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Translating *Over*, the Dominican Sugarcane Industry and Its Victims

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Abstract

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By Wrenica Archibald

This honors thesis examines the complex nature of the sugarcane industry in the Dominican Republic and the role sugarcane has played throughout Dominican history in the difficult and at times hostile relationship between Dominicans and Haitians. By analyzing and translating several excerpts from Ramón Marrero Aristy's text, *Over,* this thesis recreates for readers the harsh environment that Haitian sugarcane workers experienced as well as explores and provides a holistic view of the manipulative capitalistic system symbolized in the term *over*. The aim of this thesis is to highlight and expose the social injustices of Dominican society by presenting a three-part translation of a text grounded in the historical, cultural and political constructs of the Dominican Republic.

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El General has found his word: *perejil*.
Who says it, lives. He laughs, teeth shining
out of the swamp. The cane appears

in our dreams, lashed by wind and streaming.
And we lie down. For every drop of blood
there is a parrot imitating spring.
Out of the swamp the cane appears.

-Rita Dove*

*The two stanzas from Rita Dove's poem 'Parsley' were originally published in her book *Museum*, Carnegie-Mellon University Press, © 1983 by Rita Dove. Reprinted by permission of the poet. Rita Dove, *Selected Poems,* “Parsley,” 1993, p. 133

Historical Context of Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic has a rich yet dark history that is intertwined with the history of its neighboring country, Haiti. Both were plagued by the harsh customs and procedures that accompanied colonialism. They were both part of the expansion of Western imperialism and exposed to the structures of domination based on race and class. However, although these two countries share the same island and historical origins, they differ on several basic levels. Dominicans speak Spanish as opposed to Haitians, who speak French (Gates Jr., 2011). Phenotypically, Dominicans are typically described as being mulatto and/or white, whereas Haitians are described as African (Gates Jr., 2011). The economy and quality of living is substantially better in the Dominican Republic than in Haiti, and herein lies one area of conflict as many Haitians have left the motherland in pursuit of better opportunities and a chance to make a living in the Dominican Republic. Haitian migrants crossed the border between the two countries and often sought work in the Dominican sugarcane fields as cane cutters (Haney, 2007). Though they might obtain jobs, the Haitian migrants generally received little pay for their onerous and physically demanding labor, and were often exposed to greater poverty and mistreatment at the hands of the Dominicans (Haney, 2007). Many Dominicans today loathe the Haitian presence in the Dominican Republic because of memories and the retelling of how horrible life was for Dominicans during Haitian occupation of the island, the perception that Haitian migrants are stealing all the jobs and the assumed notion that Dominicans are simply "better" than Haitians (André, 2014). This is the depressing, horrible and bleak environment in which Dominican author, Ramón Marrero Aristy, sets his novel, *Over.* Aristy's novel intertwines

the histories of two countries to highlight the injustices of Dominican history and those that also still occur today.

The following brief history of the Dominican Republic will explain the atmosphere Aristy captures in his novel as well provide context for the complexity of the Dominican Republic as a country and the harsh reality it offers migrant Haitian sugarcane laborers past and present.

In December 1492, Christopher Columbus arrived at Hispaniola as a result of a charter granted by the Spanish monarchy to explore and conquer the New World. Upon landing, Columbus and his men met the native Indian population, the Taínos (Pons, 1998). Taínos were a peaceful people who used metal tools, practiced agriculture and fishing and adhered to an elaborate system of religious beliefs. Columbus, however, was above all interested in their metal and in particular, gold. With the plentiful gold deposits, Columbus sought to establish a commercial outpost or *factoría* (Pons, 1998). To save money, he used Indians as slaves instead of paying his men monthly wages. The overworked Taínos were subjected to harsh treatment and inadequate amounts of food and water (Bell, 1981). On December 20, 1503, the Spanish Crown that funded Columbus' expedition to the island established the system of *encomiendas,* by which Spaniards were granted Indians for labor use in the mines in exchange for "teaching" the conquered Indians the Catholic faith (Pons, 1998). Also, a hierarchical social class system was legally implemented that established caste lines and eliminated the possibility of social mobility (Wiarda, 1969). This structure remained present well into the modern era. However, with food being very scarce and the death of large numbers of Indians, Europeans began importing African slaves. As the Spaniards exploited and exhausted all the gold mines on the island, they became interested in a new industry, the sugar mill industry (Bell, 1981).

After a series of Spain's failed attempts to maintain its hold on the island, several territories in the Antilles fell to the English and French as a result of many wars. The Spanish officially ceded the western three-eighths of Hispaniola to France and renamed the colony Saint-Domingue in the 1697 Treaty of Ryswick (Pons). The French continued expanding their territory until forming what is today Haiti. Life in Saint-Domingue, also known as the "Pearl of the Antilles," was characterized by wealth as the French colony profited off of refined coffee, cotton, indigo and sugar. However, life in the Spanish- controlled portion of Hispaniola, and in particular, Santo Domingo was categorized by extreme poverty during this time due to Dutch vessels closing off the port and preventing trade and transactions, a primary source of wealth, from occurring.

When the Haitian Revolution occurred in 1789, the Spanish allied with the efforts of the black uprising led by Toussaint and even promised freedom to slaves. The Spanish hoped to use the chaos and instability in the eastern part of the island to recover the entire island (Pons, 1998). However, on July 22, 1795, unbeknownst to the inhabitants of Santo Domingo, the King of Spain ceded and abandoned all property in the Spanish part of the island of Santo Domingo in a peace treaty with France. The treaty also asked for troops and inhabitants of Santo Domingo to evacuate and relocate. Consequently, after winning the Haitian Revolution, Toussaint arrived in Santo Domingo on January 26, 1801, to claim his territory and unify the former Spanish colony under his government. After attempting to stall the Haitian occupation of Santo Domingo, Santo Domingo's governor ceded control to Toussaint. As leader, Toussaint abolished slavery and took several measures to integrate the Spanish colony into the political and economic structure of Haiti Saint-Domingue (Pons). However, France reorganized its men, with the help of Spaniards and Dominican creoles, and the year after the unification France took back control of Santo

Domingo, on February 25, 1802. During these years of constant struggle for control of Santo Domingo, the city is said to have "lost its sense of national direction" as well as:

> "lost most of its educated elite and the colonial entrepreneurs who had been responsible for its economic revival during the second half of the 18th century. Poverty again became universal and a deep pessimism fell on the populace composed mainly of colored people who perceived themselves as white, Hispanic and Catholic and who did not want to be abandoned by Spain" (Pons 116).

Though the Haitians were defeated by the French at the turn of the 19th century, they still sought their goal, unification of the entire island under one government (Pons), which would provide them a better defense against incoming French attacks. Many countries including Venezuela and Mexico offered Dominicans the opportunity to become incorporated as citizens of their own countries. However, on November 15, 1821, the pro-Haitian party proclaimed its independence from Spain and claimed the cities bordering Santo Domingo. To win the inhabitants of the only remaining town of Santo Domingo, Haitians promised them land, abolition of taxes and liberation of remaining slaves. On January 19, 1822, Santo Domingo came under the protection of the now Republic of Haiti. Dominicans in Santo Domingo, however, refused to work in the plantations, the only places they were allowed to work. It was here that the deeply embedded anti-Haitian prejudice began as a result of the 20 years of unification, a very difficult time for the co-existence of the two groups (Pons, 1998). Dominicans and especially white Dominicans felt they were subjected to immense cruelty, chaos and discrimination (Wiarda, 1969). This period left an indelible mark on Dominicans and if not for the Haitian unification, the sense of antagonism felt by Dominicans would be less. Nevertheless, this period set the tone for what the island became: a place where Haitians were unwelcomed, often despised

and regarded as lowly heathens. On January 1, 1844, the pro-French Dominican group issued a manifesto stating the reasons for separating from Haiti and calling on France for protection (Pons). Fifteen days later, *La Trinitaria*, another Dominican separatist group, issued its own document listing the grievances suffered by Dominican people and inciting a rebellion. Pons comments that "these two manifestos were a clear expression of the views of the eastern population who considered themselves completely different from the Haitians, especially regarding language, race, religion and domestic customs," (Pons 151). These two manifestos also brought forth more animosity against Haitians. *La Trinitaria* organized a coup on February 27, 1844 and by nightfall on the 28th, negotiations with the government had ended. The Haitian government agreed to a peaceful surrender of power to the Dominicans and the departure of all deposed Haitians under honorable conditions. The Dominican Republic was constituted a provisional "Junta Central Gubernativa." Over the course of 15 days, all of the towns on the eastern side announced their decision to leave the Republic of Haiti and join the Dominican Republic.

The 1900s marked a drastic change from the triumph of the new Republic. The early part of the 20th century was one of chaos, instability and economic woes as the Dominicans attempted self-rule (Pons). To exacerbate the situation, Dominicans had accrued so much debt that European nations were threatening to send battleships to collect on them. In an effort to monopolize the sugarcane industry and protect its navigation routes in the Caribbean, the United States entered into an agreement with the Republic; they agreed that in exchange for financial aid, the U.S. government would respect the agreements made by Dominican presidential predecessors in regard to the Improvement Company, a public works company privately owned by a group of U.S. citizens. The U.S. government handled all of the obligations of the Dominican

government as well as exercised power over administration of the customs house, the chief source of government revenues. The U.S. would decide how to help the Dominican Republic reestablish credit, preserve order and promote progress. As executive of the finance department, the first assignment of the United States government was the repayment of foreign loans to the British, French, Italian, Dutch and German governments. Throughout the period of U.S. Occupation, the U.S. usurped more and more control over the entire Republic. By 1907, the U.S. held complete power over not only the finances but also the politics and administration of the Dominican government. As the Dominican state increased its production and exportation of sugar, coffee, cacao and tobacco, the country saw improvements in its own finance and wealth (Pons). The sugarcane industry in particular proved vital to American corporations as they capitalized on the industry to expatriate profits back home (Wiarda). During the U.S. Occupation, the sugarcane industry was revived with the introduction of cheap Haitian labor, an idea of the U.S. government. As a result, sugar became produced in bulk and this consequently drove prices down. To recover the business, the Americans introduced greater reliance on cheap laborers, namely Haitian immigrants.

In addition to economic influences, the American forces improved the sanitation, communication and educational facilities. In 1924, the U.S. also implemented a new constitution that “reorganized the political system to create a strong executive power, but with juridical mechanisms to protect human rights” (Frank 297). One of the most influential results of this occupation was the creation of a modern unified constabulary, where future dictator Trujillo was able to rise through the ranks to power. Today, Americans are partially blamed for the rise of corrupt dictator Trujillo. The people of the Republic elected President Horacio Vásquez. A system of order and democracy lasted until the end of the 20s as the world fell into a great

depression. Conspiracies against the government were discussed and plotted beginning in 1929, when President Vásquez became ill.

Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, chief of the former Dominican National Police as a result of the U.S. Occupation, was amongst those plotting against Vice President Alfonseca's taking control of government during the time of Vázquez's deteriorating health conditions (Pons). Through tactics of intimidation and manipulation of his rivals as well as shady business deals and multiple investments in land and urban properties, Trujillo quickly ascended to power as army chief (Pons). To many, Trujillo embodied the promise of social justice as he himself was born in a rural town to poor parents of Spanish, Haitian and Dominican descent (Biography.com Editors, 2016). One industry greatly controlled and protected by Trujillo was that of the sugarcane industry. Having been a cane weigher himself and a policeman at a plantation during his former years, Trujillo became a big investor and businessman in the sugarcane industry (Biography.com, 2016). During his reign, Trujillo arranged to have his sugar companies exempt from a special tax on sugar and established private sugarcane fields on government-owned land with military protection. He used the labor of Haitians in many Trujillo-owned enterprises.

However, as army chief, Trujillo slowly began placing his followers in vital army positions. Dominican historian Frank comments: "little by little Trujillo began changing the army into both his own private business and a military machinery to serve his political ambitions" (Pons 352). The country became distinctly divided between those who supported the vice president and those who supported Trujillo. Despite reports of Trujillo conspiring against the government, Vasquez's "confidence in Trujillo also made the army chief an untouchable figure in the regime and a serious point of contention within the Partido Nacional" (352). On the 23rd of February 1930, a coup began in San Luis Fortress and, meeting no resistance, moved to

the capital, where Vasquez agreed to negotiate with the rebel leaders. On March 2nd, both Vasquez and Alfonseca resigned and Rafael Estrella Ureña was sworn in as president. U.S. legislation declared that it would not recognize any government led by Trujillo because of his betrayal of Vásquez. Consequently, Trujillo decided to promote Ureña as his own personal puppet president. As Ureña governed, Trujillo worked in the background to continue to consolidate power for both Ureña and himself while ordering Ureña on his next steps as President. He oversaw the administration of violent terrorist acts to eliminate those who were neither pro-Trujillo nor pro- Ureña (Pons). On May 24th, the two rebels were recognized by the Junta Nacional Electoral, the Dominican elections committee, as President and Vice President. During the remainder of the year, Trujillo worked to oppress, imprison and even kill more opponents (Pons). Trujillo's terrorist band became known as *La 42* (Pons). On August 16, 1930 Rafael Trujillo and Rafael Estrella Ureña took office as President and Vice President of the Republic respectively.

The "era of Trujillo," a phrase coined by Rafael Trujillo himself, was a period of corruption and mistreatment. Trujillo was a patronizing, manipulative leader who used many tactics to destroy his enemies (Wiarda). As president, Trujillo devoted his first term to further consolidating his position (Bell), systematically eliminating his enemies and censoring the press. He then filled administrative offices with his cronies, men whose loyalty could be bought with bribes and blackmail (Wiarda). He required all appointed officials to sign an undated letter of resignation, communicating the idea that one's post depended solely on Trujillo's pleasure (Wiarda). Re-election was not a concern for Trujillo as he founded the Partido Dominicano, the only political party. Furthermore, officers in the military were constantly moved up and down the

military hierarchy so as to ensure that the officers did not accumulate loyal supporters and pose a potential threat to Trujillo's rule.

Self-adulation categorized Trujillo's second term, as can be seen by his renaming of the country's capital from Santo Domingo to "Ciudad Trujillo" (Wiarda). Schools taught books written by Trujillo himself and these books glorified his virtues and applauded his rule. Dominicans were hired to yell "Viva" as Trujillo walked through the streets (Wiarda). However, this was also the period of the Parsley Massacre of 1937 (Bell). For the 80 years following Haitian occupation, Haitians had continued to trickle over the border due to social and economic problems at home. In search of a better life, Haitians crossed the border to work as cane cutters. They were supposed to return home during the off-season of the harvest rather than remain in the Republic (Wiarda); however, due to the terrible conditions in Haiti, many remained. In an effort to rid the country of the growing Haitian population, Trujillo orchestrated the massacre of thousands of Haitians. On the day of the shooting, inhabitants of the Dominican Republic were lined up and because soldiers could not phenotypically distinguish between Haitians and Dominicans by any visible means, they were asked to pronounce the word 'perejil' ('parsley') with an emphasis on the 'r' sound (Memmott, 2012). Those who could not correctly articulate the word were shot on the spot. Death estimates range from 9,000 to 20,000 (Memmott, 2012). This public mistreatment of Haitians is an example of *anti-haitianismo*, the prejudice, hatred of and discrimination against Haitians and their language, culture and race, but it is not the instance of this type of behavior. Traces of *anti-haitianismo* can be found during the colonial period as well when Spaniards instituted policies of racial segregation on the island and taught the native population of the superiority of all customs, beliefs and matters from Europe as opposed to the barbarity and, hence, inferiority of all matters relating to and originating from Africa. In Spanish,

this term is referred to as *blanquismo* (‘Whiteism’) (Geneva Academy, 2010). It was implied that anything influenced by Europeans, like Dominicans themselves, was seen as inherently superior. Haitians and their customs, on the other hand, were redolent of what was deemed “uncivilized” Africa. Trujillo’s *blanquismo* included the welcoming of Spanish Republican refugees, Holocaust refugees and any other whites who might ‘lighten’ the population, as opposed to darker skinned Haitians (Geneva Academy, 2010).

Trujillo’s era of control, manipulation and violence came to an end on the night of May 30, 1961, when he was assassinated (Bell). Although not directly involved, the CIA played a role in executing the plot to assassinate him (History.Com, Staff, 2009). Trujillo was succeeded by titular president Joaquín Balaguer, who had served as Trujillo’s presidential secretary. Over the next few decades, the Dominican Republic continued to hold democratic elections and processes, but the country still faces economic challenges, as well as immigration and discriminatory issues involving Haitians. Remnants of colonialism, imperialism and *trujillismo* still plague the country today.

Biography of Author

Dominican author Ramón Marrero Aristy was born during a time of great political instability and repression on June 14, 1913 in San Rafael del Yuma, a municipality in the Dominican Republic (En Caribe, 2015). Aristy, a dark-skinned Dominican, was born into an affluent family of cattle breeders. Aristy's high ranked social class status allowed him to flourish in an environment otherwise hostile to dark-skinned Dominicans. Given his parents' occupation, by birth, Aristy was an outsider to the exploitative and capitalistic system of the sugarcane industry. This difference in cultural environment set him apart from Dominicans who grew up under the U.S.-influenced sugarcane industry. Having not been exposed to the deeply rooted prejudice and Dominican concepts of *anti-haitianismo* and *blanquismo,* which accompanied the sugarcane industry, at an early age, Aristy began to develop his own sets of beliefs on what equality and justice in the Dominican Republic should be. Aristy's parents Juan Bautista Aristy Marrero and Olivia Beltré also contributed to Aristy's development and understanding of concepts of American influence as they were seen as radicals and forced into exile by the U.S.-occupied government in 1916 (Paulino, 2015). Though he was young when his family went into exile, Aristy began to pay attention to the political problems of his day

Six years after their expulsion from the Dominican Republic, in 1922, the Marrero Aristy family received permission from the U.S.-occupied government to return (Paulino, 2015). Despite hoping to regain their wealth and prosperity, they were instead forced to adjust to the drastic changes brought on by the American-occupied government. Consequently, to support their family, Aristy and his father became cowboys, thus demoting the family socioeconomic status from upper-middle class to working class. In an effort to educate himself and continue to

earn money for his family, Aristy moved to La Romana, a city whose economy was based solely on the sugarcane industry (Peña, 2013). There, he witnessed firsthand the struggle of peasants and workers, as many poor families flocked to the city in pursuit of a better life. There, too, he read Karl Marx and broadened his viewpoint of the working class and the class struggle (Paulino, 2015). Marx's economic concept of surplus value, used to explain the instability of the capitalist system, greatly influenced Aristy and is thoroughly embedded throughout his 1933 novel, *Over*. According to the theory of surplus value:

> "Since the capitalist pays a laborer for his/her labor, the capitalist claims to own the means of production, the worker's labor-power, and even the product that is thus produced. The capitalist thus buys a product, which s/he then sells at a profit on the market. Rather than exchange a commodity for money in order to buy another commodity of use to the consumer (selling in order to buy), the capitalist buys something in order to sell at a profit margin. The capitalist is thus driven by profit-making in and of itself, without regard to use-value or the suffering of the laborer" (Felluga, 2002).

In short, in this system, the market creates a demand for a product and the capitalist pays his/her worker less than the value of his/her labor to produce that product. Consequently, the surplus equates to what has been produced 'over' and above what is required. This 'over' then becomes profit for the capitalist at the expense of the exploited laborer, who produced the 'over'. In conclusion, the capitalist who exploits the laborer in such a way is known as a thief from the Marxist perspective (Baird, 1999). This theory of the exploitative nature of surplus value as well as other Marxian writings on socialism encouraged Aristy to become a defender of *campesinos* or field laborers (Paulino, 2015).

Throughout his time in La Romana, Aristy read the great works of literature and honed his writing skills. At the age of 14, he even served as a correspondent for two Dominican newspapers, *El Diario* and *El Nuevo Diario* (Paulino, 2015). Upon high school graduation, Aristy decided to take a job at the Central Romana Corporation, an American-owned sugarcane business that owned (and still to this day owns) the majority of the city (Sun Excursion, 2015). He worked in the warehouse, where he witnessed social oppression and social injustices within the sugarcane industry. This further fueled Aristy's desire to expose and denounce the social grievances embedded in his society. Elements of his experiences in La Romana appear in his novel *Over*, "an indictment of the exploitation suffered by cane cutters working for American sugar companies" (Irele, 2004).

While he worked, he began to take more and more interest in the politics of the time. During the 1930s, Aristy aligned himself with Rafael Trujillo, whom he thought embodied the promise of social justice and a more progressive stable country. Because of Trujillo's humble origins, his demonstrated ability to maintain order in the National Guard and his charismatic personality, Aristy believed Trujillo's rhetoric of promise. However, he soon realized that this false rhetoric was fueled by a blind hope. During this period, in addition to Trujillo, Aristy also looked up to Juan Bosch, a politician, short story writer, eventual President of the Dominican Republic and one of the most important political thinkers of his time. In 1933, Bosch published *Camino Real*, a novel about the life of peasants in the Cibao region. Bosch dedicated his book to exposing social inequalities. Bosch greatly influenced many of Aristy's works, including *Over* and his first book, *Perfiles agrestes*. In subsequent years, Aristy wrote several other books including: *Balsié: narraciones, estampas y cuentos* (1938), *En la ruta de los libertadores* (1943) and his three volume book, *La República Dominicana. Origen y destino del pueblo más antiguo*

de América (1957). Along with other daring Dominican authors, Aristy and Bosch made up a group of social activists who used their literature to highlight injustices within the Dominican Republic despite the extreme censorship of the Trujillo regime.

To focus on utilizing his writing to achieve social change, in 1935 Aristy left his job at the Central Romana Company and moved to Santo Domingo to go back to school (En Caribe, 2015). He attended but never graduated from the *Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo,* majoring in journalism. During this time, he began to write for many more newspapers including: *La Nación*, *El Caribe* and *Listín Diario* (En Caribe, 2015). Four years later, in 1939, he published *Over*. In 1940, Trujillo appointed him '*Subsecretario de Estado de Trabajo y Economia Nacional'* ('Deputy Secretary of the State for Labor and the National Economy'). His job was to act as mediator between exiles and the Dominican government, persuading exiles to align their platform with that of Trujillo (Peña, 2013). Aristy's appointment and obligatory acceptance of the position was a political tactic, often used by Trujillo against those who opposed him. By keeping his opponents close by and giving orders with which they had to comply with, Trujillo exercised power over opponents. This tactic served to ridicule Aristy, in particular, for publication of a novel that exposed the cruel, exploitative system the Trujillo government enforced (Pons, 1998). After forcing Aristy into his government, Trujillo also forced him to renounce *Over*, signaling his acquiescence to the Trujillo Regime.

As intermediary for the dictatorship, Aristy was tasked with mediating a strike initiated by sugarcane workers. To further embarrass Aristy, Trujillo forced him to write and publish a novel about his own life called *Trujillo, síntesis de su vida y su obra* (1949). However, although he accepted the position Trujillo assigned him, Aristy still resisted the government, earning him a spot on Trujillo's blacklist, reserved for enemies who could not be manipulated and thus were to

be destroyed (Pons, 1998). While on a mission to sign an agreement with Dominican exiles in Cuba, for instance, Aristy gave them newspapers and banned books. In 1957, he drafted a report on the poverty that coffee workers lived in; coffee, in addition to sugarcane, was an industry monopolized by Trujillo (Peña, 2013). His greatest act of defiance, however, came in 1959 when he instigated and supplied the *New York Times* with information to publish an article on July 12, 1959, accusing the Trujillo government of corruption (Peña, 2013). On July 17, 1959, five days after the *New York Times'* publication, 46-year-old Ramón Marrero Aristy and his driver, Luis Concepción, were murdered at the National Palace. Their bodies were moved to the hills of Cazabito, Constance, a Dominican mountain village, where they were then arranged so that their deaths appeared to be a result of a car accident (Peña, 2013). Despite Trujillo's attempts to silence Aristy's voice, Aristy become and remains a monumental writer in Dominican literature and history.

Development of Sugar in the Dominican Republic

Before I discuss the novel *Over,* it is important to provide a brief history of the sugar mill as well as how a Dominican sugar plantation functions. The *ingenio* (sugar mill) was introduced during the 16th century as Europe's solution to their financial problems after the depletion of the gold mines (Pons, 1998). The business and investment in the sugarcane industry became a great mechanism for accumulating wealth as owners of mills enjoyed many privileges and advantages that increased their profit (Pons, 1998). According to Frank Pons, a historian on the history of the Dominican Republic, beginning in the 16th century, *ingenio* owners were exempt from the payment of church tithes, taxes on copper and machinery and also held the right of patronage over church clerics and chapels on their plantations (Pons, 1998). Though the sugarcane industry profited for many years, it entered a period of decline towards the end of the 17th century as a result of Spain's retaliatory policy, *devastaciones.* This policy, implemented in response to the Caribbean colony's engagement in contraband trade with Spain's enemies, England and Holland, forced Dominican inhabitants to resettle onto ruined lands. Consequently, the *devastaciones* lead to the death of Dominican domesticated livestock and prevented sugarcane and other staple crops from being produced (Pons). The demise of the Dominican sugarcane industry lasted until the early 20th century, when it was revived by the Americans during the U.S. Occupation of the Dominican Republic.

Each *Central,* an integrated agro-industrial complex often built with railways and private ports, is comprised of a central administrative office, a mill, a refinery, the town around the office and refinery which included a small grocery store - cane fields and miscellaneous production equipment like trucks, trains, tractors, weighing scales. The *finca,* best understood to

be a plantation, includes the *bateyes,* barracks where Haitian migrants live. The word *batey* originated from the indigenous Taínos, the original inhabitants of the region who were forced to become slaves during Spanish colonization. These impoverished Haitian communities lack electricity, basic sewage services and potable water. According to the film the *Price of Sugar* (2007), a documentary on the mistreatment of Haitian migrant laborers in the Dominican sugarcane industry, *bateyes* resemble forced labor camps patrolled by armed guards (Holden, 2007). While living on the *batey*, Haitians have no health services, recreational spaces nor educational opportunities.

The Haitian labor force is responsible for the cultivation of sugarcane year-round in the *cañaverales* (sugarcane fields). This was and remains an extremely intricate and complicated process (Pons). To this day, the Dominican sugarcane industry fundamentally depends on Haitian migrants. According to a 1989 Human Rights Watch report, Haitian migrants constitute 90 percent of the labor force in sugarcane cutting (Human Rights Watch, 1989). Each year, as the *zafra (*sugarcane harvest) approaches, as many as 20,000 Haitian workers are recruited with the promise of steady work at higher pay than they can earn in Haiti (Human Rights Watch, 1989). Up to date statistics on how many Haitian sugarcane workers are recruited yearly are not available as both the government and the owners of the sugarcane business have refused to provide this information. As of the year 2014, Noor, an international organization, has estimated that over 650,000 Haitians work in the Dominican sugarcane industry each year (Noor, 2014).

As it has been since the time of Aristy's writing, the sugar harvest begins toward the end of July and continues without stop for the next eight or nine months. Work on the sugar plantation requires brute force and physical stamina (Haney, 2007). It also calls for skill and precision to ensure that the crushing, boiling, striking, packing and other stages of the

complicated manufacturing process flow seamlessly and with maximum possible efficiency. The cane cutting process requires a knife, roughly fifteen inches long with a thin blade, similar to a machete. Due to the length of the blade, the knife wielder is required to frequently sharpen the blade. Then the field workers shears the cane from the stalk and cuts off the top of the stalk. Afterwards, the stalk is cleaned, cut from the root and stacked until it was loaded and transported by younger workers and women to the sugarhouse for grinding. The processing of extracting raw, unrefined sugar takes place in the sugar mill, where large rollers crushed the cane to extract its juice before transporting it to another section of the mill, the boiling room. Mill workers then pipe the cane juice through a series of vats that filtered it through bones or charcoal before it is boiled.

Haitians laborers are generally not compensated well for their laborious work. Instead, the Dominican government manipulates Haitians in order to take advantage of cheap labor costs in the sugarcane fields. They work on average 14 hours per day, seven days a week, earning less than $1 a day with minimal to nonexistent health care (Haney, 2007). Haitian immigrants have no access to basic rights. In short, workers are paid not based on the number of hours spent working, but on the amount of cane cut. Often, the amount of cane cut is underweighed by the *pesador* (cane weigher) as he sabotages the scales in hopes of making a profit by virtually stealing those extra pounds of cane. As a result, Haitians, of course, have no idea how much they would receive in compensation per ton of sugarcane they cut. Instead of cash, they are paid in vouchers that can be redeemed for overpriced food at company-owned stores run by *bodegueros (*grocers) located on the sugarcane plantation. Thus, Haitians can barely afford one meal a day and are forced to consume the sugarcane they cut in order to survive (Haney, 2007). Due to harsh working conditions and malnutrition of the workers, accidents occur frequently and often leave

workers mutilated. Given that sugarcane workers have no right to retirement or benefits, when they became injured and stop working, they are deported back to Haiti.

Another problem Haitian laborers have faced for decades is the threat of deportation as they have no legal recognition within the Dominican Republic. They are known as “citizens without a country.” With the complicity of military and immigration authorities, Haitians are transported across the border by Dominican soldiers, stripped of their identification papers and unloaded at their *bateyes,* which have been described as “concentration-camp like” (Haney, 2007). Today, the issue of deportation remains on the forefront of the Dominican agenda after the 2010 passing of Judgment 168-13. By applying the principle of *jus soli,* established in the Constitution of 1929, this amendment redefines the criteria for obtaining citizenship (Organization of American States, 2016). This law strips those of Haitian descent of their citizenship and declares them as “stateless,” thus depriving them-even though they may have been born in the Dominican Republic-of the privileges that accompany Dominican citizenship, such as healthcare and protection under the law. Under Judgment 168-13, thousands of Haitians were deported, and their human rights were violated by the Dominican government. (Organization of American States, 2016).

In addition to the issue of deportation, Haitian sugarcane workers are also subjected to working conditions that have been characterized as analogous to slavery (Human Rights Watch, 1989). In their report, titled *Harvesting Oppression: Forced Haitian Labor in the Dominican Sugar Industry,* Human Rights Watch stated: “the labor practices on its sugarcane plantations remain comparable to the slavery institutionalized by the Spanish colonists who settled on the island during the 16th century,” (Human Rights Watch, 1989). Furthermore, many Haitians arrive at the Dominican Republic without legal documents to begin with, and, therefore, after their

labor potential is exploited and they are no longer useful, they are frequently deported (Human Rights Watch, 1989). Not even the children of these immigrants, born in the Dominican Republic, are considered citizens. Revolts and boycotts are unrealistic forms of resistance as many migrants do not speak Spanish and cannot even communicate their needs to the *bodegueros. Furthermore,* the structural organization of the *finca*, which included a series of enforcement officers at different levels, discourages revolts.

Each *finca* is organized under a hierarchical system of other employees. Each plantation has *mayordomos (*overseers) as well as foreign technicians called *maestros de azúcar,* who manage the mills. These overseers are the officials of the Dominican government's Consejo Estatal de Azúcar (State Sugar Council), which operates most Dominican sugar plantations (Human Rights Watch). Dominican soldiers, while responsible for transporting Haitians to and from Haiti, also patrol the plantations to ensure that Haitian laborers do not escape (Human Rights Watch). Each *finca* has a land owner called a *colono*. The *colono* pays the *buscones* (headhunters), the men in charge of rounding up laborers, a fee for each *picador (*cane cutter) the headhunter provides. To persuade prospective laborers, the headhunter promises to grant them a work permit so that Haitians will be legally able to work in the Republic. The *buscón* also charges a large fee from the prospective immigrant before arranging for transportation from Haiti in to the Dominican Republic.

This system of exploitation and abuse was (and is currently) is economically supported by the United States. The United States is the main market for Dominican sugar as well as the main trading partner of the Dominican Republic, purchasing approximately 75% of all of the Republic’s exports (Human Rights Watch). The United States has gone so far as to grant trade benefits to the Dominican Republic under the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the Generalized

System of Preferences. Under this agreement, the Fanjul family, a Cuban-American family who has come to be known as the “royal family of cane,” pays dwindling tariffs for their sugar exports (Bracken, 2015). The Fanjul family began growing cane in the 1980s in the Dominican Republic, where their company is now the country’s largest private landowner and employer. Their American company, Central Romana, where Ramón Marrero Aristy was exposed to the harsh business of sugarcane, produces most of the Dominican Republic’s sugar (Bracken, 2015). The Fanjul family co-owns the world’s largest refining company, American Sugar Refining, which markets it product under the brand names Domino, C&H, Redpath, Tate & Lyle and Florida Crystals. Though well aware of the abuses of the Fanjul family business as well as the Dominican sugarcane industry as a whole, the United States has yet to publically criticize this exploitation.

Over

Ramón Marrero Aristy's *Over* is about the mistreatment of sugarcane workers and the manipulative capitalistic system that controls the sugarcane industry in the Dominican Republic. The book was published in 1933, a time of disappointment for Aristy, who had hoped dictator Rafael Trujillo would foment great social change in the treatment and conditions of the working class. Instead of ameliorating the social environment, Trujillo's policies agitated and aggravated the already discriminatory atmosphere. Nevertheless, Aristy himself remained a dedicated believer in change and thus desperately sought solutions to the social problem of the mistreatment of the working class.

Aristy was often described as an idealist and a follower of Marxism (Paulino, 2010) who used his writing to highlight and denounce his country's injustices. *Over* was Aristy's way of criticizing both the government in power and the social injustices that were occurring at the time. It also addressed the negative repercussions of American influence in the Dominican Republic. Aristy's characters struggled with the temptations of greed as well as a lack of concern for the exploited workers in the sugarcane fields. The novel provided a fictional representation of the conditions of the country in an explicit and unsubtle way, without mentioning a specific location. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that Aristy was referring to the Dominican Republic and its current state. By writing this book, Aristy put himself in grave danger, his text undermined the authority of the Trujillo regime, which was known to "destroy all of its enemies," (Wiarda, 1960). This book was so controversial that Trujillo forced Aristy to renounce it in 1940. Despite the dictator's efforts, Aristy continued to fight the regime until his assassination in 1959. Today, *Over* is considered a classic, taught in many Dominican schools as it provides a critical insight

into the prevailing conditions of the country at the time, some of which have not been overcome today.

The novel is set during the U.S. Occupation of the Republic in the early 1900s and divided into three parts, each narrated by Daniel Comprés. The novel begins with Daniel, a poor young adult struggling to survive, pondering the global social problem. He is plagued by the fact that some people are born into better socioeconomic situations than others and destined to be doctors and business owners while others are destined to be jobless and destitute, barely managing to subsist. As he notes, "Unos son señores licenciados, doctores o simplemente grandes propietarios; otros, herederos afortunados, por designios del destino o de la vida…Se necesitaría ser niño corrompido para tener noción de superioridad social en esa época," (Some are titled men, doctors, or simply well-to-do landowners; others, lucky heirs, by designs of fate or of life…one would need to be a corrupted child to experience the same notion of social superiority in that time) (Aristy 11).

Comprés, an uneducated man who has been dispossessed by his father, obtains a job as a *bodeguero* on a sugarcane plantation in a city scholars speculate to be La Romana. During his job interview, Daniel meets "Mr. Robinson," an American businessman who owns and operates the entire plantation. He is referred to as "el manager" by his employees and "blanco del diablo," ("white devil") by the narrator himself. After being hired, Comprés spends the remainder of the first section getting acquainted with the people and the ways Daniel calls "la máquina" ("the machine"). He describes the sugar refinery as dehumanizing the laborers, comprised mostly of Haitians and "Cocolos," or English-speaking blacks, originally from Tortola. They work in exchange for food, and Aristy explains that "No hay que dudar, el hombre hambriento vende hasta el alma," (There is no doubt, the hungry man will sell even his own soul) (Aristy 49). The

most important moment in part one comes when Daniel is called a thief by a Haitian laborer, which introduced him to the meaning of the word, "over," which we see throughout the novel.

The concept of *over* is best described in a conversation between Daniel and "el viejo Dionisio," an old dark-complexioned manager at the sugar refinery. He responds to Daniel's outrage at being called a thief by explaining that the Haitian laborer did not mean to insult him, but rather called him what all employees are known as on the plantation. When Daniel responds with indignation, Dionisio asks him what his name is and only then does Dionisio first learn his name after having worked with Daniel for months, further emphasizing the depersonalization of this manipulative, exploitative system.

Dionisio goes on to explain that Haitians are a defenseless people who accept their status in life. They do not seek to retaliate or protest because they know it will accomplish nothing. He explains: "también instintivamente, conocen a perfección su destino, y por experiencia saben el terrible mal que les traería cualquier protesta…En la finca to son ladrón. Roba el bodeguero, roba el pesador, roba la mayordomo y yo ta creyendo que la má ladrón de toitico son el blanco que juye en su carro," ("Also instinctively, they're perfectly aware of their fate, and now, through their own experience, the terrible evil that would bring them any protest…On the *finca*, erryone is a thief. *Bodeguero* steals, *pesador* steals, *mayordomo* steals and I reckon that the worse thief of all them chumps is the white man who runs oft in his car") (Aristy 42-43). Dionisio, thus, provides the key to the success of the plantation and the sugarcane industry in the Dominican Republic. It is a system in which those at the top-the owner, the bosses and the managers-rob from those below them-the overseers, the laborers and so on-thereby forcing them to continue the cycle. Those at the bottom, the laborers, are the worst off and cannot escape the vicious cycle. When the cane cutters bring their bundles to be weighed, the *pesadores* pre-set the

scale so that it seems as if the cane cutters cut less than they did. This *over* -the under-paying and thereby essentially *over*-charging- yields a surplus of money in which *pesadores* profit. The profit or surplus value can then be used to cover the managers' debts incurred from theft at the plantation store. To make matters worse, laborers are already overcharged for their basic necessities like food and water, and this adds to the overall profit of the managers. As long as all expenses are covered, this vicious cycle continues. Though official regulations prohibit such practices, everyone is aware that thieving is not only endemic but inescapable.

Daniel, struggling to digest this corruption, expresses concern to Dionisio, as his conscience cannot accept the harsh reality. However, Dionisio places things in perspective, explaining that if Daniel, who cannot afford to lose his job, does not abide by the unofficial rules of the plantation, he will be fired. Though he tries to abstain from this systematic abuse, Daniel eventually succumbs to the unrelenting system. Every day he learns more about how the Haitians are treated, as they are rounded up and forced into small vehicles that travel for days to their designated plantation, where they are given numbers and assigned an extremely small shack. He describes it, saying: "los que viajan en camiones hacen el trayecto desde Haití al central en la caja de carga de los vehículos, de pies, imposibilitados para sentarse durante un momento. Como el cargamento humano sobrepasa la capacidad del camión, y los hombres…son arrojados de un lado a otro, esto provoca año tras año terribles volcaduras con sus naturales balances de muertos y heridos que raras veces aparecen en las columnas de algún periódico" (Those that travel in trucks make the trip from Haiti to the Central in the cargo box of vehicles, standing, unable to sit down for a single minute. As the human cargo exceeds the capacity of the truck, the men, are thrown from side to side. Year after year, this causes terrible [truck] turnovers with its natural tally of dead and wounded, which rarely appear in the columns of any newspaper) (Aristy 80).

To cope with the reality, Daniel joins the others administrators in consuming alcohol and soliciting prostitutes, and thus ends part one.

Part two describes Daniel's continued internal turmoil as he struggles to engage in behaviors his conscience deems cruel and inhumane. He says: "La buena alimentación, el ron, la quietud alumbrada por una lámpara de gas, y sobre todo los recuerdos, son cómplices que torturan…" (Good food, rum, the stillness lighted by a gas lamp, and above all memories are accomplices that torture) (Aristy 110). The memories of how harshly Haitian laborers are treated plagues his mind. He reflects on the time he witnessed an overseer hang himself because he was unable to handle the harsh reality of the plantation. Daniel understands now why the men resort to drinking and prostitution, to try to escape their lives. Prostitution, like the Dominican sugarcane industry, is an exploitative system of coercion. Prostitution takes something pure, like sex, just as the sugarcane takes something pure as sugarcane and corrupts and commercializes it. It promotes a desire for short-term pleasure and satisfaction just as the sugarcane industry promotes a desire for a short-term fix to money and social problems, the reasons why Daniel joins the sugarcane industry. Though prostitution provides a quick, easy boost, in the long-term, it does not provide any substance, love. Similarly, sugar from the sugarcane provides a sugar rush that only lasts a short time and when over, leaves consumers still hungry and craving more. This craving is used by the system as a means of deceiving the workers into believing that during the act of sex, or consumption of sugar, they can escape the system and the bitter feelings it elicits, when in actuality it continuously controls the workers, making them more dependent on the system of exploitation, whether it be the exploitation of sugarcane or sex. In this analogy, sugar is to food as prostitution is to sex, simulacra of the substance that is real. As can be seen in the book, similar to prostitution, the *over* is a system in which those who engage in it are not

satisfied in the long-term; instead, they are always indebted to others and consequently to the system as well.

The most defining moment of this section, however, is the fire in the sugarcane field. Though the cause is unknown, a huge fire spreads through the sugarcane fields and laborers' houses, which are located in the fields. Daniel describes the Haitians screaming for help, but the administrators, managers and the boss do not help the suffering laborers. Instead, they order other laborers to go put out the fire without providing them with any necessary tools. Without any protection, many Haitians burn as Daniel says: "Cae uno, cae otro" (One falls and then another) (125). The upper-administration continues to either look on or drive away from the incident, leaving the Haitians defenseless.

Throughout part two, Daniel continues to struggle with the idea that the though Haitians are mistreated, they do not fight the system nor do they try to leave the country. Daniel explains that they are hungry. Working in the fields, they are given just enough food to barely survive. They are reluctant to relocate, having settled in the Republic. He says: "la mayor parte son haitianos que no quieren abandonar la República; los menos son criollos[1] gastados que han perdido la voluntad de marchar a otro sitio," (the majority are Haitians who do not want to leave the Republic; others are burnt-out creoles who have lost the will to leave in search of a new home) (Aristy 169). He encounters many more laborers and listens to their life stories, becoming more disgusted with himself for his actions on the plantation. Part two ends with a drunken Daniel arguing with his wife at a dinner party he is hosting, disgusted with himself for because he is confronted by the fact that his newfound success and stable lifestyle come at a price, and it is an *over*priced one.

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[1] The term 'criollo', literally meaning 'creole,' refers to someone who is born and raised in the Dominican Republic. It mostly distinguishes between those who continue to live in the Dominican, a 'creole' and someone who immigrates to another country. It does not have a negative connotation.

In part three, Daniel falls into a deep depression. He realizes that he has changed, that he has indeed become a "ladrón" as a Haitian once called him. Tormented by the $68.27 worth of *over* he has accumulated within the year, Daniel feels hopeless because he has failed the laborers and himself. And then, "la vista del pueblo fué lo que me volvió a la consciencia, y una voz de angustia en mi interior no cesaba de hablar," (the sight of the people was what made my conscience return to me and the inner voice of anguish would not allow me to speak") (196). Consequently, he quits his job, does not accept his paycheck and is forced to move out, as he can no longer live in the plantation barracks. Broken, Daniel turns to rum. While drinking, he reflects on his career on the plantation, a place he had once seen as the solution to his joblessness and destitution. He describes the plantation as an Eden, but now he sees it for what is: "una mentira" (a lie) (204). The way the system functioned and the false promise of the plantation was all a lie. He explains that people, blinded by their desire for money, join the capitalistic system in hopes of a better life. However, the idea of a better life is a lie in itself because people must give up their morals for that ideal lifestyle. He then realizes and concludes that rum is not an escape, but a further control mechanism of the system. He says: "nosotros somos hijos del ron. Estamos destinados a nacer, a crecer y a morir bajo la influencia del ron," (We are the children of rum. We are destined to be born, to grow up and to die under the influence of rum) (208).

To Daniel, rum, like prostitution, initially represented an escape from the plantation and the exploitative system. Rum, like prostitution, seems to be an escape, but it is made of sugar; hence, it is essentially part of the same complex that the sugarcane industry utilizes to deceive its workers into believing that they are free from its grasps and demands. At first, intoxication allowed Daniel to feel a sense of peace; he no longer struggled between the desires of his conscience and the demands that accompany the sugarcane industry. Through drunkeness,

Daniel was able to mentally escape the plantation. However, by the end of the novel, he realized that rum is only an escape on the surface, and that the consumption of rum is a built-in aspect of the system. The system, he discovers, leads workers to believe that there is an escape in inebriation. However, the consumption of rum further solidifies the power and control the system has *over* its workers, hypnotizing them and leading them to return to perform the very tasks that caused the mental and physical deterioration that led them to drink initially. The rum sets the workers up for further intoxication and is thus a controlling substance that takes over not just work life, but also social life. The book ends with Daniel deciding to embark on his own path, involving yet another sugarcane plantation.

Over was an important novel at the time that it was written and published, and continues to be today. It accurately characterized the times during the "era of Trujillo" in an effort to fuel a social change that would be more favorable to the Haitian migrant workers as well as to the Dominican working class. *Over* was written during a time of strict censorship and as such Aristy represents one of the few daring Dominican authors who utilized his work to criticize Trujillo and his abuse of power. To document the abuses of the Trujillo-run government and Dominican society as a whole, Aristy carefully crafted a story which chronicled the dehumanizing machine that is the sugarcane industry, which inevitably corrupted even the well-intentioned in order to satisfy the capitalistic need for profit, wealth, social prestige and acceptance. *Over* provides readers an inside look into the harsh system practiced in Dominican sugarcane plantations. The book has yet to be translated and thus represents a hidden work that when made available to Anglophone readers could generate the change that Aristy hoped for when writing this novel. For these reasons, *Over* is a text that must be shared universally.

Translation Theory

The issue of the mistreatment of Haitians in the Dominican Republic has been the primary focus of several literary works worldwide. Many authors in the international community have risen to present their own narratives of the intricate and difficult relationship between the Haitian population and the Dominican population. Authors such as Edwidge Danticat, Rita Dove and Mario Vargas Llosa have covered this topic in their works, *The Farming of the Bones,* "Parsley" and *The Feast of the Goat,* respectively. These narratives, written with great imagery and symbolism, provide the world with a foundation to help them understand the ongoing issue that the Dominican Republic faces. Though their literary accounts convey a sense of authenticity and utilize figurative language to awaken the world's sensibilities to the delicate and intricate situation of the Dominican Republic, these accounts are not firsthand. Thus these accounts are inherently detached from the experiences of those who have struggled and are struggling to achieve a better life in the Dominican Republic.

Due to the highly censored environment of the Era of Trujillo, only a handful of authors utilized their writings to expose and condemn the conditions of the Haitian migrant workers. For this reason alone, those few authors and their personal accounts, whether fictional or historical, are highly valuable and precious. *Over*, reportedly the best narrative written during the Era of Trujillo according to Dominican professor, historian and scholar Alejandro Paulino Ramos, is one of a handful of texts written by an author who lived through and witnessed firsthand the horrors of the sugarcane industry (Paulino, 2015). Because of the rarity of the perspective and the gravity of the topic of *Over*, much weight lies on its translation. The translation of *Over* is not a simple task, as the text presents various challenges that must be overcome in order to recreate

the novel that Aristy envisioned while writing and present to a new audience a book historically grounded and specific to the issues of Dominican society.

Before discussing some of the specific challenges I faced as the translator, it is first important to understand the frame of mind that I had when considering how to approach the project. When deciding upon my strategies for the translation, I considered three important factors: the *skopos* or purpose of the source text, the audience and the nature of the message. According to Kirsten Malmkjaer, translation involves “the translator conveying across a language boundary whatever she or he understands to be essential to the meaning of the text, its function and the way it achieves its effects” (Malmkjaer 41). While the author’s true intentions for writing *Over* are not explicitly stated, it seems clear that Ramón Marrero Aristy sought to recreate the atmosphere and environment of a Dominican *finca* and the Dominican sugarcane industry at large. Based on his biography, we can deduce that his purpose in writing the novel was to publically criticize the Dominican government and society for its continued abuses of the Haitian population as well as to highlight the disparities inherent in the capitalistic system of the sugarcane industry, the so-called *over*. Consequently, Aristy’s primary audience was the Dominican people, who culturally excluded and often detested Haitian migrants who crossed the border into the country. Thus, *Over* is a text specifically grounded in Dominican culture and society. While many societies have marginalized groups and cases of social injustices, Aristy zooms in on and contextualizes the issue of Haitian-Dominican relations, thus setting it apart and making it a historically unique case. Consequently, this translation must lend itself to examining and appropriately portraying Dominican society so that its targeted English-speaking audience can understand the specific situation of the Dominican Republic, without displacing it onto another domestic case of social injustice well known to English-speakers. Given these factors, I

outlined three goals for my translation. These can best be summarized by Vladimir Prochazka's definition of a good translation. According to Prochazka, a good translator must: "understand the original word thematically and stylistically, must overcome the differences between the two linguistic structures and must reconstruct the stylistic structures of the original work in his translation" (Venuti 43). With these goals in mind and these factors to consider, I began addressing my greatest challenges, explicated here.

To begin with, throughout the novel, Aristy incorporates words that are contextually specific to the sugarcane industry in particular in the Dominican Republic. This terminology includes words such as: *zafra, Central, cañaveral, finca, batey, mayordomo, el míster, pesador, bodega* and *bodeguero.* The question I asked myself was: how do I accurately convey the same meaning of these words without losing their historical specificity as well as their orality? Furthermore, how do I create the same feeling and connotation that accompanies these words to a native-English speaker without them associating these terms outside of the context of the Dominican Republic? Words like *mayordomo* and *el míster,* meaning overseer and (white) man respectively, have their own meanings and cultural associations from an English-speaker perspective. These terms, which are used in the Dominican Republic to refer to positions and titles, in English, are often understood to refer to slavery in the United States. This association and reference to another country is problematic, and something I wanted to avoid given that *Over* is a text absolutely grounded in Dominican society. How would I overcome this then?

German philosopher and translator of Plato Friedrich Schleiermacher proposed a principle of "taking the reader to the author" (Malmkjaer 12). According to *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies,* Schleiermacher "was proposing a method which would invite readers to view the translated text in a different way and make an effort to apprehend the foreign

culture in its own terms," (Malmkjaer 70). As Schleiermacher recommends, I desired to retain a sense of "the foreign." Consequently, to make the text foreign and to avoid losing the meaning by attempting to find an English word that might not appropriately convey the context in which the term is used, I determined to leave the words italicized above untranslated in my English translation of the text. Translation theorist and poet Ezra Pound outlines his view on the autonomy of translation by stating that a translated text is "composed of linguistic peculiarities that direct the reader across the page to foreign textual features," (Malmkjaer 170). *Batey*, for example, is a word embedded within Dominican parlance as it originated from the indigenous population who originally inhabited the Dominican Republic. Though it has been compared to "concentration camp like barracks" in *The Price of Sugar,* it can only be understood in the context of the sugarcane industry, as this was where the Haitian laborers were forced to live in subpar, inhumane conditions (Haney, 2007). Thus, to translate *batey* as "barrack" or to somehow reference a United States army barrack or a concentration camp would lose its specific historical contextualization and possibly replace it with another one, that of the Nazi era. By utilizing this strategy, having already explicated the term in my section on the Dominican sugarcane industry, I am able to avoid distilling the meaning and cultural context of the words, and to preserve the specific reference to the Dominican sugarcane industry.

In addition to the issue of terminology, I was also confronted by the complexities of dialect. *Over* is a novel filled with conversation. The dialogue is between characters of different races, social classes, cultures and linguistical backgrounds. There were two important considerations for me to keep in mind when addressing Aristy's dialogue: register and intention. *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies* states: "It is the style that enables it to express attitude and implied meanings, to fulfill particular functions, and to have effects on its readers"

(Malmkjaer 233). Register is a stylistic device that captures the tone and social status of a character. It can be formal and informal. Intention refers to what Aristy hopes to convey to his audience through the dialogue and what impression Aristy wants to leave on his readers through the incorporation of characters who speak differently. Stylistically, Aristy is a complicated and complex writer as many of his characters speak in a low register and use non-standard Spanish. At times, he is also philosophical, especially when describing the concept of *over,* and at other times, Aristy can be metaphorical, particularly in the end of the novel when Daniel decides which path he will take. My initial challenge with the dialogue was recreating the dialect in a way that remained "true" to how it would sound to the Spanish ear, but that also expressed to a native-English speaker the same emotions and conveyed the same connotation that a Spanish speaker feels when reading it. Of this, my biggest challenge was presenting the dialogue in a way that demonstrated a balance between capturing and appropriately expressing the low register and conveying the social rank of each character through language without mocking or humorously portraying his/her dialect. The issue of specific historical contextualization once again presented itself.

Aristy writes dialogue as a Dominican Spanish-speaker hears it. In the scene of the fire, for instance, the author writes the speech of the Haitian laborers in such a way as to emphasize the orality of their language. He writes: "Yo soy e l'ombre de má mala suerte. Acababa de comerme mi trozo, y dende que largué unoj mochazo en el maldito fuego, me dentró vómito y tuve que arrojarlo tó…Ojalai te hubiá muerto!" (Aristy 126). On paper, today, this could be misconstrued as mocking a particular dialect and the person speaking it, especially given the way Dominicans look down upon Haitians, this portrayal of dialect could be offensive. However, given the suggested *skopos* of Aristy in writing this text, it seems clear to me that that was not

Aristy's intention. By spelling phonetically, Aristy was not being ill-mannered or trying to be offensive. Consequently, as the translator, decades removed from the author, but translating during a time of greater sensibility to how words can be perceived and construed, I wanted to exercise caution when translating non-standard speech.

To address this issue, I turned to translation theorist, Homi Bhabha whose theory of transnationalism captures the difficulty of translating the speech of a migrant. Bhabha believes that bringing the target audience to the foreign source text will inevitably lead the translator to be "face to face with elements of a text that actively resist being translated" (Malmkjaer 120). He goes on further to state that "untranslability can also be seen as the migrant's inability for whatever reason to assimilate into the new culture." Aristy's portrayal of the Haitian inability to pronounce 'r's' as can be seen in the words 'cambiai' and 'poique,'('cambiar' and 'porque'). The Spanish 'r' is articulated by the tapping of the tongue against the ridge directly behind the upper teeth and sounds like the double 'd' in 'adder' in certain English dialect. The French 'r', on the other hand, is produced in the back of the throat. Also, Aristy's leaving out of letters as in the word e l'ombre' ('el hombre') highlights the idea of the cultural difficulties Haitians faced in assimilating in Dominican culture. This portrayal of their dialect emphasizes the linguistic, cultural and social gap between Dominican and Haitians, a theme reflected in *Over* and an issue exacerbated by the Dominican sugarcane industry. My job as the translator of dialect was not to translate the words so that they were grammatically correct to an English-speaker, but instead to abide by Aristy's intention in writing their dialect phonetically in a low-register. This was to be done without mocking the speech of the characters. I chose to avoid words and phrases that sounded too stereotypical southern African American during the 1800s. I avoided any stereotypical dialect familiar to the native-English speaker and opted to create my own. My

translation was not literal and did not misspell words in the same order for the same words as the source text, but focused on the orality and meaning of the sentence. Like Aristy, I dropped letters such as the 't,' combined words and misspelled words. I translated the sentence given earlier to be: "I'm ta man with the wors' luc. Just eat muy peace and afta I tooka cuple swings at the dam fir, I threw up and had to throw it al…" This brokenness in language also allowed me to connote the low register due to migrant status of the Haitian speaker that a native-Spanish speaker would automatically understand. This strategy also conveyed the same idea of the orality of speech, but without any stereotyped mockery in the representation.

Another example of dialogue can be found earlier in the same scene when the fire first spreads. Here Aristy portrays the dialect of the men in charge of the *Central.* These men are not well educated, but the difference in their dialect from the Haitians is that it is more conversational as opposed to grammatically incorrect. Being Dominican-born, they have a liberty within their language to shorten words and play with the language that the Haitians do not. I wanted the dialect of the *mayordomos* and the *misters* to be pronounced exasperatedly, given that the *finca* and the sugarcane, the workers' primary source of income, had caught on fire. Translation scholar Eugene Nida points out the importance of context for a translator. He states: "a language cannot be understood outside the total framework of the culture, of which the language in question in an integral part" (Malmkjaer 45). Once again, my strategy was to approach this translation as a text historically grounded and specific to the Dominican Republic. I did not seek to ridicule, but rather present the orality of the supervisors of the *Central.* Instead of combining words and blatantly misspelling words as I did with the Haitian dialect, I translated how the words would sound phonetically to a Dominican-born listener to subtly distinguish between the two dialects. In the sentence: "Pa la candela, bando j'edegraciao…Parense, jijo

j'eputa! Parense ante que le rompa ei pecuezo!…" (Aristy 124) it is clear that the dialect is a low register, but that it has command of the language, in a way that a recent immigrant would not. The dropping of the letter 'd' is characteristic of Caribbean Spanish as can be seen in words 'desgraciao'('desgraciado') and 'usté'('usted'). Hence, the use of the 'j' instead of the 'h' and the 'd' is because the 'd' is often dropped as well as the fact that 'h' is not pronounced in Spanish. This dropping of the 'd' can also be found in the speech of Dionisio, a dark-skinned Dominican overseer for the *Central*: "!J'a, carajo!..Aquí pa los dominicanos usté se llama ladrón, y pa lo s'aitiano volé. Ese e s'el nombre que nos dan a to lo s'empleado de la compañía (Aristy 42)". The lack of the letter 's' is a result of the fact that Dominicans do not enunciate that letter clearly when it's in syllable or word final position. The letter 's' in syllable or word final position is aspirated to sound lie the letter 'h' in English or omitted in the Dominican dialect. Another characteristic associated with this dialect is apocope wherein 'para' becomes 'pa'. Consequently, my translation spelled the words as they would be heard. Instead of saying the full word of 'towards,' I abbreviated it like 'pa' and wrote 'twards.' When Dionisio speaks, I also employed apocope and abbreviated 'los empleados' (employees) to be ''ployees' as it fit orally and would be suitable for a conversational language. With the words 'fire' and 'stop,' I presented them as they would sound when screamed 'fiaar' and 'stahpp.' This altering also helped me to create that sense of low-register. This allowed me to make that subtle distinction between the characters and their nationality.

To continue to address the issue of register, I incorporated the use of contractions. In *The Translation Studies Reader,* edited by Lawrence Venuti, translation theorist Louise Souter states: "our ideal in translation is to produce on the minds of our readers as nearly as possible the same effect as was produced by the original on its readers" (Venuti 160). In order to produce that

'same effect,' in addition to abiding by the rules of tone and register set by the author, the translation must also have a natural flow. In an effort to maintain the flow of sentences as well as to stick to the low register of the different characters speaking, I implemented contractions. Contractions, especially during periods of dialogue, make the piece more informal and conversational and also help to prevent awkwardness and abruptness. When describing the system of *over*, Aristy writes: "No te apegues a esto que ya no es tuyo…Has visto tantos hombres gastados, destruídos! Has visto tanto bagazo…que ya no te explicas-no quieres aceptar-que tu no estés igual. Pero, no ves el camino?" (Aristy 223). To write 'do not' 'it is not' and 'you have seen' would detract from the power of these sentences and would thus not provide the same effect as that experienced by the Spanish-speaker. Therefore, in the translation, I wrote: "Don't become attached to this which isn't really yours. You've seen so many men worn-out, destroyed! You've seen so much human pulp…that you can't understand. You don't want to accept that you're not like them. But can't you see the path?"

Lastly, perhaps the most important consideration for a translator of a text like this is the decision on how or whether to translate the title of the novel, "Over," especially in accordance with the suggested purpose of the text. 'Over,' is an English word and it is used as a verb and a noun describing the system of manipulation and exploitation that characterizes the sugar cane industry in the Dominican Republic. As mentioned earlier in a quote by Souter, I greatly valued recreating and reproducing the same effect that was produced by the original text on its readers. I see my role as translator as a mediator between cultures, affording my target audience the chance to understand another culture by exposing it to a story that would otherwise be inaccessible. As mediator, it is of utmost important to ensure the understanding of my target audience while also taking them to a foreign language, society and culture. That being said, above all, it was most

important that my readers understand the meaning of the *over* and that I did not jeopardize their understanding of the concept. The *over* is the core and principle concept that gives rise to the mistreatment of Haitians in the Dominican Republic and the exploitative nature of the sugarcane industry. Given that the entire book is grounded in this concept, I attempted to recreate the feeling that Dominicans felt when originally reading this text, Consequently, I thought it best to leave the word untranslated. In doing so, I sacrificed foreignization for understanding. The text, its context, its grounding in Dominican history and culture, and the concept of the *over*, though derived from Marxist theory, were all factors incorporated throughout the novel to convey this sense of foreignization. However, *over* is the crux of Aristy's novel, and to risk the misunderstanding of this theme would be a translator's tragedy.

Overall, this translation recreates the story of a man struggling to reconcile the pressure of his conscience and value system with the systematic abuses of the sugarcane industry, the *over.* This translation allows Aristy's voice to emerge by carefully adhering to what I see to as the purpose of the source text, incorporating similar techniques of the skilled author and emulating the diction and dialect as heard and understood by a native speaker regardless of which language. What follows is my translation of three sections of the novel, which provide a better look at the various strategies implemented in my translation as well as present to readers the concept of the *over* so that they may now witness, understand and enjoy Aristy's literary genius for themselves.

Over

Part 1, Pages 40-46:

Old man Dionisio, now he's something else. All my life I'll remember him, as my eyes saw him that first day, his obese figure rocking in the saddle of his old mule that always walks with a loose bridle, a bowed head and his wandering eyes between his legs. As soon as I see him, I know that he's coming for a half a bottle of rum. There are days he drinks six bottles, and always at [minimum], three; but that's nothing for him. I have never seen another individual who can drink such volumes of alcohol without even getting drunk. At 200 pounds, he can take it!

I'll never forget his deep voice, so hollow, asking for rum every morning: "Give me a coffee, *bodeguero,* or else: "Danielito, giv' me my mornin' grub." And all this said in a tone so cordial. He's such a kindhearted old man! Such a reserved life he lives, but so spot on when he does speak! But he sure doesn't tell stories about his life. The most I've ever gotten, him being very tipsy at the time, is this: "*Bodeguero*, I'm ya friend so listen to the words of a loose-lipped man, but a free beast do not truuusss"…And he smiles as only he can smile.

I can say that I owe him a lot, if I hadn't met him, upon my arrival at the *batey* I'd have had serious run-ins. I was getting easily annoyed with any and every field hand and often uttered threats. One day a Haitian, who I sold a pound of rice to, called me a thief. Instantly I rushed out of the store, machete in hand, prepared to settle the score.

"Say that again!" I was screaming furiously at him. "Say it again!"

The old man, who was nearby, cut me off:

"Don't do that, *bodeguero*! Don't do that!"

And though he saw me boiling over with anger and ready to fight, he spoke calmly, like one who's sure that he'll be obeyed.

"But that Haitian called me a thief, and I'm not gonna stand for anyone insulting me!" was my defense.

Giving no importance to my words, as if they were those of a child, the old man replied:

"Forget this nonsense and learn to live on the *finca*. So he called you thief? Ha, shit! Whas your name then?"

It was then that I told him my name for the first time. He answered untroubled:

"Well, well, forget about ya name. Here, to the Dominicans your name's 'thief' and to the Haitians it's 'volé,' their name for all 'ployees of the company. Ignore 'em, those people!"

The Haitian had already walked away and I was still feeling a little embarrassed. Over time, I learned what old man Dionisio had explained to me in so few words, and I understand that no one else would have told me so simply. Because I've become used to it... I see the uselessness of getting angry with these poor souls, because they speak with no bitterness or malice. They live so helplessly, have been so oppressed that they have no energy. If they say 'thief,' it's not to offend. They're just talking for the sake of it and sometimes their harsh words conceal flattery. They have learned instinctively--- all too well---how little they mean to those above them here. Also instinctively, they're perfectly aware of their fate, and know, through their own experience, the terrible evil that would bring them any protest. They have made a philosophy of this conviction. Resignedly they say:

On the finca erryone is a thief. Bodeguero steals, pesador steals, mayordomo steals and I reckon that the worse thief of all them chumps is the white man who runs oft in his car.

And I think: Could anyone live without stealing? And I know it's not possible, because some Machiavellian force compels us to. On the *finca,* theft has its own moral ranking, different from the conventional understanding. It isn't a source of shame for anybody, because it's practiced like any other natural function and accepted as an imposed condition of employment.

I think about how each one takes part. The *pesadores* use loaded weights to steal between 500 to 1000 pounds per cartload from the delivery man and the chopper, in addition to the 200 pounds that are automatically deducted so that the weight of the goods comes out [close to] that of the factory. This overcharging allows the *over* to go to the owner of the cane plantation, with which he pays a few fines, evens out errors against him, and covers the price of water that his oxen (owned or rented from the company) drink, water that is sometimes solely symbolic, since it's already charged to the tenant farmer and the contractor, even if they have on their rented land**-**that is to say, even on land that does not belong to the *Central*-a creek where their cattle can quench their thirst.

The company strictly prohibits loaded weights, as it prohibits everything that clearly screams deception, but says nothing when the *over* appears-like a gift from Heaven-, because it knows that this *over* will irremissibly end up in its hands.

The *mayordomos* of the company-as those at the *Central* are called-have their own way of stealing too. The office of harvesting pays extremely cheap prices for jobs. The *desavero*[2] has actually been paid at less than a penny for the job, when its regular rate is a cent or a cent and a half. Weeding the field in Godforsaken, rocky terrain where it's impossible even to do two jobs in one day has been sometimes paid five or six cents. And even that's a miracle! Usual prices are three, three and a half or four cents per job**,** depending on the falling or rising price of sugar. Workers sometimes refuse to harvest the cane, not because they have the energy to claim their

[2]A process of weeding the area around the stocks of cane before the harvest begins.

natural born rights or organize protests, but because their eyes tell them that with two days of work they will still not make enough to eat even once. And then the *mayordomo* sees the need to force them, using the police from the *Central* and his own machete to do the rough-housing because when *el mister* gives the order to carry out a job at this or that price, it's got to be done, whether it's doable or not, to keep your job, we all know that the white man is infallible and whatever he say goes. In these cases, some of them folks use money from their meager salaries; but others, who are not willing to, or cannot, use tricks. They propose jobs-on their own and at risk of being let go if their deceit is discovered-at prices higher than those stipulated by the office. But as they cannot alter the reports or pay-roll, in order to sure-up their accounts they deceive the ignorant farmhands, and the one hundred jobs the worker has done, upon being measured or calculated, become 80; the 80 become 60, etc. And then, if they're discovered, look out, because the "integrity" of the company does not allow for deception.

As for the *bodeguero,* the story is more complicated and cruel. You could say that no employee is so compelled to steal, and to such desperation, as he. The *bodeguero* is charged for everything meticulously, whether it be an ounce of pepper, a head of garlic, half pound of beans or a nutmeg. The plantation's governing body has printed regulations that are like real laws, though outlandish and drastic laws, by which one can be condemned, fired, ostracized, without having been tried and without any kind of option to appeal. Mr. Robinson often writes saying: "You must adhere strictly to such and such article of our regulations," or "In accordance with such an article, you must do this or that," as if that regulation had come from the top Executive Power in the form of decree or had been created by Congress, thereby becoming law.

Shops do not have the adequate scales required to accurately weigh the large sacks that the warehouse ships. In the procedures rulebook one "article" reads: "Report damaged items or

items received broken or in insufficient quantities," but that's just a bunch of fluff because the company does not have the means to check for errors, and even if they are found, experience shows you must think long and hard before filing complaints because they "damage the record" of the company…and stories of people who have been suddenly dismissed, without explanation, shortly after having reported a bottle of rum that was broken in a box, or some ten pounds less of beans, go from mouth to mouth.

And as if this weren't bad enough! One *must* also cough up the *over*.

Part 2, pages 123-127:

The *zafra* continues. When I'm not working, I spend my spare time looking at the varying scenes of daily life through the lens of a window. One of those days, there was a fire. When the mountains of smoke began to rise in the *cañaverales*, the men who were resting for a moment in the *batey*-it was mid-day-tried to hide, full of panic. I saw the Haitian Jean Botis run towards the stalks of cane with a plate of food in his hands, swallowing as he ran. Others, who were cooking, grabbed their dishes and fled with them in hand. Some that were shopping in the *bodega* jumped from the balcony and hid under the floor. Others ran aimlessly. That's when Cleto and other police officers from the *Central* showed up, galloping like centaurs, machete in hand, viciously shouting:

"Twards the fiaar, you bunch of bastards! Twards the fiaar!"

And as some hoped to keep running away, the C*ibaeno*[3], with revolver in hand, threatened them saying:

"Stahpp, you sons of bitches! Stahpp or I'll break your neck!"

Some of those that had been shopping did not have time to save their groceries, and an old man who at the time had come up from the courtyard was knocked down by another police officer, and his groceries rolled on the ground, wasted. Others who were in their homes, left plates of food half finished, as if fear-stricken, made no attempts to flee; and everyone, forming a mob, was thrown out in front of the horses to be trampled on by the beasts.

The *mayordomos* from other fields galloped by, their shirts puffed up from the wind and the brims of their straw hats bent, yelling:

"Fiaar! Fiaar!"

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[3] A Cibaeno refers to a person from Cibao a northern region in the Dominican Republic. There they speak a local dialect that has influence from Portuguese.

The white men pulled in one after the other in zippy, fancy cars. They arrived like generals, coming to command the army.

I've already seen one fire. The cane burns like straw, leaving a black, suffocating smoke. The wind blows the flames, whipping it. The squad of field hands is thrown into the flames, armed with their work machetes, to chop the cane and thereby stop the flames. The heat is terrible, much more terrifying than anything you could ever imagine, and the flames licked at the men, burning their hair and skin. The field laborers jump back when a gust of wind blasts the furious flames into them. Terrified, burned, crazed, some flee. *Mayordomos*, supervisors, contractors and police, go after them roaring: "Stahpp the flame, fucking pussycats! Stahpp the flame!" And their strong machetes fall flat or on their backs on the shoulders of the fugitives or simply terrified men. Then, they once again hurl themselves into the flames, desperate, into the fire, simply fearful of the armed men.

One falls, then another. They are suffocated. They are dragged a short way and then they are left. Perhaps, there is a practitioner-perhaps-that can do something for them. The struggle continues. That *mayordomo* brings his crew, digging a trench. Now, he almost finishes it by the end of one or more hours of battle without a break, but out comes a spark on the other side and the fire continues with new impetus. Screams. Men were drenched in sweat, exhausted, their energy so depleted that it's impossible to explain how they keep hacking away. Whoever stops lifting his arm will not be able to lift it again. The fire continues, the smoke continues. Fire! Smoke! Thwacks! The whites give orders and the men fight the flames until they manage to defeat them.

For more than one hour, the shooting of the crackling of the cane was deafening. The women and children of the *batey,* under the furnace of the sun, commented on the event, shading

their eyes with their hands in order to look at the place of devastation. My sight did not stray from the mountains of smoke rising up to the sky.

When it was all said and done, the cars of the whites drove back out along the same road. The *mayordomos,* supervisors and contractors came to the *bodega* to take a few shots to "get over" the shock of it all, and those poor field hands, blackened, scorched, breathless, returned to the fields to cart their wagonloads of cane or to cut some more.

Later on, when doing his shopping, they commented on the events. A *criollo* named Montero said regretfully:

> "I'm ta man with the wors' luc. Jus eat muh peace and afta I tooka cuple swings at the dam fir, I threw up and had to throw it al…"
>
> "Well, I almose suffocated to deaff, brutha!"

Someone said: "I wush you had!"

And as a howling laughter was heard amongst the group, someone growled in disagreement:

> "Damn it, don't laugh. Erry time I see them hittn the mens and think that we have to stop the flames, for nuthin, my blood boils!"

At that moment, Cleto and his *compañero* passed with two other men handcuffed at the arms. They were the alleged perpetrators of the fire. What roused suspicion was the fact that they had been found with pipes and matches in their pockets, when they themselves were fighting the flames.

Someone muttered between his teeth with anger:

> "Crooke!"

But those in the group, who did not hear, continued-the police on horseback; the others on foot, tied to the saddles of the mounts by new leather.

Part 3, Pages 220-224:

I had lost the strength and desire to reason. I wasn't traveling through the urban part of the city. I felt rejected by all those who had yesterday been my companions, and so I remained among those men who didn't think, who drifted through life and who offered me their rum and food indistinctly.

I spent the first nights in that empty house, but one day someone rented it out. Then I was forced to confess to my friend this new misery. He was very poor and in his house there was little furniture, but he gave me what he could: a little cot where his child slept and a mattress that the child soaked with urine during the day and that I dried at night with my heat.

In his home, I almost always ate and drank daily. My, everything was such mumbo-jumbo! Sometimes, when the hazes of drunkenness lifted, I felt like someone who had stolen, killed or something similar. Then I tried to tell myself: "This is the reality of living indebted. It's because men have been very hard on me." And not for a moment did I want to think: "The fact is that I've strayed from the path."

***

My lover the prostitute said one night: "Come get in bed with me. After twelve o'clock, no one ever comes. I need you."

Without thinking about it, I said yes. And since that night, I waited for those who pay to have sex to leave.

I felt a burning sensation in my chest caused by a terrible sense of shame, but I tried to justify my actions by telling myself:

Isn't she a good woman? Only she is decent! Only she loves me! If that's life, what are we going to do?

***

The townspeople who saw me stumbling–sometimes it wasn't because I was drunk, but because I hardly ate-said:

"Danny Comprés, son of don Lope. That boy is lost."

And some, who dared speak to me, reprimanded me saying:

"Stop that! Don't hang around there…These people…!"

A mad desire to hit them overtook me and I hastily muttered to them:

"Who cares? My father disowned me, the *Central* let me go, everyone rejected me and now you come to preach! If anyone's lost, I am that someone and I have a right to do as I please!"

Whoever had spoken to me would make an excuse and quickly walk away, speechless. I felt empty. I felt like I was going to collapse and I would shake my head so as to not hear a voice saying: "You fool! Why lie? You think you're okay? "

And I'd go back to the rum.

***

It was yesterday that I decided not to drink anymore. More than ever I felt ashamed of myself. I didn't even want to see my lover prostitute, and so last night I slept in a train car.

Above me was the blue sky watered with stars. The moon, half-full was a sight. Rather than sleep, I napped. A voice started to speak to me:

"Eh! What you think? Every day, *The Man* devours more men. (The factory was there, its thousands of eyes turned off). The history of your people and that of your region is that of the cane. Your brothers enter the mill, the mill grinds them up, and their

blood flows through its channels: it's gold, it's profit, it's *over!,* and it's gone… and all that remains of the men here on your soil is pulp."

"And you've been grinded up too, but something inside of you, that wasn't crushed by the machine, survives. They thought you had no more energy-you yourself believed it-and they threw you away. But do you really have no doubt? Are you really not afraid to confess to yourself that you're going the wrong way, that there is another path?... Where are you going? What about the horizon, can't you see the horizon?"

My body, weakened by day's hunger, started to tremble. From my chest rose a wave of uncontrollable emotion. The voice continued:

"Don't become attached to this, which isn't really yours. You yourself no longer belong here. You've given your *over,* what are you waiting for? I think only the worry that you are nothing holds you back. You've seen so many men worn-out, destroyed! You've seen so much human pulp…that you can't understand. You don't want to accept that you're not like them. But can't you see the path? Spy the dream of *The Man* now sleeping and run before it begins grinding once more! Run, brother!"

I heard that last bit afoot. The feeling that I was being chased urged me to walk on. I moved my body forward and hunched over, I crossed the town like a fugitive.

***

The night was over. Opening a hole in the sky, the sun's large face shined through. That wave of emotion undid me. If I say that a hope sweeps me along, a hope of once more being…well, I'd be lying! Because I know that happiness-the joy of life-has been lost, left behind.

I go, perhaps obeying a primitive instinct of self-preservation, perhaps running from myself.

I'm going, because I feel that something evil is chasing me, and that sweeps me on-[with] a supreme effort-along the path that opens before me.

The weak breeze entangles the mane of the last sugarcane plantation.

And I go…

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