Subterranean Secrets: Defecation, the *Bayakou*, and Social Inequality in Haiti

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Division of Anthropology

Reed College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Arts

Shannon Mearl Smith

March 2014

Approved for the Division

(Anthropology)

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express deep gratitude to my thesis advisor, Dominique Somda, who encouraged me to pursue field research that enriched my topic, who made me feel confident in my analysis, and who would respond promptly to every email, even at 3:00am. I truly would not have been able to produce this text without her.

I would also like to thank Charlene Makley for being an incredible teacher and advisor, for pushing me to be intellectually rigorous and critical (but not cynical!), and for guiding me to think like an anthropologist.

I am so very grateful to all the members of Reed's Department of Anthropology for the thought-provoking discussions and classes that have been the nucleus of my Reed experience, and for supporting my ethnographic field work in Haiti.

My engagement with Haiti and the bayakou would not have arisen without the years of committed hard work of the Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods (SOIL) team. I would like to thank all of these sanitation heroes, with a special note of gratitude to my friends and role models Sasha Kramer and Leah Page, Reedies whose courage and compassion have inspired me to broaden my range of activism. Thank you so much to Emmanuel Antoine, Nick Preneta, Jean Arnaud, Theo Huitema, Paul Christian, Madame Bwa, Rose Marie Myrtil, Daniel Tillias, and Monika Roy for sitting down with me for interviews, helping me with Creole, and for fighting the good fight with a sense of humor. *Mèsi anpil ekip SOIL! Kaka kapab!*

My endless thanks to my father for investing in my education and to Shelby and Gale Davis, whose philanthropic support has made my Reed education possible. My hope is that the interactions I have had surrounding this thesis live up to the United World College mission to "use education as a force to unite peoples, nations, and cultures for peace and a sustainable future."

Preface

I became interested in studying the bayakou and relationships to the concept of waste in Haiti after working as an intern for the nonprofit organization Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods (SOIL) for two months over the summer of 2013. SOIL was founded by North Americans Sasha Kramer and Sarah Brownell in 2006 with the purpose of promoting "dignity, health, and sustainable livelihoods through the transformation of wastes into resources" (SOIL 2014). SOIL pursues this goal largely through the creation and servicing of ecological sanitation (EcoSan) dry toilets. The wastes collected from the toilets are carefully monitored during a composting process to produce fertile soil that can be used safely for agriculture. Turning human excreta into compost breaks the disease cycle, quickly destroying pathogens such as the one that causes cholera, and closes the nutrient cycle, keeping waste nutrients out of fresh water (where they are destructive) and putting them back in the soil.

I decided to focus on the workers who empty pit latrines by hand, known as the *bayakou,* in my investigation of waste and social inequality in Haiti because they are at the very bottom of a highly stratified social hierarchy and their work requires is such that they are immersed in the most taboo of waste substances: excrement. I was also interested in the topic because waste management in Haiti is of great concern, especially considering the current cholera epidemic that has already claimed over 8,000 lives (CDC October 2013).

Over a two-week period in January 2014, I completed interviews in Haiti with eight bayakou, as well as professionals in the public and private sanitation sectors and a midwife who works in Cap-Haitien. I carried out these interviews not as a SOIL representative but as an academic, although my history with SOIL provided crucial credibility and connections. I remain in contact with these informants and I will be returning to Haiti in July 2014 to work for SOIL once again, hopefully using the humble insights of this thesis to guide my praxis.

Finally, a word of warning: This thesis challenges readers to reconceptualize the category of "waste." This shift will require some mental work in that categories of dirt and pollution are ones that make us uncomfortable or even disgusted. Have courage, dear readers, and proceed with an open mind!

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Abbreviations

AECID	Agency for International Cooperation and Development
CEPR	Center for Economic and Policy Research
CIDC	Coalition for International Development Companies
DINEPA	National Water and Sanitation Agency
HALEC	Haitian-American Leadership Council
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFI	International Financial Institution
IJDH	Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MINUSTAH	UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti
PRAM	The Municipality Support Project
SOIL	Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

French to Haitian Creole Translations

Cap-Haitien	Kapayisyen or Okap
Carrefour	Kafou
Cité Soleil	Site Solèy
Croix de Bossales	Kwa Bosal
Croix-des-Bouquets	Kwa dè Boukè
Bel Air	Bèlè
Boutiliers	Boutilye
Delmas	Delma
Fort Dimanche	Fò Dimanch
Gonaives	Gonayiv
Gressier	Gresye
Jacmel	Jakmel
Kenscoff	Kenskòf
La Saline	La Salin
Montagne Noire	Montay Nwa
Pétionville	Petyonvil
Pont Rouge	Pon Wouj
Port-au-Prince	Pòtoprens
Tabarre	Taba
Truitier	Twitye
Warf Jeremie	Waf Jeremi

Abstract

This thesis explores the ways in which people in Haiti interact with "waste," both materially and conceptually, and the relationship that this has to socioeconomic inequalities. The poorest members of society have the most intimate contact with discarded materials, excreta, and disease, and the least access to basic sanitation and clean water. The closer one is to the conditions of absolute poverty, the more one is likened to waste in a moral and sanitary sense, and thus poverty is naturalized in a pervasive "culture of poverty" logic that mystifies the historical roots of poverty in Haiti. The bayakou are manual pit latrine desludgers who occupy the most stigmatized position in Haiti because they immerse themselves in human excreta in order to empty pit latrines. They are so maligned that they traditionally work only at night, hiding their true occupation even from their families. The subterranean worlds in which the bayakou work are Haiti's unseen spaces of abjection. Since the 2010 earthquake and cholera epidemic, some bayakou in Haiti have begun to make a place for themselves in public society, thus disrupting the mechanisms of abjection.

Based on Paul Farmer's concept of structural violence (1996, 1999, 2004, 2006), I describe how histories of exploitation and discrimination are embodied as preventable illnesses such as cholera and premature death. I use Judith Butler's (1993) description of the abject and draw from Mary Douglas's (1966) anthropological study of dirt and pollution in order to understand the category of waste as it is taken up in Haiti. Additionally, I base my analysis on the ethnographic study of waste economies in Port-au-Prince by Federico Neiburg and Natacha Nicaise (2010), as well as data that I collected during two weeks of ethnographic field research, which included interviews with eight bayakou, sanitation professionals in the public and private sectors, and a midwife.

For *Ayiti Cheri*.

Introduction

The stark disparities in material conditions and livelihood opportunities between rich and poor neighborhoods in Haiti are stratified along vertical spatial axes that reflect a socioeconomic hierarchy that is inextricable from Haitian history and transnational relationships. This thesis explores the ways in which the conceptions of waste uphold these class inequalities by likening the poorest members of society to the discarded materials that they have intimate daily contact with, including garbage, excreta, and infectious diseases. In turn, the problematization (Foucault 1986) of poverty in the domain of development has had the effect of depoliticization by treating poverty as a technical problem that requires technical solutions. Development agencies have utilized poverty as a point of entry into densely populated neighborhoods in order to control and manage the population, "[bringing] into existence new discourses and practices that shaped the reality to which they referred" in a process that Arturo Escobar calls the "developmentalization" of the Third World (Escobar 1995:24). In other words, we can in no way take poverty in Haiti as natural or given, nor can we hope that technical solutions alone will solve the sanitation crisis in Haiti. In order to locate points of rupture and resistance, we must examine how particular relationships of (re)production and discourses of waste, disposability, and infectiousness give shape to Haiti's socio-economic hierarchy.

The bayakou provide a rich window into the structural violence (Farmer 1996, 2004) of poverty in Haiti because, as manual pit latrine desludgers, they occupy the most stigmatized position in Haiti, and the necessity of their labor can only be explained through historical specificity of Haiti's social, economic, and political geography. Structural violence is a term used by anthropologist and physician Paul Farmer to connote the embodiment of historical inequality and exploitation, the way in which "large-scale social forces crystalize into the sharp, hard surfaces of individual suffering" (Farmer 1996:263).

The bayakou literally immerse themselves in human excreta when emptying pit latrines, putting themselves into contact with bodily substances that are dangerous in that they contain secrets, potential illnesses, sources of humiliation, and evil magic. Discrimination against and fear of the bayakou raise issues of class, the role of Vodou in Haiti, secrecy, the embodiment of structural violence, and of course, ideas of dirtiness and infectiousness. The perspective of the bayakou and the social conceptions surrounding them as quasi-mystical figures provide key insights to the underlying logics of discrimination in Haiti.

One reason that I wanted to examine waste in Haiti is that the country is currently experiencing the worst cholera epidemic in recent global history. The attempts to quell the disease have been largely ineffective, and thus provoke an examination of the failures of international aid agencies and the Haitian state. In this sense, it is important to examine not only Haiti's internal social stratification, but also the way in which foreign countries, organizations, militaries, and corporations have consistently treated Haitians, and especially poor Haitians, as dangerous, dirty, and incapable of autonomous social organization.

Another reason I have decided to focus on categories of waste and the bayakou's work is because waste such as trash and sewage are ubiquitously present in Haiti, making them obvious points of inquiry. Virtually every street is lined with trash and the cities smell strongly of raw sewage and burning plastic. There is negligible waste collection or treatment in Haiti and there is no sewage system. This means that ravines and the poor neighborhoods lining the urban coasts are Haiti's informal dump sites, and items salvaged from the piles of trash become materials that people living in those areas use to survive.

Not only is waste such as trash and feces pervasive in a material sense, but also the concepts of dirtiness and pollution are strong at work in everyday discourse. The sharply divided social hierarchy of Haiti rests on ideas of the poorest classes being dirty, which is associated with infectiousness and criminality. The bayakou's work, although necessary for society, is technically illegal, and they are so socially stigmatized that they at they typically hide their identities, even from their families. This is a result of a logic in which a physical proximity to waste is equivalent to a moral proximity, therefore

rendering certain categories of people, such as the bayakou, more dispensable than others. I describe how this logic of placing differential worth on human bodies is related to competing notions of value— particularly in the arena of transnational agencies that represent projects of globalized neoliberal governmentality versus the Haitian cultural forms such as Vodou, the *lakou* land use system that will be described in a later chapter, Creole, and the bayakou themselves, all of which have been constituted through a history of resistance to exploitative labor conditions (Vannier 2010; Dubois 2012; Farmer 2004, 2006.) In my treatment of Haitian resistance, I hope to follow the medical doctor and anthropologists Paul Farmer's advice to "[keep] the material in focus [as] one way to avoid undue romanticism" (2004:308). He proposes that "an honest account of who wins, who loses, and what weapons are used is an important safeguard against the romantic illusions of those who, like us, are usually shielded from the sharp edges of structural violence" (308).

My analysis is based on theorists that I will describe in a forthcoming section and the data that I collected during two weeks of ethnographic field research, which included interviews with eight bayakou, sanitation professionals in the public and private sectors, and a midwife.

Historical Background

To provide a brief historical context, I draw on the work of Laurent Dubois (2012), who provides an excellent account of how Haitian socioeconomic inequality has formed over the past two centuries. Haiti is commonly referred to as the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, and it is for this reason among others that it stands out as a unique Caribbean nation. Haiti was where Christopher Columbus first landed in 1492, renaming the island La Española from the indigenous Taíno name *Ayiti,* which means land of mountains. The indigenous population ranged from 500,000 to 750,000 and was almost entirely annihilated by the middle of the sixteenth century in an "initial and signature act of globalization" (Wilentz 2013: 93). Hispaniola's strategic location and fertile soil made it the Caribbean junction in the eighteenth century "triangle trade" between Africa, the Americas, and Europe (Dubois 2012:19). The slave trade constantly

increased in numbers due to the high mortality rates on the island that resulted from plantation owners' belief that it was cheaper to buy more slaves than to ensure their slaves' ability to reproduce (21).

The island that was Ayiti and then La Española became the French colony Saint-Domingue in 1659 and remained so during the rule of power-hungry Toussaint Louverture, a former slave, who was deported to France after seven years in power. In the few years between then and when Louverture's lieutenant Jean-Jacques Dessalines took control of the state and declared independence in 1804, there were around 100,000 deaths in Haiti due to combat, hunger, and disease (15). When Haiti gained independence in 1804 after thirteen years of uprising, it became the world's second oldest republic after the United States. Haiti is the only republic that was formed by former slaves.

The revolution in Haiti greatly upset the colonial powers who were relying on slave labor for sugar and coffee plantations on neighboring Caribbean islands. Haiti was seen as a dangerous fluke that was not to be taken seriously as a sovereign state. Decades after independence, France refused to recognize Haiti. When France finally did recognize Haiti's nationhood, it demanded an indemnity to be paid around the order of 150 million francs, equal to about $3 billion today, to compensate for the slave owners' loss in "property." This was later lowered to 60 million francs, but still by 1914, 80% of the Haitian government's budget went to France (7-8). The legacy of this crushing economic debt is manifested in the impoverished material living conditions of current day Haiti.

Since independence, Haiti has experienced a series of dictatorships, some more brutal than others. These "authoritarian political habits" (Dubois 2012:6) left "insurrection as the only means of effecting political change… despite a powerful wave of popular participation" surrounding the revolution (7). Dessalines crowned himself emperor and like his predecessor, maintained the highly profitable plantation system with military force. Haiti's war for independence was also civil war within the country, divided between the north, where King Henry Christophe lived in his impressive Citadel that would come to be known as Sans-Souci, and the south, ruled by President Alexandre Pétion, who established a sharecropping system. Pétion died in 1818 and Christophe committed suicide in 1820, leaving Haiti to Jean-Pierre Boyer, who ruled until 1843, continuing the tradition of authoritarian rule based on strong military power. He did not

invest in education whatsoever, and even prevented schools from opening (95). His greatest disservice to Haiti, however, was agreeing to pay the indemnity to France that would trap Haiti in crippling debt. The deal was made in secret, and it is not entirely clear what Boyer's logic was, given that he had to take out a loan from France to pay the debt, leaving Haiti in "double debt" (100).

Meanwhile, the majority of Haitians were living in rural villages in a system of land management known as the *lakou,* which is composed of a group of houses connected by patriarchal kinship ties around a central common yard. The incredibly fragmented and de-centralized land ownership throughout Haiti, along with persistent peasant resistance to plantation and wage labor through practices such as *marronage,* or running away, and even clandestine gardening in situations of forced plantation labor, were ways in which Haitians crafted spaces of autonomous social organization that resisted exploitation (Gonzalez 2012).

Boyer attempted to gain state control of rural agricultural production with his 1826 Code Rural that entailed forced, unpaid "corvée" labor by rural residents. As Dubois explains, "Boyer had created two classes of citizens in Haiti: urban residents, who were governed by the national laws, and rural dwellers, who were subject to a different, highly restrictive set of rules" (2012:105). This was to be typical of Haitian politics: highly militarized authoritarian states trying to extend their power into the hills, driving Haitians whose cultural institutions are built around resistance to such attempts further and further beyond the state's gaze.

Boyer was ousted in 1843 and was followed by twenty-four separate regimes, some provisional, until the U.S. Marines occupied Haiti starting in 1915, whose "strategic and economic arguments for the intervention were accompanied by claims that Haitians were incapable of self-governance and needed to be saved from their own barbarism" (213). The marines exercised near-complete power without speaking French, much less Creole, and they were also extremely racist toward Haitians, frequently raped Haitian women, and reinstated the corvée labor practices of the 1864 Code Rural (233-239). Finally Haiti's second independence came in 1934 after U.S. Marines massacred a crowd of peaceful protesters in what became an international embarrassment for the United States and was the beginning of the end of the U.S.'s occupation of Haiti.

Years later, in 1956, the dark-skinned Francois Duvalier took power, using his color to form a regime justified by the concept of *noirisme, which* promoted black leadership as ideologically superior to leadership by the lighter-skinned mulattos, who were generally upper class and who had dominated the political and economic scene until then. Duvalier tragically manufactured ideas about Haitian culture and African pride by symbolically including the rural masses in his rhetoric, in order to justify an extremely violent authoritarian rule that was backed by the United States. Francois "Papa Doc" left the dictatorial seat to his son, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, who ruled a similarly violent regime from 1971 until he was overthrown by popular student uprisings in 1986. Baby Doc's regime was responsible for opening up the country's economic policy to international financial institutions (IFIs), creating an assembly industry with the cheapest labor conditions in the Western hemisphere and one of the biggest food import industries in the Caribbean (Dupuy 2012). The Duvalier era caused a huge exodus from the country and massive urbanization.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the unsuspecting Catholic priest who promoted liberation theology, and his *Lavalas* party, which later split into the *Òganizasyon Pèp Kap Lité* (OPL), or Struggling People's Organization, and *Fanmi Lavalas*, or Flood Family, party were a huge inspiration for the student protests that ousted Baby Doc. Aristide's aligned his party with "pèp la," (the people), meaning the poor majority, and positioned this group against the small elite class, those families whose had political and economic power had been maintained in many cases since the time of the revolution. Aristide was elected president of Haiti in 1990 in a landslide victory in which an unprecedented percentage of the population turned out to vote (Dupuy 2012:24). The victory is considered Haiti's first legitimate free election. The priest, endearingly nicknamed "Titid" by his many admirers, was overthrown by the Haitian army just eight months after his election in 1991, to return again in 1994 in order to finish the remaining seventeen months of his term with U.S. president Clinton's support, along with some 20,000 U.S. marines (Dubois 2012:363, Dupuy 2012:25). Around this time the UN military forces entered Haiti to "stabilize" the country. Aristide was replaced by Rene Preval of the Lavalas party the following year, and then reelected for a second term in 2000. After several assassination attempts, Aristide was forced into exile in 2004 in a

second coup d'état. He was flown out of the country on a U.S. plane, claiming that he was subject to "a modern kidnapping" on a Democracy Now interview in March of 2004 (Democracy Now!).

Since the time that he was just a priest, Aristide has been an extremely controversial figure. Reactions to his populist politics have ranged from near worship to denigration to attempted assassination. In this sense, he certainly was and still is a divisive figure, to which Aristide has responded by deflecting the source of social division, stating that Haitians "live amongst the ruins of a social structure built to separate and divide" (2000:54) and calling out the apartheid-like conditions of class inequality and the urban-rural divide in Haiti. The politics surrounding Aristide and the Lavalas party could take up the space of several books. In this thesis, I do have the space or desire to take a strong stance in the debate of whether he was paternalistic and complicit with the system he claimed to critique (Dupuy 2009) or if he gave voice to an egalitarian social movement despite persistent and forceful opposition from the world's imperial powers (Hallward 2007). Rather, I will examine the Lavalas rhetoric inverted concepts of waste within Haiti's socioeconomic hierarchy.

Starting with neoliberal reforms such as economic liberalization and the Duvalier dictatorship, Haiti has become "one of the world's most open political economies," (Kivland 2012:251). Haiti's current President, Michel "Sweet Micky" Martelly, a well-known pop star, announced in 2011 that "Haiti is open for business" to international capital, leading to a strategy of investment that anthropologist Mark Schuller calls "trickle down imperialism" (2012). Advertising Haiti as a desirable place to invest in the global market, Martelly's government has attempted to attract foreign investors by emphasizing assets such as cheap labor and raw materials like gold. This pro-business strategy is reminiscent of Baby Doc's attempt to "develop" Haiti through an assembly industry amenable to IFIs. So far these neoliberal economic policies in Haiti have corresponded with increasing socioeconomic inequality, increased food imports and decreased domestic agricultural production, and massive urbanization without adequate public services or infrastructure (Dupuy 2012).

On January 12, 2010, Haiti came into the international spotlight as it crumbled in an earthquake. The death toll has been disputed, ranging from 66,000, claimed by USAID

representative Timothy Schwartz, which is almost certainly too low, to 316,000, the figure given by Haitian prime minister Jean-Max Bellerive, but "out of respect for the dead, and their living relatives struggling to survive, the majority of people in Haiti do not engage in this post hoc estimation" (Schuller and Morales 2012:11). The earthquake was a tragic loss of human life and a cause of great suffering. One way that anthropologists have understood the earthquake, like other "natural" disasters, is not as an event or accident, but as an unfolding process embedded in space and time that has to do with "vulnerability, evidenced in the location, infrastructure, sociopolitical structure, production patterns, and ideology" (Oliver-Smith 2012:18).

The post-earthquake development strategy, heavily influenced by the Clinton Foundation, was to "build back better," using the destruction as an "opportunity" to forget the failures of past attempts to grow the economy and start anew. Unfortunately, Haiti has not "built back better," with a huge among of international aid money intended for disaster relief and (re)construction disappeared into a "black box," as I address in chapter three (CEPR 2013). And now, Haiti's weak public sector is struggling to deal with the world's worst cholera epidemic in the last half of the century.

Webs of Power, Claims to Truth: Methodology and Literature

The first chapter of this thesis focuses on theories that seek to explain poverty in Haiti. The "culture of poverty" debate is the crux of this discussion. Oscar Lewis put forth the theory that cultural attributes such as apathy explain the perpetuation of poverty in 1966 article "The Culture of Poverty." The discursive use of "Culture" in maintaining social divisions in Haiti is a matter of great interest in my investigation. Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995), an extremely influential Haitian scholar, offers lessons in critical historiography, showing how narratives of "history" have been taken up in various moments and places in Haiti as tools to make sense of the present. It is important to consider the ways that relationships of power generate these discourses of "Culture" and "History." I make use of journalism and other forms of popular media in order to characterize some of the discriminatory discourses against Haitians, such as ideas of dirtiness and infectiousness, as well as "culture of poverty" explanations by U.S. pundits.

While these sources show the existence of these discourses but do not necessarily provide evidence with regards to how widely these ideas are held. I also reference the work of anthropologist Omar Ribeiro Thomaz (2005) to gain insight into "elite perceptions of poverty and inequality" in Haiti.

In the second half of chapter one, I focus on the topography of socioeconomic inequality as it is manifested in people's defecatory practices and participation in the waste economy. I begin by describing how people in different neighborhoods interact with their dissimilar material conditions in order to show the high degree of social stratification that structures Haiti's class relations. The prominence of waste is a strong and stigmatizing index of poverty in Haiti, and so I focus on the uses and flows of disposable consumer goods and other discarded materials as a way to explore the symbolic and material production of class.

The most detailed ethnography on flows of the waste economy in Haiti by far is the ethnographic research of Federico Neiburg and Natacha Nicaise (2010), who make astute connections between garbage, "commerce, stigmatization, and politics" in Port-au-Prince. Their study has been invaluable in my investigation, but it is important to note that their research concluded just weeks before the January 12, 2010 earthquake, and therefore their study does not take into account the drastic changes that came with the collapse of the capital. I attempt to account for these changes by looking to Mark Schuller and Pablo Morales's anthology of articles by Haitian scholars and activists who describe post-earthquake Haiti (2012) as well as the data collected through my interviews.

A possible shortcoming of my reliance on the ethnographic work of Nieburg and Nicaise is that they focus solely on Port-au-Prince, whereas the bayakou that I interviewed were all working in the northern city of Cap-Haitien, Haiti's second largest city. I use these interviews as key primary materials while recognizing that they are not necessarily representative of the majority of bayakou because to a large extent, bayakou do not self-identify as such and many hide their occupation even from their families (Nieburg and Nicaise 2010). In this regard, statistical or demographic information concerning the bayakou is impossible to accurately estimate, both in Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haitien. While there are clearly important differences between the two sites, I do not seek to make this thesis a comparative study between Haiti's two major cities, as that is

beyond the scope of this investigation and would require additional material. Rather, I question how differences described in my interviews and by Thomaz can help to explain the formation and maintenance of socio-economic inequality in Haiti at large.

Chapter two concerns the labor practices of the bayakou, and expands on the geography of inequality in Haiti to explore the subterranean depths that are places of Haiti's abject materials and people. I explore the connections between Vodou's culture of secrecy and the structures of thought that classify certain people as disposable. I question how categories of waste are embodied and employed discursively by expanding on Mary Douglas's theory of dirt and pollution in her canonical Purity and Danger (1966), as well as addressing Judith Butler's interpretation of the abject (1993). I have chosen waste as a site through which to explore social inequality in Haiti because it is precisely unproblematized and reified ideas of waste that uphold highly stratified classificatory ideas of human worth and value in Haiti. Like Douglas, I seek to show that waste is a fluid and subjective concept and therefore, I use the word cautiously and with imagined scare quotes. When I refer to trash, I mean any discarded materials such as plastic bags, rags, wrappers, bits of electronics, bottles and cans, pieces of wooden furniture, soiled paper, and the like. I generally use the terms "excrement," "feces," or the Haitian Creole word *kaka* over "shit," "poop," or any other terms. I chose to use those terms because they feel the least euphemistic or silly.

In my interviews with the bayakou, they spoke about secret objects found in the latrines associated with evil Vodou spells and rituals. I began to investigate further into the institution of Vodou and the pervasive secrecy in Haiti. The secrets that the bayakou encounter in the pit latrines paradoxically give them significant social leverage while at the same time, they are considered the most stigmatized laborers in Haiti. I also draw upon the work of medical anthropologists such as Paul Farmer (1999, 2004, 2006) and Bryant C. Freeman (1998), whose understandings of Haitians' relationships to illnesses yield surprising insights into secrecy and Vodou.

In chapter three, I situate the politics of defecation in the current cholera epidemic and development practices in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector. I argue that defecation practices in Haiti are reduced to a technical problem that requires technical development solutions, and that this economistic approach mystifies the way

that poor people's bodies are disproportionately affected by the structural violence of capitalist exploitation and neoliberal economic reform (Farmer 1999). I frequently reference the journalism of Jonathan Katz (2010, 2013a, 2013b, 2014) and Amy Wilentz (2013) as well as others. Their methodologies obviously differ from those of anthropologists, but their work is invaluable given that they have had access to details and experiences surrounding the cholera outbreak and the earthquake that have not yet studied in anthropological depth. I have found these two journalists the most helpful because they are upfront and clear about their own methodologies and relationships to their informants, which I will make an effort to elucidate when referencing their work.

I go on to further describe the transnational relationships that have historically created conditions of widespread poverty in Haiti, focusing on the marriage of humanitarianism and military intervention most saliently seen in the presence of the United Nations in Haiti, both as the occupying force MINUSTAH that introduced cholera to Haiti, and as charitable relief to the cholera crisis (Katz 2013b). I also explore the role of foreign NGOs and development agencies in the various ways that they frame solutions to Haiti's sanitation crisis. I argue that the material conditions of poverty in Haiti spring in part from Haiti being the abject of the West in a similar fashion to how the bayakou are the abject in Haiti.

Beyond the "Suffering Slot"

Throughout this text, I have decided to use the Haitian Creole spelling rather than the French spelling for most place names and other vocabulary. The majority of Haitians have always been illiterate, and so there is not an extensive corpus of literature in Creole.[1] French spelling is more common in academic texts and is considered more formal, but I do not speak French, just like most Haitians do not speak it. I prefer to use Creole in homage to the millions of Haitians who kept the beautiful and rich language of Creole alive throughout colonial history.

[1] Because I have been asked the question several times, I find it necessary to confirm that Haitian Creole indeed has a written form. Michel-Rolph Trouillot claims to have written the first full-length non-fiction book in Haitian Creole in 1977 (1995:56)

When I first went to Haiti in the summer of 2013 to work for the sanitation organization Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods (SOIL), I was pulled in by the complex and often confounding cultural traits that Amy Wilentz summarizes as community, humor, hierarchy, respect, deference, generosity, property, boundaries, cleanliness, hospitality, eloquence, and storytelling (2013:241-242). I agree with G.K. Gibson-Graham that even in academic writing it is possible "to foster a 'love of the world'" with tactics such as "seducing, cajoling, enrolling, enticing, [and] inviting" (2006:6). I would like to join their project of "inviting" my readers to imagine other realms of social and economic organization in place of reworking tired discourses that embitter us in response to what has certainly proved itself a harsh reality. This is not to "think away" the very real material and psychological toll of the level of poverty in which most Haitians live, nor to employ the figure of the bayakou as an exotic "suffering slot" backdrop from which to describe "violence [that] confronts you in your humanity and raises issues that you cannot help but feel are beyond culture" (Robbins 2013:455). I write about people who suffer from impoverished material conditions and discrimination in Haiti not as a way to provoke a universalizing humanitarian response, but in order to situate actual Haitian experiences as embedded in competing hierarchies of value that span internationally but the evidence of which can be seen in the depths of pit latrines, showing ultimately that there is no "out there" that absorbs the excesses of structural violence. The Haitian-American novelist Edwidge Danticat has said, "Haitian people are very resilient, but it doesn't mean they can suffer more than most people" (Democracy Now! 2011). I would like to write about the little corner of Hispaniola that has shaken the world several times over because lessons about the logics of capitalism, violence, and social inequality as they manifest in particular situations are truly urgent.

Chapter 1: Haiti's Geography of Inequality

In Creole, to *fè bezwen* literally translates as "make/do need" and means to defecate. How and where do people in different socioeconomic positions in Haiti take care of this daily bodily necessity? In this chapter I seek to map the material flows of waste and the physical structures of of socioeconomic inequality that affect people's defecation practices in Haiti in order to complicate and reframe common interpretations of poverty. The spaces in which Haitians defecate and the management of excreta are not straightforward matters of bodily necessity; they are embodied acts of unequal access to sanitation that take place within competing notions of value and entail stigmatization, shame, and a great deal of secrecy.

Poverty in Haiti is naturalized through discourses that stigmatize certain Haitians as being as dirty, dangerous, and infectious, and therefore blame their "culture," which is understood as the inherent qualities of a bounded group of people rather than as a complex set of practices and relationships that are reproduced and embodied according to people's values amidst specific historical conditions.

The "Culture of Poverty" Explanation

As long as Haiti has existed, the majority of its inhabitants have lived in poverty. And as long as there has been poverty, its root causes have been mystified. In many cases, a "culture of poverty" has been cited both domestically and in international media as the reason for Haiti's economic, political, and sanitation crises. This is not a recent phenomenon, as international commentators have gazed at the Haitian poor with a mixture of disgust, pity, and fascination for centuries. The culture of poverty, a theory first laid out by anthropologist Oscar Lewis in the 1960s, is said to "perpetuate itself" (Lewis 1966:21) through an affect of hopelessness expressed by individuals who grow up with "strong feelings of fatalism, helplessness, dependence and inferiority" (23). This is the same type of reductive, functionalist logic that views complex social practices and

institutions such as Vodou as merely strategies to "cope" with poverty, whereas the causes and solutions to poverty itself are strictly confined to an ahistoric techno-economic realm. In this conceptualization, "culture" is posed as something that threatens or impedes economic development, and ultimately, "civilization."

Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot wrote about the many forms of Haitian exceptionalism, "the most dangerous and resilient [of which] is the idea that the Haitian political quagmire is due to some congenital disease of the Haitian mind" (1994:46). Trouillot finds that the mystifying explanations of Haiti are framed in terms of recent economic policy rather than what he proposes, which is a focus on class structure and deep historical understanding (47).

After the tragic 2010 earthquake, the "culture of poverty" explanation surfaced in the mass media as people sought to understand Haiti's seemingly exceptional situation of persistent impoverishment. In a New York Times article, David Brooks concluded that "Haiti, like most of the world's poorest nations, suffers from a complex web of progress-resistant cultural influences" (2010). And although he does recognize that Haiti has "a history of oppression, slavery, and colonialism," he points out "so does Barbados, and Barbados is doing pretty well." Brooks' suggestion is that the common denominators of Caribbean history can be boiled down to three words: oppression, slavery, and colonialism. His explanation for why Haiti, the outlier country, lacks certain metrics of success when compared to Barbados is that Haiti's culture is "progress-resistant," which is not clearly defined. Brooks went on to say that "some cultures are more progress-resistant than others, and a horrible tragedy was just exacerbated by one of them." Like the influential nineteenth century ideas of social evolution, such as Lewis Henry Morgan's (1818-1881) notion that "barbaric" cultures exist on spatiotemporal spectrum that has the *telos* of "civilization," Brook's idea of a "progress-resistant culture" is a denial of coevalness (Fabian 1983) that implies "progress" is the path that leads to the *telos* of "development," like Morgan's "civilization" (Morgan 1877).

Another example of the pervasive culture of poverty explanation in Haiti came just days after the earthquake, as evangelical Christian figurehead Pat Robertson claimed

that Haitians with their practice of "voodoo"[2] had made a "pact to the devil" that brought on their miserable condition (Shea 2010). It is tempting to completely dismiss Robertson as a politically irrelevant extremist grasping at the fringes of the space that U.S. media has been willing to give him. However, Robertson has a large following, and similar racism can be found in other areas of publicly stated opinion.

The public comments section under blogs, articles, videos and the like is notorious for being a place where people express prejudiced ideas, probably due to the opportunity to reach a wide audience paired with the option of anonymity. With the acknowledgement that the people who regularly comment on articles are not representative of a particular demographic, the comments section is a rich site for understanding "culture of poverty" discourses concerning Haiti. I looked at the twenty-seven comments under a recent NPR interview with journalist Jonathan Katz titled "Why Cholera Persists in Haiti Despite An Abundance Of Aid" (NPR 2014). The piece briefly touches on how cholera came to Haiti by the United Nation's "peacekeeping" troops MINUSTAH, and describes Haiti's total lack of sanitation infrastructure. The few reasonable and thoughtful comments were greatly outweighed by racist victim-blaming ones.

The comments are listed in order of most votes, and users can either vote a comment up or down. The first comment, under the username SquidProQuo, said

> Other countries face THE EXACT SAME THING. These people are unwilling to dig a hole in which to releave [sic] themselves. They blame the Pakistanis (who were there providing aid), they blame the US... They blame everyone but themselves.... They blame no one because they just don't care. This country defines dysfunction. They have been a circus side show since 'papa doc'. (SquidProQuo 2014).

SquidProQuo's comment, by comparing Haiti to "other countries [that] face the exact same thing," espouses the same type of Haitian exceptionalism that was articulated by

[2] "Voodoo" is a spelling associated with misunderstandings with the Haitian religion that most academics and Haitians spell as "Vodou" or "Vodun."

Brooks. It also frames open defecation as a choice that is made out of laziness and blames the failures of aid money on Haitian apathy and refusal to take responsibility.

Tom Williams replied to the comment above, saying "Ah, Haiti. The land that gave the gift of sexually transmitted disease to Europe. That's why Columbus called it 'Devil's Island'." This is not the first time that Haitians have been accused of being infectious and hypersexual, as I will discuss in further detail later. Commenter Dorothea MacDonald seemed to agree with the sentiment that Haitians were to blame for the sanitation crisis, saying, "I hate to paint with a broad brush but from everything I've read the Haitian people do tend to lack initiative. It is absolutely cultural and so is unlikely to change." Dave Dewarks said: "Just about every photo I've seen of Haiti has two things: garbage, and people standing next to it doing nothing. Maybe cholera is the result of a problem instead of the problem itself."

In just the first four comments to the article, we see Haitians described as dysfunctional, circus sideshow freaks, irresponsible, apathetic, infectious, and lazy. Others decried the amount of money that North Americans "wasted" in sending aid to Haiti after the earthquake. The explanation given for why this aid money was ineffective is that Haitian culture impedes progress. The commenters associated the presence of garbage, feces, and diseases in Haiti as an index of "progress-resistant" cultural traits, an explanation ignores Haiti's history, lack of state services, social inequality, and the crippling difficulties of daily life in extreme poverty.

Poor Haitians have been portrayed by Haitian elites and the international community as either "simple victims or simple villains" being likened to children, animals, and evil magicians (Dubois 2012: 4) often with suggestions of dirtiness and dangers of pollution. The Haitian religion Vodou has been especially targeted, with everyone from journalists to U.S. politicians telling fantastical stories about cannibalistic practices, "voodoo dolls," zombies, and black magic. While the intellectual and artistic Haitian elite may even take pride in the national religion of Vodou, the rest of the Haitian elite tends to see it as a "backwards" way of life that is opposed to rational, orderly, Western thought. This disdain for Vodou is so great that the Haitian elite are "extremely nostalgic for strong government" (Thomaz 2005:142) like that of the Duvalier era that outlawed Vodou (131).

Towards Demystification

Haiti's persistent epithet of the "poorest country in the Western hemisphere," refers to metrics such as gross national income per capita (US$ 760 in 2012) and the Gini coefficient (0.59, making Haiti one of the most unequal countries in the world) (World Bank 2014). The United Nations (UN) states that poverty is

> a denial of choices and opportunities, it is a violation of human dignity. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family not having a school or a clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's own food or a job to earn one's living, nor having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence and it often implies living on marginal and fragile environments, not having access to clean water and sanitation. (Administrative Committee on Coordination 1998)

The UN describes poverty as material and social conditions that are shared by many people around the globe, but this definition does not gesture toward the causes of poverty or the way the problematization of poverty by global institutions such as the United Nations itself has contributed to the reproduction of such conditions. Arturo Escobar (1995) discusses global poverty as a Post World War II "discovery" that turned "the poor into objects of knowledge and management," allowing for new forms of control (22-23). The high level of impoverishment in Haiti and the failures of international development agencies to improve the situation have led many to resort to various forms of Haitian exceptionalism in which cultural traits of the poor majority are blamed for the phenomenon of poverty (Trouillot 1994).

What are the fundamental mechanisms that maintain socioeconomic inequality in Haiti that the "culture of poverty" explanation serves to mystify? Anthropologists that study Haiti consistently cite the historical development of the following factors as constitutional of the relationships of inequality in Haiti: language, education, race and racism (Trouillot 1994), structural violence (Farmer 2004, 2006), foreign intervention (Schuller 2007), politics of land ownership (Thomaz 2005), and a depoliticization and

criminalization of grassroots political processes (Vannier 2010) (Dubois 2012, Wilentz 2013, Schuller and Morales 2012, Kivland 2012).

The Topography of Haiti's Waste Economy

Haiti's highly differentiated social hierarchy is materialized along vertical spatial axes. I examine various livelihood activities and accompanying stigmas along these axes within the waste economies of Haiti's two largest cities, Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haitien, drawing on the detailed ethnography of waste economies in Port-au-Prince offered by anthropologists Federico Neiburg and Natacha Nicaise (2010), as well as personal observation and interviews that I completed in January 2014. The work of anthropologist Omar Ribeiro Thomaz (2005) adds insight into elite perceptions of waste and inequality. Thomaz conducted sixty-four interviews in Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haitien in 2000 (2005:127), and Nieburg and Nicaise conducted ethnographic research that included semi-structured interviews and prolonged observation over two months in 2009.

An overview of Haiti's sanitation situation clearly illustrates the stakes that are involved in the politics of defecation as they play out within a context of severe socioeconomic inequality. The following information is based on a personal interview with Paul Namphy from Haiti's government water and sanitation agency DINEPA, which is the acronym for *Direction Nationale de l'Eau Potable et de l'Assannissement*. Haiti's urban areas have very few toilets, leaving over 70% of the population with little choice but to defecate in open spaces near the coast, in abandoned houses, or in plastic bags that are known as "flying toilets" because they are generally tied shut and then flung into ravines, dumps, or the sea. For the vast majority of Haitians who do not have access to toilets, defecation takes place in the early hours of dawn when others are least likely to see. The few toilets that do exist lead to either a septic system or a pit latrine, and are frequented by people who have enough money to pay for them to be emptied once they are full. Given that over half of the population of Haiti live on less than one USD a day, and over 80% live on less than two USD per day (World Bank 2014), it is only Haiti's tiny elite that is able to afford the servicing of a septic or pit latrine toilet. When the septic tanks are full, a private company such as Sanco or Jedco will empty them, then

dumping the contents into the sea or the ravines of poor neighborhoods (Sasha Kramer, personal communication). When the pit latrines are full, the owners must hire bayakou to come in the middle of the night. Then the bayakou follow "the path of least resistance," as Namphy explained it, in order to dump the contents. No one wants raw sewage dumped in one's backyard, but some have more resources to resist this eventuality than others.

Haiti's topography of social inequality can be mapped in terms of access to state services such as sanitation and prevalence of waste economy activities such as scavenging or emptying pit latrines. I use the term waste economy to refer to activity involving the disposal, recycling and reuse of materials that are commonly referred to as waste, such as human excreta or discarded materials that are categorized as. The poorest members of society tend to be located in low-lying areas where there are highly visible circuits of trash accumulation, redistribution, and reuse. Residents in these poor neighborhoods are stigmatized by being likened to dirt and pollution, even by adjacent neighborhoods that have similar material conditions. The elite members of society, on the other hand, tend to live in more elevated areas and have the means to purchase disposable consumer goods that then make their way into the hands of poorer neighbors in lower neighborhoods, either by washing down through ravines or transported by vehicle to informal dumps. For that reason I refer to the urban geography of social stratification in Haiti as occurring on vertical axes.

Within the poor classes of Haiti there is a high level of differentiation. At the very bottom of the hierarchy is where most of the garbage ends up. Anthropologists Federico Neiburg and Natacha Nicaise (2010) trace the politics of "garbage, stigmatization, [and] commerce" in the neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince, demonstrating how the degree of stigmatization related to dirtiness is clearly associated with various low-lying neighborhoods, the livelihood activities taking place there, and the political disposition of the residents.

Their findings, as well as my interviews, confirm that Haiti's socioeconomic hierarchy exists along vertical spatial axes where wealthier citizens tend to live in elevated areas and the poorest reside at or even below sea level. A focus on space and its vertical organization emphasizes the material consequences of social inequality and

removes the notion that space is an unproblematic backdrop on which cultural phenomenon take place. Rather, processes of space-making are integral to cultural forms and power dynamics, structuring the very possibilities of survival.

Port-au-Prince

In 2009, over 2.5 million citizens lived in the arrondissement[3] of Port-au-Prince, a city that lies along the Gulf of Gonâve on the western edge of Hispaniola (Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique 2009). This area includes the communes of Port-au-Prince, Kafou, Site Solèy, Delma, Gresye, Kenskòf, Petyonvil, and Taba. In the business of the early morning, loud music plays from radios as women set up their produce to sell from the margins of heavily pitted streets, people walk to school and work in pristine secondhand wear known as *pepe*, and water hawkers call out "*Dlo*! *Dlo*!"

As the sun strengthens in the sky, the already overwhelming sensory experience of Port-au-Prince only intensifies. The constant plumes of dust stick to sweaty skin and get in one's eyes. Vendors sip water out of plastic bags or nap in the shade. For the *marcha fresco,* or soda hawkers, the hottest times of the day are the busiest, as they slip between aggressive vehicles that are trying to beep their way out of the traffic jams, selling icy cold drinks to annoyed drivers.

The city smells strongly of burning plastic and raw sewage. Haiti's Ministry of Public Works, Transport, and Communication estimated that Port-au-Prince generates 3,662,500 tons of solid waste per year, which is composed of 25% household waste and 75% demolition, green, industrial, medical, and commercial waste (MTPTC 2006). Goats, chickens, and huge pigs root through the piles of garbage that have been thrown into the ravines. When navigating the bumpy and cracked roads and sidewalks, one takes care to avoid the acrid smoke of burning garbage, as well as contact with any puddles of water and piles of rubble left from the earthquake that wash into the street with heavy rains. And, depending on who is doing the walking, certain neighborhoods are also avoided, almost as if the locations themselves were thought to have infectious qualities.

[3] district

Nieburg and Nicaise delineate six "micro-regions" of Port-au-Prince based on circuits of collection and distribution within the waste economy, showing that "the world of extreme poverty is highly differentiated" (2010:47), which may not be an obvious point to outsiders like the commenter Dave Dewarks, who just see garbage everywhere. Each occupation within this economy has its own accompanying stereotypes and place within the social hierarchy of the waste economy. My ethnographic research focused largely on the stigmas surrounding the bayakou, who work specifically with the collection and disposal of human excreta, but the ethnographic information provided by Nieburg and Nicaise surrounding stigmas associated with other forms of work in the waste economy gives context to understand the bayakou's abjection.

Residents of the wealthier neighborhoods like Petyonvil and Delma are the ones that can afford disposable consumer goods and the servicing and maintenance of pit latrines. These neighborhoods are located on the hills above the slums that make up most of Port-au-Prince. What they discard washes down the hill and is picked up by more impoverished Haitians. In this vertical hierarchy, there is a discourse in which each neighborhood is situated in comparison to other neighborhoods in terms of stigmas of dirtiness. To be more specific, Neiburg and Nicaise note that

> The 'lack of education' and 'absence of hygiene' attributed to the population is blurred with the characteristics conferred to the location, reinforcing a diffuse and doubly stigmatizing idea of dirt, a hybrid of sanitary diagnosis and moral condemnation. The local perceptions of dirt and garbage dialogue implicitly or explicitly with these stigmatizations from 'outsiders.' (40)

'Outsiders' in this case not being limited to foreigners but also made up of residents from other neighborhoods, which may be in very close proximity. And so,

> for example, for the residents of Pétion Ville, the districts of Bel Air and Cité Soleil are dirty and violent; for the residents of the upper regions of Bel Air the dirt is below, in La Saline; for those living in the central part of Cité Soleil, the dirt resides in Fort Dimanche and especially in Truitier; and finally for the people living around Pont Rouge the really dirty people live in Fort Dimanche. (41-42)

The most materially impoverished and stigmatized area is made up of Waf Jeremi and Fò Dimanch, and is situated below sea level, close to the sea. There are hardly any latrines here whatsoever, and people defecate in the waste dumps (48). A strong sign of abject poverty is the use of bits of plastic and rubber as cooking fuel, rather than charcoal, wood, or gas. The people who live in these areas find the bits of plastic and rubber in surrounding dumpsites and in the canals that come from higher neighborhoods and flow into the sea. There is no waste collection there and hardly any job opportunities whatsoever (Nieburg and Nicaise 2010:42-43).

As in Waf Jeremi and Fò Dimanch, concentrated detritus is characteristic of other neighborhoods near the bay like Bèlè, Site Solèy, and Twitye. Twitye holds the only official municipal landfill site in Haiti and it is where many fulltime garbage pickers make their living (40). The garbage pickers are likely to refer to themselves as *vandè pa pèz* (seller by weight), but others call them by the pejorative term *kokorat*, which is a name for a parasitic insect. To be a kokorat is considered shameful within the complex hierarchy of Haiti's informal waste economy, but they are not as stigmatized as the bayakou (49).[4]

Most of the kokorats and bayakou in Port-au-Prince tend to come from poor and marginalized neighborhoods like Waf Jeremi and Fò Dimanch (Nieburg and Nicaise 2010:43, Mazars and Earwick 2013:2), but as Keke informed me, "You'll find there's some from Petyonvil, you'll find some from Delma, There's some from Tabar, La Salin, Kafou, Site Solèy. But the highest percentage are coming from Site Solèy and La Salin." There are also bayakou who are originally from outside of the capital city, migrating at a young age and perhaps having been orphans, *kokorats,* or *restaveks,* which is a term that means "to stay with" and designates children who are orphaned or given to wealthier

[4] Garbage pickers begin their day early in the morning, searching through fresh piles of trash at Twitye, sometimes in teams of family members. At the end of the day the pickers rent a wheelbarrow to transport the items to a "workshop," which are established sites that take in found materials and make various products with them, such as aluminum pans, stoves, or cooking utensils (Nieburg and Nicaise 2010:46-47). Many of the workshops buy plastic and rubber from the pickers in order to cheaply burn hot fires that are capable of melting metal, which creates black smoke that poses a considerable health risk but is preferred over wood or charcoal because of its price (48).

families and are basically treated as slaves and might be forced to live in the streets at any moment (UNICEF 2012).

Stating what is a commonly known fact in Port-au-Prince, the Haitian community advocate Daniel Tillias said "the closer you get to the ocean, the poorer the people get." He went on to say that

> …the perfect example is [that] I don't know how to swim, because my mom would never let me go to the ocean because it's in the lower part of Site Solèy, and that's where the thugs are, that's where the children who don't go to school are, that's where it's too poor…

In the sprawling slums of Site Solèy, south of Twitye, many people collect rejected plastic containers, bits of metal, or parts of electronics, but this is not necessarily considered being a kokorat. People may rely primarily on other livelihood activities but also look for items in the ravines that have washed down the hill after a heavy rain from the wealthier neighborhoods of Delma and Petyonvil. There are hardly any latrines aside for a few commercial latrines, and so residents that live close to the dumps tend to defecate there, but some in Site Solèy who are further from Twitye and other informal dumpsites are more likely to use the flying toilet method (48-49).

In the city of Port-au-Prince, only about ten percent of garbage is collected, and the waste management site Twitye is in a "deplorable state," rife with dangerous medical waste, sludge, and solid garbage (Nieburg and Nicaise 2010:38). While illegal dumping of waste in rivers and canals of marginalized communities is a "perennial problem" in Haiti, it became even more contentious after the earthquake when thousands of displaced people attempted to defend their camps from dump trucks that would sometimes hide decaying bodies in the rubble. Illegal dumping of human feces was another concern (Troutman n.d.).

Site Solèy, the capital's most notorious slum, is divided into upper and lower regions. I interviewed Daniel Tillias, who was born and raised in upper Site Solèy, and is now the Executive Director of the Haitian faith-based social justice organization Pax

Christi, which runs a program in lower Site Solèy called SAKALA.[5] The program includes a large concrete soccer area with new outdoor lighting, a garden that recycles materials such as tires and plastic bottles, a classroom space, a composting operation, and public toilets that have paid managers. Tillias described the difficulties in valorizing work in the waste economy:

> We're creating jobs with waste. That's what SAKALA is about, is really showing people that through waste, it's possible, in terms of the environment, to do a lot. That's why we use tires, that's why we use the waste from the market to do compost, that's why we use a lot of SOIL compost—to really *show* that the waste can become an opportunity. But it goes beyond that, because Site Solèy is the place where it's all about waste- I'm talking about the people- they're like the waste of the society. The *deche* (outcasts). The people who can't do much to help this country.

To be clear, in calling people the *deche,* Tillias was explaining the stigmas that people from his neighborhood are subjected to, not himself encouraging those prejudices. His comments reveal the degree to which people in Site Solèy, like other impoverished neighborhoods in Haiti, are likened to waste. In a society that stigmatizes those living in poverty and equates them to dirt, involvement in the waste economy is loaded with associations regarding respectability.

Even in historically very poor neighborhoods and in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, there is obviously a great deal of care and attention that goes into personal appearance and hygiene. In Haiti there is a strong value placed on a respectable public appearance, and part of that entails avoiding smoking or excessive drinking on the streets, or looking unkempt. Despite efforts to gain respect, the doubly stigmatizing idea is always present.

In an interview, the head of the Port-au-Prince sanitation company Clean Tech, who goes by Keke, told me that he thinks that the bayakou and others who are working with excreta in the sanitation sector have become less stigmatized since the earthquake as

[5] SAKALA stands for *Sant Kominote Altenatif Ak Lape,* which means The Community Center for Peaceful Alternatives. The word SAKALA translates to "We will find our way together."

international sanitation standards have been adopted and the work is becoming more professionalized. He remarked, "I wouldn't even sit down with you at one point in time to talk about this. It was something very low class." It is clear from his phrasing that "low class" is equivalent to "bad." Tillias also noted a change in relationships to sanitation work since the earthquake, saying

> Because, there was this guy working in shit after the earthquake, making like *millions,* so you feel like, okay! We're talking about like *money* business now! It's not really like, shit, it's business. And they were seeing it as a *business* rather than seeing it as a stigma.

Tillias is from upper Site Solèy, although he was quick to remark that that didn't make him feel superior to anyone in the lower section where he works. He described the upper region as being similar to the more affluent nearby neighborhood of Delma in that many families own houses that are built from more durable materials like stone or concrete, more people have access to pit latrines, and are able to find some decent employment opportunities. He claimed that conditions of poverty in the lower region give the whole area its reputation, a sentiment that was confirmed by other residents of Site Solèy that were listening in on the interview. In the lower region, many people live in temporary structures or tent camps and struggle just to feed their families day to day.

The poorest neighborhoods in Haiti are often depicted as chaotic and disorderly spaces inhabited by people who are corrupt, violent, and unable to govern themselves. These stigmas have been employed in the justification of foreign intervention, such as the nine-year U.S. Marine occupation (Dubois 2012:205). More recently, the United Nations "peacekeeping" troupes known as MINUSTAH, the acronym for the French version of United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, came to "stabilize" Haiti in 2004 after the coup d'état of democratically-elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. MINUSTAH first landed in Haiti in 2004 in the neighborhood of Bèlè, the same neighborhood that had been demonstrating the most fervent political support of the populist leader Aristide. Bèlè, like other poor neighborhoods such as Site Solèy, was declared a "red zone," meaning that UN staff and other foreign workers were not to go there for any reason.

Fig.1: A ravine in Site Solèy

Anthropologist Chelsey Kivland found that many Haitians living among heavy MINUSTAH presence resent the troops because they enact violence on the population and are taking power that should be in the hands of a functional state. MINUSTAH is largely seen as protecting the interests of the Haitian National Police and the non-democratic and ineffective governments that have been in power since Aristide (Kivland 2012:254). Lawyers working with the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) in Haiti claim that MINUSTAH "has represented an oppressive, occupying force – a significant obstacle to human rights and popular democracy" (Phillips and Edmond 2010).

In 2005, MINUSTAH forces fired some 22,000 rounds of ammunition in the search for four alleged gang members, killing seventy civilians in Site Solèy (Edmonds et al 2012:51). Furthermore, MINUSTAH troops failed to react to the illegal forced evictions of hundreds of thousands from the more visible IDP camps (51-52).

MINUSTAH also has a track record of "gassing students and IDP camps, assaulting journalists, shooting at children, and killing peaceful protesters" (52). And far from addressing gender-based violence, MINUSTAH forces have been accused of widespread sexual violence. In one case, 114 soldiers were sent back to their home country of Sri Lanka for soliciting sex from underage Haitian girls (51).

Nearly ten years after they arrived, MINUSTAH is still occupying the country. While recognizing that MINUSTAH plays a complicated role in Haiti, is difficult, if not impossible, to find evidence that supports the claim that areas of Haiti are so unsafe and violent that they are in need of violent foreign military occupation.

Fig. 4: A scene in Twitye, February 2014
Lack of financing for private companies and the government recently caused the only official waste-dumping site in Port-au-Prince to be overrun with haphazard dumping and fires

A factor in the doubly stigmatizing idea of dirtiness as both sanitary and moral is an idea of criminality associated with poor neighborhoods. The fear of criminal violence,

whether substantiated or not, explains the great measures of security that elite families in Port-au-Prince take, including high fences and armed guards. To put it in perspective, the intentional homicide rate in Haiti is 8.2 out of 100,000 males, placing the country well behind many U.S. cities (United Nations Statistical Division).

As you travel inland from the bay, the topography juts up towards Kenskòf, Peguyvil, Petyonvil, and Montay Nwa, the considerably wealthier neighborhoods that sit elevated above Delma and the slums of Site Solèy, Bèlè, and La Salin below. Petyonvil is the largest and most notorious of the wealthier neighborhoods, and is the home to many of Haiti's elite families and ex-patriots (Thomaz 2005:139). Residents of the elevated and relatively wealthy neighborhoods Petyonvil and Kenskòf are likely to have professional employment in the public or private sector as well as income through remittances coming from relatives in the United States or elsewhere (139). These elites have access to consumer culture that most Haitians lack, and thus the material remnants of their consumption patterns, ranging from electronic waste to plastic containers to bits of wood, make their way down the hill and become important resources for the residents of poorer neighborhoods.

Petyonvil, unlike the more impoverished neighborhoods below, has supermarkets, nightclubs, expensive restaurants and well-maintained public parks. It is an area known to house many of Haiti's elites who often come from "traditional families," meaning that they have inherited the wealth, status, and privileges of their predecessors. Many of them live in mansions surrounded by high walls and heavily armed security guards (139).

Haitians with lighter skin tend to be in the upper class and live in rich neighborhoods, but this is not necessarily the case, and to overgeneralize is to reduce the complex relationship of "class and color... in shaping the hierarchies of Haitian society" (Dubois 2012: 321). Through his interviews with elite Haitians, anthropologist Omar Ribeiro Thomaz was introduced "…to a complex local ethnic code: blacks, light blacks, dark blacks, mulattos (*wouj*), light mulattos, dark mulattos, Lebanese, Dominicans, and so many other categories as to merit a study in its own right" (2005:128). While these categories do tend to map onto class distinctions, they should not be conflated.[6]

[6] Thomaz further explained that

Today there are both light-skinned and black elites living in Petyonvil. In Thomaz' conversations with elite Haitians, there was a near consensus that the solution to poverty and inequality in Haiti should come from a restoration of a "strong state" (2005:148). He found that about "half the interviewees believed that the state should play a civilizing role, by expanding the use of the French language and discrediting voodoo, a cause of disgrace among Haitians. The other half proposed a solution based on the promotion of Haitian's self-esteem, the valorization of Creole and even the promotion of voodoo and of the secret societies" (149).

And while the cultural values of the elite cannot be essentialized, just as those of the poor majority cannot be essentialized, it is worth reemphasizing just how stark the differences between material conditions are for these two groups. Elite families defecate in private latrines and can afford to hire the bayakou, whereas for Haiti's impoverished citizens, whether they defecate in dumpsites or use flying toilets or commercial latrines,

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> the civilizing project in post-colonial Haiti emerges from two contradictory movements: on the one hand, the assertion of the perfectibility of black Africans and their descendants; on the other, the claim by mulattos and *afranchis* that they were the legitimate heirs of Enlightenment civilization. (2005: 130)

Around the time of Haitian independence, mulatto designated someone of mixed French and African ancestry, while *afranchis* was a social category that described African-descended Haitians who had been in Haiti for several generations, spoke French, and were generally accepted as upper class but had social leverage than those with paler skin (151). While the population of colonizers was expelled from the island almost entirely, the mulattos and *afranchis* retained their social, political, and economic power (130). Thus the Haitian revolution, while it was a momentous and unprecedented rejection of slavery, never succeeded in diffusing power away from elite Haitian families. Trouillot claims that by collecting exorbitant taxes, utilizing a strong and violently repressive military, trying desperately to reinstate the plantation system, attacking nearly every institution of civil society including schools, and running the state bureaucracy in French, "the new Haitian elites treated the rural masses pretty much the same way the West had treated them" (1994:47).

"shame is undoubtedly a key factor" in the politics of defecation (Nieburg and Nicaise 2010:49).

Cap-Haitien

In the far north, Haiti's second largest city Cap-Haitien suffered less of an impact from the earthquake than Port-au-Prince. The arrondissement of Cap-Haitien is home to 324,572 people at a population density of 6,500 per square mile (Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique 2009). Cap-Haitien was the capital city of the French colony of Saint-Dominque for sixty years in the eighteenth century and it contains relatively well-preserved historical sites and French colonial architecture similar to that in New Orleans. Like the Port-au-Prince commune of Petyonvil, Cap-Haitien is home to many of Haiti's elite families, but there are also extremely poor urban areas such as the neighborhood of Shada.

The elite who live in Cap-Haitien profit from the tourism sector for the most part, unlike in Port-au-Prince, where wealth is centered on "rural estates or the import-export trade," (Thomaz 2005:139). In smaller northern city, the privileged classes live with much less security culture, often sitting and chatting on their front porches, which Thomas claims would be "unthinkable in Port-au-Prince" (141). From my time spent time in both cities, I characterize Cap-Haitien as being friendlier towards foreigners, having more established and maintained infrastructure, and having less garbage.

Like in Port-au-Prince, spaces of inequality in Cap-Haitien are organized such that the poorest neighborhoods are the most low-lying. Shada is Cap-Haitien's largest slum, and it is divided into Shada I and Shada II. Near the coast at sea level, the hastily constructed settlement area is prone to frequent flooding, and without a widespread system of waste management, this results in dangerous spreading of raw sewage. Outbreaks of waterborne diseases like cholera are tragically common. The flooding also causes significant property damage and loss (Kramer 2013). Petite Anse is another impoverished area of Cap-Haitien built on land reclaimed from mangrove swamps (Kaupp 2006). Again, a lack of access to sanitation coupled with frequent flooding results in health hazards as fecal matter comes into contact with water used for drinking and washing.

Common forms of excreta disposal in Shada and Petite-Anse are open defecation, near the river or in trash piles, flying toilets, structures similar to outhouses that are built over the river, public toilets managed by NGOs (Kaupp 2006), and household composting toilets serviced by SOIL (Page 2012). Shada is the only known neighborhood of Cap-Haitien to have toilet-like structures that overhang the river.

On the slopes above these low-lying regions is the middle class neighborhood of Bèlè,[7] where there is a greater presence of latrines**.** In Bas-Ravine, also on the steep hillside, there are more public and private latrines and some land that is used for agricultural production (Kaupp 2006). I have little ethnographic information on these neighborhoods aside from that.

The University of Southampton engineering student Rémi Kaupp anonymously surveyed 500 people in the aforementioned zones in Cap-Haitien and found that 58% of the general population does not have access to a toilet and thus openly defecates, and 15% of the population surveyed uses a private latrine. In Shada, 74% of residents surveyed openly defecate and 3% use a private latrine, whereas in Bas-Ravine, 25% of those surveyed said that open defecation is their primary method of defecation whereas 33% had a private latrine. There was no available data on the particular defecation practices of residents in the wealthier riverside neighborhoods of Cité du Peuple and Champin, but Kaupp noted that residents there have more access to latrines (Kaupp 2006).

Out of the eight bayakou that I interviewed in Cap-Haitien, it was unclear where they had been born or where they currently resided. Emmanuel Antoine, a SOIL employee who has worked with many bayakou in Cap-Haitien, told me that many come from rural areas outside of the city and then migrate to Cap-Haitien for work. Madame Bwa, a longtime community health advocate and midwife in Shada, told me that a great number of young men in Shada work as bayakou. Since there are no pit latrines in Shada, they work outside of their neighborhood in the city where wealthier people have latrines.

[7] This is not to be confused with the Bèlè of Port-au-Prince.

Marronage: Autonomous Rural Communities

The story of the waste economies in Haiti's two principle cities would not be complete without an exploration of the relationships between urban and rural spaces. Since the time of slavery, the Haitian peasantry has maintained relatively autonomous rural communities that are beyond the gaze and physical accessibility of city-dwelling politicians, military forces, and industrial capitalism (Gonzalez 2012). Important institutions such as Vodou, the traditional lakou system of land ownership and agriculture, a system of shared labor known as *konbit*, and even the Creole language are able to flourish more in the rural mountains than in the cities because there is less control and oversight. All of these important cultural forms have been powerful ways that Haitians have resisted forced labor and other forms of state control, and so to disadvantaged urban Haitians, rural spaces represent an ever-present possibility of escape from exploitation, violence, and stigmatization found in the cities (Dubois 2012:107-114). This escape, called *marronage,* or running away, is a way that disenfranchised Haitians throughout history have fled the oppressive demands of colonizers, plantation owners, the military, and the like. At the same time rural areas are more strongly associated with Vodou, which can represent a source of shame for urban Haitians because Vodouists have been consistently maligned as exotic, "backwards" practitioners of "black magic" (Farmer 2006:3-4, 43-46; Dubois 2012:225; Bellegarde-Smith and Michel 2006: xix).

For urban Haitians, in pockets of the mountains are the small towns where their parents lived. The ways that people refer to these rural spaces reveals contradictory relationships that exist in Haiti between the country and the city. On the one hand, people living in rural areas are called *moun adeyò,* or outsiders, pointing to a history of social exclusion (Schuller and Morales 2012:95). Haiti's major cities are conceptualized as the interior, although geographically they are located on the coasts. On the other hand, small towns and rural villages from which one's family hails are referred to as "*mon peyi*" meaning "my country." When I first asked one of my Haitian friends where he is from, he said Jakmel, although later I understood that he was born and raised in Port-au-Prince, but that his grandparents were from Jakmel, and so he identified with this location more

than the place he had lived his whole life. There is a sense of endearment in evoking one's rural roots.

Rural spaces are also respected as sites of resistance. The woods, although they have largely vanished with deforestation, and the hills have long provided Haitians with places to hide. The revolutionary Boukman, along with the priestess Cécile Fatiman, were said to have held the 1791 Vodou ceremony at a site deep in the mountains called Bwa Kayiman. This ceremony sparked the slave uprising that would last for thirteen years and eradicate the institution of slavery, although a rigid hierarchical structure has always remained despite the determination of such remarkable forms of organized resistance.

The practice and idea of marronage helps to explain this seemingly contradictory relationship between rural and urban spheres in Haiti. The maroon in Haiti is a runaway, fleeing from slavery before independence, fleeing from forced labor that was slavery under another name under post-revolution regimes, fleeing from wage labor on the plantations, and finally from exploitative jobs in the city. Many of the villages that were set up by maroons have never been accessible by road and remain as much of an autonomous space today as they did around the turn of the 19th century. The social institutions such as Vodou, the lakou, and konbit exist in a much more prevalent way in these micro-societies than they do in urban areas. These cultural practices, including the language of Haitian Creole, have always been inextricably tied to resistance to forced labor and wage labor. Rural people set up subsistence farms despite plantation owners' massive efforts to employ them growing coffee and sugar, and "did all the things that had been denied to them under slavery: they built families, practiced their religion, and worked for themselves" (Dubois 2012:5). Johnhenry Gonzalez emphasizes just how deeply engrained the idea of marronage is in Haitian culture:

> Whereas legal emancipation often did not protect former slaves from forced labor, the politics of *marronage,* anti-elite violence, land acquisition and autonomous production repeatedly bore fruit. The insurrectionaries of 1791 who began by burning canefields, destroying sugar mills and attacking plantation managers set off a process that eventually transformed the most profitable

> plantation colony of the 18th century Atlantic world into a peasant society of rural producers who came to associate all forms of subservient employment with slavery. (Gonzalez 2012:xii)

The social divisions within Haiti between the tiny elite and the extremely poor majority were in no way abolished along with slavery In fact, the political structure has always maintained an elite, often violently repressive ruling class. The historical frequency of marronage is indicative of the great extents to which the Haitian poor have resisted persistent attempts at exploitation by making places in which they could speak Creole, practice Vodou, and live in lakous. Furthermore, the prevalence of the figure of the maroon in the contemporary Haitian imagination highlights the importance of the rural mountains as places of possible escape. The stigmas against urban Haitians as dirty are related to their proximity to Vodou and Creole, which are exemplified in the mountains of rural Haiti. Therefore the presence of rural spaces is felt in disadvantaged neighborhoods in urban Haiti, sometimes as a source of shame related to stigmas, and sometimes as a place of escape from the unique pressures of urban poverty.

Chapter 2: Secrets in the Latrines

"The first thing I should tell you is that I am not a bayakou." I laughed somewhat nervously upon hearing this comment, not sure if it was meant to tease me or not. I was in an office building in Site Solèy interviewing Daniel Tillias about the waste economy. I quickly replied "*wi, mwen konnen sa.*" Yes, of course I know that. But that was the point: One does not know who is a bayakou, and so any poor man living in Haiti is susceptible to gossip. Even family members may not know that their father or husband is a bayakou. Tillias joked, this is because "the first person that will betray you is your wife!" Sanitation workers, especially toilet and latrine cleaners, are stigmatized in many places around the world, and the bayakou are certainly no exception. What is so peculiar in their case is the extreme and quasi-mystical secrecy surrounding their identity and work. Amidst what conditions did the bayakou find their quiet, unseen niche in Haiti? How is it that they perform such a necessary function for society and yet remains shrouded in mystery and disdain?

In Mary Douglas' influential *Purity and Danger* (1966), she puts forth the thesis that pollution and dirt are seen as disorderly elements that actually serve to maintain the social structure. According to Douglas, ideas of pollution do not arise out of folk understandings of biological "facts," i.e. what will make one ill or what leads to contagion, but rather that the ideas of dirt are highly arbitrary and function to retain a sense of order amidst what is actually a dynamically changing social fabric. This chapter explores how ideas of waste and dirtiness naturalize poverty and social hierarchy in Haiti.

The Bayakou

First it is important to understand the conditions of the bayakou's work. It is hard to estimate the number of bayakou in Haiti due to their underground status. In Port-au-Prince, Keke estimated that there are over 200 bayakou, some being contracted by eight or nine different sanitation companies and the rest working by themselves in basic teams and utilizing the wheelbarrow method described below. They self-organize in flexible,

informal networks that converge at *bases*. At these sites one can see wheelbarrows parked during the day, and the bayakou will begin to congregate there in the late afternoon, at 4 or 5 pm, to discuss potential jobs for the night and to socialize (Nieburg and Nicaise 2010:50). Known also as manual desludging crews or *vidanj sovaj,* which means "savage emptier," or even sometimes simply *sovaj*, the bayakou have the ability to empty even the most inaccessible pit latrines because they empty them by hand. They depart for their work at night due to the social stigma and the ambiguous legality. I asked Tillias if they ever work in the day, to which he responded: "I think *maybe* in tent cities… [but] when I am talking about bayakou, the typical bayakou is a guy who gets into the pit with shit almost to his neck."

The basic team of bayakou consists of three people, a wheelbarrow, three drums, some buckets, and a lamp (Neiburg and Nicaise 2010:50). The middleman deals with the client to set up the job(s) for the night. The *boss* is the unlucky one who enters into the pit latrine, usually after becoming extremely intoxicated with homemade alcohol in order to bear the smell. The name *boss* is a bit tongue-in-cheek, but my sense is that it provides a feeling of encouragement to the bayakou who is risking his life each time he descends. The *boss* may wear very cheap disposable clothing, but some prefer to go in completely naked. Entering into the pit latrine, he raises the contents up, bucketful by bucketful, to the *majo* at the top. They may pour lavender soap into the pit in order to lessen the smell and soften any hardened contents (Katz 2014). The *majo* ensures that there is light to guide the *boss's* work and transfer the contents from the bucket to the larger drums (Neiburg and Nicaise 2010) or to a type of bag with the capacity to hold 18 kilos of excreta.

This work clearly presents incredible health and safety hazards. First of all, the *boss,* being not only immersed in excreta and intoxicated, barely has light to see what he is doing in the pit and is equipped with little to no safety gear. Keke, the head of Clean Tech, explained to me that without safety equipment, "if a guy gets stuck down there, there's no way to get him out. The only way is to call the ambulance, but by then he might already be dead." Bayakou tend to have short lifespans because they are exposed to a host of maladies such as cholera, parasitic worms, malaria, fever, and skin growths. There is almost always trash in the pits as well as sludge, which is extremely hazardous

considering that any broken skin immediately puts the bayakous' blood in contact with whatever bacteria is in the sludge. Referring to the bayakou that he employs, Keke said that he "finds bumps growing on them left and right." Keke has started a program to professionalize the bayakou by adhering to DINEPA's recently set standards, which are far from comprehensive. The bayakou who are contracted by Clean Tech receive monthly medical checkups, and they were receiving cholera vaccinations until Keke was no longer able to get access to the shots.

A bayakou in Cap-Haitien confirmed that he has come into contact with "needles… bottles pieces, pieces of sheet metal, broken plates that have been discarded in the pit latrine." A bayakou in Port-au-Prince named Leon works, like many, completely naked. If he gets cut on the job, he cauterizes his skin with a candle and proceeds to get back in the pit (Katz 2014). This shabby first aid can easily lead to sickness and death from preventable diseases.

Fig. 2: A self-identified bayakou enters a pit at Caracol Industrial Park.
The organization SOIL commissioned several bayakou for this job and provided safety equipment. SOIL then composted the sludge from the pit latrine. The bayakou involved were happy to be paid fairly and to have somewhere legitimate to dump.

Leaving the work site, the bayakou push their wheelbarrow to the planned dumpsite. In Port-au-Prince, this may be at Titanyen, Twitye, or in the poor neighborhoods that are situated along the bay such as Fò Dimanch and Waf Jeremi. Regardless, it is expected that they will be harassed in some manner, whether it be through demands for bribes or more serious offenses such as stoning (Nieburg and Nicase 2010:50). Sometimes jobs do not go as planned, however, and the bayakou may be forced to dump their drums in nearby ravines or even in the middle of the road if daybreak is near.

One of the eight bayakou that I interviewed told a story of dumping gone wrong. I will call him "the director," because that is how he introduced himself to me. In 1990, at 24 years of age, he heard about a work opportunity. He had never worked as a bayakou before. He showed up at a location at night and was informed that it would be his job to dump the drums of sludge using a wheelbarrow. A tense moment occurred when the wheelbarrow broke down in the middle of the road, and the more experienced bayakou that the director was working with abandoned him there. The director was forced to carry the wheelbarrow on his head with the wheel in his hand, balancing the full drums of excreta, all the way to the ocean. (This may sound like an exaggeration or a flat out lie, but if you've ever been to Haiti you will know that it is indeed humanly possible to carry an incredible amount on one's head). At the end of this horrible and probably terrifying ordeal, he was paid 35 gourdes (about $0.89) and was told that he would receive the rest in the morning. When he arrived in the morning to collect the rest of his money, they pulled a knife on him. The director recounted the scene, saying "…wait a minute, you ask me to work for you and now you're pulling a knife on me? I told him to keep the 15 gourdes and I left." A knife was pulled on him, in other words, over a dispute concerning 38 cents.

Emmanuel Antoine of SOIL explained that the bayakou in Cap-Haitien "don't have a place to dump. They don't have any government support. They are not equipped with materials and tools to do the work." DINEPA is struggling to keep even just two waste treatment sites open in the entire country, and that does not even imply that they are fully operational. The bayakou that I interviewed talked about how dumping sludge in

the ocean hurts fish that could provide protein to hungry people. The director lamented, "if we had a place, where we could throw the material, treat it, my friend, we'd be at more ease."

Others in the group reported being arrested and harassed. The bayakou were hesitant to come forward due to fear that they would be persecuted for their work by the police. Dumping human waste in the street and in fresh water sources is illegal, and yet the legal dump sites are only functional some of the time due to politics, funding restrictions, lack of professionalization, and other related problems. So without a viable option, Namphy explained "the very tragic situation" that occurs in which "they're basically providing a necessary service to society, but they're penalized for it, because society doesn't want to own up that this is in fact a necessary function and people should be allowed to do it safely and with dignity." Not wanting to own up to the treatment of excreta is reminiscent of Nieburg and Nicaise's comment that "shame is undoubtedly a key factor" in Haitians' defecation practices (2010:49).

The earthquake and the subsequent cholera outbreak made the inadequacies of Haiti's public waste disposal and lack of access to sanitation painfully apparent. The bayakou that I spoke with in Cap-Haitien in January of 2014 explained that unfortunately, the easiest option is often to dump in the ocean or near fresh water sources, but they recognized that in doing so they are "killing people without even knowing," and felt that "it's like throwing poison with your hands behind your back. People are dying." In saying "with your hands behind your back" and "without even knowing" they were emphasizing the distanced nature of the relationship between the act of dumping and the known violence that happens to bodies upon coming into contact with fecal matter.

After dumping, the typical after work ritual of the bayakou entails "an elaborate ethics of body hygiene" which includes a "special soap" (Nieburg and Nicaise 2010:49-50). When I met with bayakou in Cap-Haitien, I was not at all surprised to observe that they did not have an offensive odor or appearance, given the very visible value placed on personal hygiene and appearance in Haiti.

Then, of course, comes payment. Pay range for a team of bayakou varies around 500 to 1200 gourdes per latrine (equivalent to about $12.70 - $30.45), so a rough estimate of an individual bayakou's nightly pay is 250 gourdes ($6.35), but the charge depends on

factors such as the size of the pit, the number of pits, and the neighborhood (Nieburg and Nicaise 2010:50). And in Haiti, this is a relatively well-paid job according to all of my interviewees. Even this small amount of money, less than half of the estimated $13 necessary to cover daily expenses, is enough to say that the bayakou "are privileged, at least relatively speaking: they manage to earn money on a daily basis, or almost, which is no trivial matter in a world of extreme poverty such as this" (Nieburg and Nicaise 2010:49).

The amount paid may decrease if a bayakou in the supervisor or middleman role takes a larger share of the profit, or if fees are collected at the site of dumping. At the state recognized dump site Twitye in Port-au-Prince, the bayakou might have to wake up the guard at night, and for that reason a bribe would be understood to be appropriate. To mitigate these types of fees by local strongmen known as *chefs* (or as Tillias explained, simply anyone with a gun, commonly referred to as "thugs"), the bayakou might give a gift to the big *chef* to create an amiable, mutually beneficial relationship and increase the likelihood that the little *chefs* won't interfere with their work in the future. Tillias was hesitant to call these transactions flat out bribes since desirable outcomes negotiated through gifts, money, and trade are how business is commonly known to take place in Haiti.

The director told me the story of the second job that he worked, after the ordeal with the broken wheelbarrow. This time, he was promised 200 gourdes ($5.08). He said that he worked tirelessly from 9 pm to 4 am, all the while thinking about those 200 gourdes. However, when he arrived to collect the money in the morning, the man who was supposed to pay him had moved overnight, and still to this day he has not received payment. "I had wasted the night," he said woefully. This caused a serious dispute with his wife, who did not understand how he could have gone off to work all night and come back empty handed. He said that he "never gave up," even though he didn't know the trade. Finally someone trained him and he saw promise in the opportunities to work as a bayakou, so he continued working until he eventually became a director. He said that he knew he was a director when he had the confidence to tell other bayakou what their proper roles should be and they looked to him as a source of authority. He finished his tale by explaining: "This is why I always say not to become discouraged."

Unfortunately the director's experience of exploitation, wage theft, and violence was not uncommon in the group of eight bayakou that I sat down with. Everyone that I interviewed agreed that the bayakou do not get paid nearly as much as they deserve for the extreme risks that they take. Even when they are contracted to do jobs with DINEPA, they may not receive they payment they were promised. In the cases that were presented in my interviews, officials in DINEPA had not used written contracts and so the bayakou had nothing to demand accountability for their payment. It may be that DINEPA intends to pay them for these jobs, but has not done so yet, but given that months had gone by at the time of the interviews, it seems unlikely.

Apart from the material and physical difficulties that the bayakou experience as occupational hazards, they also face a significant psychological toll. Excrement is the most abject of materials, seen in Haiti as elsewhere as disgusting and dangerous. The bayakou, in their close association with feces, occupy Haiti's most abject social position. Denouncing the practices of the bayakou may also be a way for people to deny that they themselves are bayakou, since it is commonly believed that "there are still a lot of people that work unbeknownst to us as bayakou," as Antoine from SOIL told me. A bayakou named Polo in Cap-Haitien told me that "There are days when you go to work, you are walking, but you don't feel like you're quite there. Because you find the work is so challenging, you find yourself disintegrating." Judith Butler theorized that

> The abject designates…precisely those "uninhabitable" zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the "unlivable" is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject. (1993:3)

In feeling not "quite there" and "disintegrating," Polo may have been experiencing an embodiment of overwhelming abjection, in the sense that he was covered in excreta and also in that he was made to question his status as a full subject.

The Badge as a Sign of Professionalism

Keke is explicitly committed to the project of increasing the professional status of bayakou in Port-au-Prince. Showing me some of the equipment and gear around the office, "See here, this is why I say my guys are proud. They are proud. They have badges saying 'Clean Tech'. You'll find all my guys have badges." The bayakou who were hanging around Keke's office were indeed quite pleased to show me their badges and likewise, the bayakou in Cap-Haitien quite frequently mentioned their desire to have badges.

There is a distinction between the traditional bayakou that work with wheelbarrows and buckets, sanitation workers that are employed by private companies such as Sanco and Jedco, and sanitation workers that work servicing compost toilets like SOIL's. In some cases, all of these occupations may be referred to as work of the bayakou, but simultaneously there exists a distinct separation between the more legitimate, professional practices of the latter two groups and the traditional bayakou. DINEPA representatives referred to the traditional bayakou as "manual desludging crews," probably in order to avoid any pejorative connotations. There was absolutely no denial when I asked for clarification whether this term referred to "bayakou," suggesting that in the process of development and standardization within the WASH sector, alternative terms are preferable because they emphasize professionalism and legitimacy.

It was notable to me that despite significant difficulties, the bayakou that I interviewed were coming forth as *self-identified* bayakou. This was virtually unheard of in Cap-Haitien until recently, when in June 2013, SOIL organized a meeting in an attempt to consolidate local actors and organizations within the WASH sector and to locate potential ways to advocate on behalf of the bayakou. At the meeting were the local Mayor, the American Red Cross, the Haitian Red Cross, the Public Health Ministry, the Police, Oxfam, and other delegates of the city. Emmanuel Antoine from SOIL looked exhausted and yet persistent when he explained the situation:

> The Mayor's office said, they wanted a clean city; therefore they couldn't have the bayakou dumping any random place. The police said they don't want to see

> disorder. Which is to say, if someone drops the material in the street, they will arrest you. MSPP [Ministry of Public Health and Population] said they don't want people to get sick because of hazardous disposal. Simultaneously, they don't want the bayakou's health to be compromised and have the bayakou unable to do the work. And we had the bayakou saying that this is their livelihood, that they have to work no matter what. And of course, we had SOIL saying we need *kaka* as well. So all the actors were speaking on what they could contribute so the situation ameliorates.

The fraught relationship between the bayakou and DINEPA is unfortunate because the bayakou in Cap-Haitien expressed a strong desire to work with DINEPA and to professionalize their occupation. Professionalization, as they explained it to me, means having laminated badges that would serve as official recognition, being assured of the legality of their work (and this of course entails having legal options for waste disposal in the first place) having the proper safety equipment, and wearing a uniform.

In my conversations with the bayakou and sanitation professionals, badges were emphasized so frequently as an essential component of professionalism, almost as if the badge were a type of *wanga*. *Wanga,* roughly translated into English as "charms," are objects that are used metonymically "to manipulate power by changing human relationships" (Brown 2003:242) Another translation is "fetish," a term that has a troubled history in European since the seventeenth century, as it was used by social theorists to justify the racism that accompanied colonialism and "general Western culture chauvinism" (249) in which "analyses of symbolic production have come to privilege the metaphorical pole" rather than the metonymic (Ferme 2001:10). In the legacy of these discourses surrounding fetish use, particularly in African religions, the materiality that links elements in metonymic relationships was attributed to irrationality, with all of its racist connotations.

A troubling incident in August 1997 involving a Haitian immigrant living in New York City named Abner Louima gives more insight into the uses of wanga. Louima was picked up by the New York City police outside of a nightclub. Officer Justin A. Volpe mistook Louima for another man in the crowd who had allegedly thrown a punch at the police officer, and threw Louima into a police car. Volpe and three other police officers

stopped twice to beat Louima on the way to the station, and once they finally got there, Volpe raped Louima with a wooden handle that appeared to belong to a toilet plunger, ramming it up his rectum and then taking it out and shoving it into Louima's face, saying "Now you are going to taste your own shit" (Brown 2003:234). Louima was hospitalized and recovered surprisingly well, and Volpe was sentenced to thirty years in prison. The large New York City Haitian diaspora population reacted to the horrible incident of police brutality by organizing one of the largest ever Haitian demonstrations in New York, using the plunger, which was previously " a sign of shame and pain," as "an instrument of resistance" (240). Anthropologist Karen McCarthy Brown called this "working the *wanga*." Louima was violated and forced to come into contact with the abject substance of his own feces, a more literal version of the structural violence that the bayakou face on a daily basis.

Subterranean Secrets: Fear and Magic

Louima's story motions towards the connections between feces, racism, physical and symbolic violence, resistance, and magic. In this section, I explore Haiti's vertical hierarchy at its most abject depths in order to understand the fear, secrecy, and evil magic associated with the work of the bayakou. Pit latrines can be characterized as spaces of abjection, secrecy, and magic. By being the unique actors that enter the latrines, the bayakou are associated with those qualities, but they also gain significant symbolic leverage as they come into the secrets contained within.

The bayakou are not only stigmatized because their work involves close contact with feces; they are also feared. To start with, this is because "some communities continue to think that the bayakou sell the fecal matter removed from the camps" (Mazars and Earwick 2013:6). This may sound like a strange rumor to an outsider, like the commonly circulated rumor that the United States wants to buy Haitian blood, but these "are not mere poetic exaggerations" (Farmer 2006:44). In 1972, a liter of plasma in Haiti could be donated for three U.S. dollars in a trade that was propagated under Duvalier and carried out by Hemo-Caribbean and Co., which received financial capital from the U.S. and other international sources (44). This market was very popular for desperate Haitian

poor in Port-au-Prince, but it came at the high price of health and the even worse consequence of shame (Freeman 1998:12). Similar to wanga, bodily substances are often thought to contain power, as will explain below.

In a discussion on causality in Vodou-inspired Haitian thought, Bryant C. Freedman explains that "Blaming sickness and disease on such commonplace elements as bad water or lack of latrines strikes many a Voodooist as a White man's simple-minded explanation for a complex Voodoo curse" (1998:55). The story of fear surrounding contact with bodily fluids and excreta entails a complex world of magic coming from the unseen realm in which animate spirits exert their power and influence over people's minds and bodies. An anthropological approach to the categories of waste, dirt, and pollution can be revealing of political dynamics, social stigmas and inequalities, and "the dynamics of markets and commercial flows" (Nieburg and Nicaise 2010:37) as well as "the relation of order to disorder, being to non-being, form to formlessness, life to death" as stated by Mary Douglas in *Purity and Danger* (1966:6).

Understanding key concepts in Vodou aids in understanding people's relationships to waste, pollution, contagion, and dirt in Haiti. Among the reasons that outsiders misunderstand Haitian culture is that secrecy, rumors, and speculation are ubiquitous in the social landscape of Haiti, making certain practices and beliefs intentionally or inadvertently inaccessible to foreigners. This culture of secrecy is undoubtedly connected to Vodou's deep influences that permeate Haitian social life and trace back to the earliest days of slavery, when the religion was often hidden behind the front of Catholicism and slave owners thought that their slaves were simply dancing in the woods during those after work ceremonies (Wilentz 2013:82). The Vodou cosmology has a "comprehensive and diffuse influence on Haitian society" (Michel 2006:42), and is deeply embedded in Haitian religious, cultural, and medical thought. Even those who claim not to practice when asked by a foreigner are likely to carry certain practices, worldviews, and fears that are associated with Vodou (Brown 2003:255, Trouillot 1994:48, Michel 2006:34). Ceremonies within Haitian Vodou are complex sets of practices and relationships that were first developed by enslaved Africans who came from different geographical regions and spoke different languages. The various rituals, captivatingly performative and highly aesthetic, are a crucial aspect of Vodou. The

ceremonies revolve around a *poto mitan,* or center pole, down which various *lwa,* or spirits descend and "mount" participants, using the bodies of the worshipers as vessels through which to express their own unique subjectivities.

Many Vodou practices and beliefs are highly secretive, in part due to the prejudices against Vodou discussed in chapter one. Due to the nature of their work, medical anthropologists such as Paul Farmer have had uniquely intimate exposure to some of the nuances of this institution, particularly in the rural areas of Haiti. In the religion, there exists a metonymic magic of contagion in which body parts like nails and perhaps feces could contain part of the person, making the bayakou dangerous because they are in a position to handle urine, feces, and menstrual blood.

As an example of the power of bodily fluids, "three drops of saliva (*twadegout*) from a dead person's mouth are considered the most deadly of poisons" (Freeman 1998:27). Breast milk too, can be dangerous; it is thought to cause diarrhea and impotence and a host of other maladies (30, 69). Blood is an especially complex substance that may have either a hot or cold essence that must be balanced and can be affected by many environmental, emotional, and magical conditions. Haitians describe blood as being "spoiled," "thin," "dirty," "yellow," "spicy," "black," and so on. Haitians are likely to explain illnesses as blood mixing with other fluids (13). Women's menstrual blood is not considered shameful, rather it is a positive sign of fertility and femininity, but it is thought to have the capability to spoil milk or meat, and according to the Shada-based midwife Madame Bwa, it is avoided because of the fear that it carries HIV. The placenta is a very powerful object that could be used in evil magic to hurt the mother or the child, and so midwives must be trusted to bury it somewhere secret and not to sell it (88). The improper use of body parts, such as fingernails and hair, and bodily fluids after they are unattached to the body can lead to disastrous results for the original owner.

All of these secretive and dangerous bodily substances frequently end up in pit latrines. In Haiti's crowded cities, where latrines are most common, the pit may be the most easily accessible place to hide objects. Not only do the bayakou inevitably come into contact with period blood and placentas as well as excreta, which makes them seen as both dirty and dangerous, they also regularly find dead human babies, animal and human body parts, and wanga.

One bayakou told me how the situation is:

> Me in my line of work, I have seen many strange things… Once I went to work and discovered a cow's leg in the toilet. It seems that it was a magic spell they had cast through the cow's leg to get someone sick. Now the victim of this ritual discovered there was a cow's leg in the pit and asked us to remove the cow's leg. He told us "please clean out this pit for me, but, you know, the minute you find the cow's leg, go ahead and rid of it." So we started to work and dug up a cow's leg…We got the cow's leg, got it out. We were told to get rid of it. The person didn't even open the door to talk to us. We sometimes find sealed magic bottles. All different types of magical paraphernalia. Once someone converts from Vodou, all the magical tools they have get thrown in the toilet. There are some bottles you find that are sealed… We sometimes find Vodou love dolls, the type where a woman wants to put a spell to attract a man, She starts to tie up from his foot all the way his head, then throws it in the pit toilet.

Another bayakou presented me with a disturbing story that began with him hearing a screaming noise coming from the pit latrine.

> I continued to dig till I got close to the source, then I looked and saw it was a bag. I opened it. I felt there was something moving in it. When I looked, it was person's head. That means someone's way of getting revenge and discarding it in the toilet. Now, we don't mind all that. We took the bag and got rid of it. It's not until later that we found out how the bag got there…We didn't say anything. We never said anything. We collected our pay. Nothing was said.

The bayakou may have chosen to divulge this information to me in a group setting in part to affirm their ethical and proper handling of these dangerous objects of potentially evil magic while at the same time emphasizing the secrecy of certain elements of the story, such as how the bag got there. They are granted some power in that they have access to spaces and bodily fluids that, through metonymic magic, could have serious effects for the owners of the pit latrines. I was surprised that they shared as much information as they did, given a general Haitian tendency to be secretive and suspicious. Two of many

Haitian proverbs are "*pa kite moun konnen afè ou,"* meaning "Don't let people know your business" (Freeman 1998: 109) and *"Abitan pa janm konnen,"* or "Peasants never know," meaning that Haitians have a strong tendency of pretending not to know information, and value subtlety over frankness since giving others personal information increases their power over you which can easily lead to a host of problems such as envy and subsequent evil magic (Freeman 1998, Wilentz 2013:82).

The bayakou's contact with fluids and objects that might be charged with evil magic is made even more dangerous by their knowledge of their customers' deepest secrets. These secrets are deep in the literal sense of being hidden underneath the ground, further thrusting the bayakou to the lowest thresholds of the vertical hierarchy of Haiti, where unseen threats and conspiracies are often imagined to be ubiquitous and relentless, and where the excesses of abjection can never be fully cast away. Plus the bayakou work only at night, often never being seen by their customers, adding to their air of frightening mystery, especially in a country where night is "a time of terror," in which violence is more likely to occur, and evil spirits, witches, and *loup gawou,* which are sort of bloodsucking werewolfs, are said to be active (Freeman 1998:94, Wilentz 2013:177). Speaking to the danger that is perceived in the pit latrines, a resident of the Cap-Haitien neighborhood Mansui said that he did not want to go use a pit latrine at night because loup gawous live in the pits (Kaupp 2006).[8]

And finally, the bayakou are feared because they sometimes dump the sludge that they have just unearthed on the house of an enemy or in a public space in protest, thus giving them another kind of leverage: the ability to humiliate and shame others. Tillias told me that one would not dare to publicly humiliate a bayakou because that would be to place oneself in a vulnerable position, and no one wants to wake up to a yard full of *kaka*.

Locating the Abject: People as Waste:

The issue, then, is not simply that the most impoverished of Haitians lack livelihood opportunities and must make due with an unmanageable amount of discarded

[8] Vampiric symbolism is common in societies feeling the pressures of capitalist exploitation. For example, see Taussig (1980).

material as the stuff of their sustenance, nor that they lack anything close to adequate water and sanitation services. The issue does not end at the mere exposure of these facts of life, but rather begins by questioning the mechanisms by which power-laden relationships reinforce the stigmas, silences, and worldviews that reinforce systems of social inequality and naturalize the conditions of poverty that the majority experience in Haiti. In short, the people most affected by this situation are likened to waste in a doubly stigmatizing sense, and are therefore dehumanized and depoliticized in the eyes of Haiti's elite, international development practitioners, journalists, investors, and the like.

Melissa Wright (2006) writes about the "myth of the disposable third world woman" (1) who paradoxically through her value-creating labor in the maquiladora "comes to personify the meaning of human disposability: someone who eventually evolves into a living state of worthlessness" (2). Wright describes how the women's degrading health and even frequent murders are results of their working conditions, but yet the myth of women-as-disposable naturalizes these outcomes. "In short, there is nothing, says the myth, that can be done to save its unfortunate protagonist form her sad destiny" (2). In a similar vein, a women's group in Port-au-Prince chanted as part of their meeting: "Women aren't trash, tramps, or garbage dumps… Women rule the world!" (Poto Mitan 2009). Although the case of the bayakou in Haiti certainly differs in many ways from the women working in Mexican maquiladoras that Wright considers, the key similarity is that the bayakou are not only seen to *deal with* waste, but they are considered *as waste themselves*.

The bayakou are one type of person in Haiti that is seen as disposable and dispensable. They are dispensable because there will always be someone desperate enough to feed themselves and their families that will be willing to climb into the pit after drinking a fair amount of homemade Haitian liquor. They are disposable because they regularly die prematurely and yet there has been little to no advocacy or intervention on their behalf. The health hazards that they face are an embodiment of centuries of structural violence that has deprived Haitians of adequate sanitation.

When they are down in the pits, the bayakou often encounter another type of disposable people: human babies. The many proverbs about the importance and blessing of having many children certainly reflect a strong cultural pride and value in babies, both

boys and girls, but the crushing economic reality that many Haitians face results in frequent infanticide and as many as one fifth of Haitian children living as restaveks. There is a long tradition of impoverished families giving their young children away as restaveks with the hope that they will be able to attend school, but they are often severely abused and exploited (UNICEF 2012). Children who make it past the first few days of infancy without being left are still the most likely in the Western hemisphere to die of preventable diseases (UNICEF 2010). In some cases in post-earthquake Haiti, women "gave birth among the dead and dying" because they had no other choice (Wilentz 2013: 60). Aristide claimed to have once responded to finding a one-month-old baby in a pile of trash being eaten by ants by insisting that "no child can be thrown away" (Aristide 2000:20). Hopefully this will someday soon be the case. One way of approaching this dispiriting issue is by examining the conditions of poverty that lead to human bodies being treated as unwanted material.

The philosopher Judith Butler's explanation of the abject can be applied to understand the logic that creates categories of disposability. After speaking of subjects that live under the sign of the "unlivable," quoted previously, she states:

> This zone of uninhabitability will constitute the defining limit of the subject's domain; it will constitute that site of dreaded identification against which – and by virtue of which – the domain of the subject will circumscribe its own claim to autonomy and to life. In this sense, then, the subject is constituted through the force of exclusion and abjection, one which produces a constitutive outside to the subjected, an abjected outside, which is, after all, "inside" the subject as its own founding repudiation. (1993:3)

Because they are never seen (or at least they are never supposed to be seen) and by occupying the "uninhabitable" spaces of pit latrines, the bayakou are not given respect of a full subject. They are likened to waste, which is an excess that is is not only "matter out of place" but matter *without a place* that must disappear "out there." By definition, there is no *place* for waste. It is in a society's inability to find a place for the excesses of production and consumption that create the category of waste. The abject is tied to

categories that presuppose a hierarchical order. In Haiti, this hierarchy is structured vertically throughout space, with the political and economic elite and intelligentsia occupying the elevated echelons and being symbolically linked to a cleanliness that entails order, rationality, privacy, and knowledge. At the lower levels of this hierarchy, Haitians are increasingly conceptualized as dirty, chaotic, criminal, irrational, and hypersexual. The latter set of traits are naturalized as "inside" poor subjects, whether through the "culture of poverty" explanation or when residents of certain neighborhoods in urban Haiti condemn other areas as their dirtier, poorer counterparts. This is not to place blame, but to begin to insert spaces of disruption within such stigmatizing discourses.

The bayakou are Haiti's abject, and yet they have social and economic leverage. The first way in which they have social standing is through a relatively high and consistent income. They can even be observed to flirt with young women, which seems almost contradictory, but according to Nieburg and Nicaise this can be attributed to their unique capacity to make a fairly regular income (2010:50). While the bayakou have economic leverage, symbolically they are still the epitome of embodied waste.

Secondly, their leverage comes largely from their mystical aura and secrecy. The secrecy that protects them from negative social consequences also serves them because the public does not harass the bayakou for fear of having pit latrine contents dumped in their yard. Through my interviews in Cap-Haitien, it became clear that this leverage associated with secrecy extended deeper still, since the bayakou come into contact with magical objects and remnants of illicit acts such as infanticide. There is another way that the bayakou in Cap-Haitien have leverage, and this is through the growing emphasis on sanitation solutions and the recognition by certain organizations and individuals, whether from international organizations or local government representatives. The bayakou recognize their unique position as the actors capable of performing a necessary function. An elderly bayakou told me

> Here's why it's important. Since ancient times, God created Adam and Eve. They were spirit. Ever since they sinned, they were cast out and became flesh. Since then, they eat and poo. Now, God creates each person with a functional specialty.

> Even if not everyone is able to do it, you'll find at least one who is able. That means that the work of managing waste is important for Haiti and for everyone, because everyone has to shit. They have to find a professional who knows how to get down in the pit to clean it.

The bayakou are leveraging their position with the local government by aligning themselves with the economic value-creation and professionalism. The bayakou that I interviewed in Cap-Haitien are fully aware that they are the only ones willing to do the work, and they want to continue working until they reach a professional standard that grants them legitimacy and accountability.

Pollution Rhetoric in the *Lavalas* Movement

As I mentioned in the introduction, Jean-Bertrand Aristide is a polemical figure in Haiti, and the following analysis of his party's rhetoric is not intended as an endorsement of his political project. Rather, I argue that his rhetoric was so effective in mobilizing Haiti's impoverished majority because it inverted the doubly stigmatizing sense of dirt. An analysis of the complexities of Aristide's presidencies would require much more history and detail, and thus I only focus on his rhetoric of pollution.

Aristide's *Fanmi Lavalas* party was a defining component of a widespread social movement in Haiti that sought to break free from the centuries-old chains of foreign control and massive poverty. *Fanmi* means family and *lavalas* means flood, the idea being that together, people as small droplets would form a flood that could "wash away the dirt of prejudice" (Aristide 2000:45). The rhetoric of the Lavalas movement inverted the typical discourse of social pollution by locating dirt with the prejudices of the elite and turning the poor into a purifying force based on values of justice, transparency, and of course, participation of *pèp la,* the people.

One starting point to understand how Haitian people were able to mobilize in support of Aristide is to consider the formation of base ecclesiastical communities, or *ti kominote legliz,* that were ironically born out of Papa Doc's grassroots institution *konsèy aksyon kominote,* or community action councils. The latter were created in 1962 largely

as a means of surveillance into the most intimate crevices of peasant life, having the "obvious function of maintaining a panoptic gaze on rural communities" (Vannier 2010:288). Papa Doc's community action councils were transformed from an early form of neoliberal governmentality into effective grassroots organizations after the 1968 Vatican II conference of Catholic bishops in Medellin, Colombia officially espoused base ecclesiastical communities under the philosophy of Liberation theology (288).

The US Foreign Assistance Act of 1981 was carried out by the USAID to promote a bottom-up development approach. Baby Doc took advantage of this the following year by making all voluntary organizations register with the Ministry of Planning to impose very strict regulations (Vannier 2010:289). Around the same time, the Catholic Priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide was passionately advocating liberation theology, using the form of Duvalier-era community action councils to advance the populist content of *ti kominote legliz*, many of which were student led.

Aristide was so incredibly popular with his constituents because he publicly recognized the poorest and most disadvantaged as citizens deserving rights like anyone else. The most important way that he performed this recognition was by not treating the poor as dirty or infectious. One example of this is the community pool at Lafanmi Selavi (Aristide 2000: 43). Pools in Haiti are typically associated with the elite, and the poor majority in Port-au-Prince does not know how to swim. By turning a stereotypically elite space into a place where poor and rich could swim together in the same water, Aristide confronted the classist fear that the poor are dirty and infectious. This belief is often held tacitly, but certainly maids working in Petyonvil would not dare to ask if their children could swim in their employers' pools for reasons that were understood but not articulated. Aristide articulated these injustices, and through the discourse of the Lavalas movement, the poor were made to feel both clean and morally superior, completely inverting the double stigmatization of dirt.

Chapter 3: Kolera and its Cures

A history of structural violence in Haiti, in its many forms, has resulted in dangerous material living conditions that entrap the majority of the Haitian population in situations of substandard waste management as well as water and sanitation services**.** The current cholera epidemic in Haiti is no more "natural" than poverty is. Haiti's persistent socioeconomic inequality results in the disproportionate contraction, treatment, and survival rates of infectious diseases (Farmer 1999:265). Similar to my discussion of the role of space in Haiti's topography of inequality in chapter one, in this chapter I address the body not as a passive backdrop on which "culture" or thought imposes itself, but as an overdetermined site through which the effects of structural violence are constantly being materialized.

The Violence of *Vibrio cholerae*

In October 2010, Haitian peasants living and farming along the Artibonite River, Haiti's largest river, started to die suddenly. The cause was a mystery, and there was much urgent speculation as to what it could be: Was it a black powder attack, something associated with evil magic in Vodou? Or had the UN dumped their *kaka* in the river? (Katz 20103). The latter suspicion turned out to be accurate, but while the cause remained a mystery, more and more peasants continued to perish.

As a funerary purification rite, it is custom in Haiti to wash newly deceased bodies. When the survivors washed the lifeless bodies of their friends and family, they unwittingly contracted cholera themselves through the contact and the cholera infected the rivers (Wilentz 2013:137). There was no way for the rural Haitians to know that the water being used to purify the bodies of their loved ones was rapidly spreading the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae* throughout the country.

Cholera is easily contracted from contact with water or food that contains traces of infected fecal matter. Victims can die within hours if untreated (CDC 2014). Once

ingested, the bacterium that are not killed by stomach acid make their way to the small intestine and swim through the mucus on the intestinal lining using their flagellum. Then they inject the cell walls with a toxin that causes the cells to pump out chloride and sodium ions, creating a lower water potential in the interior of the small intestine. This results in osmosis in which the water is drawn out from the surrounding cells, filling the small intestine with the whitish watery diarrhea. The disease quickly causes muscle cramps, vomiting, and diarrhea, in what is can be an extremely rapid loss of body fluids (Twaddell).

In October 2013, three years after cholera's introduction to Haiti in October 2010, there have been 684,085 reported cases of cholera and 8,361 deaths due to the illness (PAHO 2013). That means that nearly 15% of a country that before 2010 had never seen cholera has been infected. But how did cholera first enter the country?

Cholera rapidly spread throughout Haitian water through the infected feces of Nepalese MINUSTAH soldiers that were stationed at the Meille base near a tributary of the Artibonite River. The soldiers had recently come from Kathmandu, where cholera is known to be endemic and where there had been an outbreak at the time of their departure. They were not tested for cholera before their arrival. At their station, the plastic pipes that were supposed to lead to a septic tank were visibly broken, presenting a high risk of blackwater contamination to the Meille Tributary (Katz 2013b).

To understand the effects of cholera as structural violence, we must not reduce the epidemic to a technical medical problem that requires a technical solution. Amy Wilentz commented that when the public came to a general understanding that cholera was introduced by foreign occupying forces, despite near complete denial from the UN, the situation "fed a mythomaniac national imagination that even in the best of times is historically susceptible to paranoia" (137). Paranoia is a strong term that may seem unfair given that one of its connotations is perhaps irrationality. However, I think that what Wilentz and many others are touching on is a cultural trait of strong suspicion that is wrapped up in centuries of foreign control, imposition, and exploitation of Haitian bodies (Farmer 2006:57).

The UN's utterly irresponsible and foreseeably disastrous lack of proper sanitation practices have caused a public outcry in Haiti and internationally. Some

Haitians and their supporters have responded to the introduction of cholera by taking legalistic recourse against the UN. To date, three lawsuits have been filed: the first was a class action case led by the Boston-based Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) in October of 2013 which sought $2.2 billion on behalf of 679,000 victims; a second was led by the Haitian-American Leadership Council (HALEC) representing three individuals in March 2014; and the third was another class action filed in the U.S. District Court in New York's Eastern District on behalf of 1,500 victims that asks not only for compensation but for UN support in building adequate sanitation infrastructure, also filed in March of this year (Adams 2014). In the pursuit of justice and to end the epidemic that is causing suffering for so many thousands of Haitian citizens, the IJDH lawsuit states that

> Defendants UN and MINUSTAH recklessly designed, constructed, operated and oversaw a waste management and disposal system that failed to meet minimal sanitary and safety requirements, and caused cholera contamination of the Meille Tributary through leakage and/or overflow from Defendants' pipes and sanitation facilities on the Meille Base, and/or overflow from Defendants' waste disposal into open air pits in the Meille community, outside the base. (IJDH 2013:17-18)

Such details provided by the 67 pages of the IJDH class action match the account of Jonathan Katz, who was the Associated Press (AP) reporter in Haiti at the time. He was one of the first on the scene of the MINUSTAH base camp in question shortly after the first deaths started to be reported within Haiti. The IJDH's case also matches with the information provided by Haitians near the village of Meille. Furthermore, in an official government collaboration, a Haitian-French investigation concluded that there was "no doubt" that the MINUSTAH base in Meille was responsible for the cholera outbreak in Haiti (IJDH 2013:31). And lastly, after over a year of nothing but denial and refusal to cooperate, in January 2011, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon announced that a "UN Panel of Experts" would begin an investigation.

This investigation came after a widespread consensus had already been reached among journalists, health professionals, NGO professionals, and Haitian civil society regarding the facts of the case. Finally, the report was released, and it turned out that

despite so much denial, even the UN found overwhelming evidence that the MINUSTAH base was the initial source of the cholera epidemic. The release of this "UN Panel Expert Report," was delayed until the implicated Nepalese soldiers had concluded their six-month rotation in Haiti.

International Aid and the Framing of Solutions to Cholera

Where does Haiti go from here? The UN has refused to acknowledge their role in the epidemic, and recently the U.S. Department of Justice sided with their denial, saying that the UN is "absolutely immune from legal process" (Sengupta 2014). Meanwhile DINEPA is struggling to keep even one of their two waste treatment sites operating below capacity, and the few DINEPA employees rarely receive their meager paychecks on time. Solutions to the cholera epidemic are often framed as technical interventions into technical problems, which run the risk of ignoring the complex symbolic codes that structure and maintain Haiti's social hierarchy. As stated in chapter one, these social complexities are often reduced to a fallacious "culture of poverty," and are seen as something extraneous that hinders development.

An overview of the logistical difficulties in overcoming the cholera epidemic provides the context in which various technical solutions are proposed. There is no sewage system or large-scale sanitation infrastructure whatsoever. Only about a third of people living in Haiti have access to basic sanitation (Neiburg and Nicaise 2010:49, Wilentz 2013:109). Basic sanitation, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, means "having access to facilities for the safe disposal of human waste (feces and urine), as well as having the ability to maintain hygienic conditions, through services such as garbage collection, industrial/hazardous waste management, and wastewater treatment and disposal" (CDC 2014). Due to the health hazards inherent in dense urban living without access to toilets or clean water as well as factors such as poor access to healthcare, the infant, under-five child, and maternal mortality rates are the highest of any country in the Western hemisphere (UNICEF 2010).

National statistics regarding the WASH sector do not reveal the differences in access between rural and urban dwellers, nor between residents in different urban

neighborhoods. There are more water and sanitation services provided in urban areas, but still the poor majority struggles to survive amidst a hazardous environment. Reflecting on her neighborhood Shada before she set up a mobile clinic there, Madame Bwa said that "the women were dying giving birth, dying pregnant. There was no cleanliness. They were walking on trash. There was open defecation. Life was not good at all." Although the comment was phrased in the past tense, the improvements that came with the mobile clinic in Shada were constrained by the series of hurricanes in 2008 and the earthquake, and so the situation is still accurately depicted by Madame Bwa's words. Likewise, in the Port-au-Prince slum of Site Solèy, wastewater, feces, and trash flow through an open canal system that comes to an end at the sea.

Again, I return to my interview with Paul Namphy of DINEPA for a history of the WASH sector in Haiti. François "Papa Doc" Duvalier created the Metropolitan Autonomous Organization for Drinking Water (CAMEP) in 1964 to provide potable water to the capital, and then in 1977, the National Drinking Water Service (SNEP) was created by his son Jean-Claude Duvalier to service the major cities outside of Port-au-Prince such as Cap-Haitien, Gonayiv, and Laykay. And for the rural areas, the government body POSHEP was created in the 1980s. POSHEP was under MSPP while CAMEP and SNEP were under Public Works Ministry "for reasons of political turf," as Namphy alluded.

The government announced the creation of the Haitian water and sanitation agency DINEPA in March of 2009. Before that, the Ministry of Public Health and Population was the primary organizing body responsible for sanitation. The newly formed organization DINEPA was quickly put to the test when the January 12, 2010 earthquake hit. Overnight, millions of displaced people needing water and sanitation services. DINEPA acted as a coordinating agency to manage the many NGOs that entered Haiti soon after. The Municipality Support Project (PRAM) was created to survey and service over 1000 camps. Today there are still between 200 and 300 that are still actively being supported to varying degrees by PRAM. The survey teams currently visit the camps on a monthly basis, although it was more frequent just after the earthquake. DINEPA's biggest partner currently is the government of Spain, particularly the national water sector and the Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID).

Together they have a ten-year program that started just before the earthquake costing hundreds of millions of dollars. DINEPA also works with the Inter American Development Bank, the World Bank, the Center for Disease Control in the U.S., the French government to a small degree, and UNICEF.

The effects of the earthquake made visible longstanding "substandard sanitation and hygiene practices" and prompted the construction of the public sector's first ever human waste treatment plants. A plant was built in Titanyen and in Morne-a-Cabrit, both tied to different funding partners. These plants, while representing a very necessary advancement in Haiti's WASH sector, have been subject to "political constraints" and interrupted funding streams. There is a tension between those partners who advocate for the Public Treasury of Haiti to take full responsibility for water and sanitation services, and others who are more favorable to cost recovery methods such as charging service fees for private companies to dump their waste. The latter is a practice that DINEPA does currently deploy, with the obvious downside that that majority of Haitian enterprises are priced out of this service even, at 170 gourdes per cubic meter ($3.78).

That is to say, that for the vast majority of the population, DINEPA does not have the capacity to provide sanitation services. Despite the collaboration intended to strengthen Haiti's public WASH sector, DINEPA faces considerable difficulties in implementing effective reform. After the earthquake, the many emergency sanitation projects, while certainly constituting a necessary and life saving aspect of disaster relief, did not take into account the long term ramifications of using pit latrines and port-o-potties in a country with little to no waste infrastructure. The result, summed up by Amy Wilentz is a capital city full of "terrible festering shitholes" (2013:105).

Given these logistical challenges, many international sanitation solutions have been confined to the realm of the technical. In March 2014 Jonathan Katz wrote an article for the New Yorker titled "Haiti's Shadow Sanitation System" in which he focused on the cholera epidemic and the need for large-scale sanitation infrastructure such as a sewage system consisting of underground pipes. The article, while providing important coverage on the ongoing cholera epidemic, paints an irreconcilable picture of sanitation solutions in Haiti by claiming that Haiti needs an underground sewage system that will never manifest. "If Haiti ever does get the kind of sanitation infrastructure it needs, [the

bayakou] Leon could be out of a job. He isn't concerned. There will always be waste, he said. 'There will always be a *bayakou*.'" I am concerned that Katz may be unwittingly promoting the people-as-waste mindset by juxtaposing a Haitian-born institution, the *bayakou,* against an unrealizable standard of U.S.-style underground sewer systems. The *bayakou* in the article are fated to forever occupy their shadowy slot because Haiti does not have the "right" system. In other words, in this framework the abject *bayakou* should not exist, and Katz uses them as an exotic backdrop to show just how broken Haiti is because it is not following the trajectory of "modern" Western nations.

Few of the technical solutions to cholera are entrusted Haitian organizations such as DINEPA. Rather, the epidemic is unsurprisingly seen as best handled by international "experts," such as the UN, who introduced the disease in the first place. In terms of investments in DINEPA or other Haitian organizations, Haitian elites, including those living in Haiti as well as those that make up the Haitian diaspora, tend to view the country a risky place to invest for reasons of political instability and distrust of fellow Haitians (Wilentz 2013, Thomaz 2005). This is in part a reaction to a lack of profitable Haitian businesses. Expecting low returns on investment also creates a self-fulfilling prophecy because the Haitian economy is in a dreadful condition after decades of little investment in Haitian owned businesses and organizations. As long as investors withhold funds from local actors and businesses not included in the predatory merchant class, economic movement away from poverty will be difficult for Haiti.

The poverty experienced in Haiti has never been solely a Haitian issue; transnational exchanges have constituted Haiti since its violent inception, and likewise Haiti has been a defining player in world history, whether it is recognized for its influence or not. In terms of Haiti's relationship to international capital, the colonial powers have subjected the western half of Hispaniola to similar treatment as other Caribbean nations, including violations such as slavery, denial of sovereignty, massive debt entrapment, low wages that are taken advantage of by foreign companies, resource extraction, refused access to immigrants, structural readjustments and austerity measures, interference in political processes such as elections, occupation, flooding domestic markets through food dumping, and soft power tactics aimed at political pacification.

With such a record of abuses, it is no wonder that poor Haitians show a strong tendency towards suspicion of those in power.

Before the earthquake more publically exposed the failures of international development in Haiti, the country was already inundated with foreign aid and NGOs. Namphy provided insight to the situation:

> there were major debates prior to the earthquake on the role of NGOs in Haiti on the fact that they often substitute for the role of the government and prevent the government from giving effective results. But on the other hand, it's true that if things were strictly left up to the government which in many sectors is dysfunctional and inefficient, that the population would not have vital services.

Daniel Tillas, a Haitian from Site Solèy who runs the community space SAKALA in the same neighborhood, expressed what appeared to be a common sentiment among grassroots community leaders, which is that "it's not the NGO *itself* that is the problem, it is the approach of the NGOs." Tillias expressed dissatisfaction with what he perceives to be standard protocol of major international NGOs in Haiti: They altogether avoid neighborhoods like Site Solèy, which at various points during MINUSTAH's occupation have been considered off-limits "red zones" for most NGO workers; they rarely speak Creole even conversationally, much less fluently; they do not take the time to get to know the stakeholders that they claim to represent; they too often buy supplies from foreign sources rather than locally; they discourage local ownership of goods and services; and they are more concerned about reporting the outcomes that their donors want to see than being accountable to their stakeholders.

The Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) investigated what they called the "black box" disappearing aid money in post-earthquake Haiti. The ineffective and nepotistic use of aid money that they found is staggering. For example, of the $2.15 billion that USAID planned to spend in reconstruction projects in Haiti between 2010 and 2012, 56% has been obligated and only 25% of which has actually been spent. Over half of the money spent went to the top ten recipients of global USAID awards, the largest of which is the for-profit company International Inc. (CEPR 2013:6). Only 0.7% of USAID funding went to Haitian-owned businesses and organizations. And moreover, their

program "USAID Forward," was backed by the Coalition for International Development Companies (CIDC), a lobbying group for for-profit firms that vocally opposed awarding aid money to local organizations. Increased lobbying from the Professional Services Council (PSC), which founded the CIDC, directly preceded a letter to USAID regarding their "Forward" program (Norris 2012). Members wrote that

> [USAID's] stated objective 'is to strengthen the local actors and institutions that are ultimately responsible for transforming their countries.' While this objective is appropriate, we are concerned that funneling grants directly to unaccountable and often corrupt foreign governments without the necessary safeguards will reduce program effectiveness, accountability, and transparency and waste taxpayer dollars (Issa 2012).

This demonstrated lack of trust in Haiti-based initiatives results in a lack of investments that continue to stifle the local economy and prevent culturally appropriate solutions.

International aid has since continued to offer their expertise on what is "better," for Haitians. After the earthquake, the mantra of the Clinton Foundation and big development agencies was to "Build Back Better," and to see the disaster as an "unique opportunity" (CEPR 2013:3) to turn something broken (Haiti) into something with value (to international capitalism). "The Gold Rush is On!" declared the U.S. Ambassador to Haiti Kenneth Merten in a secret February 20101 cable that was later revealed by Wikileaks (Herz and Ives 2011). He was not alone in realizing the great profits that could be made in the wake of the disaster's many development projects.

One last example of an undignified and ineffective international aid solution to Haiti's sanitation crisis is the strangely popular "Peepoo bag." A proposed solution for emergency sanitation situations, the bag is a single-use double-layered biodegradable plastic bag that one defecates into, ties shut, and then presumably buries. Urea crystals in the bag decompose the feces and kill dangerous pathogens, and thus if used correctly, the used bag provides fertilizer while saving the immediate environment from contamination. This "solution" was to replace the "flying toilets" that are already regularly used in urban slum areas like Port-au-Prince. While the Peepoo is certainly more misguided than it is evil, but it is an interesting example to consider because it reveals the readiness of

international aid agencies to provide catchy, donor-pleasing solutions to technically-framed problems without adequately considering their stakeholders' desires and values.

It can be safely surmised that people generally do not want to defecate into bags; they do so because they have no better option immediately available. Furthermore, the Peepoo bag is sold for a very low price, but many urban Haitians are able to acquire plastic bags for free, so why would they buy one? Furthermore, given the shame of using flying toilets and their use in only densely populated urban spaces, who would be able to find the time or space or desire to bury a bag every time they had to defecate clandestinely? Besides the social side of the solution falling short, there are technical questions as well. How is the compost supposed to be beneficial to the soil if it is mixed in with huge piles of trash near the sea or fresh water sources, where many flying toilets end up? Also, the opening to the bag is quite small. A British friend who works as a sanitation consultant in Haiti tested this technology around the time of its initial release. In the privacy of his apartment in Port-au-Prince, he read the instructions provided by Peepoo, squatted down, and defecated right on the tile floor. The design of the product provides even further difficulty for women, who sometimes urinate or expel menstrual blood during bowel movements.

To add injury to insult, Peepoo's program "Peepoople," is the distributional branch of the organization and states that its mission is "that all people who so desire shall have access to dignified and hygienic sanitation" (Peepoople 2014). The idea that a bag with a very small opening is "dignified" is arguable. I question who defines what counts as "dignified" in this case. Furthermore, the comparison of poor people to waste, as the name "Peepoople" implies, plays into the logic that upholds class divisions by categorizing people into a social hierarchy in which people are assigned value according to their proximity to waste and the most disadvantaged of people are seen as waste themselves.

The World's Garbage Can

The proposed solutions of international NGOs like PeePoo are framed in such a way to almost guarantee that they will be rejected by Haitians who are struggling to survive on a daily basis. It seems unbelievable that over 8,000 Haitians have died from cholera and still the bayakou remain the country's primary sanitation solution by a long run. What else is to explain the world's sluggish reaction to Haiti's cholera epidemic and sanitation crisis?

To jump up an analytical scale, the metaphor of a global garbage can is a familiar one in the Haitian national imagination. Former President Aristide decried how "the men and women of the poorest 20%, are reduced to cogs in this machine [of capitalism], the bottom rung in global production, valued only as cheap labor, otherwise altogether disposable" (2000:6). Just as waste and the bayakou occupy Haiti's most abject slots, Haiti itself has been treated as the Western hemisphere's abject.

Following the earthquake, over a million people were estimated to have been displaced from their fallen homes (Schuller and Morales 2012:1). Even those whose homes stayed standing were sometimes afraid to sleep in their homes for fear that another earthquake would hit. Every empty available outdoor space because a tent camp for IDPs until "landowners," as much as such a category of person exists in Haiti where landownership has always been a highly contentious and debated topic, started hiring thugs to clear the area. In other cases, the International Organization for Migration and Clinton's Interim Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti targeted families in the most dangerous and visible camps by paying them $500 to relocate. The messy politics involved in the massive relocation efforts caused many to think that the issue was "how to rid Port-au-Prince of its disposable refugees, how to clear out the city quickly and efficiently, rather than fairly and humanely" (Wilentz 2013:112).

If it seems like a stretch to say that poor Haitians are treated like they are disposable because private property owners did not want massive IDP camps in their backyards, consider the case of the Corail-Cesselesse Camp, which was one of the first IDP camps set up away from the capital city center and was intended to be a model for relocation. This was an IDP camp located north of Port-au-Prince that was intended to

accommodate about 5,000 IDPs from the Petyonvil Golf Club camp (also known as "Sean Penn's camp"). The Corail camp was controversial for several reasons. The first was that the land at Corail was previously unused because it was known to be at a high risk for flooding and intense winds. Even though government officials and aid workers alike were aware of the vulnerable nature of the area, tens of thousands of people continued to be moved there, probably in no small part due to the fact that Sean Penn thought it was a good idea at the time. These "disposable" IDPs were placed "out there," in an area that was not suitable for any economic value-production.

The second reason the camp was controversial is that the land was owned by Nabatec Development, a consortium of elite families. The president of this consortium was Gerard-Emile Brun, who also happened to be the man appointed by President Préval to head relocation efforts after the quake. He conveniently chose to relocate thousands of Port-au-Prince's IDPs to Nabatec's land, "which meant that basically, as a government official, he was directing the government's and Haitian aid donors' money to his consortium" (Wilentz 2013:113). The consortium was in line to receive $7 million from the government in compensation. As if that weren't bad enough, the Nabatec was negotiating with "South Korean garment firms to build factories Haitian officials [said] would most likely go into Corail-Cesselesse" (Katz 2010). The intention was to set up maquiladora-like garment factories to employ the IDPs.

Another way that Haiti has been treated as the world's garbage can is that it has been a toxic waste dumping site for industry in the United States. In 1990, for example, the Khian Sea, a garbage barge, dumped 4,000 of its total 14,000 tons of "toxic incinerator ash" from Philadelphia, what the ship's crew was calling "fertilizer," in Gonayiv, with the permission of Baby Doc (Cohen 2010). Haiti was the last resort for the Khian Sea, after it attempted to dump in six other Caribbean nations, and outrage in Haiti prevented the remaining 10,000 from being unloaded, although the traders would attempt to return to dump the rest several times over the next couple of years, even going so far as to repaint the barge, twice (Cohen 2010). Environmental groups pressured the U.S. Justice Department to file charges against the waste traders, but to little avail. Corporations continued dumping toxic ash, or "fertilizer," and other "recycled" waste in countries like Haiti, Bangladesh, and Brazil.

In conjunction with being treated as disposable, Haitians have long been associated with infectious diseases, especially sexually transmitted diseases, which is naturalized through an idea of Haitians as hypersexual. After the earthquake, "the squalid camps home to millions of homeless Haitians were portrayed by the media as breeding grounds for infection…" (Katz 2013b) and yet, as Namphy of DINEPA explained to me, the camps were actually the less susceptible to cholera outbreaks because there was better access to sanitation in the camps than in neighborhoods such as Site Solèy. European and U.S. media has long spread false rumors that AIDS and syphilis originated in Haiti (Farmer 2006:191), when in reality, white foreigners introduced diseases such as cholera, small pox, measles, and the common cold into Haiti (Wilentz 2013:136). Yet still, Haitians are the ones seen as being infectious and dirty. Farmer gives the examples of "physicians affiliated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology" stating in the October 1983 edition of *Annals of Internal Medicine* that "voodoo practices" could be reasonably said to be a cause of AIDS (Farmer 2006:2). The persistent claim that Haitians spread sexually transmitted diseases also speaks to their hypersexualization, especially in terms of Vodou, in Western media.

The abhorrent conditions that Haitians were subject to in Camp Bulkeley in Guantanamo Bay is a powerful example of the ways in which United States policy has treated Haitians like infectious garbage, and how the United States remains largely quiet in response. The camp was an HIV-testing site for people attempting to migrate to the United States in the 1990s. Haitians were singled out for testing disproportionately in comparison to Cubans, and HIV-positive Haitians were forced to live in what was called a "humanitarian camp" but that in reality was like a prison with "latrines brimming over" and barely any access to sanitation or clean water (Farmer 2006: 218-226). Activists and lawyers in the U.S. and Haiti decried the conditions as fundamental violations of human rights that were made even worse by the fact that the Haitians were refugees fleeing the violence that followed the first coup against Aristide in 1991. After waiting months in these horrible conditions, the Haitians were never granted access to the United States. This was, unfortunately, one case of many in which "the American bioethical obsession with individual rights is easily waived" when it comes to Haitians (Farmer 2006:238).

Consider as another example of treatment from a neighbor even closer to Haiti than the United States, the Dominican Republic. This racial hatred against Haitians is associated with "criminality, violence, prostitution, and the transmission of diseases" (Thomaz 141). The DR has long shown racial malice toward Haitians, what a 2007 UN report called a "profound and entrenched problem of racism and discrimination," against blacks, and especially Haitians. In 1937 in what came to be known as the Parsley Massacre, or *Koute-a* in Creole, which means The Cutting, tens of thousands were killed in a period of just five days (Dubois 2012:303-304). In September of 2013, the Dominican Constitutional Court declared that immigrants and descendants of anyone who had moved to the DR after 1929 was no longer considered a citizen, a move that was clearly targeting the estimated 200,000 Haitian-Dominicans living in the country.

Apart from framing the sanitation crisis in Haiti as a technical problem with technical solutions and failing to effectively collaborate with Haitian organizations and entities, international aid in Haiti is subjected to suspicion because of a long history of abuse and stigmatization.

Kaka Kapab

In Creole, "kaka kapab" means "poop can!" and is an affirmative valorization of work in the excreta economy. In each interview that I conducted with the bayakou or with other Haitians concerning the bayakou, the importance of being able to provide for their children was cited as the reason that the bayakou endured their work. For the bayakou in Cap-Haitien, it was a point of acute pride that some of their children had not only finished primary school, but are even attending university. To this miraculous achievement, the director of the bayakou pressed, "thanks to what? Thanks to *kaka*!" The bayakou that I spoke with, who themselves have been abused and treated like disgusting garbage in many ways throughout their lives, were willing to make the sacrifice of continuing to engage in an occupation that they know is socially demoralized because they are afforded the pride and joy of watching their children escape from the same level of poverty and stigmatization. Their sacrifice for their families does not entail complete

self-abjection as one might expect, but rather they are also proud of the fact that they perform a necessary function for society. One of them explained to me that

> It's impossible for you to eat without needing to shit. So long as you have to eat, you have to shit. Since you have to shit, you need someone to clean up the pit so you can shit some more… That's why I say the work is important. If it were to not be important, it would have to be because no one shit any longer.

Clearly, the men that I spoke to did not present themselves as embodied waste, as if they had internalized their treatment. Although they were a bit shy, they greeted me as any other Haitian would, with kisses on the cheek and grasped hands. Granted, these were publically self-identified bayakou, meaning that they lacked the same level of shameful secrecy that keeps most bayakou in hiding. Even some of their families were aware of their occupation. The outspoken director ensured me,

> you come to my house, I give you a chair, you're looking up and down…you'll see it looks like a normal house! There are some of my girls who are now saying, 'Dad, now's time for you to take a rest from the business!'

And so in his case, the reality of his work and his status as breadwinner are clearly connected, albeit not without some tensions, in the domestic sphere.

The bayakous' willingness to step forward and identify themselves as bayakou further legitimizes their profession and makes advocacy and accountability more viable. And in return, when foreign organizations and local DINEPA representatives recognize the bayakou as professional sanitation workers rather than treating them as desperate illiterate criminals who sicken their communities without remorse, the bayakou are given a *place* to pursue the degree of professionalization that they seek, disrupting the logic that relegates them as the abject. And, while it is not a formulaic inevitability, with recognition as professionals and equipment to work safely, it is possible for the bayakou to go from feeling abject shame of their occupation to feeling proud.

For all the stigmatization that surrounds the bayakou and their work, their work is at the same time "valued by themselves and by the population living around the *base"* (Nieburg and Nicase 2010:50). Keke confirmed that

> there are many who are ashamed to admit that they work as bayakou. Back in the days, no one would tell you that's what they do. Now, you'll find more guys, especially those who have been through workshops, they will be proud to tell you that's what they do.

Keke went on to emphasize the empowering and transformative results achieved through professional recognition of bayakou, and spoke quite often about the pride that he and his workers felt. He cited illiteracy and lack of education as boundaries that can be overcome on the path to greater professionalism. A report from the International Rescue Committee (IRC), an organization that has worked with Keke in Port-au-Prince, similarly stated that

> there has been a significant increase in the pride [the bayakou] have shown in their work and it is clear the rounds of training they received have helped them gradually grow out of their shyness and silence to enable them to care for their health, the health and well being of their families and begin to more openly discuss their social status and their aspirations as professionals. (Mazars and Earwaker 2013:5)

Madame Bwa described this improvement as it has been taking place in Shada, in no small part to her tireless commitment to raising awareness about sanitation. She said:

> At first, [the residents of Shada] didn't want to talk of bayakou, but now everyone looks to work in it to earn some cash. Young men all are working in it. It a means of providing for their family, their kids to go to school. If someone in the family is sick, they can help out. So no longer, bayakou is a bad word for them anymore.

The psychological toll of social stigmatization and working a dangerous job in secrecy is heavy, and many bayakou are still afraid to identify themselves even to organizations like the IRC or Clean Tech, much less their friends and family. However, there is a growing recognition, by the bayakou and by anyone else involved in Haiti's sanitation sector, that they are the ones sacrificing their safety and health to perform a necessary function for society.

Fig. 3: A Clean Tech employee with professional safety equipment.
Two employees in the background demonstrate how the safety harness is used to pull someone up in case they slip. The pictured man is only missing his facemask.

Conclusion

Social inequality in Haiti operates according to a logic in which impoverished people are increasingly likened to infectious dirt, making the bayakou's intimate proximity to excrement particularly shameful. Within the topography of Haiti's vertical socioeconomic hierarchy, the bayakou are plunged down into the most abject of all social positions because they are in intimate contact with feces. Although they are symbolically likened to waste, the bayakou have powerful forms of leverage in their access to spaces of danger, magic, and secrets. The types of subterranean spaces in which they work within Haiti's hierarchy tell a history of embodied structural violence and resistance.

Since the earthquake and the cholera epidemic have brought international attention to Haiti's sanitation crisis, the bayakou are coming out from their abject secrecy into public society. Haiti's history of structural violence that would have the bayakou categorized as matter without place, but this category is dissolves as they create a place for themselves in Haiti's troubled topography. The more they present themselves as sanitation professionals who protect the population from cholera, the less they are shrouded in shameful secrecy, and the more they can provide for their families with increasing feelings of pride.

International aid has largely failed Haiti, and initiatives to improve access to sanitation, although sometimes well meaning, tend to perpetuate a paradigm in which poverty is naturalized. The culture of poverty explanation that presents itself in popular thought as evidenced by the mass media, is testament to the level to which poverty in Haiti has been mystified. However, the bayakou represent a uniquely Haitian institution, and like other institutions such as Creole and Vodou, the bayakou are not "progress resistant"-- they are exploitation resistant. I end on this note not to romanticize them or understand the physical and psychological hardships that they face, but to celebrate the truly unprecedented leaps they have made since the earthquake in openly identifying themselves in order to demand accountability and professional standards.

The bayakou's process of place-making coincides with Haiti's confrontation of the cholera epidemic within the larger sanitation crisis, which brings to light the treatment

of Haiti the abject of the West, the results of which have not only been symbolic, but have been materially inscribed in Haiti's topography and embodied through defecation practices that cause shame, preventable illnesses, and premature deaths

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