From De-to-Post-to-Neo-Colonization: A Brief History of Haiti's Occupations

Introduction

> *When you examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not belonging to a given race, a given species.*[1] *– Frantz Fanon*

The overwhelming response of the Western nations to Haiti's devastating earthquake on January 12, 2010, exemplifies the connection between race, humanitarian crisis, and so-called "failed states." Haiti's underdeveloped infrastructure created a space whereby an earthquake could kill as many as 316,000 people, mostly in the highly populated area of Port Au Prince. The militarized relief effort focused on the securitization of relief aid for the first several days following the earthquake, effectively marginalizing Haiti's inhabitants who struggled to survive. The securitization of relief aid continues a narrative that frames Haitians as dangerous, violent, a people predisposed to criminality, necessitating security before distributing desperately needed supplies. The significant delay evinces the perception of Haiti as a place that will never "get it right," and therefore, immediate, pervasive, and sustaining assistance is not a top priority: reestablishing control is.

Haiti's long and racialized history produced narratives of Haitians as "others" – a group predisposed to underdevelopment because of their lack of resourcefulness, ingenuity, and financial responsibility. These discourses disassociate most Haitians from the Eurocentric notions of civility and progress. By framing Haiti as a nation that lies outside modernity and progress, its only hope is through developmental aid from former colonizers, international lending agencies, the United Nations (UN), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Of course, these global "civil servants" promote development strategies that are amenable to their own economic and political self-interest. Neoliberal economic policies, odious debts, despotic regimes, and the overthrow of democratic governments can find their roots in this neocolonial order. Through racial narratives that project Haitians as existing outside modernity, and through

[1] FRANTZ FANON, The wretched of the earth 40 (Grove Press. 1965).

neocolonial influences in all phases of Haitian life, Haitians are subject to global institutions that remove their agency and replace it with dependency.

In this paper I will examine Haiti's racialized colonial history through a postcolonial lens and provide a critical interpretation of its history towards its present. Through this analysis of Haiti's history, we can interrogate Eurocentric racial discourses and discursive strategies that took part in the colonial domination of so much of the world. By critically examining Haiti's historical development, in effect, we will see a counter-discursive thesis that critiques the foundational notion that Haiti's present circumstance is the result of its own doing. Thus, "the rereading and rewriting of the European historical and fictional record are vital and inescapable tasks"[2] which I must address to situate the postcolonial realities and conflicts seen in Haiti today. I will then affirm and analyze the racial nature of military intervention, international aid, and developmental support in Haiti. Through this analysis, I will argue that a neocolonial order permeates the Haitian political, economic, and social environments. By doing so, I will provide a basis to argue that racial and cultural superiority arrives with intervention, aid, and development.[3]

The Emergence from Slavery

> *Haiti where negritude rose to its feet for the first time and said it believed in its own humanity.*[4] – Aimé Césaire

The late eighteenth century was the century of freedom for Western civilizations. Freedom – the highest and universal political and social value. Yet, ironically, slavery – the systematic capitalist enslavement of non-Europeans as a labor force in the colonies – stood as the utter antithesis of freedom, underwriting the entire economic system of the west, while simultaneously facilitating the global spread of Enlightenment ideals.[5] The French colony of St. Domingue was one of the richest colonies in the world and provided France with a steady flow

[2] HELEN TIFFIN, Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-discourse In The post-colonial studies reader 95 (Bill Ashcroft & Gareth Griffiths eds., Routledge 2005). (she points to the importance of counter-discourses and narratives)

[3] In a sense, this project is idealist in nature. I hope to construct a counter-majoritarian narrative that will unmake the system of images and words that frame the common view of Haiti. As a white male, I'm positioned to critique the European and American transgressions, but I lack the capability to fully understand the position of the Haitian people. This is what Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic term the empathic fallacy. Please see: Delgado, Richard, and Jean Stefancic. 2000. Critical race theory: the cutting edge. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

[4] AIMÈ CÈSAIRE, Return to my native land (Penguin Books. 1969).

[5] SUSAN BUCK-MORSS, Hegel, Haiti and Universal history 31 (University of Pittsburgh Press. 2009).

of capital. Driven by slave labor and supported by fertile soil and ideal climate, St. Domingue produced half the world's coffee and 75 percent of its sugar.[6] In 1788, ninety percent of the island's population were of African Descent.[7] The French enslaved 30,000 Africans annually in the colony and depended on armed men of color to preserve social order.[8] French slave owners practiced the revolting exploitative strategy of working their slaves to death and quickly importing new ones. The slave trade demonstrates the dark connection of labor, race, and capitalism. Despite the industrial revolution in modern civilizations, labor costs in Haiti were cheaper than the machine. By 1789 the "pearl of the Caribbean" was, for most of its inhabitants, "the worst hell on earth."[9]

The tragic contradiction of colonial France – reveling in enlightenment rhetoric codified in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, which begins "all men are born and remain free and equal in rights," – and the cruel use of slave labor provides a window into the subaltern, subhuman experience. The French enlightenment did not admit the black body but kept him out of sight, "[a]ll it saw in him was the promise of a quantitative progression of the potential, 'man.'"[10] Bodies the French could shackle, whip, rape, and kill with impunity. Dominant French thought argued the "[b]lacks would regain real freedom there as they became human. Having acknowledged their duties, they would accede to the realm of rights through pathways and entrances prepared for them by France."[11] Only the civilized French knew the realms of freedom and only through them could this freedom be realized. In other words, blacks were nothing but labor and France would transform them into human beings. One way the colonizer transforms the savage, subaltern being, is through language imperialism – subjugating the ethos that occurs in speech.[12] This relationship between the colonizer and colonized plays an important role in Haiti's colonial past and present.

The class and racial structure in St. Domingue created a space for revolution. Peter Hallward, a noted postcolonial and critical theorist notes:

---

[6] PAUL FARMER, The uses of Haiti 56 (Common Courage Press. 1994).
[7] JOHN D. GARRIGUS, Before Haiti : race and citizenship in French Saint-Domingue 5 (Palgrave Macmillan. 2006).
[8] Id. at, 229.
[9] MARGOT WILLIAMS & JOSEPHINE MCSWEENEY, Cuba from Columbus to Castro 245 (Messner. 1982).
[10] LOUIS SALA-MOLINS, Dark side of the light slavery and the French Enlightenment 69 (University of Minnesota Press. 2006).
[11] Id. at, 116.
[12] For more discussion on language imperialism see pg. 35

> Coercive power in the colony was divided between three increasingly antagonistic groups – the white plantation owning elite, the representatives of French imperial power on the island, and an ever more prosperous but politically powerless groups of mulattos and former slaves (*affranchis)*.[13]

The white ruling class constantly oppressed the *affranchis* and mulattoes by restricting access to law and politics – the center of civil society. St. Domingue's mulattoes owned a fourth of the colony's slaves and an equal proportion of land. The *affranchis* and mulatto middle class, who owned the means of production, were the greatest force in developing and sustaining the French colony. The middle class wanted civil and political rights like the white plantation owners. This desire to benefit from the ideological capitalist system is a result of what Marx calls "false consciousness." Through "false consciousness" the subjugated "internalize the perspectives, values, and point of view of the very people who conquer them, thus becoming unconscious agents in their own subordination."[14] The *affranchis* petitioned the National Assembly for political rights and privileges in 1789. On May 15, 1791, the Assembly passed a decree declaring that people of color, born of free parents, were entitled to all the privileges of French citizens.[15] Unmoved by the revolutionary ideals and unconvinced of the humanity of the free people of color, the white colonists refused to enforce the decree.[16] Shortly thereafter, white and *affranchis* militias were at war.

Taking advantage of the chaos, a slave rebellion began in August 22, 1791. The French who were profiting from the slave trade in St. Domingue, of course, did not want the colony to be free. Therefore, "the French revolutionaries concluded that the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* did not apply to enslaved Africans. High-sounding rhetoric about the universality of liberty could scarcely be allowed to trump the business of the nation."[17] In an attempt to quell the rebellion, French emissaries from the mainland came to St. Domingue to enforce the declaration of social equality and attempt a class alliance between the white landowners, mullatoes, and *affranchis*.[18] The declaration of social equality is not to be confused

---

[13] PETER HALLWARD, Damming the flood : Haiti, Aristide, and the politics of containment 12 (Verso. 2007).
[14] RICHARD DELGADO, Rodrigo's Eleventh Chronicle: Empathy and False Empathy, 84 California Law Review 76, 69 (1996).
[15] GEORGE W. BROWN, The Origins of Abolition in Santo Domingo, 7 Journal of Negro History 22, 374 (1922).
[16] VALERIE QUINNEY, Decisions on Slavery, the Slave-Trade and Civil Rights for Negroes in the Early French Revolution, 55 see id. at 128 (1970).
[17] MICHAEL O. WEST, et al., From Toussaint to Tupac the Black international since the age of revolution 74 (University of North Carolina Press. 2009).
[18] Id. at.

with full racial equality – slavery was left intact. Instead, it created a structure of domination whereby *affranchise* and mulattoes had new social and civil rights and could legally own and exploit slaves. This dynamic further displaced and agitated relationships of class and race in the colony. The ostensible class alliance did not deter the slaves who fought for their freedom and equality.

By September 1791, the slave rebellion fractured St. Domingue and provided a power vacuum for other Western colonial powers to enter the island. Spain invaded in 1792 and England in 1793. Many French colonists lobbied the British government to intervene citing fear of the slave insurgency and the radicalization of France.[19] One third of the 30,000 whites fled to the United States, many in Louisiana, which still maintains a French flavor, and worked *against* the establishment of an independent Haiti.[20] A popular poem of the time speaks to this complexity:

> Yesterday I was born a Spaniard,
> in the afternoon I was French,
> By the evening Black I was,
> Today they say I'm English.
> I don't know what will become of me![21]

The French commissioner and parliamentary lawyer Sonthonax, "faced with the treason of pro-British whites, the Spanish and English invasions, and widespread slave uprisings, was forced to abolish slavery on August 29, 1793."[22] When he handed out 30,000 rifles to the newly freed slaves he stated, "this is your freedom; the one who will take this rifle back will want to enslave you anew!"[23] The French had seemingly abolished racism by the provision of equality passed in 1791 and now, for the sake of the colony, abolished slavery. Abolishing slavery was necessary for the French to hold their imperial power in St. Domingue. Not only were the French exploiters of labor, but also of war. The militarized enslaved population, empowered by the promise of freedom, fought the Spanish and English who both practiced slavery in their own colonies. Former slaves and their owners fought a common enemy, but for different and contradicting

---

[19] PATRICK BELLEGARDE-SMITH, Haiti the breached citadel 62 (Canadian Scholars' Press. 2004).
[20] Id. at.
[21] SIBYLLE FISCHER, Modernity disavowed : Haiti and the cultures of slavery in the age of revolution 131 (Duke University Press. 2004).
[22] BELLEGARDE-SMITH, 62.
[23] PLOÎRMEL BROTHERS OF CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION OF & J. C. DORSAINVIL, Manuel d'histoire d'Haiti 71 (H. Deschamps. 1958).

reasons. The elite, mullatoes and *affranchis* fought to restore their former colony's glory, while the slaves fought for their freedom.

Under the flag of the French, Toussaint Louverture led the newly freed slaves in a successful military stratagem to rid St. Domingue of non-French interests. In 1795, Touissant removed Spanish forces and recovered Spanish occupied towns.[24] Toussaint defeated the English in 1797 and crushed a mulatto uprising that killed 15,000 mulattoes.[25] By 1798, St. Domingue was under Toussaint's control and the French had little practicable influence. The slave rebellion shifted the balance of power upside down.

In 1801, following his astonishing rise to power, Toussaint declared a new constitution. The constitution banned slavery, gave legislative sovereignty to St. Domingue, and appointed him as governor for life, but did not officially declare independence from France.[26] Article 3 of the constitution stated, "there can be no slaves in the territory; servitude is forever abolished. Here, all men are born, live, and die, free and French."[27] Article 1 states that St. Domingue "forms part of the French Empire, but is subject to particular laws."[28] How the French were to enforce their authority was unclear, since Article 19 states that no laws were valid in the territory, unless approved by the assembly of St. Domingue.[29] Enraged by the lack of control in his colony, Napoleon intervened.

The French mobilized rhetoric of their own cultural superiority and denigrated Touissant and his followers as savages. Napoleon stated, "The freedom of the negroes, if recognized in St. Domingue and legalized by France, would at all times be a rallying point for freedom-seekers of the New World."[30] Now, St. Domingue was the only place in the world that effectively abolished slavery. If St. Domingue's revolutionary spirit were to spread to other colonies, the imperialist nations would lose their most profitable labor force. Millions of French jobs were dependent on slavery. The French saw the slave rebellion and the actions of Toussaint as dangerous to their interests. "On the pretext that a Negro is not a human being, the French made a slave of him, but

[24] BELLEGARDE-SMITH, 62.
[25] Id. at.
[26] WEST, et al., 76.
[27] FISCHER, 229.
[28] Id. at.
[29] Id. at.
[30] STÈPHEN ALEXIS, Black liberator; the life of Toussaint Louverture (Macmillan Co. 1949).

when he reacted like a hero, they saw him as a monster."[31] By seeing the slave rebellion as a movement of monsters, France's cultural superiority justified a military intervention. Supported by the United States, England, Holland, and Spain, Napoleon attempted to eradicate black freedom from his colony.

Upon arrival in St. Domingue, Napoleon's brother-in-law, Charles Leclerc, and the largest expeditionary forces ever to sail the Atlantic, went about reestablishing French dominance in their colony. Against such overwhelming forces, Toussaint's army gave little resistance. One by one, Toussaint's generals lured by promises of position and protection, defected to the French.[32] The French captured Toussaint and charged him with treason. On the day of Toussaint's deportation, one of Napoleon's generals stated:

> And you, ferocious African, who triumphed for a while on the tombs of your masters whom you cowardly slaughtered...return to the political nothingness to which nature condemns you. Your atrocious pride shows only too well that servitude is your lot. Return to your duties and count on the generosity of your masters. They are white and French.[33]

The French dragged him to the ship in chains and Toussaint declared, "with my overthrow, one has merely cut down the trunk of the tree of black freedom. But it will grow from its roots that are numerous and deep."[34] Toussaint died in prison in the Jura Mountains in France, on April 7, 1803.[35] Removing powerful leaders like Toussaint reverberates into the future with the removal of the first democratically elected president of Haiti – Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Even though the French held high ideals about the rights of man, the French did not consider black bodies fully human and not subject to the enlightenment ideals. After the French regained control of St. Domingue, they established a plan to recreate the old order. Concluding that freed slaves hardened by battle would not submit into slavery, the French decided to murder all except those who had not yet reached their teenage years.[36] This genocidal solution would kill off most of the slave population, but as they had done historically, they would restock the colony with fresh supplies from Africa. Unwilling to see their territory and people enslaved again by the

[31] C. L. R. JAMES, The Black Jacobins; Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution (Vintage Books. 1963).
[32] WEST, et al., 77.
[33] SALA-MOLINS, 116.
[34] LAURENT DUBOIS, Avengers of the New World : the story of the Haitian Revolution 278 (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 2004).
[35] BELLEGARDE-SMITH, 64.
[36] WEST, et al., 77.

French, one by one the generals abandoned Leclerc and joined forces with the active slave militias commanded by Toussaint's lieutenant – Dessalines.

Dessalines led a large force against the French. Calling for immediate independence from France and the expulsion of all whites. Dessalines forced Leclerc's army to retreat, and by 1803, the French surrendered. Napoleon lost almost all of his 80,000 troops in his campaign to return the people of St. Domingue to slavery.[37] Historians commonly attribute Napoleon's waning power to the loss of his armies in St. Domingue. One noted Haitian historian wrote of this time, "for self-sacrifice and heroism, the men, women and children who drove out the French stand second to no fighters for independence in any place or time. And the reason was simple. They had seen at last that without independence they could not maintain their liberty."[38]

On January 1, 1804, Dessalines took the final step of declaring independence from France and, with that, ended colonialism and slavery. Dessalines renamed the country Haiti, after its name in Arawak. The Haitians created the new flag by deriving the French flag that symbolized the three classes – blue (black), white, and red (mulatto). The Haitians tore out the white center of the flag and joined the blue and red to symbolize the new alliance formed in battle.[39] Dessalines named himself governor-general and Emperor of Haiti for life as Emperor Jen-Jacques I.[40]

The 1805 Haitian constitution was thoroughly nationalist in character. For example: Article 12 reads, "No whiteman of whatever nation he may be, shall put his foot on this territory with the title of master or proprietor, neither shall he in future acquire any property therein;" Article 14 reads, "All acception of colour among the children of one and the same family, of whom the chief magistrate is the father, being necessarily to cease, the Haytians shall hence forward be known only by the generic appellation of Blacks;" and Article 12 in *General Dispositions* states, "All property which formerly belonged to any white Frenchmen, is incontestably and of right confiscated to the use of the state." Confiscating French lands reclaimed nearly three-fourths of the national territory. Other significant articles established the freedom of worship, forbade any distinctions between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" births, and outlawed creating nobility classes.[41]

[37] Id. at, 80.
[38] JAMES, 288.
[39] BELLEGARDE-SMITH, 64.
[40] Id. at.
[41] Id. at, 65.

When the accounts of the age of revolutions are told, Haiti, the first country to abolish slavery and the second republic (the first black republic), is often never mentioned. The grandiose story of the American Revolution and its heroic claim to independence from the English monarch and establishing a democracy usually takes center stage. Or, the French revolution and the rise of the bourgeoisie, supported by enlightenment ideals that toppled the monarch and its despotic rule. Ironically, Haiti was the only revolution that "forced the unconditional application of the principles that inspired the revolutions: affirmation of the natural unalienable rights of all human beings."[42] In this sense, the Haitian revolution expanded the definition of freedom adopted by the French and Americans who prided themselves on their love of freedom, but still practiced slavery. The Haitian revolution initiated anti-racist movements.[43] However, the colonizers believed Haitians could not conceive freedom; "Haitian slaves *as slaves* should have been incapable of conceiving freedom, let alone a revolution [therefore] they should have been unable to comprehend the significance of the nation-state, let alone found the first Black republic in the world."[44] This process of Othering – defining the Haitians as backwards, undeveloped, and irresponsible – continues today.

France neither recognized nor traded with Haiti until 1825, which only came about after France compelled Haiti to pay an indemnity of 150 million francs of gold.[45] Although the French reduced the price to 90 million francs of gold, by the end of the 19th century, Haiti's payments to France consumed nearly 80 percent of its national budget.[46] France received its last installment in 1947. "Haitians thus had to pay their original oppressors three times over – through the slaves' initial labor, through compensation for the French loss of this labor, and then in interest on the payment of this compensation."[47] This debt has done more to create a fragile nation state than any other. The United States did not recognize Haiti until 1861, after Lincoln abolished slavery and Congress followed suit. Napoleon's fear of a free black republic continues to influence US relations with Haiti.

---

[42] HALLWARD, 11.
[43] DAVID THEO GOLDBERG, The threat of race : reflections on racial neoliberalism 10 (Wiley-Blackwell. 2009).
[44] PATRICIA E. CHU, Race, nationalism and the state in British and American modernism 11 (Cambridge University Press. 2006).
[45] ROBERT FATTON, Haiti: The saturnalia of emancipation and the vicissitudes of predatory rule, 27 Third World Quarterly, 117 (2006).
[46] HALLWARD, 12.
[47] Id. at.

The United States Military Occupation

Beginning as an economic and geopolitical strategy, the United States Marine Corp invaded and occupied Haiti from 1915 to 1934. From 1911 to 1915, Haiti had six presidents, all of whom were overthrown or assassinated in political unrest.[48] Haiti was in turmoil. After the outbreak of World War I, the United States saw Haiti as an important naval port to neutralize European encroachments in the Western Hemisphere. The US grew concerned with the threat of security and financial instability if Haiti were to fall into the hands of Germany and violate the Monroe Doctrine.[49] The Doctrine, established in 1823, provides that any efforts by European countries to colonize land in the Americas would be seen as acts of aggression and would require U.S intervention.[50] A newspaper story in the *America Pageant* stated:

> Hoping to head off trouble, Washington urged Wall Street bankers to pump dollars into the financial vacuums in Honduras and Haiti to keep out foreign funds. The United States, under the Monroe Doctrine, would not permit foreign nations to intervene, and consequently it had some moral obligation to interfere financially to prevent economic and political chaos.[51]

Haiti was *not* one of the listed countries that fell under the jurisdiction of the Monroe Doctrine, yet that didn't prevent the United States from treating Haiti as a country that required paternalistic discipline.[52] This action confirmed the stereotype of the incapable black nation.

The United States saw itself as a superior nation militarily, economically, and democratically, so with occupation, their intervention in Haitian affairs was humanitarian. This echoes past French occupation as well as reasons for US' current policy toward the island republic. Despite the rhetoric the US mobilized to "restore order," some scholars note that this repudiation of Haitian sovereignty "[h]istorically and symbolically, constituted a payback for the revolution against slavery, white supremacy, and colonialism over a century earlier. As such, it

---

[48] DAVID MCBRIDE, Missions for science : U.S. technology and medicine in America's African world 80 (Rutgers University Press. 2002).

[49] RAYFORD W. LOGAN, The U.S. 'Colonial Experiment' in Haiti, 17 The World Today, 438 (1961).

[50] Gale encyclopedia of American law 104 (Gale/Cengage Learning. 2011).

[51] JAMES W. LOEWEN, Lies my teacher told me : everything your American history textbook got wrong 213-214 (New Press : Distributed by Norton. 1995).

[52] JOAN HOFF, A Faustian foreign policy from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush : dreams of perfectibility 36 (Cambridge University Press. 2008).

amounted to Jefferson's revenge."[53] Jefferson's revenge prompted George Barnett, a US marine general to complain to his commander, "[p]ractically indiscriminate killing of natives has gone on for some time." Barnett termed this violent episode "the most startling thing of its kind that has ever taken place in the Marine Corps."[54] The occupation was anything but humanitarian. As often the practice of the colonizer, the U.S began remaking the law in its own image.

The US first secured the position of their supporter, President Dartiguenave, and unapologetically began changing Haitian law. The US wanted to change two specific laws: the prohibition of land ownership by foreigners and the parliamentary government system, which allowed the elected legislature to veto acts of the President.[55] As so-called acts of paternalism, the US interest in complete executive power in the Haitian government repudiated its own constitution. Changing laws to increase administrative power in lawmaking and advancing certain political interests is often the practice of colonizers.

The new constitution, drafted by Assistant Secretary of the Navy, gave foreigners the right to own land, gave the President unchecked powers, and legalized the US occupation.[56] The assembly refused to ratify the constitution for they feared economic enslavement from rich Europeans and Americans. President Dartiguenave dissolved the assembly twice at the request of General E.K. Cole.[57] As opposition to the constitution grew, General Cole took drastic measures. Receiving a blank check and ultimate authority from Washington, Cole reported to Washington stating, "in case the President did not sign the decree, he was to be informed as coming from me, that I would suppress the National Assembly myself and would recommend the establishment of a military government...The President then signed the decree."[58] After three assembly dissolutions, the new constitution went to a vote to the public. The result was predictable – 69,337 to 335 in favor of the constitution.[59] The light vote on such a vital issue is telling – the Haitian population was then around two million. One historian cites a *Foreign Relations* article published in 1918 and states, "it has been claimed that only ballots marked with 'oui' were given

[53] WEST, et al., 98.
[54] LOEWEN, 16.
[55] WALTER H. POSNER, American Marines in Haiti, 1915-1922, 20 The Americas, 257 (1964).
[56] PAUL H. DOUGLAS, The American Occupation of Haiti I, 42 Political Science Quarterly, 249 (1927).
[57] Id. at.
[58] Id. at, 250.
[59] POSNER, 259.

to the voters who usually could not read, and that most of the opposition had refused to participate in the farce."[60]

The US signed multiple treaties with Haiti and authored the new constitution from 1915 to 1918. Under the terms of treaties signed in 1916 and 1917 the United States promised to "aid the Haitian Government in the proper and efficient development of its agricultural, mineral, and commercial resources and in the establishment of the finances of Haiti on a firm and solid basis."[61] This agreement echoes a recent constitutional agreement between the Haitian government and an NGO led by former president Bill Clinton, which effectively hands over control of the economic and political powers of the state.[62] Under a treaty signed in 1915, the Haitians were required to bring any new laws before the US for approval.[63] Much like the former colonizers, the US sought to make Haiti in its image and gift Haiti with modernity and development. Like the French, the US failed in its objectives – Haiti desired to be free from colonialism and imperialism.

A combination of Haitian nationalistic social movements, a US stock market crash, and a failed Haitian experiment saw the removal of US forces in 1934. In 1928, a short article in *Le Petit Impartial* declared:

> Youth, where are you? For twelve years the white man has trampled like a master over the sacred soil that our phalanx of heroes watered with their blood...let's pull ourselves together...We have set things in motion and we hope, after the difficult days of struggle, to strike up the anthem of deliverance![64]

The rising nationalist movement forced a change in American policy in Haiti: the Forbes Commission of 1930 recommended elections and withdrawal of American troops.[65] The Forbes report stated, "[we are] not convinced that the foundations for democratic and representative government are now broad enough in Haiti... [in addition] poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government" halted US interest in the region. These words, too, were telling – it is the Haitian's fault that they aren't developed or modern. This discourse reverberates in Haiti's history and present realities. In 1934, the Marines withdrew and left a

---

[60] Id. at.

[61] LOGAN, 439.

[62] For more discussion on this topic see page 25

[63] POSNER, 260.

[64] ROBBIE SHILLIAM, International relations and non-Western thought : imperialism, colonialism, and investigations of global modernity 166 (Routledge. 2011).

[65] Id. at, 167.

fiscal representative in Haiti who controlled Haiti's budget until the 1940's.[66]

Haiti's Modern Struggle for Stability and Independence

Using the model given to them by the US, the Haitian presidents ruled oppressively through unchecked executive power and the concentration of military force. Thus, the "political stability of Haiti was based on repressive maintenance of the government apparatus rather than on normalization of democratic political processes."[67] The repressively stable regimes lasted until 1956, which saw the ascendancy of the despotic ruler Francois Duvalier. Historians view the Duvaliers' three-decade father and son dictatorship as the cruelest in Haitian history and "one of the harshest in the Western Hemisphere."[68]

"Papa Doc" Duvalier, who earned the nickname as a country doctor before his presidency, ruled over Haiti with the support of the US. After he won an election in 1957, the US military forces trained Papa Doc's troops and supplied forces to quash an attempted coup comprised of Haitians, Cubans and other Latin Americans.[69] The US government was to reveal in 1986, because of a freedom of information act request that Duvalier lost the election by 750,000 votes but the US chose to support him anyway because of his anti-communist stance and lack of an alternative.[70] In other words, "US policy seems to substantiate the belief that Duvalier was largely a US creation and that he would never have survived without the United States."[71] The US needed a base of operations for its covert war against Cuba and invasion of the Dominican Republic. Ignoring that Duvalier could not have stayed in power except for the help of the US, the *New York Times* wrote in 1957, "Haiti has been unfortunate in her political leadership in recent years. This was inevitable in a country with an illiteracy rate of over 90 percent. The highly emotional people, who have little but tribal rule and superstition to guide their thinking, have been notoriously susceptible to demagogic political appeal."[72] As we will see

[66] LOGAN, 440.
[67] BELLEGARDE-SMITH, 115.
[68] Id. at, 123.
[69] WILLIAM BLUM, Rogue state : a guide to the world's only superpower 112 (Common Courage Press. 2000).
[70] BELLEGARDE-SMITH, 126.
[71] Id. at.
[72] Id. at, 139.

later in this paper, this is a common theme in colonialist justification.

With the support of the US, Duvalier established an oppressive regime that killed almost 50,000 Haitians.[73] Duvalier's *Tonton Macoutes*, named after the mythological boogeyman, wore straw hats, blue denim, and carried machetes or guns and killed people with impunity. Duvalier used the US Marine bases to create regional groups of *Tonton Macoutes* to enforce his rule throughout Haiti.[74] Upon his death in 1971, "Papa Doc" Duvalier decreed his 19-year-old son – "Baby Doc" Duvalier – as president for life.

"Baby Doc" followed in his father's footsteps but also opened Haiti to foreign investment and neoliberal economic reforms. Low taxes, privatization, and an export driven economy created geographic and class based uneven economic development. In other words, "Baby Doc" opened his borders to economic exploitation for the benefit of the elite capitalists. By the 1980's Haiti was applying Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) as required by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These SAPs would later cripple the public sector and effectively outlaw tariffs. In 1967, twelve foreign firms were operating in the light assembly sector; in 1979, 51; by 1986, 300 US corporations operated in Haiti.[75]

Throughout the Duvalier's rule, more Haitians have emigrated than any other in the world (second is Puerto Rico). Approximately 80 percent of Haiti's lawyers and other professionals were living in the US, Canada, or other African Nations.[76] The US deported thousands of Haitians who fled the government and *refused* to offer refugee or asylum status.[77] Civil rights groups charged that, "the State Department did not want Haitians because they were blacker than Cubans."[78] In 1986 a popular uprising overthrew the Duvalier regime.

After years of military dictatorships supported by the US, Haiti had her first democratically elected leader, Jean Bertrand Aristide. Aristide was a preacher before coming into office. He was the first Haitian head of state to speak Creole instead of French. Aristide championed the plight of the poverty-stricken majority. Before winning office, Aristide stated his

---

[73] ALEX DUPUY, The prophet and power : Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the international community, and Haiti 39 (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 2007).

[74] HALLWARD, 14.

[75] Id. at, 15.

[76] MCBRIDE, 223.

[77] ROBERT D. SCHULZINGER, US diplomacy since 1900 319 (Oxford Univ. Press. 1998).

[78] Id. at. (Refusing asylum or immigrant status is still a practice occurring today. Haiti's colonial history and relationship with the US, has degraded their status to worse off than communist supporters. Another instance of this type of treatment occurs when Haitian-American criminals are deported back to Haiti to serve their sentence.)

position eloquently in a church gathering:

> We're asking you to acknowledge what you have stolen, that your countrymen have stolen during the process of colonization. If you truly want to call yourselves 'developed' countries, you need to acknowledge what you've done to us. But, we are not asking for your pity, no, but for you to acknowledge that we have the right to recuperate a part of what has been stolen from us....then you wouldn't dare call a people you've exploited 'underdeveloped' when you are responsible for their lack of development.[79]

Aristide came to power on a platform that sought a return to economic autonomy, the end of neocolonialism, and the fulfillment of a healthy living wage. Nine months after the election, in 1991, and just days after raising the minimum wage from $0.38 to $1, a coup led by General Raoul Cedras ousted Aristide.[80] Cedras' regime was responsible for many acts of violence including the arrest, torture, rape, murder of thousands of Haitians and Aristide supporters; altogether, 5,000 Haitians were killed, tens of thousands fled Haiti, and over 300,000 became internally displaced.[81] The United Nations and former President Clinton (then special envoy to Haiti) imposed an embargo that prevented all goods from entering Haiti except for humanitarian supplies. This embargo crippled the economy. The assembly sector of Haiti, which formerly employed 100,000 workers, fell to just 17,000, and has barely recovered since.[82]

In 1994, under the auspices of the Security Council, US forces occupied Haiti in *Operation Uphold Democracy* to "facilitate the departure" of Cedras and reinstate Aristide. As noted in the Haiti Handbook given to US personnel who joined this operation, "[f]or a variety of internal and external reasons far too complex to address here, Haiti did not fare well over the last 200 years."[83] This handbook reinforced the narrative of the poor, underdeveloped, and backward black republic of Haiti. The operation turned into a nation building reconstruction effort lasting years. Through this aid, Haiti was to become developed, modern, and back on track. The US has influenced Haitian politics since 1915 and has supposedly championed democracy around the world, but when it comes to the first democratically elected president in Haitian history, they only support him when he had less than a year to rule in Haiti. In 1995, shortly before leaving office, Aristide disbanded the military citing the reoccurring military coups.

---

[79] NICOLAS ROSSIER, et al., Aristide and the endless revolution (First Run Features 2005).

[80] id. at;KARIN VON HIPPEL, Democracy by force : U.S. military intervention in the post-Cold War world 98 (Cambridge University Press. 2000).

[81] VON HIPPEL, 98.

[82] ASSOCIATED PRESS, Clinton 'hated,' But Defends, Haiti Embargo, CBS News(2009), at http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/10/02/ap/latinamerica/main5360292.shtml.

[83] VON HIPPEL, 96.

The people elected Aristide again in 2001, but the US removed him from office before finishing his second term.[84] The Global North viewed Aristide as moving away from their "white capitalism" – the Eurocentric model of exploiting labor. In 2004, celebrating the bi-centenary of its independence Aristide demanded that France return its extorted sum imposed on the Haitians when they claimed their independence – this request was flatly denied. Slavoj Zizek, a zealous cultural theorist and critic stated:

> So while US liberals ponder the possibility of reparations to US blacks for slavery. Haiti's demands to be reimbursed for the tremendous amounts ex-slaves had to pay to have their freedom recognized was ignored by liberal opinion, even though the extortion here was twofold: the slaves were first exploited, and then had to pay for the recognition of their hard-won freedom.[85]

France and the US began pressuring Aristide to fall in line economically since his internal policies were markedly against the structural adjustment programs enforced by the IMF and World Bank. In 2004, France and the US came together to criticize Aristide's government as "a form of mob rule which violated human rights, and [portrayed] President Aristide as a power-mad fundamentalist dictator"[86]

A US imposed $500 million aid embargo, most of which had been slated for humanitarian assistance, crippled Aristide's social and development programs. The State department defends the embargo as a means for punishing Aristide for not accepting the neoliberal economic dictates of America and a failure to negotiate with the Haitian elites.[87] Strangely, US required Haiti to pay $30 million in back interest for loans that were not even disbursed yet![88] Haiti's GDP fell from $4 billion in 1999 to $2.9 billion in 2003.[89] With few resources to sustain an impoverished nation, Aristide spoke at a large public in April 2003 rally saying, "do not block my country, for the poor to find good food to eat, do not block my country, for young people to find jobs to support their families, do not block my country, to have good elections and no more coup d'etats, do not block my country."[90]

The US did not use heavy-handed economic tactics against the dictatorial and corrupt

---

[84] Shortly after his election, Aristide was "kidnapped" and brought to South Africa.
[85] SLAVOJ ZIZEK, Living in the end times 159-160 (Verso. 2010).
[86] Id. at.
[87] JONATHAN KOZOL, Foreward, in The Uses of Haiti (2002).
[88] HALLWARD, 82.
[89] Id. at.
[90] ROSSIER, et al.

regime of the Duvaliers. The popular movement of Aristide proved a threat to the financial interests of the Global North. Zizek notes, "[t]he goal of the US and France was to impose on Haiti a 'normal' democracy, a democracy which would not weaken the economic power of a narrow elite, and they were well aware that, in order to function in this way, democracy has to cut its links with direct popular self-organization."[91] A decade after Aristide was restored to power in 1994, he resigned after rebel forces, probably armed by the US, attacked the capital.[92]

Haiti's Colonial Present

The United Nations peacekeeping forces are the sole military force in Haiti and have controlled the Haitian state for over two decades. The United Nations first became involved with Haiti in 1990 when they oversaw the election. In 1994, the Security Council, under the Chapter VII mandate,[93] sanctioned the deployment of 20,000 strong multinational forces to Haiti to bring Aristide back into power. These peacekeeping missions have gone under different guises over the years: The United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH); The United Nation Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH); The United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti (UNTMIH); and, The United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH). On February 29, 2004, one day after the US ousted Aristide from the country, the Security Council declared Haiti a threat to international peace and security and approved a multinational Interim Force (MIF) to occupy Haiti. Later, on April 30, 2004, The Security Council authorized a multinational security force to support "the constitutional political process under way in Haiti" and to facilitate humanitarian and other international assistance.[94]

This security force, The United Nations Stabilizing Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), mandated by the Security Council to assist in "monitoring, restructuring and reforming the Haitian National Police, consistent with democratic policing standards," overseeing the re-establishment of the corrections system and developing "a strategy for reform and institutional

[91] ZIZEK, 160.

[92] Aristide and his supporters ardently argue that the US armed the militia to overthrow Aristide and that the US kidnapped and left Aristide in South Africa.

[93] Chapter VII of the UN charter allows the Security Council to "determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression" and to take military and nonmilitary action to "restore international peace and security".

[94] JANE E. STROMSETH, et al., Can might make rights? : building the rule of law after military interventions 31 (Cambridge University Press. 2006).

strengthening of the judiciary."[95] These law reform initiatives were designed to promote the ''establishment of a State based on the rule of law."[96] The motives behind these interventions are couched in humanitarian concerns – stop indiscriminate bloodshed and political repression – pragmatically, however, the self-interest of the US was the desire to prevent a massive influx of Haitian refugees.[97] These ongoing interventions provide concise examples of neocolonialism, a new imperialism – the continued control of the economic and political powers of a sovereign state.

On January 12, 2010, Haiti suffered a devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake just 13 km deep and just 25 km from Port-au-Prince. The quake itself was extraordinarily deadly because of the weak buildings, impoverished infrastructure, and already overburdened and limited health services available in the country. The earthquake killed Over 316,000 Haitians, 300,000 injured and made vulnerable to new diseases, and left 1.3 million homeless.[98] In addition, the disaster further fractured the uneven provision of health services. What little infrastructure existing was demolished or badly damaged, including the offices of the Ministry of Health, as well numerous hospitals and clinics, water and sanitation services, communication systems and associated governmental offices.[99]

When the earthquake occurred, Haiti was already known as the "NGO Republic," having 10,000 NGOs in the country, the highest number per capita in the world.[100] Approximately 20 percent of Haiti's total public expenditures and 70 percent of capital expenditures and 70 percent of the investment budget from 2004-2006 were from external donor monies.[101] In real terms, this points to the heavy influence that outside funders have on public programs in Haiti through tied aid, and to a lesser extent, untied aid. Haiti continues to be weakened through programs that bypass the state – mostly because of assumptions about "poor accountability, mismanagement

---

[95] GREGORY H. FOX, Humanitarian occupation 169 (Cambridge University Press. 2008).
[96] Id. at.
[97] STROMSETH, et al., 3.
[98] U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, Magnitude 7.0 - HAITI REGION(2010), at http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/recenteqsww/Quakes/us2010rja6.php#summary. (the President of Haiti recently raised the death toll to 316,000)
[99] TIM REID, Comment: Who is running Haiti?(2010), at http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article6992668.ece.
[100] WORLD BANK, Haiti public expenditure management and financial accountability review (The World Bank 2008).
[101] Id. at, 38.

and corruption."[102] Haiti was not only the "poorest country in the western hemisphere," but also suffered from the greatest disparity between the haves and the have-not's and ranks eighth in the world in Gini coefficient[103], or somewhere between 59.2[104] and 65.[105]

Fears of US intervention in rebuilding Haiti have been made visible in the refusal of the Provisional Electoral Committee to allow more than a dozen political parties to participate in the elections, particularly the Fanmi Lavalas, the political and social movement party of Aristide, and the largest in the country. Between 1,100 and 1,300 internally displaced people (IDPs) camps housed one million homeless in Haiti. Many of these camps sprang up hastily in the aftermath of the quake, and fewer than 30% have been appointed managers.[106] Despite continual economic interventions by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Inter-American Development Bank, and humanitarian interventions by USAID, Haiti is still the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. Whatever the focus, the economic "modernization" processes have failed to produce more than three years of growth in the past 15.[107]

To enforce democracy and rule of law in post-earthquake Haiti, the UN's security force MINUSTAH served this purpose. MINUSTAH has been the largest and only military presence in Haiti with 12,230 total uniformed personnel (8,930 troops 3,300 police).[108] MINUSTAH's budget was $853,827,400, almost three times the amount of the Haitian government budget.[109] With these ground forces securitizing humanitarian assistance and development projects, the Global North legitimizes and solidifies its influence in all aspects of Haiti's geopolitical structure. Haiti has no control.

The Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC), constitutionally mandated by the Haitian government, effectively controls all economic planning. The IHRC was comprised of members of the international community, led by Bill Clinton, and members of the Haitian elite.

---

[102] PAUL MCPHUN AND KEVIN COPPOCK, Healing a wounded country. (Médcins sans Frontières Policy Options Dossier 2010).

[103] The Gini Coefficient is used to measure inequality of distribution. Total equality is 0, and maximum inequality is 1 (this is sometimes multiplied to 100).

[104] CIA, The World Factbook (Central Intelligence Agency ed., 2009).

[105] WORLD BANK, Haiti (World Bank 2010).

[106] MELANIE TEFF AND EMILIE PARRY, HAITI: Still trapped in the emergency phase. Refugees International, Field Report(2010), at http://www.refugeesinternational.org/sites/default/files/100710_haiti_still_trapped.pdf

[107] BANK, Haiti.

[108] MINUSTAH, MINUSTAH Facts and Figures(2011), at http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minustah/facts.shtml.

[109] ROSSIER, et al;CIA;MINUSTAH.

The IHRC is responsible for "continuously developing and refining development plans for Haiti, assessing needs and gaps and establishing investment priorities**."**[110] They oversee over $5 billion in aid monies distributed to Haiti. In January 2011, they approved over $3 billion in projects. Mobilizing the discourse that Haitians are inherently incapable of administrating their own government, the IHRC mandate is under the state of emergency powers, which means the executive has complete control; the executive has constitutionally passed his power to the IHRC to invest the money where they see fit without any concessions or movement towards democracy. The IHRC mandate was for 18 months, but as with MINUSTAH, whose mandate was for only several months, we find that the IHRC is still active in 2021.

The Postcolonial Theoretics

Racism undergirds the colonial project. By developing a racist script whereby difference is noted as inferior, the colonial power can justify its domination of the other. Albert Memmi, a noted postcolonialist scholar, stated:

> Colonial racism is built from three major ideological components: one, the gulf between the culture of the colonist and the colonized; two, the exploitation of these differences for the benefit of the colonialist; three, the use of these supposed differences as standards of absolute fact.[111]

Earlier in the paper I have written about the cultural divide between the French and the other inhabitants on the island. By subjugating the slave, mulatto, and *affranchis*, the French could exploit the other without justification for their actions. The clear divide between the *Declaration of the Rights of Men and of the Citizen* and the continued exploitation of slaves evinces the strong connection between liberalism, domination, and exploitation. Furthermore, the unchanging relationship, after the French revolution, between the colonizer and colonized, unfortunately shows the common fact that the colonized are subaltern and the colonizers are racist. "The colonialist," Memmi argues, "stresses those things which keep him separate rather than emphasizing that which might contribute to the foundation of a joint community."[112] Skin color provided the obvious and baseless distinction that maintained the structures of oppression and violence.

---

[110] RENÉ PRÉVAL, IHRC Decree (Republic of Haiti 2010).

[111] ALBERT MEMMI, The colonizer and the colonized 71 (Howard Greenfeld trans., Orion. 1965).

[112] Id. at.

Colonialism also works within a geographical space that further materializes the cultural difference between two peoples. Derek Gregory, a noted geographer posits, "imperialism and colonialism should be conceptualized geographically – as constellations of power that are intrinsically concerned with land, territory, displacement and dispossession."[113] The French saw Africa as a place to capture and enslave black men, and St. Domingue as the place to exploit the enslaved. The French, and more broadly, Eurocentric colonizers, exercised a particular language that is replete with superiority and dominance. The Europeans are advanced societies while Africa and elsewhere are backwards and undeveloped. This discourse created what Edward Said calls *imagined geographies*. Said explains in his book *Orientalism*, "as much as the West [created] itself, the Orient [or St. Domingue in our case] is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other."[114] The reflection, however, is distorted because the identity placed on the slave is not an authentic representation of the person or place, but an imagined creation that reflects the French's superiority and the slaves' inferiority. Said continues, "[i]n a quite constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand."[115] Today we see this relationship reproduced through the IHRC's manipulation of Haiti's political and economic society. The identity of the colonizer has changed and evolved – the French, the US, the UN – the flexibility of the actor and their superiority is maintained.

Since independence in 1804, Haiti has been severely affected by its previous colonizers and other global colonial forces throughout her existence. One scholar notes, "[d]ecolonisation is process, not arrival; it invokes an ongoing dialectic between hegemonic centrist systems and peripheral subversion of them; between European or British discourses and their post-colonial dis/mantling."[116] In Haiti's case, this subversion has lasted for years and the closer she gets to democracy, the more neocolonial actors exert their influence.

In hegemonic development discourses, one encounters a naturalized understanding of the progressive appropriateness of "us" versus the socio-political backwardness of "them" – those

[113] DANIEL CLAYTON, Critical Imperial and Colonial Geographies, in Handbook of cultural geography 357, (Kay Anderson ed. 2003).
[114] EDWARD W. SAID, Orientalism 5 (Pantheon Books. 1978).
[115] Id. at, 7.
[116] TIFFIN, 95.

who need the Global North's development aid dollars.[117] This presumed sensibility of superiority evolves, then, as a machination of paternalistic endeavours to impose a set of developmentalist goals onto other cultures. The racialized bent of development circumvents the need to examine the desires of the "developed on" for a series of interventions deemed appropriate from afar. In the same vein, failings of development programs are often couched in failings of the natives, whether because of innate "laziness"[118] or socio-political unrest that is an inherent "social ill."[119] The Global North intends to give, spend, and use money for whatever projects it wills in Haiti. The country is an experiment in development. Imagined geographies encapsulate this idea of difference across space *and* across culture.

Cultural difference also relies on the relationships of the individuals, to reiterate, the colonized and colonizer. Franz Fannon wrote, "The governing race is first and foremost those who come from elsewhere, those who are unlike the original inhabitants, 'the others'."[120] And, "the white man is not only the Other but also the master, whether real or imaginary."[121] St. Domingue had the master and servant relationship. The French would enslave the African and work him to death and replace him with a new stock; thereby creating subaltern workers who are under the whip of "white capitalism."

Producing colonial identities is both separate and simultaneous. Gayatri Spivak notes, "[t]he colonizer constructs himself as he constructs the colony."[122] The French constructed themselves as the enlightened masters, the sophisticated Frenchmen, and delighted in celebrating their superiority. The slave understood "[i]n the collective unconscious, black = ugliness, sin, darkness, immorality. In other words, he is Negro who is immoral"[123] The French believed that

---

[117] M. DUFFIELD, Development, territories, and people: Consolidating the external sovereign frontier, 44 Peace Research Abstracts Journal (2007);ARTURO ESCOBAR, Encountering development : the making and unmaking of the Third World (Princeton University Press. 1995).

[118] PHILIPPE R. GIRARD, Paradise lost : Haiti's tumultuous journey from Pearl of the Caribbean to Third World hot spot (Palgrave Macmillan. 2005).

[119] MARK R. DUFFIELD, Global governance and the new wars : the merging of development and security (Zed Books ; Distributed in the USA exclusively by Palgrave. 2001);R. SHILLIAM, What the Haitian revolution might tell us about development, security, and the politics of race, 50 Comp. Stud. Soc. Hist. Comparative Studies in Society and History (2008).

[120] FANON, 40.

[121] FRANTZ FANON, Black skin, white masks 138 (Grove Press. 1967). (While the concept of the Other has evolved into describing the not-white individual, the relationship still is the same. The Other is white to non-whites, and the Other is non-white to whites.)

[122] GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK, A critique of postcolonial reason : toward a history of the vanishing present 203 (Harvard University Press. 1999).

[123] FANON, Black skin, white masks 192.

Africans were less than human, sinful, monsters. Jean Bodin, the famous sixteenth-century French political theorist, summarized this wisdom of the ages with the categorical remark that "promiscuous coition of men and animals took place, wherefore the regions of Africa produce for us so many monsters."[124] In forming the other and simultaneously modelling oneself, the dehumanization process demanded that the slaves pose not any ethics, principles, or worth. For if they did, then slaves in St. Domingue and other colonies could not be killed with impunity; their deaths would bring moral retribution to the French and other slave owners. Not only could slaves be thought to be absent of any worth spiritually or emotionally, the Other must be considered destructive by their very existence:

> The native is declared insensible to ethics; he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. He is, let us dare to admit, the enemy of values, and in this sense he is the absolute evil. He is the corrosive element, destroying all that comes near him; he is the deforming element, disfiguring all that has to do with beauty or morality; he is the depository of maleficent powers, the unconscious and irretrievable instrument of blind forces.[125]

This distance between the French civilization and the African monster allowed the space to be filled with subjugation, death, and enslavement. By constructing an immoral and undeveloped Other, the French constructed themselves as moral and developed. But who is the slave?

Before St. Domingue's decolonization, we can discover who the slave is by learning his legal limitations. The *Code Noir* took shape in 1685 and lasted until the French Revolution in 1789; it fixes the main lines for policing slavery.[126] *Code Noir* Article 30 states:

> Slaves cannot hold offices or mandates that involve the discharge of any public functions; they cannot be made agents, for the running or management of a business, by anyone other than their masters; neither can they sit as arbitrators, experts, or witnesses in civil or criminal cases. In cases where their testimony is heard, it can only be used to refresh the memory of the judges; it cannot provide the basis for any assumptions, conjectures, or proof.[127]

The French removed the enslaved from their agency to perform public duties, to develop businesses, to testify. The enslaved were thus held to the shadows of the public sphere imprisoned socially and legally. Article 31 states, "[a] slave cannot be party to, or be judged in, a

---

[124] LES BACK & JOHN SOLOMOS, Theories of race and racism a reader 43 (Routledge. 2000).

[125] FANON, The wretched of the earth 41.

[126] Take note of similarities in the US Constitution: Article I Section 2. Clause 3; Article I Section. 9. Clause 1; Article IV Section 2 Clause 1; Article IV Section 2 Clause 3.

[127] SALA-MOLINS, 33.

civil matter either as plaintiff or defendant nor can he institute a criminal action in his own right in redress of a wrong against him."[128] No redress for any wrongs committed unto him, the slave lived under the heel of the master never to speak of any criminal injustice leveled against him. Article 3 states, "[w]e forbid any religion other than the Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith from being practiced in public." The slave's spirituality and beliefs were stolen from him. His god replaced with that of the masters. The spiritual traditions of his culture, denied, hidden. Article 11 states, "[w]e forbid priests from conducting weddings between slaves if it appears that they do not have their masters' permission." Article 13, "We desire that if a male slave has married a free woman, their children, either male or female, shall be free as is their mother, regardless of their father's condition of slavery. And if the father is free and the mother a slave, the children shall also be slaves;" Article 19, "We also forbid slaves from selling any type of commodities."[129] The slave has no rights to the market, cannot legislate, marry of their own volition, is only born free by the "whiteness" of his mother. After the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, the slave was supposed to be equal, but in St. Domingue the slave was not:

> But I, a slave, am neither from here nor from elsewhere. I am from nowhere. I do not count...I am unfit to be counted among humans when they assemble under clear sky to play the grand game of their collective sovereignties....[me] a slave, an animal, a human being for almost a thousand moons, and I will be noisily and duplicitously chased back to the "unpolitical" nothingness of my bestiality...I am accepted in their assemblies when, through their infinite kindness, I first whiten up my ways, then my grimaces, and finally my skin. Black, now you are white. You may come in and legislate with us.[130]

The *Code Noir*, the legal identity of French slaves not only authorizes violence upon black bodies, but also extinguishes their basic humanity. That is, until they become civilized or white. The process to modernization, to development, occurs through the transformation into the master. The Eurocentric models are the right way, the only way, to become a member of society both individually and internationally.[131] As with Haiti's situation, to become a member of the

---

[128] Id. at.

[129] LOUIS XIV, Code Noir(1685), at http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/335/.

[130] SALA-MOLINS, 31.

[131] Athony Anghie in his book, Imperialism, sovereignty, and the making of international law argued that "acceptance into the family of nations could occur only if they met the 'standard of civilization' which amounted, essentially, to idealized European standards in both their external and, more significantly, internal relations." (p.84). Anghie again notes, "Both external and internal reform had to be carried out by a state seeking entry into the family of nations. In the external sphere, the state had to be capable of meeting international obligations and maintaining the diplomatic missions and channels necessary to enable and preserve relations with European states. In the internal

international community, to be recognized by the former colonizer, you must pay your master for freedom.[132]

Violence was inescapable in the Haitian revolution. Fanon wrote, "[t]he colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence."[133] In spite of the French enlightenment, the situation in St. Domingue was not changing nor would it since the French economy was so dependent on the work of slaves in its richest colony. Lewis Henry Morgan, one of the most famous American anthropologists in the 19th century wrote:

> We owe our present condition, with its multiplied means of safety and of happiness, to the struggles, the sufferings, the heroic exertions and the patient toil of our barbarous, and more remotely, of our savage ancestors. Their labors, their trials and their successes were a part of the plan of the Supreme Intelligence to develop a barbarian out of a savage, and a civilized man out of this barbarian.[134]

For Morgan, slavery was part of a divine plan to civilize the savage, the serf, the slave. Of course, exploiting slaves laid the foundation for Europe and America's modernity, but this does not justify exploiting individuals in that depraved manner. Freedom would not be granted from the master's hand. Freedom must be taken. St. Domingue and the birth of Haiti was the first country to outlaw slavery. It did not occur through a social evolution or transformation, but through violence. Thomas Jefferson and William Byrd, who warned as early as 1736 that African slaves require "tort rein, or they will be apt to throw their rider"[135] was not enough for the French and St. Domingue slave owners.

Once claiming independence, the Haitian people outlawed foreign ownership of land. They claimed the land for themselves and through this claimed their nationality – "[f]or a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity."[136] Pre-revolution, slaves were not allowed to own land in St. Domingue, and although the *affranchis* elite owned land, only Haitians could own land after the revolution. In the Western liberal tradition private property is power. Through its ownership one can in turn exploit others. What Haiti intended was the end to

---

sphere, the state was required to reform radically its legal and political systems to the extent that they reflected European standards as a whole." (p.86)

[132] 90 million francs of gold.

[133] FANON, The wretched of the earth 86.

[134] LEWIS HENRY MORGAN, Ancient society 554 (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 1964).

[135] MAURICE SHERWOOD LEE, Slavery, philosophy, and American literature : 1830 - 1860 20 (Cambridge Univ. Press. 2006).

[136] FANON, The wretched of the earth 44.

foreign exploitation. The US military occupation from 1915-1934 is revealing in the sense that a priority above all else was a law that would allow foreigners to own land. This US coerced law would be the beginning of almost a century of US led neocolonialism. Despite the passing of the constitution, the power of the Haitian majority would not capitulate to the requirements of the colonial power.

St. Domingue transformed into a feared nation of strong black peoples. "Haiti was a symbol of black power and authority, not of desperate rebellion, and that is why it could inspire or terrify."[137] The specter of the Haitian revolution, the uprising of slaves that overthrew the French colonizers, began a 200-year geopolitical apprehension of powerful freed black bodies. This fear still shows signs today as Aristide, a simple priest, garnered the support of 70% of Haitians and earned the fear of the white nations – Haiti could again inspire uprisings in other territories. The specter of freedom could not be permitted to exist in Haiti. Like the ideas of the French revolution that inspired many social movements, Haiti could empower other black republics and decolonized nations. This was Napoleon's fear; it is America's and the Global North's fear. As globalization continues and inequality deepens, the Global South may depart from the Eurocentric ideals of development and modernity.

The fear from powerful black bodies originates from their challenges to the system developed by the colonizers and the economic elite. Class and color in Haiti play a significant role in local politics. The *affranchis* and white elite have held positions of power before the Haitian revolution. Colonial powers depended on these French speaking elites to apply domestic political and economic policies that would benefit their former colonizers. Most of the subaltern class in present and historical Haiti don't have a relationship with the colonizers beyond being dominated, dispossessed, forced into labor, taxed, and evicted – physical and economic exaction. Neil Lazuras explains further:

> There was comparatively little attempt on the part of the colonial establishment to seek hegemony among these subaltern classes, that is, to win their ideological, moral, cultural, and intellectual support for the colonial enterprise. The explicit targets of colonial hegemonization were the national or (sometimes) regional elites.[138]

[137] DAVID PATRICK GEGGUS, The impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic world 17 (University of South Carolina. 2001).
[138] NEIL LAZARUS, Nationalism and cultural practice in the postcolonial world 90 (Cambridge Univ. Press. 1999).

For example, the US never overthrew the Duvaliers because they were vehemently anti-communist and applied free market economic systems.[139] America overthrew the first democratically elected president, pragmatically, for what he stood for – the people of Haiti. Aristide's enormous popularity and anti-imperialist stance stood against the hegemonic ideals of the Global North. Born into poverty, Aristide was a community organizer and priest, not an elite. He knew the plight of the people. When he began to change the system, he was thrown out.

Another mechanical form of oppression and colonization is through Language. The French language ruled the island republic for centuries. Aristide was the first head of state who spoke Creole instead of French. Language is one of the more significant pathways through which the colonizer colonizes the mind and culture of the colony. Bhaktin believed:

> Languages are philosophies – not abstract but concrete, social philosophies, penetrated by a system of values inseparable from living practice and class struggle. This is why every object, every concept, every point of view, as well as every intonation [finds its] place at this intersection of linguistic philosophies and [is] drawn into an intense ideological struggle.[140]

The colonizer's language is a channel through which values are presented as the norm, especially in how the colonized define themselves culturally. In Haiti, the colonized sought to subvert this linguistic imperialism and created a new tradition of cultural patterns with Creole. [141] Shilliam notes the origins of Creole:

> [it] came about as a result of the imposition of French language on slaves, and functioned as an appropriation of French. Creole speakers used French in a derisive way, as if they were wreaking violence on the language itself. Creole continually works not to transcend the French language, but as a detour, a diversion or turning away, as transcendence would entail the definition of a Creole authenticity.[142]

Creole acts a differentiation device that separates colonizers from the colonized. A clearly delineated Haitian linguistic identity occurred. Before the end of slavery, creating Creole was one of the few acts of agency and subversion. Linguistic imperialism, like its broader component, provokes resistance that reveals clashing dialects and violent utterances.[143] However,

---

[139] VON HIPPEL, 97. (the US feared its spread from neighboring Cuba)

[140] M. M. BAKHTIN & HÈLËNE ISWOLSKY, Rabelais and his world 471 (Indiana University Press. 1984).

[141] PATRICK TAYLOR, The narrative of liberation : perspectives on Afro-Caribbean literature, popular culture, and politics 60 (Cornell University Press. 1989).

[142] SHILLIAM, International relations and non-Western thought : imperialism, colonialism, and investigations of global modernity 173-174.

[143] JEAN-JACQUES LECERCLE, A Marxist philosophy of language 194 (Brill. 2006).

the viewpoints of how Creole originated differed widely. One linguistic commentator remarked on Haitian Creole in 1933:

> Speakers of a lower language may make so little progress in learning the dominant speech, that the masters, in communicating with them resort to "baby-talk". This "baby-talk" is the masters' imitation of the subjects' incorrect speech...The creolized language has the status of an inferior dialect of the masters' speech.[144]

The script of Haitian inferiority and racism continues. The colonizer did not see Creole as a subversive strategy to decolonize the mind and create a distinct culture; instead, it was a degenerative form of a pure language. The US Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925) commented about Haiti: "Dear me, think of it, Niggers speaking French."[145] For Bryan, an African speaking French was an aberration; Creole more suited the subaltern status of Haitian people. Not only were the speakers of Creole less than human – the language was too.

In Haiti, and other former colonies, language is the site of class struggle. Language, in particular, moves through its spokespersons whether they be the elite or the marginalized.[146] Creole has long been the language spoken by the majority, currently 90% of Haitians speak Creole as their only language.[147] The Haitian elite often looks down upon Haitian Creole. "French's international prestige has long made [Haitian Creole] relatively unattractive in the eyes of Haiti's neocolonial elites anxious to gain respect in the Western world: French-speaking Haitian elites felt they would stand a better chance to appear as 'equals'."[148] During the US Marine occupation from 1915 to 1934, the 1918 Constitution declared French as the national language.[149] The 1983 Constitution declared both French and Creole as national languages, but French as the only "official" language.[150] The 1987 Constitution finally declared Creole as on "official" language.[151] Since only 5% of Haitians can speak French fluently, these constitutional provisions exemplify the powerlessness of the monolingual majority. Thus, language can be seen both as a barrier between, and a marker for, class structures. Aristide, fluent in five languages, knew the linguistic struggle and chose to break away from this linguistic imperialism.

---

[144] LEONARD BLOOMFIELD, Language 472-474 (H. Holt and Company. 1933).
[145] NOAM CHOMSKY, Year 501 : the conquest continues 201 (South End Press. 1993).
[146] LECERCLE, 196.
[147] JOHN A. HOLM, An introduction to pidgins and creoles 88 (Cambridge university press. 2000).
[148] MICHEL DEGRAFF, Against Creole Exceptionalism, 79 Language, 401 (2003).
[149] HOLM.
[150] Id. at.
[151] Id. at.

Conclusion

The neocolonial project in 21st century Haiti involves not only an arguably permanent UN military force (MINUSTAH), but also an NGO that effectively administers the country (IHRC). The dominating development discourses derive themselves from the Western traditions that equate industrialization as progress – never mind the social and environmental costs. Post-earthquake Haiti is an excellent example of a "pre-developed" nation that "requires" Western developmental projects, and with an extremely large budget to do so. The concept of "civility" that emerged during the Enlightenment became known as "development" in the 20th century. Stuart Hall speaks of the "othering" process that undergirds this concept:

> In enlightenment discourse, the West was the model, the prototype and the measure of social progress. It was *western* progress, civilization, rationality and development that were celebrated. And yet, all this depended on the discursive figures of the 'noble vs. ignoble savage' and of 'rude and refined nations' which has been formulated in the discourse of 'the West and the Rest.' So the Rest was critical for the formulation of western Enlightenment – and therefore for modern social science."[152]

By establishing a "superior" and an "insubordinate" relationship, whether geographically or interpersonally, the Global North, the neocolonizer, mobilizes a historically charged connection and becomes the "helper" the "provider of aid," and through this develops and civilizes the other. The similarities are striking: Whether it's culture, language, color, or infrastructure, the Western world retains the position of superiority and demands that others follow behind. Through this distorted reflective relationship, the Global North, from a position of transcendence and knowledge views the underdeveloped third-world-global-south as a place to be developed upon:

> Before development, there is nothing but deficiencies. Underdeveloped areas have no history of their own, hardly any past worth recalling, and certainly none that's worth retaining. Everything before development can be abandoned, and third world countries emerge as empty vessels waiting to be filled with the development from the first world.[153]

The discourse of development, then, creates an inequality in all areas of existence – personal, economic, political, militarily, religiously. The former slave state, the country of dark peoples whose populace seeks to break the system (for their benefit and their children as did the

[152] STUART HALL, et al., Formations of modernity 313-314 (Polity in association with Open University. 1992).
[153] RITA ABRAHAMSEN, Disciplining democracy : development discourse and good governance in Africa 19 (Zed Books. 2000).

individuals who started the Haitian revolution) are wrong, backwards, against the current neoliberal capitalist system, and; therefore, against progress. [154]

Advanced "civilized" nations "give" billions of dollars to Haiti and yet nothing ever works there. It's as if these century-old opposing dialectics of "noble" and "savage" lives on in the form of "donor" and "donee," or "NGO worker" and "Haitian." Despite UN military and IHRC involvement in Haiti's development, reconstruction is still not manifesting in all its supposed brilliance. The discourse of capitalism, free market economics, international human rights, and industrialization are continuations of superiority scripts. Meaning, that through these avenues and actions Haiti will become modern and developed. By going over 200 years of history we can see that this type of relationship does not inspire the formation of a just Haitian government or an enlightened economic system. Edward Said said:

> Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination.[155]

We see this domination both historically and at present. Whether UN military intervention is the new imperialism or post-Washington consensus reforms are the new ideological economic neocolonizers, domination is perceived and felt in Haiti. The Global North views Haiti as requiring this domination, this guidance, these processes of modernization, or otherwise things will never change. Whoever will be in the position to make change in Haiti will be forced to decide – where do we go from here? Frantz Fanon wrote in 1961:

> The fundamental duel which seemed to be that between colonialism and anticolonialism, and indeed between capitalism and socialism, is already losing some of its importance. What counts today, the question which is looming on the horizon, is the need for a redistribution of wealth. Humanity must reply to this question, or be shaken to pieces by it.[156]

How true this holds today. The issues facing Haiti and other countries in the world will not be these extravagant development agendas that are created, executed, and implemented by the global markets, but instead a global reformation of wealth – shifting from the rich to the poor. The battle of ideologies must maneuver around and take place in the issue of deepening

---

[154] NANCY C. M. HARTSOCK, The feminist standpoint revisited and other essays 207 (Westview Press. 1998).
[155] EDWARD W. SAID, Culture and imperialism 9 (Knopf : Distributed by Random House. 1993).
[156] FANON, The wretched of the earth 98.

inequality. Over 200 years ago, Haiti was an inspiration to the downtrodden and revolutionary. That same spirit that drastically changed the world then, must rise up and change the world now.