

# Hispaniola Needs New Narratives

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Currently, the Dominican Republic is the single largest case of statelessness in Latin America and the Caribbean and is home to a significant number of stateless and undocumented people, mainly of Haitian descent. September 2023, in fact, marks ten years since the Constitutional Court's ruling of September 2013, known as "La Sentencia," which ordered that all birth registries from 1929 should be audited for people who had been (allegedly) wrongly registered as Dominican citizens. According to an October 2022 report based on official figures, the people still affected by this ruling are 137,794.<sup>1</sup> "La Sentencia," which established that people born in the Dominican Republic from foreign parents without a regular migration status never had the right to Dominican nationality, immediately caused outrage from human rights defenders, both nationally and internationally. The Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR), for example, concluded that this arbitrarily deprived thousands of people of their nationality, in violation of their right to a juridical personality and affected in a disproportionate manner those of Haitian descent who are also people of African descent and often identified on the basis of colour, a fact that constitutes a violation of the right to equality and non-discrimination.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of widespread condemnation, in 2014, the Dominican Congress passed Naturalisation Law-169-14. This Law generated two groups: those who had previously been in possession of birth certificates and could reapply for

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<sup>1</sup> 'Participación Ciudadana', *Informe Preliminar de la Investigación sobre la Implementación de la Ley. No.169-14*, Santo Domingo, 2022 <https://pciudadana.org/publicaciones/> [accessed 7/9/2023]

<sup>2</sup> 'IACHR Expresses Deep Concerned Over Ruling by the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic', 8 October 2013, *Organization of American States (OAS)* - press release, [https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media\\_center/preleases/2013/073.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/preleases/2013/073.asp) [accessed 5/9/2023].

Dominican nationality (GROUP A); and those who never had a birth certificate but with the right to Dominican nationality under the Constitution when they were born. Those in this latter group were required to first declare themselves as foreigners and then follow a path to naturalisation (GROUP B). To date, nobody in this second group has obtained Dominican nationality and, during and after the COVID-19 outbreak, the prolonged suspension of certain registration procedures caused further delays in making significant progress towards a solution for both groups.<sup>3</sup>

Arguably, “La Sentencia” is better understood in the context of a series of laws and administrative procedures which, for many years, were aimed at affecting the status of Dominican-born children of Haitian parents and at removing Dominican nationality from Dominican citizens of Haitian ancestry who had previously been granted Dominican identity documents. For instance, despite the fact that until 2010 *jus soli* was supposed to grant birthright citizenship to those who were born in the Dominican Republic, birth certificates were often arbitrarily refused to children whose parents were of Haitian descent by the Dominican *Junta Central Electoral* (“Central Electoral Committee”) which was in charge of registering them. Such refusals effectively deprived of their citizenship a significant number of children who were legally entitled to it, concomitantly denying them name, nationality, certain access to health care and education, and seriously hampered their ability to find a “formal” job, secure a pension fund, get married, open bank accounts, purchase a house, obtain an inheritance. Most importantly, the absence of birth certificates made it impossible for parents to register one’s children’s births: as a result, these arbitrary denials have had the effect of perpetuating statelessness from one generation to the next. The effect of this has not been ethnically cleansing

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<sup>3</sup> ‘A nueve años de la Sentencia TC 168-13: Miles de dominicanos y dominicanas seguimos luchando por nuestra nacionalidad,’ 23 September 2022, *Dominican@s por Derecho* <https://dominicanosxderecho.wordpress.com/2022/09/23/a-nueve-anos-de-la-sentencia-tc-168-13-miles-de-dominicanos-y-dominicanas-seguimos-luchando-por-nuestra-acionalidad/> [accessed 5/9/2023].

Haitian descendants from the Dominican Republic so much as confining them within the country as a stateless underclass of people.<sup>4</sup>

However, on the tenth anniversary of the 2013 ruling, the roughly 137,000 people currently left stateless are also at risk of being expelled from their own country to Haiti, a country that many of them have never seen, where they may have no family or acquaintances and whose official languages (French and Kreyol) they may not speak. Furthermore, as part of the mandate of “La Sentencia,” in November 2013, the Dominican Republic announced a national plan (*Plan Nacional de Regularización de Extranjeros*) aimed at regularizing the status of long-term migrants with irregular status. Despite preliminarily regularizing over 200,000 Haitian migrants, the Plan is currently stalled while an audit, announced in late 2021, is supposedly taking place, leaving “out of status” many who applied bona fide for the Plan. With the regularisation plan in limbo, those rendered stateless by “La Sentencia” may also be confused with out of status Haitian migrants who may be liable to be deported to Haiti.

Deportations to Haiti are particularly objectionable given that the situation has been increasingly and alarmingly complex and volatile due to “unnatural” disasters caused by “the coloniality of climate”<sup>5</sup> and political instability. The situation has taken a turn for the worse in Haiti since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in mid-2021, an earthquake in the south of the country, a devastating tropical storm that same year, a new outbreak of cholera, and the uncontrolled violence of the gangs.

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<sup>4</sup> Samuel Martínez, ‘The Racialized Non-Being of Non-Citizens: Slaves, Migrants and the Stateless’, *Statelessness and Citizenship Review*, 5.1 (2023) <https://statelessnessandcitizenshipreview.com/index.php/journal> [accessed 5/9/2023].

<sup>5</sup> In Janet Abramowitz’s words, an “unnatural” disaster is a disaster made much more severe owing to human action (Janet N. Abramowitz, *Unnatural Disasters*, Worldwatch Paper 158, Worldwatch Institute, Washington 2001) and, more specifically, Mimi Sheller has pointed out that Caribbean survival under ever-worsening environmental and political conditions demands radical alternatives to the pervasive neocolonialism, racial capitalism, and US military domination that have perpetuated what she calls the “coloniality of climate.” Sheller insists that alternative projects for Haitian reconstruction, social justice, and climate resilience—and the sustainability of the entire region—must be grounded in radical Caribbean intellectual traditions that call for deeper transformations of transnational economies, ecologies, and human relations writ large. Mimi Sheller, *Island Futures: Caribbean Survival in the Anthropocene*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2020.

The Dominican Republic has made a vocal stance as to the need for the international community to be more supportive than hitherto towards a solution to the crisis in Haiti. At the same time, it refuses to see the “mote in its own eye”: the prohibition for foreigners -read Haitians-- to enter the Dominican Republic if they are more than six months pregnant, for instance, reveals how, at this moment of crisis, the Dominican Republic is not showing good neighbourliness towards Haitians who might be looking for medical attention they are not able to find in their own country. Mass deportations of out of status migrant workers across the border to Haiti, moreover, are putting Ariel Henry’s de facto Government under even more pressure, especially considering the internal problems already outlined above. An UN expert visitor to Haiti, William O’Neill, has underscored once more this reality in June 2023, when he declared:

Some repatriation methods used do not comply with human rights standards and violate bilateral migration agreements. I urge the authorities of the Dominican Republic to respect their commitments in this regard and reiterate the call on all countries in the region to put an end to the mass deportations of Haitian migrants, in particular unaccompanied minors.<sup>6</sup>

Given the volume of the deportations, the demographic they target, and the way they are carried out, it is unsurprising that, when, in June 2022, the Dominican Republic presented its candidacy to occupy a seat on the UN Council of Human Rights (2024-2026), Dominican civil society responded with incredulousness. The fact that this candidacy was presented despite well documented violations of human rights in the country and that the Dominican

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Haiti UN Expert William O’Neill Concludes Official Visit’, 28 June 2023, *United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner* – press release, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2023/06/haiti-un-expert-william-oneill-concludes-official-visit> [accessed 5/9/2023].

Republic is aspiring to a seat on the UN Security Council brings to the fore the discrepancy between reality and narratives.<sup>7</sup>

If one looks at the circulation and dissemination of sanctioned narratives about Haiti, Haitian migrants and Dominicans of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic, the feeling of being on a loop is inescapable. Over the centuries, conservative pronouncements against Haitians and Haitian Dominicans have changed very little in nature in their encouragement of a national identification which uses Haiti as its negative foil. Based on a set of dichotomies which covers almost every aspect of life on Hispaniola, these discourses depict a simplified and artificial picture of the island which highlights differences, posits them as incompatible traits, and denies the existence of cultural permeability: Haitians speak Creole, Dominicans speak Spanish; Haitians practise Vodou, Dominicans are Catholics; Haitians are black, Dominicans of mixed race or white; Haitian culture and society are an extension of Africa, the Dominican Republic has “pure” Spanish origins. As Pedro San Miguel has succinctly put it, according to these discourses, “the definition of ‘Dominican’ [is simply] ‘not Haitian.’”<sup>8</sup> The pervasive influence of divisive narratives in the Dominican Republic is better understood if one considers that, despite the fact that extreme conservatives are a minority in the Dominican Republic, the majority of Dominican newspapers tend to assume and defend the conservative positions where anti-migrant discourse is the norm and

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<sup>7</sup> Kuwait and the Dominican Republic declined to participate in the “pledging event” of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in New York on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023. It is where the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) and Amnesty International (AI), with the aid of the missions of South Africa and Belgium, coordinate questions to those states looking for seats on the Human Rights Council of the UN. <https://ishr.ch/latest-updates/hrc-elections-2023-states-pledge-to-keep-council-relevant-inclusive-and-able-to-respond-to-crises/> [accessed 14/09/2023]. Although the Dominican Republic did not attend the pledges meeting, the following question is one they would have faced: To the **Dominican Republic**: what measures are you contemplating to significantly improve the quality of life and working conditions of Haitians and people of Haitian descent who work in sugar cane fields? What actions will you promote in this area through the Council? (Dominicans for Justice and Peace).

<sup>8</sup> Pedro Luis San Miguel, *The Imagined Island: History, Identity and Utopia in Hispaniola*, trans. J. Ramírez [1997], Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005, p. 39.

Dominicans of Haitian ancestry may be erroneously conflated with Haitian migrants.

Mindful of the importance of narratives, therefore, we take our cue from the anthropologist, performance writer and theorist Gina Athena Ulysse who, in 2015, after the devastating earthquake which hit Port au Prince in January 2010, has rightly insisted that we need new narratives in, for, and about Haiti to inform activism, policy, and the ability to imagine a different future and different ways in which the world can relate to Haiti and its people.<sup>9</sup> Ulysse is clearly right about Haiti but, arguably, the island of Hispaniola *as a whole* needs new narratives, in particular new narratives challenging well established and divisive discourses and stereotypes which support hardline policies and justify denationalising practices mobilised to manage migration in the absence of adequate controls at the point of entry or lack of channels by which migrants may maintain a positive status.

The “cost” generated by Haitian or Haitian descended students who study in public education, for example, has been amply disseminated in the media. In the Dominican Republic, legal documentation barriers often affect the Haitian population’s ability to access the educational system. This problem could be replicated or even exacerbated among Haitians displaced by the vagaries of the climate crisis, especially those who enter the country irregularly. Lack of access to legal documentation has also impacted Dominicans of Haitian descent, who have seen their access and progress in the educational system affected by discriminatory policies and the arbitrary application of laws.<sup>10</sup> In a recent study, instead, Allison Petrozziello has highlighted the nefarious effects of the media

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<sup>9</sup> Gina Athena Ulysse, *Why Haiti Needs New Narratives: A Post-Quake Chronicle*, Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Left Behind: How Statelessness in the Dominican Republic Limits Children’s Access to Education’, *Georgetown Law Human Rights Institute Fact-Finding Project*, <https://www.right-to-education.org/resource/left-behind-how-statelessness-dominican-republic-limits-childrens-access-education> [accessed 12/09/2023].

and political discourse around Haitian pregnant women on the women in question.<sup>11</sup>

Arguably, it has always been politically expedient to describe pregnant Haitian women as an intolerable burden for the Dominican National Health Service in order to justify measures aimed at limiting or preventing their access to it. It is worth mentioning that there is no agreement between the Ministry of Health and the National Health Service (which is responsible for administering the public hospital network) in terms of figures and statistic regarding Haitian childbirths and their actual burden on the Health System and, on occasion, improbable figures have been shown to be fake news.<sup>12</sup> Yet, based on a supposed Haitian “invasion” or the perceived excessive use of the Dominican public services by Haitians, from the end of September 2021, the Ministry of the Interior and Police of the Dominican Republic announced the implementation of further restrictive measures against migrant women, particularly Haitian women, and of a particularly aggressive regime against migrants, allegedly with irregular status, with thousands of deportations that violate due process standards. These disproportionate, ineffective and unsustainable operations<sup>13</sup> have been carried out with the direct involvement of security and public order bodies that have no competence in administrative matters such as the Armed Forces, the National Department of Investigations (DNI) and the National Police. Several stateless and undocumented people who

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<sup>11</sup> Allison J. Petrozziello, ‘La problematización de las “parturientas haitianas” y otras estrategias de control fronterizo [Problematizing Haitian Women as ‘Birthers’ and Other Border Control Strategies]’, in *Miradas Desencadenantes: construcción de conocimientos para la igualdad: La Movilidad Humana: una mirada de género a los desafíos y desigualdades en los nuevos contextos migratorios; trata de personas, nacionalidad y refugio en República Dominicana*, Santo Domingo, DR: Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo, 2022, pp. 11–49.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Desmontando los fake news del gobierno contra las mujeres haitianas’, 18 November 2021, *Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadoras y Trabajadores de la República Dominicana (MOSCTHA)* <https://mst-rd.org/2021/11/18/desmontando-los-fake-news-del-gobierno-contra-las-mujeres-haitianas/> [accessed 5/9/2023].

<sup>13</sup> ‘Posicionamiento del Proyecto Trato Digno - La política migratoria del gobierno dominicano en resumen: Operativos migratorios desproporcionados, ineficaces e insostenibles’, 22 November 2022, *Proyecto Trato Digno*, <http://tratodigno.obmica.org/index.php/2022/11/22/posicionamiento-del-proyecto-trato-digno-la-politica-migratoria-del-gobierno-dominicano-en-resumen-operativos-migratorios-desproporcionados-ineficaces-e-insostenibles/> [accessed 12/9/2023].



were deprived of their Dominican nationality following the Ruling 168-13 have also been caught up in these mass deportations. Pregnant women, with perceived or real Haitian roots, are among those actively targeted, their deportation leaving them and their children in limbo with the potential to further perpetuate statelessness.<sup>14</sup>

As a matter of fact, in what can and has been described as a witch-hunt and in a violation of the fundamental right to health, gender equity, maternity protection and of the rights of children, migration officials have seized women in hospital wards and deported them to Haiti, turning health centres into sites of migration enforcement and inscribing the border onto the body of these women and their children. To capture and detain women with the objective to deport them, Dominican authorities have increased the number of operatives for the detention of Haitians or those perceived to be Haitians. Notably, both detention and deportations are carried out even though denying care to a pregnant woman and proceeding to her arrest and deportation due to her irregular immigration status when she is seeking medical attention, violates Dominican General Migration law which prohibits the detention of minors, pregnant or lactating women, elderly migrants, and asylum seekers.

Nonetheless, both official figures in the Dominican Republic for cross-border deportations in 2023 and figures available from the Support Group for Haitian Refugees and Repatriates (GARR), which is the Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) providing the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) with data for its DTM (Displacement Tracking Matrix), coincide in showing the consistent deportation of pregnant or lactating women as well as children. According to GARR these women arrive in Haiti with very few belongings (they are often not given the opportunity to go home first) and

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Boletín OBMICA’, March 2022, <http://obmica.org/index.php/publicaciones/boletines/389-boletin-obmica-marzo-de-2022>; ‘Haitianas deportadas desde la sala de parto’, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVD1QO-bBrU> [both accessed 12/09/2023]



lamenting that they had to leave everything behind in the Dominican Republic, including other children and spouses. A recent publication has underscored the difficulties of ensuring due process and individual consideration of each (putative) deportee, as should theoretically take place.<sup>15</sup>

Some two years after the restrictive measures have been brought in by the Dominican authorities, these abuses continue to be documented in the international news.<sup>16</sup> In November 2021 and again in February 2022, the UN system requested, but to no avail, that the Dominican Republic not only suspend all deportations of Haitian women but also issue permanent residence permits to Haitian women whose children were born and raised in the Dominican Republic to encourage them to seek medical assistance when/if needed without fear of repercussions.<sup>17</sup> In early 2022, the *UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) also called on the Dominican Republic to remove all legislative barrier to ensure children entitled to it could have access to Dominican nationality.<sup>18</sup> On 17 March 2022 Dominican civil society organisations reported to the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) on the situation of human rights for migrants and effective access to Dominican nationality. The commission recommended to the State to renew dialogue with civil society on the question of the denationalised persons.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> ‘*Trato Digno – New Challenges for Due Process in Deportations from the Dominican Republic*’, OBMICA/CEDES0 2023, <http://obmica.org/index.php/publicaciones/libros/436-trato-digno-new-challenges-for-due-process-in-deportations-from-the-dominican-republic> [accessed 12/09/2023]

<sup>16</sup> ‘Haitianas deportadas desde la sala de parto’, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVD1QO-bBrU> [accessed 12/09/2023]

<sup>17</sup> ‘Situation of human rights of migrants and their families in Dominican Republic’, *Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfNPYkBNbeo> [accessed 12/09/2023].

<sup>18</sup> ‘La asignatura pendiente con los derechos de las mujeres en República Dominicana’, OBMICA, <http://obmica.org/index.php/actualidad/390-la-asignatura-pendiente-con-los-derechos-de-las-mujeres-en-republica-dominicana> [accessed 12/09/2023].

<sup>19</sup> Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, ‘Situation of Human Rights of Migrants and Their Families in the Dominican Republic’, (2022), available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfNPYkBNbeo> [accessed 14/09/2023].

Nonetheless, if the work of local civil society organisations demonstrating against nationality stripping and deportations and using legal means to restore rights to the denationalised is obviously invaluable, for human rights activities to gain traction it is vital to challenge conservative narratives from a cultural as well as legal point of view. In this respect, the centrality of literature and the arts in the creation and dissemination of new narratives which can foreground the reality of the situation, raise awareness, dismantle pernicious stereotypes, and play a crucial role in changing the tone and content of the conversation should not be underestimated.

In her 2019 novel in verse *Clap When You Land*, for instance, the Dominican writer Elizabeth Acevedo usefully sheds some light on the pre-2021 situation.<sup>20</sup> The novel tells the story of two sisters, Camino, who lives in the Dominican Republic and Yahira who lives in New York. Camino's best friend is Carline, a girl of Haitian descent who lives in the same Dominican village as Camino's and works for the tourist industry. When the pregnant Carline goes into premature labour during a power outage, it is Tia, Camino's aunt and the local *curandera* (midwife), who delivers the baby in the middle of the night. Acevedo makes it clear that resorting to a home birth, in Carline's case, is not a lifestyle choice but is dictated by the need to "bypass" some of the huge difficulties which many Haitian women living in the Dominican Republic (and Dominican women of Haitian descent or perceived as Haitians) have always encountered when they had to give birth: "Carline should be in hospital", Camino observes, but, she continues:

It is not an easy thing to do,  
for a Haitian parent to bring her child  
to a Dominican hospital to give birth.

There is already a lot of tension around  
who here deserves care; I cannot fault [the family]

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<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Acevedo, *Clap When You Land*, London: Hot Keys Books, 2020. Page numbers will be given in parentheses in the text.

for being too afraid (165)

Carline, therefore, gives birth to a premature baby in a situation where Haitian women were obviously discouraged from seeking medical and hospital treatment for themselves or their children. In 2004, for example, a separate process was created for registering births for women who were perceived to be “foreigner” (or Haitian) and were issued with a form which registered the child into a Foreigners’ Book despite the fact that, until 2010, *jus soli* supposedly granted birthright citizenship to those who were born in the Dominican Republic. In 2010, the right to Dominican citizenship was restricted to those born in the country and who could prove that one of their parents was a “legal” resident. Over the years, the persistent lack of opportunities to regularise one’s status and the status of one’s children and the fact that “real” birth certificates have often been arbitrarily refused to children whose parents are Haitians or of Haitian descent, has resulted in a significant number of people deprived of their citizenship and its concomitant rights.

Acevedo’s novel alerts us to the potential consequence of discriminatory policies before they were further reinforced in September 2021, further impeding access to health care for (prospective) Haitian mothers and their children. “In another country,” we are told of Carline’s premature child,

this baby would still be in the intensive care unit,  
but these are Kreyol-speaking folk who cannot afford  
either the bill or the legalities that would come with hospitals

Although Carline will not utter the words,  
I know she still expects the baby to die.  
He is just so, so small (263-4)

Prudently, in fact, the baby is not named until everyone is confident that he will live. As Camino puts it, it is

[...] an amazing thing  
to see this babe clutch at the air  
to see this child who should not be here  
not only here but                    *here* (170)

Notably, the baby is eventually named Luciano, a name that comes from the Latin “lux” - light- and which signpost the miracle of life and his survival. “To give birth” is “dar a luz” or “to give to the light” but, ironically, rather than “give to the light” or “being given to the light,” Carline and her baby, due to their “irregular” situation, must remain in the dark, under the radar, invisible. On the page, Acevedo separates the two “here” --the “here” of the world of the living and the “here” of the Dominican Republic. In reality, however, the ontological dimension and the geo-political one are much “closer” when one takes into consideration the repercussion of different forms of imposed precariousness. Significantly, those at the receiving end of Dominican discriminatory laws and practices and who, for different reasons, find themselves without a birth certificate, have often lamented that they feel as if they “do not exist, as if [they] were not part of this world”, extending the parameters of their exclusion beyond national boundaries and into an ontological dimension.<sup>21</sup>

Yet, even in this dispiriting scenario, the novel highlights the fact that at the community level where Dominicans and Haitians live side by side, they often engage in everyday acts of solidarity and sorority by underlining how Camino’s friendship and her aunt’s skills and generosity are instrumental to the survival of

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<sup>21</sup> Roberto and Anderson, interviewed in *Citizens of Nowhere* (dirs. Regis Coussot, Nicolas-Alexandre Tremblay), 2015.

both Carline and Luciano. Similarly, the documentary *Deportaciones Indignas* (“Unworthy deportations”) refers to the experience of a Haitian woman who had been deported with her baby daughter without the possibility of going home to collect her belongings or taking charge of her young son who was left alone in Santo Domingo.<sup>22</sup> We are shown, however, how her Dominican neighbour stepped into the breach, took over care of the little boy and openly criticised the unfairness with which her neighbor had been treated. In her own words:

I don't understand it very well - they should've considered these people, you know? Because imagine if it's us in a different country, I think about that, you know? I think about my children and imagine I am in a different country where I don't have papers and I get separated from my children, that would be very hard. Her with a small daughter and they took her like that, so quickly, not even giving her time to come get her things or her son. To leave only with what she had on her. That must be very hard.<sup>23</sup>

Solidarity between Dominican women and Haitian women migrants who live together in popular neighbourhoods has been researched and well characterised in a recent publication<sup>24</sup> and we have also tried to disseminate as widely as possible the long and occluded history of solidarity and collaboration between Haitians and Dominicans using, as a springboard, (Fumagalli's) *On the Edge: Writing the Border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic*,<sup>25</sup> the first literary and cultural history of the borderland region of Hispaniola. Bringing to

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<sup>22</sup> The documentary *Deportaciones Indignas* (dir Toni Pichardo), 2021 may be seen following this link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mo\\_IV4WNU2M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mo_IV4WNU2M) [accessed 5/9/2023].

<sup>23</sup> Daneuris Marrero, interviewed in *Deportaciones Indignas*.

<sup>24</sup> Tahira Vargas García and Matías Bosch Carcuro, ‘¿Invasión o convivencia? Relaciones y percepciones entre mujeres dominicanas y migrantes haitianas más allá del prejuicio, la ideología del antagonismo y la violencia de Estado’, in *Vidas en movimiento: Migración en América Latina*, CLACSO 2022, Argentina, pp. 383-460 <https://biblioteca-repositorio.clacso.edu.ar/bitstream/CLACSO/169341/1/Vidas-en-movimiento.pdf> [accessed 12/09/2023].

<sup>25</sup> Maria Cristina Fumagalli, *On the Edge: Writing the Border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015; 2018 [https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1gn6bzf?item\\_view=book\\_info](https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1gn6bzf?item_view=book_info) [accessed 5/9/2023].

the fore a compelling but, so far, largely neglected body of work which has the politics of borderline-crossing as well as the poetics of borderland-dwelling on Hispaniola at its core, in fact, *On the Edge* analyses fictional and non-fictional literary texts (novels, biographical narratives, memoirs, plays, poems, and travel writing), alongside journalism, geo-political-historical accounts of the status quo on the island, and visual interventions (films, sculptures, paintings, photographs, videos and artistic performances) which illuminate some of the processes and histories that have woven and continue to weave the texture of the borderland and the complex web of border relations on the island from colonial times.

Putting in dialogue the research underpinning *On the Edge* with human rights concerns, we have organised and been involved in numerous activities in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, including the central border region of the province of Elias Piña, but also in Martinique, Guadeloupe, Cuba, Ireland, and the United Kingdom, articulating our views and experiences in different ways: academic and online publications, conferences, literary, cultural, and film festivals, public talks, a video. A trilingual bulletin published online by OBMICA<sup>26</sup> provides further details on our activities up to 2018 while 2020 saw the publication of the volume *Border Transgression and Reconfiguration of Caribbean Spaces* edited by Myriam Moïse and Fred Réno<sup>27</sup> to which we contributed two separate chapters. One of our chapters (Fumagalli's) revisits the *annus horribilis* 2013 and its immediate aftermath by focusing on a series of literary and artistic interventions –including the video-performance *Manifiesto* by Polibio Díaz, the movie *Cristo Rey* directed by Leticia Tonos, the novel *Nombres y animales* by Rita Indiana, the documentary *Citizens of Nowhere*

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<sup>26</sup> *On the Edge: Boletín Especial OBMICA*: [obmica.org/images/Publicaciones/Boletines/Boletin-Obmica-especial-espanol-On-the-Edge-sep-2018.pdf](http://obmica.org/images/Publicaciones/Boletines/Boletin-Obmica-especial-espanol-On-the-Edge-sep-2018.pdf); [obmica.org/images/Publicaciones/Boletines/Boletin-Obmica-especial-ingles-On-the-Edge-sep-2018.pdf](http://obmica.org/images/Publicaciones/Boletines/Boletin-Obmica-especial-ingles-On-the-Edge-sep-2018.pdf); [obmica.org/images/Publicaciones/Boletines/Boletin-Obmica-especial-frances-On-the-Edge-sep-2018.pdf](http://obmica.org/images/Publicaciones/Boletines/Boletin-Obmica-especial-frances-On-the-Edge-sep-2018.pdf) [all accessed 5/9/2023].

<sup>27</sup> Myriam Moïse and Fred Réno, *Border Transgression and Reconfiguration of Caribbean Spaces*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

(dirs. Regis Coussot, Nicolas-Alexandre Tremblay) and Karmadavis's performance *Comedor Familiar*<sup>28</sup>-- which creatively engage with and investigate the issues of the right to citizenship of Haitian Dominicans and the regularisation of Haitian immigration. The other (Wooding's) analyses how the border crossing has been instrumentalised during political turmoil on the island of Hispaniola whereby episodes of forced migration have punctured positive developments towards cooperation and an enhanced contact zone across the island. Wooding's chapter considers how the border has been re-configured since the turn of the century, with new challenges for Dominico-Haitian relations emerging from increasingly restrictive migration and nationality policies handed down on the east of the island by the Dominican authorities.

A year later, the co-authored chapter that we contributed to the (Open Access) *The Border of Lights Reader*<sup>29</sup> was focused on the reality of mixed couples and their children<sup>30</sup> because children of ethnically mixed couples, who are and have historically faced problems registering their children as Dominicans, are not exempt from the reverberations of the denationalisation crisis. This work was conducted in the frame of a three-year project (2016-2019)<sup>31</sup> aimed at realizing the constitutional right to Dominican nationality of children born to such couples in the Dominican Republic, at better understanding their predicament and at supporting them in ensuring compliance

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<sup>28</sup> Polibio Díaz, *Manifiesto*, 8 August 2013; *Cristo Rey* (dir Tonos Paniagua Leticia) 2013; David Pérez Karmadavis, *Comedor Familiar*, 2014; Rita Indiana (Hernández) *Nombres y Animales*, Cáceres: Editorial Periférica, 2013; *Citizens of Nowhere* (dirs. Regis Coussot, Nicolas-Alexandre Tremblay), 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Megan Jeanette Myers and Edward Paulino, *The Border of Lights Reader: Bearing Witness to Genocide in the Dominican Republic*, Amherst: Amherst College Press, 2021 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.12278109> [consultado 5/9/2023].

<sup>30</sup> Fumagalli, Maria Cristina, and Bridget Wooding. 'Memorialization, Solidarity, Ethnically Mixed Couples, and the Mystery of Hope: Mainstreaming Border of Lights', in *The Border of Lights Reader: Bearing Witness to Genocide in the Dominican Republic*, edited by Megan Jeanette Myers and Edward Paulino, Amherst College Press, 2021, pp. 162-170. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.12278109.19> [consultado 5/9/2023].

<sup>31</sup> Final outputs of the project include: a Protocol for para-legals to accompany affected persons: *Facilitando el acceso al registro civil dominicano a descendientes de parejas mixtas: protocolo para el acompañamiento legal*. Santo Domingo, Editora Búho, 2018 <http://obmica.org/images/Publicaciones/Libros/Protocolo-2018-FINAL.pdf> [accessed 6 July 2020] and an accompanying video (in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole): *Libertad*. Santo Domingo, 2018 <http://obmica.org/index.php/parejas-mixtas/multimedia/228-libertad-la-historias-de-las-y-los-hijos-de-parejas-mixtas> [accessed 6 July 2020].



with their right. As other activities, it was also supported by a grant (funded by the University of Essex and OBMICA inter alia) aimed at transforming the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1937 massacre of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the Dominican borderland into an occasion to rethink and help reframe past, present and, crucially, future relations on the island.

Significantly, consecutive official reports on the numbers and characteristics of Haitian migrants and their descendants in the Dominican Republic (ONE 2013 and ONE 2018)<sup>32</sup> have identified some 25,000 cases where Dominican documentation has not been acquired for children born to ethnically mixed couples where one parent is of Haitian ancestry. Local contacts along the border report many cases of undocumented offspring of such couples, especially in the border province of Elías Piña which is the poorest province in the country and where the chief town Comendador is located. In our visit to the province, we targeted school children who, alongside the general public and officials from Haiti and the Dominican Republic, attended a public talk during which it was highlighted that Comendador/Elías Piña is also the setting of René Philoctète's *Le peuple des terres mêlées*.<sup>33</sup>

Philoctète's novel features a mixed couple, "*el mulato Dominicano*" and labour activist Pedro Alvarez Brito and his wife Adèle, "*la chiquita negrita haitiana*" who are caught up in the 1937 massacre of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the Dominican borderland and the subsequent *desalojos* (or "evacuation") during which ethnically mixed families were dismembered. Philoctète uses Spanish to describe Adèle and Pedro in the original text in French, to highlight the bilingualism of the people living in the borderland. Overall, Adèle and Pedro embody the idea of unity between Haitians and

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<sup>32</sup> 'Informe General de la Segunda Encuesta Nacional de Inmigrantes en la República Dominicana, ENI-2017', UNFPA – Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas, Santo Domingo: Oficina Nacional de Estadística, 2018. <https://dominicanrepublic.unfpa.org/es/publications/informe-general-de-la-segunda-encuesta-nacional-de-inmigrantes-eni-2017> [accessed 6 July 2020].

<sup>33</sup> René Philoctète, René, *Le peuple des terres mêlées*, 1989 - quotations in English (with page references in parentheses in the text) are from the English translation: *Massacre River*, trans L. Coverdale, New York: New Direction Books, 2005.

Dominicans conveyed by the title of the novel which identifies a “single people” (*le peuple*) on these “*terres mêlées*” (“mixed lands”). The bicultural features of this province were also documented in a video shot in October 2017 illustrating our activities in Comendador and launched in December of that year.<sup>34</sup>

Philoctete’s novel foregrounds the fact that transnational bonds and mixed families were not and are not “exceptional” despite being strategically recast as “non-normative” by different “state[s] of emergency” like the 1937 massacre and *desalojo* or the denationalisation crisis of 2013 which is more directly referenced by a more recent performance (also mentioned in the public talk in Comendador), namely *Comedor Familiar* (2014) by the Dominican artist Karmadavis. The title *Comedor familiar* evokes both a “family meal” and the safe space of a “family dining room” where members of a family sit together, share food and renew bonds of intimacy which transcend the limits of national identification and nationalistic discourses. Equipped with a cooking stove, Karmadavis serves a gastronomical fusion of ingredients and dishes typical of both nations to a Dominican father, a Haitian mother, and a Haitian-Dominican child who consume their lunch at a dining table with only three legs which indicates the extreme precariousness of ethnically mixed families in the Dominican Republic. *Comedor familiar*, however, is an ultimately hopeful work: as the epigraph to the performance explains: “when dialogue is no longer possible, what still exists is the mystery of hope”, words which resonate in the title of Fumagalli’s chapter for *Border Transgression and Reconfiguration of Caribbean Spaces* and in our co-authored intervention for *The Border of Lights Reader*.

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<sup>34</sup> *La Frontera Dominico-Haitiana: Pasado y Presente* <http://obmica.org/index.php/multimedia/232-la-frontera-dominico-haitiana-pasado-y-presente> [accessed 5/9/2023]

It is worth mentioning here that *Border of Lights*, an organisation which came to be to commemorate the lives lost and affected by the 1937 Massacre, also shares our understanding of hope as a political duty and our commitment to creating, supporting, and disseminating new narratives: as their websites specifies, they aim “to uplift the narrative of historical and ongoing collaborations between two peoples at the Dominican Republic and Haiti border [and] to continue in the struggle for justice, with hope in our hearts.”<sup>35</sup>

The power of, and the belief in, hope are also evident in the work of Jean Philippe Moiseau, a plastic and recycling artist who was born in Haiti in 1962 but moved to the Dominican Republic in 1994: despite addressing serious and sombre themes, Moiseau’s works are always characterised by vibrant colours and/or clear and blue sky as backgrounds, reiterating that hope always is key in any counter-narrative. Central to Moiseau’s *modus operandi*, is the use of masks which, whilst acknowledging the importance of Carnival in Caribbean culture (and, historically, in counter-establishment culture), play a crucial part in his investigation of transnational identity. They work, in fact, as compelling references to the necessity to “hide” identity and diminish cultural traits that Haitian migrants and people of Haitian descent often feel in the Dominican Republic if they want to avoid discrimination, detention or even deportation. Moiseau’s creative recycling and his choice of materials --pieces of metal or “fer découpé”, newspaper cutting, jagua palm, gourds, driftwood or seeds that are of particular importance to Haitian culture and identity and part of the indigenous legacy of Hispaniola-- are informed by a determination to make permanent what would otherwise be lost in an attempt to resist the personal and collective cultural and physical obliteration of which members of the Haitian minority in the Dominican Republic are at constant risk.

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<sup>35</sup> *Border of Lights*, October 2017 <http://www.facebook.com/pg/BorderofLights/posts/> [accessed 20 May 2020].

*L'Immigrant* (“The immigrant”) (2020)<sup>36</sup> by Jean Philippe Moiseau is a complex sculpture that gestures towards precariousness and vulnerability while reasserting, at the same time, the centrality of the role that migrants play in the host country’s economy and culture, an observation which is true of the Dominican Republic, but also more globally. The “body” of the immigrant is a vertical pole which evokes the *poto mitan*, the most powerful symbol of Vodou temples which connects heaven and earth and around which all ceremonies revolve. The upper part of the pole, which reminds one the lightness of mobiles, and most importantly, of the key role played by harmonious equilibrium in achieving stability, recalls base pairs of DNA where the unique genetic makeup and identity of an individual is stored. It has, simultaneously, the solidity and fragility/precariousness of a spinal cord.

The way in which the “vertebrae” of this spinal cord are organised reproduces the spiralling motifs that represent Danbala, the supreme snake spirit of Vodou in a traditional *poto mitan*. The colour of the pole, instead, signposts his wife Ayda Wèdo who is the mistress of the sky – the orange symbol reflects the veve of their mystical marriage. Since the origins of both Danbala and Ayda Wèdo have been traced in animistic practices in Dahomey, West Africa, Moiseau is obviously making a broader point about migration/immigration, deracination and re-rooting, the permanence and impermanence of individual and collective identity and heritage, by evoking the slave trade.

The pinnacle gestures towards heaven and the divine, underscoring the immigrant’s ability to maintain connections, to simultaneously inhabit and bring together different dimensions. The four masks under the pinnacle are carved out of gourds, often used as vessels for vodou lamps used by devotees who need to secure favours from the spirits, a motif also underlined at the base of the

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<sup>36</sup> *International Art Contest Minority Artists Working On Statelessness Themes*, Exhibition Catalogue, November 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/minorities/2022-11-03/ONLINE-Exhibition-Catalogue-Minority-Artists.pdf> [accessed 5/9/2023], p. 48.

sculpture with three candles organised in the shape of a set of stairs. The fact that the immigrant has four heads/masks looking in four different directions signposts the capacity to approach things from different perspectives that being exposed to different cultures can bring. This is also underlined by the fact that the noses, eyes, and mouths are holes as if to underscore open-mindedness and the ability to absorb the new. At the same time, the 360 degrees coverage afforded by the four heads/masks also signifies the immigrant's need to stay alert and always cover one's back. Undercutting and countering stereotypes, Moiseau's work here also highlights the multifaceted nature of figures and people whose complexities are all too often simplified or erased. The fact that the four heads are organised in the shape of a hat refers to the expression "*Chapeau Bas*" or "Hats Off" and is intended as a mark of respect for immigrants.<sup>37</sup>

In the mask entitled *La Sentencia* ("The sentence") (2015)<sup>38</sup> Moiseau incorporates newspaper cuttings from the Dominican and Haitian press, juxtaposing two of the languages spoken on Hispaniola in an attempt to claim the entire island and not just one of its nations as his homeland: here the newspapers are all focused on the 2013 ruling and its effects. The metal mask follows the well-established Haitian tradition of *fer découpé*, or steel drum sculpture, pioneered in the 1950s and 1960s by the Haitian sculptor Georges Liautaud and practised, in particular, by three generations of artists from the village Croix-des-Bouquets. Metal is also the material of prison bars and shackles, a reference to the iron fist with which Haitian migrants and Haitian Dominicans are treated and the harshness of their condition. The clippings are covered by dripping yellow paint which becomes orange red in the background

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<sup>37</sup> Moiseau sums up his work here thus: "The immigrant, a ray of sunlight in the economy of the host country, a cultural representative, an adventurer who looks for a better life on foreign soil, often misunderstood for being poor. This work represents the essence of the lived experience of immigrants across the world."

<sup>38</sup> *International Art Contest Minority Artists Working On Statelessness Themes*, Exhibition Catalogue, November 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/minorities/2022-11-03/ONLINE-Exhibition-Catalogue-Minority-Artists.pdf> [accessed 5/9/2023], p. 50.

and which might be evocative of the tears and blood spilled by those at the receiving end of the 2013 ruling and other related human rights violations. The eyes, nose, and mouth represented as abstract shapes concentrated in the middle of the work, highlight the isolation which ensues when homogenising discourses and legal practices such as those signposted by the newspaper cuttings flatten all migrant into stereotypes: the mouth is shut, and the eyes have no pupils so there cannot be a real exchange of gaze or opinions with viewers.

*Detrás de la Caña* (“Behind sugarcane”)<sup>39</sup> (2022) deals with the way in which the crucial work of Haitian migrants in the sugar industry of the Dominican Republic is rendered invisible or not properly recognised. Routinely cast as a threat too remote, unknowable, and different to be comprehended, the workers are represented, synecdochally, by their eyes which, pointed directly at viewers, assert their presence and demand recognition of those involved in what is the most important longstanding cross border labour migration flow in the Americas. The fact that the eyes are connected by a series of colourful ribbons which, concomitantly, keep the stalks together, further underlines the importance of communities, connection and belonging and signposts the overall contribution of the wider migrant community to the “consolidation” of the economy of the host country.

The vertical sugarcane stalks, however, also remind one of the bars of a prison, a clear allusion not only to the *bateyes* (or sugar worker’s town) in which many are confined and where very few public services are provided. Also, they gesture to the fact that denationalisation or irregular status deprive those affected (and their children) of fundamental rights and of all the possibilities for betterment or success without which there is no real freedom. Many of these migrants, in fact, were brought in the country to work for the

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<sup>39</sup> *International Art Contest Minority Artists Working On Statelessness Themes*, Exhibition Catalogue, November 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/minorities/2022-11-03/ONLINE-Exhibition-Catalogue-Minority-Artists.pdf> [accessed 5/9/2023], p. 52.

sugar industry with the consent of the Haitian and Dominican governments, have lived in the Dominican Republic for decades, and created ethnically mixed families with locals. Moreover, they were given photographic forms of identification by the sugar refineries in which they were employed, and which were deemed acceptable or sufficient to apply for a pension in 2012. However, as Natalia Riveros has demonstrated in a study commissioned by OBMICA, by the end of 2014, only 2,090 out of 16,000 applicants had obtained their pension while an extra 6,000 had not yet received an answer.<sup>40</sup> Since 2014, moreover, it has been increasingly difficult to apply for a pension with the documents provided by employers and, as a result, many elderly people have been deprived of social security: it goes without saying, once again, that the irregular status of the early generations of migrant canecutters who worked in the sugarcane fields is having serious repercussions also on the status of subsequent generations.

*Les Rêves du Cireur de Bottes* (“The dreams of the shoeshiner”) (2022)<sup>41</sup> is a painting which reiterates the right for every human being to thrive in life, a dream that is particularly difficult to sustain if, not only adverse economic conditions, but denationalisation and legal processes which keep people in a legal limbo, intervene to bar one’s right to education, work, or health care. The shoe-shiner in the image is surrounded by his (material) dreams (a car, a woman, a satellite dish) and, at the bottom right we can see the Haitian *vévé* of Marassa or Twins which represent children’s sacredness: inviting us to reflect on the serious and widespread issue of child labour, Moiseau also encourages us not to relinquish hope in and for the new generation. The newspaper articles that Moiseau has included towards the top of the painting, in fact, include one which refers to the twenty-five Dominicans of Haitian origin who, in November 2012,

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<sup>40</sup> Natalia Riveros, *Estado del arte de las migraciones que atañen a la República Dominicana 2014*, OBMICA, 2014, p. 130 <http://obmica.org/index.php/publicaciones/informes/126-estado-del-arte-de-las-migraciones-que-atanen-a-la-republica-dominicana-2014> [accessed 12/09/2023].

<sup>41</sup> *International Art Contest Minority Artists Working On Statelessness Themes*, Exhibition Catalogue, November 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/minorities/2022-11-03/ONLINE-Exhibition-Catalogue-Minority-Artists.pdf> [accessed 5/9/2023], p. 49



appealed against the decision of the civil authorities to deny them their identity cards, when these had been legally obtained.<sup>42</sup>

Sugarcane stalks also appear as the background of the acrylics on canvas *Porteuse d'Espoir* ["Bearer of hope"] and *Fille, Enfant de la Canne à Sucre* ("Girl, Sugarcane child") (2022)<sup>43</sup>. The *Porteuse d'espoir* is represented as a masked woman who, like George Frederic Watts's *Hope*<sup>44</sup>, portrayed in all its different versions with a harp with only one chord, is surrounded by musical instruments. Among these instruments are rattles or *ascon* which are used in Voudou to communicate with spirits and persuade them to collaborate or assist a devotee: as a symbol of connection with the spiritual realm, their use is restricted to the Houngans or Mambos who are identified here as, amongst other things, "bearers of hope." In the hand where she is not holding the rattles, Moiseau's "Hope" holds a small and tender plant which, if well-tended, has the potential to grow and become a tree: this little, "green" plant, chimes, in chromatism and connotations, with the predominant colour of the painting which is the colour of hope. Similar colours, a sugarcane background, the presence of a rattle and other musical instruments also characterise *Fille, Enfant de la Canne à Sucre* and clearly reaffirm hope in the new generation currently at the receiving end of denationalisation policies which affect them and their families. The fact that the central figure is a girl/woman raises awareness of the recent more restrictive practices introduced for migrants in the Dominican Republic which are affecting, in particular, pregnant girls and women.

The mask called *Los Olvidados del COVID* ("The Forgotten by but also during Covid") (2020)<sup>45</sup> captures the way in which the pandemic exacerbated

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<sup>42</sup> Iván Santana, 'Presentan recurso de amparo', *Hoy*, 14 May 2012.

<sup>43</sup> *International Art Contest Minority Artists Working On Statelessness Themes*, Exhibition Catalogue, November 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/minorities/2022-11-03/ONLINE-Exhibition-Catalogue-Minority-Artists.pdf> [accessed 5/9/2023], p. 52

<sup>44</sup> The first two versions were completed in 1886 with further copies produced between 1886 and 1890.

<sup>45</sup> *International Art Contest Minority Artists Working On Statelessness Themes*, Exhibition Catalogue, November 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/minorities/2022-11-03/ONLINE-Exhibition-Catalogue-Minority-Artists.pdf> [accessed 5/9/2023], p. 51

exclusion through lack of health and socio-economic support for stateless people and their stubborn determination to survive or, as Sigmund Freud would put it, their “life drive” in the face of “death”. A horn made of hardened walnut which seems to mimic an erection protrudes from the forehead of the head/mask, signposting procreation or, more broadly, other life-sustaining actions like cooperation, collaboration, and care. Wearing a Covid mask but with its eyes wide open, this mask, unlike the others, returns the gaze and implicates viewers, emphasising that when one member of a society is unsafe (from a health or legal perspective), then everyone is unsafe, and that solidarity and activism are key.

In this respect, during the pandemic, we published a blog entitled “Stranger than Fiction: Opportunities for a New Narrative in Dominico-Haitian relations under Covid-19”<sup>46</sup> which highlighted the fact that, along with other groups in vulnerable situations, the denationalised and stateless were a sector of the population left in “limbo” when they needed, more than ever, State aid, official social protection and the possibility to apply for the assistance from central government established under Covid-19. In many cases, in fact, the files of Dominicans of Haitian ancestry were still being processed by Dominican authorities to remedy denationalisation. Also, for hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants who, since 2014, had engaged with the regularisation programme but still found themselves with a fragile or out-of-status legality, there was little incentive to come forward and stake claim to humanitarian aid from the authorities if they feared future deportation. Given that in order to be effective in the Dominican Republic, the Covid-19 response had to ultimately include all those who had been routinely marginalised and neglected, and work towards improved relations with neighbouring Haiti, we sincerely hoped that,

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<sup>46</sup> Maria Cristina Fumagalli and Bridget Wooding, ‘Stranger than Fiction: Opportunities for a New Narrative in Dominico-Haitian Relations Under Covid-19’, 8 July 2020, *University of Essex – Human Rights Centre Blog*, <https://hrcessex.wordpress.com/2020/07/08/stranger-than-fiction-opportunities-for-a-new-narrative-in-dominico-haitian-relations-under-covid-19/> [accessed 5/9/2023].

despite all the terrible challenges that it presented, the pandemic would also provide opportunities to improve border relations and finally address the predicament of segments of the populations in precarious legality, like Haitian migrants and denationalised Dominicans of Haitian ancestry.

Overall, the effects of the pandemic on the urgent issues in question have been rather mixed: on the one hand, social protection mechanisms activated by the Dominican authorities for humanitarian assistance and those made unemployed by the health crisis, did not initially cover persons living and working in the country without a Dominican ID document. Moreover, cross-border deportations were resumed after six months when a humanitarian corridor had enabled Haitians wishing to return to Haiti to do so, especially because of diminished labour opportunities in the Dominican Republic with the onset of Covid-19. The re-establishment of deportations in August 2020 was contested by civil society, in a context where migrant rights' defenders held that the Covid-19 health crisis was far from resolved.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, campaigning by civil society organisations to advocate for equal access to vaccines for hard-to-reach populations, lacking Dominican documentation, in the Dominican Republic was successful, leading to UNICEF implementing COVAX for these populations by late 2021.<sup>48</sup>

Unfortunately, from a cultural perspective, divisive narratives dominated by ethno-nationalist discourses continue to circulate and, arguing that Dominicans and Haitians are incompatible, persist in fomenting anti-Haitianism. Coincidentally, in November 2022, at the same time in which Moiseau became one of the laureates of the *International Art Contest for Minority Artists working on Statelessness Themes* jointly organised by the UN Human Rights

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<sup>47</sup> 'Urge Moratoria De Deportaciones Hacia Haití', 3 November 2021, *Proyecto Trato Digno* – press release, <http://tratodigno.obmica.org/index.php/2021/11/03/urge-moratoria-de-deportaciones-hacia-haiti/> [accessed 12/09/2023]

<sup>48</sup> Justin Jacobs, 'Winning the Fight for Vaccine Equity in the Dominican Republic', 26 July 2021, *American Jewish World Services* <https://ajws.org/blog/winning-the-fight-for-vaccine-equity-in-the-dominican-republic/> [accessed 12/09/2023].

Office (OHCHR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the non-governmental organisations Freemuse and Minority Rights Group International (MRG),<sup>49</sup> *La entrada del Barón Samedi en Santo Domingo y otros relatos*, a new collection by Manuel Núñez, was published in Santo Domingo.<sup>50</sup> In the titular work, anti-Haitian tropes which have circulated since the nineteenth century are redeployed once again as Haitians are dehumanised and animalised: they are cunning and violent invaders, dangerous Vodou practitioners who occupy Dominican territory and people it with their children; allied with international malevolent intellectuals and occult forces they are intent on unifying the island and eradicating Dominicans and their way of life.<sup>51</sup>

Núñez himself has recycled these tropes throughout his career and, in particular, in *El ocaso de la nación dominicana*, (“The twilight of the Dominican nation”), a controversial book which, in 2001 was awarded the prestigious Premio Nacional Feria del Libro León Jimenes. To Núñez, this lamentable “twilight” of the Dominican Republic is caused by the fact that, owing to widespread “Haitianisation”, the country is moving “further and further away” from what he calls “the spiritual frontier of the nation” which comprises its “culture, language, values.”<sup>52</sup> Significantly, if we take the yellow drippings in Moiseau’s *La Sentencia*<sup>53</sup> to signposts the sun melting and “setting” on the context exemplified by the newspaper cuttings, all related to the 2013 rulings, we can envisage a radically different kind of “sunset” or

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<sup>49</sup> *International Art Contest Minority Artists Working On Statelessness Themes*, Exhibition Catalogue, November 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/minorities/2022-11-03/ONLINE-Exhibition-Catalogue-Minority-Artists.pdf> [accessed 5/9/2023].

<sup>50</sup> ‘El escritor Manuel Núñez pondrá en circulación su nueva obra’, 9 November 2022, *Diario Libre*, <https://www.diariolibre.com/revista/cultura/2022/11/09/manuel-nunez-pone-a-circular-nuevo-libro/2135430> [accessed 5/9/2023].

<sup>51</sup> Manuel Núñez, *La entrada del Barón Samedi en Santo Domingo y otros relatos*, Santo Domingo: Editorial Alto Velo, 2022 pp. 313-404. Page references to this edition will be given in parentheses in the text.

<sup>52</sup> Manuel Núñez, *El ocaso de la nación dominicana*, Santo Domingo: Alfa & Omega, 1990, p. 55.

<sup>53</sup> *International Art Contest Minority Artists Working On Statelessness Themes*, Exhibition Catalogue, November 2022 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/minorities/2022-11-03/ONLINE-Exhibition-Catalogue-Minority-Artists.pdf> [accessed 5/9/2023], p. 50

“twilight” of the nation from the one predicted by Núñez, one that involves the full extinction of solidarity, decency, and the rule of law.

Núñez’s *El ocaso de la nación dominicana* is one of many ethno-nationalist texts, the best-known of which is probably Joaquín Balaguer’s *La isla al revés: Haití y el destino dominicano* (“The island the wrong way round: Haiti and the Dominican destiny”), published in 1983. It famously describes the Dominican Republic as “the most Spanish people/nation in the Americas,” insists on “Haitian imperialism,” conflict, and incompatibility between the neighbouring nations of Hispaniola, and depicts Haitians as primitives, diseased, ignorant, and morally flawed.<sup>54</sup> A staunch ally of Trujillo, Balaguer was President of the Dominican Republic from 1960 to 1962, 1966 to 1978, and 1986 to 1996: he therefore had ample possibilities to influence cultural discourses and, unsurprisingly, *La isla al revés* has had multiple editions and is still widely available in Dominican bookshops.

Arguably, with *La entrada del Barón Samedi en Santo Domingo y otros relatos* marketed as “fiction,” Núñez aims at a wider readership than *El ocaso de la nación dominicana*. The back-cover blurb and advance publicity define the titular short-story which closes the volume as “a fiction of anticipation, a nationalist tale that projects a possible and perhaps tragic future of our lives,”<sup>55</sup> and compare Núñez’s work to the *oeuvre* of Michel Houellebecq --most likely the novel *Submission* (2015), which depicts France governed by a Muslim party which rules the country according to Islamic law. It goes without saying that the tragic future of the Dominican Republic in “La entrada del Barón Samedi en Santo Domingo” is caused by Haitian immigration. Significantly, other texts which have presented readers with a future, apocalyptic, and post-apocalyptic,

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<sup>54</sup> Joaquín Balaguer, *La isla al revés: Haití y el destino dominicano* [1983], Santo Domingo: Editora Corripio, 1994, p. 63. In Spanish, ‘pueblo’ means both ‘nation’ and ‘people.’ *La isla al revés*, is based on *La realidad dominicana* (‘The Dominican reality’), a book written in 1947, when he was Foreign Minister to Trujillo.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Manuel Núñez pondrá en circulación “La Entrada del Barón Samedi en Santo Domingo y otros relatos”’, 9 November 2022, *Acento* <https://acento.com.do/cultura/manuel-nunez-pondra-en-circulacion-la-entrada-del-baron-samedi-en-santo-domingo-y-otros-relatos-9128132.html> [accessed 5/9/2023].

Dominican Republic, like Junot Díaz's "Monstro"<sup>56</sup> or Rita Indiana's *La mucama de Omicunlé* ("Tentacles") (2015)<sup>57</sup> have also referred to Haitian-Dominican relations, anti-Haitianism, the discrimination of Dominicans of Haitian descent, and the predicament of Haitian migrants, albeit in a very different way.

In Rita Indiana's novel, Hispaniola is in the grip of a viral outbreak as is the case for Díaz's science-fictional short story where a horde of Haitians infected by a mysterious virus and turned into murderers and cannibals, ominously move towards the border with the Dominican Republic. Both texts were published before the Covid 19 emergency, and we have used them as springboards for our reflections and interventions regarding the opportunities afforded by the pandemic. Written in the historiographical mode that, counterintuitively, characterises science-fictional or speculative texts, Rita Indiana's and Díaz's fictional account relate to us stories about the present of the time of writing (respectively, 2015 and 2012) but also about the past that led to that present. Díaz and Rita Indiana, in fact, were writing about the then all too present realities of the infamous 2013 ruling and the 2011 Haitian outbreak of cholera responsible for the death of thousands of Haitians, criticising concomitant discourses which supported the denationalisation processes and warned that the Dominican apocalypse was impending due to the imminence of a stampede (which never materialised) of desperate Haitians crossing the border into the country in the aftermath of the outbreak and the devastating 2010 earthquake.

Significantly, in a move that reveals how racism, colourism and the pathologisation of Haiti and Haitians go hand in hand with Dominican anti-Haitianism, the popular name of the epidemic which, in Díaz's short story, begins to manifest itself by making Haitians blacker, is "Negrura". Moreover,

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<sup>56</sup> Junot Díaz, 'Monstro', *The New Yorker*, 4 June 2012, pp. 106–18. Page references will be in parentheses in the text.

<sup>57</sup> Rita Indiana (Hernández), *La mucama de Omicunlé*, Cáceres: Editorial Periférica, 2015.

the Dominicans affected by it are immediately branded as “haitianos” and we are also informed that Haitian-Dominicans and Haitians living in the Dominican Republic began to be “deported over a freckle” (113): this remarks sounds like a not-so-covert criticism of the way in which the Dominican government has been using arbitrary deportations, often targeting dark-skinned individuals regardless of their status, as a means to control and regulate “Haitian” immigration.

In *La mucama de Omicunlé*, instead, when Haitians fleeing the quarantine declared on their side of the island, reach the Dominican Republic, they are promptly recognised by security cameras which proceed to release a lethal gas and activate automatic collectors who disintegrate their contaminated bodies and dispose of them. Obviously, in order to “recognise” Haitians on Dominican territory, security cameras can only rely on racial profiling: notably, in December 2013, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights observed that the September 2013 ruling affected in a disproportionate manner those of Haitian descent who were/are often identified on the basis of colour in violation of the right to equality and non-discrimination. The unceremonious ruthlessness with which these “foreign” bodies are dealt with, moreover, recalls the government’s adoption of “legal means” to dispose of denationalised Dominicans of Haitian descent, irregular migrants, and their rights.

Núñez’s speculative text also connects reality and fiction as well as present, future, and past, by prefacing his story with a (strategically selected and framed) “non-fictional” event dated 2017<sup>58</sup> and by including characters who are masks or caricature under which real people are often easily identifiable –characters’ names, for example, are frequently puns or anagrams of the names of the people they correspond to. The title of Núñez’s book and short story obviously refers to James Ensor’s painting *Christ’s Entry into Brussels* (1888) where masks and

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<sup>58</sup> ‘Apresan a tres nacionales haitianos que intentaron agredir a policías en el parque Mirador Sur’, 14 September 2017, *Noticias Sin* <https://noticiassin.com/pais/apresan-a-tres-nacionales-haitianos-que-intentaron-agredir-a-policias-en-el-parque-mirador-sur-654851/> [accessed 12/09/2023]



caricatures are a prominent feature and where they are meant to signpost the hypocritical, grotesque, and shallow nature of a humanity that Ensor was so keen to critique. Ensor's monumental painting "documents" what should be a crucial occurrence, namely the arrival of Christ in the city: however, despite being at the centre of this gigantic carnivalesque procession, this momentous arrival goes unnoticed by most of the crowd and is difficult to spot even for the viewers. The association with Ensor's work clarifies that the aims of Núñez's book are to mourn the disappearance of "a great people" (12), as he puts it, but also to shame those who "look elsewhere" instead of facing the reality of their imminent extinction and/or, worse, collude with "Haitians" against Dominicans and the Dominican Republic. Ultimately, the book is a call to action for all patriotic Dominicans who should regroup to "defend" themselves and their country.

The plot is easily sketched: Parque Mirador in the capital is occupied by a rapidly multiplying number of "Haitian" families, including, of course "myriads of pregnant women and children" (314) arriving from the four cardinal points in what is described as a concerted military operation –a connotation reinforced by the repeated use of the word "invasion" or "occupation." The reference here is clearly to the Haitian occupation of Dominican territory (1822-1844) which is often evoked to caution against Haitian brutality and savagery by anti-Haitian voices and paraded as a significant precedent permanently about to repeat itself.<sup>59</sup> The cover chosen for the book –a painting by the Haitian artist Vilaire Charlot- constitutes a visual counterpart for this alarmistic rhetoric: it shows a gigantic Barón Samedi, the Lord of all Gede spirits, and his wife Grande Brigitte,

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<sup>59</sup> The occupation was brutal and included a program of Haitianisation which made French the official language of Hispaniola. It has been noted, however, that it was the Dominican Independentist Núñez de Cáceres who had invited the Haitian ruler Jean-Pierre Boyer to annex the newly formed Estado Independiente de Haití Español to defend it from an attack by colonial powers and that some accounts indicate that, at least initially, he was received with enthusiasm by Dominicans. See Eugenio Matibag, *Counterpoint, Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint: Nation, Race and State on Hispaniola*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 99 or Frank Moya Pons, *La dominación haitiana, 1822–1844*, Santo Domingo: Librería La Trinitaria, 2013, pp. 26–33.

surrounded by a huge if undistinguished crowd, and in the foreground, a huge drum and three skulls --which are normally placed on altars in honour of Gede spirits—also evoke the powers of Vodou. As if to symbolically erase history, Barón Samedi and Grand Brigitte stand right in front of the Puerta del Conde in Santo Domingo, significantly the place where the Dominican flag flew for the first time during the proclamation of Dominican Independence from Haitian rule on 27 February 1844. The combination of title and image, therefore, makes the line which separates a “fiction of anticipation” from the account of a *fait* (allegedly) *accompli* a very blurred one.

As the Parque Mirador becomes a microcosm of the nation under siege, there is no indication of why these “Haitian citizens” (316) might be in Santo Domingo, of how and why they entered the country, or of how long they had actually lived there before congregating in Parque Mirador. Predictably repeating the well-rehearsed litany of incompatible differences between the two peoples, the short story relentlessly dehumanises and animalises “Haitians”; they are dirty, smelly, diseased, contagious, uncivilised, cowardly eco-vandals and homicidal troglodytes who menacingly reproduce and multiply at an alarming rate. Protected by an army of misguided and gullible, or cunning and corrupt, “globalist,” local and international organisations, religious figures, NGOs, politicians, public intellectuals, activists, and the media, they are intent on unifying the island and erasing the Dominican way of life. The only defence for the Dominican people is to respond by resorting to “vigilantes” justice, a line of action the short story fully condones, and even tacitly praises.

Arguably, what Nuñez brands as hypocrisy, lack of patriotism, or anti-Dominican collusion, simply signposts that there continue to be “cracks” in the fabric of the anti-Haitianism he is parading as the only way forward. Recently, official hardline migration policies are also showing some of these cracks, with, as primary examples, events taking place in Greater Santo Domingo and on the

Dominico-Haitian border. These, we would argue, are the fissures in which possible new narratives for Hispaniola can develop and thrive.

In June 2023, social networks circulated disturbing images of a small child being sustained by their mother from behind the bars of the cage-like transport which was taking the migrant woman to probable detention and subsequent cross-border deportation. Subsequently, due to the furore at home and abroad<sup>60</sup> caused by the social media exposure of the incident which took place in Santo Domingo, the Director of the Migration Management arm of the Ministry of the Interior and Police, Venancio Alcantara, issued a public statement where he characterised the event as “a perturbing and harrowing incident.”<sup>61</sup> The woman was offered psychological support from the Dominican child welfare institute (CONANI) for the trauma she and her child had suffered in the process and the Migration Officer responsible was summarily dismissed. Importantly, the social networks were practically unanimous in condemning the atrocity and calling into question the humanity (or its absence) in arbitrary raids and deportations -- particularly in cages like “mobile prisons”-- whilst also underlining their futility. This grave and regrettable incident, therefore, has created a space in which to begin to discuss migration control in a more rational way than had been the case previously.

The second incident which also took place in June 2023 calls into question the lack of a humanitarian perspective and the failure to protect persons in situation of particular vulnerability. In this case, the Haitian-Dominican border is being instrumentalised as a place where security prevails at the expense of

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<sup>60</sup> On 12th September 2023, nine special rapporteurs and working groups of the UN system issued a further communication on these issues: ‘Dominican Republic: UN experts condemn detention and deportation of pregnant and postpartum Haitian women’. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/09/dominican-republic-un-experts-condemn-detention-and-deportation-pregnant-and> [accessed 12/09/2023].

<sup>61</sup> ‘Bebé se aferra a la vida en las verjas de camión de Migración mientras su madre detenida lo sostiene’, 3 June 2023, *Listín Diario* [https://listindiario.com/la-republica/20230603/bebe-aferra-vida-verjas-camion-migracion-madre-detenido-sostiene\\_756826.html](https://listindiario.com/la-republica/20230603/bebe-aferra-vida-verjas-camion-migracion-madre-detenido-sostiene_756826.html) [accessed 12/09/2023].

humanity. When newspapers reported that ambulances arrived from Haiti at the Restauración hospital (on the northern border with Haiti) despite three military checkpoints in the area, the Director of the Migration arm of the Ministry of the Interior announced a reinforced check point on the international highway at the entry point to the Restauración municipality to control the entry of pregnant Haitian migrant women. The announcement indicated that the rights of the women would be respected.<sup>62</sup> However, the discourse underpinning this announcement was undermined by a major scandal in the main Los Mina maternity hospital of Santo Domingo which, in the first few months of the year, reported an unconscionable number of fatalities; evidence showed that this was unrelated to Haitian patients who were a small minority in the period under question.

While all countries have been challenged on improving maternal mortality rates following Covid 19 (and the situation is dire in the region<sup>63</sup>) this major incident set alarm bells ringing and demonstrated that distraction tactic of “othering” and then blaming the “other” as a convenient way of *not* getting to the bottom of national problems is wearing thin. For those advocates seeking to promote new narratives of “protected motherhood” island wide, therefore, new spaces might be opening to do so: furthermore, the misogynistic slant of migration policy is no longer as broadly accepted as it might once have been since not just migrants’ rights advocates but also feminist groups, for example, are mobilizing to denounce human rights abuses where gender-based violence is crossed with racial discrimination.<sup>64</sup>

Crucially, the volume of deportations is not necessarily going to be a winning card for the current President who has re-election intentions for 2024, as

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<sup>62</sup> Ronny Mateo, ‘Controlaran entrada parturientas de Haití’, 27 June 2023, *El Nacional*, <https://elnacional.com.do/controlaran-entrada-parturientas-de-haiti/> [accessed 12/09/2023].

<sup>63</sup> ‘Zero Maternal Deaths. Prevent the Preventable’, *Pan American Health Organization*, <https://www.paho.org/en/campaigns/zero-maternal-deaths-prevent-preventable> [accessed 12/09/2023].

<sup>64</sup> ‘OBMICA y CEDESO realizan encuentro reflexivo sobre deportaciones arbitraria de embarazadas’, 7 December 2021, *Proyecto Trato Digno*, <http://tratodigno.obmica.org/index.php/2021/12/07/obmica-y-cedeso-realizan-encuentro-reflexivo-sobre-deportaciones-arbitrarias-de-embarazadas/> [accessed 12/09/2023].

Dominicans question why, if the number of these events is exceedingly high, deportations need to continue. The ensuing reasoning suggests that what is happening in practice is a so called “revolving door syndrome” where migrants with alleged irregular status are routinely deported but return to the Dominican Republic to reunite with family or come back to the work from which they were forcibly removed.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, the emphasis on the border and its securitisation, epitomised in the building of the wall and the new “Raya Abinader” announced in February 2021 and September 2023,<sup>66</sup> is hardly credible when it is an open secret that informal migration continues to be the norm, permitted by the so-called *macuteo* in which Dominican officialdom is clearly complicit.

*Macuteo*, bribery and the exploitation of those who need to cross the border not only to migrate but also to conduct their business are highlighted in *Al este de Haití* (“East of Haiti”) (2016)<sup>67</sup> by César Sánchez Beras, a hopeful and instructive account of the lives of three generations of men from the same Haitian family. Unlike Núñez, who reduced all Haitian migrants (and/or Dominicans of Haitian descent) to a homogenous undifferentiated mass, Sánchez Beras is invested in approaching the issue of Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic by focusing on the experience of individuals --a personal diary, in fact, plays an important part in the overall narrative. While Jean, the grandfather, never leaves his native Haitian village, his son Claude, and later, his grandson Christopher, move to the Dominican Republic. *Al este de Haití* takes seriously the responsibility to educate his Dominican readers who are urged to reflect on the importance of adopting a different perspective --the title

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<sup>65</sup> Leire Ventas “‘Me han devuelto 7 veces a Haití y he regresado’, la pesadilla que viven los niños y adolescentes haitianos en la República Dominicana”, 29 August 2023, *BBC News Mundo* <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/articulos/c51v25y3dl4o> [accessed 12/09/2023].

<sup>66</sup> Bridget Wooding and Kacey Mordecai, ‘The Dominican Republic Wants to Build a Border Wall. It Should Learn from US Mistakes’, 31 March 2021, *Miami Herald* <https://rights.inexile.tumblr.com/post/652953705400975360/embed> [accessed 12/09/2023]; ‘Trazada la “Raya Abinader”’, 12 September 2023, *Listín Diario* [https://listindiario.com/puntos-de-vista/20230912/trazada-rama-abinader\\_772563.html](https://listindiario.com/puntos-de-vista/20230912/trazada-rama-abinader_772563.html) [accessed 12/09/2023];

<sup>67</sup> César Sánchez Beras, *Al este de Haití*, Colombia: Editorial Nomos, 2016, pp. 81-83. References to this edition will be included in parentheses in the text.

posits Haiti, *not* the Dominican Republic, as referent and “point of departure” while the Dominican Republic is the “otro lado” (“the other side”) or a location *east of Haiti*. A shift in perspective is always fundamental to properly understand the culture of other countries and Haiti is no exception.

Significantly, at the beginning of the narrative, when Claude works as a guide and native informant for US documentarists interested in representing Haiti, he is fully committed to ensure that his culture is not misrepresented (25).

The novel is interspersed with expressions in Haitian creole (always translated in notes – that is, p. 18, 19, 40, 105) or references to Haitian Vodou which is never “othered” or demonised: its syncretism and continuities with Catholic iconography are instead brought to the fore (29). Haitian cuisine is also celebrated (40, 41) and so are Haitian storytelling (13-17) and literature from and about Haiti –the novel contains references to and quotations from Jacques Roumain, Jacques Stéphen Alexis (44) and Alejo Carpentier’s *El reino de este mundo* (“The kingdom of this world” i.e. 32-34, 41, 43, 44). Sánchez Beras foregrounds the different heartbreaks of migration: Claude laments the unfairness of having to choose between the people and things one loves (39) and the novel reveals the difficulties he and other Haitian migrants encounter in the Dominican Republic (71, 93-95, 106-107); at the same time, however, the narrative does not forget to acknowledge the pain endured by those the migrants are forced to leave behind, like Claude’s father Jean and his son Christopher.

Solidarity between Haitians and Dominicans is also presented as an important value: Claude and Mercedes are a mixed couple who share the same commitment to fight oppression and exploitation and Mercedes is happy to adopt Christopher when he turns up in the Dominican Republic, unexpectedly, to meet his father (98). Christopher’s future life “bajo otro cielo” (“under a different sky”) in the Dominican Republic is described by his father as full of opportunities (107-108), even if Sánchez Beras knows full well that regular and “irregular” migrants, and Dominicans of Haitian descent, face a huge number of

barriers and obstacles in the host country. Claude's hope for the future of his son, therefore, is not to be seen as a realistic projection but as the creative expression of a wish and of the belief that hope is a political duty: after all it is articulated, significantly, by Claude, whose deep-seated ambition is to be a writer and who has spent his life fighting injustice at great personal cost. That *Al este de Haití* was initially published in 2016 and then reissued in 2019, and again in 2023 to very positive reviews,<sup>68</sup> perhaps signposts that the openings for new, positive narratives for Hispaniola exist and that civil society actors and their allies should be as “creative” as Sánchez Beras's Claude in order to exploit them to the full.

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<sup>68</sup> Andrea Teanni Cuesta Ramón, “‘Al Este de Haití’, César Sánchez Beras”, 2 April 2023, *Acento*, <https://acento.com.do/cultura/al-este-de-haiti-cesar-sanchez-beras-9182690.html>; Minerva González Germosén, “‘Al Este de Haití’: una perspectiva distinta, de César Sánchez Beras”, 18 June 2023, *Acento* <https://acento.com.do/cultura/al-este-de-haiti-una-perspectiva-distinta-de-cesar-sanchez-beras-9210520.html>; Ramón Colombo “‘Al Este de Haití’, lectura obligada”, 20 June 2023, *Acento* <https://acento.com.do/opinion/al-este-de-haiti-lectura-obligada-9210975.html>; Denis Chantal Romero Peralta, ‘Humanidad tras la frontera’, 23 July 2023, *Acento*, <https://acento.com.do/cultura/humanidad-tras-la-frontera-9227281.html> [all accessed 5/9/2023]