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Cover Page Footnote

Thank you to my faculty advisor for the Summer Undergraduate Research Institute, Dr. Jason Bartles.

INTRODUCTION

In *La Era de Trujillo*, public space became a hall of mirrors all of which refracted Trujillo's greatness in his many costumes: the statesman in jacket and tie, the caudillo on horseback, or the army general in full military brass with his distinctive Napoleonic chapeau.

Lauren Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and the Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*

Although he never formally authored works of literature, Rafael Trujillo would become the defining storyteller of his era. Under his authoritarian regime, named the *Trujillato*, Trujillo ventured to be the only author of his era. Speeches, books, and news articles written by his supporters, both at home and abroad, all had to receive Trujillo's stamp of approval. Mario Vargas Llosa notes that freedom of expression under the *Trujillato* "was a kind of operatic farce, orchestrated by this man who had practically total control and could convert people into actors in a very sinister show" (qtd. in Gussow). And in this sinister show, Vargas Llosa also notes that Trujillo worked to ensure that he was the "playwright, director and the main character" of the era (Boyers & Bell-Villada 222). For most Dominicans, they could only watch the theatrical violence unfold from the cheap seats. Trujillo wrote the ending and directed the people to act when necessary, but of course, no one could ever overshadow the dictator as the main character of his own dictatorship.

However, Trujillo could not continue to write his story after his assassination in May 1961. His supporters certainly tried. They were successful in keeping aspects of Trujillo's legacy alive, as some Dominicans were still too afraid to tell their stories. But, over time, his survivors' stories would be put to paper in the form of dictator novels. While Trujillo would remain one of the main characters in fictional recreations of the *Trujillato*, these would not be portrayals that he would appreciate; they would lack his distinctive director's thumbprint that molded everything published beforehand. Both non-fiction and historical fiction have unique perspectives when it comes to reconstructing an era. To understand how authors are portraying Trujillo and his regime, attempting to reclaim the power of storytelling from him, I centered my discussion around three accounts: *Trujillo: The Death of the Dictator* (1978) by Bernard Diederich, *The Feast of the Goat* (2000) by Mario Vargas Llosa, and *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994) by Julia Álvarez. These texts all explore the idea that, although Trujillo was certainly a force to be reckoned with, he also built his dictatorship by extending the legacy of colonial rule. Adopting the narratives of colonization would shape Trujillo's regime, as well as how he told the story of his regime. Therefore, it is only fair that these authors attempt to deconstruct Trujillo as an agent of colonialism in their own narratives. Each text uses the power of narrative to mirror the historical processes of Trujillo slowly colonizing Dominicans' minds and bodies to take the power of creation away from the people. The authors also associate Trujillo with the images

of the Spanish conquistador and the American military to undermine Trujillo's right to rule.

MAKING MEANING: NARRATIVES IN HISTORICAL FICTION

History, I was learning, is the story we tell ourselves about what really happened.

Interview with Julia Álvarez, 2004, Chicago

For such a larger-than-life figure with dreams of authorial and authoritarian intent, it is fitting that the greatest deconstructions of Trujillo's life also come in the form of literature, which is intrinsically tied to history. While chronology is one of history's primary goals, at the end of the day, history can also be seen a piece of literature—a narrative written by an author with an agenda. To this end, Ángel Estévez points out history's prejudices in an example that shapes the discussion outlined here: "The 'official' account of the conquest and the subsequent colonization conveys a historical narrative that does not quite coincide with the vision of the colonized" (161). Colonial powers have systematically denied the region its cultural identities and own interpretations of events. Édouard Glissant notes how this support for history as a single story, or "history as a force and power coming from an (external) culture," began to take root in the Caribbean elite, as colonialism purposefully replaces traditional methods of learning and expressing culture, and the elite were the first to adopt this definition to become closer to whiteness (92). This approach to writing history mirrors Trujillo's own approach. Sonia Farid writes that the *Trujillato* involved "the creation of a fabricated official narrative" that the Dominican people were forced to swallow (49). Like a colonial power would, Trujillo replaced aspects of Dominican history and culture with his own "Trujillisms" and forced his way into the Dominican elite.

If colonial powers, and by extension Trujillo and the elite, twisted the record of history for their own gain, then what is a responsible way to approach history? One approach is the acceptance of history as multiple stories to tell. To this end, Glissant emphasizes that a true and equal history should be "concerned with the obscure areas of lived reality" that official narratives purposefully forget (69). Therefore, Glissant concludes that history cannot be exclusive to historians; historians must rely on literature to paint the full picture of true and lived experiences from everyone involved (65). Dictator novels, especially the Trujillo cycle, are one example of the partnership that Glissant proposes here. Thus, to responsibly write a novel about history, authors must truly understand the power of narrative, and whose narratives they are choosing to represent.

Hayden White describes "narrative" as "a human universal on the basis of which transcultural messages about the nature of a shared reality can be transmitted" (6). When organizing historical events, narrative is how authors make meaning. That is why White also writes that the express purpose of historical

narratives is to moralize its events, leading to those greater literary themes (18). Each text studied here is narrated by multiple Trujillo victims. Therefore, the Trujillo cycle's stylistic choice to rely on multiple points of view not only strengthens their individual literary themes, but also satisfies Glissant's need to highlight obscure voices in history. I will analyze the narrative and stylistic choices of each text below that allow them to reflect the era of Trujillo through his victims, shattering Trujillo's official narrative.

The Texts. The first lens through which to analyze Trujillo is a non-fictional biography, *Trujillo: The Death of the Dictator* (shortened to *The Death*) by Bernard Diederich. At the time of Trujillo's assassination in 1961, Diederich was working as a foreign correspondent in Haiti and flew to the Dominican capital the very next day to begin writing. Diederich interviewed multiple primary sources, including Trujillo's driver on May 30, as well as the conspirators' families (xiii). Although non-fiction, *The Death* still retains a central narrative. White writes that the primary job of a historical account is "imposing upon its processes the formal coherency that only stories possess," echoing Julia Álvarez's perception of history as a story (23). For a true historical narrative, it is also not enough to collect events in chronological order; they must be "revealed as possessing a structure, an order of meaning" (White 9). Diederich follows White's observations, heavily structuring his account of the Trujillato as a play. The chapter titles almost read like the play's acts, such as "Enter the CIA" and "Rehearsal for Assassination," so Trujillo's end was always coming. Diederich also organizes the actors, the conspirators and Trujillistas, under the section "Cast of Characters." Using the stylistic lens of the theater, Diederich can now put the truth into his non-fiction account to expose Trujillo's lies more adequately to the world.

Next, the first fictional lens through which to analyze Trujillo is the novel *The Feast of the Goat* (shortened to *The Feast*) by Mario Vargas Llosa. Although Peruvian, Vargas Llosa's experiences with politics led him to his interest in writing about Trujillo. He began travelling to the Dominican Republic to interview survivors and read archived newspapers from the era. Although some critics have argued that Vargas Llosa takes too many historical liberties compared to other novels¹, Vargas Llosa does not deny his dramatization, insisting that literature embodies the very "subjectivity of an epoch" and reveals "the truth hidden in the heart of human lies" (qtd. in Weldt-Basson 115). For Vargas Llosa to explore this master-servant relationship, the novel is narrated from the point of view of both Trujillo and his victims, emphasizing their effect on each other.

Reflection rules the entire novel, as Urania is narrating from 30 years in the future. This is around the time of *In the Time of the Butterflies*' publication, which Vargas Llosa may have considered in this choice. As a fictional character, Urania

¹ See Estévez 150–155 for a collection of opinions on Vargas Llosa's historical accuracy.

can be read as a creation that reflects the emotional and sexual trauma that all Dominican women faced under the *Trujillato*.² Vargas Llosa notes that Trujillo was proud of his nickname “the Goat,” indicative of his sexual appetite (224). But Vargas Llosa also uses the conspirators as narrators to relay important historical context. Richard Patterson uses the accepted terminology “realeme,” which is a real-life historical figure or concept translated into genre fiction.³ Trujillo and the conspirators would all count as realemes, as Vargas Llosa’s portrayals all rely heavily on Diederich’s research (Weldt-Basson 123). Their motives for killing Trujillo are all also largely the same, but Vargas Llosa dramatizes them for narrative purposes. Each of the main four conspirators’ motives handily touches upon the four major contributors to Trujillo’s downfall. Lieutenant Amado (Amadito) García Guerrero correlates to the June 14th Movement; Antonio de la Maza describes the Galíndez scandal; Antonio (Tony) Imbert relays his horror at the assassination of the Mirabals; and Salvador Estrella Sahdalá correlates to the Catholic Church. Again, Vargas Llosa was most interested in analyzing the Dominican people’s final breaking point. However, he also paints the most intimate portrait of Trujillo, being the only text where Trujillo is a narrator.

The second fictional lens through which to analyze Trujillo is *In the Time of Butterflies* (shortened to *The Butterflies*) by Julia Álvarez. Álvarez’s family escaped from the Dominican Republic in 1960 after the *Servicio de Inteligencia Militar* (SIM) targeted her father. Four months after their escape, the Mirabal sisters were murdered. Haunted by their story, Álvarez began writing *The Butterflies* to understand how the Mirabals became national heroes. However, quickly after she started, Álvarez realized that in becoming martyrs, the Mirabals lost their humanity and individuality. In response, Álvarez wanted to illuminate the “dark areas” of the Mirabals’ personal lives instead of writing a strict historical account. Echoing Vargas Llosa’s sentiment, Álvarez writes in her Postscript, “A novel is not, after all, a historical document, but a way to travel through the human heart” (324). As an intimate story of ordinary women against extraordinary odds, *The Butterflies* thus mainly explores the Mirabals reacting to the private being made political.

Each Mirabal sister, Patria, Dedé, Minerva, and María Teresa (Mate) narrates multiple chapters from their point of view. Each narrative style is different to help represent the sisters’ individual personalities. For example, as Mate is the youngest, she excitedly narrates through writing in her diary. As with Urania, there is something to be said about making four distinct female voices the storytellers of the *Trujillato*. The title supports this, as it is the era of the Butterflies, not the era of Trujillo. The fifth and final authorial voice, present in Dedé’s chapters in 1994, is the woman interviewing her. Only referred to by Dedé as the “gringa dominicana,”

² See Boyers & Bell-Villada 224 and López-Calvo 37.

³ Patterson borrows this terminology of “realeme,” as well as “dark areas,” from McHale’s 1987 book *Postmodernist Fiction*.

Katherine Lashley observes that she is “representative of—yet not a reflection of—the author herself,” as Álvarez also lives in the United States and chooses to write mostly in English (188). This framing device is Álvarez’s way of recognizing that, in her role as the “foreign” intellectual taking Dedé’s testimony, the least she can do is publish the story in English so the wider world recognizes the Mirabals (324). Álvarez also recognizes, invoking White’s idea of a relationship to authority, that Dedé’s comfort and willingness to share is what truly legitimizes Álvarez’s account (Latorre 9). As Glissant prioritizes those personal and lived realities above all else in history, Álvarez accomplishes her mission of humanizing the Mirabals—and even outshines Trujillo in his own era.

As outlined in this section, I have examined the authors’ decisions when it comes to narration, as well as how these decisions carry the weight of historical context. In Gene Bell-Villada’s words, *The Feast* “has transported us international readers back to the nerve center, to the sickened soul and body of the Trujillo autocracy,” and the same can be said of the rest of the Trujillo cycle (xi). This disease is silence, the Dominican people denied the power to make meaning, denied the self-determination of both mind and body, as is the nature of dictatorships. Lauren Derby notes that prolonged paranoia became a national marker under the *Trujillato*, a very real, taxing mental and physical response (2). And if a paranoid silence is the disease, then writing can be a cure. Thus, the authors of these novels provide an outlet for the victims interviewed and make it their mission to reflect the sides of Trujillo that he did not plan on anyone ever seeing, certainly not an international audience.

THE GOAT’S MANY BODIES: A LITERARY ANALYSIS

There is still another reason to grant literature an important place in the life of nations. Without it, the critical mind, which is the real engine of historical change and the best protector of liberty, would suffer an irreparable loss.

Mario Vargas Llosa, “Why Literature?”

As stated previously, one could say that Trujillo acts as a natural extension of colonialism in the Dominican Republic. Aníbal Quijano explains that the colonization process also includes “the colonization of cognitive perspectives, modes of producing and giving meaning, the results of material existence, the imaginary, the universe of intersubjective relations with the world: in short, the culture” (541). Each text studied here explores how Trujillo gradually supplanted Dominican culture with his own loyalty performances and modes of meaning during his reign. As outlined previously, he buys into the Eurocentric idea of an official historical narrative. Of course, Trujillo’s insistence on history as a single story is not the only area where he reflected the processes of colonialism. Patterson further writes that “Trujillo attempted to take away the stories people told about

themselves. . . thus robbing them of both physical and cognitive control of their own lives” (233). To truly dismantle Dominican culture, Trujillo had to focus on the two main areas that Patterson mentions here: the mind and the body.

Manipulating the Dominican Mind. Quijano explains that the “Eurocentric perspective of knowledge operates as a mirror that distorts what it reflects,” and Trujillo himself would mirror this process, twisting aspects of Dominican culture to his own gain (541). Merengue is a prime example of this distortion. Both *The Feast* and *The Death* open by quoting “They Killed the Goat,” which was a popular Dominican merengue after Trujillo’s assassination. Diederich includes the lyrics: “The people celebrate / With great joy / The Party of the Goat / The Thirtieth of May” (ix). As the dance originates from the rural region of El Cibao, Trujillo tells Urania that “respectable people said it was music for blacks and Indians,” but that those same people “danced the merengue in clubs and decent homes now thanks to him” (461). While Minerva calls dance the “country cure,” Trujillo uses the merengue as another form of control over her: “‘But then women from El Cibao make the best dancers and the best lovers,’ he whispers, tightening his hold” (98). True to life, Trujillo turned merengue from a dance associated with the countryside and marginalized populations into a propaganda tool associated with the white *Trujillato* elite.

This brings us to Trujillo’s perversion of Catholicism (another monumental aspect of Dominican culture) as a moral and racialized justification for his regime. Patterson writes of “Trujillo’s virtual deification by his own regime [that] was part of a comprehensive effort to reconstruct Dominican reality” (230). Trujillo had to become God Himself. Patria, Minerva, and Mate conflate Trujillo with God at times because it is the only way they can make sense of his omnipotence (39; 53). Vargas Llosa further describes this parallel in a conversation Trujillo and Balaguer have about one of Balaguer’s most famous speeches, *God and Trujillo*. When Trujillo asks, “Do you still believe that God passed the baton to me?”, Balaguer answers, “More than I did then, Excellency. . . You have been, for this nation, an instrument of the Supreme Being” (266). While we are tempted to laugh at Trujillo’s bald megalomania, Vargas Llosa reminds us that this deification is purposeful, and that it has a body count. Even though he was not personally religious, Trujillo used Catholicism as a measure of a true civilized nation, compared to Haitian Vodou (Patterson 225). In that same speech, Balaguer describes how the Dominican Republic had suffered Haitian invasions and annexations that led to the “massacre and flight of whites,” but ultimately survived “because of Divine Providence” (266). The speech’s ultimate thesis is that the Parsley Massacre and anti-Haitian racism are justified as part of God’s mission to keep a pure, white, Christian country. Now, I will further expand upon how these texts explore Haitian-Dominican race relations.

Manipulating the Dominican Body. Quijano writes that, due to colonization, we now see the European nation-state as the pinnacle of civilization, and Trujillo was no different (573). Vargas Llosa has Trujillo think about “this country, which, thanks to him, had stopped being a tribe, a mob, a caricature, and become a Republic” (140). Even though Trujillo was a dictator, he was undyingly loyal to the optics of a Western democracy. But, *as* a dictator, Trujillo was even more loyal to another idea: his own personhood and body as the basis of the nation-state, as Derby refers to Trujillo’s body as a “synecdoche for Dominican nationhood itself” (205). And again, Trujillo did his best to parallel his personhood to Godhood. This deification also has its basis in Western sovereigns, such as the “distant yet divine Spanish monarch” (Derby 7). Charlotte Rich speaks of Trujillo’s “public spectacles . . . which attempted to recreate the aura of European royalty” (173). Although Trujillo seemingly could not decide between a democracy or monarchy, he clearly wanted the state, and therefore his body, to reflect European ideals and aesthetics as much as possible.

Trujillo further policed the bodies of the Dominican people because he needed their bodies to reflect the superiority of his own. Colonization left Latin America with the concept of race, which, in Quijano’s words, is “a mental construction that expresses the basic experience of colonial domination” (541). To appear as close to European as possible became the ideal. In the Dominican Republic, colonial powers and their derivatives, administrations such as Trujillo’s and Balaguer’s, have continued to breed anti-Haitian and largely anti-black sentiment. However, Maja Horn notes that the discussion of Haitian-Dominican relations often “omits how outside forces—both U.S. and European—helped produce and foster tensions between them” (24). Therefore, I want to acknowledge the imperialism embedded in the Dominican Republic’s anti-black sentiments in my outline of Trujillo’s Spanish and American influences on his regime (24).

As mentioned while discussing the Catholic Church, Trujillo’s regime was primarily concerned with presenting the Dominican Republic as a Catholic and Hispanic society (Patterson 225). While most Dominicans, like Trujillo himself, are mixed, Trujillo refused to engage with this reality (Diederich 12). Instead, Trujillo made white bodies the ideal through his “unifying discourse of nation under the Spanish ethnic marker— namely, that of the colonizer—as opposed to the African heritage and component” (López-Calvo 14). It is a well-known fact that Trujillo wore skin-lightening makeup and even retouched his photos.⁴ Vargas Llosa describes Trujillo’s conflicted feelings on his ancestry: his Haitian features are “something that never failed to mortify him,” but whenever interacting with the white Dominican aristocracy, Trujillo “would think mockingly: ‘They’re licking the ground for a descendant of slaves’” (334–35). Even though Trujillo is an agent

⁴ See Diederich 12 and Derby 197.

of colonialism, he is also just as much of a victim of it as anyone else. But instead of choosing to unlearn his racism, Trujillo ordered the massacre of black bodies around him. To this end, the hall of mirrors that he built around the country through propaganda could never reflect his own blackness that mortified him so much.

To further contextualize Trujillo's flagrant racism, each text repeatedly associates Trujillo with the Spanish conquistador (López-Calvo 39). In *The Feast*, Urania speaks of Trujillo's historical revisionism: "The most important thing that happened to us in five hundred years. . . During those thirty-one years, all the evil we had carried with us since the Conquest became crystallized" (55). Trujillo was known to surround himself with white military officials, and Diederich uses the particular example of an auxiliary force, the Anti-Communist Foreign Legion, primarily made up of exiled Spanish and Yugoslavic fascists (28). Similarly, Trujillo was known for his European refugee programs whose main goal was to help whiten the Dominican race. In *The Butterflies*, Patria mentions their Spanish neighbors Don Bernardo and Doña Belén, who would have disappointed Trujillo, as they never had any children to add more white bodies to the country (215).

Minerva and Sinita's childhood play portrays Dominican independence, as Sinita is supposed to shoot imaginary arrows at their colonizers offstage before untying Minerva, the bound Motherland (28). But, when they perform the play for Trujillo, Sinita aims her bow at him instead, "who at that moment comes to symbolize the oppressive essence of the colonizer" (López-Calvo 101). Álvarez continues this metaphor into the Discovery Day Dance. The day itself, when Christopher Columbus landed on Hispaniola, is significant. During the dance, Trujillo refers to Minerva as a "national treasure," saying, "Perhaps, I could conquer this jewel as El Conquistador conquered our island" (99). As these examples have shown, Trujillo's attempts to emulate the Spanish are what mainly color his perceptions of racialized bodies. However, with the last example, there is significant overlap with the area of gender. Vargas Llosa also has Trujillo justify anti-Haitian racism by thinking, "Nothing attracts black flesh more than white. Haitian violations of Dominican women are an everyday occurrence" (194). When, in reality, Trujillo would do more harm to Dominican women than his imagined Haitian threat ever could.

That is because, while Trujillo wanted to entirely rid the country of black bodies, he kept female bodies around as another tool to legitimize his regime. As stated previously, Trujillo's interactions with the U.S. primarily influenced his thoughts on gender. But I will expand more on this intersection of race and gender, of Spanish and American colonial influences, before I move on. The U.S. Marines arrived with their own brand of anti-black racism, as they viewed the Dominican Republic as a "conquered land inhabited by inferior black people" in desperate need of U.S. intervention (qtd. in Horn 34). The Marines' occupation led to the country becoming what Horn calls a "dollar diplomacy dependency," where the U.S. "fused

gendered and racialized notions in its civilizatory mission” while forcibly reorganizing Dominican society (Horn 25). Therefore, one reason that Trujillo so readily adopted anti-black rhetoric is because he had “to signal their ‘worth’ by downplaying their own blackness and emphasizing their racial difference from their Haitian neighbors” to receive even a modicum of respect from the U.S. (Horn 24). But, finally, what about the lasting impact of American gendered notions?

Many have written off Trujillo’s displays of masculinity as just another example of traditional Dominican machismo. However, Horn and Derby outline how Trujillo actually replaced Dominican notions with the gender politics of the U.S. Marines that trained him. Derby explains how U.S. occupation emasculated Dominican men, through actions such as disarming the population, except for the new National Guard (28). Trujillo would continue this tradition by carefully controlling arms. López-Calvo further notes that Trujillo could only view sexuality through the Marines’ military worldview and had an “inability to relate to women other than through either submissiveness or abusive control, often in the form of rape” (30). Therefore, as well as taking their guns, Trujillo would sleep with his men’s wives. Minerva in *The Butterflies* sees Trujillo fondling a senator’s wife while right in front of him (96). In *The Feast*, Urania sees Trujillo’s car in front of her married neighbor’s house, and her father begs her to forget that she ever saw Trujillo there (221). Because of violations like this built up over throughout the time of his regime, Derby notes that Trujillo “depleted the collective honor of all Dominican men except himself” (174). Like the culture at large, masculinity now began and ended with Trujillo’s personal definition, and no other man could ever stand up to him.

Overall, McCallum writes that Álvarez “offers a strong critique of the ‘post-colonial’ situation of the Dominican Republic by presenting a world where dictators like Trujillo, the Dominican ruling class, and the United States replace the original colonizers” (qtd. in López-Calvo 101). But, as Trujillo was not born into the white Dominican elite, the dictator instead sleeps with and “symbolically becomes bourgeoisie and white (or at least offends their sensibilities) through women like Lina Lovatón” (115). Lina, one of Trujillo’s most notable affairs, was from an old elite family and known for her red-gold hair and white skin (Álvarez 20). Álvarez places Lina in Minerva’s school, where Trujillo starts courting her at age sixteen; his first gift is when “Trujillo took a medal off his own uniform and pinned it on hers,” signaling her body as another military conquest (21). Although Lina does not get a voice, when Trujillo similarly rapes Urania, it is Urania narrating, not Trujillo. At one point, Vargas Llosa writes, “[Urania] is more frightened than before, when he was caressing her or violating her. . . If the weeping man with hairless legs sees her, he won’t forgive her, the rage of his impotence” (467). Vargas Llosa omits Trujillo’s name in favor of his physical description, emphasizing to the reader that he is nothing more than a pitiful old man. Therefore, like his attempts to impress

the U.S., and imitate colonizers at large, Trujillo's attempts to use female bodies to remain the only source of masculinity in society are ultimately unsuccessful.

Urania, and by extension the Mirabals, are quite notable as narrators because the "story of the fall of the 31-year regime has been told almost exclusively through the eyes of its male protagonists" (Manley 62). Vargas Llosa even makes Urania's rape the center of the entire plot (Polit-Dueñas 99). She indirectly causes Trujillo's assassination, as he is returning to the Mahogany House again to have another girl to erase Urania's memory. Because Urania is narrating from the future, one might go so far as to "say that the perspective of the omniscient narrator is that of Urania; also, it could be said that this is Vargas Llosa's perspective" (Estévez 157). After all, Urania is the character that reads about and studies the dictatorship the most, so Urania is given the all-important role of storyteller. The Mirabals also played a large role in Trujillo's assassination. Tony Imbert's chapter almost fully focuses on their impact instead of his personal life. Diederich also writes, "The cowardly killing of three beautiful women in such a manner had greater effect on Dominicans than most of Trujillo's other crimes. It did something to their machismo" (71). However, as they should not be remembered for their deaths first, Álvarez fills this gap in the historical record with her novel. She gives Dedé the same storyteller role as Urania, as Dedé plays an active part in keeping her sisters' memory alive. Lashley writes, "Although her sisters no longer take up the physical space that their bodies would (if they were still living) their memory takes up physical space in the museum and in the articles, and now books, that have been written about them" (197). Female protagonists are finally defining a male-dominated era, making it the era of the Butterflies all along.

CONCLUSION

The car in which Trujillo rode to his death was sold and converted into a taxi. The owner, an ex-army sergeant, painted it a dark blue and placed, in the rear window, a little sign: "In this car they killed the Goat."

Bernard Diederich, *Trujillo: The Death of the Dictator*

While Lashley describes the sisters made immortal by Dedé's stories, on the other hand, Trujillo's body, and body of work, are no longer reflected by the mirrors of his choosing. Instead, they are reflected by the novels of the Trujillo cycle, unafraid to shine light on the truth of the era, and to truly highlight Glissant's obscure areas of lived reality. Although we can never fully recapture the *Trujillato*, or fully heal decades of silence and give a voice to every last one of Trujillo's victims, we can certainly try. Diederich, Vargas Llosa, and Álvarez, as well as the brave Dominican people that they interviewed, are redefining Trujillo's relationship to American and Spanish powers. They are reframing Trujillo's heinous actions and perversions of culture as what they truly are, not what Trujillo wanted them to be. Through the unique narrative tools provided by historical fiction and non-fiction, these authors

are revealing that Trujillo's official narrative was not original; it was simply a continuation of colonialism. On this creative process, Patterson writes: “. . . To kill him [Trujillo] was not enough: he had to be brought back to life, so that he could be unwritten and rewritten, unmasked and definitively disempowered through the strength and integrity of their art. . . The ‘Father of the New Fatherland,’ the ‘Instrument of Supreme Being,’ is truly dead, but Rafael Trujillo will live on forever as the Goat” (234–35). And while the Mirabals, and the countless others that suffered under his hand, deserve to be remembered as more than just “the Butterflies” and deserve to know that the era always belonged to them, Trujillo does not deserve to be any more than a Goat.

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