

## 34

# BLESI DOUB/HERIDAS DOBLES/ DUAL WOUNDS

## Re-writing the island

*Alanna Lockward*

### Introduction

To read a book – one book – we must divide it in two. Ancient traditions say that the creation of the world may have only been possible by the powerful force of polarization, differentiation: Man/Woman, Ying/Yang and Light/Darkness. The number two is then the same number one, the manifestation of the same reality, but in opposite directions.

To articulate the complicated historical scenery of the two nations that dwell in La Hispaniola, it is also necessary to separate them, polarize them. The emergence of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and of their respective cultures, has been canonized by their chroniclers in such a way as to assume this natural splitting process – in their eagerness to define by opposition, they have obviated the absolute interdependency of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Yet, they were twins; two creatures were born in the same island, gestated in the belly of plantation economy, the machine invented by Europe for the New World.

The following text is an exercise in the hidden sight of this unique reality in the Caribbean that challenges the beatific hypothesis of an anti-apocalyptic Caribbean, as argued by Antonio Benítez Rojo or as prophesized by Edouard Glissant, who both talk about a model of Caribbean creolization for the world. Over the mountains of this island – the only in the Caribbean with a territorial dividing line between two nation/states – lie presaging clouds that threaten to liberate them with their humid truths; the exceptional life of the serpent-island that eats its own tail: that must be two to be one.

### Demetaphorization of the colonial wound

A recent account on the constant robberies at a cultural art center in Puerto Plata, a coastal town in the North of the Dominican Republic, brought tears of laughter to my disconcert. How was it possible that the thieves ‘visited’ the place so often that the director, after returning from filing a complaint for a burglary, found that he was hit again by yet another break-in? These anecdotes are everyday life in the Dominican Republic where the level of criminality is significantly higher than in Haiti.<sup>1</sup> Against all evidence, however, the common assumptions of these shared realities implies the opposite. And it is precisely in these epistemic limbos, in this tragic accumulation of misconceptions that both populations have experienced the coloniality

of sensing, being and doing that Jacques Viau Renaud's epically characterizes in his poem 'Nada Permanece Tanto como el Llanto' (Nothing Lingers so Long as the Weeping).

The following ideas on healing the coloniality of being-sensing and thinking through performance art in the island and its diasporas orbit around the seeds of a shared humanity depicted in Viau Renaud's meticulous lyrical account of a chain of historical circumstances that overshadow any aim of atonement. These seeds are as present as the shared wounds, 'Dual Wounds' as I call them here, resonating with the phenomenal political and literary legacy of this martyr and poet, articulated always from the notion of the inseparability of our co-existence:

'We took refuge under the distracted shadow of trees  
and from them  
ran to meet the mutilated life,  
we removed the earth  
and found the essence of love  
deeply rooted in the hearts of our dead.'<sup>2</sup>

At the moment of Viau's untimely death, visual artists, poets and intellectuals were self-organized in different collectives,<sup>3</sup> in circumstances still unparalleled in Saint-Domingue's<sup>4</sup> history. The legacy of the radical art of the 1960s in the Dominican Republic, a direct outcome of the struggle against dictatorial rule and later of the US invasion of 1965, was defined by the budding solidarity between the two populations of Saint Domingue. This unity found concrete expression in the more than 100 anti-Duvalier exiles who fought side by side with Dominicans against this second US Marine occupation.

Poetry as a healing tool has been consecrated by many, and the words of Audre Lorde's are particularly relevant for the ideas that follow:

Over the last few years, writing a novel on tight finances, I came to appreciate the enormous differences in the material demands between poetry and prose. As we reclaim our literature, poetry has been the major voice of poor, working class, and Colored women. [...]. The actual requirements to produce the visual arts also help determine, along class lines, whose art is whose.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, Lorde resumes in this powerful statement the distinctive intersectionality of the synergy between healing, poetry, political activism and the visual arts, which is clearly observable in the way that performance practices are embodied by Saint-Domingue's artists, and which is the focus of this examination. And in this assertion, those living in the Diaspora are equally included; my curatorial and theoretical work has consistently spiraled around this axis. Marked by economic and political exile, this quintessential Caribbean quality demands to be analyzed in the context of two brutal dictatorships and their immediate successors.<sup>6</sup> This particular demetaphorization<sup>7</sup> of the colonial and imperial wounds is what I intend to highlight with the use of 'Dual Wounds'. In their shared (diasporic) social persona, the inhabitants of this exceptional Antillean imaginary are constantly confronted with the freshness of the blood shed by two barbarous dictators. In Saint Domingue the heroes and heroines of anti-dictatorial activism and their descendants are sharing the same moment in history right now with their murderers and their offspring. Moreover, the grandsons of both Duvalier and Trujillo, born and raised outside of the island, are currently politically active in each country.

Beyond eloquent, and ultimately effective, were the recent protests organized by victims and descendants of the Duvalier regime who use political performance to sabotage President Michel

Martelly's plans to honor Jean-Claude Duvalier's burial with the protocol of a former head of state. Artist Barbara Prézeau-Stephenson, took part in the protest denouncing these plans. It is empowering to report that this collective performance, supported by those living in the island and the Diaspora, was successful and that many of the main instigators were women.

As opposed to Haiti, where Papa Doc and Baby Doc are indivisible, canonical historiography systematically avoids scrutiny of the continuities between Trujillo's dictatorship and Joaquín Balaguer's 'constitutional' rulings. In the elections of 1996, the presidential candidate, José Francisco Peña Gómez, a Dominican of Haitian descent who was orphaned by Trujillo's massacre of 1937<sup>8</sup> and had the support of half of the population, was defeated by a coalition between Balaguer and the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) founded and ruled by Juan Bosch, his traditional 'enemy'. At the core of this infamous pact, 'El Frente Patriótico Nacional' (The National Patriotic Front), represented the alleged impossibility of allowing a politician of Haitian descent to rule the country. The PLD has capitalized since this first victory on the anti-Haitian sentiments institutionalized by the Trujillo-Balaguer tandem and it is currently in complete control of the executive, judiciary and legislative powers. In the same pendular dynamic of power 'mastered' by the Trujillo-Balaguer era,<sup>9</sup> the PLD only lost the authority of its almost two decades of political reign for a short period between 2000 and 2004. The winning candidate, Hipólito Mejía from Peña-Gómez' party, the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD), is currently one of the public figures openly supporting Trujillo's grandson's political ambitions, who have smoothly entered the local sphere without major public upheavals. In other words, the overall picture of anti-Haitian sentiments and policies, which has been consecrated in the shameful Constitutional Ruling 168/13 is taking place in an atmosphere of uncanny socio-political consensus (Canton and McMullen 2014).

### Narratives of reconciliation: beyond the Parsley Massacre

The 1937 massacre of Haitian citizens ordered by Trujillo has been, until the Constitutional Rule 168/13, the most prominent subject of conversation on Haitian territory and its Diaspora with regards to its neighbors. In my experience spending long periods of time living in Haiti since 1994, this is a fact about our shared history that every single Haitian knows about. In contrast, the period of the 22 years of Jean-Pierre Boyer's ruling of the entire island is only referred to in school books with 12 lines and correspondingly, the same happens with the absence of Dominican characters in Haitian literature, as exposed by French literary critic Léon-François Hoffmann, which could explain how the same phenomena is applicable to the visual arts:

Up to the American occupation, and despite the turbulent history and frequent contacts between the two countries, the Dominican Republic and its citizens are virtually absent in Haitian literature. There is, in my knowledge, no historical novel about the invasion of Dessalines, the occupation under Boyer, the invasions of Soulouque. Nor a novel or a story that is set in the Dominican Republic, or a protagonist is a Dominican or is about a Haitian-Dominican community. It is as if the writers had decided to treat their neighbors with contempt and silence.<sup>10</sup>

Eliú Almonte, as well as some intellectuals like Freddy Prestol Castillo, who in his novel *El Masacre se Pasa a Pie* (*The Massacre Is Crossed by Foot*) recreates his own account of what Dominicans call 'El Corte' (The Cutting), and Haitians refer to as 'Kout kouto a' (The Knife Blow), has dealt with this moment in history in a rigorous manner. In 2000, Almonte presented the commissioned installation 'La isla ofendida' at X-Teresa Arte Actual in Mexico City as part of a group

show dedicated to Dominican artists on the island and the Diaspora. Two plexiglass maps of the island mirrored each other, one on the floor, the other hanging from the ceiling. On the floor, the different racializing categories used in Dominican territory to ‘classify’ people across class divides were printed in red, covered with bare bones sprinkled with sea salt. On top, the second map was completely covered with dozens of parsley bunches.<sup>11</sup> The challenging self-explanatory allegory to the 1937 Massacre represented by this herb, suspended from above, suggested a permanent state of alertness with regards to this indeed inescapable issue in our shared history. The inclusion of Almonte’s provocative and redemptory piece in this exhibition responds to my insistence in including Haiti in what is considered to be a ‘Dominican’ exhibition or essay. This emphasis has also been extensive to the regional conundrum on the Spanish-colonized Caribbean, which until very recently has systematically excluded the irrefutable historical relevance of Haiti, especially of the Haitian Revolution.<sup>12</sup> In this sense, the iconoclastic work of Eliú Almonte is explicit in many dimensions. Almonte’s commitment to political commentary in his installations and performances combined with the healing tools of historical re-enactments are an integral part of his practice.

As in the case of Eliú Almonte, historical and collective memory’s re-enactments are also recurrent in the works of Teresa María Díaz Nerio, Sasha Huber and Jochi Muñoz. A series of recent performances by Jochi Muñoz, inspired by and dedicated to Jacques Viau Renaud, testify to the poet’s enduring of the anti-imperialist legacy on Dominican soil.

### Stapling, re-enactments and healing

Born and raised in Switzerland from a Haitian mother and a Swiss father, Sasha Huber has only been able to visit Haiti twice in her life. The epic narratives of her nation and her family history as grandchild of the prominent Haitian painter, Georges Ramponneau, and her mother being also a painter have permeated her own definition as an artist.

In the ‘Shooting Back Series’, Huber literally shoots back at the narrative of the brutal repression of Duvalierism, something she did not experience personally but that defines her sensing, being and thinking in the world, which is also the case with Teresa María Díaz Nerio’s mimicry of Trujillo’s persona discussed further on. The physicality of this action and the sound of the stapling machine also operate as a self-healing method assisting the artist in the process of facing the ‘Dual Wounds’ of the Saint Domingue condition. According to Huber, each staple represents the death of countless *indiviDuals* as part of the tragic legacies of Duvalierism.

From the dictatorial legacies of the Dual Wound, Teresa María Díaz Nerio echoes in ‘*Throne of Gold*’ and ‘*Trujillo’s Island*’ (2007) the narratives of a history that she as well as Huber has mainly heard from historical and familiar accounts, and later on invested considerable time in researching. In these two performances, Díaz Nerio comments on the hyper-masculinity embedded in an autocratic persona. Avoiding oversimplifications by mimicry or caricaturization, these portrayals rely on a hieratic mode.

In a radically new direction, the staged paralysis of Díaz Nerio’s previous works is transformed into dance and spoken word in the lecture-performance ‘Ni “mamita”, Ni “mulatita”’ (2013). In her analysis of the hyper-sexualized ‘mulata’ and the ‘faithful servant’ or ‘mamita’, in the Cuban film *Yambaó* (1956), Díaz Nerio describes how these figures emerged in Cuba during colonialism, often becoming symbols of nationalist renderings after independence. Alternatively dancing a rumba, screening sequences of the film and reading her analysis, Díaz Nerio departs from the hypothesis that:

These roles are so ingrained in the Caribbean women’s view of themselves that it greatly affects their choice of social performance. In turn, these stereotypes are being

taken for granted by *white* Europeans, which in the long run contributes to perpetuate the misrepresentation of Caribbean women and in this regard prevents their accessibility to other spheres of life in the West.

(Díaz Nerio 2013)

By challenging these heteronormative parameters, Díaz Nerio provides a much-needed space for knowledge creation from a Black woman's perspective, honoring at the same time African ancestral devotions. In her performance at Nikolaj Kunsthal, Copenhagen, as part of BE.BOP 2014. SPIRITUAL REVOLUTIONS AND THE 'SCRAMBLE' FOR AFRICA', she was playing the claves, an instrument of Cuban Rumba that marks the rhythm, while the audience took their seats. Dressed in yellow, the color that identifies Ochún as the goddess of love, she rang bells at different moments to invoke the loas. Towards the end, as a final decolonizing gesture, Díaz Nerio removed from her neck an *inuke*, a horse tail used in Cuban Yoruba religion, in this case made from her own hair interlaced with gold leaves, and a *nazar boncuğu*, a Turkish evil eye pendant. By swinging both amulets on top of the audience heads whispering a protection blessing, a moment of intimate communion materialized in the name of some of the spiritualities that inform her daily life in Amsterdam.

### Expansion and reverberations of hair politics

Hair as a signifier of racialization and particularly in relation to Blackness is a recurrent theme in iconic works by artists such as Ellen Gallagher and Ingrid Mwangi Robert Hutter. The level of involvement of Black women with their hair is epic and its implications could be considered encyclopedic. The multiplicity of codes brought up by the interplays within a constructed Otherness and the dialectic between an empowered self-affirmation and an ostracized self-deprecation with regards to a *white* hegemonic norm of 'beauty' and 'cleanliness' are already a subject of many scientific publications (Prince 2010) and art projects (Opiah 2013) in the US, the Caribbean and elsewhere.

In *Dynamo* (2013) Élodie Barthelémy's melodramatic dreadlocks are paired with classical music and action painting, two emblematic examples of Western discursive hegemonies. The dreads of the maroon, of the rebel, that Bob Marley popularized in an almost unmeasurable manner, are paired to a cello concerto as well as to the signature of Jackson Pollock's legacy: action painting. The juxtaposition of these elements is yet another lyrical provocation to the hegemony of Western canons.

Dominican diaspora emergent artist, Joiir Minaya, who has won several national awards with performances, videos and installations that rely frequently on hair as a medium, experimented during a residency at Skowhegan with her peers, creating a landscape of interlaced humanity invoking on her own terms the power of hair as a multi-dimensional signifier.

An equally puzzling and revealing space of shared trust in the island is manifested in the startling success of Dominican hair dressers in Haitian territory and elsewhere in the Caribbean and beyond. The ambition of approaching *whiteness* at all costs is at the core of the phenomenal skills cultivated in this trade by generations of Dominican women. Accompanied by their legendary entrepreneurial stamina, they have achieved a unique status that facilitates their social mobility conjuring common places associating them with the sex industry.<sup>15</sup>

Nicolás Dumit Estévez has also addressed these issues from a queer perspective. The artist traveled from his home in the South Bronx to his birthplace in Santiago de los Treinta Caballeros, Dominican Republic, in order to trace any genealogical roots that he may possibly have to the neighboring Republic of Haiti. Carefully 'staged' in the diaspora, in Estévez' adoptive home,

the South Bronx, the braiding of his hair was part of the process of facing his own contradictory relationship to Blackness.

### Marassás in the mirrors of decoloniality

The metaphor of inseparability of the Duality, of the twin principle of the *Marassá*, the *loa* that symbolizes the status of Saint Domingue as the only Caribbean space with two island-nations sharing the same territory, is dealt with in 'All Tied Up/Atados'. Charo Oquet tied herself back-to-back to a Haitian vendor outside the Museo de Arte Moderno in an action reminiscent of Tehching Hsieh and Linda Montano's legendary durational piece. The impossibility of moving in any direction without the consent of the other is dramatically accentuated by the choice of tying both counterparts back-to-back.

The rope is staged as a symbol of the multi-dimensional character of human relations in Élodie Barthélémy's 'Cordes à Cailloux' (2014), a collaborative work with the rope acrobat Nicolle Perrier and the musicians Chiara Simeone and Joran Le Nabat. Sometimes the rope is in the middle somehow elevated, and at other times it duplicates the physicality of the borders between the two women on stage. The dramaturgy is deliberately enigmatic and consists in the juxtaposition of the elements on stage and their manipulation by the performers.

There is a self-evident connection with the idiosyncratic Dual collective subconscious of the Saint Domingue condition. Barthélémy is tied-up and frees herself from her counterpart, revealing the tensions and frustrations of the inescapable *Marassá* status of Saint Domingue and in doing so she also introduced her inherent potential for achieving her own healing. As in any curative agenda, a diagnosis is already part of the remedy, which can only materialize upon exploring and naming our shared realities and calling its elements by their right names.

Furthermore, I will argue as in previous conversations with Dominican critic and curator Sara Hermann, that this association of entanglements and inescapable realities typifies the particular diasporic stamina of the Saint Domingue condition. According to Dominican and Haitian statistics,<sup>14</sup> the local economies are significantly supported by international wires, known as '*remesas*' in Spanish and as '*transfé*' in Haitian Creole. The proportion is remarkable and goes to show to which extent in each imaginary the absence of those that departed is truly illusory. How much of this economic input is generated by Dominican sexual workers is a pending assignment of government statistics that painfully illustrates the double standards at play.

The financial entanglements between Saint Domingue communities in the Diaspora and their local island counterparts is conclusive in the mirroring nature of their social and political interactions. Therefore, the Saint Domingue diasporic condition, as an experience, becomes part of the narrative of self-identification even for those who have lived in the island permanently. Obviously, each experience is informed differently across gender, class and racialization, but what is important here is to highlight how this communal diasporic-self beyond geographical boundaries is transformed into an identifiable territory.

In 2005, David Pérez Karmadavis asked a Haitian vendor to write on a piece of paper his own diagnosis of the traumatic, to say it lightly, relationship between both nations and then had this message tattooed on his arm in public during the first Festival de Arte Corporal, in Caracas. As is the case with a vast majority of Dominicans, although the artist has dedicated many of his performance pieces to the exploration of the relation between both populations, until now he has never himself visited Haiti. Since he does not speak Haitian Creole, Karmadavis had no idea of what the piece of paper said. He only found out later on when Haitians would talk to him in the street asking him why he had that sentence tattooed on his arm. This is in the most strict sense a conversational piece and as durational as it gets, for that matter. The text says that all the

problems between the two nations have been created by its respective economic and political elites: 'Biznis gouvènanman benefis gouvènanman'.

### Beyond the spectrum: documenting the intimate in/and the public space

A work outside of what Huey Copeland refers to as 'the storied history of performance'<sup>15</sup> is Miami-based Adler Guerrier's 'Is what Chomsky said about Prometheus (Nine to Five)' (2001), a three-channel video featuring a man in a suit carrying a briefcase. He waits at the bus stop; walks down the street; walks into a building; enters a cafeteria. However, his activities begin at 9 p.m., when it is dark and downtown is completely deserted. This is definitively the view of an immigrant that sees himself as part of the scene, not as an accessory; there is a strong sense of dignity and self-respect in this perspective. According to Guerrier (Zorach 2014, 80), this film was based on three jazz compositions: Charles Mingus's 'Haitian Fight Song' [1955], Duke Ellington's 'Fleurette Africaine' (African Flower) [1963], and the Modern Jazz Quartet's 'Valeria' [1972]. 'Haitian Fight Song' is the piece more strongly connected to the above-mentioned sequences of the film, where the idea of the Situationist's *flâneur*<sup>16</sup> is linked to the maroon<sup>17</sup> leaders who conceived and ultimately achieved the first successful enslaved people uprising, the Haitian Revolution, which created the first Black Republic.

This particular type of awareness implied by the presence of the Black body in the urban landscape represents both a transgression and an affirmation of being. In Guerrier's native Haiti, young people also transgress the unmarked boundaries of class and racialization by becoming contemporary *pa gen pwogram*, defying pervasive notions of belonging attached to public spaces such as those beaches that until very recently were only accessible to the elite, as well as the streets of Pétiyon-Ville, which today are as promiscuous socially as the traditionally crowded areas of downtown Port-au-Prince. This displacement of landscapes' 'legitimacy' dooms any attempt at social engineering to be an exercise in futility. The illegality of the Black body is a *de facto* impossibility in Haiti and the absurdity of its criminalization is what keeps the legacy of the Haitian Revolution a glorious reminder in the face of Ferguson et al. Here the Black body in the landscape has a decolonial history that is as real as it gets, a living memory that has been consistently and painfully erased by colonial archives on the African continent and elsewhere.

Underlining the conundrums of absence–presence in performance art, different healing actions for what I refer to as 'post-earthquake healing performance', have been poetically embraced by Sasha Huber and Barbara Prézeau-Stephenson, and Jean-Ulrick Désert. 'Bol du Ciel' is an elegiac action conceived by Désert to mourn the earthquake victims and their survivors. A poster reproducing the landscape of the sky at the official time when the earthquake of January 10, 2010 occurred portrays each of the 750 stars with a metal low relief miniature profile of Josephine Baker. Crushed to form a ball, the posters will be sold by a street vendor holding on her/his head a typical market basket. She/he will offer the artist's work for a nominal fee with a simple proclamation: 'Bol du Ciel'. When opened, the buyer will see in this crushed paper relevant information about the performance in Haitian Creole, French, English and German. The physical presence of the artist is redundant in this piece which is a dynamic that permeates some of his recent performances as explained above. This action is still awaiting its crystallization on Haitian soil but was presented as an installation at the major exhibition 'Haïti, Deux Siècles de Création Artistique', 11.19.2014–02.15.2015 (Haiti, Two Hundred Years of Artistic Creation), presented at the Grand Palais, in Paris.

Accompanying these healing tools seen from the perspective of a mourning diaspora, Sasha Huber in 'Haïti Cherie', yet another private performance, is dressed symbolically with the colors of the Haitian flag while drawing angels on the snow. Her impotent grief, intensified by distance, has an individual and social undertone distinctively spiritual and formally executed with her characteristic visual precision.

In 'The Fréda Circle' (2013), the myth of the seductive Erzulie Fréda is invoked by the Vodoun chanting of seven women while they embroider petals of artificial flowers on a transparent veil circle measuring five meters in diameter. Originally conceived as spiritual and emotional support for women who lost their partners during the earthquake, the essential components of this piece celebrating womanhood and solidarity, spoken word and embroidering, are also exposed in 'The Fabrication of the Creole Woman' (2014), presented at Yale University.

Six women (including Prézeau-Stephenson) prepared blog posts in advance about the role of sewing in their families. After contemplating and sharing these stories, they came together, bringing assorted scraps of fabric brought from home. The result was a multimedia performance experience, documented through pictures and texts, and dedicated to Audre Lorde. Mirroring the legacy of this inspiring Caribbean diaspora Black feminist, the body politics and knowledge creation of Saint Domingue artists sharing their Dual Wounds have been changing the tone and subject of the conversation on aesthetics, aesthesis, gender, spirituality and healing, among other liberation agendas. By means of re-interpreting socio-political misconceptions across racialized class boundaries and filling historical vacuums using performance art as a medium, they are facilitating much-needed curative spaces in the island and beyond.

## Bibliography

- Cosentino, Donald J. (1998). *Vodou Things. The Art of Pierrot Barra and Marie Cassaise*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Hall, Stuart (1989). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. Framework (no. 36). <http://www.rlwclarke.net/Theory/PrimarySources/HallCulturalIdentityandDiaspora.pdf> (Downloaded 10.06.2014).
- Hermann, Sara (2002). 'Eliú Almonte: Aspavientos'. In: *Arte Contemporáneo Dominicano*. Madrid: Turner/Casa de América.
- (2001). Presentación. Dimensiones Heroicas. Santo Domingo: Museo de Arte Moderno.
- Hoffmann, Léon-François (2008). 'La République Dominicaine et les Dominicains dans la fiction haïtienne'. In: *The Caribbean Writer as Warrior of the Imaginary – L'Ecrivain caribéen, guerrier de l'imaginaire*. Gysels, Kathleen and Bénédicte Ledent (eds.). Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi. PP. 345–58.
- Lao Montes, Agustín (2007). 'Hilos Descoloniales. Trans-localizando los espacios de la Diáspora Africana'. *Tabula Rasa*. Bogotá Colombia, No. 7: 47–79, July–December 2007.
- (2006). 'Stages of a Panic Curator. My Catharsis with the Holy Infant of Prague (aka Nicolàs Dumit Estévez)'. New York: Franklin Furnace. <http://www.franklinfurnace.org/research/related/Estévez.php> (Downloaded 11.06.2014).
- Lockward Artilles, Antonio (2009). *Haitianos y Cocolos en la Literatura Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Editora Universitaria UASD.
- (1965). 'Prólogo'. In: *Permanencia del Llanto*. Santo Domingo: Ediciones del Frente Cultural. <http://www.marxists.org/espanol/tematica/literatura/viaurenaud/permanenciadelllanto.pdf> (Downloaded 10.07.2014).
- Lorde, Audre (1984). 'Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference'. In: *Sister Outsider*, Los Angeles: Freedom, 114–23.
- Mignolo, Walter (2012a). 'Decolonial Aesthesis and Other Options Related to Aesthetics'. In: *BE.BOP 2012. Black Europe Body Politics*, Alanna Lockward, W Mignolo, eds. Berlin: Ballhaus Naunynstrasse. <http://blackeuropebodypolitics.wordpress.com/catalogue/>
- Viau Renaud, Jacques. *Poesía Completa (1985/2006/2010)*. Santo Domingo–Berlín 2006. First edition: CEDEE, Santo Domingo, 1985. Second edition: Ediciones del Cielonaranja, 2006. Third edition: Ediciones Cielonaranja, 2010.



Notes

- 1 At the moment of writing this text, the Haitian Ambassador Fritz Cinéas was robbed in his house by two policemen and four civilians. During his visit to the police national headquarters for a press conference on the matter, his cellular phone was apparently stolen. After prompt inquiries the phone was recovered. The incident has been explained as a result of the chaotic atmosphere of the press conference. The phone's disappearance, whether accidental or criminal, is a painfully illustrative episode that reveals the absolute insecurity that the population must endure on a daily basis with the systematic involvement of the police in their adversities. <http://acento.com.do/2015/actualidad/8222650-aparece-celular-robado-embajador-de-haiti-durante-rueda-de-prensa-en-palacio-pn/>
- 2 'Nos refugiamos bajo las sombras distraídas de los árboles y desde ellas corrimos al encuentro de la vida mutilada, removimos la tierra y encontramos las raíces del amor profundamente arraigadas al corazón de nuestros muertos'. Renaud (2010, 108), translation by the author.
- 3 A pioneering overview of these contributions is compiled in the catalogue of the exhibition *Dimensiones Heroicas*. Museo de Arte Moderno, July 2001, Santo Domingo.
- 4 The usage of the colonial term used by the French to name the island is meant to emphasize the conundrums of translation and coloniality. The name is taken from the 'original' Spanish colonial appellation which previously referred to the island as 'La Española'. The fact that the capital of the Dominican Republic is Santo Domingo reflects the ambivalences of canonical historiographies which very often uses the same term to refer to Haiti as well as the entire island as *Saint-Domingue*. An illustrative example of how confusing the naming politics of the island are, is materialized in C. L. R. James legendary 'The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution' (1938). San Domingo never existed, instead, Ayiti and Quisqueya are the original people's designations for the island.
- 5 Lorde (1984, 116).
- 6 François Duvalier 1957–1971 + Jean-Claude Duvalier 1971–1986. Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina 1930–1961 + Joaquín Balaguer 1960–1962; 1966–1978 (For its ferocious prosecution of political opponents, this period is known as 'Los Doce Años', *The Twelve Years*) and 1986 to 1996.
- 7 I am very thankful to Silvio Torres-Saillant for the inspiring conversation on this particular matter.
- 8 The massacre of an indeterminate number of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent, ordered in 1937 by the dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina, despotically in place for 31 years, is an open wound in the relations between the two peoples. The only local public exposure of this tragedy was championed by foreign Protestant ministers. The agreement on the border of the only island in the Caribbean with these characteristics dates back to 1936, as a result of the negotiation between President Sténio Vincent and Trujillo, who added new clauses to the 'original' version of 1929 by the American occupation authorities (Haiti 1915–1934, Dominican Republic 1916–1924). The year following the ratification of this agreement, Trujillo ordered the massacre.
- 9 Balaguer was defeated for re-election in 1978 and was out of power for the next eight years.
- 10 Hoffmann (2008, 349) continues analyzing the specific role that Dominican identity plays in the Haitian literary imagination which until today is strictly circumscribed to representing Dominican women as seductresses and prostitutes. Male characters are symptomatically absent.
- 11 'Perejil' is parsley in Spanish. The 'r' sound was used as a mean to identify who would pronounce it as a Haitian or a Dominican.
- 12 I have done this consistently since my physical and mental decolonization processes started in 1988, after my participation as a dancer in the Afro-Dominican choreography *Vidas y Muertes de una Isla*, by Marilí Gallardo, dedicated to *Saint Domingue*, and in 1994 after my first visit to Port-au-Prince, in my curatorial and theoretical work as well as a writer and journalist. Furthermore, after the Constitutional Ruling 168/13, I have defined myself as an epistemic Haitian and a Dominican in transit.
- 13 Haitian men's preference for Dominican sex workers is documented by historian Georges Corvington in one of the volumes of his extensive work *Port-au-Prince au Cours des Ans (1743–1950)*. According to the author, the exotic prostitution was installed in the city starting in 1923, much to the detriment of their Haitian peers. The first customers were the American soldiers that occupied then the entire island, followed by local ones motivated by curiosity. At that time, upper-class Haitians disapproved of the proliferation of Dominican brothels (then called 'dancings'). Nowadays, after more than seven decades of

uninterrupted exercise, the status of the Dominican sex worker in Haiti is recognized and forms part of the next meeting of the Bilateral Commission headed by the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries. According to a statement by the Haitian Embassy's chargé d'affaires, Guy Lammothe, this new point of negotiation is the latest addition to the agenda to be discussed in January 1998. See Lockward (2014, 35).

- 14 In an unpublished interview Gabriel Bidegain, chief technical advisor of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Haiti states in this regard that: 'Remittances exceed 30% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and at the household level, 52% reach the end of the month thanks to money transfers from their working relatives abroad. In those places, mainly in the United States, migrants have improved their educational level. 16.5% have licentiate level, masters or PhDs. The main negative impact is the brain drain (skilled personnel at different levels migrating) affecting the country's development.'  
According to Dominican official data: 'Dominican Republic is the sixth recipient of remittances in Latin America and the Caribbean. From the macroeconomic standpoint, remittance income plays an important role, and in the period 2000–2007 accounted for 8% of GDP on average. According to figures from the Central Bank of the Dominican Republic, the remittance income in the balance of payments increased from USD 1.689 million in 2000 to USD 3.111 million in 2008. Moreover, remittances are the second largest source of income, second only to the tourism sector': 'Programa de mejora de la información y procedimientos de los Bancos Centrales en el área de remesas' (2010).
- 15 Taken together, Guerrier's flâneur-style pictures from the late 1990s to the present offer a peculiar articulation of imagistic practice that stands in contrast both to contemporary large-format color photography, which aims for the immersive effect of a tableau, and to the storied history of performance documentation, perhaps the series' closest analogue in terms of its structural underpinnings. [...] Even more importantly, in his practice there is no initial target that spurs either action or interaction, distinguishing his work not only from performance art more broadly, but also from influential models of African diasporic urban intervention predicated on the [B]lack subject's visual recognition by unnamed passersby. As opposed to Stanley Broun's requests for directions in early 1960s' Amsterdam, Adrian Piper's cross-dressing as a black man on the make in 1970s Cambridge, or William Pope. L's abject crawls through 1980s' Manhattan, the ambit and ambition of Guerrier's movements through space seem less testaments to the racialization of civil society and more functions of the unknowable terrain of his own subjective inclinations at a given moment in time. See Copeland (2014, 44).
- 16 Literally translatable as 'stroll; strolling; sauntering', flânerie is most often associated with a rich tradition of unencumbered, non-confrontational movement through physically and socially shifting Francophone geographies. In late 19th-century Parisian visual and poetic discourse, the aimless looking of the 'gentleman of leisure' was key to understandings of the city's spatial transformation into a center of modern capital. For Haitian writers in the 1920s living under American occupation, the wanderings of bourgeois *pa gen pwogram*, meaning those with no program or schedule, were seen as central to the gathering of native knowledges that might be amassed and mobilised in the making of a national culture. And amid the upheavals of mid-20th-century France, the related concept of the *dérive*, or drift – an uncharted, meandering journey through an urban landscape – would become central to the radical practice of the Situationist International, particularly group members' exploration of 'the effects of the geographical environment on the emotions and behaviors of individuals'. See Copeland (2014, 45).
- 17 Marronage – the lifestyle, ethics and socio-political organisation of runaway enslaved communities outside the plantation system during colonialism – has been an intrinsic component of the radical imagination of countless liberation struggles in the Americas.