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Border at the Crossroads

For more than five hours, packed with other passengers like sardines and listening to loud music and sharing one another's sweat and body odors, I traveled in a public minibus from the capital city Santo Domingo to Pedernales, a town on the southern end of the Haitian-Dominican border. In the bus were people of all ages and colors, speaking in both the island's languages and its several regional accents. There were Dominicans traveling to the border for the first time; Dominicans who lived along the border; Haitians returning to Haiti; Haitians who lived on the Dominican side of the border; members of Dominican-Haitian families visiting relatives; Haitians with business at the Dominican consulate in Pedernales—in short, a microcosm of Dominican and Haitian relations.

During these five hours, I heard Dominicans, including soldiers with their constant racial profiling, insult and demean Haitians, all of them reproducing the official Dominican discourse of racial and ethnic exclusivity. But to my surprise I also observed intimacies among the travelers. I met an interethnic married couple living in Pedernales; heard Haitian Kreyòl spoken both by a Dominican woman with her Haitian friend and by the bus driver, in greeting a man on a motorcycle; and saw a Dominican woman watching over a Haitian woman's children while the mother bought lunch during one of the bus journey's many stops. I also witnessed Haitians defend their rights to soldiers and bus drivers, similar to what I'd observed on other trips I'd taken from the capital to different destinations across the border and back.

In chapter 1 I approached Dominican-Haitian relations from the perspective of the construction of Haitian otherness by the Dominican elite. In this chapter I document and critically analyze the historical evolution of the Haitian-Dominican geographical border, as well as the historical and ongoing creation of national subjectivities and the cultural borders separating Dominicans from Haitians. I argue that the geographic and sociological Dominican-Haitian border is today a key to the history of intersocietal and intergroup exclusion/inclusion and "difference" between two peoples.

This chapter explains that the Haitian-Dominican physical border was initially the product of the religious confrontation of Spain and France in Europe and the contest for territorial control in the Caribbean. However, the colonial power struggles devolved into an entangled mix of political and economic factors that eventually produced the border as a physical and symbolic space separating two nations in terms of race, culture, and history, as well as one marking Dominicans as superior and Haitians as inferior. I further argue that the foundation of anti-Haitianism and the creation of a psychological border germinated during Jean-Pierre Boyer's 1822–1844 unification of the island. The resentment of the colonial and postcolonial elite class arose in the midst of the economic, political, and social revolution promoted by Boyer. The elites, including slaveholders, planters, and Catholic clergy, were humiliated and expropriated, while at the same time slavery was abolished. Rage against Haitians, which began to grow among the elites, later permeated their academic work, creating rather than reconciling differences between the two nations.

The elite discourse stressed hostility, antagonism, and conflict. The Dominican state has used violence, genocide, and coercion to destroy interconnections between Dominicans and Haitians and to control the border. Still, in spite of many historical interventions and episodes, the border as social location today remains a confusing liminal space where ordinary people engage in ongoing sociocultural dynamics, creating an alternative community of cultural fusion and cooperation.[1]

I will examine the Haitian-Dominican border from this entire conglomeration of factors, including history, politics, national imaginations, and people's daily experience, all with the aim of distinguishing "official" Dominican anti-Haitian discourse from people's lived experience of the border as a social location.

The History of the Haitian-Dominican Border

The history of the geographical border dividing the island of Hispaniola begins in the seventeenth century with disputes between the Spanish and French colonizers over the status of the island. According to Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle, the rivalry between Spain and France started in Europe, where Spain was defending Roman Catholicism during the advent of Protestantism and the Enlightenment.[2] Peña Batlle further searches for the causes of Spanish colonial decline in Hispaniola and blames Spain for abandoning Tortuga Island. Yet he also praises Spain as the savior of the Catholic faith.

Over the course of more than two centuries, the two colonial powers would co-create a border on Hispaniola that separated the French and Spanish portions of the island—the former power occupying the western third and the latter the eastern two-thirds.[3] Here I borrow American geographer Richard Hartshorne's categories of "superimposed" and "natural," using "superimposed" to characterize the border demarcated in 1731 as one imposed by colonial powers on a region under its control, as well as a natural demarcation aligned with the physical features of the region, in this case two rivers.

This separation of the island involved a zigzag series of events and historical processes that included repeated conflicts between Spain and France; the abolition of slavery; the independence of Haiti and struggle by Haitians to maintain their freedom; Haitian president Jean Pierre Boyer's temporary unification of the island; the creation of an independent Dominican Republic and ensuing negrophobia advanced by the Dominican ruling class and intellectual elite; the mass murder of Haitians in 1937 in what I call the Hispaniola Holocaust; the deplorable conditions of Haitian immigrants working in the Dominican Republic; ambivalent diplomatic relations between the two countries; and the creation of distinct cultural boundaries between the two nations.

Each of the two separate states that resulted from this superimposed colonial border emerged with distinct linguistic attributes—Haiti with French and Kreyòl, the Dominican Republic with Spanish—and each with distinct historical ties to its former imperial metropole. Over time these differences have been transformed into internal island inequalities.

Today borders require strict scrutiny. In Europe, in spite of integration and borderless world,[4] the refugee crisis and aggressive migration from poor nations maintain borders as a site of vivid, living tensions, and in the New World maintaining a border such as that between the United States and Mexico would require an investment of millions of dollars in the construction of walls or fences and the employment of security forces to keep potentially thousands of immigrants from poor Latin American nations at bay. Beyond their physical reality as geographical lines dividing nation-states, borders also create symbolic divisions "invisible to the human eye" to distinguish "us" from "them."[5] For their part, the Dominican Republic and Haiti apparently maintain rigorous scrutiny of the persons and goods that cross their border. And the practices through which this border is demarcated encode not only a painful colonial past, which still haunts both nations, but also the ways in which borders are managed and perpetuated to benefit political and economic elites, to the detriment of nonelite groups.[6]

The Haitian-Dominican border is a construct of powerful forces, both foreign and national. These power relations have been essential in the construction of Dominican national subjectivity in contraposition to Haiti as the other. In this sense, through the Dominican official discourse, Haitians have become the Dominican nemesis in terms of skin color, religion, morality, and conditions of health. This racist colonial discourse officially defines Dominican-ness in terms of Hispanic roots and Catholicism in opposition to Haitian blackness and Vodou religious practices.[7]

In spite of this inherited divisiveness, I observed instances of solidarity both at the border and beyond. To make sense of this, I draw on Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of borderland, a space where vulnerable, excluded, and marginalized people exchange and blend culture, history, geography, identities, memories, and personal experiences. Borderland, or "frontier," as defined by David Chidester is a zone of contact rather than a line or a boundary.[8] Chidester envisions a frontier as a region of intercultural relations. The social location of the frontier is not a static site but rather involves constant economic and cultural movements of people, thus subverting their separate cultures, their historical locations, and their politically constituted selves. It is in this transhistorical, and sometimes incoherent and confusing, liminal space that borders are irreverently crossed and recrossed, thus diluting the meaning of "here" as a location of racial

superiority and civilization and “there” as a location of inferiority and uncivilization, and constructing “us” as a locus of rich cultural interaction. At the same time, governmental policies, ideologies, violence, and surveillance, intertwined with global processes, are constantly sabotaging these liminal transformations, creating in the mix many crossroads of contradictory encounters.

Frontier and Borderland and the Physical Border, 1697–1935

The frontier dividing the two nation-states occupying the Caribbean island of Hispaniola only emerged two centuries after the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492. It predated by more than a hundred years the birth of the Haitian state, in 1804, and by nearly a century and a half the creation of the Dominican Republic, in 1844. From that early point onward, animosities between Spain and France, and later between Haitians and Dominicans, have dominated the historical evolution and physical demarcation of this border for more than three hundred years of animosities that would become central to the eventual emergence of the “official” Dominican national discourse.

Yet also since early colonial times, and at least a century before the earliest Spanish-French engagements, there were other social agents of change and cultural production on the island that have been largely ignored by scholars. Here I call attention to the indigenous Tainos and the African maroons who throughout the sixteenth century, prior to the first French incursions in the late 1500s and long before the official creation of the French colony in 1697, escaped Spanish oppression to settle in the wilderness along and in between the three mountain ranges that run east to west through the western half of the island (see fig. 2.1).

The mountains of the island served maroons as bases from which to both fight the persecution of the Spanish and serve as refuge zones to create alternative communities free from abuse and exploitation. Archival data documents the several insurrections of Tainos and Africans in early 1500s, the constant escape of slaves, and the creation of maroon communities in the mountains.[9] These communities extended into what would become Haiti on the western side of the island and occupied a vast interior terrain that fostered greater freedom and tranquility after the Spanish began to abandon the western portion of the island in the late 1500s and early 1600s. The French, going first to Tortuga Island off the western end of Hispaniola’s northern coast, then gradually began to populate the abandoned lands, producing food and engaging in trade.

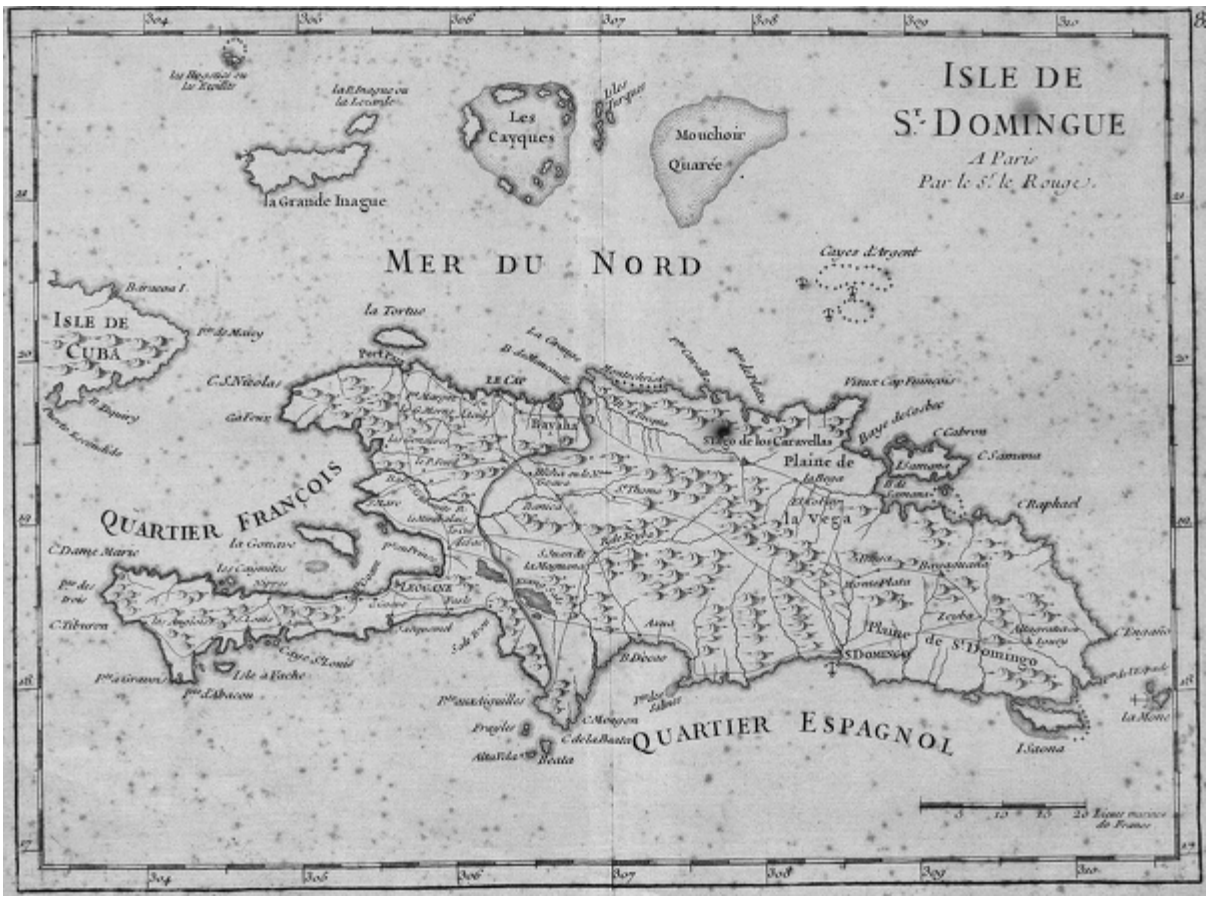

Figure 2-1. 1756 map (archival image)

Consequently, the history of the frontier and borderland reflects two dissimilar developments: on one hand, a struggle between contending colonial empires for control of the island, and on the other, a largely forgotten history of indigenous and black resistance and the creation of alternative communities in the island's interior. I see in these maroon communities the genesis of a borderland rich in resistance and self-directed cultural creativity. I will examine this maroon frontier history and its contribution to island cultures more closely in chapter 4. But, first, in this chapter I will trace the development of the imposed physical border on a prior frontier and borderlands zone and focus on its role in cultural production and interaction, in the construction of the official Dominican national imaginary and in the trajectory of Haitian-Dominican relations.

Let us examine the most basic historical contradictions that shaped and reshaped the border dividing the island. The central social imbalances in Hispaniola derived from the conflict between Spain and France in Europe and its impact on people in both sides of the island.

France and Spain were involved in a series of religious wars in Europe for centuries. In Hispaniola across the Atlantic the first consequence of the conflict was felt in the early seventeenth century, taking the form of abandonment of land in the northern and western part of the island. Admitting that illegal settlement by buccaneers on the offshore island of Tortuga constituted a threat to its colonies, the Spanish crown ordered the depopulation of the imperiled territories. In 1603 the island's governor relocated the populations of the towns of Montecristi, Puerto Plata, Yaguana, Bayaja, Neiba, and San Juan de la Maguana to an area near the colony's capital of Santo Domingo in the southeast. After this depopulation, the abandoned northern part of the island became an attractive site for incursions by French and English *filibusteros* (pirates).

By 1638 these abandoned lands had been resettled by French entrepreneurs. Then, in 1697 in Europe, nine years of the War of the League of Augsburg, between France and Spain, culminated in the Treaty of Ryswick, in which Spain recognized French control of some Caribbean territory—Tortuga and the western

side of Hispaniola. The French entrepreneurs already on the western side then inaugurated the colony of Saint-Domingue, for which they imported thousands of enslaved Africans for the development of sugar and coffee plantations, and they soon created the wealthiest colony in the Americas.

The border dividing both colonies continued to be negotiated in Europe. The first step in delimiting the border was the Inter-Colonial Protocol of 1731, which adopted the valleys of the Massacre and Pedernales rivers in the north and south, respectively, as the accepted line. (The Rio Masacre had received its macabre name earlier in 1728, when Spanish soldiers killed a number of French settlers along it.) In 1777, the Treaty of Aranjuez established an official border, beginning with the Massacre in the north and ending along the Pedernales in the south, and leaving an interior frontier zone in between. This borderland, crossed by other rivers and by mountain ranges, was left undermarcated, creating a constant source of future dispute and conflict. The frontier zone issue then disappeared for a time in 1795, when Spain ceded its eastern portion of the island to France in the Treaty of Basel, which ended the Franco-Spanish War (1793–1795).

A second threshold, linked to France, was on the horizon. The French Revolution's commitment to liberty and equality, and the subsequent abolition of slavery in all French colonies, ignited the longing for freedom in the slave and mulatto population of the French colony of Saint Domingue, which embodied an internal contradiction—between slavery and freedom—that was irreconcilable. During the years after the French Revolution and the ensuing Haitian Revolution, and through subsequent historical developments, the border was crossed and recrossed by the French and the Spanish, by slaves moving back and forth between both territories seeking refuge, and later by Haitians and Dominicans. For example, General Toussaint Louverture, in his mission to abolish slavery, crossed the border into the east to reclaim the Spanish-speaking side for France. In doing so, he encountered little opposition as Spanish troops, fighting without a strong desire to win, actually welcomed his arrival.[10] Toussaint reached the city of Santo Domingo on January 26, 1801, and after receiving honors from the colony's governor, he summoned the city's population and proclaimed a general abolition of slavery on the Spanish side of the island, which occurred, according to Emilio Cordero Michel, on January 26 or 27, 1801.[11] A new momentum now came to the fight for abolition. After the triumph of the Haitian Revolution, the border was crossed once again. In 1805 the Haitian Army, under the command of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Henri Christophe, and Alexandre Pétion, crossed to the eastern territory to stop the French, who had retreated there after their defeat in the west, from hunting black children in the border area to sell as slaves, General L. Ferrand, governor of the Spanish side, having decreed that all male and female children captured from the side of the newly created Haitian Republic must remain in the Spanish colony and work as slaves.[12] Christophe and Dessalines confronted only weak resistance in Santiago, as did Pétion in Azua, but arriving in Santo Domingo in March, they had to abandon their plan of defeating the French on land when a report arrived that a French naval squadron was near the island's coast.

Dominican history books assert that on their way back to Haiti, Christophe and Dessalines attacked and burned the towns of Monte Plata, Cotuí, and La Vega and killed four hundred in Santiago and the entire population in Moca. Charles Mackenzie, a British consul in Haiti in 1826, later wrote in his travel diary during a visit to Santiago, "He [Christophe] violated his pledge, set fire to the churches and convents, among which there was an ecclesiastical school for priests, and the best parts of the town, deliberately murdered six priests, and carried off several wretched people prisoners. His more extensive atrocities were stopped by his immediate commander."[13] It is not clear, however, how the targets were chosen: Were they killed without regard to class position and skin color? Were planters, slaveholders, and Catholic clergy targeted, those whites who in the Haitians' eyes were responsible for slavery and its human degradation? This slaughter of planters and burning of fields by the Haitian generals has been ingrained in the Dominican "official" imaginary as savage acts of Haitians against "Dominicans," although the Dominican Republic was not actually created until 1844.

While Haiti lived the aftermath of the war against France and the troubled initiation as a nation, eastern Hispaniola was involved in its own social and political predicaments. On one hand, Spanish Creoles had secured control of the eastern part of Hispaniola from France in 1809. On the other hand, some Creoles were confronted by rising and contradictory nationalist sentiments. White and rich mulatto Creoles favored, if not rule by Spain, then independence as part of "La Gran Colombia" under Simón Bolivar, although he never took them seriously. The black and mulatto masses, however, inspired by the Haitian

Revolution, favored unification with Haiti, and the island's governor, José Núñez de Cáceres, a Spanish Creole fearing mulatto and black insurrection, on December 1, 1821, proclaimed the eastern portion of Hispaniola independent, as the Independent State of Spanish Haiti. This independence, which proved only short lived, is referred to in Dominican history books as *Independenica efimera* ("the ephemeral independence").

The economic situation in the former Spanish territory was disastrous, and many, including Núñez de Cáceres, did not believe the new country could survive on its own. On February 9, 1822, the situation changed yet again when Haitian president Jean-Pierre Boyer crossed the border, marched into the city of Santo Domingo, and unified the island by annexing newly independent "Spanish Haiti" to the Haitian Republic, thus fulfilling the Haitian Revolution's ideals of human equality, the abolition of slavery, and the unity and indivisibility of the island. This unification encountered support and approval throughout most provinces of the island's eastern side, as exemplified by the letters, presented in his book by Jean Price-Mars, that document the desire of several provinces and municipalities on the eastern side of the island to be unified under the government of Boyer.[14] Moya Pons states that Núñez de Cáceres welcomed the Haitian president.[15]

After unification, Boyer abolished slavery for good in the former Spanish colony and initiated an agrarian reform that involved expropriation of land from large landowners and the Catholic Church and redistribution of land to poor and middle peasants.

Let us pause here to consider in more detail the significance of Boyer's occupation for the emergence of anti-Haitianism in the Dominican Republic. The period from 1822 to 1844 is critical in understanding the development of conservative Dominican intellectual and negrophobic thought.

In 1822 the social formation of the former Spanish colony included a large mass of blacks and poor mulattos, many of whom were still enslaved, and a small proportion of white Creoles and rich mulattos. The blacks and poor mulattos, both slave and free, had advocated protection by Haiti during the uncertain year of weak government under Núñez de Cáceres. As Moya Pons puts it, the "majority of the population was mulatto and saw with good eyes the unification with Haiti and the promise of land and abolition of slavery."[16] The other bloc, including Núñez de Cáceres and the so-called *pro-colombianos*, had lobbied for the protection of Simón Bolívar and annexation to La Gran Colombia.[17]

After Boyer's arrival in Santo Domingo, his first action was to abolish slavery and promise land to the freedmen. Boyer created a commission to conduct an inventory of all land and movable and real property abandoned by its owners. These lands passed to the state and were distributed among peasants. As a further move, the government confiscated all properties belonging to Spain and the Catholic Church; convents, land, cattle ranches, houses, and hospitals belonging to the Church thus became state property. Clerical salaries were suspended, and the government directed the clergy to support themselves on their ecclesiastical income. The Catholic Church was deprived of its role in the government, and with this action Boyer created the first lay state in the history of Latin America and the Caribbean. Boyer also expelled the clergy from the Universidad Santo Tomás de Aquino as an attempt to secularize education. Condemned to live in poverty, the Catholic hierarchy began to conspire against Boyer to return the island to Spain, but this attempt failed.

The portrayal of the period between 1822 and 1844 by several Dominican historians is tainted with patriotism and allegiances to the Catholic Church's point of view; however, reading between lines and going back to the original sources, one can obtain a better understanding of the period. Emilio Rodriguez Demorizi, representing the elite, dedicated his life to collecting historical documents, and in his *Invasiones Haitianas* one finds letters written by Boyer concerning expropriation of property and land.[18]

Boyer's policies hurt deeply the interests of white landholders and the Catholic Church, resentment intensifying among these groups, and the reaction by landowning elites and the Church to the expropriation of their lands and the abolition of slavery produced a hatred of Haitians that eventually converted into a racist negrophobia that permeated the intelligentsia. These sentiments would solidify into intellectual rhetoric and state policy during the rest of the nineteenth century, and they persist today.

Boyer came under duress when, in exchange for recognizing Haitian independence, France demanded a large monetary indemnification for the loss of its former colony. This payment created a major economic

and political crisis that led eventually, in 1842, to Boyer's ouster. On the Spanish-speaking eastern side of the island, a strong nationalist movement led by liberal Spanish Creoles, mulattos, and blacks, and known as the Trinitarios, emerged. They were supported at first by discontented former landowners and the Catholic Church, and in February 1844 these forces declared the "Dominican Republic" to be a new independent nation.

After independence, conservative interests turned against the leaders of the Trinitarios, who had few resources of their own, and many of these were exiled while others were executed. The conservatives, under the political leadership of rich mulattos and protective of Spanish Creole and Catholic Church interests, have, with few exceptions, constituted the ruling class for the duration of the Dominican Republic's history.

Between 1844 and 1929, both of the island's nations tried several times to mutually resolve the border issue, but negotiations succumbed to revolutions, coups, a short-lived annexation of the Dominican Republic by Spain, and misunderstandings about where precisely to draw the line. The most disruptive event was the 1861–1865 Spanish annexation brokered by Pedro Santana and a group of other conservative mulattos who did not believe the newly created republic could survive on its own. The annexation was reversed by an army of mostly black and mulatto Dominicans, who during 1863 to 1865 defeated the Spanish forces in a popular movement termed the War of Restoration.

In 1867 the Dominican Republic signed what was to be called the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation with Haiti, but political struggles in that nation did not permit ratification. A new treaty signed in 1874 stipulated that both countries must preserve the sovereignty and integrity of their territories and that they should work on the restitution of border commercial tax collection. An additional agreement for final demarcation of the physical border was still required, but it did not become reality as internal political struggles in both nations, and disputes over *posesiones actuales*, or the effective control of territories that each nation claimed, impeded agreement.[19]

In 1896 Pope Leo XII was asked to mediate, but papal intervention never took place. In 1912, under the auspices of US president William Howard Taft, a modus vivendi arrangement stipulated a de facto border until the dispute could be resolved.[20] Then, in 1915, the United States occupied Haiti and, a year later, the Dominican Republic. Although both nations tried to restart negotiations while under US control, successful border discussions did not occur until 1929, when President Horacio Vazquez of the Dominican Republic and President Louis Borno of Haiti signed the Border Treaty of 1929. In its first article this treaty stipulated that the line between the two nations was the Massacre River and its outlet in the Atlantic Ocean to the north and the Pedernales River and its outlet in the Caribbean Sea to the south. An additional provision called for the creation of a commission of three Dominicans and three Haitians to place markers along the border, with any disagreement to be appealed before an international commission of five members representing Haiti, the Dominican Republic, the United States, Venezuela, and Brazil. This work started immediately, but discordant views soon emerged. According to Dominican historian Franklin Franco Pichardo, the 1929 border treaty process was not successful because of struggles between Haitian and Dominican landowners and political turmoil during 1930: the fall of the Dominican Vasquez presidency and a student revolt that ousted Haitian president Borno. Economic distress resulting from the Great Depression then paralyzed further demarcation efforts.[21]

Dominican dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo came to power in 1930, and in 1933 he restarted negotiations with Haiti's president Sténio Vincent to complete the 1929 treaty agreement. Signed in 1935, it finally settled physical demarcation of the border. The agreement assigned the disputed internal territory of La Miel (more than thirty-seven thousand hectares) to Haiti, with an international highway to be constructed linking the villages of Bánica and Restauración, and it awarded the territory of Mas Gros-Mare (seven thousand hectares) to the Dominican Republic.

While the 1935 treaty established a definitive physical demarcation of the Haitian-Dominican border, a process of cultural and psychological border demarcation under Trujillo was also set in motion. The climax of this process was Trujillo's massacre of thousands of Haitians in 1937.

The Road to a Preconceived Genocide

Scholars have contextualized the Haitian massacre within a complex series of factors: labor unrest and popular outrage over high unemployment rates spawned by the Great Depression, with Haitians used as scapegoats to shift attention from underlying problems facing the Dominican Republic.[22] I do not contest this analysis, but we need to examine the Haitian genocide as well in the light of polarized notions of Dominican Hispanidad and Catholicism versus Haitian Africanity and "uncivilized" religious practices. Many have also argued that the massacre reflected Trujillo's efforts to whiten the Dominican Republic.[23] This claim has recently been reexamined by historian Richard Turits, who argues that the massacre resulted less from a desire of the Dominican government to whiten its population than from its decision to eliminate Haitians from the Dominican border zone and to establish a clear political, social, and cultural boundary between the two nations.[24]

My argument incorporates these complementary positions. On one hand, from the nineteenth century onward the Dominican intelligentsia and politicians had certainly been interested in whitening the population, and Trujillo was clearly a fierce advocate for expanding European migration to the country. On the other, the establishment of rigid national boundaries, the reinforcement of political control, and the elimination of bicultural Dominican-Haitian communities were deemed essential to national sovereignty and Dominicanization of the border, in accord with the "official" Dominican imaginary endorsed by Trujillo, of Hispanidad and Catholicism as opposed to Haitian blackness and barbarism.[25] In this sense, the process of nation-state control of the border was guided by racist ideology.

In support of my point, I will argue that the process of border negotiation, which started in 1933 and ended in 1935, was saturated with political maneuvers orchestrated by the Dominican dictator. This episode may be interpreted as part of a preconceived plan for the 1937 genocide. Before Trujillo's true agenda regarding Haiti and the border would be unveiled, his political maneuvering included manipulation of Haiti's most influential political figures and his gaining the trust of the Haitian populace.

By 1934 Trujillo had established alliances with the three major figures on Haiti's political scene: mulatto president Sténio Vincent; mulatto Elie Lescot, Haiti's foreign minister in Santo Domingo and a former member of the Haitian cabinet; and black Demostenes Calixte, commander in chief of the Haitian National Guard. Trujillo supported Vincent's desire to remain in power, largely in order to prevent the rise of the Dominican dictator's Haitian opponents. For his part, Vincent expelled eleven senators and seven representatives from Haiti's Congress, figures who both opposed his ambition to remain in office and opposed Trujillo's antidemocratic policies, and he also deported many Dominican dissident exiles who had taken refuge in Haiti.

Trujillo, who paid Lescot to keep a close eye on Vincent, at the same time was nurturing Lescot's political ambitions, eventually helping him succeed Vincent as president of Haiti. Trujillo established a similar close relationship with Calixte, who took refuge in the Dominican Republic to plot against Vincent. Throughout the border negotiations, and apparently during and after the massacre, Trujillo maintained the loyalties of each of these three Haitian political figures, and his strategy of cooperation would prove beneficial when, after the Haitian massacre, Lescott testified favorably on Trujillo's behalf before the United States Congress and the Dominican dictator received a lenient sentence. These Haitian and Dominican diplomatic moves during the time of Trujillo were based on mutual protection.

Concurrently, Trujillo made efforts to gain the support of Haitians at the popular level. While the border negotiations were in progress, Trujillo and Vincent visited each other's countries, publicly exhibiting friendship and solidarity. In October 1933, for example, both presidents met at the border town of Juana Mendez (Ounaminthe) to sign the border treaties. During this meeting, Trujillo and Vincent also signed a mutual agreement to avoid attacking each other's country.[26] In November 1934 Trujillo traveled to Haiti to continue negotiations and met President Vincent. During their meeting, Trujillo said to Vincent: "This long awaited visit, for me so longed-for, reached one of my deepest desires, treasured since the moment I shook your hand at the Masacre River." It was at the conclusion of the meeting that he ratified the ceding of the La Miel land parcel to Haiti, and it was on Vincent's February 1935 visit to the Dominican Republic that both presidents reached the final border agreement under which the Gros Mare lands were ceded to the Dominican Republic. In March 1936 Trujillo again visited Haiti and signed an amended La Miel protocol.

In his speech Trujillo said: “I am very proud to declare before my fellow Haitians, compatriots, and before the world, that a high proportion of African blood runs in my veins.”[27] He then proceeded to kiss the Haitian flag.

Although Trujillo embraced his African heritage while in Haiti, at home he also declared himself to be a pure European. He continued his “Dominicanization” of the border, which had begun immediately after he seized power in 1930. He announced a new law banning immigration of people of color, and he encouraged the immigration of white people. He also embraced Nazism and Spanish Falange ideology, at the same time gratuitously accusing Haitians of promoting crime in the border region.

The policy of Dominicanization of the border contained five interrelated aspects: economic, racial, moral, political, and military. Economic Dominicanization entailed the development of a local border agricultural economy that did not rely on Haiti and would orient border production into the general Dominican economy. Joaquín Balaguer referred to this economic refocus, based on rice, peanut, potatoes, corn, and other products, as the economic conquest of the border.[28] By 1932, there were nine new agricultural colonies near the border towns of Pedernales, Restauración, Capotillo, Hipolito Billini, Mariano Cesteros, and Trinitaria, all under military supervision.

Trujillo’s Dominicanization policy included a racial component: the new agricultural farms were owned by European immigrants whose settlement in the border towns was intended to solve the so-called “problem” of the Africanization of the country. In this sense, the policy of the Dominican state deliberately fostered “whitening” the Dominican population through the immigration of white people. The desire of the elite to promote white immigration had first been put into practice by Dominican president Horacio Vasquez in 1926, with the clear aim of reducing the number of Haitians entering the country.[29] Trujillo continued this effort, conducting negotiations with several European countries, as well as Japan. Under Trujillo, hundreds of families from Spain, Italy, Japan, and the Jewish diaspora migrated to the Dominican Republic. Ironically, Jews fleeing Nazi genocide in Europe arrived immediately after the Haitian genocide in 1937. Both authors Allan Wells and Marion Kaplan offer detailed accounts of the arrival of 750 Jewish settlers in Sosúa following the Haitian massacre of 1937.[30]

The moral component of the Dominicanization of the border consisted of a campaign to promulgate the Christian religion by constructing numerous Catholic churches in the border region and by supporting the Roman Catholic border mission of San Ignacio Loyola, which was established in 1935. The main goal of this Christian campaign was to expiate the “evil” practices of Vodou. The moral component also included the systematic construction during 1932 to 1935 of border-zone schools in which teachers were instructed to cultivate a nationalistic spirit among their students.

The political component consisted of renaming towns, villages, and other sites to commemorate both battles with Haiti during 1844, 1845, 1847, 1855, and 1856 and the names of Dominican heroes who had fought or died in these clashes. As Balaguer states, “The permanent evocation of these events, along with patriotic propaganda in the border schools, contributed without any doubt to fortify the national sentiment in the soul of new generations and to return to the Dominican people of the border towns the consciousness of their personality and of their Hispanic origin.”[31] Finally, the military component of Dominicanization was pursued through the construction of military posts along the border. These posts still exist at points along highways and roads crossing the border today.

During the first years of Trujillo’s regime, when he cultivated an embrace of Spanish Falange and Nazi ideology, members of the Falange regularly visited the Dominican Republic and established a branch in the country. The creation of the Dominico-German Scientific Institute, a student army modeled on Hitler’s Brown Shirts, and publication of Fabio A. Mota’s book, *New Ideas about the Reconstruction Work of Trujillo: Neosocialism and Dominicanism*, indicated the influence of Nazi ideas on Trujillo’s regime.[32] By 1937 Trujillo had developed strong alliances with the German Nazi government, exemplified by the gift of a copy of Adolf Hitler’s book, *Mein Kampf*, sent to Trujillo by the author. Today the Museo de las Casas Reales in Santo Domingo exhibits an iron window grate, also a present to Trujillo from Hitler, in which swastikas are visibly featured.

The ideology of Dominican racial superiority was firmly established in the thinking of Trujillo’s intelligentsia and was central to his regime’s propaganda. The underlying irrationality of racism in the island context could only be sustained by action, and this would result in violence against Haitians. Once

Dominicanization of the border was in progress, popular mobilization to move against the Haitian population within the Dominican Republic came next. There were two groups of such Haitians: the migrant workers, or *braceros*, in the country's sugar plantations, and the residents of the border zone. Trujillo implemented different policies to deal with each group.

In order to reduce the number of Haitians working in the Dominican Republic, the government reduced the bracero quotas assigned to each sugar cane plantation, and thereby created a legal basis for deportation. By 1932 Trujillo was already seeking the reduction of the braceros quota. The Immigration Law of 1932 stipulated that in order to enter the country foreigners had to pay US$6 and an additional $US6 each year to stay in the country. However, for people of African descent the initial amount was US$300 and US$100 payable annually thereafter, and failure to comply with the law was punishable by imprisonment and deportation. This law was modified only when the US State Department and sugar cane plantation owners protested to Trujillo that it harmed business.

The official justification for the deportation of Haitians now was that larger numbers than permitted under the quota system were crossing the border, including many Haitians whom the dictator Fulgencio Batista had deported from Cuba. The Immigration Law of 1937 reduced to 40 percent the proportion of Haitian workers permitted to be employed on Dominican sugar cane plantations. The law also required all foreigners to register at their consulates within six months or face deportation, and when thousands of Haitians failed to register, they were subsequently deported.

To deal with the Haitians residing in the border towns, Trujillo spent the month of August 1937 traveling personally on horseback over a considerable portion of the border area. He inspected the construction of the international highway, witnessed the presence of large number of Haitians living in Dominican territory, and listened to complaints from peasants about Haitians stealing cattle, occupying land, and abusing Dominicans.

Trujillo now had his excuse to move against the border zone Haitians. The official argument was that deportation measures had failed and that repatriated Haitians had found ways to return to the Dominican Republic. In reality, Haitians in the border areas were not primarily recent immigrants—most of the Haitian families there had lived in the frontier region for many years[33]—and the letters Trujillo brandished denouncing Haitians and complaining about robberies committed by them were forged.[34] Nonetheless, massive "violations" of the border by Haitians, and their supposed ongoing criminal activity, became justifications for mass murder.

Hispaniola's Holocaust

The slaughter of Haitians—also known as El Corte (the cutting), La Masacre (the massacre), or Operación Perejil (operation parsley)—commenced on September 28, 1937, and continued for four days. According to one contemporaneous eyewitness account, the soldiers tied the hands of the Haitians behinds their backs and made them walk toward the pier, then hit them with the back of their rifles or stabbed them. The bodies fell into the sea, where most were eaten by sharks. Those who were not eaten by the sharks swam back to the beach, where they could be seen in great numbers. There was a case of torture—a Haitian boy taken to Montecristi, buried alive, and then killed with machetes.[35]

The events have been dramatically reconstructed by several Dominican and Haitian poets and novelists. At one extreme, the Dominican Freddy Prestol Castillo wrote dismissively that the perpetrators were "drunken soldiers" who could not have committed these crimes if sober. In contrast, the Haitian Jacques Stephen Alexis describes how his main character Hilarion is hit by a bullet and then lies dying in the sun as horrors occur around him. Edwige Danticat, also Haitian, recounts that "groups of Haitians were killed in the night because they could not manage to trill their 'r' and utter a throaty 'j' to ask for parsley, to say 'perejil.'"[36]

The actual number of Haitians killed has never been established.[37] Some place it as low as twelve thousand and others as high as twenty-five thousand. The slaughter has produced many interpretations, and most of them place blame on Trujillo. Yet the Haitian genocide was not the act of an isolated madman. It was also the culmination of an anti-Haitian ideological campaign that was advanced by Dominican

intellectuals for nearly a century, a development of negrophobic beliefs that "otherized" Haitians and led to the 1937 massacre. As the Massacre River reddened with Haitian blood, the question of the physical border was provided a decisive resolution. Moreover, what had been a longstanding frontier zone, a social location of cultural conjunction and intimacy, was violently attacked.[38] Consolidation of the Dominican nation-state's racist ideology would emerge from the event, and its sharply demarcated psychological and cultural borders have prevailed since.

Otherization of Haitians: The Cultural, Ideological, and Symbolic Border

> "Dominicans are constitutionally whites . . . and not like Haitians [from a country] where men eat people, speak patois, and the *Luas* abound."
>
> —Francisco E. Moscoso Puello, *Cartas a Evelina* (my translation)

After the massacre, the process of institutionalizing anti-Haitianism accelerated. The foremost exponents of Trujillo's anti-Haitianism were the writers and public figures Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle and Joaquin Balaguer, who championed the construction of a psychological border dividing the two nations. Both authors dedicated most of their intellectual work to strengthening Dominicanness, emphasizing the Hispanic attributes of light skin color, Roman Catholicism, European images of female pulchritude, devotion to the Spanish language, and an unquestioned fervor toward the "motherland" of Spain. Both authors' conclusions might be seen as comical at best had their elaborate set of racist beliefs not become the justification for state policies. Based on a distorted account of the island's history, as we saw in chapter 1 and will examine further in chapters to come, these beliefs permeated the entire fabric of Dominican society, with schools, the Church, and mass media the most important vehicles of their propagation. This institutionalized ideology exemplified what Frantz Fanon called the "psychopathology of colonization." Simply stated, Dominicans in general are socialized as subjugated beings who wear white masks to hide their negritude, complex feelings of inferiority, and deep self-shame.[39]

The official construction of the Dominican identity has also created and intensified complex symbolic borders within the Dominican populace. Skin color differences create barriers among Dominicans themselves, at the same time that they produce a morbid component in their relations with their mostly African-descended island neighbors. Experts commissioned by the United Nations concluded in 2007 that in the Dominican Republic there remains a "profound" and "entrenched" problem of racism and discrimination against Haitians, Dominicans of Haitian descent, and blacks in general.[40]

The wounds of the border massacre more than seventy years ago have been constantly reopened, with massive deportations, violations of human and labor rights, and even killings of Haitians. According to official statistics, among the country's population of 10 million, an estimated 800,000 Haitians live in the Dominican Republic, including 280,000 Dominican-born individuals of Haitian descent. Harsh economic conditions, political instability in Haiti, and the 2010 earthquake have precipitated massive migration of Haitians to the Dominican Republic in search of a better life. This Haitian presence creates tensions in a country with 40 percent of its population living in poverty. In the midst of these tensions, Haitians for decades have been randomly selected for expulsion.

While many contend that a nation-state has the right to deport undocumented foreigners, the pressing current issue is not the right to repatriate but how these repatriations occur. According to various international and UN bodies, these expulsions violate the American Convention on Human Rights, the Protocol of Understanding on the Mechanism of Repatriation, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 13, and the Covenant on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Articles 4(a), 5(b), 5(d), and 6.[41] These conventions, protocols, and covenants prohibit the collective expulsion of foreign nationals, as well as the expulsion of legal residents who are denied the opportunity to challenge their expulsion and to have their case reviewed by legitimate authorities. Deportations are often accompanied by extraordinary human rights violations, and in 2003 the Inter-American Court determined that the Dominican Republic has used excessive force against Haitian migrants.[42]

Since 2004 the Dominican state has tried to build a legal foundation to deny citizenship to children of

Haitian parentage born in the country. The government of Leonel Fernández rewrote migration laws in 2004, and in 2007 it issued directives to expand this legal groundwork. The country's constitution was amended in 2010 to provide that children born in the Dominican Republic have automatic citizenship only if at least one parent is a legal resident. The situation for Dominicans of Haitian ancestry was further undermined on September 23, 2013, by the Dominican Constitutional Tribunal's ruling, 168–13, which negated the Dominican nationality of hundreds of thousands of Dominicans with Haitian ancestry. This ruling stated that all children of undocumented Haitians parents born since 1929, and their descendants, would be stripped of Dominican citizenship.[43]

Despite the record of hatred and abuse of Haitians that led to the recent rulings, right-wing leaders of the Dominican Republic and Haiti historically have often been allies. As noted, in the early 1930s the dictators Trujillo and Vincent established an alliance to protect their respective territories from dissidents. In 1963 a pro-Trujillo Dominican cabal and Haitian dictator François Duvalier together staged an occupation by the Haitian army of the Dominican Consulate in Port-au-Prince, meant to destabilize the Dominican government of left-wing president Juan Bosch. His successor, the conservative Joaquín Balaguer, was intimate friends with both Duvalier and his son Jean-Claude Duvalier, who took power after the death of his father. When the younger Duvalier was overthrown in 1986, and the left-leaning Jean-Bertrand Aristide won election, Balaguer responded by deporting thousands of Haitians and was widely presumed to be collaborating with Haitian strongman Raoul Cedras in the coup that ousted Aristide. Later, after Cedras was himself overthrown, he sought refuge in the Dominican Republic.

In sum, although physical, cultural, political, and symbolic borders divide the Dominican Republic and Haiti, dictators and antidemocratic forces have cooperated across it. We now turn to far less exalted or powerful voices that, within this separation and turmoil, reflect the "us" of cultures intersecting or fusing at the borderland crossroads.

Breaking Cultural Boundaries: The New Frontier

Traveling in buses with Dominicans and Haitians in both directions between Santo Domingo and the Haitian-Dominican border, I witnessed two different narratives performed. One is the official story of elite *dominicanidad* and hatred of Haiti "otherness." The other is a story of the borderland that has evolved since colonial times to the present. My ethnography testifies to this twofold reality.

On one occasion I was on a bus that left Pedernales at 8:00 A.M. All seats were occupied. The passengers exhibited all shades of colorfulness, from very black to very light. I could not distinguish by sight who was Dominican or Haitian. Only when instead of proceeding straight ahead, the bus turned and entered the town's army headquarters entrance and stopped, was it Haitians alone who were asked to step down. They were told: *Morenos afuera con pasaportes en mano* ["Black people come out with passports in hand"]. More than fifteen women and men left through the back of the bus and were taken inside a building, where they stayed for about half an hour. Afterward they returned one by one and entered the bus, retaking their seats silently. When all were inside, the bus took off.

The breathtaking beauty of the landscape along the Pedernales to Barahona Road could not be easily enjoyed. The bus was stopped every ten or fifteen minutes by army sergeants, who were as black as most Haitians, demanding that the *morenos* identify themselves and show their passports. The American and Peruvian foreigners on the bus were not molested. The bus was stopped eleven different times.

This racial profiling climaxed when a black Dominican sergeant forced a black man, in the middle of the bus, who refused to show his passport to speak in order to determine his nationality. This recalled to me how dark-skinned people were forced to pronounce *perejil* to determine their nationality during the 1937 genocide. People in the bus told the sergeant that if he didn't want to show his passport, it was because he was Dominican. The sergeant insisted, but the man remained silent until the sergeant at last permitted the driver to continue.

I had noticed the driver and his assistant giving money to the soldiers. Later I found out that Haitian passengers are extorted monetarily by both bus drivers and soldiers. Even before they could get into the bus they had to give the driver money in addition to the bus fare.

On another occasion, when I was traveling with my son, Miguel, and my friend Mireya, the minibus we were in arrived at Jimaní, close to the border, around five in the afternoon. The three of us and the other thirty-five people, all wet with perspiration, descended from the bus with suitcases, boxes, and bags of groceries. Outside we found the temperature to be not less than ninety degrees. More than a dozen motorcycle-taxi drivers were there, offering their services to the arriving passengers. I wanted to reach the border before dark, so we took two motorcycles, one for Miguel and me and another for Mireya. I pressed against the back of the driver to leave space for Miguel to sit and we drove for about ten minutes, until we reached the Dominican post at the border. The post consisted of a long, high wire fence with an entrance in the middle, two large Dominican flags on each side, an army headquarters building to the left, and another small building to the right. To the right of the border post was Lake Azuey, with mountains behind it; due to flooding, it now extends across the Dominican side of border.

Two soldiers were posted at each side of the entrance, clearing smaller trucks, SUVs arriving in both directions, and long-haul trailers with food, water, medicine, and clothing to be taken to Port au Prince for the earthquake victims. As each vehicle was inspected, money was passed to the soldiers, and in an undisguised, open manner. The border crossing point for people on foot was also casual and fluid. A young Haitian young woman had brought food for one of the soldiers, and a group of Haitians talked laughingly with three Dominican men outside the small building. People interacted naturally, with familiarity and intimacy.

After crossing through the Dominican border post, our motorcycle-taxis took us to the Jimaní Hotel, a 1950s-style one-story building dating to the time of the dictator Trujillo, our overnight stop on the way to back to Santo Domingo. Upon our arrival, I spoke a little with our motorcycle-taxi drivers. One was Dominican and the other was Haitian. Both were bilingual in Spanish and Kreyòl and had girlfriends of both nationalities. When I asked the Dominican driver about the difference between Haitians and Dominicans, he said simply that Haitians were French and we are Spanish. And in speaking to the manager of the hotel, a slim Dominican woman who seemed to play every staff role in the hotel except that of chef, I discovered that she was fully bilingual and was married to a Haitian man.

On another day, the bus I was on left Santo Domingo late in the morning for the border town Elias Piña. The bus was completely full. I sat on the left side of a row of five seats—two fixed seats on each side of the bus and one movable, improvised seat in the center beside a woman who looked Haitian to me. A man and a woman with a child were on my other side. In the row ahead were two Dominican men and a couple with their ten- or eleven-year-old daughter. In the row behind me were five Dominican men. Altogether there were five fixed rows, plus two additional rows behind the driver's seat, and a seat for two passengers next to the driver. The heat and sweat and the loud merengue and bachata music were equally uncomfortable to me and my travel companions.

The bus stopped first in Baní, a southern city about forty miles from Santo Domingo, the bus driver announcing loudly: "You have fifteen minutes to eat and go to the bathroom." Outside I talked with the couple sitting on the right side of my row. She was Dominican and he was Haitian. Both spoke Spanish with me and introduced me to their daughter, Ezili. "Beautiful name," I said, then asked them, "Why Ezili?" They looked at each other and smiled but gave no answer. I did not persist.

Ezili is an *Iwa* (mystery) in the Dominican Republic and can represent love, lust, and motherhood, for which of these attributes she takes different names: Ezili Dantò, Ezili Freda, Ezili-je-wouj, or Marinè. In all of her manifestations, Ezili is considered one of most powerful and arbitrary in Vodou. Ezili, known on the Dominican side of the island as Anaisa, is identified with the Catholic Saint Clara.

The parents of the girl Ezili lived in Elias Piña and offered to help me find a place to stay. While walking back to the bus, I overheard them talking to each other in Kreyòl.

As we continued our journey, I initiated a conversation with the woman next to me. She told me she was Dominican, although she had a pronounced Kreyòl accent. She had been born on El Central Barahona, which was one of the most important sugar cane plantations in the Dominican Republic and located near the southern city of Barahona. The *bateys*, the housing for the Haitian workers, of El Central Barahona were considered to be among the most segregated in the nation. Residents of these bateys had a Haitian priest, but no school and very little interaction with the outside world. The woman, born to Haitian parents, had moved to Elias Piña after marrying a Dominican man who sold used clothing in that town's market.

They had four children, three boys and one girl, all between the ages of nine and fourteen. We kept talking for a while about the hot weather and other inconsequential matters.

We had already passed the city of San Juan de la Maguana when the man in front of me started to talk to the men behind my row, saying that he was very tired. The man behind me answered, "Don't worry. As soon as we get there, we buy a liter of Brugal [a popular Dominican rum considered by some to be an aphrodisiac] and get a Haitian girl of eight cylinders—with tight muscles, big breasts and butt—and we forget about tiredness." The man in front of me replied, "If it is a Haitian, we must drink *kleren* [a strong illegal alcoholic beverage made from sugarcane and known to be produced at the border]. And you know what I would do with that Haitian girl—I would rip her clothes off, turn her upside down, submerge her in a tank of water, and tie her and. . . ."

"Tie her and . . ." were the last words he uttered. The man in my row interrupted him, asking him to show respect. They then began arguing, the second man accusing the first of being a rapist, to which the first replied, "It's none of your business." Finally the driver's assistant standing next to the door of the bus asked everybody to shut up. The men talking about drinking and finding a Haitian girl were construction workers, hired to repair the sewage system in Elias Piña. All lived in Santo Domingo and had never been in the border zone before.

This conversation made me wonder about sexual violence against Haitian women during the genocide and after. I lack the evidence to demonstrate the number of women raped during the days of the genocide, but what I can demonstrate is that the anti-Haitian policies are highly gendered. The "maternal labor" of Haitian women—that is, as mothers producing more Haitians—is the major danger in the reproduction of more Haitians in the Dominican Republic. Headlines for newspaper articles frequently read "Haitian Women Cross Border to Give Birth." The case *Dilcia Yean and Violeta Bosico v. the Dominican Republic*, taken before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, is illustrative. Violeta Bosico and Dilcia Yean were two girls born in the Dominican Republic of Haitian mothers whose birth certificates were denied by local Dominican officials in 1997. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights found in 2005 that theirs was a case of racial discrimination. Women have also being affected by anti-Haitian violence. From the testimonies of survivors, Catholic father Emile Robert collected a list of 2,130 names of dead Haitians. The majority of dead people were wives, mothers-in-law, sisters, nieces, friends, domestic servants of the attested. I counted the number of women in a summary of Father Robert's list published by Jose Israel Cuello, and in the 109 testimonies 79 women were mentioned as murdered by the Trujillo's soldiers.[44]

Border Crossings

Fortunately, the racist colonial construction of Dominican identity continues to be contested in many disparate arenas, both in the Dominican Republic and Haiti and in their diaspora communities. Although this "official" ideology has prevailed in terms of Dominican state policies toward Haitians, new critical voices and actors have emerged to challenge many of these notions.

Dominican civil society, represented in organizations such as the Movimiento de Mujeres Dominico-Haitiana (Movement of Dominican-Haitian Women), has taken the plight of Haitian women and their Dominican-born children to international forums to demand respect for universal human rights. The work of the late Sonia Pierre, founder of this organization, has had a tremendous international impact. Dominican organizations joined efforts with her to stop the violations of human rights; feminists worked hand in hand with her, denouncing discrimination and protecting her when the government of Leonel Fernández attempted to strip her of Dominican citizenship. The Centro de Investigación y Acción Femenina (Feminist Research and Action Center) and the Colectivo Mujer y Salud (Women's Health Collective) have been active throughout the struggles of Sonia. Other institutions, such as Centro Bonó and Solidaridad Fronteriza (Border Solidarity), have also worked to ensure respect for Haitians as fellow human beings.

Dominicans living outside of the country have played an important role in advancing new ideas and perspectives on the question of Dominican-Haitian interrelations. From a scholarly perspective, Silvio Torres-Saillant, for example, offers searching analyses of anti-Haitianism and Dominican negrophobia.[45]

The fictional work of Junot Díaz, as in his novel *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), envisions Dominican-Haitian relations through the metaphor of *el cañaveral* (the sugar cane field), and engages both Dominican and Haitian calamities. Today Dominican intellectuals, activists, artists, and others convey in their writings about identity that they are breaking new paths in the creation of a new frontier, one of mutual inclusion.

Although Dominicans at the popular level have been socialized within a negrophobic "official" ideology, it is undeniable that Dominicans and Haitians can and do cross the island's cultural and language boundaries. For example, in the summer of 2007 I visited the Haitian-Dominican market in Dajabón. On that occasion, this location between Dajabón, Dominican Republic, and Juana Mendez (or Ounaminthe), Haiti, was crowded with people, chickens in their arms, blocks of ice in front of them, and stocks of eggplants, onions, cucumbers, corn, perfumes, clothes, and cosmetics to be sold. As people interacted in the market, I asked myself: What is today's ongoing imaginary of the Massacre River separating the two cities, and forming the boundary that separates the two countries? Is it remembered as red with blood or that the wounds are healed, as the characters in Haitian novelist Edwige Danticat's *Farming of Bones* experienced it?

No signs of hatred or disdain were evident on the marketgoers' faces. The Dajabón market, open twice a week for Haitians to enter the Dominican Republic for commercial exchange, is just that, a site of commercial exchange between the two peoples. Moreover, during visits to the border towns of Elias Piña and Bánica, I observed a significant number of intermarriages and much bilingualism and codeswitching between the island's two languages.

This evidence of interaction suggests a lively social space in which the two nationally differentiated groups interact and blend their cultures in many ways. The social spaces of the border, such as at Dajabón, exist at the "conjuncture of two cultures" that "fuse" and "blend."[46] If in the Dominican capital city Haitians are despised, and at the border crossing points the military presence still represents a bloody past of mass murder and ongoing coercion, in Dajabón and in other parts of the country a fusion of languages, commercial exchange, intermarriage, music, everyday cooperation, and religious syncretism challenges the "othering" efforts of Dominican elites.

Deep questions remain. How does the Dominican-Haitian borderland operate as part of the ongoing social, cultural, and political negotiation of meaning? How does the geographic border continue to represent "us" and "them," "here" and "there"? In terms of Gloria Anzaldúa's notion of reimagining culture—of living without frontiers and being at crossroads—contemporary authors and activists are constructing the new frontier, as also are Dominicans and Haitians as they interact in daily life. All represent a reality of individuals of differing languages and ethnicity together creating "intimacy."

3

The Creolization of Race

The entrance to the Museo del Hombre Dominicano contains three large statues of figures from the sixteenth century: Enriquillo, the Taino Indian who revolted against the Spanish colonizers; Fray Bartolome de Las Casas, the Roman Catholic priest who defended the indigenous people against Spanish abuses; and Sebastian Lemba, the enslaved African who declared war against the colonial regime. These three symbolize Dominican society in embryo, with the presence of Taino, Spaniard, and African as cultural and racial starting points. The figure of de Las Casas stands between those of Enriquillo and Lemba: is this intended to symbolize Spain as the central or most important element of the set? And do the open arms of Lemba signify the promise of freedom for the enslaved?

When I entered the building, I walked through a beautiful exhibition of carnival dresses and masks representing each region of the country. While it seemed to me that these colorful gowns had to be linked to Africa, none of the materials explaining the exhibit indicated that this was so. Since the creation of the museum in 1978, it is only the former director, Carlos Andújar Persinal, an anthropologist, who has any track record of research on or publications about the African element within the Dominican Republic's syncretic culture.[1] Nowhere in the museum did I find acknowledgment of the clamor for freedom symbolized by Lemba's open arms. The Museo del Hombre Dominicano is, like most of the country's historical markers and texts, a reflection of the official Dominican imaginary. The carnival exhibition and Lemba's open arms are there perhaps only to confuse critics.

Yes, with Lemba Africa is present in the museum, but the center is Spain, and the historical substrate is Taino, whose heritage is celebrated on the museum's third floor. The museum recalls what Manuel de Jesús Galván extolled in his 1882 novel *Enriquillo*: the island's foundational Indo-Hispanic race. In analyzing the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, sociologist Ginetta Candelario comes to the following conclusion: "Through its technologies—its architecture, display strategies, and 'narrative machinery'—the Museo del Hombre Dominicano not only links past to present in a seamlessly progressive continuum from pre-Columbian to Dominican, but also promotes a 'simultaneously bodily and mental' subjectivity that conceptualizes Dominican identity as naturally indigenous and historically Hispanic."[2] Indeed, the museum substantiates what dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo affirmed: "The Negro in the Dominican Republic . . . has been absorbed completely, has given up any African atavism and has adjusted to the system of Dominican culture which has deep Spanish roots."[3]

The museum's symbolism, Trujillo's pronouncement, and the official imaginary are all interlocked in denial of the African component in the Dominican Republic's racial and cultural amalgam. A simple look at the faces of people working in the museum, however, or at the photographs of present and former directors, or at the daily visitors, does not corroborate the idea of an Indo-Hispanic race. What skin color I could observe was not that of Indo-Hispanics—as, say, in Mexico or Peru—but a wide range from the darkest black to the lightest mulatto.

Undeniably, Dominican heritage is a hybrid built upon early genetic and cultural fusion of Spaniards, Tainos, and blacks. This mixing of races and ethnic groups was further complicated by the arrival of other ethnic and racial groups during the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, adding new elements to the Dominican racial mosaic: Haitians during the unification of the island in 1822 and in contemporary migration from Haiti to the Dominican Republic; African Americans in the nineteenth century; black people from the English-speaking Caribbean, known as Cocolos, in the late nineteenth century; and Arabs, Jews, Europeans, Chinese, and Japanese in the twentieth century. All became integral parts in the racial formation of the Dominican Republic.

The genetic mingling of these groups is represented in the racial rainbow of Dominican society today. However, the problem is the official Dominican imaginary: it still informs us that the racial origin and subsequent homogenization of the people is Indo-Hispanic, and in refuting it in this chapter I hasten to say