians' eligibility for such a temporary protected status (TPS) in the U.S. was introduced shortly after the January 2010 earthquake, under U.S President Barack Obama, and had been renewed every 18 months since (Global Justice Clinic, 2017). However, since Trump assumed office, officials in the U.S. departments of immigration and homeland security have argued that Haitians should no longer be eligible for this protected status. In May 2017, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) renewed Haiti's TPS designation for only 6 months, instead of issuing a customary 18-month extension. And in November 2017, the DHS announced the termination of Haiti's TPS status, which will take effect on July 22, 2019.

The Trump Administration has justified its plans to resume deportations to Haiti by citing what it calls "significant progress" since the 2010 earthquake (Department of Homeland Security, 2017). The IOM's statistics on the decrease in the number of Haitians living in camps have played a key role in these justifications for stripping Haitians' protected immigration status. The acting director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, James McCament, cited these statistics in a memo he sent to the DHS secretary in April 2017, advising that Haiti's TPS designation should be terminated. More specifically, McCament cited IOM's data, which suggests a 96 percent decline in the Haitian camp population since its peak in summer of 2010, as evidence that "Haiti has made significant progress in recovering from the 2.010 earthquake, and no longer continues to meet the conditions for [TPS] designation" (McCament, 2017). These statistics were similarly cited as evidence of "progress" by the DHS Secretary John Kelly, when he announced in May 2017 that his department had decided to renewed Haiti's TPS designation for only 6 months, instead of issuing a customary 18-month extension (Kelly, 2017). These statistics also featured prominently in the notice that DHS published in the *Federal Register* explaining this decision not to extend Haitians' protected immigration status for longer. This notice stated that,

Although lingering effects of the 2010 earthquake remain, Haiti has made significant progress in addressing issues specific to the earthquake, as its economy continues to recover and grow. For example, 96% of people displaced by the earthquake and living in internally displaced person (IDP) camps have left those camps. (Department of Homeland Security, 2017)

Since the Trump Administration first announced its plans to terminate Haiti's TPS designation, many Haitians who'd been living in the U.S. have already preemptively fled the country. Many of them have sought asylum in Canada, and, more specifically, in the francophone province of Québec, where the majority population of French-speaking Québécois has long included a large Haitian diaspora community.

Given that most asylum claims made at regular land border crossings between the U.S. and Canada are systematically denied under the terms of the Safe Third Country Agreement (Canadian Council for Refugees, n.d.), Haitian TPS recipients who've sought asylum in Canada have overwhelmingly arrived via unauthorized border crossings. At one point in the summer of 2017, when the number of Haitian asylum seekers arriving at the US/Canadian border was reportedly at its peak, Canadian authorities estimated there were about 250 people, the vast majority of them Haitians, crossing the border in this way per day (Woods, 2017). Labeled as "illegal border-crossers" (Harris, 2017) and "illegal border migrants" (Campbell, 2017) in the media, these asylum seekers have summarily been arrested upon arrival in Canada. Between January and September of 2017, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) reported apprehending 15,000 such people, many of whom were Haitian citizens, at unauthorized border crossings (Hinkson, 2017).

The fate of these asylum seekers is highly uncertain. According to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), 6,304 Haitian citizens who arrived from the U.S. via unauthorized border crossings between February and October of 2017 have applied for refugee status in Canada (Harris, 2017). In 2016, Canadian authorities accepted about half of the refugee claims filed by Haitian nationals (Geddes, 2017). However, according to data released by the IRB on the results of the more recent batch of refugee applications from Haitian asylum seekers, who entered Canada via irregular crossings along the US/Canada border, the acceptance rate has since dropped considerably. Of

298 of these latter applications that had been processed by November 2017, only 29, or 10 percent, were accepted (Harris, 2017).

For years, Haitians living in Canada were, like their counterparts in the U.S., protected from deportation (or "removals", as deportations are officially referred to by the Canadian government) under the terms of a program called Temporary Suspension of Removals (TSR). According to the website of the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), TSR is a program that "interrupts removals to a country or place when conditions pose a risk to the entire civilian population", for reasons such as "armed conflict within a country or place or an environmental disaster resulting in a substantial temporary disruption of living conditions" (Canadian Border Services Agency, 2018). Under this humanitarian program, Canada suspended deportations to Haiti in 2004 (although CBSA continued to deport Haitians whose "removal" the government justified on the grounds of "criminality"). However, the suspension that had for more than two decades protected many Haitians living in Canada from deportation was lifted in August of 2016, under the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Government of Canada, 2016). Canada justified this decision, which was first announced in December 2014, under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, on the grounds of what the Canadian government claimed to be "improved" conditions in Haiti, stating in a press release that "the Government of Canada considers that there is no longer a generalized risk to the entire civilian population" in the country (Government of Canada, 2014).

Many human rights advocates and legal experts have challenged U.S. and Canadian officials' arguments that it is now safe to deport people to Haiti due "significant progress" or "improved conditions" in the country since the 2010 earthquake. As a recent report published by a legal clinic at NYU law school showed, conditions in Haiti are still far from safe (Global Justice Clinic, 2017). Eight years after this disaster, relatively few of the homes that were destroyed or damaged in this earthquake have been rebuilt. There is thus still a chronic lack of safe housing in Haiti, and this problem has been exacerbated by Hurricanes Matthew and Irma. And these dire conditions have been made all the more serious by an epidemic of cholera, a deadly disease that broke in Haiti due to the negligence of the UN.

Given these hazardous conditions, there was much outrage when the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced the termination of Haiti's TPS designation. Republican and Democratic lawmakers, as well as the editorial boards of leading U.S. media outlets, all came out against this decision, which has also been widely critiqued in the media Canada and Québec. However, there has been relatively little media attention to the statistics through which the Trump Administration has rationalized its efforts to strip Haitians living in the U.S. of their protected immigration status. The critical context that I learned from talking to people like Marie-Pierre about the deaths of camp residents like her daughter that are not even counted in these statistics thus has the potential to contribute quite significantly to these discussions about U.S. and Canadian asylum policies and their affects on the lives of thousands of Haitians living in the U.S, as well as Canada and Québec.

Significantly, I found that the form of graphic reportage presented significant benefits for communicating this context, which, as I mentioned earlier, has systematically been neglected in the media. For instance, in the chapter "Humanitarian Ends", graphic dialogue offers a platform for the data analyst's account of the agency's procedures for identifying, counting and classifying the population of Haiti's camps. By allowing me to quote so extensively from what she said about the "Displacement Tracking Matrix", and the IOM's process of registering those it classifies as "IDPs", as well the methods the agency uses to count displaced Haitians through "the rapid assessment and counting of displaced people", this narrative form helped me to highlight the role of categorization, interpretive frameworks and values in the production of these statistics (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p. 82-83.)

Graphic dialogue also helped me explore the very different language Marie-Pierre used in talking about her own experiences of this system. For instance, in this chapter, I cite what Marie-Pierre told me, in Creole, about her own family's experience of this process, in which her daughter, who was included on her family's first registration card, was removed on the second card her family was issued, because she had died (*Picturing Aid in Haiti*, 2017, p. 81).

Working in this dialogic form also helped me communicate my revealing exchange with the IOM's data analyst on the subject of how this leading intergovernmental agency accounts for

people like Marie-Pierre's daughter, who the IOM officially registered as IDPs, but who have subsequently died in Haiti's camps. The final page of "Humanitarian Ends" cites what the data analyst told me during this exchange, and about how the IOM does not keep records of deaths in camps like the one where Marie-Pierre's daughter died. The concluding scene of "Humanitarian Ends" also cites the data analyst's explanation of this striking omission.

### **Panel 1**

JULIA: This was a humanitarian operation, this was an emergency situation. So I wouldn't even see IOM's mandate as being to count deaths.

### **Panel 2**

JULIA: We're tracking living people, because we want to assist them. We are not tracking deaths.

We need to know how many people there are to give them assistance, this is what we do, so the deaths...

I mean, here, we don't really measure how a program is working with the number of deaths.

For us, the indicator is decrease of people in camps. Because we want to close camps.

*(Picturing Aid in Haiti, 2017, p. 84)*

By drawing attention to the role of language and interpretation in the production of the official statistics this international intergovernmental agency uses to evaluate programs to relocate displaced Haitians from camps, my graphic script thus offers a critical perspective on this numeric data that has often been presented to the public as objective evidence of humanitarian "progress".

### ***Reframing the IOM's drone view of the camp***

Working in this drawn medium also allowed me to both critically examine and contest the ways in which people like Petionville Camp's residents were dehumanized through the visual frames of the drone photographs like the one I discussed in the previous chapter (see Figure 12) that were used in the production of the IOM's statistics on Haiti's camp population. The power of such aerial photographs is buttressed by the powerful cultural connotations of photographic images,

and particularly the types of aerial photos whose production is increasingly dependent upon satellite and drone technologies. For due to the important role that machines (namely cameras, but particularly cameras mounted on mobile technological devices such as drones) play in their production, such images are often perceived as "showing" rather than interpreting the realities they depict. However, as Butler (2009) has argued, more than simply offering an "'imprint' of reality", such photographic images also work to "frame" what they show (Butler, 2009, p. 67). She elaborates that "even the most transparent of documentary images is 'framed' and framed for a purpose, carrying that purpose within its frame and implementing it through the frame. If we take such a purpose to be interpretive, then it would appear that the photograph still interprets the reality it registers, and this dual function is preserved even when it is offered as 'evidence' for another interpretation presented in written or verbal form" (Butler, 2009, 70). For Butler, such interpretations are not merely a subjective act. Rather, these interpretations are structured by state power, as well as norms of recognizability that allow some lives and not others to become perceivable as human lives.

However, as Butler also observes, "To learn to see the frame that blinds us to what we see is no easy matter" (Butler, 2009, p. 100). For she observes that "this visual field cannot be understood by looking at its explicit contents, since it is constituted fundamentally by what is left out, maintained outside of the frame in which representations appear" (Butler, 2009, p. 73). Yet she also makes a powerful case for the importance of modes of visual cultural production that work to investigate dehumanizing media frames. The point of this for Butler is not "hyper-reflexivity" but rather "to consider what forms of social and state power are 'embedded' in the frame" (Butler, 2009, p. 72). In making *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, I found that working in a drawn medium allowed me to engage in this far from easy work of seeing the dehumanizing frame used in the production of statistics on displaced Haitians. For as I discussed in Chapter 3, drawing encouraged me to look at the aerial images of Haiti's camps carefully enough to become cognizant of the impossibility of apprehending human lives in these images.

While Butler focuses on photography in her discussion of how visual culture producers might investigate dehumanizing media frames, I found that working in the drawn medium of graphic reportage allowed me to reveal something about the framing of Haiti's camp population that it

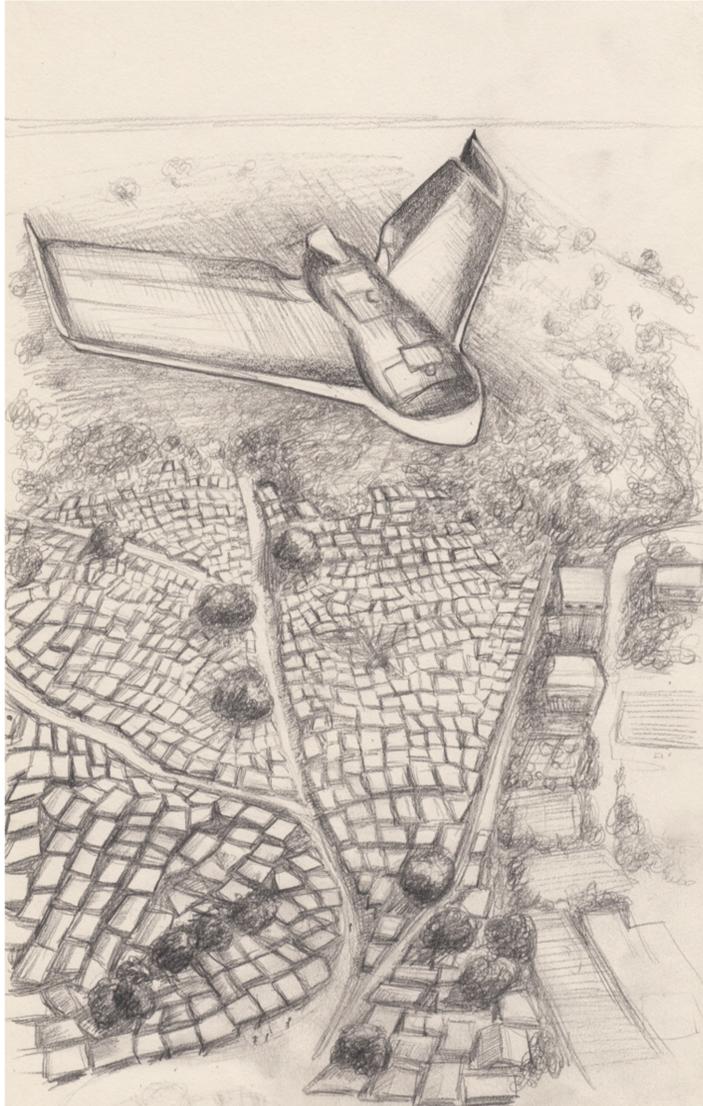


Figure 15. Drawing based on IOM drone image

would have actually not been possible to show through a photograph. For re-framing the aerial view IOM used to count displaced Haitians living in camps in an explicitly interpretive and subjective drawn medium made it possible to add a significant detail about the production of these photographs that had not been visible in the original images. Namely, in my illustration based on the IOM's drone image (see Figure 15), it was possible for me to foreground the fact that this image offers readers a *drone's* perspective on a Haitian camp without raising the kinds of ethical issues often at stake in altering photos. By drawing the drone, which had been invisible in the original photograph, I was able to signal that the visual frame used in the production of humanitarian statistics is embedded in military technologies. Technologies that were not designed to make it possible to

apprehend of the lives of the people pictured below as grievable human lives.

By using the medium of drawing to ethically give visual form to Marie-Pierre's account of her daughter's death, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* invites a very different perspective from that the drone photography used in the methodology of the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix.

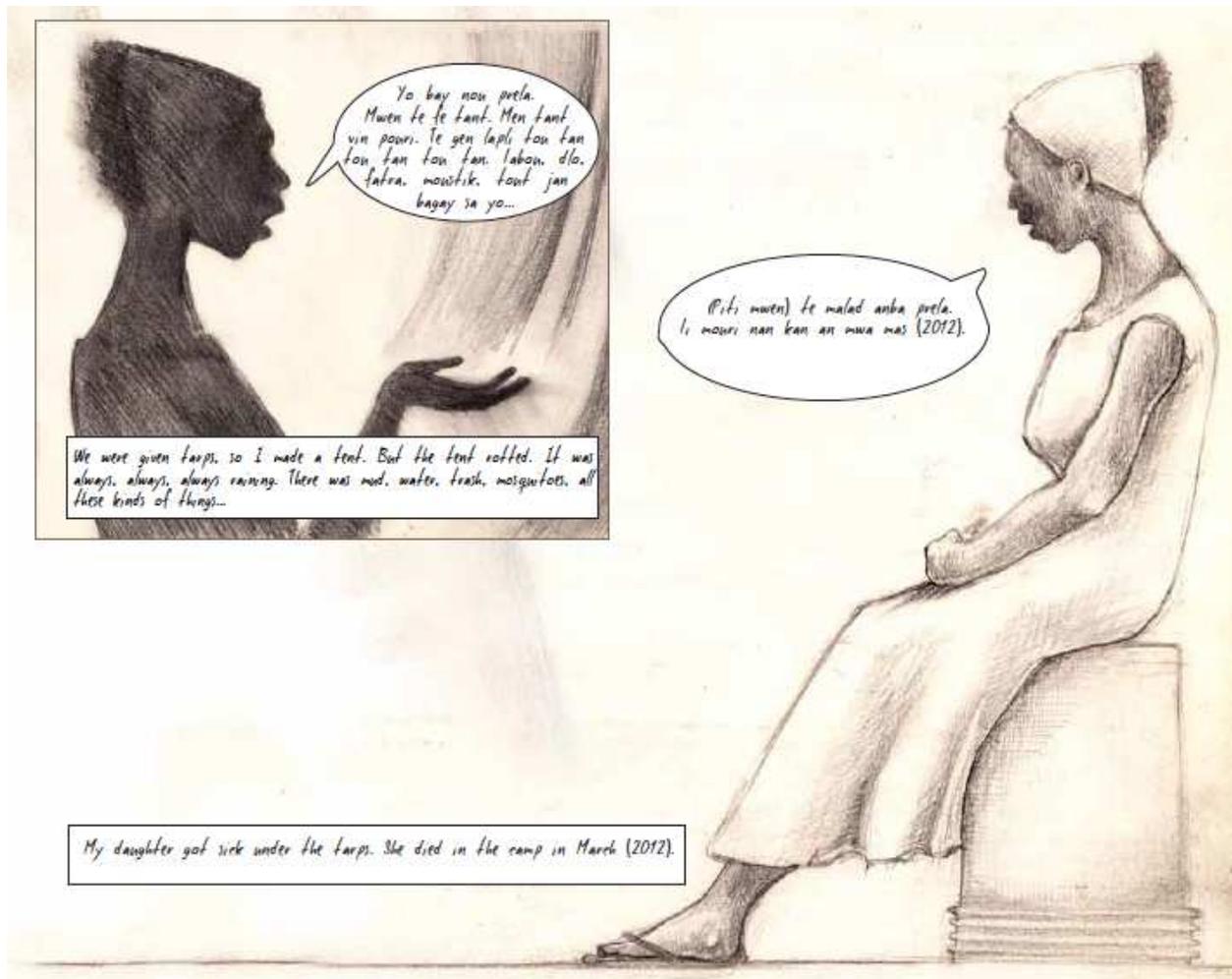


Figure 16. Detail from my sample pages about uncounted deaths

### ***Picturing Aid in Haiti's broader implications***

Based on my experience of making *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, I would propose that graphic reportage offers a particularly promising means of addressing the patterns of silencing, dehistoricization and dehumanization that have been observed in more standard forms of media coverage of humanitarian aid in places like Haiti. For as I demonstrated in this thesis, as well as in my graphic project itself, this drawn approach can facilitate access to people whose voices, histories and agency are often ignored or negated in the media. Moreover, I showed that this drawn form can help ethically give visual form to the accounts of people afraid of speaking out in the media.

As an approach that can facilitate access to information and perspectives neglected in the news, and help protect the identities of vulnerable interviewees, graphic reportage would seem

particularly relevant for the scholarship on critical alternatives to mainstream news reporting. Significantly, my experience of making *Picturing Aid in Haiti* also suggests that this drawn form has the potential to address some significant shortcomings of approaches like investigative reporting, alternative media and the New Journalism that scholars have often characterized as critical or reflexive. For as I showed in this thesis, graphic reportage can encourage a kind of reflexivity that is otherwise rare in journalism, even in these otherwise relatively critical approaches. In the specific context of my own graphic project, I demonstrated that working in this drawn form helped me to foreground the problem of my positionality, and the complex dynamics of language, translation and visual representation language involved in my own process of framing aid in a Haitian camp. Based on my experience of making this project, I would argue that, by its very form, graphic reportage has the potential to encourage journalists to engage in more reflexive practices of research, writing and visual presentation.

This would seem to give graphic reportage a particular relevance for recent efforts to develop methodological frameworks for research involving the production of works of journalism. For as I showed in Chapter Two, reflexivity is particularly crucial in such practice-based research. By demonstrating the important role that the form of graphic reportage played in the reflexivity of the journalistic project I made as part of my research for this thesis, this thesis provides a relevant lesson for future research of this kind. Namely, my experience of making this graphic project would seem to suggest that other scholar/practitioners interested in producing works of journalism as part of their research might also benefit from experimenting with alternative media forms that might similarly encourage them to engage in more reflexive practices than those commonly used in journalism.

In this chapter, I demonstrated that working in the form of graphic reportage helped me to address the shortcomings of Western media coverage of humanitarian intervention in camps like Petionville Camp in a particularly layered and reflexive way in *Picturing Aid in Haiti*. Namely, I showed that, partly due to its graphic form, this project highlights perspectives and critical context that had been neglected in the media, while also foregrounding the problem of my positionality, and the dynamics of language, and translation and visual representation involved in its own making. Moreover, I demonstrated that this drawn approach allowed me to both critically

examine and to challenge the dehumanizing narratives, language and images through which Haitian camp residents were often framed in Western media. Based on my experience of making this project, I argued that graphic reportage can, by its very form, encourage greater reflexivity in journalism. And I also argued that this drawn approach has particular potential for addressing the problems that scholars have theorized in other forms of media coverage of humanitarian interventions in places like Haiti.

## CONCLUSION

By reflecting on the making of *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, this thesis contributes to the scholarship on graphic reportage, as well as to a broader body of literature on the practice of journalism. As I mentioned in the introductory chapter of this thesis, one of my explicit goals in making this work of graphic reportage was to explore information and points of view that had been neglected in other forms of media coverage of humanitarian interventions in camps for Haitians displaced by the 2010 earthquake. As I demonstrated in this thesis, the graphic form of this project in many ways facilitated these goals. I also showed that this drawn approach presented particular advantages for exploring the perspectives of the residents of Petionville Camp, whose voices, agency and histories had often been ignored or negated in English-language media coverage of their camp. Moreover, partly due to its graphic form, I demonstrated that *Picturing Aid in Haiti* works on multiple levels to challenge the dehumanizing narratives, language and images through which Haitians living in this camp were often framed in Western media.

Discussing specific excerpts from *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, which serves as a platform for the words, stories and images that some of these camp residents contributed to this project, this thesis demonstrates that graphic reportage can open up space for exploring the perspectives of people like displaced Haitians whose points of view are often neglected in the news. Based on my experience of producing this graphic project, which also highlights historical and ongoing dynamics of imperialism in Haiti, I argued that graphic reportage offers a particularly promising means of addressing the limits scholars have observed in other forms of media coverage of disasters like the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Yet *Picturing Aid in Haiti* is not without its own important limitations. While I made a conscious effort in making this graphic project to challenge the colonialist discourses through which people like displaced Haitians have often been represented to Western media audiences both by journalists and humanitarian agencies, I am aware that this project also risks reinforcing these very same discourses. Indeed by its very structure, as a project made by a white English-speaking North American based on her fieldwork in a Haitian camp, this work of graphic reportage could be argued to reinscribe these patterns of colonial representation that have long worked to

disproportionately foreground the agency of (typically white and English-speaking) Westerners, while effacing that of people like Haitian camp residents. *Picturing Aid in Haiti* challenges these discourses, by highlighting the agency of the camp residents who participated in my research, and offering a platform for the stories and words through which they themselves challenged these narratives (not least by talking about the ways displaced Haitians assisted one another in their camp). Yet I cannot pretend that this graphic project entirely escapes these discourses (which arguably would have required an entirely different kind of project, which centred on media production by camp residents themselves, ideally initiated and led by displaced Haitians rather than a visiting *blan* PhD student). However, by foregrounding the problem of my position as a *blan*, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* openly reflects on this very problem.

It would be inaccurate to say that the form of graphic reportage automatically led me to reflect in this way on the problem of my positionality. Yet as discussed in Chapter 3, working in this drawn medium was an important factor in the way I positioned myself in this project.

By its very form, graphic reportage would seem to complicate received ideas about journalism--not least those embedded in the language through which journalists often present their work to the public. Due to the important role that images play in graphic reportage, this approach diverges from the specific kinds of journalism (like newspaper articles) that have long been privileged by those who understand journalism as a vehicle for rational information. As a *drawn* visual form, it also relies on a type of image that is read very differently from the images often positioned in journalism as the most "true" form of evidence. For in contrast to photographs, which are often attributed a mechanical objectivity due to the role that machines play in their production, images drawn or painted by hand tend to be read as inherently subjective and interpretive.

The connotations of this illustrated form of journalism contrast strikingly from the objective style that news reporters in places like the US and Canada have long been expected to adhere to in their writing. In this way, graphic reportage would seem to resonate with broader shifts in journalism values evidenced by many journalists' efforts to rethink the traditional conception of journalistic objectivity and related objectivist writing conventions. However, as "a conspicuously artificial form" that "openly eschews any aesthetic of transparency" (Chute, 2016, p. 17), this

drawn medium sits awkwardly with types of metaphors that have become increasingly important in the digital media landscape, through which journalism is positioned as a "glassy essence" that transparently "reflects" reality rather than interpreting it (Ettema & Glasser, 1998).

This drawn form would also seem to present complications for the growing numbers of journalists who understand their work in terms of goals of truth-seeking. For it has often proven difficult for works of nonfiction produced in this drawn medium to gain recognition as being possibly "true" or "nonfictional" (Chute, 2016, p. 2). For instance, when Art Spiegelman won the Pulitzer Prize for *Maus*, his two-volume graphic oeuvre based on interviews he recorded with his father about his family's experience surviving the Holocaust, he was, tellingly, initially awarded the prize in the *fiction* category. Similarly, in the instances where books of graphic reportage have enjoyed commercial success, publishers and bookstores have tended to classify them as "graphic novels" (Campbell, 2003)--a label that tellingly not only renders problematic these works' status as journalism, but also suggests their exile from the broader category of "nonfiction". By its very form, graphic reportage would thus seem to invite a reading of journalists' work that clashes with journalism's own image of itself.

By reflecting on how working in this drawn medium affected my own process of framing aid in Haiti, my thesis contributes to the broader literature on graphic reportage. As I showed in reviewing this literature in Chapter One, this scholarship has focused overwhelmingly on Sacco's graphic books. Based on textual readings of these books, scholars such as Chute (2016) have shown that Sacco consistently draws attention to the experiences and perspectives of people whose perspectives are often missing in the media, while also foregrounding issues of positionality, representation, language and translation that journalists have similarly been faulted for neglecting.

As I discussed in Chapter One, there has been much interest in this scholarship in the role that the drawn form of comics plays in Sacco's work. However, as I showed in reviewing this literature, this scholarship has been rather vague about how exactly this drawn medium might affect the practices that journalists like Sacco use in their work. And indeed it would seem somewhat difficult to answer this crucial question merely through textual readings of graphic books. By

using a very different set of methods--including the strategies of research, writing, drawing and design involved in *making* a work of graphic reportage--this thesis contributes to elucidating this issue.

Reflecting on my process of researching my own graphic project, I showed that this drawn form has the potential to facilitate access to points of view and information often missing in the media. As discussed in the previous chapter, my experience of researching this project also suggests that graphic reportage may have a more profound significance than has previously been acknowledged for representing histories neglected in the media and in mainstream historiographies. For while scholars such as Chute (2016) have emphasised the different possibilities this drawn form opens up for representing such histories textually and visually, my experience of researching *Picturing Aid in Haiti* suggests that graphic reportage can also facilitate access to basic information about these histories that would otherwise be inaccessible.

This thesis also contributes to recent discussions about this drawn form's potential for representing vulnerable sources. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Vagnes (2015) has emphasized the possibilities this medium opens up for telling the stories of undocumented immigrants. However, as I demonstrated in Chapter 4, graphic reportage would also seem have a much broader potential for ethically telling the stories of people who are typically marginalized in the media, but who may be at risk if they speak out publicly.

I also demonstrated in this thesis that graphic reportage has the potential for acknowledging processes of translation in a more radical way than is commonly done even in Sacco's work, which highlights the role of local translators often rendered invisible in other forms of journalism, but which typically includes only English translations of the words of people like Bosnians and Palestinians (Sacco, 2001, 2004, 2007a, 2007b, 2010). For as I discussed in the previous chapter, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* gives readers a chance to engage with the original words that some of my interviewees spoke in Creole and French, before I translated their words into English. In this way, this research-creation thesis pushes forward recent scholarly discussions about graphic reportage's potential for revealing processes of translation (Chute, 2016; Worden, 2015).

By reflecting on how working in this drawn form affected the practices of research, writing and visual presentation I was accustomed to using in my work as a journalist, my thesis contributes not only to the literature on graphic reportage, but also to a broader body of literature on journalism practices. As I discussed in the previous chapter, some of the findings of my research-creation project are particularly relevant for the scholarship on alternatives to the mainstream news reporting model. For my research demonstrates that graphic reportage can help journalists to both access and ethically present the kinds of underreported information and perspectives that have long been a focus in areas like alternative media and investigative reporting. Moreover, as I discussed in the previous chapter, graphic reportage also has the potential to address some significant shortcomings in these otherwise relatively critical journalism approaches. For as I showed in this thesis, by its very form, graphic reportage can encourage a kind of reflexivity that is otherwise rare in journalism, even in approaches that have sometimes been positioned as critical or reflexive alternatives to mainstream news reporting.

Much in the way that, by its very form, graphic reportage challenges conventional conceptions of journalism, this research-creation thesis contributes to recent efforts in fields like communication studies to expand traditional conceptions about what constitutes a legitimate form of academic research, by including a graphic project as an integral component of my PhD research. By reflecting critically on my process of producing this work of graphic reportage, not only in this more standard academic component of my thesis, but also in the story I tell through *Picturing Aid in Haiti* itself, this research also contributes more specifically to recent work to develop and theorize reflexive methodologies involving the production of works of journalism. As I mentioned in discussing these emergent strategies of journalism practice-as research, scholar/practitioners engaged in such work are generally expected to reflect critically on their practices in their journalism work as well as in an accompanying academic text. Yet as I have shown in this thesis, such reflexivity goes against the grain of the language in which journalists are typically trained to present their work. Based on my experience of making *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, I would propose that for journalists to exhibit such critical reflections in the journalism projects they produce as part of their academic research, they may in fact need to test out and develop new forms of journalism that (like graphic reportage) allow them to experiment with different language and metaphors that challenge old clichés about journalism's "glassy essence".

As a project that reflects critically on the complex dynamics of power, language and representation involved in its own making, *Picturing Aid in Haiti* contributes to these efforts by offering a concrete example of what such reflexivity might look like in a work of journalism produced as part of an academic research project.

Due to my decision to focus on my own process of making *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, there are many questions about graphic reportage that I was unfortunately not able to address in this thesis. One such question is that of how differently situated readers respond to this drawn form of journalism. In this concluding chapter of my thesis, I had hoped to be able to at least talk about the ways the displaced Haitians I interviewed for *Picturing Aid in Haiti* responded to this work of graphic reportage. However, in order not to further delay the scheduled completion of my PhD, I had to postpone my plans to distribute this graphic project to my research participants.

I plan to distribute copies of *Picturing Aid in Haiti* to each person I interviewed for this work of graphic reportage. In order to make this graphic project more accessible to the displaced Haitians who participated in my research, I have set aside a budget to have this graphic project translated into Creole, as well as a budget for a follow-up trip to Haiti, which will allow me to distribute these copies in person. I have budgeted a month for this follow-up trip. For I anticipate that it will be far from straightforward to locate some of the displaced Haitians I interviewed for this project.

As I mentioned earlier in this thesis, Petionville Camp was closed in February of 2014. And by the time of my final research trip to Haiti, in December of 2013, all but two of the camp residents who participated in my research had been relocated from the camp on the Petionville Club's golf course through J/P HRO's World Bank-financed rental subsidy program. During my research trip in December 2013, I visited three of these research participants in the homes to which they'd moved with the aid of one of these subsidies. However, as discussed in this thesis, these subsidies lasted only 12 months, and none of the displaced Haitians I interviewed seemed at all confident that would be able to afford to pay their rent after these temporary subsidies ran out. So I cannot say for sure where these former residents of Petionville Camp might be now.

Studies have suggested that many displaced Haitians who have left camps have ended up either returning to homes that were badly damaged in the earthquake, or living in conditions that are in many ways very similar to those that prevail in camps (Schuller, 2016). Many other former camp residents have reportedly settled in a shantytown beside Corail, the remote settlement I mentioned earlier in this thesis, to which about 3000 Petionville Camp residents were relocated in the first official resettlement scheme in 2010 (Schuller, 2016). There had previously been relatively few Haitians living in this area, which is located on a barren stretch of wind-swept land that is also a flood plane. However since 2010, this shantytown, called Kanaran (which is Creole for the biblical promised land of Canaan), has become one of Haiti's largest and fastest-growing slums.

In my efforts to reconnect with the former residents of Petionville Camp who participated in my research, I will thus have to use a variety of different strategies. These include phone calls, visits to my research participants' old neighbourhoods, and visits to Kanaran, where two former residents of Petionville Camp I interviewed told me they were thinking of moving after their rental subsidies ran out. As many of these former camp residents know one another, I will ask any of them that I am able to locate about whether they know of the current whereabouts of the others. I will then invite all of the former camp residents I am able to locate to attend a final debriefing session for this project.

At this meeting, I will distribute Creole copies of *Picturing Aid in Haiti*. After giving the displaced Haitians who participated in my research a chance to give their feedback on this graphic project, I will also consult with my research participants on plans for the broader distribution of this graphic project. I will let my research participants know about the project's planned release online via Concordia University's Spectrum database of theses and dissertations. I will also seek their input on my ideas for eventually turning this graphic project into a book, and for some shorter works of graphic reportage I hope to publish in the meantime based on this research. During this debriefing session, I will also ask them if they have their own ideas about how this graphic project might best be distributed, including to Creole-speaking readers in Haiti.

There are very high stakes in the issues some of the former residents of Petionville Camp brought to my attention and helped me to document in this graphic project. One of these issues, which I discussed at length in this thesis, is that of deaths in Haiti's camps. As I have already discussed, such deaths have largely gone unmentioned in the media. Moreover, I showed that statistics documenting a decrease in the number of Haitians living in camps have often been presented as evidence of "progress" in official and media discourses. In this thesis, I demonstrated that working in the form of graphic reportage facilitated my process of documenting information about deaths in Haiti's camps, and critical context about how these deaths are not counted in the main set of official statistics on Haitians living in camps. This thesis also showed that this graphic form helped me to communicate this context in this project, which provides a platform both for Marie-Pierre's account of her daughter's death in Petionville Camp, and for IOM data analyst's explanation of how such deaths are not counted in the main set of official statistics on Haitians living in camps.

The stakes in the way these statistics are presented in the media are particularly high in the lead-up to the announced termination of Haitians' protected immigration status in the U.S. For as discussed in the previous chapter, these statistics documenting a dramatic decrease in the number of people living in camps in Haiti has played a central role in the Trump Administration's rationale for ending TPS for Haitians. When the termination of Haiti's TPS designation comes into effect in July of 2019, more than 58,000 Haitians currently living and working in the US, many of whom have children who are US citizens, could face imminent deportation to Haiti. In this context, there are important questions about how *Picturing Aid in Haiti* might best be distributed to the diverse communities of readers with stakes in the information and perspectives explored in this work of graphic reportage.

While I do not plan to move forward with any broader distribution of this graphic project before first consulting with the displaced Haitians I interviewed, I can envision many possible directions for these distribution efforts. However, this next chapter in the making of *Picturing Aid in Haiti*, which will depend crucially on where people like Marie-Pierre tell me they would like to see this project go next, has yet to be written.

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