

“Yo soy negro, pero negro blanco:” Hispanicity,  
Antihaitianismo and Genocide in the Dominican  
Republic

by

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*To the thousands of massacred Haitian nationals, Haitian-Dominicans, Dominicans of Haitian descent, and dark-skinned Dominicans killed along the border in October 1937 and the following months.*

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## ***Introduction: The Intersections of Race, Ethnicity, and Nationhood in the Dominican Republic***

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In November of 2009, the Dominican baseball player Sammy Sosa made headlines around the world when pictures of him emerged with lightened facial pigmentation. Many were under the impression that Sosa was extremely ill, possibly suffering from vitiligo, “a skin condition in which there is a loss of brown color from areas of the skin, resulting in irregular white patches that feel like normal skin.”<sup>2</sup> Sosa immediately addressed these claims, stating that he was not ill, but in fact using a skin-whitening cream to make his face lighter. Many people in his hometown of San Pedro de Macoris were angered and offended by the pictures of a lighter Sammy Sosa. To the residents of a region inhabited by phenotypically dark-skinned Dominicans, Sosa seemed to be denying his Dominicaness *and* his blackness by lightening his skin.

In an exclusive interview on *Primer Impacto*—a popular show on Univision, one of the leading Latino networks in the United States—Sosa was asked by the interviewer Tony Dandrade, himself a dark-skinned Dominican man, if he “was proud of being black.” Sammy Sosa responded with the following statement:

Todo el tiempo, así fue que yo nací, Tony. Ahora bien, que quiero lucir mejor, mi vida entera, siempre lo he hecho. Yo no veo ningún tipo de problema con eso, pero no me olvido de adonde vengo.

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<sup>1</sup> Map courtesy of <http://www.servantsheartdr.org/about-us/why-the-dominican-republic/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Vitiligo," *PubMed Health*, Linda J. Vorvick, A.D.A.M. Medical Encyclopedia, 11/09/2010, 21 Mar 2012. <<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001834/>>.

All the time, that was the way that I was born, Tony. All my life I have wanted to look better. I do not see any kind of problem with that, but I do not forget where I come from.<sup>3</sup>

Sosa's response is a loaded statement about how race, ethnicity, and culture are constructed in Latin America. While accepting the fact that he is phenotypically dark and a descendant of African slaves who were brought over to the New World, Sosa simultaneously identifies whiteness as the secret to looking "better."

Blackness has long been plagued with negative connotations; no place is this clearer than in the Dominican Republic. Founded on notions of its culture, religion and people being homogenously white and Spanish, Dominican society has long denied its African ancestry, and finds it necessary to do so because of its proximity to Haiti. Haiti, which founded itself as a Black Republic<sup>4</sup>, is, in the eyes of many Dominicans, a constant threat to Dominican culture and values. This sentiment is based on a long history between the two nations that stretches back into the colonial era. Several Haitian occupations of the Dominican Republic and the Dominicans' fight for independence from their neighbor gave rise to intense hostility towards Haiti, its people and its culture.

This work looks at the ways in which racial formations manifest themselves in Dominican society prior to and after the Haitian Massacre of 1937, a genocide ordered by General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina. Before I begin my discussion, I

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<sup>3</sup> Sammy Sosa interview, November 10, 2009. *Primer Impacto*, Univision Studios. <http://anyguy.guanabee.com/2009/11/sammy-sosa-4/>

<sup>4</sup> In this case, capitalizing Black is necessary because of the political significance of the Haitian Revolution. In the rest of my thesis, the term black will usually be in lowercase letters, because black has not become a politicized name in the Dominican Republic as it has in the United States through the Black Power Movement and in Haiti through the Haitian Revolution.



must explore and define four key terms that I place in conversation with each other in this thesis: race, ethnicity, nationalism and racism.

Peter Wade references Michael Banton when speaking about race in his work Race and Ethnicity in Latin America, and states that

the word ‘race’ entered European languages in the early sixteenth century. Its central meaning was what Banton calls *lineage*, that is a stock of descendants linked to a common ancestor; such a group of people shared a certain ancestry which might give them more or less common qualities.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, Max Weber makes the following statement about ethnic groups:

We shall call ‘ethnic groups’ those humans groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists.<sup>6</sup>

Weber’s, Banton’s and Wade’s descriptions of race and ethnicity suggest that both concepts originally emerged out of the conviction that people from a similar and shared ancestry are members of the same “race” or “ethnicity/ethnic group.” In the nineteenth century, however, we see the redefining of race on the basis of biological theories suggesting that people from certain races are inferior to those of other races. The rise of Social Darwinism allowed race to be rearticulated along biological lines. Conceptualizing race through this lens made race become an unavoidable and *genetic* predisposition. Defining race as an unchanging category solidifies the boundaries generated from beliefs that racial and ethnic groups derive from a common lineage, and strengthens the exclusiveness of these groups. Furthermore, a biological definition of race presupposes an always objective and correct assessment of a racial

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Wade, Race and Ethnicity in Latin America, Second Edition (European Union: Pluto Press, 2010) 5.

<sup>6</sup> Max Weber, “Origins of Ethnic Groups,” from Ethnicity, edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1996) 35.

group. These biological definitions work to uphold whiteness as the ideal and blackness as inferior, and indeed its polar opposite. This type of rigid boundary creation fuels racism, a term that Albert Memmi defines as “a generalizing definition and valuation of differences, whether real or imaginary, to the advantage of the one defining and deploying them, and to the detriment of the one subjected to that act of definition, whose purpose is to justify (social or physical) hostility and assault.”<sup>7</sup>

Definitions of ethnicity were not included in biological reasoning; as a result, ethnicity remained an identity that was asserted by individuals who claimed membership in a specific ethnic group. According to the sociologist Mary Waters “the word ‘ethnic’ has generally referred to groups defined by cultural attributes, while ‘racial’ groups have been defined by physical attributes.”<sup>8</sup> As a result, ethnicity has also allowed a less rigid, more malleable boundary that could accommodate the growth and transformation of ethnic groups. Using this definition of ethnicity, along with the Social Darwinist definition of race, suggests that while people are restricted to a certain race, they had more latitude when it came to be identified to as members of an ethnic group. For example, in the Dominican Republic, Social Darwinism was utilized by prominent Dominican scholars who argue that Haitians were biologically a black, therefore inferior, race while Dominicans were biologically a superior, Spanish race; further discussion of this distinction will be seen in Chapters 1 and 3. Yet Dominicans, regardless of their phenotypical attributes and racial classifications, were all considered to be members of the same ethnic group.

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<sup>7</sup> Albert Memmi, Racism, translated by Steve Martinot (Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press, 2000) 100.

<sup>8</sup> Mary Waters, Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) 45.

Wade's, Banton's and Weber's definitions of race and ethnicity provide a theoretical foundation for the ways in which Dominican identity has been formed. Moreover, the impact of these conceptual terms can be seen in the assertion of the belief that the Dominican Republic emerges out of a supposedly solely Spanish-influenced culture and ethnic background. As a result, Dominican understandings of nationalist and racist rhetoric aligned themselves along these constructions of race and ethnicity.

Benedict Anderson, in his book Imagined Communities, describes the process of nation-building and nationalism. He defines the nation as

an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign ... The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries. Beyond which lie other nations ... It is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm ... Finally, it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.<sup>9</sup>

Anderson's definition presents a comprehensive approach to the understanding of nation-building and nationalism. It suggests that the nation is founded on specific and restrictive understandings of itself. Furthermore, his assertion draws special attention to the fact that regardless of present inequalities in a society, the nation is still imagined as a community and members of that community are viewed as being in an equal partnership. This philosophy manifests itself in the Dominican Republic through its racist nation-building projects, a theme that will be undergird in this thesis. Anderson's claim that a nation is an imagined political community is comparable to

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<sup>9</sup> Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (Brooklyn, NY: Verso Books, 2006) 6-7.

Banton's and Weber's suggestions that race and ethnicity are also imagined and constructed entities.

Relying on these scholars, I argue that racial, ethnic and national groups are imagined communities, created by individuals who feel attached to each other by a constructed common and shared ancestry. Stephan Cornell and Douglas Hartmann define the process of construction as

an interactive one. Identities are made, but by an interaction between circumstantial or human assignment, on one hand, and assertion, on the other. Construction involves both the passive experience of being "made" by external forces, including not only material circumstances but also the claims that other persons or groups make about the group in question, and the active process by which the group 'makes' itself.<sup>10</sup>

Out of this feeling of shared commonalities emerges nationalism, a deeply rooted and unbreakable bond to the nation itself. In order for race, ethnicity, and nationalism to develop, boundaries must be created to *define* the physical parameters of a race, ethnic group, or nation. Without boundaries, anyone could become a member of these groups; boundaries become necessary to distinguish one entity from another. The boundaries erected by group formation serve both to define the group and as a guideline to what a group is and what it is not. Hence, nations, races, and ethnic groups understand each other in terms of the Self/Other dichotomy, which dictates that the Self, a superior being, is everything the Other, an inferior being, is not.

Such boundaries work to keep a group's population within its borders and keep outsiders at the margins. The necessity of the creation of boundaries in national, racial and ethnic groups becomes an issue because of the exclusivity that it generates. Rogers Brubaker urges us to complicate the idea of monolithic groups, and refers to

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<sup>10</sup> Stephan Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press, 2007) 83.

the idea of separate and exclusive groups as “groupism,” a term that he defines as “the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogenous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis.”<sup>11</sup> Instead, he suggests we should think of groups as socially constructed, dynamic and contingent entities; thinking about groups in this manner would allow for growth to occur within these entities in an uninhibited fashion.

In the Dominican Republic, the definitions of race, ethnicity and nationhood are conflated and rearticulated through a groupism understanding, which declares that the nation is racially and ethnically white, and Spanish. This conceptualization is a fallacy, considering the long histories of indigenous and African peoples both in colonial Santo Domingo and in the post-colonial, independent Dominican Republic. Furthermore, the population’s phenotypical characteristics, coupled with cultural values and traditions, display a clear fusion of Spanish, indigenous, and African races, ethnicities, and cultures. The simultaneous creation of a white and Spanish racial, ethnic, and cultural ideology and a vehement denial of blackness in the Dominican Republic gave rise to racist limitations on what being Dominican meant.

Racialized restrictions worked to define Haitians as a foreign, threatening force, justifying the nationalistic rhetoric that called for the need to protect the Dominican Republic from further Haitian intrusion. Memmi argues that racism develops out of fear and aggression, suggesting that “fear always accompanies the undertaking of hostility ... For racism, its attacks are always seen as preventive

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<sup>11</sup> Rogers Brubaker, “Ethnicity,” from *The Ethnicity Reader*, edited by Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex (Great Britain: Polity Press, 2010) 34.

reactions to what is unforeseeably foreseen as aggression by the adversary.”<sup>12</sup> These dual sentiments can be clearly discerned in the actions of the Dominican government and Dominican society to prevent and protect themselves from “the constant and passive Haitian threat and invasion.” The fear of Dominicans that the Dominican Republic will be penetrated by Haitian culture, language, customs, and thought directly informs the aggressive nature of Dominicans towards their neighbors.

Both the Dominican elite and the Dominican government have continuously worked to engrain racist, anti-Haitian sentiment in Dominican society since before Dominican independence in 1844. But racist sentiments and campaigns did not become fatally violent until the Haitian Massacre, in which thousands of Haitians were slaughtered on the Dominican side of the Dominican-Haitian border. The Dominican government domestically proclaimed that the massacre was necessary for the preservation of the nation. The transition from verbal to physical aggressions marks an intensification of fear on the part of Dominican society towards Haitians. Memmi proclaims that “racism truly begins when one prepares or justifies an offense or an assault through the devaluation of the other; that is, when one sets in motion certain discursive machinery that conceptually nullifies others and whose main function is to provide the groundwork for concretely preying upon and injuring them.”<sup>13</sup> The Haitian Massacre presents itself as the epitome of Memmi’s statement; the deaths of thousands were interpreted as necessary, and there was no concern for the victims lost or and the destroyed families left behind in the aftermath. Moreover,

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 103.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 104.

the massacre provided the foundation for a rearticulation of the antihaitianismo that characterized the Trujillo regime, a topic that is explored in Chapters 2 and 3.

It was the overwhelming denial of a very real blackness by Dominicans that initially sparked my interest in this subject. Although the majority of Dominicans can be described as black, many of them choose to refer to themselves as *indios* or *mulatos*, terms that acknowledge a mixture of cultures without fully accepting participation to certain aspects of that mixture. To call a Dominican black is considered an insult of the highest degree, and connotes the idea that that individual is, or is like, a Haitian. As a person born in New York – the U.S. city with the largest population of Dominican immigrants – to Dominican parents, my home, school, and community environments shaped my personal understanding of race and ethnicity. This allowed for a flexible construction of Dominican racial, ethnic, and cultural identity. My parents were both adamant about being black and accepting blackness as a fundamental part of Dominican society. I soon learned, however, that most Dominicans did not understand race and ethnicity in the Dominican Republic this way, and I struggled to understand how blackness could be denied in a place where it was evidently present.

In this thesis, I present a sociohistorical investigation of the development of antihaitianismo prior to and after the Haitian Massacre, starting with an in-depth analysis of Dominican racial, ethnic, and national formations. I will show that after the Haitian Massacre, a shift in antihaitianismo ideology develops that serves to rearticulate both anti-Haitian sentiment and Dominican nationalist rhetoric. Remnants

of this intellectual and sociological shift are seen in contemporary Dominican society, which is currently in a new transitional phase, struggling to redefine itself again.

My methodological approach involves the creation of a historical foundation for my sociological analysis of the constructions of race, ethnicity, nationalism, and racism in the Dominican Republic. I wish to complicate commonly accepted discourses of blackness and add to the growing body of research on counternarrative and revisionist work. In creating a synthesis of Dominican and Haitian histories, I look to understand why is it that a nation that clearly has African origins, has been, and is still, unwilling to accept its objectively observable blackness. What are the implications for the Dominican Republic if the discourse of antihaitianismo continues? In addition to a thorough review of existing English- and Spanish-language literature on Dominican-Haitian relations, Dominican history and Dominican racial, ethnic, and national formations, I also conducted archival research in the Dominican Republic. An assessment of Dominican newspaper articles, and government documents from the time directly following the Haitian Massacre allows for the production of a complex and nuanced study of antihaitianismo following the massacre.

In the first chapter, I present a historical account of antihaitianismo prior to the Haitian Massacre. The origins of antihaitianismo can be traced back to the colonial era, before the independence of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Anti-Haitian sentiment strengthened with the 22-year Haitian occupation of the Dominican Republic and solidified itself as a racist ideology as a result of Dominican independence in 1844. Dominican-Haitian relations remained tense during the first



decades of Dominican independence. Border disputes were a constant issue between the neighboring nations; agreements made were rarely upheld and the border between both nations remained unsettled. The issues between both nations intensified with the US occupation of the entire island in the early 1900's. The end of the 1920's leaves the Dominican Republic with a newly established police force and army and the rise of Trujillo. Trujillo's ascension to power in 1930 marks the beginning of the Trujillo Era.

In the second chapter, I evaluate the Haitian Massacre and its consequences. In the aftermath of the killing of thousands of Haitians, Trujillo and his regime attempted to cover up the Massacre, efforts which did not convince the international community. However, Trujillo managed to get away from serious repercussions and agreed to a monetary settlement between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. I will look at the Dominican, Haitian and American responses to the Massacre, along with the proposed causes for the genocide.

In the third chapter, I look at how Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle and Joaquín Balaguer, the two leading intellectuals sponsored by the Trujillo regime to speak about Dominican society and history, rearticulated and redefined Dominican national identity, also referred to as Dominicaness, and antihaitianismo. In Peña Batlle's explanations of the development of the Haitian state and Dominican-Haitian border relations, his condescending view of Haitians permeated through his arguments of white homogeneity in the Dominican Republic and the threat of the "black neighbor next door." Balaguer's arguments, on the other hand, employed a racist

anthropological and biological explanation that viewed the Haitian population as a dark, inferior race, which posed a threat on the Dominican way of life.

In the fourth chapter, I address the contemporary conception of Dominicaness and antihaitianismo through an overview of scholarly works that have emerged in the past three decades. Many of the works being produced in the Dominican Republic about antihaitianismo try to revise previously unquestioned histories and narratives about Dominican-Haitian relations and the Haitian Massacre. This counternarrative scholarly movement is complemented by a literary movement influenced by both Dominican and Haitian authors, which include Edwidge Danticat and Julia Alvarez, along with Peruvian author Mario Vargas Llosa. The counternarrative movement does not stand uncontested, and an exploration of contemporary scholarly texts that follow in the *Trujillista* tradition<sup>14</sup> will be conducted in order to give an accurate account of the environment in which the Dominican Republic currently stands.

In the conclusion, I readdress my arguments and join the different parts of this thesis and give suggestions for future research on this topic.

The detailed investigation of Dominican racial, ethnic and national formation presented here includes a history of antihaitianismo from its inception to the Haitian Massacre, and extending into contemporary Dominican society. Putting terms such as race, ethnicity, nationalism and racism in conversation with each other makes it possible to define the evolution of Dominicaness. Like many contemporary scholars reexamining Dominican society, I attempt to revise a history that has been written by

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<sup>14</sup> A *Trujillista* is a supporter of Trujillo; the *Trujillista* tradition, thus, supports the continuation of Trujillo's ideals.

the victors, conveniently silencing its victims. This revisionist process is necessary if Dominicans are to shed the ideological blinders of antihaitianismo.

## ***Chapter One: Santo Domingo Ayer: An Overview of Antihaitianismo before the Haitian Massacre***

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Antihaitianismo is the belief that Haiti and its people are racially, ethnically, morally, and mentally inferior to the Dominican Republic and Dominican people. As an ideology, antihaitianismo posits a binary distinction between Dominican and Haitian identities. In the process of creating a Dominican national identity, blackness was conflated with Haitian identity, and Dominicanness was understood as a blend of Spanish and indigenous cultures, devoid of African influences. The development of antihaitianismo, however, did not begin with the separation of the Dominican Republic from Haiti in 1844; the foundation of anti-Haitian sentiment was laid in the colonial era, as far back as 1697, long before the ideology was to acquire its name.

In this chapter, I will follow the development of antihaitianismo from its beginnings during the colonial era, through the Dominican and Haitian independence movements, and up to the Haitian Massacre of October 1937. This timeline will provide a sociohistorical framework for the definition and understanding of antihaitianismo.

### *The Colonial Era*

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The island that would be renamed<sup>15</sup> by Christopher Columbus in 1492 was the first Spanish colony in the New World. Spain's lust for silver, gold and other commodities led to the exploitation of the Arawak and Taíno peoples present on the

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<sup>15</sup> Columbus named the island known to the Arawak and Taíno population as Quizqueia (Quisqueya) and Ayiti (Haiti) La Española, a name later changed to Hispaniola.

island. Disease brought from Europe into the Americas and forced hard labor soon decimated the Arawak and Taíno populations. The Spaniards then imported African slaves to serve as laborers in the sugar cane and coffee plantations, as well as in the silver and gold mines. While Hispaniola had small gold and silver reserves in comparison to other parts of the Americas, the island had ideal conditions for raising sugar cane and cattle, enterprises that would define Spanish Santo Domingo and French Saint-Domingue in the future.<sup>16</sup> Until the 1697 Treaty of Ryswick, Hispaniola was one colony under the Spanish Crown; after the signing of this treaty, the island was split into two separate colonies, with the eastern side of the island remaining Spanish and the western side of the island becoming French. Several events led up to the split of the colony, including Spain's waning interest in the island, the Devastations of 1605-1606, and the wars taking place in Europe at the time.

During the sixteenth century, gold and silver were rapidly depleted from the mines of Hispaniola; the Spanish shifted their attention to other locations like Mexico and Peru, where chances of finding gold and silver were much greater.<sup>17</sup> During this time, Spain also found itself in a precarious situation; while it was conquering vast stretches of land in the Americas, the Spanish Crown was constantly at war with France and England.<sup>18</sup> Two of the tactics that both France and England used against Spain entailed producing fear in the Spanish colonies by sending corsairs and introducing contraband trade into the colonies.

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<sup>16</sup> Frank Moya Pons, The Dominican Republic: A National History (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1995) 37.

<sup>17</sup> Mark A. Burkholder and Johnson, Lyman L., Colonial Latin America, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008) 185-188.

<sup>18</sup> Moya Pons, 42.

Corsairs were private citizens with ships who were granted decrees by their respective governments allowing them to “confiscate ships with full cargoes, raid and burn plantations, and in general inspire fear” in Hispaniola and other islands. In response, “the colonial authorities were forced to construct a wall to enclose and protect the city of Santo Domingo.”<sup>19</sup> The Spanish Crown also developed several routes for its ships to take when traveling to and from the Americas; these routes were designed to be a more direct link to parts of the Spanish Empire such as modern-day Mexico and Peru. The new routes did not include Santo Domingo and further isolated the island. Although it was illegal under Spanish rule to engage in trade with any entity aside from the motherland, it was extremely hard to control illegal trading, especially in places like Hispaniola where Spanish neglect was strongly felt. The drastic decrease in Spain’s interest in Hispaniola, plus the alienation produced by the newly created traveling routes made the colonial population more inclined to entertain illegal trade. Hispaniola began to trade heavily with French and English merchants. According to Frank Moya Pons,

contraband trade was welcomed by the residents and cattle owners of the interior who were doubly harmed by the royal monopoly. On many occasions, the colonists requested the abolition of the monopoly so they could sell their products to other nationals or to other merchants at other Spanish ports. In all instances the crown rejected these petitions. As the availability of imported goods decreased, the colonists resorted to contraband.<sup>20</sup>

Spain decided that the best way to deal with the illegal trade was to clear out the northern and western sides of the island and move the residents inland to Santo Domingo, the capital of the island. The resulting depopulation was known as *las*

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 43.

*devastaciones* (the devastations).<sup>21</sup> *Las devastaciones* did not help Spain keep foreign powers away from their shores; it attracted them all the more because access to Hispaniola became easier once the northern and western regions were depopulated. Additionally, *las devastaciones* left residents from the depopulated areas severely impoverished due to the loss of most of their livestock during the evacuation; “of the estimated 110,000 domesticated livestock, only 8,000 arrived at the new locations and all but 2,000 died because of poor pasturage in the new area.”<sup>22</sup> These conditions led to famine and poverty, with families that could move elsewhere migrating to other parts of the Spanish empire in the Americas.

By the 1630s, just three decades after *las devastaciones*, Dutch, French, and English forces were trying to move into Hispaniola once again. This time, they used the island of Tortuga as a staging area. Tortuga is located right off the coast of the northwestern end of the island; from there, illegal trade started up again in Hispaniola, and buccaneers hunted wild cattle for nourishment and hide trading.<sup>23</sup> Spain responded by attacking Tortuga on various occasions, and while the Spanish troops were able to slow the French occupation of the western side of Hispaniola, their efforts were not enough to stop the inevitable. In 1697, after years of fighting the French both in Europe and in Hispaniola, Spain handed over part of Hispaniola to France in the Treaty of Ryswick, which ended the Nine Years’ War.<sup>24</sup>

The Treaty of Ryswick officially established a French colony on the island. Hispaniola was split into Spanish Santo Domingo to the east and French Saint-

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 53 -54.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 72; Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle, Historia de la cuestión fronteriza dominico-haitiana, Reprint (Santo Domingo: Sociedad Dominicana de Bibliófilos, [1946] 1988) 80 – 83.

Domingue to the west. Saint-Domingue quickly became France's most lucrative colony. The French colony's sugar plantations required a constant large supply of labor, which led to a continuous importation of slaves. The conditions under which the slaves were transported caused 20% of them to die en route to the Americas.<sup>25</sup> Santo Domingo, on the other hand, had stopped producing sugar on the scale of earlier years due to the market price drop resulting from the flooding of the global market with sugar from Brazil and Saint-Domingue;<sup>26</sup> instead, they focused on cattle-raising.

Saint-Domingue and Santo Domingo began trading with each other because of Santo Domingo's need for sugar and Saint-Domingue's need for meat to feed its large number of slaves. The work environments in the two colonies helped establish their individual social constructions of race. The constant importation of slaves to Saint-Domingue created a society that not only was mostly black, but also allowed for the development of syncretic identities and religions in the colony—with the slaves from Western Africa came many customs. Santo Domingo, on the other hand, because it did not achieve the economic prosperity that was found in Saint-Domingue, had a significantly smaller number of slaves. The slaves in Santo Domingo were treated differently because the colony did not have enough capital to buy slaves at the rate at which Saint-Domingue did. Slaves therefore were “treated better,” and their life expectancy was longer. The fact that Santo Domingo specialized in cattle-raising also benefitted the slaves in the Spanish colony because this work was not as strenuous as

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<sup>25</sup> C.L.R. James, Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1969) 8.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-62.



working in the sugar-cane fields. In Saint-Domingue, the constant importation of African slaves for the continuation of the sugar-producing economy made Saint-Domingue almost 90% black and 10% white.<sup>27</sup> Alan Cambeira argues that

the considerably small number of Caucasians there, while tightly linked in formation by a purely racial solidarity, were nevertheless disjointed bitterly by class or caste. Despite the growing abundance in material wealth of the colony, there were equally growing racial caste and class antagonisms that would ignite with a devouring vengeance this explosive socioeconomic and psychological circumstance. The division, with the accompanying hostilities, proved to be noticeably unusual for the region. The colony was producing, along with increased material richness, a social elite, an economically successful caste, that began perceiving itself as a new nobility, however alarmingly insignificant their numbers.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time as notions of race were being developed in both colonies, the French and Spanish settlers were also involved in serious border disputes. While the Treaty of Ryswick granted France a part of Hispaniola, it did not establish a strict border between Saint-Domingue and Santo Domingo. Moreover, the Spanish settlers were disturbed to see French settlers moving farther inland, causing Santo Domingo to become a smaller colony. Spanish efforts to repopulate the borderlands began before the signing of the Treaty of Ryswick in hopes of preventing further French encroachment. In 1719, negotiations between the French and Spanish governments led to an agreement on a neutral border-zone between the two colonies, yet this did not stabilize the situation.<sup>29</sup> Further attempts to establish the border continued, and included Spanish soldiers stationed at the Dajabón and Pedernales rivers with orders to stop French settlers from moving past those points,<sup>30</sup> and the signing of a treaty of

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<sup>27</sup> See Laurent DuBois' Avengers of the New World.

<sup>28</sup> Alan Cambeira, Quisqueya la Bella: The Dominican Republic in Historical and Cultural Perspective (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997) 120.

<sup>29</sup> Peña Batlle, Historia, 88.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 89; Moya Pons, 85.

limits in 1731.<sup>31</sup> The border issue was resolved with the 1777 Treaty of Aranjuez between Spain and France. The treaty sought to establish an official border between Saint-Domingue and Santo Domingo; Spain also used this treaty to officially recognize Saint-Domingue as a French colony.<sup>32</sup> Even though in the Treaty of Ryswick Spain had ceded the western part of Hispaniola to France, the Spanish Crown had not recognized the French colony as a legitimate entity. The Treaty of Aranjuez kept Hispaniola running smoothly until 1789, when the French Revolution erupted.

By the mid- to late eighteenth century, Saint-Domingue began considering the benefits of independence. Unlike Santo Domingo, which had some liberty to manage its own affairs, Saint-Domingue was under severe control from France. The white elite wanted power over the colony while poor whites and free *gens de couleurs*<sup>33</sup> wanted to gain the respect that had been denied to them by the upper classes.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, the enslaved population grew tired of the abusive treatment to which it was subjected. In the late eighteenth century, Latin American and Caribbean colonies began to turn towards independence, influenced by the American and French revolutions. Latin Americans began to recognize that being ruled by European nations hundreds of miles away harmed the development of their economies and territories. During the early stages of colonialism, Spain's American empire was controlled by *peninsulares*, Spanish immigrants from the Iberian Peninsula. By the time of the

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<sup>31</sup> Moya Pons, 85.

<sup>32</sup> Peña Batlle, *Historia*, 83, 96; Ernesto Sagás, *Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2000) 26.

<sup>33</sup> French for "people of color," a designation for the people of European and African descent in Saint-Domingue.

<sup>34</sup> David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, [1979] 1996) 20-28.

French Revolution, Napoleon's subsequent rise to power, and the French invasion of Spain in the early nineteenth century, *peninsulares* were few and the higher classes had taken on a different look and name due to racial mixing: the *mestizo* and, more importantly, the creole. The creole class began the push towards independence in Spanish America, a movement spearheaded by Simon Bolívar. It was not the creole and mestizo movement in South America, however, that initiated the liberation of Spanish America from Spain; it was the slave-led revolt in Saint-Domingue against the French.

#### *Haitian Independence and the Unification of Hispaniola*

The Haitian Revolution began in 1791, two years after the French Revolution. Led by Toussaint Louverture, the revolt represents the only successful slave revolt in history and made Haiti the first colony in the New World after the United States to gain independence. Haiti gained independence in 1804 and soon found itself in dire circumstances. The thirteen-year revolution left the newly formed nation in shambles; with the gaining of independence, it had lost all foreign investment and imports, and the burning of the sugar plantations had destroyed once fertile lands.<sup>35</sup> The Haitian Revolution showed the other peoples of the Americas what would happen to them if they decided to defy the motherland. To become an independent nation, Haiti had to fight off Spanish, British, and French invasions.<sup>36</sup> Once Haiti became a nation, all European aid was taken away, and the once most lucrative colony in the world became, and has remained, one of the poorest nations in the world.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 27 -32.

<sup>36</sup> Moya Pons, 96.

One of the main reasons why the Haitian Revolution could succeed was France's involvement in numerous other wars with England, Holland, and Spain. Napoleon's desire for French expansion into the Iberian Peninsula, coupled with fighting simultaneous wars with three countries and trying to put down the slave uprising in Saint-Domingue, proved too much of a strain. Because France lacked the funds and the manpower to sustain multiple battlefronts, Napoleon increasingly lost control over Saint-Domingue. Yet after Napoleon invaded and occupied Spain, and placed his brother as the King of the Spanish Crown, in 1795, France gained control of the eastern side of Hispaniola through the Treaty of Basel. The treaty stated

states that the King of Spain would cede and abandon to the French Republic all property in the Spanish part of the island of Santo Domingo. It further stipulated that Spanish troops would promptly evacuate the towns, ports, and establishments and would surrender them to French troops when they arrived. It was conceded that the inhabitants of Santo Domingo would have one year, from the date of the treaty, to relocate.<sup>37</sup>

The French occupation of Santo Domingo laid the foundation for the development of antihaitianismo in the colony. Santo Domingo had been fighting against French domination of the island for two centuries, actions that had previously been settled by the Treaty of Ryswick and the Treaty of Aranjuez. Many upper-class families now left Santo Domingo and headed to Cuba, where they felt their rights would be upheld and protected.<sup>38</sup> A matter of great concern to the upper classes was the possible eradication of slavery in Santo Domingo by the French. In the same year as the signing of the Treaty of Basel, the French abolished slavery in Saint-Domingue in hopes that that action would calm the insurrection against the French government. Although Santo Domingo was not a major slave-owning colony, the *criollo*, mulatto

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 100.

and *mestizo* upper class saw the owning of slaves as a right they had as “whites.”<sup>39</sup>

The abolition of slavery threatened the racial constructions created by the Spaniards and perpetuated by the white upper class.

Before long, news of the Treaty of Basel reached Saint-Domingue and, in an effort to unite the island, Toussaint Louverture and his troops entered Santo Domingo and took control of the eastern part of the island. Louverture acted in the name of the French Crown because Saint-Domingue was still under French control. Additionally, Louverture forced the governor of Saint-Domingue to sign a decree stating that he could legally occupy Santo Domingo.<sup>40</sup> In the subsequent months, Louverture imposed agricultural reform on the former Spanish colony.<sup>41</sup> “Slavery had been abolished automatically on his arrival in Santo Domingo, and abolition was ratified by the new colonial Political Constitution promulgated in Santo Domingo on August 27, 1801.”<sup>42</sup> This action enraged the white upper class of Santo Domingo, whose position within the social power structure of Santo Domingo had been called into question. The white upper class resented being rendered subordinate not only to France, but also to the former slave population of Saint-Domingue.<sup>43</sup>

Louverture and his troops lasted only one year before being driven out of the eastern side of the island by an alliance between French troops and the residents of Santo Domingo. “Long accustomed to identifying themselves as white, the racially mixed population of Santo Domingo had not been able to accept the governance of

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<sup>39</sup> *Criollo* is the Spanish version of creole, which was the racial category assigned to a person born from Spanish parents in the Americas. *Mestizo* is a person who is of European and indigenous descent.

<sup>40</sup> Moya Pons, 104-105.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 107.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 108.

<sup>43</sup> Sagás, 28.

the blacks,<sup>44</sup> and preferred submitting to white French soldiers. Louverture was captured, arrested, and taken back to France, where he died in exile, and Jean-Jacques Dessalines became the head of the Haitian Revolution. Dessalines was a much harsher and more ruthless leader than Louverture, as became clear when he massacred whites remaining on the western side of the island and pillaged Santo Domingo in 1805.

Dessalines decided to occupy the eastern side of the island; as a newly free and independent state, Haiti was extremely vulnerable to invasion by other nations, especially France. Dessalines and Henri Christophe entered Santo Domingo and took over various cities before reaching the city of Santo Domingo. Upon the arrival of the Haitian troops, the small number of French troops stationed there stood their ground until French reinforcements arrived. Dessalines, Christophe, and the rest of the Haitian troops retreated to Haiti, fearing a French invasion. Sagás offers the following dramatic account of the retreat:

During the retreat, however, the Haitian armies left a trail of blood. They ransacked all the towns in their path, killing many of their inhabitants. According to Haitian historian Price Mars: ‘And so it was that the retreat of the Haitian army was one of the most dramatic and bloodiest episodes of a dramatic and bloody history. Burnings of farms, destructions of cattle, execution of hostages, arrests of women and children, the brutal transfer of them to the West, after the army; nothing was missing in such a sad portrait of futile horrors. For Dessalines, the people of the East resembled the French whites, his eternal enemies.’ Dessalines, furious over being unable to capture Santo Domingo, and believing a French invasion to be imminent reverted to the “scorched earth” policy that he had successfully used during the Haitian Revolution. Furthermore, Dessalines now considered the Santo Domingo colonists, who had preferred to side with the French, his enemies.<sup>45</sup>

Dessalines’ destruction of Santo Domingo left the white upper class with an intense hatred for Haitians. This event laid an important cornerstone for the development of

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<sup>44</sup> Moya Pons, 108.

<sup>45</sup> Sagás, 28.

antihaitianismo in Santo Domingo. However, it was not until the twenty-two year Haitian Occupation that antihaitianismo fully solidified as an ideology in the Spanish colony.

In 1808, the settlers of Santo Domingo united and fought off the French forces controlling them. The colony returned to Spanish hands and remained there until 1821, when Santo Domingo gained independence from Spain and soon after petitioned to become a part of Simon Bolívar's Gran Colombia. A few weeks later, in early 1822, the Haitian President Jean Pierre Boyer, fearing that France might use Santo Domingo as an entry point into Haiti, ordered Haitian troops to enter the Dominican Republic and take control of the whole island.<sup>46</sup> Haiti controlled the Dominican Republic for the next twenty-two years. During this time, it abolished slavery, which had been reinstated after Louverture's capture, and nationalized and redistributed privately owned lands, actions that enraged the Dominican white upper class.<sup>47</sup> By the late 1830s and early 1840s, the white upper-class residents of the eastern side of the island began to organize against Haiti, and on February 27, 1844, they declared independence.

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*Dominican Independence and the Dominican Republic as an Autonomous State*

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Led by Juan Pablo Duarte, Ramón Matías Mella, and Francisco del Rosario Sánchez, the Dominican Republic defied Haiti and became its own autonomous state. As soon as independence was achieved, the Dominican Republic sought to gain recognition from the United States, France, England, and Spain by defining itself as a

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<sup>46</sup> Moya Pons, 119.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 124.

white, Spanish, and Catholic nation. Because of the association of Haiti's being a "black nation," the Dominican Republic and its people wanted to distance themselves from their neighbor next door as much as possible; their way of doing this was to shun blackness and embrace its opposite: whiteness. In approaching Western nations for support, Dominicans claimed that they were a nation of *blancos, mestizos, indios y indios oscuros*. The sociologist Ginetta E.B. Candelario in Black Behind the Ears, explains how "observers with varied political agendas ... colluded in the representation of Dominicans and the Dominican Republic as a nation with a minimal degree of 'pure blackness.'"<sup>48</sup> Thus, negation of blackness seemed necessary to the development of Dominican racial and national identity, for accepting blackness would mean accepting the inferiority they associated with Haitians. Dominicans sought to understand themselves as the antithesis of Haiti and its blackness.

Candelario continues her argument by stating that

while skin color and any African heritage are the phenotypical symbol and genealogical and ideological codes for determining racial identity in the United States, for Dominicans the phenotypical symbol is hair and the ideological code is anti-Haitianism.<sup>49</sup>

The definition of Dominicanness that the newly independent Dominican Republic produced made antihaitianismo the bedrock of Dominican national identity.

Accordingly, it became imperative that the nation be protected at all costs from the neighbor next door.

During its first years of nationhood, the Dominican Republic struggled to develop and to maintain stability. The country yearned for recognition, as well as for

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<sup>48</sup> Ginetta E.B Candelario, Black Behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007) 14.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 7.



support against another possible Haitian occupation. Many conservatives' agendas promoted the possibility of annexation to another country, such as France, Spain, or the United States. "In May 1848, the Dominican government sent a diplomatic mission to Spain, France, and England to negotiate the recognition of the Dominican Republic as an independent country."<sup>50</sup> France was the only one of the three nations to acknowledge the Dominican Republic as an independent state, signing "a provisional treaty of peace, friendship, trade and navigation."<sup>51</sup> According to Candelairo, in the 1850s, the United States considered the idea of bringing the Dominican Republic into the Union as a slave state.<sup>52</sup> Although this proposal eventually fell through, the mere possibility of it made the Spanish government reconsider its position on Dominican sovereignty.<sup>53</sup> In 1861, an economically strained Dominican Republic was annexed to Spain and became a Spanish province. Moya Pons states that in the agreement of annexation,

Spain would promise to: 1) never reestablish slavery in Dominican territory, 2) consider Dominican territory as a Spanish province, thus permitting it to enjoy the same rights as other provinces, 3) employ the services of the greatest possible number of Dominican civil and military officials in the new government, 4) amortize all paper money then in circulation in the Dominican Republic, and 5) recognize as good and valid all the acts passed by the Dominican government since 1844.<sup>54</sup>

Only a couple years after annexation, in 1863, however, Dominican rebels took up arms against the Spanish government and fought for the separation of the Dominican Republic from Spain. It what came to be known as the War of Restoration, the rebels, with the aid of the Haitian president, Fabre Geffrard,

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<sup>50</sup> Moya Pons, 168.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 171.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 7-8.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 177.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 202.

fought against Spanish troops in a new war of independence. Geffrard was eager to help with the restoration movement because he was unsettled by having Spain so close to Haiti.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore,

what began as a peasant revolt soon became a racial war, since the black and mulatto Dominicans who constituted the majority of the population feared being enslaved again by the Spaniards... With few material resources available, and taking into account the geography of the country, the Dominicans could only fight the Spaniards in one possible manner: guerilla warfare. From the beginning, each rural community and each region of the country organized its own forces and named its own leaders to coordinate operations with the revolutionary movement.<sup>56</sup>

It took two years of fighting before Spain annulled the annexation agreement and the Dominican Republic became an independent nation once again. By the time the agreement was annulled, the entire Dominican population and government favored independence and sovereignty. By the end of July 1865, all Spanish troops had left the Dominican Republic for good.<sup>57</sup> The end of the nineteenth century in the Dominican Republic brought the fourteen-year dictatorship of Ulises 'Lilís' Heureaux. This era also marks the beginning of Dominican nationalistic rhetoric and thought as voiced by figures like Eugenio María de Hostos.

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the Dominican Republic did not have intellectuals producing work regarding the nation. Eugenio María de Hostos, a Puerto Rican exile who lived for many years in the Dominican Republic, is credited with being the father of Dominican intellectual thought and the Dominican education system. During his time in the Dominican Republic, Hostos founded the Escuela Normal, a senior high school in Santo Domingo, and many institutes for the training

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 211.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 213.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 217-218.

of teachers in higher education.<sup>58</sup> According to the Dominican historians Bernardo Vega and Roberto Cassá, Hostos supported the creation of an Antillean federation, which would include an independent Cuba and Puerto Rico, along with the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and the rest of the islands that comprise the Greater and Lesser Antilles.<sup>59</sup> Hostos' theories led to many intellectuals emerging from his tutelage speaking of Dominicanness as inherently inferior because of the mixture of Spanish, indigenous, and African cultures found in the Dominican population. This rhetoric complicated previous concepts of Dominicanness because it claims that previous denied racial and ethnic identities are in fact a part of Dominican racial, ethnic, and cultural construction.<sup>60</sup> The emerging intellectuals believed that whiteness and Hispanicity were attributes necessary to a superior, pure society, concepts that would continue to be utilized in the mid-twentieth century; the latter point will be explored in Chapter 3. Light-skinned Dominicans remained the dominant group under this new racial understanding; thoughts of Dominican inferiority, however, did not affect the already popular discourse on Haitian inferiority. The scholar José Ramon López, writing at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, discusses the question of Dominican inferiority from the vantage point of class, arguing that Dominican inferiority is due to the immense poverty and malnutrition that the nation suffered during most of the colonial and post-colonial era.<sup>61</sup> Even though Hostos never directly addressed the question of antihaitianismo, he did agree with the majority of the intellectuals on resolving "the black issue." Haitian immigration was on the rise

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 246.

<sup>59</sup> Bernardo Vega, *Trujillo y Haiti*, Vol. 1 (Santo Domingo, Rep. Dominicana: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1988) 23-24.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 29.

and Dominicans began to fear the possibility of a “passive Haitian invasion.” Hostos and several Dominican intellectuals and politicians believed that white immigration would resolve the “black issue.” As a result, during Heureaux’s dictatorship, Gregorio Luperón went to Europe to advocate for the immigration of Jewish families to the Dominican Republic. Although Luperón’s mission of increasing white immigration failed, it showcased the racial issues with which the nation was struggling. With the new understanding that Dominicans were the offspring of Spanish, indigenous, and African ancestors, immigration to whiten the Dominican Republic seemed like the only possible solution to the “black issue.”<sup>62</sup>

The assassination of Heureaux in 1899 led to severe political and economic instability in the Dominican Republic. The nation’s currency began to lose value and the national debt was increasing at an astronomical rate. Foreign investors were concerned: “on two occasions, in 1900 and 1903, the Italian, Belgian and German governments had even sent warships to Santo Domingo to force rapid payments.”<sup>63</sup> These actions severely troubled President Theodore Roosevelt, who did not want European intervention in the Americas for fear that these nations would try to take control of the Panamá Canal.<sup>64</sup> In June 1904, the American government made the decision to intervene economically in the Dominican Republic, and placed an American financial agent in the country who was in charge of collecting the revenues that the Dominican government had to pay back to foreign investors.<sup>65</sup> A year later, in 1905, the Dominican president, Carlos F. Morales Languasco, and President

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>63</sup> Moya Pons, 288.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

Roosevelt annulled the economic intervention agreement of the previous year and instead agreed on the United States having complete control of Dominican finances. Additionally, no financial action could be taken in the country without the approval of the president of the United States. President Roosevelt declared that the United States would be responsible for handling Dominican revenues earned from exports and would make sure that the nation's debt to foreign investors would be paid off.<sup>66</sup> In mid-1906, the United States granted the Dominican Republic a \$20-million loan with which to pay its creditors. The agreement reached in 1905 remained in effect: the United States would have sole control of customs in the Dominican Republic until the country discharged its debt to the United States.<sup>67</sup> Just nine years later, in 1915, the United States occupied Haiti.

#### *The U.S. Occupation of the Dominican Republic and Haiti*

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Following years of continued political instability, the United States decided to occupy the Dominican Republic in 1916. The nation was placed under military occupation, similar to the one already developing in Haiti.<sup>68</sup> Several things changed in the Dominican Republic during the occupation, including the creation of a national guard, the launching of vast public works projects intended to modernize the nation, and a new focus and economic dependency on sugar-cane production and export.<sup>69</sup>

“In April 1917, the Dominican National Guard was instituted with the aim of creating a body of native troops that could control revolutionary movements once the Marines

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 289-291.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 293-295.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 317-320.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 322.

had left.”<sup>70</sup> One of the earliest recruits was Rafael Trujillo, who would later become dictator of the Dominican Republic for thirty-one years.

The various public works projects and the expansion of sugar-cane production depended on the constant availability of cheap labor. Between the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the Dominican Republic counted on the labor of black migrant workers from the Lesser Antilles. Although these workers were discriminated against,<sup>71</sup> the country found these workers to be a better option than Haitian workers,<sup>72</sup> whom they considered inferior to people from the Lesser Antilles and the West Indies. By the time of the occupation, however, the U.S. military government decided that it would be more efficient to have Haitian migrant workers cutting and processing sugar cane and working on the public works projects. Haitian migrant workers worked for much lower wages than those from the Lesser Antilles.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, it was easier for the United States to have a constant flow of Haitian migrant workers because they were occupying both the nation providing cheap labor and the nation requiring the labor. The increased presence of Haitian nationals caused substantial tension within the Dominican society. The Dominican exile feared the “darkening of its people.”<sup>74</sup> Sagás affirms that

the ‘Haitian problem’ became an important issue of elite debate during the early twentieth century, and the racist, anti-Haitian prejudices of the Dominican elites

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 323.

<sup>71</sup> West Indian migrant workers in the Dominican Republic are known as *cocolos*, a derogatory term for dark-skinned West Indians. These workers were discriminated against because they were seen as a threat to Dominican purity, just like Haitian migrant workers later. Dominicans preferred West Indian labor because they believed that although the workers were black, they were of a higher class than Haitian laborers.

<sup>72</sup> David Howard, Coloring the Nation: Race and Ethnicity in the Dominican Republic (Boulder, CO: Signal Books Limited. 2001) 24.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>74</sup> Sagás, 41.

were as strong and widespread as ever. Now the Dominican nation imagined by its elites seemed to be threatened by two fronts: first, by U.S. imperialism, and second, by (black) Haitian migration.<sup>75</sup>

Regardless of the animosity felt by Dominicans towards Haitians, there was little the former could do in regard to Haitian migration. Even after the end of the U.S. occupation in 1924, the country still depended heavily on cheap Haitian labor for sugar-cane production.<sup>76</sup> Haitian migration continued, increasing the population of Haitian workers permanently residing in the Dominican Republic.

By 1920, the U.S. occupation was facing severe opposition in the Dominican Republic. With the Hughes-Peynado Plan of 1922, a set of guidelines was adopted for the evacuation of the U.S. Marines and the ending of the U.S. occupation. The plan stated that

a provisional government would be installed whose president would be elected by the principal political leaders and the archbishop of Santo Domingo. The government would prepare the appropriate legislation to regulate the holding of elections, reorganize the municipal and provincial political structures, and modify the constitution so that the necessary reforms could be made.<sup>77</sup>

The U.S. occupation came to an end in mid-1924, and Horacio Vásquez was elected president. During his years in power, Vásquez had very good relations with Haiti and its president, Louis Borno. In the year of his election, Vásquez commissioned Moisés García Mella to go to Haiti with the aim of solving the two countries' border disputes. Negotiations between countries began in July of 1927 and ended towards the end of 1928. In 1929, the Dominican and Haitian delegations met once again to reach a final agreement. During these negotiations, a new figure was introduced: Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle. Peña Batlle was the legal advisor to the Dominican delegation in Port-

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid; Vega, 1988, 22.

<sup>77</sup> Moya Pons, 333.

Au-Prince; relatively unknown at the time, he would gain fame for being the lead intellectual in Trujillo's regime.<sup>78</sup> The final agreement was reached in February 1929 and an official border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti was established. As part of the agreement, the Dominican constitution had to be modified because it did not allow for reestablishment of the border. Once the constitution was amended, Vásquez signed the agreement on February 25, 1929, and it was ratified by the Dominican government on April 29, 1929.<sup>79</sup>

By this time in his presidency, however, Vásquez had become extremely unpopular with the Dominican electorate due to his efforts to extend his presidency. Vásquez's attempts at reelection failed, and in February 1930 General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina and Rafael Estrella Ureña overthrew Vásquez's regime, forcing Vásquez into exile.<sup>80</sup> This moment represents the beginning of the Trujillo Era.

### *The Beginning of Trujillismo*

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Trujillo was officially sworn into power in August 1930, with Rafael Estrella Ureña as his vice-president. Around the time that Vásquez was ousted from the presidency, President Borno in Haiti was also ousted by the Haitian people, and in November 1930, Sténio Vincent was elected as President of the Republic.<sup>81</sup> Dissent regarding Trujillo's "election" as president was immediate among the Horacistas<sup>82</sup>. Many dissidents and political refugees migrated to neighboring Haiti, where freedom

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<sup>78</sup> Vega, 1988, 87.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 52-53.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>82</sup> The Horacistas were the supporters of Horacio Vásquez and his political agenda.



of speech and the press was one of the first pieces of legislation President Vincent signed into law. Trujillo feared that the political refugees might be plotting against him; he also did not feel comfortable with their finding refuge so nearby.<sup>83</sup> Trujillo arranged for a number of spies to be stationed in Port-Au-Prince, posing as *anti-Trujillistas* to gather intelligence on possible plots against him.

During the first couple of years of their administrations, Trujillo and Vincent had a rocky relationship. By the end of 1930, most of the border was established, with the exception of a few areas, five which were documented by the commission in charge of the Dominican-Haitian border.<sup>84</sup> During 1931, Trujillo moved a large number of the Dominican military to a bordertown called Montecristi, under the pretense that a Haitian invasion was imminent; the true motives were his fear of the rising number of Dominican exiles moving to Haiti and the increasing numbers of Haitians populating bordertowns.<sup>85</sup> The massing of Dominican troops on the border, however, made tensions rise and confrontations inevitable. Vincent asked the U.S. commanding officer located in Haiti, which was still under U.S. governance, for a large contingent of troops to be placed on the border, arguing that Dominican troops were mistreating Haitian civilians on Haitian soil.<sup>86</sup> Vice-President Estrella Ureña deemed it imperative that relations between the Dominican Republic and Haiti be ameliorated. He claimed that the incidents occurring on the border between Dominican and Haitian nationals were further straining the complicated relationship between the neighboring countries. Estrella Ureña resigned from the vice-presidency

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 89.

in August 1931 and, from self-imposed exile, declared himself an *anti-Trujillista*.<sup>87</sup>

After the first two years of Trujillo's dictatorship, relations between the Dominican Republic and Haiti normalized. Ságas explains that

in 1935 and 1936, Presidents Trujillo and Sténio Vincent of Haiti signed additional clauses to the 1929 border treaty, finally establishing a permanent, fixed border between the two countries of Hispaniola. Both leaders visited each other several times, and the press in both countries showered them with praise.<sup>88</sup>

The newfound peace between the countries came to a screeching halt in 1937.

In a trip to the borderlands in late 1937, Trujillo saw that the Haitian population and culture were still very present in borderland life. On October 2, 1937, at an event organized in honor of his arrival in Dájabon, Trujillo issued a decree stating that all Haitians living on the border were to be killed; the Haitian Massacre had begun.

#### *Mass Genocide and the Beginning of a Rearticulation of Antihaitianismo*

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The Haitian Massacre represented the climax of centuries of anti-French, anti-black, and ultimately, anti-Haitian sentiment in the area that became the Dominican Republic. Although anti-Haitian sentiment did not manifest itself until the early nineteenth century, its roots lie in the French invasion and occupation of the western side of Hispaniola. Furthermore, the split of Hispaniola into two colonies, one French and one Spanish, led to the development of two distinct social constructions of race, and, later on, national identities.

The Haitian Revolution, its aftermath, and its implications laid the foundation for antihaitianismo in colonial Santo Domingo. The occupations of Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines traumatized the settlers of the eastern side of

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 90.

<sup>88</sup> Ságas, 45.

the island. Dessalines' sacking of Santo Domingo only exacerbated anti-Haitian sentiment in the colony. The Haitian occupation of the Dominican Republic between 1822 and 1844 solidified antihaitianismo not just as a sentiment, but also as a national ideology. The establishment of antihaitianismo also laid the foundation for the definition of Dominicaness as a strictly white and Spanish racial, ethnic, and national group. This definition both excluded members of Dominican society from its definition, and worked as a defense mechanism for the young Dominican nation who believed that Haiti was an imminent threat to their sovereignty.

In the years following independence, the Dominican Republic sought to distance itself as much as it could from its neighbor. Dominican and Haitian relations became further strained with the U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic from 1916 through 1924 and its simultaneous occupation of Haiti from 1915 through 1934. Ultimately, centuries of tension and antihaitianismo erupted in 1937, with the state-sponsored massacre of thousands of Haitians on the Dominican-Haitian border. The Haitian Massacre symbolizes the beginning of a rearticulation of antihaitianismo in the Dominican Republic.

## **Chapter Two: “Perejil/Pelejil:” Details on the Haitian Massacre, its Causes and Consequences**

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*For some months, I have traveled and traversed the frontier in every sense of the word. I have seen, investigated and inquired about the needs of the population. To the Dominicans who were complaining of the depredations by Haitians living among them, theft of cattle, provisions, fruits, etc., and were thus prevented from enjoying in peace the products of their labor, I have responded. “I will fix this.” And we have already begun to remedy the situation. Three hundred Haitians are now dead in Bánica. This remedy will continue.<sup>89</sup>*

With this statement, made on October 2, 1937, at an event in his honor in the bordertown of Dajábon, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo publically announced the massacre of thousands of Haitians, Haitian-Dominicans, and Dominicans of Haitian ancestry, already under way. Beginning at the end of September, the Haitian Massacre physically showcased the effects of the dominant anti-Haitian rhetoric and sentiment that had prevailed among the Dominican elite for over a century. Furthermore, it redefined Dominicanness in an area defined by a porous, mixed society and culture. The massacre also ushered in a state-sponsored anti-Haitian propaganda campaign. Eventually, the massacre presented serious difficulties for the Trujillo regime, leading to his vilification in the international press. But why did the massacre occur in the first place? And what were the consequences of this event?

In this chapter, I will lay out the details of the Haitian Massacre and critically analyze prevailing theories as to why the massacre took place. Attention will also be paid to the months following the massacre, when a series of actions by the Dominican,

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<sup>89</sup> Richard Lee Turtis, Foundations of Despotism: Peasants, the Trujillo Regime, and Modernity in the Dominican Republic (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press. 2003) 162; also see J.M Jan’s Colleta: Diocese du Cap-Haïtien, Documents, 1929-1960. Vol 4. Rennes: Simon, 1967, pgs 82-83.

Haitian, and American governments ultimately led to an agreement in January 1938 by the Dominican Republic to pay Haiti reparations of \$750,000. Once clear understandings of these events are established, the rearticulation of antihaitianismo begins to make sense. This rearticulation becomes the basis for the redefinition of Dominicaness in the Dominican Republic during the Trujillo Era.

### *El Corte/The Cutting*

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It is estimated that between 5,000 and 30,000 Haitians were massacred on the border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti in the six-day period from October 2 to October 8, 1937.<sup>90</sup> Because the vast majority of massacred Haitians were killed with machetes or bayonets, the operation came to be known as *el corte*, or the cutting. Very few were killed with guns; accounts suggest that only individuals who tried to run away from Dominican troops were shot.<sup>91</sup> The aptly named Massacre River<sup>92</sup>, which served as an accepted divider of the Dominican Republic from Haiti, became one of the main spots where Haitians trying to escape the massacre were chased down and murdered.

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<sup>90</sup> The number of people killed in the Haitian Massacre has always been disputed. Joaquín Balaguer, an intellectual of the Trujillo period, later estimated in his memoir, Memorias de un cortesano en la era de Trujillo that 17,000 Haitians were killed. The Haitian historian Jean Price Mars in his monumental work, La República de Haiti y la República Dominicana, claims that 12,136 Haitians were killed while Frank Moya Pons uses the number of 18,000 Haitians. Eric Paul Roorda in The Dictator Next Door suggests that around 12,000 Haitians died within a week of the massacre and that many more died as a result of injuries they may have received while trying to escape and long-term exposure to the elements. The Dominican press of the era, continuing to claim that the massacre did not happen, claimed that between 200 and 8,000 Haitians had been killed as a result of frontier issues.

<sup>91</sup> Turtis, Foundations, 163

<sup>92</sup> “The river lost its original Taíno Indian name, Guatapana, in 1728, when Spanish soldiers slaughtered thirty pirate buccaneers seized there. In honor of the slaughter, the river was christened in blood as the Río Masacre.” Michele Wucker, Why the Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians, and the Struggle for Hispaniola (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1999) 44.

The Dominican troops assigned the task of mass genocide came with elite Dominican understandings of Dominicaness, which the historian Richard Lee Turtis argues were not found among the frontier population of the Dominican Republic. Turtis maintains that the unmarked and porous border had given rise to a bicultural community of Haitians and Dominicans in which intermarriage, cross-cultural friendships and constant travel between the two nations were accepted norms. “In many ways, the border remained an inconsequential political fiction for frontier residents. As one Haitian refugee from the massacre recalled, ‘Although there were two sides, the people were one, united.’”<sup>93</sup>

The fusion of Haitian and Dominican cultures on the border also created a group of transnational migrants who crossed the border on a daily basis for work, school, and other services. These individuals spoke both Spanish and Haitian Kreyol.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, a mixing of cultures also meant a mixing of religions; many Dominican residents from the border regions were familiar with and practiced Afro-Caribbean religions such as Vodou, an African-based religion commonly practiced in Haiti. For these reasons, the Dominican elite and the Trujillo regime were calling for the “Dominicanization of the frontier.”<sup>95</sup> The objectives of this program were to introduce light-skinned Dominicans and European migrant workers who would “lighten the race” to the borderlands, and to promote the infusion of Dominicaness,

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<sup>93</sup> Richard Turtis, “A World Destroyed, A Nation Imposed.” (*Hispanic American Historical Review*, 82.3: 2002) 589-635, 595.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> This terminology first appeared in the late nineteenth century, when the idea of whitening campaigns in the Dominican Republic first became popular.

commonly defined by the elite as “white, Hispanic and Catholic.”<sup>96</sup> The success of this project was crucial to the Dominican elite and the Trujillo regime because it signified the unification of Dominicans under a specific racialized agenda that defended whiteness, and denied blackness.

The idea of introducing European migrant workers was not a new concept. As mentioned in Chapter 1, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Gregorio Luperón tried to encourage the immigration of Russian Jews to the Dominican Republic. The leading intellectuals at the time, in conjunction with the Dominican elite, believed that white immigration would enable the Dominican Republic to advance as both a nation and a race. By 1937, however, “the Jewish community numbered no more than a few hundred, with most living in the capital.”<sup>97</sup> With the small Jewish community’s concentration in the capital, and the Dominican government’s failed attempts at promoting other white immigration to the frontier, the borderland’s culture remained unaffected.

Turtis asserts that “for centuries, the culture of the Dominican peasantry had also been seen by Dominican elites and policy-makers as backward, even African.” Additionally, “popular Dominican religion, music, and other cultural practices had always exhibited forms traceable to Africa and in common with Afro-Haitians.”<sup>98</sup> Thus, the existing definitions of Dominican identity preferred by Dominican elites and policy-makers made it necessary to “whiten the frontier.” Failure to do so would be tantamount to accepting African influences and ideas as a part of Dominicaness. Cultural characteristics opposed by the ruling elite presented themselves in the

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<sup>96</sup> Lauro Capdevila. *La dictadura de Trujillo: República Dominicana, 1930-1961.*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, translated from French (Santo Domingo, RD: Sociedad de Bibliófilos Dominicanos, 2010) 97

<sup>97</sup> Allen Wells, *Tropical Zion: General Trujillo, FDR, and the Jews of Sosua* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009) 11.

<sup>98</sup> Turtis, *Foundations*, 150.

bordertown communities. Furthermore, Dominicans and Haitians were seen living in peace, without the dividing barriers that elitist Dominican race theory claimed existed. These Dominicans were not only viewed as backward and African, as Turtis notes, but also as borderline Haitians, people who needed to be civilized and reminded of their race and nationality.

In the 1980s, several journalists and historians, among them Juan Manuel García and Miguel Aquino García, interviewed survivors and people who had lived on the border during the massacre. These interviews capture the undeniable terror and horror of the six days in which thousands of lives were taken, and the broken families, ties, friendships, and lives that were left in the massacre's aftermath. Many of the people interviewed were Dominicans of Haitian descent, most of them the only survivors of their families. Aquino García presents the story of Inocencio 'Ñoño' Pérez, a man who was twelve years old in 1937, and who lost both his parents and his five siblings in the massacre. Aquino García explains that

Ñoño nació en Loma de Cabrera y se considera con toda razón dominicano. Su nombre es Inocencio Pérez y tiene 69 años de edad. Su madre era haitiana y su padre dominicano también de madre haitiana.

Ñoño was born in Loma de Cabrera and considers himself Dominican, rightfully so. His name is Inocencio Pérez and he is 69 years old. His mother was Haitian and his father was Dominican, also from a Haitian mother.<sup>99</sup>

Ñoño's fervent conviction in his Dominicaness is not uncommon for many survivors of the massacre; he was born on Dominican soil, which granted him Dominican citizenship and legal recognition as a Dominican under the Dominican constitution. Yet, Ñoño was the only one of his siblings, who had all been born in the Dominican

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<sup>99</sup> Miguel Aquino García, Holocausto en El Caribe: Perfiles de un tiranía sin precedents, la matanza de haitianos por Trujillo (Santo Domingo, Rep. Dom: Editora Corripio, C. por A. 1995) 122. Translation mine.



Republic, to survive the massacre. His testimony was indicative that prior to the massacre, border communities were largely a mixture of Dominicans and Haitians living in peace with each other. Ñoño's situation challenged elitist theories suggesting that Dominicans and Haitians could be easily distinguished, regardless of where they were found. Since many Dominicans residing on the border were bilingual and formed a part of a unique culture and community separate from the mainstream Dominican narrative, distinguishing them from Haitians was almost impossible unless people had Haitian names.<sup>100</sup> One method that was used by Dominican troops forced people to say *perejil*. It was believed that if a person could not say *perejil*, parsley in English, or any word with an "r" in it, then the individual was Haitian because Haitians could not "roll their r's."<sup>101</sup> Once again, this method proved to be ineffective in distinguishing Haitians from Dominicans because of the mixed culture and society characteristic of the frontier peoples for generations. Although Dominican troops believed that they were murdering only Haitians, many Haitian–Dominicans, Dominicans of Haitian descent, and dark-skinned Dominicans were slaughtered as well.

Ñoño's testimony is also indicative of the place dark-skinned Dominicans and Dominicans of Haitian descent occupied in the constructed understandings of Dominicanness. Since Dominicanness asserted that Dominicans were solely a white and Spanish racial, ethnic, and national group, it prohibited the ability for dark-skinned Dominicans and Dominicans of Haitian descent to assert their blackness.

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<sup>100</sup> This was a rarity and only found among direct migrants from Haiti. Haitians who had been born in the Dominican Republic usually were given Dominican names; such was the case with Ñoño's father and Ñoño himself.

<sup>101</sup> Aquino García, 120.

Furthermore, because of the rigid boundaries of Dominicaness, it required that dark-skinned Dominicans renounce and deny their blackness in order to be Dominican. Even if dark-skinned Dominicans did this, however, they were still treated like second-class citizens. Nowhere is this clearly than in the Haitian Massacre, where simplified notions of race and ethnicity, along a misunderstanding of the bicultural nature of the border region, led to the murdering of thousands of Haitians, Dominicans of Haitian descent and dark-skinned Dominicans.

*Dominican, Haitian and American Responses in the Aftermath of the Massacre*

Once news of the massacre reached the population on the border, many began to flee. Along with his decree for the mass murder of Haitians, Trujillo announced that Haitians on the Dominican side of the border had twenty-four hours to pack their belongings and cross into Haiti for safety. On October 3, hundreds of Haitians migrated into Haiti, leaving behind the lives that they had created for themselves over decades. A day later, Dominican troops closed off the border, and Haitians trying to cross into Haiti were killed.<sup>102</sup> Some victims managed to cross the Massacre River and enter Haiti undetected; many of these people were wounded as they fled. The Haitians and Dominicans who made it to Haiti brought with them stories of horror and terror.

On October 10<sup>th</sup>, just eight days after Trujillo's declaration, the Subsecretary of Foreign Affairs, Joaquín Balaguer, responded to a telegram sent to the Dominican government by Haitian Minister Evremont Carrié. In his response, Balaguer tries to placate Carrié, claiming the following:

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

que Su Excelencia el Señor Presidente Vincent no cree que el Gobierno de su Amigo el Señor Presidente Trujillo haya podido asociarse a sucesos tan deplorables y ha dado encargo a Vuestra Excelencia de presentar las justas quejas haitianas en la esperanza de que el Gobierno Dominicano aprobará plenamente los puntos que a continuación se expresan:

1. Una investigación para fijar las responsabilidades.
2. El castigo de los culpables
3. Una indemnización a las víctimas o a sus parientes
4. La reprobación espontánea del Gobierno Dominicano en presencia de tales hechos y su seguridad de no permitir que se repitan.

that your Excellency, Sir President Vincent does not think that the Government of his Friend, Sir President Trujillo, has associated itself with such deplorable actions and has given charge to my Excellency of presenting the just Haitian complaints in hopes that the Dominican Government will fully probe the points that are expressed in the following:

1. An investigation to establish responsibility.
2. The punishment of the guilty.
3. Reparations for the victims or their families.
4. The spontaneous reprimanding such acts and the guarantee that they will not be allowed to occur again.<sup>103</sup>

Balaguer's telegram goes on to state that Trujillo was surprised by the claim of the Haitian government because the Dominican government had heard of only minor incidents between Dominican and Haitian peasants on the border. Balaguer also claimed that Trujillo had already established a task force in charge of investigating the border incidents.<sup>104</sup> Balaguer's initial response to Carrié's concerns represented the beginning of Trujillo's denial of the massacre. On October 15, five days after Balaguer responded to Carrié's telegram, both parties reached an agreement, in which the Dominican Republic officially agreed to conduct a thorough investigation of the October 2 to October 8 border incidents.

It was not until the following day, October 16, that the government-censored-and-controlled Dominican press made mention of the massacre. *La Opinión* and

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<sup>103</sup> José Israel Cuello, Documentos del Conflicto Dominico-Haitiano de 1937 (Santo Domingo, Rep. Dom: Editora Taller, C por A, 1985) 51. Translation mine.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, 52.

*Listín Diario*, both prominent newspapers, ran a government press release that detailed the agreement made between Carrié and Balaguer. *La Opinión* also ran a small article adjacent to the press release commenting on recent problems taking place on the border. The article supported Balaguer's initial story: that the border conflicts were not a massacre but small incidents involving Dominican and Haitian peasants on the border.<sup>105</sup> Over the next several weeks, the Dominican press continued to follow this path. On October 29, *La Opinión* published a letter from Trujillo to Dominican Minister Enrique Jiménez, in which Trujillo stated that the good relations between both nations should not be affected by the border incidents of early October. Trujillo goes to the extent of saying that he “protests with all of the strength in my spirits against the current of Haitian opinion that can consider him [Trujillo] a threat to the Haitian nation.”<sup>106</sup> In early November, articles appeared in *La Opinión* suggesting that the Haitian government was trying to cause a scandal out of the “insignificant events of Dajabón.”<sup>107</sup>

The reporting conducted by the Dominican press suggests that the Haitian government spoke about the events of early October to the international community; however, this was not the case. President Vincent remained surprisingly silent directly following the massacre. According to the historian Eric Paul Roorda, Vincent was cautious in his response for several reasons, including the fact that “the Dominican armed forces were much more powerful than the Haitian, and the

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 12; *La Opinión*, Oct. 16, 1937, 1.

<sup>106</sup> *La Opinión*, Oct. 29, 1937, 1; direct quote: “protesto con todas las fuerzas de mi espíritu contra esa corriente de la opinión haitiana que puede considerarme como amenaza para los sagrados intereses del pueblo haitiano.”

<sup>107</sup> *La Opinión*, Nov. 5 and Nov. 6, 1937, both pg. 1.

potential for military disaster in the event of a war weakened Vincent's position."<sup>108</sup>

Vincent's actions were heavily criticized in the Haitian press, and he was accused of supporting Trujillo's massacre.<sup>109</sup> Although the Carrié-Balaguer Agreement had been acknowledged by both nations, the Dominican government was not following up with the "investigation." Carrié informed Vincent that he had not received any information regarding the investigation and that his final request for information on October 25 had not been responded to.<sup>110</sup> In the early weeks of November, Vincent took a trip along the border; at the end of the trip, he declared that

in this tragic circumstance that has dragged into mourning a great part of the northern population, my first sentiment, my first movement, spontaneously dictated by my heart, with all of my affection, has been to come here, to share our legitimate pain ... I promise that the causes and those responsible will be investigated regarding this tragedy.<sup>111</sup>

Following this declaration, on November 12, President Vincent sent telegrams to the United States, Cuba, and Mexico asking for their assistance and good offices<sup>112</sup> in the mediating between the Dominican Republic and Haiti regarding the border incidents of early October; the United States was first to respond, with responses from Cuba and Mexico following soon after.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Eric Paul Roorda, The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime, 1930-1945 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998) 134.

<sup>109</sup> Turtis, Foundations, 168.

<sup>110</sup> Bernardo Vega, Trujillo y Haiti, Vol II, (Santo Domingo, Rep. Dom: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1995) 105.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, 112; Turtis, 168.

<sup>112</sup> "Good offices" was a term used in the Americas after the establishing of the Good Neighbor Policy, an initiative of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration. According to the agreement, the nations of the Americas were to treat each other as friends. Furthermore, the agreement was meant as a way to unite the Western Hemisphere under U.S. American vigilance. It is useful to think of the Good Neighbor Policy as a modernized, less direct version of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.

<sup>113</sup> Roorda, 135; Vega, 1995, 152.

The Dominican government was not satisfied with Vincent's actions, and in fact, was not notified of them until November 13, the day after the telegrams were sent. "Although Trujillo had said that he would welcome the counsel of the United States, the Dominican government asserted that the Haitian request for good offices 'had come as an unwelcome surprise.'"<sup>114</sup> The United States made several attempts at receiving the Dominican government's permission to mediate and investigate the events of early October. Roorda elaborates on this:

In response, Trujillo characterized the murders as just another minor squabble 'between Dominican and Haitian *campesinos*,' no different from "the many that have occurred since 1844,' when the Haitian occupation ended and Dominican independence began. He defined the problem as an internal affair involving illegal Haitian aliens, not subject to outside mediation. While Roosevelt emphasized the part of the Good Neighbor policy that called for collective mitigation of conflicts within the community of American states, Trujillo stressed the other side of the same policy: the sanctity of each nation's sovereignty.<sup>115</sup>

Trujillo's response was clearly indicative of the Dominican stance: not only did the massacre not occur, but also there was nothing to investigate because the events were minor incidents, which would be addressed without the intervention of other countries.

Trujillo continued to fight vigorously against repeated efforts trying to establish mediation between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. His combative nature quickly began to work against him, and employing a new approach suggested to him by Dominican Minister Andrés Pastoriza, the Dominican government started a campaign that focused on illegal Haitian immigration across the fluid border. The campaign became the gateway for the entrance of racist rhetoric into the Dominican version of the incidents. Pastoriza believed that the American and Cuban public would sympathize with Dominicans' protests against the uncontrollable invasion of

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<sup>114</sup> Roorda, 135.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

black Haitians into their nation.<sup>116</sup> According to this version, Dominican peasants along the border were merely defending their rights, property, and land. “Pastoriza, discerning the reluctance on the part of Cuba, Mexico, and the United States to involve themselves too deeply, advocated an informal meeting with the mediators. He hoped to convince them to put the pressure back on the Haitian government to accept the results of the Dominican investigation and arrive at a direct, bilateral agreement to settle the affair.”<sup>117</sup> Meetings between all parties began in early December; quickly, the mediating parties along with Haiti came to the conclusion that “since the incident had taken on an ‘international aspect,’ a commission should go to Hispaniola to investigate and prepare a report.”<sup>118</sup>

The Dominican government backed out of the informal mediations fast, proclaiming that it had not agreed upon formal mediation and once again asserted that international mediation was not necessary. Trujillo returned to his original method, and the mediations were at a stand-still up until the Dominican government received word that Haiti was thinking of breaking ties with the Dominican Republic and invoking the Gondra Treaty of 1923 and the Convention of Conciliation of 1929, “existing inter-American arbitration pacts” that “essentially would take Trujillo to court.”<sup>119</sup> Faced with this turn of events, Trujillo cabled the presidents of the United States, Cuba, and Mexico on December 17, stating that given the circumstances, in addition to President Vincent’s refusal of internal mediation, he would allow

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 136 – 137.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 136.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 136-137.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 137; Cuello, 141.

mediation and the conduction of an investigation of the Dominican border.<sup>120</sup> Presidents Roosevelt and Laredo Bru of Cuba promptly responded to Trujillo's cable, stating that they were both glad that "the Government of the Dominican Republic would not give the most minimal hindrance to any alteration of peace in America, whose preservation all of the nations of the World wish to secure with such legitimate and great interest."<sup>121</sup> Trujillo also cabled President Vincent, wishing him a merry Christmas and attempting to shift the mediations back to bilateral agreements between the two nations, without the involvement of outside mediators.<sup>122</sup> Vincent refused Trujillo's offer, however, and condemned Trujillo's involvement in the massacre. Vincent's reaction came on the heels of rumors that "his flaccid reaction to the massacre had stirred accusation in Haiti that he was 'leagued' with Trujillo, and indeed his government was beginning to look 'pretty wobbly.'"<sup>123</sup>

According to the original arbitration agreement, "the matter would be investigated by a commission comprising four members, two nominated by Haiti and two by the Dominican Republic."<sup>124</sup> Yet, within a month of Trujillo's declarations in favor of mediation between the two nations, "he offered to \$750,000 to Haiti to settle the affair immediately, without an investigation by the arbitrators, and Vincent

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<sup>120</sup> Cuello, 142.

<sup>121</sup> Cuello, 143; Roosevelt's response to Trujillo – direct quote: "que el Gobierno de la República Dominicana no dará el más mínimo hincapié a ninguna alteración de la paz de América cuya preservación todos los pueblos del Mundo desean asegurar con tan legítimo y gran interés."

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 147.

<sup>123</sup> Roorda, 139.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.



agreed.”<sup>125</sup> On January 31, 1938, representatives of the Haitian and Dominican governments signed the agreement, ending the tense mediations between both nations.

### *Causes and Effects of the Haitian Massacre*

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The reasons for the Haitian Massacre remain obscure. During the seven years before the massacre, relations between the Dominican Republic and Haiti were cordial. On several occasions, Presidents Vincent and Trujillo visited each other. Trujillo was even quoted as admitting to his Haitian ancestry on his mother’s side and proclaiming that although Haiti and the Dominican Republic were separate nations, they were brothers, united as one. In making these declarations, Trujillo achieved two things: one, he created a bond between both nations, who had been at odds with each other for the majority of their existences; and two, he publically dismissed the anti-Haitian views of various intellectuals in his administration. The Dominican press prior to the massacre supported the image of Trujillo’s amicable relationship with Vincent and Haiti; articles printed during this time emphasize the friendship between Trujillo and Vincent.<sup>126</sup>

As a result of the friendly relations between the two nations, in 1936, a border agreement was reached according to which the Dominican-Haitian border was officially demarcated for the first time. “After the settlement of the border agreement, Haitian president Sténio Vincent renamed Port-au-Prince’s main street, La Grand Rue, ‘Avenue President Trujillo,’ while Trujillo christened the northern frontier route

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 140.

<sup>126</sup> Turtis, Foundations, 159-161.

between Monte Cristi and Dajabón ‘Carretera Vincent.’”<sup>127</sup> The establishment of the border symbolized the end of centuries of border disputes and seemed to point to the possibility of excellent relations between the neighboring nations.

During his initial years in office, Trujillo also attempted to gain support in Haiti for his administration. Turtis suggests that

Trujillo’s efforts included financial support for Haitian artists, intellectuals, political leaders and newspapers; propaganda concerning successful economic development in the Dominican Republic; and official visits to Haiti in which he handed out gifts and pictures of himself to the crowd, declare his love for the Haitian people, and dramatically kissed the Haitian flag.<sup>128</sup>

Presented with this image, it is hard to imagine what could possibly have gone so wrong in the year between the border agreements and the beginning of the massacre.

In August 1937, Trujillo began his tour of the Dominican-Haitian borderland region. During his time in the area, he realized that the border agreements had not curbed illegal immigration. Moreover, the “state efforts to impose a firm border continued to be frustrated by the bicultural, bilingual, and transnational character of the frontier. Popular transnational networks combined with weak national infrastructure on both sides of the border to impede state efforts to pursue rebel groups and exiles as well as cattle smugglers and thieves.”<sup>129</sup> The mixed nature of the borderlands made it difficult for new regulations to be imposed on its inhabitants. The policies adopted in Santo Domingo went against the wants and needs of the frontier people. Restrictions on immigration, and the imposition of taxes inconvenienced the lives of these people who relied on fluid, constant travel to and from Haiti, and on the ability to transport untaxed merchandise back and forth between the two nations.

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 160.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 161.

These restrictions threatened to force them to alter their way of life dramatically. Not satisfied with that prospect, they continued to carry on with their everyday tasks, without abiding by the newly ratified legislation regarding the borderlands. Turtis concludes “it may thus have appeared to government leaders, and ultimately to Trujillo, that to harden the boundary between Haiti and the Dominican Republic in expeditious fashion, a boundary between Haitians and Dominicans also had to be established in the frontier.”<sup>130</sup>

Other accounts suggest that Trujillo’s fear of an unestablished border fueled the massacre. Trujillo had grown increasingly paranoid about conspirators crossing the border into Haiti and planning an attack on his government.<sup>131</sup> Additionally, an uncontrolled border meant that Trujillo’s government was not making a profit from import and export taxes. This made the closing of the fluid border necessary for the maintaining of the Trujillo administration.

Building on these suggested causes, I argue that the Haitian Massacre was a result of fear and aggression. Albert Memmi asserts that fear and aggression are the critical components of racism, an idea which I present in the Introduction. Aggression and aggressive acts are a direct consequence of fear and paranoia. Trujillo harbored a documented fear of a possible uprising against his regime. As for his rapid and unexpected transition into anti-Haitian sentiment, Trujillo’s latent antihaitianismo transformed into fear and paranoia, which developed during his trip along the frontier in the late summer of 1937. Although Trujillo himself never publically denounced Haiti in the years prior to the massacre, some of his actions indicated that he was

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Vega, 1988. 87.

influenced by the antihaitianismo that many in his regime abided by. The whitening campaigns of the borderlands in the early 1930s attempted to “Dominicanize the border;” Trujillo viewed this as a necessity both because those areas were poorly populated, and because the majority of the people who lived there did not follow the laws put in place by his regime. While many scholars assert that Trujillo did not verbalize anti-Haitian sentiment, and that only Haitians along the border were massacred, I argue that Trujillo still harbored anti-Haitian sentiment prior to the massacre. Haitians in other parts of the nation were largely living and working on sugar cane plantations. Furthermore, these Haitians were not a threat to Trujillo or the preservation of Dominicaness because they were mainly in contact with themselves; even if small bicultural communities emerged as a result, they were not as large and vast as the ones on the border. When Trujillo was confronted with a strong, vibrant bicultural community that refused to abide by his laws, he realized that the borderlands remained an “un-Dominicanized” location in the Dominican Republic outside of his control. His realization meshed well with his paranoia of possible uprisings, and became further influenced by the anti-Haitian members of his government. These different components exacerbated Trujillo’s anxiety and led to the ultimate act of aggression: ordering the genocide of thousands of Haitians.

The consequences of the massacre presented themselves almost instantaneously. Soon after word of the atrocities reached Haiti, the American press descended on the story. Several American reporters arrived at the Dominican-Haitian borderlands just days after the massacre started. The images and interviews of injured survivors of the tragedy sent shockwaves through the international community; major

newspapers like *the New York Times* and *the Nation* printed scathing articles about Trujillo, his administration and the crimes against humanity he had committed with the ordering of the massacre. “*The Nation* called Trujillo a ‘miniature Hitler’ and called for the State Department to conduct its own investigation and to sever ties with the dictator. *Life* magazine ran photos of Trujillo and his victims with an article entitled ‘The U.S. Is Invited to Arbitrate a Massacre in Its Front Garden.’”<sup>132</sup> Although Trujillo insisted that a massacre had not taken place, international pressures, along with Haiti’s appeal to the Gondra Treaty and the Convention of Conciliation, forced him to retreat from his once rigid and aggressive position and agree to arbitration. Yet, even after the agreement between Haiti and the Dominican Republic was signed in January 1938, the American press continued to hammer Trujillo and his regime, now contending that Trujillo had gotten away with mass murder.<sup>133</sup> But less than a year later, Trujillo had already redeemed himself and turned himself into “Trujillo, the Savior.”

A few months after the signing of the January 1938 agreement, Roosevelt decided to organize a conference in Evian, France, where the situation and circumstances surrounding European refugees would be discussed. Roosevelt invited all world leaders interested in helping the refugees, including Trujillo. Trujillo sent his brother, Virgilio, as his representative, with an important message for those attending the conference:

The Dominican government, which for many years has been encouraging and promoting the development of agriculture by appropriate measures and which gives ample immigration facilities to agriculturalists who wish to settle in the country as colonists, would be prepared to make its contribution by granting specially

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<sup>132</sup> Roorda, 138.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 140.

advantageous concessions to Austrian and German exiles, agriculturalists with an unimpeachable record who satisfy the conditions laid down by the Dominican legislation on immigration. For colonization purposes my government has at its disposal large areas of fertile, well-irrigated land, excellent roads and a police force which preserves absolute order and guarantees the peace of the country. The Department of Agriculture could give colonists, in addition to land and seed, the technical advice which they need.<sup>134</sup>

The following month, Virgilio added to his original statement, avowing that the Dominican Republic was willing to take one hundred thousand European refugees.<sup>135</sup> While many doubted that the number of refugees taken in by the Dominican Republic could amount to such a high number considering its population, which was around 1.5 million, thanks to this offer, Trujillo and his administration managed to clear their name. The American and international press quickly moved their focus from the Haitian Massacre to Trujillo's statements at Evian.<sup>136</sup> The massacre became a figment of the past, and Trujillo was once again honored, this time for his great compassion for European refugees, victims of racial and religious discrimination whose lives were torn apart by the Nazi regime. The irony that similar same injustices and atrocities had been imposed on the bicultural, bilingual community of the borderlands escaped notice. Due to severe scrutiny of the refugees' visa applications, only a few hundred Jewish refugees inhabited the Sosúa settlement, certainly not enough to "lighten the race."

### *Conclusion*

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The Evian Conference provided the perfect opportunity for Trujillo to absolve himself of the Haitian massacre. After the Evian Conference, the massacre was not

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<sup>134</sup> Wells, 9

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 10; Roorda, 143.

<sup>136</sup> Roorda, 143 – 144.

spoken about in either the Dominican or international media. Months after the January 1938 agreement, the only thing that graced the front page of *La Opinión* were letters written by Dominicans to Trujillo congratulating him on the successful agreement established between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The last governmental cover-up involved the indictment of a few dozen Dominican peasants, charged with the murders committed during the border incidents. A Dominican tribunal sentenced the men between 10 and 30 years of hard labor. About a year later, most of the men were freed and, given a small amount of money. They would remain forever classified as criminals according to the Dominican justice system, even though the majority of them were innocent of the crimes.<sup>137</sup>

The effects of the massacre lasted and increased in severity through the course of Trujillo's regime. The once bicultural and bilingual community of the Dominican-Haitian borderlands was destroyed. After the massacre, the border became a heavily monitored location; augmented security made crossing back and forth between the neighboring nations almost impossible. As a result, several lucrative markets that depended on the fluidity of the border, including cattle herding and selling, collapsed, driving the frontier communities into an economic depression. The closure of the border also allowed for the spread of the racist notions of Dominicanness that the Dominican elite and policy-makers believed defined and differentiated Dominicans from Haitians. For the first time, the entire country was being governed under the same understandings of Dominican racial and ethnic identity. It took only a

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<sup>137</sup> See Juan Manuel García's *La Matanza de Los Haitianos*. Author conducts a series of interviews with individuals who were convicted of murdering people during the massacre and individuals who actually engaged in the killing of people.

generation before the borderland understanding of race and ethnicity was supplanted by the dominant elite's notion of Dominicaness. For the children born after the massacre, who had never seen the bicultural and bilingual frontier that their parents and ancestors had lived with for generations, dominant Dominican race theory became their way of identifying themselves.

The Haitian Massacre ushered in a rearticulation of antihaitianismo that served as the unifying ideology during the remainder of Trujillo's regime. It offered the basis for a new nationalist rhetoric. Furthermore, the massacre took the preexisting anti-Haitian sentiment and created a rigid, physical boundary between Dominicans and Haitians, generating an "us against them" mentality. The fathers of this new antihaitianismo were Joaquín Balaguer and Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle. With the physical boundary already established through the massacre, Balaguer and Peña Batlle made it their mission to create intellectual and sociohistorical boundaries between the neighboring nations, delving deep into Dominican history and revising it for the purposes of their project.



### ***Chapter Three: “Santo Domingo, el pueblo más Español de América”<sup>138</sup>: An Analysis of the New Antihaitianismo of Joaquín Balaguer and Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle***

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In the aftermath of the Haitian Massacre, an intellectual movement began that sought to solidify the new aspects of antihaitian sentiment. The new antihaitianismo rearticulated boundaries between Haitians and Dominicans, while simultaneously producing a nationalist, anti-Haitian agenda that would also redefine Dominicaness. Joaquín Balaguer and Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle, through their works from different disciplines, became the fathers of the new antihaitianismo. Their works display the ways in which antihaitianismo and Dominican nationalism emerged as co-dependent theories during the Trujillo Era.

This chapter offers an in-depth analysis of Joaquín Balaguer’s La Realidad Dominicana and La isla al revés, and of Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle’s Política de Trujillo, Orígenes del estado haitiano and Historia de la cuestión fronteriza dominico-haitiano. A critical look at these works will allow us to understand the foundation of new antihaitianismo, how it was created and how it was utilized by the Trujillo regime as a tool of nation-building.

#### *Joaquín Balaguer*

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Joaquín Balaguer was a young politician in his early thirties when the Haitian Massacre took place. At the time he occupied the position of Sub-secretary of State,

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<sup>138</sup> This is the title to one of the sections in Balaguer’s La isla al revés. Joaquín Balaguer, La isla al revés, 11<sup>th</sup> edition (Santo Domingo, Rep. Dom: Editora Corripio, C. por A, 2002)

which placed him in direct conversation with the Haitian government regarding the events of October 1937. Balaguer was in fact the first person from the Dominican government to address the concerns of Haitian government officials when they started to receive accounts of mass murder on the border.<sup>139</sup> In early correspondence between the Dominican Office of Foreign Affairs and the Haitian government, Balaguer already attempted to develop a cover-up for the massacre. He assured the Haitian government that the Dominican government had not ordered a state-sponsored massacre and that Trujillo had ordered a full investigation into the matter.<sup>140</sup> Further attempts at covering up the massacre emerged from Balaguer's initial denial. Moreover, Balaguer's characterization of the massacre as merely an exaggerated account of border disputes between Dominican and Haitian peasants became the story that the Dominican government adhered to throughout the international scandal that ensued. Balaguer's version regarding the massacre provided the foundation for his 1947 book La Realidad Dominicana and an updated edition that came out almost four decades later, La isla al revés.

In La Realidad Dominicana, Balaguer addressed the issues that he believed affected the Dominican Republic on a constant basis because of its proximity to Haiti. He contended that Haitians had been able to infiltrate every part of Dominican society and had corrupted its inherent values and sense of identity. Balaguer presented his claims of Haitian inferiority through the categories of race, religion, demography,

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<sup>139</sup> Made evident through Jose Israel Cuello's compilation of documents related to the Haitian Massacre.

<sup>140</sup> Cuello, 51-53.

moral/ethical behavior, the economy, and education. He grounded his view of Haitian inferiority in aspects of Social Darwinism such as eugenics and scientific racism.

Balaguer, like many other Dominican intellectuals, argued that Haitians and Dominicans were racially different. He described Dominicans as descendants of a “Spanish race,” while Haitians were descendants of an “Ethiopian race.”<sup>141</sup> Pedro L. San Miguel and Ernesto Sagás contend that Balaguer conflated race, ethnicity, nation, and culture into one ideology. Balaguer asserted that Dominicans were a biologically white and Spanish race, and as a result, were also ethnically and culturally a white and Spanish nation. By proclaiming that Dominicans were only white and Spanish, he suggested that they could not be anything else. Balaguer’s construction of Dominican identity made no allowance for obvious African and indigenous influences on Dominican society. He drew on Social Darwinism and faulty science to mask support for his racist views. Balaguer’s arguments depended a strictly racist foundation that used negative and false stereotypes about Haitians in order to support his assumptions about Dominican racial, ethnic and cultural formations.

Balaguer’s conflation of race, ethnicity, nation, and culture made these concepts synonymous.<sup>142</sup> Since Balaguer described Dominicans as descendants of a Spanish culture, their default race was Spanish, whereas he considered Haitian culture to be of African origin, which made Haiti racially black. Additionally, Balaguer stated the following:

El problema de la raza es, por consiguiente, el principal problema de la República Dominicana. Si el problema racial tiene una importancia incalculable para todos los

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<sup>141</sup> Balaguer used the terms “black race” and “Ethiopian race” interchangeably as a way of describing Haitians.

<sup>142</sup> Sagás, 50 -52; Pedro L. San Miguel, The Imagined Island: History, Identity and Utopia in Hispaniola (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005) 58.

países, para Santo Domingo principalmente esa cuestión cobra, por las razones ya señaladas, una trascendencia inmensa, puesto que de ella depende en cierto modo la existencia misma de la nacionalidad que se halla desde hace más de un siglo en lucha contra otra raza más prolífica.

The race problem, is therefore, the principal problem of the Dominican Republic. But if the racial problem is of incalculable importance to all countries, in Santo Domingo the matter takes on immense proportions, as upon it depends, after a fashion, the very existence of the nationality that has for over a century been struggling against a more prolific race.<sup>143</sup>

At its core, the threat that Balaguer dreaded was the tainting of Dominican Hispanicity and whiteness with Haitian Africanness and blackness. He vehemently believed that it was imperative to preserve the Spanish and Catholic culture as the bedrock of Dominican society because a failure to do so would mean the demise of “the most Spanish colony in the Americas.”<sup>144</sup> It would also constitute the loss of civilization for the Dominican Republic. He conjured up the specter of a transformation from a civilized, white society to a savage, animalistic black society. Balaguer claimed that

el idioma y la tradición hispánica fueron, durante más de un siglo, los únicos muros que le sirvieron de defensa contra la pavorosa ola de color y contra las fuerzas disgregativas que desde 1795 han ido invadiendo, de manera ininterrumpida y sistemática, el territorio dominicano.

the Spanish language and tradition were, during more than one century, the only entities that served as a defense against the dreadful wave of color and against the destructive forces that, since 1795, have been invading uninterruptedly and systemically the Dominican territory.<sup>145</sup>

In his praise of Spain and Spanish culture, Balaguer joined a tradition of Dominican scholars and intellectuals who asserted that Spain’s abandonment of Santo Domingo had allowed French pirates and buccaneers to invade the northwestern end of Hispaniola and led to the eventual creation of French Saint-Domingue as a colony. A

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<sup>143</sup> Balaguer, *La Realidad Dominicana*. 124-125. Translation by Sagás, 51.

<sup>144</sup> Balaguer, *La isla al revés*. 63.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

more direct consequence of these events was the development of a black nation next to a “white, Christian, and Spanish nation.” Thus, the transformation of Hispaniola into colonial Saint-Domingue and Santo Domingo and post-colonial Haiti and the Dominican Republic generated an automatic threat to the “purity” of Dominicaness. Ensuring the continuation of racial purity became the most important aspect in maintaining a Spanish Dominican Republic.

Balaguer also referred to of Haitians as “devil worshippers” and “a satanic people.” He stated that “Vodou and magic in Haiti are a product of their race, inseparable from their ancestral roots.”<sup>146</sup> While Vodou emerged from West African religions brought over by slaves to the New World, in conjunction with the Christian beliefs that they encountered once they arrived in Saint-Domingue, Balaguer clearly attempted to discredit Vodou’s inherently syncretic nature. The connection he made between religion and race sought to establish that Vodou, viewed as a suspect, satanic and dangerous religion, was a direct representation of the Haitian people’s blackness and character. In the case of the Dominican Republic, however, he presented the Catholic foundation laid by the Spaniards early on in the colonialization process as the proper, civilized way of life. In his view, Dominicans’ affinity with Roman Catholicism was a link not only to their former colonial masters, but also evidence of their whiteness and Hispanicity.

Understanding religion through Balaguer’s binary, however, is problematic and ineffective. It does not take into account the small number of Dominicans who practice other Afro-based religions aside from Vodou. As for the Dominicans who do

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<sup>146</sup> Direct quote: “El vaudou y la magia son en Haití un producto de la raza, inseparables de sus esencias ancestrales.” source: Balaguer, *La isla al revés*, 205.

practice Vodou, Balaguer proclaimed that this deviation resulted from the constant and continued passive invasion of Haitians into the Dominican Republic. He strongly suggested that lower-class Dominicans were more susceptible to being influenced by Haitian lore and society because of their ignorance and marginality.<sup>147</sup> In his words,

el contacto con el negro ha contribuido, sin ningún género de dudas, a relajar nuestras costumbres públicas. La moral del campesino dominicano, en zonas rurales donde ha sido mayor el trato con Haití, tiende visiblemente a descender para colocarse a los niveles de la de sus vecinos.

contact with the negro has contributed, without any doubt, to the loosening of our public way of life. The morality of the Dominican peasant, in rural zones where contact with Haiti has been greatest, tends to visibly descend in order to place itself at the levels of their neighbors'.<sup>148</sup>

In short, Haiti presents a threat to Dominican racial and social purity. Balaguer stressed that the degeneration of Dominican social understandings was directly correlated with Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic; this argument was the same that many Dominican intellectuals during and after the Trujillo regime used to rationalize the Haitian Massacre. Because of a constant threat to Dominican racial, social, and religious notions, the massacre became the only alternative to protect Dominican purity and values.

The degeneration of Dominican social norms that Balaguer alluded to relates to another aspect of Dominican society that he addressed: patriotism and political loyalty to the Dominican Republic. Balaguer stated that bordertowns, because of their proximity to Haiti, had virtually broken their ties to the Dominican government. He suggested that the citizenship of the people who resided on the frontier was suspect because of the mixture of Haitian and Dominican cultures, societies, and customs. He

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<sup>147</sup> Balaguer, *La Isla al Reves*, 47.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, 45.

noted the bilingualism of peasants living on the frontier as an additional sign of their impurity. Balaguer ultimately concluded that the mixture of Haitian and Dominican blood had not only tarnished Dominican purity on the border, but had also tarnished Dominican patriotism among of these bicultural, bilingual peoples.<sup>149</sup> This understanding rationalized the attempts at repopulation along the border with white immigrants early on in the Dominican Republic's existence as an independent nation. These campaigns were revisited once again at the beginning of the Trujillo regime, with efforts of populating and developing bordertowns, along with the inclusion of these regions in political conversations; reference was made of this in Chapter 2. This interpretation of the biculturalism along the border as a threat emanating from Haiti served as a justification for the massacre.

To illustrate the erosion of patriotism, Balaguer spoke of societal disintegration in the Dominican Republic. He asserts that

el negro que emigra a Santo Domingo es un ser tarado por lacras físicas horrosas. Ninguno de ellos conoce la higiene y su infiltración entre la población nativa dio sin duda lugar durante largo tiempo a un descenso apreciable del índice sanitario en nuestras zonas rurales.

the negro who migrates to Santo Domingo is a being marked by horrible physical defects. None of them know anything of hygiene and their infiltration of the native population doubtless provoked during a long period a considerable decrease in the sanitation of our rural zones.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Direct quote: "Entre las masas dominicana residentes en las regiones fronterizas, as más expuestas a la penetración de nuestros vecinos, y la de las otras zonas del país, se habían roto prácticamente los lazos de la solidaridad nacional. No solo el tipo denominado "rayano," sujeto de una nacionalidad dudosa que vive al margen de las dos fronteras y se expresa con la misma perfección en español y es el dialecto haitiano, participando en igual grado de ambas nacionalidades, sino también en la mayoría de las familias que habitaban aquellas comarcas se había debilitado en gran parte el sentimiento patriótico."; source: Balaguer, La Realidad Dominicana, 98.

<sup>150</sup> Balaguer, La Realidad Dominicana, 102. First sentence translated by Sagás, 51; rest of the translation is mine.

In addition to referring to Haitians as unhygienic, Balaguer claimed that Haitians were incestuous and lazy by nature, attributes which were tainting the pristine Dominican society.<sup>151</sup> Through his harping on Haitians' racial inferiority, he expressed more and more his paranoid fear of a Haitian invasion and his belief in Dominican exceptionalism and superiority.

Balaguer went on to make Haitians responsible for the spread and transmission of venereal diseases and malaria to Dominicans.<sup>152</sup> He contended that the Dominican peasantry were the chief victims of this degeneration. By making Haitians carriers of disease, Balaguer magnified the threat they posed to Dominicans. Assigning any and all imperfections of Dominican society to Haiti, offered a convenient foundation for the nation-building and patriotism that Balaguer and many others in the Trujillo regime desperately wished to undertake. By creating a nation which firmly stood by its identity as white, Spanish, Catholic and Dominican, Balaguer and the Trujillo regime were able to pacify their own paranoia regarding anti-Trujillista movements developing in the borderlands and in Haiti while uniting the entire nation under the banner of Dominicanness.

Balaguer's largest fear was based on pseudobiology and the fear of the physical degeneration of the Dominican people into a black race. Earlier in this chapter, I described how Balaguer conflated race and culture into one definition, which allowed him to assert that because the Dominican Republic was a culturally Spanish nation, it was also a white nation. Dominican whiteness had threatened by both the aforementioned possibilities, and the physical threat of Haitian-Dominican

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid, pgs 94 & 104; *Sagás*, 51.

<sup>152</sup> Balaguer, *La isla al revés*, 43.



children. Balaguer staunchly claimed that the citizenship of those born in bordertowns are questionable not only because of their proximity to Haiti, but also because of the large number of bicultural and bilingual families that lived there.

Balaguer's fears were only strengthened by the birth and mortality rates of Haiti and the number of migrant workers crossing into the Dominican Republic for work. Balaguer's thoughts are thoroughly expressed in the following passage:

Esa densidad de población tiende a aumentar rápidamente bajo la influencia de la siguientes causas: a) la fecundidad característica del negro; b) las condiciones primitivas que singularizan el bajo nivel social de una parte considerable de la población haitiana, y c) la resistencia opuesta por la fortaleza física del negro a las enfermedades, lo que disminuye la mortalidad no obstante las deficiencias sanitarias en que se desenvuelve la vida en las aglomeraciones del país vecino.

The density of the population tends to increase rapidly under the influence of the following causes: a) the characteristic fecundity of the negro; b) the primitive conditions that define the lower social classes that make up a considerable part of the Haitian population, and c) the resistance, because of the physical strength of the negro, to illness, which lowers mortality rates regardless of the sanitary deficiencies that the masses of the neighboring country are exposed to.<sup>153</sup>

Ultimately, Balaguer's claims were based on numerous generalizations about Haitians and Dominicans. Ernesto Sagás indicates that "his arguments are based on outdated and unfounded theories of racial inferiority, some of them dating back to the nineteenth century. Furthermore, his portrayal of Dominican history is romantic at best, and his 'historical examples' are weak."<sup>154</sup> Balaguer's antihaitianismo did not differ significantly from that articulated by many other intellectuals of his time except in one major regard: racial purity was a necessity if the Dominican Republic was to

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>154</sup> Sagás, 52.

remain “clean” and “true to itself.”<sup>155</sup> Looking at Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle’s works allows us to see another way antihaitianismo was redefined following the massacre.

### *Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle*

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Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle was not yet affiliated with the Trujillo regime at the time of the massacre, but was very familiar with Dominican-Haitian relations. As a young man, Peña Batlle served as the legal advisor to the Dominican negotiators chosen by Horacio Vásquez to resolve the border disputes between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. In this role, Peña Batlle directly influenced the ways in which the new border demarcation line would affect and benefit the Dominican Republic. In February 1929, the Dominican Republic and Haiti had reached a border agreement that both President Vásquez and President Borno of Haiti signed into law. When Trujillo overthrew Vásquez in 1930, Peña Batlle removed himself from politics, because of his loyalty to Vásquez. It would take over a decade before Peña Batlle would emerge in the intellectual scene under the Trujillo regime; once he arrived, however, he became the leader of the *Trujillista* intellectual movement.

Peña Batlle’s antihaitianismo is rooted in a sociohistorical understanding of Dominican-Haitian relations. He produced several books during his career that emphasized the colonial history of the two nations. In Historia de la cuestión fronteriza dominico-haitiano, published in 1946, Peña Batlle spoke about the causes of social and cultural duality in Hispaniola. He analyzed the effect of *las*

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<sup>155</sup> San Miguel, 62.

*devastaciones*<sup>156</sup> and the subsequent colonialization of these lands by French buccaneers and pirates.<sup>157</sup> Peña Batlle asserted that the 1777 Treaty of Aranjuez, in which Spain formally recognized French Saint-Domingue as a colony, only strengthened the duality, and was not enough to keep the threat of French expansion into the eastern side of the island away.

While Peña Batlle asserted that the Dominican Republic was a culturally white and Spanish nation, his antihaitianismo differed from Balaguer's because it did not conflate race, ethnicity, and culture. Peña Batlle understood that the Dominican Republic was not a homogenous society; in his works, he repeatedly stated that slavery had existed in the Dominican Republic, and that as a result, *mestizaje* was quite common, making Dominicans members of a mixed race. Furthermore, Peña Batlle argued that the racial composition of Dominicans was irrelevant when it came to their cultural identity. He suggested that Dominicans were a civilized people, regardless of their racial composition, because they were educated and socialized in a white and Spanish society. Peña Batlle believed that 300 years of Spanish colonization had made Dominicans culturally Spanish, that "there was a 'consubstantiation of our social forms with those of Spain.'<sup>158</sup> As such, Dominicans were *culturally* white and Spanish while simultaneously being of mixed race.

Peña Batlle's interpretation of Dominican racial, ethnic, and cultural identity is as flawed as Balaguer's interpretation. His acknowledgement that Dominicans descended from a mixture of African, Spanish, and indigenous racial groups was

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<sup>156</sup> As explained in Chapter 1, *las devastaciones* were the clearing out of the northwestern parts of Hispaniola by Spain in an effort to diminish illegal trade.

<sup>157</sup> Peña Batlle, *Historia*, 80 – 83.

<sup>158</sup> San Miguel, 55-56.

automatically contradicted by his assertion that the Dominican Republic was a culturally homogenous white and Spanish nation. Though Peña Batlle accepted the fact that Dominicans were a mixed race, he refused to accept that they were also a mixed culture, society and nation. He sought to separate race away from ethnicity, culture, and nation in an attempt to deny the palpable cultural influences of African and indigenous ethnic groups on Dominican society.

Furthermore, Peña Batlle proclaimed “the uprising of the slaves in Haiti had as a direct result the complete extinction of the white social class.”<sup>159</sup> He suggested that because of the black slaves’ inability to cohabitate peacefully with the white and mulatto classes, the Haitian Revolution had eradicated all traces of both, leaving only the black race.<sup>160</sup> As a black culture, Haiti presented a direct menace to the Dominican Republic’s Hispanicity. Additionally, Peña Batlle argued that the rise of slaves with “no historical tradition, without a formalized culture, without a spiritual structure,” coupled with the eradication of whiteness from the colony, left Haitians without any guidance.<sup>161</sup>

In the process of defining a new antihaitianismo, Peña Batlle made it clear that what was largely at stake was the Hispanicity at the heart of Dominican culture. By arguing that the Dominican Republic was homogeneously Spanish, like Balaguer, Peña Batlle discredited the impact of indigenous and African influences on the development of Dominican society. Although Peña Batlle expressed the same racist sentiments as his intellectual counterparts, he was strictly concerned with the

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<sup>159</sup> Direct quote: “El levantamiento de los esclavos tuvo por resultado la completa extinción de la clase social de los blancos.”; source: Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle, Origenes del estado haitiano (Ciudad Trujillo, Rep. Dom: Editora Montalvo, 1954) 61.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Peña Batlle, Origenes del estado haitiano, 62.

preservation of a culturally Spanish Dominican Republic. While Balaguer feared the degeneration of a Spanish Dominican population and culture, Peña Batlle accepted the fact that Dominicans were an amalgam of races, and did not concern himself with the consequences of the physical darkening of the Dominican Republic. Peña Batlle believed that a *cultural* darkening of the Dominican Republic was what was at stake, not *physical* degeneration of an already mixed society. Like Balaguer, Peña Batlle stressed that the greatest issue Dominicans faced was the constant and imminent threat to their *way of life*. Ultimately, Peña Batlle emphasized that the only way for the “Haitian Invasion” to stop would be through strong governmental action against Haitians.

Because of these views, Peña Batlle became one of the strongest supporters of Trujillo after the Haitian Massacre. He stated that “the previous Dominican governments had not placed a focus on the frontier problem aside from referring to it as a simple question of limits, disregarding completely the essential sense of relations that affects all neighboring nations and especially the problem that the Dominicans face regarding our neighbor.”<sup>162</sup> He claimed that the border regions had been “abandoned to their own fate, without the manifestation of the effects of concerned and intelligent governmental action.”<sup>163</sup> He suggested that the lack of governmental attention to the development of the frontier had allowed for the penetration of Haitian

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<sup>162</sup> Direct quote: “Hasta hoy los gobiernos dominicanos no habían enfocado el problema fronterizo sino como una simple cuestión de límites, desprovista en absoluto del sentido esencial de relaciones ajeno a todo problema de vecindad y muy especialmente al problema de vecindad con que nos afrontamos los dominicanos.”; source: Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle, *Politica de Trujillo* (Ciudad Trujillo, Rep. Dom: Impresora Dominicana, 1954) 63.

<sup>163</sup> Direct quote: “Hasta ahora nuestra zonas fronterizas han permanecido abandonadas a su propia suerte, sin que en ellas se hayan manifestado los efectos de una bien concertada e inteligente acción gubernativa.” Ibid, 64.

cultural values into Dominican borderland society. The only solution to the problem would be to have a strong Dominican government with a commitment to resolving the frontier issues affecting the nation. Peña Batlle claimed that

hasta que el Generalísimo Trujillo advino al poder nadie se había preocupado por darle a la frontera el carácter esencialmente político con que todos los pueblos civilizadores de la tierra contemplan sus problemas de ese género. Hasta Trujillo, ningún otro gobernante dominicano había comprendido el fenómeno fronterizo dominico-haitiano como hecho de raíces triplemente prendidas en la vida jurídica, política y económica de la nacionalidad dominicana.

until Generalísimo Trujillo rose to power, nobody had concerned themselves with giving the frontier the essential political character with which all of the civilized towns of the land contemplate their problems of that genre. Until Trujillo, no other Dominican politician had understood the Dominican-Haitian frontier phenomena as a cause of three intersecting factors affecting the juridical, political and economic lives of the Dominican nationality.<sup>164</sup>

Trujillo's determination to impose on the Dominican border into contemporary notions of Dominican society was applauded by Peña Batlle. To him, Trujillo represented the statesman that the Dominican Republic had long needed. In a letter to Cuban Minister Dr. Jorge Mañach, Peña Batlle emphasized his support of Trujillo's dictatorial regime:

En la República Dominicana no puede, no debe producirse un régimen de gobierno tan desinteresado de la fuerza que se convierta, como ha sucedido muchas veces, en agente de la expansión haitiana. La democracia, como la entienden y ejercitan algunos países, es lujo que no podemos gastarnos nosotros. Cuándo entenderán ustedes, los cubanos, nuestros vecinos más entrañablemente queridos, esa verdad? Sépalo bien Ministro, desde que los haitianos nos pierden el miedo, nos dan la dentellada: a las calladas, sigilosamente, sin que ustedes ni nadie lo sepan.

In the Dominican Republic there should not be, there cannot be, a government so uninterested in the use of force that it turns itself, as it has happened many times, into an agent of Haitian expansionism. Democracy, as understood and exercised in some countries, is a luxury that we cannot afford. When will you Cubans, our dearest neighbors, understand that truth? Know this well, Minister, as soon as the Haitians stop fearing us, they will bite us: silently, quietly, without you or anyone knowing about it.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 96; translation from Sagás, 49.

Here, Peña Batlle fully supported Trujillo's dictatorship and the methods used by his regime. Furthermore, he was unapologetic about the need for employing violence and strength to protect Hispanicity. This statement implies unreserved approval of the Haitian Massacre. Peña Batlle was widely known as a supporter of the massacre due to his feelings about the Haitian threat to Dominican values. He considered the massacre a necessary measure against the continued aggressions of Haitians.

Peña Batlle's historical understanding of the island's history allowed for him to rearticulate old antihaitian rhetoric and sentiment and redefine it for a contemporary Dominican society. Additionally, the new antihaitianismo being articulated by Peña Batlle placed a stronger emphasis on the preservation of Hispanicity than ever before, an emphasis that served as the basis for a new Dominican national identity. Subsequently, he became the leader of an intellectual movement that sought to establish a Dominican identity that would unite the nation. Thus, Dominicans began to finally understand themselves not only as white, Catholic and Spanish, but also as strictly not black, and not Haitian.

### *Conclusion*

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Joaquín Balaguer and Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle are only two of the numerous intellectuals who came out of the Trujillo regime. It was their works, however, that laid the foundation on which the rest of the intellectuals based their notions, ideas and thoughts. Scholars such as Sócrates Nolasco, Angel S. del Rosario Pérez, Carlos Augusto Sánchez y Sánchez, and Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi all produced works during the Trujillo era that promoted the new antihaitianismo of Balaguer and Peña Batlle. These scholars collectively argued that Haitians were an

imminent threat to Dominican society and culture. Like Balaguer, many of them believed that there was a biological difference between Haitians and Dominicans, and like Peña Batlle, all of them used a revised history to assert their racist claims. Balaguer and Peña Batlle, through different methods, managed to reconstruct antihaitianismo for Trujillo's totalitarian government, commuted to the absolute social and political cohesion of the Dominican Republic. With the pretext of Trujillo as the "Savior and Father of the Nation," both authors revised and reworked Dominican and Dominican-Haitian history in order to get their points across.

Balaguer grounded a large majority of his racist claims about Haitians on faulty science and Social Darwinism. Consequently, many of his assertions have no basis supporting their claims and present themselves more as a racist narrative rather than a work trying to understand the complicated history of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Additionally, Balaguer's understanding of Dominican identity used the conflated definition of Dominicaness, which asserted that regardless of any other factors, Dominicans were racially, ethnically, and nationally white and Spanish. By basing his argument in a Social Darwinist definition of Dominicaness, Balaguer completely excludes a large majority of Dominicans from Dominican racial, ethnic, and national identity.

Peña Batlle, on the other hand, does not conflate race, ethnicity, and nation into his definition of Dominicaness. He declared that Dominicans were the descendants of a mixed racial and ethnic group. He strongly stressed, however, that racial and ethnic compositions were irrelevant because Dominicans were socialized in a Spanish society, which automatically made them a white and Spanish culture and



nation, regardless of the mixed composition of its constituents. Peña Batlle attempted to ground his claims in a fractured and extensive Dominican-Haitian history, which he rewrote in the process. Ernesto Sagás stresses that while both men harbored strong antihaitian sentiments, “Balaguer’s antihaitianismo clearly lacks the historical coherence of Peña Batlle’s arguments.”<sup>166</sup>

Nevertheless, these authors shared the same concern: the preservation of Hispanicity. Their fear and paranoia regarding the loss of Spanish culture and the spread of Haitian culture into the Dominican Republic permeated their arguments, and supported racist anti-Haitian sentiment. According to their agenda, it was imperative that the cultural purity of the Dominican Republic be maintained at all costs. While Balaguer was generally known as the principal apologist of the Trujillo regime, Peña Batlle was the main intellectual leading the new antihaitianismo movement. With an unapologetic stance regarding Haitians and the potential threat that he claimed they posed to Dominican society, Peña Batlle made no attempt to conceal his antihaitianismo: Dominicans and Haitians were inherently different, which created a duality in Hispaniola.

Peña Batlle died in 1954, seven years before the end of the Trujillo regime. Balaguer, however, went on to live past Trujillo’s presidency, rose to the Presidency of the Dominican Republic several times and continued to generate antihaitianismo in his works until his death in 2002. The antihaitianismo that Balaguer and Peña Batlle created, and which once united the Dominican nation, has been attacked in the past few decades by both Dominican and Haitian intellectuals who were in their youth

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<sup>166</sup> Sagás, pg 52.

when Trujillo was assassinated. Contemporary Dominican society is now at a crossroads with the intellectuals of the new *antitrujillista* tradition pointing in one direction and apologists for the Trujillo regime pointing in another. This new generation of intellectuals is once again redefining and rearticulating the ways in which antihaitianismo affects, presents, and develops itself in Dominican society and culture.

## ***Chapter Four: La Republica Dominicana Hoy: The Emergence of a Sociohistorical and Literary Anti-Trujillista Counternarrative***

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The execution of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo on May 30, 1961 ushered in a new era in contemporary Dominican society and history. The first two decades after Trujillo's assassination are defined by a period of civil war and national upheaval. During this time, Joaquin Balaguer occupied the presidency for a total of 24 years, during which he continued some of the same social repressions established in the Trujillo era. Yet, this period was also defined by the creation of political parties and a desire for democratic processes. Starting in the 1980s, a group of Dominican and Haitian historians, sociologists and literary figures began producing work which contested the racist and nationalist notions that were perpetuated by the Trujillo regime. The emergence of an *anti-Trujillista* counternarrative allowed for conversations in which questions of race, racial difference, and Dominican-Haitian relations and history began to be addressed from a different perspective.

In this chapter, I will discuss the various intellectual movements that have developed in the Dominican Republic following Balaguer's multiple terms in office and the end of the Trujillo era. While a counternarrative movement has surfaced, *Trujillista* rhetoric continues to be produced by a separate group of historians and lawyers. These conflicting ideologies have been exhibited in contemporary issues such as the presidential candidacy of Peña Gomez, questions about Haitian immigration, and the Dominican response to the Haitian earthquake of 2010. By examining current intellectual trends in the Dominican Republic, we can better

understand where contemporary Dominican society stands today regarding issues of race, antihaitianismo, and nationalism.

*The Beginnings of a Sociohistorical Counternarrative Movement*

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The fall of the Trujillo regime brought the end of the strict censorship laws that were enforced during his era. Juan Bosch, a Dominican intellectual who had gone into exile in the late 1930s, and the founder of both the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) and the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), led the early stages of the movement against the theories put forth during Trujillo's dictatorship. Bosch's publications became the inspiration for the youth who later became the writers, lawyers, historians and sociologists whose work would form the counternarrative intellectual movement.

Freddy Prestol Castillo's historical novel titled *El Masacre se pasa a pie*,<sup>167</sup> published in the early 1970s, focused entirely on the Haitian Massacre and presented a version of the events based on his own experience. A Dominican fiscal lawyer employed by the government, Prestol Castillo was stationed along the border when the massacre took place; his story represented what he witnessed as a bystander in the region. He began to write his novel-memoir during the massacre and finished it not long after. In the introduction to his book, Prestol Castillo gave a vivid description of the massacre and his determination to hide the manuscript at all costs. He stated that he buried the work until the assassination of Trujillo, and then waited until it was safe

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<sup>167</sup> Translation: "The Massacre is crossed by Foot"; the title is a reference to the crossing of the Massacre River by foot in order to escape from the massacre.

to publish his book.<sup>168</sup> The release of his novel-memoir drew the attention of the Dominican public to the events that had occurred almost four decades earlier. Although many individuals had published books critical of the Trujillo regime, no book before Prestol Castillo's had fully addressed the massacre in detail. Prestol Castillo's work shed light on an event that was largely unspoken of because of the immense violence associated with it. His work allowed for the Haitian Massacre to be spoken about in a public manner for the first time ever. Furthermore, this work generated an interest in the massacre among several young scholars, who would begin publishing in the early 1980s.

The *anti-Trujillista* counternarrative movement has sought to analyze and critique the Trujillo era and regime. The scholars that I will speak about in this chapter have concerned themselves with a rearticulation of antihaitianismo and Dominicaness. They are attempting to deconstruct the conflated definition of Dominicaness, which states that Dominicans are a white and Spanish racial, ethnic and national group. Additionally, they are participating in a revisionist project that is attempting to challenge commonly accepted narratives of Dominican-Haitian history and anti-Haitian sentiment. These scholars are addressing antihaitianismo and Dominicaness in four different ways: they are revising the explanation of the causes of the Haitian Massacre; they are introducing oral and silenced histories into the narrative of the massacre; they are critically engaging with the *Trujillista* intellectuals; and they are looking at the presence and influence of blackness in the Dominican Republic.

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<sup>168</sup> Freddy Prestol Castillo, *El Masacre se pasa a pie* (Santo Domingo, Rep. Dominicana: Biblioteca Taller, 11<sup>th</sup> edition, 1998) 7 – 16.

The scholars Suzy Castor, Bernardo Vega, and José Israel Cuello have become three of the leaders of the movement, looking at the Haitian Massacre and the commonly accepted explanations through a historical lens. Since Dominican accounts of Dominican-Haitian history have always demonized Haitians, Castor, Vega, and Cuello engaged with that history and reshaped it.

Haitian historian Suzy Castor published Migraciones y relaciones internacionales (el caso Dominico-Haitiano) in 1983.<sup>169</sup> Her monumental research looked at Dominican-Haitian relations and the conditions of Haitian migrant workers in the Dominican Republic. She anchored her work in an analysis of the Haitian Massacre, its causes and consequences. Similarly to Prestol Castillo, she portrayed a gruesome picture of mass slaughter, proclaiming that

the explanation of the genocide must be looked for in a complicated web of causes: the weight of geopolitical factors, the evolution of the frontier, the implications of the migratory phenomenon, [and] the development of an ideology characterized by severe antihaitianismo by the Dominican oligarchy.<sup>170</sup>

Castor's insistence on understanding the massacre as a result of several factors, and not merely Trujillo's attempt of "preserving the nation," shifted the conversation on antihaitianismo in the Dominican Republic. She was one of the first scholars to offer an alternative justification for the massacre. Her reasoning positioned itself in direct opposition to the commonly accepted rationalizations of the time. Castor's work

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<sup>169</sup> Castor's book was first published in Mexico in 1983 and later published in the Dominican Republic by la Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (UASD) in 1987.

<sup>170</sup> Direct quotation: "La explicación del genocidio tiene que buscarse en un tejido bastante complejo de causas: el peso de los factores geopolíticos, la cuestión fronteriza en su evolución, el fenómeno migratorio con todas sus implicaciones, el desarrollo por parte de la oligarquía dominicana de una ideología marcada por un fuerte anti haitianismo." Suzy Castor, Migraciones y relaciones internacionales (El caso dominico-haitiano) (México, D.F.: Impresos Lamac, 1983) 78 – 79.

opened up the discussion and exposed the several limitations that previous explanations of the Haitian Massacre had.

Additionally, she asserted that the Haitian Massacre and the U.S. occupation of both nations in the early 20th century exacerbated the plight of Haitian migrant workers in the Dominican Republic. Many Dominican intellectuals from the *Trujillista* tradition vilified Castor's work upon its release. They characterized her descriptions of how Haitian migrant workers were treated as exaggerated and false. Campaigns to discredit Castor failed, and, her book became the first in a series of publications focusing on antihaitianismo and the Haitian Massacre.

A couple of years later, in 1985, the engineer and journalist José Israel Cuello published Documentos del conflicto dominico-haitiano de 1937. In this book, Cuello offered a compilation of documents from the Dominican government related to the Haitian Massacre. The earliest document in Cuello's collection is dated October 10, 1937, eight days after Trujillo's decree, and the collection continues through the mediation period and ends in February 1939, with correspondence between the Dominican Republic and Haiti about the payment of the agreed-upon amount of \$750,000. Cuello's collection also has several appendixes, which include a speech delivered by Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle, a timeline of Dominican news coverage about the massacre, and letters written by a number of Dominican politicians involved with the massacre.

Many of the documents that Cuello included in his collection had been previously held by the Dominican government and were not available to the public. By bringing a series of primary sources together, he provided a comprehensive and

linear description of how Trujillo's regime dealt with the consequences of the massacre. His emphasis on issuing Dominican documents that spoke only about the massacre, and not about previous Dominican-Haitian relations, highlighted the importance of the massacre in contemporary Dominican history. Furthermore, Cuello was able to redefine the dominant narratives of the massacre because the previously hidden government documents showed the Trujillo's regime attempt at covering up the events. His collection became a useful source for researchers who were interested in discussing the massacre. Castor's and Cuello's works formed a solid foundation for the intellectuals who followed them.

A lawyer, historian, and former ambassador to the United States, Bernardo Vega published Trujillo y Haiti, Vol. I (1930-1937) in 1988. Vega's objective was to create a chronological history of Dominican-Haitian relations during the Trujillo era; this introduction to his currently four-part series focused on the first seven years of Trujillo's regime. Vega paid special attention to border disputes and negotiations, *anti-Trujillista* activity in Haiti and the beginnings of the massacre. He ended the volume with a detailed description of the massacre. Vega, who by this time was a respected historian in the Dominican Republic, drew a larger audience to the subject and placed questions of causes, consequences, and guilt directly before the Dominican people. His work explicitly called for the recognition of the facts and acceptance of the concept that they must be spoken about publically. Vega dedicated Trujillo y Haiti, Vol. I to



the Dominican people and the Haitian people, with the hope that this work will contribute to a better understanding of our common history and to the search for ways of beneficiary cohabitation and cooperation for the two nations.<sup>171</sup>

In 1995, Vega released Trujillo y Haiti, Vol. II (1937-1938); this volume focused directly on the aftermath of the massacre. In his first chapter, Vega addressed the various theories that have emerged to explain the massacre. Like Castor, Vega claimed that multiple factors led to the Haitian Massacre, including the tumultuous historical past of both nations, unsuccessful efforts to clearly demarcate the border, failed attempts at “Dominicanizing” the border region, and Trujillo’s response to his trip through the borderlands in the late summer and early fall of 1937. Vega’s analysis differed from Castor’s because he maintained that the main reason for the massacre was a desire to whitening the borderlands.<sup>172</sup> Vega supported his claims by citing the various times that the Dominican Republic tried to “whiten” the borderland population by promoting internal and external immigration to the border region. The failure of these government-sponsored programs, according to Vega, led to Trujillo’s decision to order the massacre.<sup>173</sup>

Vega referred often to Castor and Cuello in the first two volumes of Trujillo y Haiti. His research was informed both by their works and his own conclusions, which added to the emerging intellectual conversation on the Haitian Massacre. The kind of historical revision that Castor, Cuello, and Vega engaged in allowed for the emergence of complicated and nuanced understandings of the causes of the Haitian

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<sup>171</sup> Direct quote: “Al pueblo dominicano y al pueblo haitiano, con la esperanza de que esta obra contribuya a un mejor entendimiento de nuestra historia común y a la búsqueda de formas de convivencia y cooperación beneficiosas para ambas naciones.” Vega, 1988, 7.

<sup>172</sup> Vega, 1995, 26, 33-24.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 24-26.

Massacre. Their research has opened up the field, allowing other scholars to address the causes and consequences; many of these scholars have been cited in Chapter 2.

*The Use of Oral Histories and Silenced Narratives in the Counternarrative Movement*

In addition to a rearticulation of the Haitian Massacre, scholars engaging with this topic have introduced the silenced and ignored histories of the victims and survivors of the massacre. The historians Juan Manuel García and Miguel Aquino García conducted interviews along the border, collecting oral histories from victims, survivors, perpetrators, and witnesses of the massacre. The oral histories presented by García and Aquino García complemented Castor's, Cuello's, and Vega's works, and supported the assertion that silencing and erasure of history needed to be mended.

The historian Juan Manuel García published his work La matanza de los haitianos: Genocidio de Trujillo, 1937 in the Dominican Republic in 1983. García engaged in archival and historical research along with interviewing survivors of the massacre. The result was a comprehensive narrative of the massacre and its aftermath from late September 1937 to February 1938. Published earlier than Cuello's and Vega's works, García's book was the first historical study of the massacre written by a Dominican scholar and published in the Dominican Republic. While García's and Castor's descriptions of the massacre are very similar, García's ability to interview several of the survivors had an intense and unique effect on his work. He presented not only a researched project, but also the personal anecdotes of individuals directly affected by the events.

García interviewed residents of the border regions who recalled the massacre, survivors, and a few men who participated in the murders. By bringing different

perspectives and sources together, he generated a historical narrative that, like Castor's work, complicated the government-sanctioned understandings of the massacre. García placed blame on key figures for the massacre and the resulting international aftermath. In speaking of one of his interviewees, he stated that

for Don Diego, what Trujillo left for Dominicans, for the entire country, was 'an eternal responsibility vis-à-vis the neighbors. Dominicans will always have to be alert, because similar to what happened in World War II, an common enemy has been made of that country [Haiti], without our even participating in this situation.'

'Our future generations will have to guard themselves well and understand the debt that is there,' says the high school teacher Don Diego."<sup>174</sup>

This passage does two things – first, it highlights a perspective that included Dominican guilt over the massacre. While this may not have been an uncommon feeling, before García's book this perspective was not represented in the leading intellectual dialogue. Citing Don Diego gave a voice to the latent discomfort that the massacre created among some Dominicans and to their disapproval of dominant discourses. Don Diego's reference to the Holocaust not only connected the two events as acts of genocide, but also suggested that future generations would have to carry the burden of their nations' past. By thinking about the massacre in these terms, Don Diego placed the responsibility for knowing about the massacre and making amends with Haiti on a future Dominican society.

In 1988, the historian Miguel Aquino García published Holocausto en el Caribe: Perfiles de una tiranía sin precedents, la matanza de haitianos por Trujillo.

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<sup>174</sup> Direct quote: "Para Don Diego, lo que Trujillo dejó a los dominicanos, a todo el pueblo, fue 'una eterna responsabilidad con los vecinos. Los dominicanos tendremos que estar siempre alertas, porque tal como se dijo al ocurrir la Segunda Guerra Mundial, se ha hecho de ese pueblo el enemigo común, sin que hayamos tenido ninguna participación para que así fuera.' [paragraph break] 'Nuestras generaciones futuras tendrán que guardarse muy bien, y saber que ese es un compromiso que está ahí, dice el profesor Don Diego.'" García, 1983, 77.

The title of Aquino García's work drew a connection between Hitler's genocide of millions of Jews, homosexuals, gypsies, and other individuals, and Trujillo's genocide of thousands of Haitians. This connection, previously mentioned in Don Diego's testimony, was one that became commonly spoken about in the emerging counternarrative. Aquino García researched and collected archival and oral histories in order to create his narrative about the massacre. The testimonies Aquino García collected while traveling through the border regions were a critical component to his book. The extensive interviews he conducted enabled him to integrate oral histories and personal anecdotes from different bordertowns into a historical timeline that allowed for the production of an inclusive history.

#### *A Scholarly Critique of the Trujillista Intellectuals*

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The third component of the *anti-Trujillista* counternarrative movement involved a critical engagement with *Trujillista* intellectuals. The scholars Andrés L. Mateo, Pedro L. San Miguel and Ernesto Ságas have analyzed the works of Joaquín Balaguer, Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle, and countless other authors publishing during the Trujillo regime. In critiquing the works of the *Trujillista* intellectuals, Mateo, San Miguel, and Ságas challenged their ideas, calling into question their justifications of antihaitianismo and the Haitian Massacre, and asked for a rethinking of anti-Haitian sentiment and racism in the Dominican Republic.

Andrés L. Mateo's Mito y cultura en la era de Trujillo looked at myth-making in Trujillo's regime. Mateo argued that the massacre, along with the *Trujillista* intellectual movement, produced a nationalist ideology intended to create the supportive and submissive Dominican society that Trujillo needed for his rule to

succeed. When speaking about the massacre, Mateo stated that the majority of Trujillo's intellectuals became involved in justifying the events. Furthermore, he suggested that these intellectuals portrayed the massacre as necessary to secure the border and protect the nation, a theme that was discussed in Chapter 3.<sup>175</sup>

The historian Pedro L. San Miguel's The Imagined Island: History, Identity and Utopia in Hispaniola, originally published in Spanish in the Dominican Republic under the title La Isla Imaginada: Historia, identidad y utopía en La Española in 1997, is a collection of four essays focused on historiography and nation-building in the Dominican Republic. He looked at these categories from a strictly historical position that simultaneously acknowledged that history and historiography are constructed narratives that can be interpreted in different ways.<sup>176</sup>

In the first essay of the book, titled "The Imagined Colony: Historical Visions of Colonial Santo Domingo," San Miguel looked at the historical interpretations of colonial Santo Domingo generated by six Dominican scholars: Antonio Sánchez-Valverde, Pedro Francisco Bonó, José Gabriel García, Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle, Joaquín Balaguer, and Juan Bosch. His analysis of these scholars concluded that each of them saw Dominican history as tragic due to the abandonment of the island by the Spanish and the subsequent loss of the western side. San Miguel's response to these ideas is clearly articulated in the following passage:

Losing paradise may be a tragedy. It will always be a tragedy for those in positions of authority, whose reputed "heirs" will lament the absence of that safe, enclosed space over which they held dominion – or at least exercised usufruct. In their "memoirs" (their historiography), they will tell us of those intruders who undermined their inheritance or who seduced the weak in order to sow dissension

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<sup>175</sup> Andrés L. Mateo, Mito y cultura en la era de Trujillo, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Santo Domingo, Rep. Dominicana, Editora Manatí, 2004) 121-123.

<sup>176</sup> San Miguel, 4-7.

and internal disaffection ... What they will not tell, or will mention only as an insignificant sidelight, will be the struggles and the resistance of those who did not partake of the joys of paradise, for whom that “paradise” was, perhaps, an inferno.<sup>177</sup>

San Miguel’s conclusions emphasized that the historiographies generated by these authors have also silenced many other histories because of the way in which they recount certain events. He therefore called for the evaluation of a multitude of histories in order to create a more complete and accurate representation of Dominican historiography. San Miguel’s suggestion is a contemporary thought that all scholars of the counternarrative movement share.

Interested in similar questions of historical construction, Ernesto Sagás published Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic in 2000. Sagás conducted an in-depth analysis of antihaitianismo in Dominican politics from the colonial era through the Trujillo regime and into contemporary Dominican society. He focused on the ways in which race and politics informed each other and allowed for the continuation and development of antihaitianismo as an accepted ideological trope.

Sagás asserts that

in the Dominican Republic, antihaitianismo ideology has played several roles. First, it has been used as the basis for discrimination of Haitians, the country’s largest ethnic minority. Second, it has been employed as an ideological weapon of control and manipulation of the Dominican people—specifically the dark-skinned lower classes—for it diffuses class tensions and moves the political agenda away from the issue of equitable redistribution of wealth in Dominican society. And third, since its development it has remained a dominant ideology, competing against and subjugating alternative ideas. Antihaitianismo ideology is so ingrained in Dominican culture that antihaitianismo has become the norm, rather than the exception, in Dominican society.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 33-34.

<sup>178</sup> Sagás, 2000, 122.

Ságas' second point in this passage readdressed a consistent issue in Dominican racial formation, and the fourth component of the *anti-Trujillista* counternarrative movement.

### *The Addressing of Blackness in Contemporary Dominican Society*

As a result of the rigid boundaries created between Haitians and Dominicans, dark-skinned Dominicans are forced into an intermediate position in which they are not white enough to be considered fully Dominican and are not black enough to be considered Haitian. Dark-skinned Dominicans are deeply affected by the institutionalized narratives of antihaitianismo and the denial of blackness, and are kept at the margins of society. These individuals are also forced to deny their blackness if they wish to be a part of Dominican society; accepting blackness automatically ostracizes, and stamps those people as not Dominican. The anthropologist Carlos Andújar has been the latest scholar to broach the subject of antihaitianismo and blackness in the Dominican Republic.

Andújar originally published his essay La Presencia Negra en Santo Domingo in 1997, with a second, revised edition released in early 2011. In his work, he sought to undercover the African roots of the Dominican Republic. He went back to the beginning of the slave trade in Western Africa and documented the forced migrations of hundreds of thousands of black African slaves to the New World.<sup>179</sup> He discussed the nature of slavery in the Dominican Republic, black rebellions that occurred in the late eighteenth century, and most importantly, African influences and contributions to

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<sup>179</sup> Carlos Andújar, La Presencia Negra en Santo Domingo (Santo Domingo, Rep. Dominicana, Editorial Letra Gráfica, 2011) 27-47

Dominican culture. Andújar asserted that African influences can be most directly found in Dominican religious practices, linguistics, and music.<sup>180</sup> Commonly accepted forms of Dominican music today, such as *merengue* and *bachata*, and their use of percussion instruments, are direct manifestations of the African origins of the Dominican Republic.

The contemporary sociohistorical intellectual movement has been informed by a multiplicity of scholars from different disciplines whose works attempt to change colloquial understandings of antihaitianismo and the Haitian Massacre. Their scholarly texts have helped to spawn a literary counternarrative movement, which also seeks to address and uncover previously silenced histories. These literary works are important to the counternarrative movement because they reflect the investment of both academic scholars and literary figures in reclaiming and revising of history.

### *The Rise of a Literary Counternarrative Movement*

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The final decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century ushered in a series of literary works by Dominican and Haitian authors<sup>181</sup> who based their stories on the emerging *anti-Trujillista* counternarrative movement. In 1989, the Haitian scholar and poet René Philoctète published *Massacre River*,<sup>182</sup> the storyline followed a Dominican man, Pedro Brito, his Haitian wife, Adèle and his mission to save her from the Haitian Massacre. Philoctète described the massacre with intricate detail and places a deep emphasis on the commonalities found between Dominicans and Haitians living on the border. As with Castor's, García's and Aquino

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid, 73-96.

<sup>181</sup> The exception to this is Mario Vargas Llosa, who is Peruvian.

<sup>182</sup> The translation, which I am using as a reference, was released in 2005.



García's works, *Philoctète* showed how the massacre both murdered thousands of people and destroyed the borderland culture that had existed in the region for over 100 years. His choice of a Dominican-Haitian couple as protagonists represented the bicultural society that existed in the Dominican Republic prior to the massacre; Pedro was willing to do anything to save Adèle because of his love for her. At the end of the novel, Pedro and Adèle manage to get across the Massacre River and onto Haitian soil safely. Philoctète writes,

they are of every color, every walk of life, every belief, every character, every kind of memory and beauty, those people who have just landed on Haitian soil. The day after Trujillo's madness, they came by the tens of thousands from every cranny of the Dominican border ... Are they Haitians? Are they Dominicans?

Together they hoped for good harvests, and trembled in the same cabins when the harsh winds blew. They welcomed the saints and angels with the same offerings, sang the same refrains with the same musical instruments, danced to the same rhythms, cooked the same food, drank the same black coffee, defended freedom with the same turbulence, sowed the seeds of love in the same voluptuous earth. They have so many things in common, share so many similar wounds and joys that trying to distinguish between the two peoples violates their tacit understanding to live as one.<sup>183</sup>

This description implies the same kinds of conclusions that historians and sociologists were drawing in their own research. The ambiguity of race, ethnicity, and nationality embodied the ways in which borderland peoples defined themselves. Knowing whether someone was Dominican or Haitian was irrelevant because Haitians, Dominicans of Haitian descent and dark-skinned Dominicans were being killed. A similar kind of narrative emerges in Edwidge Danticat's literary work.

Danticat released her second novel, *The Farming of Bones*, in 1998. The novel received critical acclaims for its personal and intimate portrayal of the Haitian

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<sup>183</sup> René Philoctète, *Massacre River*, translated by Linda Coverdale (New York, NY; New Directions Books, 2005) 213-214.

Massacre through the eyes of the main character, Amabelle. The novel followed the story of Amabelle, a Haitian woman orphaned at a young age, taken in by a Dominican family living alongside the border, and made one of their domestic workers. Amabelle grew up in the household with the family's daughter, Valencia. As in Philoctète's novel, love lies at the center of Danticat's novel. Amabelle forms a relationship with Sebastien, a Haitian sugar-cane cutter. Their love and lives are turned upside down when Trujillo orders the massacre. Amabelle flees, but not before trying to find Sebastien. On her way to Dajabón, where she would attempt to cross the Massacre River, she comes across many other people who are fleeing as well. Many of the people that Amabelle travels with and meets along the way do not make it with her across the Massacre River and into Haiti. Danticat's vivid and emotional narrations of the events allowed for audiences to understand the terror and horror generated by the massacre. Moreover, her novel parallels many of the descriptions provided by Vega, Cuello and Sagás. It also incorporates many aspects of the personal anecdotes reported in Garcia's and Aquino García's works.

Unlike Massacre River however, Amabelle and Sebasien's love story is not given a happy ending. Amabelle never found out what happened to Sebastien; she heard rumors that he was killed in different places along the path to safety. Amabelle, like the reader, is left to assume that he perished in the massacre. By portraying Sebastien's fate in this way, Danticat showed the destruction of love, friendships, relationships and lives along the border.

Philoctète's and Danticat's novels form a part of a larger movement producing literary works focused on the Trujillo regime. Several other works, including Julia

Alvarez's How the García Girls Lost Their Accents, Mario Vargas Llosa's The Feast of the Goat, and Junot Díaz's The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao briefly addressed the Haitian Massacre in their plot. In Julia Alvarez's novel, there is a character named Chucha, who is described as a Haitian domestic worker in the García household. Sofía, the youngest of the García sisters, describes Chucha in the following passage:

There was this old lady, Chucha, who had worked in Mami's family forever and who had this face like someone had wrung out after washing it to try to get some of the black out. I mean, Chucha was super wrinkled and Haitian blue-black, not Dominican *café-con-leche* black. She was real Haitian too and that's why she couldn't say certain words like the word for parsley or anyone's name that had a *j* in it, which meant the family was like camp, everyone with nicknames Chucha could pronounce ... Way back before Mami was even born, Chucha had just appeared at my grandfather's doorstep one night, begging to be taken in. Turns out it was the night of the massacre when Trujillo had decreed that all black Haitians on our side of the island would be executed by dawn. There's a river the bodies were finally thrown into that supposedly still runs red today. Chucha had escaped from some canepickers' camp and was asking for asylum.<sup>184</sup>

The description of Chucha focused on a couple of things—first of all, a presumed difference between Haitian blackness and Dominican blackness. Through the eyes of Sofía, there was a clear distinction between them. Secondly, Chucha's being Haitian and a survivor of the massacre defined her identity. Sofía's grandfather's taking Chucha in further magnified the complexity of the massacre. While many Dominicans turned their backs against their neighbors, some were still loyal to their friends and their communities. The García family knew nothing about Chucha when they took her in, yet when she came to their door looking for asylum, she was given a place to stay because they knew that her chance of survival outdoors was minimal.

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<sup>184</sup> Julia Alvarez, How the García Girls Lost Their Accents (New York, NY; Penguin Books, 1991) 218.

In Mario Vargas Llosa's novel, The Feast of the Goat, the massacre is referred to twice. In both sections, Trujillo's character speaks about the necessity for the massacre. When asked at a dinner in Barahona, a southern city in the Dominican Republic, by Simon Gittleman, one of the U.S. Marines who trained Trujillo in his early years, what was the most difficult decision he had to make, Trujillo responded with "the second of October 1937, in Dajábon."<sup>185</sup> Trujillo's character raises his hands and claims that

for the sake of this country, I have stained these with blood ... To keep the blacks from colonizing us again. There were tens of thousands of them, and they were everywhere. If I hadn't, the Dominican Republic would not exist today. The entire island would be Haiti, as it was in 1840. The handful of white survivors would be serving the blacks.<sup>186</sup>

In an earlier passage, Trujillo is also quoted thinking "What do five, ten, twenty thousand Haitians matter when it's a question of saving an entire people?"<sup>187</sup> Vargas Llosa's interpretation of Trujillo's well-documented ruthlessness emerged unmistakably in these two quotes. The kinds of statements made by Trujillo's character in Vargas Llosa's novel are nearly identical to some of the comments made by both Trujillo and his regime. The form in which Vargas Llosa normalized the conversation brings attention to two things: how the massacre was understood during that time and the extent to which Trujillo's regime was willing to justify the events of October 1937. This understanding of the Trujillo regime is found in the works of all of the *anti-Trujillista* scholars writing today.

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<sup>185</sup> Mario Vargas Llosa, The Feast of the Goat, translated by Edith Grossman (New York, NY; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000) 163-164

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, 7.

The most recent novel to mention the Haitian Massacre is Junot Díaz's The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao. In a footnote at the bottom of the second and third pages of the book, Díaz offered a shortened and concise history of Trujillo's regime, in which he states that one of its "outstanding accomplishments includes the 1937 genocide against the Haitian and Haitian-Dominican community."<sup>188</sup> While Díaz's novel focused on the overall violent tactics implemented by Trujillo's regime, his momentary reference to the Haitian Massacre displayed the importance that the massacre has garnered over the past three decades.

Due to an increased interest in antihaitianismo and the events of October 1937, several scholars and literary figures have produced monumental studies and texts about the massacre. The historians, sociologists, political scientists, and anthropologists who have associated themselves with this subject have pioneered in researching and uncovering a silenced history. The literary treatments that came as a result of the rising sociohistorical counternarrative movement were informed by the scholarly works of these intellectuals and used them to create their own fictional narratives about the Haitian Massacre. The mass success of many of these novels introduced questions of antihaitianismo, violence, race, and nationhood to a whole new generation of readers. Because of the accessibility of their novels, authors like Edwidge Danticat, Mario Vargas Llosa and Julia Alvarez have reached audiences that academics were not able to. These writers have implanted ideas derived from the *anti-Trujillista* movement into the heads of thousands of Dominicans. Together,

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<sup>188</sup> Junot Díaz, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao (New York, NY; Riverhead Press, 2007) 2-3.

intellectuals, scholars and literary figures have brought attention to the Dominican Republic's long history of antihaitian sentiment and racism.

### *The Continuation of Antihaitianismo*

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These scholars do not stand uncontested, however; *Trujillista* scholars such as Luis Julián Pérez, Carlos Cornielle, and Manuel Núñez follow in the Balaguer and Peña Batlle traditions and carry the torch for continued antihaitianismo in the Dominican Republic. For those scholars, antihaitianismo was a critical component of their work.

Many intellectuals who continued in this tradition were also a part of Trujillo's regime in some form. The lawyer and historian Carlos Cornielle, who published Proceso histórico dominico-haitiano: Una advertencia a la juventud dominicana in 1980, held the Sub-Secretary position in various departments, including the departments of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, and the Interior, during his career with the Trujillo administration. In the introduction to his book, Cornielle directly addressed Dominican adolescents: "This work has ... no other objective than to awake the sentiment of action in the Dominican youth, facing the extraordinary problems that we confront with Haiti ..." <sup>189</sup> Cornielle laid out a Dominican-Haitian history that began with the island of Tortuga and the founding of Saint-Domingue and ended with the rise of François "Papa Doc" Duvalier in 1956. In his retelling of Dominican-Haitian history, Cornielle portrayed Dominicans as

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<sup>189</sup> Direct quote: "Esta obra, que nace del pensamiento y del espíritu en franca comunión, no tiene otro objetivo, que no sea despertar el sentimiento y la acción de la juventud dominicana, frente a los insoluble problemas que confrontamos con Haití..." Carlos Cornielle, Proceso histórico dominico-haitiano: Una advertencia a la juventud dominicana (Santo Domingo, Rep. Dominicana; Publicaciones América, S.A. 1980) 73.

perpetual victims of Haiti. Furthermore, he exclaimed that Dominican cultural values and practices were at risk of being erased if serious measures were not taken to protect it. In the style of his predecessors, he justified the massacre as a necessary event for the preservation of Dominicaness in the Dominican Republic. Such thoughts are further addressed and intensified in Luis Julián Pérez's Santo Domingo frente al destino.

Pérez, like Cornielle, was a member of the Trujillo regime, from 1945 to 1961. His book reiterated many of the theories espoused by Balaguer, Peña Batlle and Cornielle. He asserted that during its history, the Dominican Republic “has had to face all sorts of invasions, usurpations, and depredations”<sup>190</sup> from Haiti. Pérez also affirmed that Spanish abandonment allowed for the establishment of Saint-Domingue in Hispaniola; his claims come from a line of intellectuals who believe that a larger interest by Spain in Santo Domingo would have prevented the French domination of the western end of the island.<sup>191</sup> In his narration of the events of October 1937, Pérez supported Trujillo’s decision and claimed that “Trujillo assumed all of the historical responsibility, and the Dominicans who defended the name and the honor of the Republic ... did nothing else but fulfill a patriotic duty that makes them worthy of the gratitude of their citizenry.”<sup>192</sup> This same sentiment has been mostly recently expressed in the historian Manuel Núñez’s work, El ocaso de la nación dominicana.

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<sup>190</sup> Direct quote: “En el curso de nuestra historia se ha tenido que afrontar toda clase de invasiones, usurpaciones y depredaciones...” Luis Julián Pérez, Santo Domingo frente al destino (Santo Domingo, Rep. Dominicana; Taller, Isabel la Católica 309) 9.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*, 21.

<sup>192</sup> Direct quote: “No obstante esos excesos, Trujillo asumió toda la responsabilidad histórica, y los dominicanos que defendieron el nombre y el honor de la República, puesta ante los ojos del mundo en aquella ocasión, no hicieron otra cosa que cumplir con un deber patriótico que les honoraba y hacía merecedores de la gratitud de sus conciudadanos, en vez de querer

Núñez's antihaitian position is directly influenced by Peña Batlle's scholarly works; Núñez believes fervently that Dominican culture, not race, is what is at risk of being tainted and damaged by Haitian influences.<sup>193</sup> Núñez acknowledges that Dominicans are a mixed people with African, indigenous and Spanish cultures. Nevertheless, he strongly asserts that Dominicans are culturally white, Spanish and Catholic, and Haiti, Haitian immigrants and Haitian culture are an imminent and constant threat to Dominican cultural norms.<sup>194</sup> Nuñez goes to the extent of declaring that counternarrative and revisionist intellectuals are "poor scholars, un-Dominican, pro-Haitian, and even Marxist imperialists."<sup>195</sup> These accusations are the direct result of the fear and anger generated by the inclusive histories that are now being presented about the Haitian Massacre and antihaitianismo.

#### *The Societal Impact of the Counternarrative Movement*

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The Dominican Republic currently finds itself in a transitional phase. While antihaitianismo continues to affect and drive everyday life, there is an active movement pushing Dominican culture from this ingrained ideology into a new one of acceptance and understanding. The scholarly and literary counternarrative movements that have emerged in recent decades showcase and place importance on silenced narratives and histories. The counternarrative movement has been forcing Dominicans to rethink and question internalized notions of race, ethnicity, nationalism, and national identity. Several events and factors have amplified this

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anatematizarlos al hacerlos responsables de una autoría intelectual irreal e injusta." Ibid, 99-100.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>194</sup> Manuel Núñez, *El ocaso de la nación dominicana*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edición (Santo Domingo, Rep. Dominicana; Editorial Letra Gráfica) 258.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid; Sagás, 72.



conversation, including the presidential candidacy of José Francisco Peña Gomez, the large number of Haitian migrant workers present in the Dominican Republic, and the response to the January 12, 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Peña Gómez was a political powerhouse who rose from poverty and a life story directly affected by the Haitian Massacre—his parents, of supposed Dominican and Haitian ancestry, fled the Dominican Republic to save their lives. He served as an advisor to Juan Bosch during his short-lived presidency after the fall of Trujillo, and became a well-known face in both *anti-Trujillista* and *anti-Balaguerista* politics. Due to his popularity with the Dominican public, particularly the overwhelmingly dark-skinned lower class, Peña Gómez’s chances of becoming president were extremely high.<sup>196</sup> Political campaigns against Peña Gómez, largely funded by Balaguer and his followers, attempted to create links between his presumed Haitian ancestry, his desire of unifying the island under one rule, and his supposed following of Vodou. Sagás cites Frank Moya Pons as stating that the campaign against Peña Gómez was “the worst display of racism that we have seen since the Haitian-Dominican wars.”<sup>197</sup>

Peña Gómez lost the 1994 presidential election to Balaguer; international pressures and rumors of voter fraud, however, forced Balaguer to hold elections once again in 1996. In this election, he was unable to run for the presidency and instead endorsed a candidate relatively new to the Dominican political scene: Leonel

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, 110; Howard W. French, “Embargo Creates ‘Oil Boom’ Near Haitian Border” (New York, NY; New York Times, 1994).

Fernández.<sup>198</sup> The antihaitian propaganda against Peña Gómez once again emerged, and this time around, Peña Gómez lost the presidency to Fernández. Sagás comments,

In a bitter postelection speech, Peña Gómez declared that racism had played an important role in his electoral defeat. Racism, he confessed, was well entrenched in Dominican society, and had he been elected president, a bloodbath would have taken place. He finished by remarking that ‘Dominican society is not yet ready for a black president.’<sup>199</sup>

Peña Gómez died in 1998, after a four-year battle with pancreatic cancer. His body was displayed for public viewing, where he was mourned by the millions of followers who had voted for him and supported his political beliefs. The fate of the Peña Gómez presidential campaigns revealed how antihaitianismo still held sway, thwarting any attempt to acknowledge the presence of blackness in Dominican society. Yet, the popularity of Peña Gómez complicates his statement that “Dominican society was not yet ready for a black president.” Taking into consideration that Peña Gómez had wide support in the 1994 presidential election, especially among the members of the more populous lower classes, it is clear that his loss was due primarily to voter fraud, in conjunction with the racist, anti-Haitian campaign supported by Balaguer and the Dominican elite. The slanderous comments about Peña Gómez made by Balaguer and the Dominican elite are amplified in the current situation of Haitian migrant workers in the Dominican Republic.

Since the exponential rise of sugar production in the Dominican Republic during the U.S. occupation in the early 1900s, Haitian nationals have been migrating

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<sup>198</sup> Leonel Fernández has been the president of the Dominican Republic for the past 8 years. He was not eligible to seek reelection at the moment due to a clause in the Dominican Constitution that stipulates that a President can only serve two presidential terms in a row. Furthermore, if the former President wishes to seek reelection, the individual must be out of office for at least a full four-year term before doing so. He will be stepping down on August 16, 2012.

<sup>199</sup> Sagás, 112.

in large numbers to the Dominican Republic to work in the *bateys*, or the sugar cane fields. Initially, during the late nineteenth century, Dominican cultivators worked in the *bateys*, but, a series of strikes for better wages and treatment led to a reconsideration of the sugar plantation labor force. West Indian migrants originally became the new source of labor. The anthropologist Samuel Martínez argues that

the West Indians were not just a source of cheap labor but workers who could be subjected to harsh discipline with less hesitation than Dominican nationals. West Indians could be obligated to work at night or on Sundays without overtime pay or left idle and hungry for days, as best suited production schedules. Growers benefited not just from lower labor costs but from the greater assurance with which they could command the pace and timing of fieldwork with an immigrant labor force. Such control was an important consideration in an industry where coordinating output in field and factory might spell the difference between operating at a profit or a loss.<sup>200</sup>

By the early twentieth century, however, West Indian workers became discouraged with the wages and work conditions in the *bateys*, and were not migrating to the Dominican Republic in the numbers that they had in previous years. Consequently, Haitian migrant workers began to replace the West Indian workers; Martínez cites Suzy Castor, who “estimated that between 1915 and 1930 alone, southern Haiti lost more ‘than 80,000 men’ to the cane fields across the border.”<sup>201</sup>

The number of Haitian migrant workers grew exponentially in the twentieth century. There are well over one million Haitians currently residing in the Dominican Republic; within a total population of just under 10 million, Haitians represent over 10%. The large majority of the Haitian community in the Dominican Republic still

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<sup>200</sup> Samuel Martínez, “From Hidden Hand to Heavy Hand: Sugar, the State, and Migrant Labor in Haiti and the Dominican Republic,” *Latin American Research Review* 34:1 (1999) 57-84, [JSTOR](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2503926), The Latin American Studies Association, 6 April 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2503926>, 65.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid*, 66; Suzy Castor, “El impacto de la ocupación norteamericana en Haití (1915-1934) y en la República Dominicana (1916-1924)” in *Política y sociología en Haití y la República Dominicana*, edited by the Coloquio Dominico-Haitiano de Ciencias Sociales, 42-64 (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1971) 84.

works in *bateys*, and still receive inhumane treatment and extremely low wages. Many Haitians in the Dominican Republic are illegal immigrants who are not protected by the labor laws,<sup>202</sup> and are unable to achieve Dominican citizenship.

The Dominican Constitution has worked to prevent the children of Haitian migrant workers born in the Dominican Republic from having automatic Dominican citizenship. In the most recent revision of the Dominican Constitution, adopted in 2010, Chapter 5, Article 18, Section 1, states that Dominican citizenship is granted to those who “have at least one Dominican parent, those who had Dominican citizenship prior to the ratification of the new constitution, people born in the Dominican Republic, with the exception of those whose parents are either members of foreign consulates, or *those whose parents are illegal aliens. Those individuals are considered transitory residents.*”<sup>203</sup> Many Dominicans of Haitian ancestry do not have citizenship in the Dominican Republic, or in Haiti, because they were not born there. Even if these individuals had Haitian citizenship, it would not protect them from the abuses that they endure in the Dominican Republic. Many Dominicans of Haitian ancestry are also denied rights that accompany Dominican citizenship, such as welfare assistance, access to public schooling, and health care services. These members of Dominican society remain unprotected and vulnerable to the government of the nation in which they were born. Most of the people affected by this law were

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<sup>202</sup> Ramón Antonio Veras, “Contractos y Reclutamientos de Braceros: Entradas Clandestinas o Repatriación” in La Cuestión Haitiana en Santo Domingo: Migración Internacional, Desarrollo y Relaciones Inter-Estatales entre Haití y República Dominicana,” edited by the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, (FLASCO) (Santo Domingo, Rep. Dom: FLASCO, 1992) 111.

<sup>203</sup> “Constitución de la República Dominicana,” República Dominicana/Dominican Republic, Constitución de 2010/Constitution of 2010, 21 January 2011, Georgetown University Political Database of the Americas, 6 April 2012, <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/DomRep/vigente.html>. Italics emphasis done by me.

born and raised in the Dominican Republic, and have never been to Haiti; a Dominican society that seeks to ignore them and their needs is all they know.

The Constitution of 2010 was ratified on January 26, 2010, just two weeks after the tragic 7.0–magnitude earthquake in Haiti. The earthquake has dramatically affected Dominican-Haitian relations over the last two years. The Dominican Republic was one of the first nations to offer support to the neighboring country; the Dominican Red Cross had crossed the border into Haiti, bringing much needed medical supplies and assistance, less than twenty-four hours after the earthquake struck.<sup>204</sup> Two days after the earthquake, President Fernández established a Help Center in Jimaní, the southeastern bordertown closest to the epicenter of the quake.<sup>205</sup> In the months following the earthquake, Dominicans donated thousands of pints of blood,<sup>206</sup> food,<sup>207</sup> water,<sup>208</sup> and medical supplies,<sup>209</sup> and established bank accounts for

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<sup>204</sup> Author unknown, “Cruz Roja dominicana opera como fuente humanitaria para Haití.” *Hoy Digital*, 13 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/el-pais/2010/1/13/309645/Cruz-RojaDominicana-opera-como-puente-de-ayuda-humanitaria-para-Haiti>.

<sup>205</sup> Diego Pesqueira, “Fernández va hoy a Jimaní a supervisar colaboración,” *Hoy Digital*, 14 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/el-pais/2010/1/14/309781/Fernandezva-hoy-a-Jimani-a-supervisar-colaboracion>; Arismendi Calderon, “En Jimaní todos ayudan a Haití,” *Hoy Digital*, 21 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/el-pais/2010/1/21/310756/En-Jimani-todos-ayudan-a-Haiti>.

<sup>206</sup> Author unknown, “Miles de personas acuden a donar sangre para las víctimas terremoto Haití,” *Hoy Digital*, 15 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/el-pais/2010/1/15/309982/Miles-de-personas-acuden-a-donar-sangre-para-la-victimas-terremoto-en-Haiti>; author unknown, “La Cruz Roja despacha 3,000 pintas de sangre para víctimas del terremoto de Haití,” *Hoy Digital*, 20 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/el-pais/2010/1/20/310647/La-CruzRoja-despacha-3000-pintas-de-sangre-para-victimasterremoto-de>.

<sup>207</sup> José Alberto Espinal, “Donan un millón de huevos para afectados en Haití,” *Hoy Digital*, 16 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/el-pais/2010/1/16/310102/Donan-un-millon-de-huevos-para-afectados-en-Haiti>.

<sup>208</sup> Author unknown, “Donan 400 mil litros de agua a sobrevivientes terremoto de Haití,” *Hoy Digital*, 26 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/el-pais/2010/1/26/311418/Donan-400-mil-litros-de-agua-a-sobrevivientes-terremoto-en-Haiti>.

monetary donations to Haiti. Several Dominican celebrities, including the baseball player David Ortiz of the Boston Red Sox, donated money and supplies to the cause<sup>210</sup>; similarly, the musicians Sergio Vargas, Fernando Villalona and los Hermanos Rosario, among others, held a fundraising concert for the victims of the earthquake.<sup>211</sup> Telethons on the leading Dominican broadcasting channels took place, also attempting to collect donations and send them to help the recovery effort in Haiti.<sup>212</sup>

In addition, Dominican medics went to Haiti to assist the thousands of injured people who needed medical attention.<sup>213</sup> Many Haitians were also transported to the Dominican Republic to be examined and taken care of in Dominican hospitals.<sup>214</sup> The earthquake has generated a lot of discussion around the displaced Haitian nationals who have now immigrated to the Dominican Republic. Many Dominican politicians

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<sup>209</sup> Adalberto de la Rosa, “Salud informa que disponen de un millón de vacunas para víctimas del terremoto” *Hoy Digital*, 15 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/el-pais/2010/1/15/309974/Salud-informa-que-disponen-de-un-millon-de-vacunas-para-victimas-del>; author unknown, “Laboratorios Lam envía donativos a Haití,” *Hoy Digital*, 16 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/salud/2010/1/16/310110/Laboratorios-Lam-envia-donativos-a-Haiti>.

<sup>210</sup> Author unknown, “David hará donación afectados Haití,” *Hoy Digital*, 4 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/deportes/2010/1/14/309883/David-hara-donacion-afectados-Haiti>.

<sup>211</sup> Troi Orlando Espejo, “Artistas dominicanos unen voces a favor de Haitianos,” *Hoy Digital*, 1 February 2010, online edition. <http://www.hoy.com.do/el-pais/2010/2/1/312172/Artistas-dominicanos-unen-vozes-a-favor-de-haitianos>.

<sup>212</sup> Author unknown, “Caneles dominicanos se unirán para telemaratón por Haití,” 15 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/el-pais/2010/1/15/309966/Canales-dominicanos-se-uniran-para-telemaraton-por-Haiti>.

<sup>213</sup> Author unknown, “CMD envía más médicos especialistas hacia Haití,” *Hoy Digital*, 26 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/el-pais/2010/1/26/311415/CMD-envia-mas-medicos-especialistas-hacia-Haiti>.

<sup>214</sup> Altagracia Ortiz, “En Neiba, Barahona, Azua, Santiago y Santo Domingo atiendan a miles de haitianos,” *Hoy Digital*, 16 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/el-pais/2010/1/16/310081/En-Neiba-Barahona-Azua-Santiago-y-Santo-Domingo-atienden-a-miles-de>; Altagracia Ortiz, “Hospitales en RD siguen recibiendo pacientes,” *Hoy Digital*, 24 January 2010, online edition, <http://www.hoy.com.do/el-pais/2010/1/24/311220/Hospitales-de-RD-siguen-recibiendo-pacientes>.

have been voicing concerns about the increasing size of the Haitian population. Some assert that the influx of Haitians is becoming an unbearable strain on the fragile Dominican economy; others continue to feel culturally threatened by a large presence of Haitians in the Dominican Republic, and some even go to the extent of suggesting the mass expulsion of thousands of Haitians. Such sentiments are indicative of the persistence of anti-Haitian sentiment, despite the initial attempts to better Dominican-Haitian relations.

The events just discussed above highlight the complex status of antihaitianismo in the Dominican Republic today. While racist rhetoric still plagues Dominican society and attempts persist to maintain a rigid and exclusive definition of Dominicanness, efforts at redefining Dominicanness and establishing good relations with Haiti are taking place. If we return to the Sammy Sosa scandal, we can see the dilemma at hand clearly: Sosa asserts that while he's proud of being black, he is whitening his skin because he wishes to look better. In order for the Dominican Republic to be inclusive of its constituents, it must reconsider the definition of Dominicanness that portrays Dominican society as strictly white and Spanish racially, ethnically, and nationally. Only then will dark-skinned Dominicans and Dominicans of Haitian descent be able to function as full members of Dominican society. The denial of blackness is hindering the Dominican Republic's potential to understand, acknowledge, and benefit from its racial, ethnic, and cultural heritages. The rearticulation of Dominicanness along less rigid lines will also make possible a Dominican society *not* defined by anti-Haitian sentiment, and willing to establish a genuinely good relationship with its neighbors for the first time in their shared history.

## ***Conclusion: Rethinking Antihaitianismo and Dominicanness for a Modern Dominican Society***

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Current conversations about Dominican racial and ethnic formation are destabilizing the dominant racial discourse that has prevailed in the Dominican Republic for over two centuries. This destabilization has placed the nation at a crossroads between those who wish to continue with previous, anti-Haitian interpretations of Dominican racial and ethnic identity, and those who wish to redefine Dominicanness in attempts to create a more inclusive definition of what it means to be Dominican. My aim in this thesis has been to track the development of Dominican racial, ethnic, and national formations. I have established that the concept of Dominicanness conflated the definitions of race, ethnicity, and nation, resulting in the assertion that being Dominican meant being white and Spanish.

Dominicans developed this counterfactual racial understanding as a defense mechanism in response to the perceived threat that their neighbor, Haiti, posed to their sovereignty, integrity, survival and purity. In Chapter 1, I showed how a turbulent and violent history involving both countries led to the creation and establishment of antihaitianismo, and a definition of Dominicanness that flies in the face of reality. This definition poses a problem because Dominicans are not solely white and Spanish; they are of mixed racial, ethnic, and national origins, and their society has been influenced by African, indigenous, and Spanish cultures.

Additionally, the rigid observation of boundaries generated an “us versus them” mentality, which in turn exacerbated feelings of fear and paranoia. As Memmi



argues, fear and paranoia heighten defensiveness and justify acts of aggression. The evolution of resentment toward and hatred of Haitians stemming from the various Haitian occupations of the Dominican Republic, along with the effects of the U.S. occupation of Hispaniola in the early twentieth century, intensified, and reached their peak with Trujillo's ordering of the Haitian Massacre in October 1937, topic discussed in Chapter 2. In an attempt to justify the massacre, a new, more exclusive and violent antihaitianismo emerged in its aftermath. Joaquín Balaguer and Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle, along with the rest of the *Trujillista* intellectuals, defended Trujillo's actions and referred to them as "necessary for the preservation of the nation;" this topic was explored in Chapter 3.

My findings have established that antihaitianismo and Dominicaness are co-constructed ideologies that have evolved and developed together. The development of antihaitianismo gave rise to the narrow definition of Dominicaness that disregards racial and ethnic realities. Severe and internalized terror of blackness and the degeneration of Dominican purity have made Dominicans unable to see themselves as what they are. The denial of African origins has also worked to exclude Dominicans of Haitian descent and dark-skinned Dominicans from Dominican society. For these individuals, a vocal disavowal of blackness has become necessary before they could be considered by themselves and others Dominican.

Researching such a vast and complicated history required a trip to the Dominican Republic, and the use of both English- and Spanish-language sources. Many of the Spanish-language books were not easily accessible, some not available at all, in the United States. Furthermore, many of these texts have been out of print for

decades, which required me to identify and search the holdings of second-hand bookstores with particular determination and focus. Through *La Sociedad de Bibliófilos Dominicanos* (the Dominican Society of Bibliophiles), I was able to run nationwide searches for specific books that I was having a hard time locating, and had them transported to Santo Domingo. I spent countless hours at the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (UASD) looking through their Ancient Works collection, and photocopying parts of books that were relevant to my thesis. Finally, this work would have not been complete without my days spent in *el Archivo General de la Nación* (the Dominican National Archives), where I collected articles from the newspaper *La Opinión* from October 1937 until May 1938. All of these books and primary sources came back with me in two suitcases from the Dominican Republic to New York, where I would spend my entire summer combing through them.

In addition to archival research, another strong component of this thesis has been translations. When working with primary and secondary sources in a different language, one must not only be able to read and write in both languages, but must also be able to translate full ideas and theories from one language to another. Although I grew up in a bilingual home, this project has tested and strengthened my abilities to think critically in both languages. I often found myself thinking in Spanish, due to the large number of Spanish sources that I dealt with, and having to translate and rearticulate my arguments in English.

When I went to the Dominican Republic to conduct my research last summer, I could see how the current counternarrative movement had directly affected Dominicans. Many of my family members were conflicted by the troublesome history

between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and admitted that the treatment of Haitians in the Dominican Republic needed to change for the better. On the other hand, I vividly remember being asked by two of my cousins what my research was about; once I said that I was looking at the Haitian Massacre, I was quickly told “*que no me confunda, tu no eres negra, tu no eres haitiana. Tu eres morenita, si, pero no negra.*” Translation: “Do not confuse yourself, you are not black, you are not Haitian. You are a little dark-skinned, yes, but not black.” The conflicting comments made by my family members highlight the uncertain place in which Dominican society finds itself. My cousins’ insistences that I am not black are very similar to a common phrase Dominicans used in the late nineteenth century: “*yo soy negro, pero negro blanco*”—“I am black, but black white.” The blatant contradiction in these statements expresses an obvious denial of blackness and reveals the complex construction of racial, ethnic, and national identities in the Dominican Republic.

Sociologists, historians, and anthropologists, among others, have recently become interested in the Dominican Republic, its history, and its culture. Many have concerned themselves with looking at the Trujillo regime and the ongoing situation with Haitian migrant workers. I believe that future research should also take an in-depth look at the influence of transnationalism and globalization on Dominican racial, ethnic, and national understandings. A large majority of Dominicans no longer reside in the Dominican Republic, but rather in urban centers such as New York, Boston, and Providence. Many of these individuals travel back and forth between the United States and the Dominican Republic, transporting with them not only American currency, but also American cultural values. Nowhere is this exchange more tangible

than with the younger generations, who have grown up in an environment where they listen to *merengue*, *bachata*, *salsa*, R&B, and hip-hop, all in the same neighborhood. The younger generations, in many ways, have created a more malleable definition of Dominicanness for themselves that they carry back with them to the Dominican Republic when they go there to visit.

Ultimately, the historically condoned definition of Dominicanness must be complicated, questioned, challenged, and rejected because it has succeeded in oppressing and excluding a large number of Dominicans, along with Haitians, from Dominican society. Furthermore, the perpetuation of a false understanding of racial and ethnic origin has inhibited Dominican society from exploring, and accepting, the richness of a truly mixed society. To privilege one race or ethnicity over another is problematic and irresponsible, because it discredits the influence of other races and ethnicities on a culture. Recognition of blackness, indigeneity, and whiteness is necessary because that is what Dominicans *are*: they are the result of a mixing of African, indigenous and European ethnic and cultural groups.

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