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# Modernizing Nationalism: Masculinity and the Performance of Anglophone Caribbean Identities

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

MODERNIZING NATIONALISM: MASCULINITY AND THE PERFORMANCE OF  
ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN IDENTITIES

By

Nadia Indra Johnson

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty  
of the University of Miami  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Coral Gables, Florida

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Modernizing Nationalism: Masculinity and the Performance  
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This study examines Anglophone Caribbean national identities to interrogate multiple and varied economies that manage citizens in the interest of economic and social production and/or the policing of national identities. It is particularly concerned with the gendered character of these economies. The formation and preservation of these national identities rely heavily on gender and sexual difference as Anglophone Caribbean national identities are inextricably linked to expressions of Afro-Caribbean masculinity. Thus I analyze novels and cultural representations of Afro-Caribbean masculinity in cricket, calypso and chutney-soca music in Trinidad's carnival. I also examine Afro-Caribbean religions, Revivalism and Rastafarianism, as well as Afro-Caribbean practices of masking. I examine these practices in order to interrogate the reproduction of colonial practices of marginalization and exclusion. These colonial practices, I argue, are inherent in the cultural politics that inform these cultural performances while denying modes of national belonging that refuse dictated performances of national identities.

The literary and cultural performances in this project span three epochs in Caribbean history: post emancipation, independence, and post independence to assess the shifting cultural landscapes that shape postcolonial subjectivities. In Sylvia Wynter's *The Hills of Hebron* and Orlando Patterson's *The Children of Sisyphus*, I examine sexual economies in which power is negotiated and contested in a struggle to chart the gendered borders of

citizenship and production. I then turn to Lakshmi Persaud's *For the Love of My Name* to analyze violence exacted against ethnically marked national collectives as an instrument of political and economic aggression that disproportionately affects women. My critique of Earl Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance* and contemporary performances in calypso and chutney-soca carnival competitions, considers how operative traditions seek to govern post-independent cultural politics. By drawing parallels between the formation of Afro and Indo-Trinidadian nationalisms, I argue that these identity formations establish cultural difference while also dictating cultural performances to advance and police national identities. Lastly, I engage Lovelace's *Salt*, Garfield Ellis' *Such as I Have* and contemporary discourses concerning cricket performance, remuneration, and women's limited access to cricket. I argue that cricket becomes a cultural commodity in the perpetuation of a regional national identity that is dependent on gender constructs. Thus this study demonstrates how representations of culture can be mobilized to challenge ideologies and political practices of exclusion, marginalize women in the formation and performance of national identities and govern cultural politics.

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## Introduction

Nations are contested systems of cultural representation that limit and legitimize people's access to the resources of the nation-state, but despite many nationalist's ideological investment in the idea of popular *unity*, nations have historically amounted to the sanction of gender *difference*" (McClintock 89).

The formation of nationalisms and national identities has been central to the postcolonial project. In the Anglophone Caribbean, cultural representation of national identities is decidedly a masculine endeavor. Masculine performances of national identities are central to the formation of these contested systems as they are paramount in establishing systems of power that seek to "limit and legitimize people's access to the resources of the nation-state" by mobilizing citizens within various economies (McClintock 89). This study is concerned with the gendered models that inform nationalist economies and their reliance on gender difference. It analyzes literary and cultural representations of Afro-Caribbean performances of masculinity in the sport of cricket, calypso and music in Trinidad's carnival, Afro-Caribbean religions Revivalism and Rastafarianism, and Afro-Caribbean practices of masking that are located in multiple and varied economies: sexual, ethnic, political and regional. I also examine Indo-Caribbean performances of national identities in chutney-soca music in Trinidad's carnival. It calls attention to the reproduction of colonial practices of marginalization and exclusion inherent in the cultural politics that informs these performances while denying multiple modes of national belonging that refuse dictated performances of national identities. Finally, this study challenges the efficacy of masculine performances of national identities to continue to mobilize citizens if gender difference is not dissolved. Instead, it privileges performances that reject binaries drawn between social and

economic values and emphasizes the need for a dialectical relationship between economics and culture by refusing dictated performances shaped by operative traditions that often deny multiple senses of national belonging.

In “No Longer in a Future Heaven,” Anne McClintock asserts that nationalism is always gendered:

They are (nations) historical practices through which social difference is both invented and performed. Nationalism, in this way becomes constitutive of people’s identities through social contests that are frequently violent and always gendered. (89)

This is understandable as constructions of masculinity are predicated on power contestations, central to the identity of both men and women that dictate their relationship to the nation politically, socially, and culturally. The project of nation building is one that has historically been associated with manhood and the performance of masculinity. In fact, a theory of gender power is necessary in any interrogation of the various manifestations of nationalism as gender, read in this study as a social construct that is reified through cultural performances, lies at the center of any nationalist discourse.

The scholarship of M. Jacqui Alexander urges the need to interrogate “multiple operations of power, of gendered and sexualized power that is simultaneously raced and classed” (*Pedagogies* 4). These operations of power are dependent on the construction of gender and sexual difference to draw boundaries that determine not only citizens’ access to the resources of the nation-state, as McClintock suggests, but also their productive roles in the efficacy of the nation-state both economically and ideologically. Women’s lives are disproportionately affected by power contestations between men, particularly when national aspirations are involved. Not only are women economically and socially marginalized but their bodies also serve as battlegrounds where men can mediate, enforce

and contest systems of power. In “Dis Place—The Space Between,” M. Nourbese Philip asserts that, “the most efficient management tool of women is the possibility of the uninvited and forceful invasion of the space between the legs—rape” (75). She discusses how the threat of rape seeks to repress women’s sexuality and access to public space, proclaiming, “BUT JAMETTES GET RAPED TOO!” (78). Philip’s use of the jamette figure, a lower class woman in nineteenth century Trinidad notorious for her refusal to observe colonial moral prescriptions for gender performance, as a paradigm of how gender and sexuality is socially constructed and policed is instructive (77-8). The term jamette finds its etymology in the French term *diamètre*—diameter. It signals the dividing of the world into two hemispheres foregrounding the lower sphere, or underworld, inhabited by the jamette. The jamette class references a class of women, usually domestics in middle and upper class homes. They were viewed as transgressive for their unwillingness to subscribe to colonial prescriptions of gender. Jamettes laid claim to public space not socially occupied by women—the street—as singers of bawdry songs, usually sexual in nature; *stickmen*, which as the name suggests was a male-dominated arena; prostitutes; and even formed gangs that fought for control of public spaces.<sup>1</sup> Philip’s utterance that, “jamettes get raped too,” insists on an understanding of rape as a weapon not only implemented in power struggles between men but also as a violent means to police and control women’s bodies, sexuality, and mobility. For Michel Foucault, sexual “repression has indeed been the fundamental link between power, knowledge, and sexuality” (5). He argues:

[N]othing less than a transgression of laws, a lifting of prohibitions, an irruption of speech, a reinstating of pleasure within reality, and a *whole*

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<sup>1</sup> For more on jamettes in nineteenth century Trinidadian society, see Bridget Brereton’s *Race Relations in Colonial Trinidad* and Errol Hill’s *Trinidad Carnival*.

*new economy* in the mechanisms of power will be required. (5, italics my emphasis)

Foucault emphasizes how social and political economies of power have historically relied on sexual difference to manage citizens and maintain power differentials. And while Foucault does not necessarily grant gender primacy in the manner that Philip does, issues of gender certainly permeate his engagement with discourses of power. He illustrates how sexual and gender difference is one context through which power can be seized, negotiated, and contested. Foucault's urging for "a whole new economy in the mechanisms of power" does not call for an erasure of sexual and gender difference in economics of power. Rather he emphasizes the need for a shift in the mechanisms of power towards systems that do not revolve so absolutely around sexual and gender difference denying citizens equal rights on account of this difference.

Caribbean nationalisms have relied heavily on the formation of multiple and varied economies to mobilize citizens in the interest of labor and production. They have often reproduced sexual divisions of labor, divisions of labor socially constructed but determined by biology that were gradually interjected into the slave economy after the abolishment of the slave trade. In slave economies where women worked alongside men in the fields and the formation of slave families was opposed, sexual divisions of labor were impractical. In the introduction to *Women and the Sexual Division of Labour in the Caribbean*, Keith Hart writes, "the simple fact is that the sexual division of labour was from the beginning weakly institutionalized in the Caribbean" (5). The only palpable sign of sexual divisions of labor in slave economies could be found in trades that required skilled labor such as artisans, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths and drivers that were

exclusively reserved for male slaves.<sup>2</sup> However, after the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and the approach of the inevitable emancipation of slaves in the British colonies, the implementation of Christianity became integral in transplanting English constructs of gender, most notably the institution of marriage. The institution of marriage was considered invaluable in socializing the enslaved populations of the region to maintain a productive work force to ensure that the West Indies would continue to propel the British Empire into modernity as a world economic powerhouse.

At the center of this colonizing project was the formation of the nuclear family. The European model of the nuclear family with the husband as the head of household and the wife as caretaker of the home and children served as an indicator of social and economic development. Rhoda Reddock asserts that,

this model, which developed in the nineteenth century Western Europe, became internationalized through the processes of colonial and capitalist expansion. In the twentieth century it came to be seen as a component of development and modernization, and the basis of social and economic organization worldwide. (*Women* 2-3)

As a result, the British took several measures to ensure the implementation of the nuclear family as a common feature of West Indian life. This project necessitated the need to address the perceived social ills associated with slave society such as promiscuity, concubinage (the practice of a man and woman cohabitating together without the legal union of marriage; see Austin-Broos), illegitimacy, and the unwillingness of slaves to reproduce. In 1824, the Order of Council encouraged marriage amongst slaves, abolished Sunday market to facilitate religious instruction and prohibited the division of slave families through sale in Trinidad and Guyana (Reddock, *Women* 16). Despite these

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<sup>2</sup> For more on sexual divisions of labor in Caribbean slave economies, see Rhoda Reddock's *Women, Labour & Politics* and Keith Hart's *Women and Sexual Divisions of Labor in the Caribbean*.

efforts, scholars such as Rhoda Reddock and Orlando Patterson have noted the unwillingness of the slaves to accept the doctrines of the English in regards to marriage. Ironically, their abhorrence of marriage was directly linked to their relationship to economics. In *Sociology of Slavery*, Patterson discusses what he refers to as “multiple associations.” This term references relationships where an individual, male or female, oscillated between several partners often depending on availability of plots of land usually made available by slave owners to plant provisions. Patterson emphasizes the prominence of economics in these relationships: “The economic aspects of these relationships, especially as they related to cultivation of provision grounds, were obviously important” (*Sociology* 163). Contrary to the British practice of reducing the lifestyle of the slaves as immoral, slaves had a keen understanding that the European model of marriage was tied to economics and required a husband earning an income and supporting a non-working wife. This was diametrically opposed to the lives of the slaves as black women were full time laborers and black men were often denied access to economic opportunities. Reddock and Patterson also note that black women also were largely against marriage as they felt it would take away their independence since they were able to provide for themselves by selling provisions and crafts in the market place. This practice was possible in Jamaica and Trinidad as slaves were given access to plots of land on their masters’ plantation, as it was their responsibility to feed themselves. The women worked diligently to plant extra provisions that could be sold and used to earn extra income.

The desire for financial independence of Afro-Caribbean women continued even after Emancipation. In his travelogue, *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies*, Charles

Kingsley observes the financial independence of these women and their entrepreneurial endeavors as market women. He compares them to white women who had no independence and submit themselves completely to their husbands. Kingsley notes:

The Negro woman has no need to marry and make herself the slave of a man, in order to get a home and subsistence. Independent she takes care to remain; and no schemes for civilizing the Negro will have any deep or permanent good effect which do not take note of, and legislate for, this singular fact. (33)

Kingsley equates the effacement of established colonial gender roles as evidence that the Negro could not be “civilized” if black women’s independence was not taken seriously and ultimately controlled. His criticism does not end there; rather he goes further equating black women to men. He writes, “watching the negresses, one can well believe the stories of those terrible Amazonian guards of the King of Dahomey, whose boast is that they are no longer women, but men” (32-33). In *The English in the West Indies*, James Anthony Froude, in his cursory appraisal of the customs and manners of the people of the West Indies, also attributes what he perceives to be masculine qualities to black women. In attempt to assess the preparedness of West Indians to self-govern, he writes,

If black suffrage is to be the rule in Jamaica, I would take it away from the men and give it to the superior sex. The women are the working bees of the hive. They would make a tolerable nation of black amazons. (198)

The independence of West Indian women both financially and socially was perceived as a primary obstacle to the socializing of West Indians and implementing European concepts of gender difference and the sexual division of labor. The introduction of the nuclear family into West Indian society became paramount to the colonial project.

This focus continued well into the twentieth-century. The Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 further emphasized social policy. In *Modern Blackness*, Deborah Thomas notes that the focus of this act was to emphasize, “‘modern’ conjugal families... [that were seen] as central not only for social development but also the motor of modern economic development because familial conditions were now viewed as affecting labor productivity” (49). In 1943, Lady Huggins, the wife of the Governor in Jamaica, launched a mass-marriage campaign. It was believed that these combined efforts would ameliorate the previously mentioned social issues and ensure a steady labor supply. While many of the emancipated slaves, women in particular, did not subscribe to colonial precepts concerning gender and sexual difference, the scholarship of Reddock, Thomas, and Alexander illustrate that although re-envisioning the region’s relationship to modernity was paramount to independence movements, gender and sexual difference would feature prominently in the formation of Caribbean nationalisms.

Scholars such as Simon Gikandi, Wilson Harris, and Sybil Fischer have identified several historical moments as markers of the inception of modernity. These epochs include Christopher Columbus’ “discovery” of the New World, the formation of the Atlantic slave trade, and the Haitian Revolution. In *Writing in Limbo*, a study of modernism and Caribbean writing, Simon Gikandi notes that modernity as concept is derived from Eurocentric notions of conquest and advancement. Thus it follows that the conquest of the New World and the subsequent formation of the slave economy has often been viewed as a defining moment in Europe’s pursuit of modernity. However, the problem with marking modernity with Columbus’ discovery, particularly for the Caribbean, is that modernity was thrust upon the region. The Caribbean has had little

autonomy in asserting its place in modernity or staking its claim to the economic benefits thereof. As a region comprised of “third world” countries, many fraught with destitution and poverty, independent Caribbean countries are rarely associated with fiscal economic development. And yet, the Caribbean archipelago is central to any discourse of modernity. Despite the fact that the Caribbean remains at the core of historic modernity, there is some incongruity in describing the region as modern since the region never historically reaped the economic benefits of the modernizing mechanisms that have exploited the resources and people of the region. Instead, the economic wealth amassed in the Caribbean largely benefited and served to modernize the nations of colonial powers. As a result, questions of labor and production have always been central to the formation of nationalisms in the Anglophone Caribbean.

Leo Despres asserts that, “Modern nationalisms cannot be understood apart from colonialism” (11). Labor and production lay at the core of British colonialism in the Caribbean. The sugar economy established in the region was dependent on a steady supply of productive labor at a minimal cost. After slavery was abolished, questions of labor and production became even more salient for the British Empire. The introduction of indentured servants to the Caribbean landscape sought to fill a need for a cheap labor supply but only exacerbated charges of economic exploitation made against the British colonial government. By the 1930’s protests against unfair wages and poor working conditions took a decided turn. Labor riots erupted across the region, most notably in Trinidad, Jamaica, and Barbados.<sup>3</sup> The demands for fair pay, better working conditions, and representation would serve as the nascent beginnings of the call for independence

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed account of labor riots in the British Caribbean see Richard Hart’s *Labor Rebellions of the 1930s in the British Caribbean Region Colonies*.

from British colonialism heralded by Eric Williams' declaration "Massa Day Done" at a public lecture at Woodford Square on 22 March 1961.

In its attempt to lay claim to modernity, the Caribbean has had to refashion and re-envision European notions of modernity for alternatives that are conducive to the construction of nationalism and identity in the region. In an interview with Stephen Slemon, Wilson Harris speaks of modernity as a revisionary process that requires innovative strategy, a process that is actively at work in contemporary nationalist movements in the Anglophone Caribbean (48). Formation of multivalent economies has been central to these revisionary processes. I use the term economy in the broadest sense to include any system that manages citizens of Anglophone Caribbean nation-states in the interest of economic production and/or the production of national identities. In *Encountering Development*, Arturo Escobar recognizes "the need for a cultural politics that takes seriously the existence of both mainstream economics as a dominant discourse and the manifold local models implicitly maintained by Third World groups" (58). The masculine performances of national identities under study, respond to this need by refashioning colonial constructs of manhood and masculinity to correlate with their own epistemological registers as a vehicle for re-conceiving the region's relationship to modernity by assuming control of the ways in which individuals and cultures of the Anglophone Caribbean are commodified. These performances engage national ideologies that are aimed at countering colonial cultural and hegemonic values. However, as previously mentioned, the emergence of Caribbean nationalisms and the need to manage citizens in the interest of production has often times galvanized around the reproduction

of colonial practices that establish new hierarchies based on race, class and most notably gender. These processes rely on the implementation of gender as a social construct that is affirmed through gender performance.

In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler observes,

as in other ritual social dramas, the action of gender requires a performance that is repeated. This repetition is at once a re-enactment and re-experiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation. (140)

This repetition is not simply confined to ritual and fetish. It is also the reification of social values and ideologies that are incessantly negotiated, contested, and invented through various performances of masculinity in the interest of seeking approval from the nation fostering national collectivity. McClintock argues:

In our time, national collectivity is experienced preeminently through spectacle. [...] Indeed, the singular power of nationalism since the late nineteenth century, I suggest, has been its capacity to organize a sense of popular, collective unity through the management of mass, national commodity spectacle. (102)

Social, political, and national values are disseminated through performative constructions that are imbued with notions of cultural and national identity rooted in history and affirmed through masculinity. Men come to understand themselves socially and politically through a set of behavioral practices that affirm masculinity through the assertion of domination and power based on the premise of biology. In “Caribbean and Masculinity,” Linden Lewis asserts that, “masculinity is both a set of practices or behaviors and an ideological position within gender relations” (95). These behaviors and social practices are learned and reverberated through spectacle, fetish, and performance that must be reinforced through repetition in the interest of preserving power and identity. The cultural performances depict masculinity as normative and central to the construction

of nation, particularly in the Caribbean. Performance is central to this study not only because of the formative role it plays in Caribbean national cultures but also and more significantly because of its role in socializing and mobilizing citizens on the basis of gender and sexual difference. The masculine performances of national identities thus are read as performative acts that seek to ideologically maintain oppressive systems that disavow and legislate against performances that do not correlate with hegemonic performances of gender. The scholarship of M. Jacqui Alexander reminds us of the ways in which the state deploys power to criminalize performances that are non-productive both biologically and economically. And while she discusses how the state attempts to legislate non-normative sexual bodies she acknowledges the ideological distancing of these non-normative bodies:

Legislative gestures fix conjugal heterosexuality in several ways. Generally, they collapse identities into sexual bodies which, in the particular case of lesbian and gay people, serves to reinforce a fiction about promiscuity: that sex is all of what we do and consequently the slippage, it is all of who we are. (“Not Just 9)

She argues that the attempts of nation-states to marginalize non-normative citizens on the basis of sexual difference have resulted in the eclipsing of promises of equality and domination in a postcolonial state (“Not Any(Body)” 5). It is this obscuring of promises made that preoccupies this study.

This project began with a preoccupation with postcolonial subjectivities and how citizens grapple with the failures of independence: the continued marginalization and

exclusion of citizens, the continued economic disenfranchisement of the working poor, and the denial of multiple senses of national belonging. In *Refashioning Futures*, David Scott argues that,

Histories of the present ... ought to be attentive not only to the shifting contours of the pasts they interrogate, but to the shifting contours of the presents they inhabit and from which they are being written. (15)

This study is concerned with both the specific contours of the colonial past and the postcolonial present to assess the ever-shifting cultural landscapes that inform masculine performances of national identities. Although this project is not an effort to construct a history of the present, it spans three epochs in Anglophone Caribbean history: post emancipation, independence, and post independence. The literary and popular culture texts being analyzed were selected as productive sites of engagement with the historical, cultural and political frameworks I am interested in critiquing. There are a number of Caribbean texts that I could have selected for this study as all nationalist literatures and cultural performances are gendered whether implicitly or explicitly. Bringing together literary and popular culture texts also emphasizes the prominence that these two mediums have experienced in shaping nationalist discourses in the Caribbean. Some of the questions that emerge from the social and textual spaces provided include: What tensions emerge amid the espousal of seemingly competing social and economic values? How is the alienation associated with commodification negotiated by the working class, and what inconsistencies or contradictions emerge in the construction of gender and national identity via these masculine performances? For the purposes of this study, I define the term nationalism broadly. Although the islands of the Anglophone Caribbean occupy a relatively small area spatially, on account of its unique diversity, multiple nationalisms

have emerged that are at once insular, regional, and cultural. The centrality of gender and sexual difference to the formation and sustainability of these multiple nationalisms offers new dimensions to Caribbean nationalist discourses. In *Cultural Conundrums*, Natasha Barnes poses the question, “How and when does gender and/or sexual difference assume the same interpretive value (as racial difference)?” (17). *Modernizing Nationalism* seeks to contribute to this project.

The first part of this study examines how colonial practices are reproduced in emergent Caribbean nationalisms in the interest of marginalizing subsectors of the nation as producers of labor and capital. The first chapter, “Saving Souls: Sanctified Sex and the Enterprise of Nation,” is concerned with the utilization of sexuality to map the boundaries of nation by producing gendered citizenships to establish and maintain political and economic sovereignty. Anchored in readings of Sylvia Wynter’s *The Hills of Hebron* and Orlando Patterson’s *The Children of Sisyphus* as allegories of nationalist agendas in post-emancipation Jamaica, I interrogate sexual economies in which power is negotiated and contested in a struggle to chart the gendered borders of citizenship and production. More specifically, I consider how under the guise of religious authority, male heterosexuality is employed as a mechanism for structuring nationalism through the commodification of women’s labor and bodies. Lastly, I examine how women, albeit from marginalized positions, assert agency not only through the reclamation of sexual identities but also by challenging the impermeability of gendered citizenships. Lastly, I argue that colonial precepts adopted by patriarchal authority to contain women’s sexuality must be abandoned if alternative registers of sovereignty are to be attained.

The second chapter, “Unwilling Sacrifices: Caribbean Nationalisms and the Practice of Exclusion,” turns to Guyana on the cusp of independence to examine colonial practices of ethnic exclusion that are maintained in Caribbean nationalisms as represented in Indo-Caribbean women writers’ engagement with a “douglas poetics” as a response to these practices. This chapter reads Lakshmi Persaud’s *For the Love of My Name* as an allegorical representation of post-independent Guyanese politics alongside Narmala Shewcharan’s *Tomorrow is Another Day* and Jan Lo Shinebourne’s *The Last English Plantation* to interrogate violence exacted against ethnically marked national collectives as an instrument of political and economic aggression. It also considers how women suffer disproportionately both physically and economically as a result of these aggressions. The continuance of ethno-economic strategies that marginalize Indo-Guyanese as laborers and producers of agricultural goods, on which the economy is dependent, results in violent contestations. This chapter also examines cultural contradictions that emerge from these practices of exclusion. That is, while Indo-Guyanese were ostracized from national projects on account of their race and adherence to Indian cultural and religious practices, the often-contrived narratives of nationalism were heavily dependent on African cultural retentions.

The second part of this study examines post-independent performances that resist and are in fact hostile to attempts to dictate performances in the interest of mobilizing citizens to advance and police national identities. They turn to political technologies and cultural institutions employed by former colonial administrations to resist operative traditions that seek to improve economic circumstances while advancing national collectives along lines of race and class. However, these performances continue to

maintain gender difference. The third chapter, “Casting off the Shackles of Respectability: National Identity and the Politics of Culture,” interrogates the performance of national identities that are shaped by established traditions that find their origins in African cultural retentions. Through a reading of masculinity and nationalism in Earl Lovelace’s *The Dragon Can’t Dance*, I examine how Afro-Trinidadian cultural performances embedded in the national Carnival establish traditions that seek to govern cultural politics. I read these traditions as operative constructs and consider their employment as political technologies that deny multiple senses of belonging, particularly in regards to class. Focusing on the national art form of calypso, I examine how the governing cultural politics occludes not only the multiple origins of calypso but also its multiple functions. Lastly, I consider how in this milieu calypso competitions, a political technology once utilized by colonial administrations to control the content and performance of calypsos, can provide an avenue for economic advancement, artistic freedom, and alternative approaches to rebellion that are at times disavowed by established national traditions. The chapter then turns to performances of Indo-Caribbean women’s sexuality on a national stage through the mediums of chutney soca and calypso. I examine the formation of Indian nationalisms, Indo-Trinidadian nationalisms formed in the Caribbean, not only to establish cultural difference from the dominant Afro-Trinidadian culture but also to confine expressions of Indo-Trinidadian women’s sexuality to domestic/private spaces. In so doing, I draw parallels between Afro and Indo Caribbean nationalisms to illustrate how operative traditions seek to dictate performances of national identities.

The final chapter, “Who Seh Ah Nah a Gentleman: Mashing up the Boundary of a Colonial Inheritance,” interrogates how the sport of cricket becomes a cultural commodity in the perpetuation of a national identity that is based on a regional collective and dependent on gender constructs. This discussion is anchored in readings of Lovelace’s *Salt*, Garfield Ellis’ *Such as I Have* and contemporary discourses concerning cricket performance, remuneration, and women’s limited access to cricket as a cultural space to perform national identities. Recognizing that the sport has served as a cultural and political terrain that played an essential role in articulating anti-colonial sentiments and newly emergent national identities, I examine how ardent calls for equitable remuneration for West Indies cricketers seeks to dismantle colonial socio-economic hierarchies inherent in cricket at the continued expense of subverting gendered hierarchies that persist in the post-independent Caribbean. Thus, I turn to performances that seek to dismantle the culture of maintaining socio-economic and gendered hierarchies in the post-independent Caribbean at all levels of the game.

## Chapter One: Saving Souls: Sanctified Sex and the Enterprise of Nation

Sexuality—the repression of black male sexuality, the control of sexual reproduction of slaves, the often violent expression of white male sexuality on the bodies of female and at times male slaves, and the well guarded sanctity of white female sexuality—was paramount in the machinations of power that propelled and policed the slave economy. And even after emancipation, the policing of black sexuality remained central to the colonial project. Colonial institutions, most notably the church, set parameters that relegated the expression of sexuality to the conjugal home—between husband and wife—enforced by legislation.<sup>4</sup> Laws were passed making sexual acts such as buggery, sodomy, and oral sex illegal, criminalizing homosexual acts and any act that did not conform to the reproductive function between a man and woman.<sup>5</sup> One’s sexual identity then was marked not by desire but one’s ability to be productive in biological and economic terms. The scholarship of M. Jacqui Alexander illuminates the inequitable analytics of power inherent in the criminalization of sexual acts that are constituted as non-normative on account of their inability to be procreative. She urges an “[understanding of] the ways in which the state deploys power in this domain and the kinds of symbolic boundaries it draws around sexual difference, for these are the very boundaries around which its power coheres” (Alexander, “Not Just” 5-6). The emergence of nationalisms in the Caribbean reproduces imperial policing of sexuality, female sexuality in particular.

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<sup>4</sup> See Rhoda Reddock’s *Women, Labour and Politics* and Deborah Thomas’ *Modern Blackness*.

<sup>5</sup> M. Jacqui Alexander draws attention to the continuance of these laws in the postcolonial Caribbean state, specifically Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas. See *Not Just (Any)Body Can Be a Citizen and Redrafting Morality*.

An assiduous analysis of the history of sexuality in the Caribbean reveals a history of the socializing machinations of colonialism. In his tripartite exploration of the intricacies of sexuality and the analytics of power, *The History of Sexuality*, Michele Foucault focuses on the institutional repression of sexuality and its subsequent contribution to identity formation in the Age of Industrialization. And while his work focuses on modern Europe, his concatenation of history, sexuality, power, and processes of production is instructive in theorizing the essentialization of normative sexuality and gendered roles in the Caribbean that have been projected from these colonial models. Moreover, it lays bare the greater implications of the continuance of colonial projects in the formation of Caribbean national identities and gendered citizenships.

This chapter examines the utilization of sexuality to map the boundaries of nation by producing gendered citizenships in the interest of establishing and maintaining political and economic sovereignty. Anchored in readings of Sylvia Wynter's *The Hills of Hebron* and Orlando Patterson's *The Children of Sisyphus* as allegories of nationalist agendas in post-emancipation Jamaica, I interrogate sexual economies in which power is negotiated and contested in a struggle to chart the gendered borders of citizenship and production. More specifically, I consider how under the guise of religious authority, symbolic of patriarchal authority, male heterosexuality is employed as a mechanism for structuring nationalism through the commodification of women's labor and bodies. I also examine how women, albeit from marginalized positions, assert agency not only through the reclamation of sexual identities but by challenging gendered citizenships in the project of nation building. Lastly, I argue that colonial precepts adopted by patriarchal

authority to contain women's sexuality must be abandoned if alternative registers of sovereignty are to be attained.

The plot of *The Hills of Hebron* charts a trajectory that maps the complexities of race and class stratifications in colonial Jamaica that are revealed through the affirmation of masculinity via the performance of male sexuality. The sexual relationships between Reverend Brooke and Gloria, Chin Quee and Martha, and Mr. Randall and Cato maintain and rehearse the political and economic realities that the New Believers grapple with prior to their exodus to Hebron. As the descendants of emancipated slaves and subjects of the crown, they struggle daily to earn a living. This experience of liminality is most palpable in their inability to provide for their families. They are no longer slaves, and yet they have little power in a society where they remain on the lowest rung of the socio-economic hierarchy. Moses, leader of the New Believers, draws upon their peripheral relationship to the colony and subsequent liminality to gain their loyalty with his promise of self-empowerment and racial uplift through black-nationalist ideologies; his radical black identity politics lay a foundation for the formation of an independent nation represented by the allegorical Hebron.

The rape of Gloria, the bi-racial daughter of the Chinese shop owner Chin Quee and his black common law wife Martha, by Reverend Brooke, the white clergyman whose mission is to continue the socialization of the members of Cockpit Center through religious conversion, is reminiscent of the rapes of countless black female slaves by white masters of the plantocracy. The rape of the domestic servant by the employer is grounded in discourses of power that are informed by both race and class politics in post-emancipation Jamaica. Gloria's rape serves to restore Reverend Brooke's masculinity and

by extension white patriarchal authority. This act nullifies his inability to convert the black masses of Hebron. On a symbolic level, the rape of Gloria restores order and power to race and class hierarchies that Moses effaces through his espousal of black-nationalist ideologies. As a white man of the clergy, a socializing institution of colonial Jamaica, Reverend Brooke represents power and authority. However, this is not the case in Cockpit Center. He perceives Moses as a direct challenge to his authority because the latter poses a threat to the power and privilege his appointment affords him. Brooke's adherence to white upper-class values isolates the people that he purports to want to save and, "little by little the shirtless ones for whom the church ha[s] been originally established [are] excluded" (120). Reverend Brooke represents the seeming impermeability of race and class hierarchies that Moses seems so intent on not only subverting but also dismantling. Moses' rhetoric of Black Nationalism gains him the loyalty of Reverend Brooke's former parishioners as it "ma[kes] them believe that behind them there [is] a God, black and made in their image and partial to them, His Chosen People" (73). His assertion of a black God is a direct challenge to the ideologies of Reverend Brooke's church, as it provides the working poor with an alternative history that ideologically negates their liminal status in colonial Jamaica. Reverend Brooke's resultant loss of authority manifests physically in his inability to perform sexually with his wife and ultimately drives him to seek to restore his masculinity and his authority through the violation of Gloria. The loss of the "soul of his parishioners ... disturb[s] him to such an extent that his very manhood [is] called into question, forced to prove itself on a morning bright with sun in a shuttered room" (202). It is important to consider Wynter's use of the third person. Reverend Brooke's masculinity and authority as a

member of the clergy are not the only things at stake; rather the symbolic manifestation of a manhood that is “forced to prove *itself*” is that of British moral authority and epistemologies on which presumptions regarding the right to rule are based. Gloria’s racialized and sexualized body is marked with a history of economic relations in colonial Jamaica.

Chin Quee’s status as shop owner places him as the intermediate beneficiary of the Euro-centric racial hierarchy that informs the socio-economic landscape of colonial Jamaica. He is afforded economic benefits and social privileges that are denied black men. Thus, he is perceived as a stand in for white plantocracy.<sup>6</sup> Chin Quee’s adherence to the social structure of colonial Jamaica manifests itself most fiercely in his inchoate inscription of his bi-racial daughter as Chinese: “He refuse[s] to send her to school and [does] not even consider sending her to church. For him, his child [is] Chinese” (193). The isolation of Gloria and his refusal to allow her “to mix with children of an alien race” circumscribe the shop space as “alien territory” to a nationalist landscape (193). The protection that the shop affords Chin Quee, for his daughter, is grafted onto a nationalist discourse that assigns Chin Quee’s immigrant status as alien to the nation. That is a space that eschews the project of nation building that necessarily requires the

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<sup>6</sup> In her essay, “The Chinese Shop as Nation Theatre,” Ann-Marie Lee Loy observes in West Indian literature that the Chinese shop owner is often perceived as a replacement for white plantocracy. She cites as evidence the attack and subsequent destruction of the Chinese shop in texts that address issues of national formation and national identity. She argues that, “[t]he positioning of Chinese shop space as alienated from nation space is linked to a discourse that defines national belonging in terms of those who have traditionally suffered and resisted forces of exploitation and oppression within West Indian spaces” (Par. 6, line 1). In *Hebron*, national belonging is ascribed to the descendants of African slaves. While the perception of the Chinese as inheritors of European plantocracy may not be accurate, Wynter depicts Chin Quee as going to great lengths to distinguish and isolate himself and his daughter from the black masses of Cockpit Center. His continued exploitation of blacks actively alienates himself and his daughter from the newly emerging national space. However, in novels such as Patricia Powell’s *Pagoda* and Margaret Cezair-Thompson’s *The True History of Paradise*, shopkeepers Lowe and Mr. Ho Sing, respectively, consider themselves citizens of the nation-state. Even though Lowe’s shop is burned down, he recognizes that it is not a personal attack against him but the historical association of the Chinese shopkeeper to the European plantocratic system.

dismantling of the colonial socio-economic structure; instead it signals the continuance of a stratum dependent on race and class hierarchies that interpolates the immigrant Chinese shop owner as the inheritor of European plantocracy.

Chin Quee's visceral adherence to the racialized socio-economic structure of colonial Jamaica is evidenced in his determination to control Gloria's sexuality. His attempts to cordon her off from the national landscape become most virulent when Gloria attains physical maturity, and the perceived threat no longer comes from alien children but alien men (192-3). The tenability of her "Chineseness" relies on her father's ability to protect her from black male sexuality that in turn draws attention to the unstable foundation on which her racial designation is based. As Natasha Barnes aptly illustrates, the arbitrariness of racial codification in the novel is inscribed on Gloria's body and marked by the absence of a phenotypical description of her. This absence of racial indices points to the malleable character of race classification in regards to gender. Because of his positioning in the patriarchal socio-economic structure of colonial Jamaica, Chin Quee mistakenly believes he is able to guard his daughter from further racial contamination. However, when Chin Quee dies, Gloria's mother, Martha, is unable to provide her the same protection. Their economic depravity, in the absence of Chin Quee, effaces, if not obscures completely Gloria's "Chineseness." Her mother's decision to hire her out as a domestic, results in her re-inscription in this race/class stratification as a "black" woman.

The enforcement of racial hierarchical power through male sexuality evident in the rape of Gloria is mirrored in the relationship of Gloria's parents, Chin Quee and Martha. Chin Quee "picked [Martha] up in the wilds of the St. Elizabeth bush" (192).

And although the details of her acquisition are not revealed, the incessant marital rape of Martha suggests that their marriage is the result of an economic transaction (192).<sup>7</sup> Martha's responsibilities are not confined to the shop. Chin Quee's investment requires her submission to his "driving mechanical persistence with which, night after night, her 'husband' crushe[s] her flesh" (193).<sup>8</sup> As with Gloria, Chin Quee controls Martha's sexuality. However, his motivations are different. As a black woman, Martha's sexuality, her body, is not afforded the protection that Gloria receives. Instead, her sexualized body is a possession owned by Chin Quee. In the shop he positions himself strategically to ensure the constant surveillance of Martha, not only to make sure she has no direct access to his money but to prevent her from, "rebel[ling] against him with any one of the laborers who lounged in the shop, for whom sex would be casual and sensuous" (193). Although race is not referenced, it is certainly inferred as the term "laborers" implies black in the socio-economic history that informs the text. As with Gloria, black male sexuality poses a direct challenge to the power Chin Quee exercises over Martha's body.

The relationship between Cato and his slave master Randall is also very instructive in understanding the interwoven economic and racial dynamics that are a legacy of slavery and plantocracy in Jamaica and the role they play in the construction of black masculinity in the Caribbean. Randall's sexual interest in his slave Cato effeminizes him, as Randall does not view him as a man but as an object, a commodity to

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<sup>7</sup> This economic transaction by the Chinese shopkeeper is mirrored in China Man's commodification of both Zuela's labor and body in Elizabeth Nunez's *Bruised Hibiscus*. Although the racial dynamic is different (Zuela is Amerindian from Venezuela), both women are rendered inferior as a result of racial and economic stratifications in the British Caribbean.

<sup>8</sup> Barnes notes, "the disturbing recirculation of Orientalist stereotypes that portray the Chinese as alternatively craven, tyrannical, lascivious," particularly in his relationship with his wife (152). The depiction of China man in Nunez's *Bruised Hibiscus* is equally disturbing. His opium induced stupors as well as his abusive relationship to his child bride rehearses stereotypes ascribed to the Chinese shopkeeper in the Caribbean. However, this depiction is balanced by the diametrical characterization of his Chinese assistant Tong Lee.

be enjoyed. His effeminization of Cato thus has a stake in determining how Cato's masculinity will be constructed and ultimately his positioning in the socio-economic structure. Unlike the economically disenfranchised black men, such as Moses, whose masculinity is evidenced through their sexual prowess and is discerned in their ability to produce numerous children, Cato is attributed with "barrenness" despite the fact that he has a daughter, "who was wrung from [his] seed like milk from grated cassava" (91). Cato's barrenness appears to be marked specifically by the absence of a son rather than his inability to father numerous children. Despite his ascribed "barrenness," the black slaves victimized by Cato's betrayal curse him, "his children and his children's children..." robbing him of any chance of continuing his legacy, to "found a dynasty" (88).<sup>9</sup> This paradoxical curse suggests that in this patriarchal/patrilineal society, Cato's emasculation is not only discernable in his rape but in his betrayal of his own people when he embraces the epistemologies of colonial Jamaica and the resultant privileges afforded him due to what Barnes refers to as a homosocial relationship with his slave owner. Therefore, his efforts "to be a man" do not only reference his effeminization at the hands of his master Randall, but are a direct assault on his betrayal of his fellow slaves for freedom and the pursuit of economic success. Indeed, Cato is an example of a well-socialized Black British subject. Wynter writes:

Like the tree, he put out green branches and prospered, trading ruthlessly with his fellow black men, circumspectly with the white gentry who held him up as an example of the heights to which even a black could rise if he served God, was faithful to his master and profited by the lessons he was taught. (91)

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<sup>9</sup> In the novel, Cato instigates a slave rebellion and then reveals the plans to his master Randall in exchange for his freedom. After the slaves kill Randall, Cato goes to the neighboring plantations to inform the owners of the slave rebellion takes place and reveals the identity of the leaders who were killed. In return, they acknowledge his freedom and rewarded him with land and money that allows Cato to become a ruthless businessman. He dies a wealthy man.

Barnes explores the economic benefits that Cato receives as a direct result of his proximity to Mr. Randall. She asserts, “however asymmetrical are the social circumstances that brought the two men together, Cato prospers in a world where he has more in common with the white male plantocracy than with the black members of his own race” (155). His failure to “found a dynasty” can be read as his inability to give rise to an independent nation. This failure materializes in his inability to have a son who will continue his legacy. Rather, Cato’s seed produces a line of daughters who will not be allowed to carry his name into the future of an independent Jamaica.

Cato’s betrayal of the slaves cannot only be read through an economic lens, but must also be read through discourses of sexual economy. While the slaves curse him for his betrayal, their assertion that, “he tried to be a man when it was already too late,” suggests that even before his betrayal they rejected Cato on grounds of his homosexual relationship with Mr. Randall despite the power dynamics that inform this relationship (91). Furthermore, it suggests, that Cato, the victim of homosexual rape, would have no place in an independent nation where identity will be constructed around a virile male heterosexuality. Thus Cato’s barrenness is marked not only by his absence of male heirs but also by the homosexual/non-reproductive relationship between him and Mr. Randall.

The power dynamics illustrated in the rapes of Gloria by Reverend Brooke, Martha by Chin Quee, and Cato by Mr. Randall provide a historical, economic, and political context necessary to understand the intricate gendered and racialized matrix from which Moses Barton emerges. From his introduction to Cockpit Center, Moses’ sexual identity is acknowledged by the portentous response of the women who “[fidget] like mares sensing the approach of a stallion” (116). His characterization as a stallion

foreshadows his siring of an independent nation that manifests in the realization of Hebron and is discernable in the faces of “the several babies [...] born in town bearing a marked resemblance to the prophet” (137). In contrast to Cato, Moses’ ability to produce children is prolific. Similarly, the women’s palpable attraction to him signals the impending formation of his congregation, largely comprised of women.

Moses’ arrival in Cockpit Center evokes the biblical exodus, thus, aligning the economic conditions of the black working poor as an illegitimate form of economic bondage in colonial Jamaica. He is modeled after Alexander Bedward, a Revivalist preacher who is regarded by many as the first Jamaican to espouse ideologies of black nationalisms that engage an epistemic historicism by seeking an alternative social order.<sup>10</sup> Thus it is paramount that Moses’ flock is comprised solely from the black working poor of Cockpit Center, as their lives have been systematically devalued by colonialism. As a result, they are open to receive his revolutionary message. Since the market place is a converging space for the black working poor of Jamaica, it serves as a primary site for acquiring a following that will be receptive to his black identity politics and anti-establishment ideologies. By preaching sermons that emphasize restoration and retribution, Moses rejects codifications that place the black working poor on the lowest rung of the social ladder. His declaration of the impending reversal of the social hierarchy bears the promise of birthing a new nation that will dissolve class and to a lesser degree

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<sup>10</sup> The relationship between religion and radical black identity politics in Jamaica has been well documented. In *Rastafari*, Chevannes credits Alexander Bedward with paving the way for Marcus Mosiah Garvey and the subsequent formation of Rastafarianism. See also Anthony Bogues’ *Black Heretics, Black Prophets*.

race/color hierarchies.<sup>11</sup> Hebron, the fictional promise land, thus, is invested with the promise of economic and political sovereignty.

Moses' selection of the market place for generating a following, however, is more complicated than simply identifying a converging space for the black working poor of Jamaica.<sup>12</sup> Even more important, the market place is a space that is dominated by financially independent women. By convincing the market women, who largely constitute his membership, to hand over all of their possessions, he is able to commodify these women for the realization of an independent black nation represented by Hebron. Because of their labor and financial support, he is able to purchase robes, feed the poor, and ultimately establish a sizeable congregation.

While in the market place, Moses appraises the women present to assess their possible contributions to his impending congregation. He bypasses Kate who is arranging her mangoes "as his instinct warns him against her—she would not be like the other women he had known, shadows in his sun" (232). Moses' response to Kate foreshadows the role that sexuality will play in the formation and subsequent negotiations of gendered citizenships in Hebron. Indeed, Kate later obscures the firmly entrenched gender hierarchy established by Moses to conceive her only child who will be born alive. He also passes Gatha after taking note of her "uniform of respectability—shoes and stockings and a long-sleeved dress with a high neckline" (116). Moses finally settles on Liza as the one

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<sup>11</sup> Barnes observes that the success of Moses' "racial nationalism...[and] its progressive possibilities" is evidenced by Rose's seamless incorporation into Hebron despite her mixed racial heritage (she is half white, a quarter Chinese and a quarter black) (149). She continues to argue that "Hebron's social organization is unique in that prior identities of its New Believer congregation appear to have no residue in the present: the brethren come from all sectors of the complex class structure of Cockpit Center—the working class, the petit bourgeoisie, [and] the lumpen proletariat" (149).

<sup>12</sup> See Barbara Bush's *Slave Women in Caribbean Society* and Hilary McD Beckles *Natural Rebels and Centering Woman* for a discussion of market women and their contributions to local economies in Jamaica and Barbados.

who will be “his first convert” (116). He listens to her problems with a sympathetic ear. By expressing an understanding of her economic woes, he is able to gain Liza’s trust and effect her conversion. Moses grants respectability to Liza’s life by bestowing her with the title “Mother” reconfiguring her status as mother. Before she encounters Moses, Liza’s status as mother is marked by the death of her five children, of which she is saddled with their sole responsibility after their fathers abandon them. Moses’ proclamation of Liza as mother serves a number of purposes in his scheme. He establishes her as the necessary female progenitor of the Son of God who conceives without the sexual act. By naming her as the mother of God, Moses makes her responsible for providing for him, even at the expense of herself and her daughters. The sacrifice of the women is perceived as ephemeral and to be rewarded in the successes of the son. As the son and only male member of the household, Moses must be provided for; he holds the promise to the end of their suffering in his dreams of Hebron. This act establishes a gendered model where women work and sacrifice in the interest of advancing the cause of men, in this case, the edification of an independent nation.

Even Moses’ selection of his wife is inspired by his need for capital to fund his exodus into Hebron. He visits Gatha to earn her trust and by extension her money. However, after she witnesses her mother speaking freely concerning their circumstances with the prophet, she becomes incensed. Moses quickly surmises Gatha’s change in demeanor and “s[ees] at once that he [will] not succeed in converting her, would not get a penny out of her to help feed his followers,” and quickly parts ways (124). As great granddaughter of Cato Randall, she values markers of respectability that are associated with whiteness. However, when Moses returns from his stint in the mental hospital, he

has acquired a marker of respectability that Gatha does not have—literacy. When Moses returns with his message of a black God cultivated by the Irish doctor O'Malley, Gatha willingly sells her land and shop in exchange for a husband who could “lift the magic of words from the printed pages of the Bible” (88). She willingly sacrifices the financial security provided by her land and business, bequeathed to her by her great grandfather Cato, to become the wife of a leader who will forge a black heaven on earth.

Much like his relationship to Liza, Moses' marriage to Gatha is also pivotal in reproducing the gendered hierarchies of colonial Jamaica. Just as the presence of Reverend Brooke's wife as a proper British woman who clings to the values embodied in the colony's proselytizing mission is important to the solidification of his image as a paragon of British masculinity, so too does Gatha grant legitimacy to the gendered citizenships Moses is intent on establishing in Hebron. Gatha's acquiescent act of handing over her wealth for the realization of Hebron firmly roots Gatha in Moses' gendered hierarchy. When she finally makes the exodus from Cockpit Center, she is seemingly stripped of her independence and has relinquished any semblance of authority she may have previously possessed.

Prior to making the exodus to Hebron, Moses establishes gendered hierarchies within his congregation to ensure that gendered citizenships will be firmly rooted in the autonomous polity of Hebron. I use the term, gendered citizenships, to emphasize the inequitable relationship of female citizens to the nation. In a society that is founded on a patriarchal structure, women are central to the nation as laborers and mothers but are denied the decision making power that is afforded their male counterparts. The establishment of these gendered citizenships is not only edified through Moses'

relationship to women such as Liza and Gatha but also through the structure of the New Believers Church. Through the apotheotic act of proclaiming himself the Son of God, Moses grants his nationalist agenda legitimacy through the attachment of something divine or more specifically the installation of a God-head/authority. His message takes on a more revolutionary character when he later declares that God is indeed Black. This assertion lends veracity to his previous claim, but it serves a more definitive purpose. It establishes an oligarchic patriarchal, patrilineal hierarchy that is dependent on clearly demarcated gender roles that conform to colonial prescriptions of gender. While Hebron revises the socio-economic hierarchy in terms of race, it does nothing to dispel or dissolve the deeply entrenched gender roles that are central to the very establishment that it challenges; the parameters of nationalism and identity formation that he establishes are coterminous with those of England. The New Believers then are ruled over and administered by Moses who functions as the supreme authority with a coterie of carefully selected men who help to maintain and enforce the patriarchal/patrilineal structure of Hebron. The majority of Moses' flock, however, is women who serve Hebron by continuing its existence through reproduction, carrying out domestic tasks necessary to sustain Hebron, and by providing the finances necessary for the efficacy of Hebron.

While Moses' relationship to Liza and Gatha adheres to the normative order of a patriarchal/patrilineal society (that of mother/son and husband/wife), his relationship to other women in the novel is established through sexual predation. In fact, Moses' commodification of women for the advancement of Hebron is mirrored in his sexual predation of women. Barnes writes that Moses is a "petty tyrant whose messianic zeal comes alive most forcefully in his role as a sexual predator" (147). This is most evident

in his construction of his sexuality as a component of his religious stature in order to exercise control over female bodies. This is demonstrated when he takes a teenage Sue into his prayer shed after proclaiming her virginity the sacrifice required of her for Hebron.

He pulled at her skirt, urgently fumbling with the safety pin, and explained that the sacrifice of her virginity was necessary to their successful exodus into the promised land of Hebron. She helped him with the pin. She felt lapped in the warm still air and casually acquiescent. But she was too much in awe of the Prophet to look at him. She kept her eyes fixed on the roof, on the pencils of light which pierced through holes in the zinc sheets and played hide and seek in his matted hair. (18)

Sue is awed by his religious stature, which she believes to be akin to the divine and is more than willing to do whatever he asks for the benefit of Hebron. The halo-like lights that dance in his matted hair seem to be auspicious. However, the heinous nature of Sue's violation is discernable in her recollection of the act from a child's purview. The "pencils of light" that "play hide and seek" in his hair demonstrate that there seems to be no limit to the extent that Moses Barton will go to exercise his lasciviousness. The rape of Sue precedes and bears light on the manner in which Moses profits from Gloria's rape, the young daughter of Chin Quee and Martha, to complete his preparation for his exodus to Hebron. Although he does not commit the act himself, he shares equal culpability in the continued violation of Gloria's body.

The commodification of Gloria's pregnant body, and more pointedly the manipulation of the violent act committed against her, brings to fruition Moses' dream of Hebron that he has nurtured for years. By assuring Reverend Brooke of his intent to conceal the former's indiscretion, Moses is able to procure a plot of land that is formative in the realization of Hebron. In so doing, he humbles himself before Reverend Brooke

proclaiming the sin to be Gloria's. His removal of Gloria is not to protect her from the Reverend, but to protect the Reverend against any so-called false claims she might make against him. Thus, Gloria is doubly violated both by Reverend Brooke and Moses. Furthermore, the procurement of land substantiated by the large red wax seal and thick vellum paper helps to sway those who still have doubts about the legitimacy of his impending nation, as it indicates that Hebron is a sovereign polity recognized by the Crown.

The necessity of these symbols of colonial authority to legitimate their exodus further emphasizes the reproduction of not only colonial gender hierarchies as *modus operandi* of Hebron but the deliberate manipulation of male sexuality to define and negotiate national borders. Both the expression of male sexuality by Moses' and Reverend Brooke's acts of rape is formative in the manifestation of Hebron. It cannot be realized or attained ironically without the authority of the Crown as an assurance that the colonial government will not impede on the political and economic sovereignty of Hebron. Once Moses receives this sign of a covenant between himself and the colonial government, his sexual predation ceases (at least until his authority is challenged) as he enters into Hebron with his wife beside him. Hebron, therefore, rejects the sin and iniquities of Cockpit Center on which it is founded, only to mimic the façade of moral virtue maintained by British colonists.

In her reading of the novel, Barnes calls for "us to understand rape in more symbolic terms" (148). Thus, if rape is symbolic of seizing and enforcing power and authority over bodies marked by race and gender under the presumption of a "natural" order, then sexuality—more specifically, the claiming of a sexual identity—becomes the

symbolic ground where said power can be contested, challenged, and negotiated. Despite Moses' predation and implementation of gender prescribed roles, the women of *Hebron* are able to move from behind the shadows of men and assert agency by defining their own sexual identities.

Janice Lidell writes that, "the primary thematic concern of *The Hills of Hebron* is certainly not with women" (323). However as she points out, women are central to the narrative not only in terms of their victimization but also in the manner from which they emerge from marginalized positions by defining their sexual identity for themselves. Gatha, Martha, Sue, and Kate are a few of the many women that stand to gain in one fashion or another from their submission to Moses. Gatha's respectability is fulfilled through the procurement of a husband who can read and write. Kate, through *her* sexual advances towards Moses, is finally able to conceive a child who lives; Martha is rescued from the decaying shop of the deceased Chin Quee. Sue seemingly has no ulterior motive for submitting to Moses' sexual demand other than the affirmation of *her* womanhood. This is confirmed when Gatha attempts to force open the shed door which results in Sue's "malevolence" towards her as she perceives Gatha as "always try[ing] to reduce her femaleness" (18). Sue embraces her femaleness through the free exercise of sexuality for sexual gratification. Despite being the victim of rape, Sue's transgression lies in the way she privileges sexual pleasure over reproduction and morality.

Kate, a former market woman, is married to Aloysius who is the carpenter for the "white man's church." Although she gets pregnant a number of times, all of her children die shortly after their birth, which resembles the affliction of the West African spirit child, *ogbange*, which tortures its mother in a cyclical life and death pattern usually as a

punishment for a moral or social act of transgression.<sup>13</sup> And while Kate's ascendance to the middle-class qualifies as transgressive in a novel that is very much concerned with investing the lives of the working poor with dignity and self-worth, Kate places the blame on Aloysius. For Kate, his inability to produce a child who lives is tied to his dwindling economic resources that the novel inextricably links to his disdain for the black masses of Cockpit Center and his disavowal of them. However, the fact that Aloysius impregnates Kate several times suggests that their death is a result of Kate's inability to mother her children.<sup>14</sup> But seemingly, this is not the case as Kate is a doting mother to her daughter Maverlyn, who is conceived in Hebron. She also nurses Isaac, as Gatha's breasts are never able to produce an adequate supply of milk to nourish him. Seemingly, then, Kate's transgression lies in her sexual advances that she makes towards Moses, or in more

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<sup>13</sup> For more on the use of *ogbange* as a literary trope in African American literature, see Christopher Okonkwo's *A Spirit of Dialogue*. He argues that African American authors "re-channel its [*ogbange* as myth] epistemic frequencies ... to frame their characters, design narrative interiors, and negotiate inextricably racial, historical, gendered, maternal, political, philosophic, and artistic questions related to lives of Africans and their descendants enslaved in a hostile New World and still unjustly treated in both life and totalizing white-master narratives" (xv). Seemingly, Wynter engages this myth to explore the racial, historical, economic, and gendered matrix that informs Kate's characterization in the novel. Kate's social ascension is a direct result of her marriage to Aloysius. He attends a white church and eschews the black masses of Cockpit Centre expecting Kate, a former market woman, to assume the decorum of the white women who attend his church. As a result, Kate's mobility as well as her economic independence is limited as she is expected to remain largely in the home unless accompanied with her husband. In addition, Aloysius discourages her from socializing with the market women she used to work beside. The presence of the *ogbange* appears to call attention to how Kate navigates gendered, racial, and class hierarchies in post-emancipation Jamaica.

<sup>14</sup> For more on the use of *ogbange/abiku*, (*abiku* is the Yoruba term for *ogbange*) in Caribbean Women's Writing, see Nadia Johnson's *Children for Ransom*. In her discussion of the presence of *ibeji* (the Yoruba term for twins believed to be *ogbange*) in Caribbean women's writing, she argues that the employment of these spirit children provides a new understanding of the complexities of motherhood in relation to the material world. Drawing upon New World continuances of African cosmological beliefs concerning *ogbange*, namely that they are born to women who have committed a transgression against their husbands, ancestors, or community at large, she posits that Caribbean women writers' challenge the notion that women who refuse gendered boundaries, specifically in relationship to motherhood, have committed a transgressive act against their race, community, or nation. Instead, she insists that strained mother-daughter relationships are not a result of an inability to mother but rather an unwillingness to accept propertied relationships that deny women ownership of the female body and female sexuality.

specific terms, her unwillingness to conform to the prescribed gender roles of colonial Jamaica vis-à-vis Hebron. She commits adultery to conceive a child who will be born alive.

Upon first encountering Kate in the market place, Moses recognizes Kate's affirmation of her sexuality that is revealed in her clothing that emphasizes the roundness of her breast. When Kate finally gives birth to her daughter Maverlyn, it is the result of her relentless pursuit of Moses that begins with her calculated decision to follow him to Hebron and ends on the night that she conceives his child.

Kate seizes the opportunity when Moses is attacked in Cockpit Center by the followers of the young communist leader. Unlike Moses, the collective that the communist leader offers is based not on race but on the poverty and hunger of those who labor and toil daily for survival. He offers an alternative that is not bound up in questions of gender or sexuality, and as a result is able to attract a sector of Cockpit Center's population that Moses is unable to convert. Moses is visibly shaken by his perceived loss of power witnessed by the agitated crowd in Cockpit Center who unleash their anger on him. It is not fortuitous that his sexual encounter with Kate follows his attack by the angry mob. He is confronted with a new political ideology that calls for men *and* women to seize control of their labor and is not reliant on religion dispelling the hallowed appeal of his messianic stature. This challenge culminates when the mob turns on Moses and attacks him. Aloysius finds Moses huddled behind the cart broken and diminished.

In this confused state Moses enters Kate's home to explain that her husband is fixing the cart. And even though Moses tries to leave (he still eschews Kate on account of her sexual aggressiveness), Kate engages him in conversation barring his exit until he is

finally “compelled to take her” (232). The language implies that this sexual act is another act of rape. However, Kate’s sojourn into Hebron for the sole purpose of conceiving a child who will be born alive and her unwillingness to allow Moses to leave her home the night their child is conceived, urges us to read Kate’s assertion of sexual agency in a continuance of defining and re-defining national boundaries through sexuality. Moses’ response to the encounter further indicates that this sexual act does not assume the character of his previous acts of sexual predation in Cockpit Center: “Had this woman, like Delilah, come forward from among the number less others to rob him of the secret of his strength” (232). In the Bible, Judges 16: 4-21, Delilah seduces Samson into revealing to her that the secret of his strength resides in his hair. She subsequently betrays him to the Philistines who neutralize his strength by shaving his head. Kate too has discovered or is cognizant that the secret of Moses’ strength is in his sexuality and seduces him in order to get pregnant. Kate’s act humiliates Moses to such an extent that he leaves Kate only “to w[ake] up his wife and [take] her brutally, striving to erase the image of the other woman who had diminished him” (232). Kate’s transgression then lies in her assertion of sexuality to affect a desired end, a privilege in Hebron that is afforded only to men. And in this act, she reverses the gendered roles Moses perceives to be firmly rooted in Hebron. While Kate’s actions certainly do not constitute rape, they are symbolic of a loss of authority on the part of Moses. However, Kate’s sexual agency is limited. After she gives birth to Maverlyn her body is marked with rheumatism which she herself “accept[s] ...as a penance she [must pay] for having” her (17). Despite this physical marking of her transgressive body, Kate’s actions demonstrate that gender and sexual/national identities are much more unstable categories than previously assumed, as

Kate participates in what Tracy Robinson terms as “women acting like men” (11).<sup>15</sup> That is she steps outside of the gendered boundaries established in Hebron and commits adultery for selfish purposes—an act that seemingly only men like Moses Barton and Reverend Brooke can commit. Their acts of adultery are overlooked; however, when Rose is believed to have committed adultery she is banished to a shed that is located on the periphery of Hebron.

In her discussion of gendered citizenships, specifically from the lens of Anglo-Caribbean legislation, Robinson argues that the epistemologies of sexual/national identities in the region at present do not provide an adequate lexicon for acknowledging women as seekers of sexual agency and autonomy. She also asserts that in the eyes of the law, rape is only considered a sexual act when a man forcibly penetrates a woman. Legally speaking, it is not possible for a woman to rape a man. What is ensconced in this discourse is the question of who has access to power mitigated by sexuality. The woman’s biological inability to commit rape, as defined by legislation, confirms and justifies denial of power over her sexual identity. On a more symbolic level, women are denied the authority that is associated with male sexuality. The symbolic utilization of rape in the novel comes full circle as Moses’ rape of Gatha, for the purpose of restoring his manhood, mimics Reverend Brooke’s rape of Gloria. The resultant rape—the only sexual encounter between Moses and Gatha in the novel—produces their only child, Isaac.

After Moses’ crucifixion—his last futile attempt to restore his loss of authority—  
Gatha Barton “emerg[es] from her anonymity, stamp[s] herself upon their

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<sup>15</sup> In the post-emancipation setting of the novel, Kate’s transgression would certainly be perceived as a “wom[a]n acting like m[a]n.” However, this is not a characterization that I will carry throughout this study as it urges against reading women’s acts of agency in binary terms.

consciousness...enforcing respect” (21). Her sojourn as Moses’ submissive wife is ephemeral. She has been biding her time nurturing her dreams of Hebron, with every stroke of her apron smuggled into Hebron against her husband’s orders. Despite his order to burn all of their possessions before entering Hebron, Gatha keeps her apron as a sign of her independence. She has planned for her ascent to power, albeit through her son, as evidenced by the money she has put aside for her son’s future—the future of Hebron. Like Kate, Gatha too gives up her financial and social independence for the throes of matrimony. She emerges as a deft leader who is masculinized by her seizing of power and authority to rule, as Hebron is a patrilineal society where only men can rule. She also is “playing man” in a patriarchal society that is unwilling to recognize her authority under any other terms. But as Lidell points out, Gatha’s political aspirations do not extend past her maternal role, as they are for her son alone.

The future of Hebron hinges on the victimized body of Rose, the daughter of Gloria and Reverend Brooke, as her pregnant body remains at the center of the battle for control of Hebron that ensues between Obadiah, Gatha, and unknowingly Isaac. When Hebron is faced with drought and economic ruin, Obadiah, the elder of the church and husband of Rose, takes a vow of celibacy as a sign of a covenant between himself and God. Obadiah abstains from sex. This is a result of his mother’s ostensible sexuality that is inherent in her feverish pocomania trances that mirrors the seemingly violent sex that he witnesses her partake of with her paying customers. As a result, Obadiah associates sex with violence and pain—abandonment even as it is in these moments that his mother pushes him away.

In Hebron, he feels trapped inside his massive body because he does not want to define his masculinity, nor Hebron, as sexual. Wynter describes Obadiah: “He stood just over six feet tall and his powerful shoulder muscles strained against the black broadcloth of his jacket” (15). Obadiah is too big for Moses’ jacket that is passed down from Elder to Elder. Indeed, his vision for Hebron is also bigger than that of Moses as its motivation lies not in the messianic nationalism of the crucified leader (who ultimately believes that God is white), but rather in black nationalisms that de-emphasize the oligarchic nature of its leadership and instead focus on the future of the collective. He sees the fallacy in Moses’ dream of a black heaven realizing that it no more provides a future for the youth of Hebron than Cockpit Center. He identifies with the young person whom he believes to be Rose’s lover as he assaults him on the hill:

You must be young, then—and restless for living. As I used to be—before Prophet Moses caught me up in his vision, put fire in my belly to come up to Hebron and build a black heaven on earth. But once we built up heaven and shut ourselves inside it, what did we leave for you, what dreams, what visions....” (79-80).

Obadiah recognizes the fallacy of Hebron as an autonomous nation. While Moses is successful in establishing a polity that maintains political and economic sovereignty from colonial Jamaica, this sovereignty is limiting as it isolates the citizens of Hebron from the rest of the world with deleterious effects.

When Obadiah learns that Rose has not taken a lover but is instead raped by Isaac, Moses’ son, Obadiah understands clearly the danger of privileging male sexuality: “For he knew, better than any other, how this man, whom he had loved, had been forced to do this thing and why” (82). In a society founded on the power of black male sexuality, Isaac is faced with the harsh reality that in a society where masculinity is defined through

sexuality, he is deemed less than a man. This is because his deformity is perceived as evidence of weakness in contrast to his father's athletic frame. After learning of his father's sexual exploits in Cockpit Center, Isaac is forced to confront the hypocrisy of the people of Hebron. Moses' sexual predation indeed seems to be left behind in Cockpit Center as no one mentions it once they have made the exodus into Hebron. The marital rape of Gatha, the only rape that takes place in Hebron, certainly would not be considered rape based on marital right.<sup>16</sup> However, the rape of Rose, wife of Obadiah and daughter of Gloria and Reverend Brooke, forces the citizens of Hebron to confront the fallacy of Moses' sexual predation. It is not something that has been left behind but rather manifests in his son. Despite his mother's belief that his redemption will come through his education and position as elder, he reaches the conclusion that his masculinity can only be asserted through sexuality, culminating in his rape of Rose.

Isaac's clubfoot marks him as an asexual being, particularly when juxtaposed with his father Moses. Moses is described as having, "a beautiful black face with its sloe eyes and its suggestion of an ancient ebony carving ...a disciplined vitality in his sturdy athletic body" (150). While Moses, "move[s] like a panther," Isaac hobbles awkwardly (150). Similarly, while Moses is able to engage in sex with countless women, a prostitute in Kingston ridicules Isaac for thinking that he can have sex with her without paying. In fact, the only sexual encounter that Isaac has in the novel is when he rapes Rose.

Unlike his biblical namesake, the son of Abraham who will inherit a great nation, Isaac is rejected by his father and is denied a patrilineal ascent to the position of elder of Hebron that Gatha fights so hard to procure. Even his mother, whom transfers her dreams and

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<sup>16</sup> Isaac's rape of Rose takes place on the periphery of Hebron.

visions of revenge onto her son, recoils from his deformed foot. Furthermore, she de-sexes him by proclaiming that he “never once looked at a woman to lust after her” (23). This de-sexing of Isaac is essential to Gatha’s revenge against Moses for demoralizing her respectability, as Isaac must be constructed diametrically to his hyper-sexualized father. However, Isaac emerges as the trickster God Legba.

Also referred to as Elegua or Eshu, Legba is a major god in Afro-religious pantheons.<sup>17</sup> Marked by a deformed foot and often depicted with a cane or crutch, he sits at the crossroads between the secular and immortal world much in the same way that Isaac occupies interstices between Hebron and Cockpit Center, nationhood and colonial Jamaica.<sup>18</sup> In fact, he rapes Rose at a point of intersection between Hebron and Cockpit Center. Because of his deformed foot, Legba is often mistaken as a feeble man which allows him to catch others off guard with his virility and strength (he is associated with the phallus), much like Isaac, hence his ascription as the trickster God. Isaac’s emergence as Legba is a diametrical to his father’s messianic stature that is rooted in Judeo-Christian ideologies. And like the trickster God, Isaac seemingly presents new opportunities for Hebron, as it is the knowledge that he has raped Rose that drives Obadiah to Cockpit Center.

When Obadiah learns that it is Isaac that has raped Rose, he leaves Hebron and returns to Cockpit Center in search of not only work but also a new direction that will lead Hebron out of its isolation. Ironically, he goes to the marketplace just as his

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<sup>17</sup> In Haitian Voudoun he is referred to as Legba, however in Yoruba-based pantheons in Cuba and Brazil he is referred to as Elegua and Eshu in Nigeria.

<sup>18</sup> Isaac occupies an interesting space in Hebron in that he is the only member of Hebron who is able to earn an education outside of its borders. As a boarding student in Kingston, he is not confined to the isolation of Hebron as the other citizens. In fact, it is because of his ability to occupy both spaces that he learns of his father and the hypocrisy that Hebron is founded on. Even though Isaac has access to a colonial education, he uses the opportunity to speak out against the social ills of colonialism rather than embrace them.

predecessor Moses does. In *Gwine By*, Deborah Nester emphasizes the role that the market place serves as a site where national interests can be articulated and contested (8). The market place serves as the defining space in the novel where nationalist ideologies are espoused. Moses begins his proselytizing mission in the market place, as does the communist agitator who urges the people of Cockpit Center to strike and use the “weapon of [their] labor” (224). The lone Rasta chants his message of repatriation while being dragged away from the marketplace by the police, and finally Obadiah returns to the market place in search of new epistemes in which to anchor alternative registers of sovereignty.

In an interview with David Scott, Wynter articulates her musings on the possibility of an alternative political order that she is grappling with in *Hebron* and by extension her critical corpus of work. Wynter explains to Scott:

[W]e know about political sovereignty, especially with the rise of the state. We know about economic sovereignty, with the dominance of the free market all over the world, together with its economic organization of reality. We do *not* know about something called *ontological* sovereignty. (“Re-Enchantment” 136)

Moses establishes an autonomous polity, and while it experiences political and economic sovereignty from colonial Jamaica, it represents a “limited sovereignty” for the citizens of Hebron (Scott, *Sovereignty* 147).<sup>19</sup> They are isolated from the rest of the world and expected to follow the gendered, sexual, and religious prescriptions of the polity. Thus, Obadiah necessarily has to look outside of Hebron to find alternative epistemes.

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<sup>19</sup> I borrow this term from George Lamming in an interview with David Scott, *the Sovereignty of the Imagination*. In this interview, Lamming expounds on the limits of sovereignty as defined by nation: “The question of sovereignty, then, particularly in the light of the definition of nation as being a particular space defined in terms of politics and laws, that sovereignty is limited. The sovereignty which literally means your freedom from external influence, external interference in your domestic affairs, that is limited in the sense that you may not always have control to shield or protect yourself from interventions” (147).

For Obadiah, the marketplace serves as a site of sustenance both literally and physically as it is in the marketplace where he is provided with mangoes for him and Rose even though he does not have the money to pay for them. But more importantly, it is while he is in the market that he comes across the character modeled after Jahnheinz Jahn, a German anthropologist whose work on West Africa contributed to the study of African and West Indian cultural continuities.<sup>20</sup> The significance of this character to the novel cannot be underestimated as he introduces Obadiah to an African ontological system that is particularly useful in remapping cultural boundaries of Hebron and the epistemologies on which this mapping is reliant. Obadiah realizes that the political and economic autonomy attained has not been sufficient to liberate the people of Hebron from British epistemologies that continue to inform their existence even after their exodus. What the Jahn character offers then is an avenue for exploring alternative sovereignties in post-colonial Jamaica. The connection he makes between Obadiah's statue and that of its African counterparts provides the basis for the construction of new epistemes that are based on an ontology that is grounded in African origins (136). The linkages drawn by the traveler in the novel provide Obadiah with a nexus from which ontological sovereignty can be explored. However, as Barnes points out, Africa as represented by Jahn is "romanticized and unhistoricized," and does not address the specific conditions of New World Africans (171). However, what Africa represents is a referential point which Hebron can return to ideologically to begin the necessary process of decolonization, albeit inchoate, that will make possible the forging of new

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<sup>20</sup> This connection is initially drawn by Kenneth Ramchand in *The West Indian Novel* pp. 121-22 and further elaborated on by Natasha Barnes in "The Reluctant Matriarch."

epistemological registers that coincide with their own understanding of their post-colonial condition.

It is important that this transaction, between the traveler and Obadiah, occurs in the market place as it a space where the local converges with the global. The market place is a central feature to the ports of the British Caribbean where foreign travelers disembark and get their first and many times only glimpse of Caribbean culture, people, and customs.<sup>21</sup> The traveler's interest in Obadiah's carving and the story of Hebron that it captures prompts Obadiah to return with a new vision for Hebron. Obadiah decides to build a road from Hebron that will connect its citizens to the world and the world to them. He returns to the foundation of Hebron, indeed that of Africa, the market and proposes that they sell the "work of [their] hands"—men, women and children, dissolving the sexual division of labor predicated on the commodification of women's labor and bodies that is formative in the creation of Hebron (312). Rather, he engenders a new collective that incorporates the ideas of both Gatha and Isaac and ends the struggle for power in Hebron.

It is no surprise that the search for alternative formulations of sovereignty in *Hebron* begins with Obadiah and his carving. His mother seemingly embodies the actualization of ontological sovereignty throughout the novel. If we are reading sexual practice as symbolic of negotiations made in mapping citizenship and the forging of alternative epistemologies for understanding the post-colonial condition, then Obadiah's mother is central to the action of the novel as opposed to the peripheral pages she occupies largely on account of her gender.

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<sup>21</sup> For more on the centrality of the marketplace to travel writings about the British Caribbean see Deborah Nester's *Gwine By*.

In his essay “The ‘S’ Word,” Greg Thomas hails what he perceives as the signaling of “*sexual* ontological sovereignty” in African diasporic theories on black female sexuality. He engages Wynter’s musings in determining if ontological sovereignty is something that in fact exists or is attainable. Through a discursive examination, he charts a trajectory of black female diasporic scholars that have contributed, indeed created, a growing corpus of scholarship that seeks to center discourses of black sexuality in non-western, non-Occidental schools of thought. This exploration, for Thomas, begins and ends with Sylvia Wynter. Thomas asserts that Wynter’s “anti-imperialist denaturalization of sex, her demystification of gender and sexuality, is amazingly complete” (93). And while he focuses on Wynter’s scholarly essays, *The Hills of Hebron* provides another occasion to map, indeed explore, what ontological sovereignty, as expressed through sexuality, for the African Diaspora and the Jamaican national landscape, in particular, might look like. This exploration is explored through the most unlikely character, Obadiah’s mother.

Obadiah’s nameless mother, who is relegated to a few pages in the novel and whose story is always narrated by someone else as is Moses’, remains an outsider to Cockpit Center. As a pocomania dancer, her participation in this Afro-religious ritual reserved for women is marked by her ability to become, “the most completely possessed” (67). But the significance of her poco-dance and its placement of her in an Afro-centered ontology/epistemology cannot be fully understood without contemplating the sexual character of her dance/possession. Sister Beatrice recalls:

Obadiah’s mother became the most completely possessed. Perhaps because she fought the hardest against this exaltation, this wild release that sent her spinning, leaping, whirling, her body held stiffly, breasts erect and pointed, her nostrils flaring, her lips slightly parted and pressed against

white teeth that glinted in the light of the torches; and the men silently circling her would be infected by her passion. (67)

Her performance is an expression of female sexuality that is not controlled by patriarchal epistemes. Indeed, the wildness, even animalistic characterization of her spirit possession, indicates that her sexuality cannot be contained. She is the closest the novel comes to a female counterpart to Moses, or more appropriately, a foil to Moses' hyper-sexuality that seeks to gain control of women's bodies. The female centeredness of the poco-rituals that emphasizes a collective provides an alternative to Moses' patriarchal church over which he reigns supreme. Pocomania is not a purely African religious tradition. It finds its origins in Myalism that blends the doctrine of Christianity with spirit possession, drawing continuities between an African heritage and New World experience. Nor does it conceptualize good and evil since all spirits are equally revered. Because of its adherence to Christian binaries of good and evil, right and wrong, Cockpit Center does not provide her with an environment conducive to the free expression of her sexuality. Thus, she rejects these communities and their indices of sexual morality. This also explains why Obadiah's mother is never intoxicated by the promises of Moses' Hebron. The political and economic sovereignty that is bound in the promise of Hebron censures her expression of her sexual identity and sovereignty over her body.

After her poco-dances, Obadiah's mother withdraws from society "with eyes that saw so clearly, they were not seeing at all" (68). Sister Beatrice makes the comparison between Obadiah and his mother after he descends into madness disillusioned by the betrayal not only of his wife, but also a brother of Hebron.<sup>22</sup> What then is the betrayal

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<sup>22</sup> Because the citizens of Hebron, particularly women, have been cut off from colonial Jamaica, Obadiah is certain that Rose has been raped by a male citizen of Hebron even before he learns her attacker's identity.

that disillusion his mother? It can be argued that her disillusionment stems from her inability to express her sexuality freely in Cockpit Center or at least for it to be legitimately recognized instead of being deemed immoral in post-emancipation Jamaica.

Her ostensible sexuality is scripted in the novel as something that the community needs to control and results in the pathology that is ascribed to her person. Her sexuality, in the eyes of society, prevents her from being a proper mother to Obadiah. It can be argued that her overt sexuality results in Obadiah's desperate need to suppress and control sexuality that is embodied in the wood figure he carves of his mother in one of her pocomania trances. Obadiah's unconscious whittling of his mother, "her eyes wide and lost in a cold ecstasy, her breast taught like thorns, her legs strong and powerful," is an attempt to "[recapture] and [imprison] her sexuality" (158). The carving of her at the height of her sexual "freeness" seeks to petrify her, as it is these moments that "her spirit [was] ugly [and] set against him" (158). More importantly, the image reminds Obadiah that his mother is a prostitute.

In Obadiah's eyes his mother's occupation prevents her from being a good mother. She slaps him around when he questions why so many men come "to visit her one after the other" (158). Most notably, he remembers her violent reaction towards him when he jumps on a client that he believes is hurting her. Her rage recalls to him the erotic expression of power through sexuality that is inherent in her poco-dance. Obadiah mistakes her ecstasy for pain. He is unable to associate sex with pleasure. Thus, Moses' Hebron, which exercises control over female sexuality, provides an oasis from his life with his sexually free mother. In his eschewal of his mother and what she represents—female sexuality unchecked—Obadiah overlooks the significance of his mother's

economic freedom. Obadiah recalls that after the man pulls his mother off of him he leaves a shilling on the table. His mother uses this money to buy rice and salt fish to cook his favorite meal. Despite this act of motherly affection, Obadiah is unable to distinguish it from the image of his mother as a pariah to society.

Like Kate, Obadiah's mother is an anomaly in a novel where women are the victims of sexual predation. She is the only woman in the novel whose sexuality is not contained or controlled by male authority/sexuality—cannot be contained by the moral codes of society. Moreover, by maintaining control/sovereignty over her body/her sexuality, Obadiah's mother is the only woman in the novel who maintains control of the economic benefits of her labor. Her poco-dance thus engages discourses of power and authority, challenging them as it provides her control over her sexuality as well as her financial earnings.

However, the paradox of her sexual freedom is that its tenability relies on her ability to remain on the periphery of not only colonial Jamaica but of emerging nationalisms as well. Indeed, her self-commodification alienates her from national projects. If Obadiah's mother represents the possibilities and simultaneously the obstacles in attaining ontological sovereignty in an independent Jamaica, then the characterization of Dinah, the prostitute in Orlando Patterson's *Children of Sisyphus*, revolves around the existential crisis that emerges for women in an attempt to maintain and exercise this control over their bodies and sexuality within the framework of emerging nationalisms.

Orlando Patterson's *Children of Sisyphus* places at the center of the novel a female protagonist whose existential crisis is bound up in questions of gender, sexuality, and citizenship. The novel, published in 1964 and set in the 1950's, examines a historical

juncture replete with emerging nationalisms that vie for prominence on a Jamaican national landscape. Like *Hebron*, *Sisyphus* engages inequitable gendered citizenships that emerge from these varied manifestations of nationalism. Dinah's Sisyphean effort entails a search for a national space where her ambition, "fe give up [a] life of whoredom an' live like normal woman," will not be thwarted or dictated by the limitations or boundaries placed on female citizenships, particularly in relation to national investments in containing and controlling female bodies and female sexuality (22). However, throughout the course of the novel, the essentialization of normative female sexual productivity in nationalist projects insists on the requisite repression of female sexual identity. Thus, Dinah learns that living "like normal woman" in a soon to be independent Jamaica necessarily demands the exorcism of her sexual identity as a prostitute. Her existential crisis then is very much bound in the physical body and mitigated through expressions of and the struggle to define her sexuality on her own terms. Dinah's desire to define her sexuality in a manner of her choosing directly conflicts with the gendered project of the emerging independent nation.

The reader is first introduced to Dinah, a working prostitute, in the throes of leaving her Rastafarian "husband" and their son Nicholas. Dinah does not choose to enter into a relationship with Cyrus, rather he chooses her. Her initial encounter with Cyrus results in her rape that he justifies through the spouting of religious doctrine. He tells her,

An' the rib which the Lawd God had taken from man, made him a woman an' brought her unto man" ... 'An' hear I, woman, Adam said, "Dis is now bone of my bones, yes, an' flesh of my flesh"—Adam was a black man, yu did know dat, sister? A black man was de firs' to inhabit dis earth" (15)

Cyrus's religious rhetoric is striking as it lays bare his manipulation of the "oly scripture" to correlate with epistemological registers of Rastafari to render Dinah submissive to his advance. The story of Eve being plucked from Adam's rib places Cyrus's authority not simply in his biology as male but as originary as a descendent of Adam, "a Black man [, ...] de firs' to inhabit dis earth" (15). His words have their desired effect as "[Dinah] c[an't] understand the spell he cast over her. Matched with his imposing naked physical presence as a marker of his masculinity, he is able to subjugate her to his will establishing authoritative control over her body and her sexuality.

Before the rape, Dinah is self-sufficient. Although she lives in the Dungle, a squatter community built on human excrement and waste, the income she procures allows her to be self-reliant, having control over both her money and body.<sup>23</sup> The violent act of rape grants Cyrus the ability to effectively strip her autonomy. Through the imposition of fear, he is able to establish and maintain power over her, rendering her once rebellious body docile. Dinah does not remain in the conjugal relationship out of loyalty but out of fear of harm to her person:

And it was Cyrus that she was afraid of. There was nothing else keeping her back. In a funny kind of way she feared Cyrus. That was why she lived with him. He appealed to her instinct of self-preservation. When she was with him she had to please him. At any moment he would charge upon her and destroy her. (13)

Interestingly enough, her fear of Cyrus nurtures her "instinct of self-preservation," not only in their relationship but also in Jamaican society at large. Through Rastafarianism, Cyrus provides a model of gendered prescriptions necessary to survive in a patriarchal

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<sup>23</sup> The Dungle and Back-o-wall was a well-known squatter settlement in West Kingston where Rastafarianism was able to gain momentum as the result of the suffering of its inhabitants. This area was later razed by Edward Seaga's administration and was replaced by what is now Tivoli Gardens. For more see Barry Chevannes *Rastafari*.

society, producing a gendered map needed to traverse the socio-economic and political landscape of Jamaica.

The implications of the authoritative power that Cyrus holds over Dinah are much greater than the forced coercion of matrimonial obedience. Implicit in her rape is the containment of her sexual identity. Dinah's rape is steeped in a contradictory use of language that denies her any pleasure or agency in both her desire for Cyrus and the sexual act. Statements such as, "She warmed to him against her will and sucked the saltiness that flowed from his lips," and:

She felt to scream; she felt to cry with joy. She felt to run; she felt to sink into his flesh. He flung her from him and she fell upon the black moist sand. With a delicious rebellion against her will she turned over on her back and lay prostrate beneath him. (16)

Dinah's recollection of her rape indicates that there is in fact a mutual sexual attraction between her and Cyrus; however, their relationship is predicated on conflicting registers of respectability. Her conflicted eschewal of him is a response to his status as a rasta. She rejects him on account of their status as society's derelicts and more importantly their treatment of women. When she is initially approached by Cyrus, she tells him, "Ah not 'avin anything fi do wid you, Rastas. Oonoo treat you woman too bad. Oonoo seem to t'ink dat woman did only mek to serve an slave fo' you an dis is one woman wha no make fo' dat'." (15).

Cyrus' efforts to control Dinah's sexuality do not extend to confining her sexual performance to their conjugal relationship. Quite the contrary, he depends on the money she earns as a prostitute to support himself and their son. What the rape seeks to accomplish is the confinement of her sexuality to productive acts, both biologically and financially. As a struggling fisherman who is unwilling to search for work in colonial

Jamaica due to his religious beliefs, Cyrus justifies his commodification of Dinah's labor and body as a necessary trial of *his* righteous suffering:

Oh mighty God of Ras, it pained him so much to know that his woman went whoring to help support him. But what to do. It was prophecy. They were the children of Israel suffering for the misdeeds of their fathers...

They would have to suffer at the hands of Babylon and it would be a sin to try to evade it. It would be blasphemy in the sight of God Rastafaria, who must have had just cause for punishing them. So when he allowed his woman to follow the paths of wickedness and the ways of whoredom he was actually doing what was right. He might even receive some recompense in Ethiopia for his penitent submissiveness. (27)

The implications of this passage are multivalent. First, Dinah is a possession that belongs to Cyrus. Secondly, a gendered hierarchy of power is enacted as Dinah's occupation as a prostitute, which was initially of her choosing, is now something that Cyrus *allows* her to do. Last and most important, Dinah's life is stripped of meaning outside of the fulfillment of Cyrus' requisite suffering that will effect *his* salvation and ultimately manifest in his subsequent repatriation to Ethiopia. For Cyrus, the existential crisis of blacks in colonial Jamaica is not specific to the Black race—men, women, and children—but to black males. It is also interesting to note the hierarchy that is invoked in this circular trope of suffering. Cyrus' submission to the "mighty God of Ras," establishes a hierarchy that places the Rastafarian (who in the novel is always male) submissive only to God. In so doing, the political order that places Rastafarians on the lowest rung of the Jamaican socio-economic stratum is reversed. Further, it restores black manhood by proclaiming that God is in every man. Brother Solomon, the leader of the Rastafarian sect, explains the colonial (mis)education, "But there is another thing that they hide from us. The most important of all. And that is that man is God. The spirit of Rastafari is invested in every one of us. Is just for we to find it" (34). Thus, Dinah must prostrate herself to the will of

Cyrus, a living God. They live together as man and wife, a “marriage” that results in the birth of their son. And as in *Hebron*, the commodification of Dinah’s labor and body is necessary in propelling the fulfillment of the Rastafarian nation particularly in relation to repatriation. Not only does Cyrus use his religion to justify the commodification of Dinah, but he also convinces himself that he will be rewarded in heaven for his sacrifice. According to his rationalization, he is the one who is making the sacrifice, not Dinah. He never considers that Dinah too is “suffering” not only under colonial authority but also under the misogynistic ideologies central to Rastafarian tenets. The desires and wants of Dinah are of no consequence to him. In fact, he believes himself to be a good man to her, “as far as it was possible to be good in dis hell [they] livin’ in now” (32).

Even though the participation of women is excluded from the Black nationalist-movement of Rastafari in its original form, women play a vital role in the continuance of the movement as mothers and helpmates to their king.<sup>24</sup> Masculine power that is stripped by Babylon is restored through the virulently enforced gender hierarchy of Rastafarianism. Although merely a symbolic role, to fulfill the prophecy of black men as kings necessitates presiding over the presence of black women. Cyrus’ dream of repatriation to Ethiopia and the subsequent end of his suffering is contingent on Dinah repatriating with him. This does not mean that repatriation is impossible without her. However, without his queen, his vision of being a king and advancing a legacy is not complete. This explains his anguish when he learns that repatriation is quickly approaching, and Dinah has not yet returned. As suggested, the control of both Dinah’s body and labor not only procures financial support for Cyrus and her son, but it also

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<sup>24</sup> For more on gendered hierarchies in the early formations of Rastafari, see Barry Chevannes’ *Rastafari*.

ensures the survival of a lineage—Cyrus through Nicholas—which is symbolic of the continuance of the black race. Accordingly, Cyrus reads her abandonment of their family as a social issue that threatens the Black race by dismantling the Black family:

‘Is a conspiracy! Is de white men dem conspiring ‘gainst we an’ we woman. Dem know dat de time is near when we shall leave dis ‘ell, dis land of bondage. Dem know dat not’in ‘dem do can stop we, so dem tryin’ fe kill we out before we leave. Firs’ dem start to tell we ‘bout birth control an’ all kind o’ tripe dat we mus’ practice if we is to improve we lot. An’ when we find out dem scheme dem tryin’ dis new one now. Dem tryin’ fe get ‘way we woman dem from we. Is a plot, birth control and all dem other stunt is a ploy fe kill de negro race!’ (30)

The rhetoric of Rastafari ideologies denies women control of their bodies particularly in regards to their reproductive function. By proclaiming birth control as a ploy of Babylon to kill the black race, women such as Dinah are denied control of their bodies, which affects not only their ability to work but their mobility as well. Dinah articulates this in her rationalization to abandon her son she recognizes that her gendered role as mother inhibits her mobility both physically and socially:

She never saw the reason why she should have to be burdened with the care of another human being when she could hardly take care of herself. But she realized how hard she was. She wished for a moment that she could feel sorry for him. Oh, but it was such a farce. She knew deep down that the very fact that she wished she could feel sorry for him was indicative of her true feeling. It was cruel the way she was going to leave her pickney. But she had to be cruel. (19)

Dinah has a keen understanding of the ways in which her subscription to Rastafarian ideologies concerning the roles of women as mothers prohibits her ability to advance herself economically and socially. On this premise, she eschews motherhood as a weapon in Cyrus’ arsenal that effects her subjugation. She necessarily understands that to liberate herself and assert agency she must effectively deaden any maternal feeling she has towards her son.

Cyrus is unable to understand how Dinah's act empowers and renders her free of his tyranny because he understands her role as mother and wife not only as normative but "natural." He cannot fathom that Dinah's decision to leave can be of her own volition. He can only rationalize her brazen act of disobedience in terms of power dynamics between colonial Jamaica (Babylon) and Rastafarianism (black men) in which women become necessary pawns in a struggle for power through the assertion of masculinity—a struggle that is dependent on his ability to make Dinah a proper Rasta woman: "Ah did tell her dat when de holy Emperor sen' fo' we ah would carry her to heaven wid me as me queen; but she leave it all. She gone to live in de ways o' Babylon. Gone an leave her own pickney fe starve an' suffer'" (32). Clearly the only way that Dinah can be afforded entrance into the Rastafarian heaven of Ethiopia is by being a dutiful and submissive partner to Cyrus, which extends to what he perceives as her primary responsibility, her role as mother to their son Nicholas, a position that would confine Dinah to the Dungle.

Rasta women are noticeably absent from Patterson's *Sisyphus*. In his many works about Rastafarianism, Barry Chevannes asserts that in Rastafarian ideology women are a necessary evil that must be controlled and contained through the edification of a patriarchal society. He explains that,

the control of women by men is reinforced through myth and symbols. The Adam and Eve myth justifies women's generally unequal place in the family and in society. This and other myths from the Bible reinforce the peasant worldview [which informs Rastafarian attitudes] that women are treacherous by nature." (29)

Nowhere is this better demonstrated than in the belief of Rastafarians that a woman can only reach the enlightenment of Jah through her spouse. Chevannes quotes a Rasta-woman to emphasize the inequity of access to God in Rastafarianism: "there was no such

person as a Rastawoman, but a Rastaman woman, a girl taken from outside the movement and fashioned into the Rastaman's ways" (*Rastafari* 260). The belief that God is in every man does not extend to women. Because the religion views women as inherently evil coupled with their subjugated role to men, God cannot possibly reside in women as they are deemed inherently flawed. Only through diligent subjugation by Rastafarian men can women be considered worthy of salvation and the ultimate voyage to Ethiopia. This explains the glaring absence of "Rastawomen" in *Sisyphus*. Women are not present at the meetings. Nor are they included in their planned repatriation to Ethiopia. This is in accordance with the tenets of the religion, as women cannot choose to become Rastafarians. Rather they must be led to the religion and only in a subservient capacity. They are not granted any authority, not even in the conjugal home. In fact, the two Rasta characters in conjugal relationships, Cyrus and Crocus, suffer due to their women's insistence to maintain control over their bodies and financial circumstances. Both of their partners, Dinah and Mable, have left them for other men who are financially positioned to provide them an avenue out of the Dungle. Economic stability, in that it is attained through the procurement of work in the Babylonian system, is a concept that they eschew. Dinah and Mable's decision to seek men who participate in or embrace economic stability as a Babylonian principle represents a failure on the part of Cyrus and Crocus to maintain authority over their women. Both men threaten violence to teach them "de place o' woman-kind" (29). Later in the novel, Crocus finds Mable and after a severe beating throws her into the cart with the coconuts he was unable to sell and brings his property, both Mable and the coconuts, back to the Dungle. The proximity of Mable to the coconuts emphasizes the subjugated role of women in the Rastafarian movement.

Their autonomy is not acknowledged. Instead, they are possessions that must be controlled and administered over for the greater cause of Rastafarianism.

When Dinah is presented with the opportunity to leave Cyrus for a better life, she does not hesitate. The offer to be kept by the constable Alphanso—a protector of the laws and values of colonial Jamaica that are quickly emerging as the values of official nationalism—is attractive for a number of reasons. Namely, as a resident in a tenement yard, his domicile is a significant social climb from the cardboard structure that Dinah shares with Cyrus and her son. However, despite this social mobility and wresting herself away from the sexual subjugation that characterized her relationship with Cyrus, Dinah comes to realize that she has in fact traded one form of sexual commodification for another. While Alphanso does not expect her to continue as a prostitute, he too claims ownership of her sexuality by locking her away in his tenement room to ensure that he will be the only man with sexual access to her. He expresses his desire to control Dinah's sexuality the first night she coaxes him off of his job to the brothel where she services her clients: "Her body had thrilled him like that of no other woman. He had told her so that first night when she had tempted him off his duty to the little brothel where she operated. It would be paradise being able to do that every night, he had exclaimed" (39). Dinah misreads his desire for her as evidence that she holds power over him. She ignores the control he holds over her body and sexuality that is symbolized in his uniform.

For Dinah, Alphanso's uniform is a marker of middle-class respectability because he holds a government job that is valued in colonial Jamaican society. She believes her newfound status as the constable's woman makes her "civilized, human," as he provides

her with a place with four walls, furniture, a steady supply, and most importantly the respectability that comes with economic stability. She explains to Rachel the significance of finding a man with a job:

It mean me dream come true. All me ambition. I always wan' fe live in a room wid good solid wall round me an' a floor under me foot an' ceilin' over me 'ead. Ah always wan' fe eat good good food like wha' ah see in de picture advertisement. I wan' fe give up me life of whoredom an' live like normal woman.' (22)

From the first night with Alphonso, she does not readily make her body accessible to him. Instead, she teases him holding power over him. The paradox is that while Alphonso is not paying Dinah for each sexual encounter, the “marriage” mimicked in their relationship—a husband who works and provides shelter and food while the wife maintains the home and prepares the food—is in fact another form of prostitution that denies her autonomy over her body and sexuality. At first Dinah views Alphonso's constable uniform as a sign of respectability and a testament to her social ascent. Ironically, she does not recognize the power invested in his uniform and his utilization of it to police her sexuality much in the same way Cyrus uses violence to enforce his authority. Later she comes to recognize his uniform as a cloak that conceals his inadequacies.

Interestingly enough, in her observations of Alphonso, Dinah draws comparisons to Cyrus who indeed thinks he is “God on earth.” Like Cyrus who finds his authority in the religious doctrine of Rastafari, Alphonso finds his authority in his uniform. His ornate uniform mimics the pomp of British customs and demeanor. Dinah resents his lack of ambition and his contentedness with the symbolic authority of his uniform. His authority is indeed symbolic as it grants him little authority within his place of employment where

he remains on the bottom of the power dynamics of colonial authority. Cyrus' authority, on the other hand, instills in him an ambition in the realization of the Rastafarian nation. He is in no way willing to accept a symbol of authority in place of full autonomy.

Alphanso's lack of authority materializes in his inability to satisfy her sexually. In fact she characterizes their sex as "tedious." At this juncture she also begins to become dissatisfied and disillusioned with her living situation. Despite, the improvement in her place of residence, Dinah is disillusioned by the apparent poverty of the tenement yard. After Mable commissions an obeah man to put an oil-o-fall-back curse on her, she begins to realize that life with the constable is not what she expects and that the life of the people in the tenement yard is not much better than her life in the Dungle.<sup>25</sup>

These people, these men and women she had so stupidly felt that first morning were so civilized, so different from her, turned out to behave and think in a manner not very different from the way she was used to. They got up and drank their bush-tea in the morning as she was accustomed to. They went to bed after stuffing themselves with cod-fish and flour, and sometimes with nothing at all, same way as down in the Dungle. The children might not have appeared as starved, but they still ran about the place naked and uncared for. There was just as much swearing and fighting and cursing... (76)

Neither the tenement yard nor Alphanso's uniform hold the promise of respectability she anticipates. Dinah understands her disillusionment as evidence that "she [is] seeking to go yet further" (77). She finds herself in the midst of Shepherd John's Revivalist Church.

In the introduction to the novel, Victor Chang writes of the Revivalist Church that, "the portrait of Shepherd John, the Revivalist leader, and his flock of servile women [are]... very lightly sketched therefore not providing any sense of their complexity" (xii). As a result of this light sketching, it is difficult to place the Revivalist cult in the context

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<sup>25</sup> Oil-o-fall-back is a curse set on someone by an Obeah man that ensures no matter what a person does they will fail and end back up where they started.

of nationalist movements that are central to Patterson's characterizations of the Rastafarians and the ilk of Alphonso and the other residents in the tenement yard. The significance of the Revivalist cult seems to lie in the necessary completion of Dinah's Sisyphean round through the evocation of the Absurd, the philosophy that the efforts of humanity to find meaning in the universe will ultimately fail. In *Writing Down Babylon*, Avis McDonald argues that Patterson's use of the Absurd illustrates the heightened alienation and powerlessness experienced by post-colonial societies. She observes that the novel examines

a segment of Caribbean society whose members, trapped in poverty, find themselves exiled, ostracized and disempowered. In essence, the characters' experiences of exile on the fringe of society and of bondage to an uncaring Eurocentric elite render their existence Absurd. (McDonald 64).

However, like the Rastafarian cult represented by Cyrus and the emergence of official nationalism represented by Alphonso, the ability to exercise control over women's bodies is also central to the religious-political order of Shepherd John's church. Driven to the Revivalist Church to counter the obeah spell put on her by Mable, Dinah finally attains the fulfillment of sexual pleasure as Shepherd John's "chosen one." However, it does not result in the autonomy she expects.

A sister of the first order explains to Dinah the significance of the chosen one: Only de Elder Moder an' one o' Daughter o' de Firs' Order live wid de Shepherd. De Daughter livin' wid 'im do anythin' im want.' She paused again, now even more embarrassed...Shepherd always say dat one day de choosen one will come along who God selec' as 'im mate. (148)

This revelation is preceded by an explanation of the gendered hierarchy of the church. Shepherd John is the leader of the church, Elder Mother as the second in command, followed by a continued hierarchy of women. Shepherd John functions as the Godhead as

Moses does in *Hebron*, despite the fact that the Elder Mother brings him into the Church and provides him with the necessary training to lead. However, while her training involves scriptural and ritual instruction, Shepherd John establishes the gendered hierarchy of authority. The interpolation of Dinah as the chosen one, an equivalent to Shepherd Johns' wife, into the already established power dynamics of the church re-signifies the authority of the Elder Mother. While Dinah possesses no palpable power, the significance of Dinah's ascendancy is in its symbolic stripping of the Elder Mother's authority.

Immediately upon entering the church, Shepherd John informs Dinah that he will release her of the earthly sin that binds her body and declares her a Daughter of the first order foreshadowing the role she will play in the gendered hierarchy of the church and his manipulation of this hierarchy to control of her sexuality. Shepherd John has her clothes burned with much of the ceremony of Moses when he orders the New Believers to burn their worldly possessions before entering Hebron. Fire symbolizes the ritual cleansing and release of sin that Dinah endures for three days ultimately ending with her baptism. Ironically, Dinah's baptism, in which she fails to catch the spirit, recalls the bath she takes in the sea to cleanse her body immediately preceding her rape.

Early in the novel, the garbage man, Sammy, foreshadows the predatory characteristic in which Shepherd Johns approaches the exorcism of Dinah's demons. In addition to the Elder Mother, he is the only one who is able to see through the Shepherd's guise always, "looking at the young women members as they caught the spirit under the pretence that he was searching for the chosen one" (3). When Dinah fails to catch the spirit during her baptism, Shepherd John follows with an elaborate exorcising of her

demons exacted by flogging her with a tamarind switch. In this religious fervor, Shepherd John and Dinah consummate their covenant as man and wife. He places this sexual act in the realm of the Divine: “ ‘Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance and I will not meet thee as a man’ ” (156). And in accordance Dinah receives the covenant as a spiritual revelation:

Her soul swelled up to meet him. His flesh stole into her like a spirit. All was body, all was flesh, yet by the very totality of their presence, by the very power released by their contact, there was nothing of body or of flesh. Only an almighty, all-embracing surge. The moment grew, slowly, then faster and faster, larger and larger. Now she could almost feel it, She enclosed him more tightly with her arms. Now it was upon her. Her body forgotten, wrapped itself involuntarily around him. “Jesus!” She uttered fervently. (157)

For the first time in the novel, Dinah experiences sexual pleasure. However, she mistakenly reads it as evidence of the equity in their relationship; it is short lived as the gendered hierarchy of Shepherd’s church directly informs her life. Shortly after the consummation of their relationship, Shepherd John informs Dinah that they will be migrating to England in two weeks. As her husband, he does not discuss his plans with her. Rather he has in a clandestine manner secured her birth certificate, passport, and passage without her knowledge. Dinah has been so consumed with her salvation and ultimate liberation from a life of prostitution that she has missed the Shepherd’s manipulation of his religious stature to establish authority over her. As a result, instead of being happy about the social mobility evident in her migration she is instead hesitant to go to “Backra land. Where Missis Queen live” (171). Her reference to England as backra land and its implied proximity to the Queen reveals a great deal about Dinah’s attitude toward colonialism. Despite the superiority it invokes, what is foremost in her mind is the abandonment of the church and by extension Jamaica.

His planned exodus, although ideologically different from the Rastafarian exodus to Ethiopia, demands the requisite accompaniment of his wife or chosen one without her consent. Although Dinah agrees to go, it is with great trepidation, as she rightly fears the response of the Elder Mother and the largely female congregation. The night of the Shepherd's last service, all eyes are on Dinah as they cannot help but blame her for their loss. For the women, they are losing more than a leader but their way of life.

But why did he have to go? Was it the hands of God that drew him from them? If so, what was the sin so great they had committed? He was their life. He made them want to live. He made it possible for them to scrub the floors, to cook the food, to bear the everlasting insult that was their working life. Only he gave it meaning. Only with him could they continue. So why should God want to take away their Shepherd from them. (178)

Their exacerbation with the Shepherd's decision to leave is predicated on the firmly entrenched gender roles that guide daily life in the church. Without his legitimating presence, they are unsure how to continue without him. This desperation allows the Elder Mother to reclaim her authority by framing Dinah with the murder of Shepherd John she. When the daughters discover Dinah standing over the bleeding Shepherd with a blood stained knife in her hand, they viciously attack her for the murder of the leader and in many ways their way of life which she destroys long before he is killed. Despite the savageness of the attack, Dinah makes her way back to the Dungle in search of Cyrus.

Seemingly, there are no solutions to Dinah's existential crisis in the novel. The plight of Dinah to seek control of her body and sexuality in an equitable gendered hierarchy seems futile. She is indeed a child of Sisyphus as the realization of an autonomous sexual identity within emerging nationalisms is always pursued but never attained. However, her unwillingness to accept gendered citizenships policed by sexual

borders espoused by emerging nationalisms urges a widening of national discourses concerning myopic attitudes towards gender, sexuality, and citizenship.

Collectively, Sylvia Wynter's *The Hills of Hebron* and Orlando Patterson's *The Children of Sisyphus* call attention to the paradoxical perpetuation of colonial precepts of gender and sexuality in organizing citizenship in newly independent Caribbean nations. However, they do not necessarily offer solutions for women faced with the inequities palpable in decolonization. Instead they serve as harbingers who initiate a dialogue in Caribbean literature that is imperative if gendered citizenships in Caribbean nationalisms are to be dissolved.

## Chapter 2: Unwilling Sacrifices: Caribbean Nationalisms and the Practice of Exclusion

While the previous chapter interrogates sexual economies to examine how gendered citizenships deny women sexual identities within nationalist paradigms, this chapter interrogates ethno-economies to examine how the marginalization of female citizens is exacerbated by the systematic exclusion of citizens from nationalist projects as a result of ethnic difference. Ethnic divisions decidedly mark nationalisms in the Caribbean nation-states of Guyana and Trinidad. In both countries, the two major political parties, the Progressive People's Party (PPP) and the People's National Congress (PNC) in Guyana and the People's National Movement (PMN) and the United National Congress (UNC) in Trinidad are organized along racial lines—African and Indian. Drawing on a history of slavery and indentureship, nationalist politics have been fraught with ethnic conflict centered on questions of national culture and access to political power. In *For the Love of My Name*, Trinidadian author Lakshmi Persaud turns to Guyanese independence to call attention to cultural contradictions that emerge as a result of masculinist narratives that reproduce colonial practices of ethnic exclusion in the interest of maintaining ethno-economic strategies. Through the depiction of the fictitious island of Maya, Persaud reconceives these narratives by building on Afro and Indo Caribbean feminist dialogues that emphasize the potential of literary feminisms to empower both African and Indian women in a nationalist landscape that engenders ethnic difference and racial hostility. In this chapter, I read *For the Love of My Name* alongside novels from other Indo-Caribbean women writers to explore the possibilities and limitations of a dougla poetics, a poetics that engenders Indo and Afro Caribbean feminist

dialogues through literature, in concretizing Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean feminist collectives. I argue that for both African and Indian women to benefit equally from feminisms grounded in a dougla poetics, a poetics that engenders Indo and Afro-Caribbean feminist dialogues through literature, cultural difference must be celebrated by a national culture that privileges the cultures of all Guyanese citizens equally. Furthermore, I assert that the douglarization of Caribbean feminisms cannot only be located in traditionally African spaces, but rather these processes must take place in Indian cultural spaces as well.

“One People, One Nation, One Destiny” is the motto adopted at the inception of independence for the Anglophone Caribbean nation-state of Guyana in 1966. Its message signals a coming together of the diverse peoples that comprise the nation and the coalescing of a Guyanese national identity. However, this motto occludes racial, ethnic, and class divisions that exist between Afro and Indo-Guyanese and have characterized Guyanese independence. Aggravated by the continuance of ethno-economic strategies implemented by prior colonial administrations, these divisions have been hotly contested and punctuated by acts of violent intimidation by authorities of the state as well as private citizens. The contestations of these ethnic divisions are often the direct result of practices of exclusion in independent Guyana. My use of the term exclusion is fluid as the ethnically marked groups singled out as targets of violence are in fact citizens. However, they are systematically “excluded” from the often-contrived narratives of nationalism despite their systemic relationship to the nation-state as citizens whose labor contributes to the economic growth and stability of the country. This chapter reads Lakshmi Persaud’s *For the Love of My Name* as an allegorical representation of post-independent

Guyanese politics to interrogate violence exacted against ethnically marked national collectivities as an instrument of political and economic aggression.

The novel is set in the fictitious island of Maya, a representation of post-independent Guyana. Roberto Strongman's *On the Question of Caribbean National Allegory* argues that the use of allegory serves to "[re-assert]...denied subjectivity in the political realm" (29). This element of allegory is certainly one of the foundations of Persad's *For the Love of My Name*, which explores the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that Indo-Guyanese citizens, particularly women, face in asserting their subjectivity in a national landscape that systematically excludes them. Many Caribbean writers such as George Lamming, V.S. Naipaul, and Shani Mootoo have employed the use of a fictitious island in Caribbean national allegories.<sup>26</sup> Persaud's narrative strategy to depict Guyana as an island that is sinking as a result of the psychic trauma of ethnically motivated political violence identifies Guyana as what Antonio Benítez-Rojo refers to as a "repeating island." That is it places Guyana, a country located in the South American mainland, squarely in a historical and cultural context of British colonialism and Caribbean independence. Its chronicling of Guyanese cultural politics, racial and class hierarchies, political violence, practices of exclusion, and sexual divisions of labor indicate that Maya is an,

island that repeats itself until transforming into a meta-archipelago and reaching the most widely separated transhistorical frontiers of the globe ... [with] no center or circumference, but...[with] common dynamics that express themselves in more or less regular ways within the chaos. (Benítez-Rojo 24)<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See Lamming's *Of Age and Innocence* and *Season of Adventure*, Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*, and Mootoo's *Cereus Blooms at Night*.

<sup>27</sup> Benítez-Rojo grounds his discussion of the repeating island in scientific discourses of chaos. He explains: "I have capitalized this word to indicate that I'm not referring to chaos as conventionally defined, but rather to the new scientific perspective, so called, that has now begun to revolutionize the world of scientific

While, the historical and cultural context that informs the novel is specific to Guyana, it also informs the nation-states of the Anglophone Caribbean that grapple with the legacies of British colonialism. Generally, the novel serves as a warning of the deleterious effects that can result from the continuance of colonial practices of exclusion inherent in cultural nationalisms. Specifically, Persaud examines the role xenophobic jingoism plays in violence leveled against Indo-Guyanese citizens, women in particular. Violence is employed as a technology that confines them to a commodified role as producers of agricultural goods while simultaneously deterring Indians from political aspirations as part of a nationalist agenda that is motivated by ethnic separatism and enforced through a “culture of masks.”

The plot of the novel emanates from a “Culture of Masks” that is created by Oppositional Leader Robert Augustus Devonish and inspired by ancestral African cultural practices of masking. The culture of masks serves multiple purposes in Devonish’s political and economic agenda. The masks simultaneously mark their bearers as part of a national collective based on African ancestry, establish a gendered hierarchy within the Afro-Mayan political party, and establish unmitigated power through the visible association of the masks with acts of violence against Indo-Mayan citizens. Thus, the masks are implemented as tools to mediate socio-economic relations in Maya.

Persaud employs the mask as a cultural signifier that is readily identifiable as part of a larger body of Afro-Caribbean cultural traditions.<sup>28</sup> They reinforce a guiding

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research, that is, *Chaos* to mean that, within the (dis)order that swarms around what we already know of as Nature, it is possible to observe dynamic states or regularities that repeat themselves globally (2).

<sup>28</sup> For more on the role of the mask and the cultural practice of masking in Caribbean popular culture, see Gerard Aching’s *Masking and Power*. His discussion of how “masks and masking activities in the Caribbean mediate social relations” is instructive in understanding how the purple masks implemented by mediate relations between the Indo and Afro Mayans in the novel, particularly in the interest of maintaining ethno-economies (2).

ideology, based on race, which will help to forge a national identity for independent Maya. As Oppositional Leader of colonial Maya, Devonish commissions a local artist, Selwyn, to make a series of masks to be worn by loyal party members as an outward indicator of authority. The selection of the mask as a symbol of his party's power is not accidental. Devonish is keenly aware of the centrality of masking to African cultural traditions. While Selwyn is modeling a mask that would have been traditionally worn "by a man who wielded power," he emphasizes how the mask along with "the slow ominous beat on the drum," will enhance power already possessed (47-8). Devonish immediately draws the connection between the drum and its inextricable linkage to African communal customs and the function of the mask, excitedly informing/asking his sister Marguerite: "Did you know that amongst certain tribes in Africa, men always carried a small mask?" (48).

The practice of masking as an African cultural tradition as well as its role in the governing of African tribal communities is well documented. Robert Farris Thompson identifies the mask of Yoruba culture as an instrument of intercession that makes possible the interaction of community members with revered ancestors while simultaneously, "protect[ing] ordinary men and women from the searing gaze of the king in a state of ritual unity with his forebears" (9). The wearer of these masks must be a member of the society who is well respected, possesses great power, and is most always male. Similarly, Henry and Margaret Drewal observe that the most elaborate masks in Yoruba culture are worn by men and, "convey masculine images of physical and spiritual power, status and sacred leadership" (85).<sup>29</sup> It is this image of power that Devonish wishes to emulate in

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<sup>29</sup> Although very little has been written about the practice of masking in Ibo culture, in Chinua Achebe's, *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe gives a detailed account of a ceremony that serves as a tribunal in Ibo society to

his bid to seize control of the Mayan government and advance Urban Mayans of African descent, explaining the selection of the color purple. The artist, Selwyn, explains the significance of selecting the color purple for the masks: “This mask was meant to create a fearful awe, and may have been worn by a high priest or ruler of a kingdom—hence the colour purple, signifying royalty—sanctified authority, blood, kinship, sacrifice” (48).

Devonish’s vision for an independent Maya is one of a nation that is comprised of citizens who are of African ancestry. After positioning himself as the President of newly independent Maya, he wastes no time extolling his vision of Maya as an African nation. During the independence celebration, Devonish addresses the nation:

Our forefathers have known the whiplash, our foremothers aborted under the kicks of the estate overseer. We were always alone. But no more. Whatsoever was done to one of us, was done to us all. We are brothers one and all—inseparable. You are with me and I am with you. (21)

His references to the “whiplash” and “overseer” are references to the enslavement of Afro-Mayan citizens. It makes clear that the Mayan struggle for independence is a struggle for Urban Mayans (Afro-Mayans that reside in the capital of Bon Aire and its surrounding suburbs) that are inextricably connected by African bloodlines and kinship. He engenders a collective that is grounded in a collective suffering of Afro-Mayans as a legacy of the institution of slavery that he argues marks them as “the chosen ones” to lead and rule independent Maya (37).<sup>30</sup>

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settle conflicts in the village. Achebe goes through great pains to emphasize the division of gender associated with the tradition of masking and the transcendence from man to spirit that transpires as a result of the masking.

<sup>30</sup> Africans were brought to present day Guyana by the Dutch in the early seventeenth century as forced labor for the sugar industry. They were deemed as the most preferable labor source for their durability and familiarity with the tropical climate. After emancipation, indentured servants were brought from India, China, and Portugal, under British colonialism to replace slave labor. Emancipated slaves fled the plantations in pursuit of their own land as well as economic and political freedom that would most often be obtained in urban centers. However, to maintain a stable labor force while transitioning from slavery to

Devonish's implementation of the masks into the oppositional party is the first step in his aggressive political agenda to disenfranchise Country Mayans (Indo-Mayans) and usurp political power from the ruling party as they are distributed only to Urban Mayans who are members of his political party. He draws upon the ideological foundation of ethnic exclusion laid by his predecessors, the Notables of Bon Aire who are the "offspring of the emancipated," equal in his eyes to the venerated ancestors of many African tribes. For Devonish, the Notables "were men of vision who foresaw the problem that would come with the arrival of the indentured agricultural workers, whose offspring [they] later called Country Mayans, to demarcate [their] urbanity from their rusticity" (129). The semiotics of naming these ethnically determined groups emphasizes the specific historical circumstances in which these populations were interpolated into the colonial Mayan landscape as well as works to establish an allegorical framework. More importantly, it reveals the parallels between ethnicity and class that emerge in an independent Maya.

It is important to note the novel's omission of other minority ethnic groups that are systematically denied representation in the established socio-economic and political landscape in independent Guyana.<sup>31</sup> This omission constructs a binary discourse that places Afro-Mayans as the benefactors of Mayan independence as a direct result of the continued exploitation of Indo-Mayans which is further reified through Persaud's depiction of Devonish, modeled after Forbes Burnham, Afro-Guyanese leader of the

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independence, Guyanese planters implemented a period of apprenticeship by freed slaves for a duration of four years (Hughes 45).

<sup>31</sup> The role Amerindians played in the establishment of ethno-economies is, however, referenced in the address made by the Notables.

People's National Congress (PNC) and first prime minister of independent Guyana.<sup>32</sup> In so doing, Persaud emphasizes the exclusion of Indo-Mayans from political aspirations in an independent Maya that is exemplified in Devonish's exclusion of Country Mayans from his political rhetoric of "we." Instead of drawing upon the shared exploitation of both African and Indians under British colonialism, Devonish chooses to ignore the history of oppression and forced servitude of Indians under indentureship.<sup>33</sup> Ironically, he champions the suffering of African slaves as evidence of their rightful claim to lead an independent Maya, constructing a narrative for Afro-Mayan nationalism.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> The exclusion of other ethnic minorities in the Guyanese political and socio-economic landscape is not unique to this novel. As a result of the inter-ethnic violence between Indo and Afro Guyanese that has characterized Guyanese politics, most political discussions concerning Guyana engage the power struggle that exists between Afro and Indo Guyanese. However, in *Georgetown Shuffle*, Sabita Manian calls attention to how "the Afro-Guyanese dominated People's National Congress (PNC) and the Indo-Guyanese dominated People's Progressive Party (PPP) have polarized politics to the near disenfranchisement of other minorities such as the Amerindians, the Chinese and the mixed ethnic population" (198).

<sup>33</sup> In *From Columbus to Castro*, Eric Williams documents the circumstances of the indentured servants as well as the conditions under which they suffered. While acknowledging that Indians came to Guyana and other Caribbean islands as free laborers paid a meager salary for five years with the promise of return passage to India or a plot of land if they remained, he also acknowledges they too worked under oppressive circumstances. These circumstances included but were not limited to a denial of mobility, the constant threat of imprisonment for insubordination, the imposition of monetary fines for insubordination, as well as deplorable living conditions that mirrored that of slaves. Indians were forced to live in single room barracks "without washing or sanitary facilities ... there was no privacy" (Williams *From Columbus* 357). Williams describes at great length the extent to which indentured servants were denied basic rights of mobility: "Every immigrant was bound to reside on the plantation on which he was under indenture; he was thus attached to the soil. If found anywhere else, without a ticket of leave on a certificate showing exemption from labour, he could be stopped, without a warrant, by the Protector of Immigrants or any person authorized by him in writing, by a plantation policeman or by the employer of his manager, or overseer, and taken to the nearest police station; if convicted, the penalty was a maximum of seven days imprisonment, with or without hard labour ... If indentured labour was free, it was, to paraphrase Carlyle, freedom plus a constable (*From Columbus* 355-6)." The need to possess a ticket or certificate indicating exemption from labor to move about freely is reminiscent of slavery. Slaves too were forbidden to leave estates without written permission and could be seized and punished by those who assumed authority over their person without warrant. In addition, the indentured servant labored under the same overseer as the emancipated slave, and while the indentured laborer might not have suffered to the same extent the brutality experienced by slaves, their circumstances cannot be wholly characterized as free. See also Verene Shepherd's *Maharani's Misery* for another example of the common experiences shared by African slaves and Indian indentured servants as laborers under British colonialism. Shepherd recounts the narrative of an Indian woman who boards a ship to the Caribbean as an indentured servant. After being raped, she dies before the ship reaches its destination. Shepherd likens the passage from India to the Caribbean to the middle passage used to bring slaves from Africa to the New World.

Devonish's refusal to acknowledge Country Mayans and their contributions to Maya during the independence speech signals the continued political and economic disenfranchisement of Country Mayans despite the end of colonial rule. Not only does it serve to reify a national identity premised on Afro-Mayan culture and history, but it also occludes contributions that Country Mayans have made to the economy through agriculture, although he will rely heavily on their exploitation as laborers to bolster his socialist economic plan. Instead, he views them as "descendants from another continent, still loyal to other shores," because they hold fast to their cultural and religious practices brought with them from India (19). Persaud's narrative strategy allows several characters, including Devonish, to narrate multiple and varied perspectives on the project of nation building in Maya. In Devonish's narrative, culture quickly emerges as the proving ground where national identities will be created and contested in a multi-ethnic nation-state. For Devonish, the supposed unwillingness of Country Mayans to relinquish their religion, customs, and surnames to embrace Urban Mayan culture is evidence that they should not have access to political or economic power in a country where national identity is based on African ancestry. Through her depiction of Devonish, Persaud critiques the hypocrisy of Afro-Guyanese and Afro-Caribbean citizens that construct Indo-Caribbean culture as contrary and oppositional to national culture. By granting primacy to African culture in a national landscape, Devonish constructs an 'us' against "them" mentality that fosters ethnic separatism in the interest of establishing an ethno-economy; he is in fact guilty of the disloyalty he accuses Country Mayans of.

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<sup>34</sup> In *Contributions Towards the Resolution*, Judaman Seecoomar writes that Afro-Guyanese members of Burnham's political party, the PNC, who remained in office uninterrupted for 28 years, asserted what they believed was "their historical right to inherit the land after the colonial power had taken its leave" (15).

The national identity that Devonish crafts for Maya through the implementation of African masks does not reflect the diverse people and culture of Maya. Rather, it is a national identity that is grounded in ancestral origins suggesting that he too is “still loyal to other shores.”(19). However, he demands Indo-Mayans relinquish their cultural identity if they are to have a stake in building an independent Maya. The creolized minority population of Country Mayans who “[change] their surnames, their religion, their habits and thinking,” become successful both economically and socially by “taking the only path available to them” (73). However, Persaud rejects these binary conceptions of culture in a multi-ethnic society, as she does not view creolization or migration as the only viable options for Indo-Guyanese. Instead, she provides examples of Indo-Mayans who refuse to relinquish their culture and yet actively work alongside Afro-Mayans towards an independent Maya that is not reliant on ethno-economic strategies.

In addition to turning to African culture as a foundation for national identity, Devonish draws heavily from the history of emancipated slaves, the Notables. Christobel Hughes writes that, “the period following Emancipation (1838 to 1845) is one of the most remarkable in Guyanese history” (45). It is during this period that emancipated slaves accumulated money from their apprenticeships to purchase abandoned land and form “co-operative villages.” The emancipated slaves understood keenly the relationship between labor, economics, and political power. As a result, many eschewed agricultural labor for governmental positions in the urban capital, thus, the nomenclature of Afro-Mayans as Urban Mayans. The moniker of “Notables” acknowledges this remarkable feat of emancipated slaves to assert their economic freedom through the establishment of co-operative villages and to place themselves in a position to benefit from migrations to the

urban center and opportunities to obtain a formal British education. These advancements prepared them to seize control of political power in British Guiana. However as the prospect of independence becomes more tenable, the Notables perceive that political control of Maya will fall into the hands of those who comprise the agricultural labor force. As a result, they petition the Secretary of State for the colonies in order to secure the labor market. The Memorial, written in this interest, reads as follows:

The emancipated worker and native Amerindian are unwilling, from their more civilised habits and greater needs, to work for less than a fair living wage such as the indentured agricultural workers, with their free housing and medical attention, are prepared to accept.

Moreover ... they are of a miserly disposition – saving the greater portion of such earnings, small as they are, which they are able to do by their habit of life and very limited needs, and sending these savings back to their own country, which little benefits Maya. Moreover, the project of the Government to settle them in the colony by means of a commutation, for land, of their right to return passages, has resulted in failure and been abandoned.

Observation also shows that of the articles on which duties and taxies are levied, they consume very few .... [B]ecause of these habits their contribution to the revenue of Maya is negligible. You ought also to note that rice, their principle article of food, is now so extensively grown by them that the revenue formerly raised on its importation cannot now, alas be reckoned upon. Their presence makes a sad tale. (131)<sup>35</sup>

It is curious that the Notables begin their petition with the concatenation of Afro-Mayan and Amerindian concerns regarding their economic futures. Historically, in Guyana, certain Amerindian tribes such as the Arawak, Carib, and Warrau were central to the colonial project. They assisted the Dutch and later the British suppress slave rebellions and capture runaway slaves. In return, they were allowed to operate as free nations in restricted territories (Fox 42). This practice contributed to ethnic divisions of labor in

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<sup>35</sup> This passage is an extract from the historical Memorial of the Notables of British Guiana, a petition made to the Secretary of State in 1903. In the “Author’s Note,” Persaud writes, “Selected extracts from the Memorial of the Notables are drawn from the actual petition they made to the Secretary of State as well as the correspondence in 1903 between the Secretary of State and the Governor of the colony of British Guiana” (n.p.).

what was then British Guiana and continues in present day Guyana. Persaud's reproduction of the Memorial makes clear that as early as the turn of the century following emancipation, the Indo-Guyanese presence was perceived as an obstacle to Afro-Guyanese independence. The petition also emphasizes the centrality of Indo-Guyanese economic contribution to discourses of ethnic exclusion in Guyana.

In this Memorial to the Secretary of State, the Notables begin their petition by distinguishing the Country Mayans from the emancipated African and native Amerindian workers by proclaiming the latter (emancipated and native) more civilized than the Country Mayans. The criteria for which they measure indices of civility are undoubtedly European standards, more specifically British cultural values and patterns, as they "made their case ... in the language of the civilized world" (130). Furthermore, unlike the Country Mayans, they presumably have no loyalties to another nation. The need to emphasize loyalty to a country marks the beginning of nationalist thought in Maya, as the aim of the Memorial is to achieve aspirations of political domination for the African descendants of Maya. They place this argument in an economic discourse to indicate overwhelmingly that not only are country Mayans a drain on the colony's economy as a result of costs of passage to and from India, free housing, and medical attention, but they also contribute little to the economy to the detriment of Maya.<sup>36</sup> The Notables also point to their "miserly disposition" which seemingly makes them *unwilling* to contribute to the

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<sup>36</sup> The expenditures of the colony to procure indentured servants did not just entail passage from and to India. The cost of maintaining the immigrants during their indentureship also fell to the responsibility of the colony. Because slavery was a private enterprise, the cost to procure and maintain slaves was incurred by the individual planters. Eric Williams cites that in 1896 approximately thirty percent of the general revenue of British Guiana was spent to cover the cost of immigrating indentured servants (*From Columbus* 357). As a result of taxes imposed on the entire population, "Indian immigration was thus financed to a considerable extent by those with whom it was intended that the Indian immigrants should compete" (Williams *From Columbus* 358). More specifically, the government levied taxes on emancipated slaves to pay for the cost of indentureship although they did not benefit from their labor further exacerbating relations between Indo and Afro Guyanese.

Mayan economy, as they send the vast majority of their wages back to “their own country.” For the Notables, the issue of remittances is salient, as they believe it serves as evidence that Indians are not contributing economically. However, this is not the case as their agricultural labor contributes greatly to the Mayan economy.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the use of the phrase “their own country,” as opposed to “another country,” serves to further alienate the Country Mayans from nationalist agendas and even the formation of Mayan identity. Instead they are scripted as denizens who remain loyal to India.

Despite the shared desire to effect the removal of Country Mayans from the colony/country, Devonish differs from the Notables in his chosen methodology of dealing with the Country Mayans. While he too wants them to leave, he recognizes their value to the economy of independent Maya as agricultural workers who provide a service and ultimately pay the salaries of the urban middle class Mayans (73). For Devonish, the commodification of the Country Mayans as a cheap labor supply becomes particularly salient when he later bans the importation of foreign goods including food products such as wheat flour, salt, butter, and cheese, as many of his supporters “had neither the land nor the skill to grow food” (164). Devonish establishes an economic system that mirrors the capitalist colonial system in that it is based on ethnic differentiation.<sup>38</sup> Devonish

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<sup>37</sup> The designation of thrifty or miserly has often been ascribed to Indians in the Caribbean. The Notables capitalize on this stereotype to suggest that not only are Indians not contributing to the Guyanese economy; they are in fact taking away. Eric Williams contributes to this discourse in relaying the substantiality of Indian remittances in British Guiana, “Williams relays the substantiality of Indian remittances in British Guiana: “Notoriously thrifty, the Indian immigrants were able to accumulate considerable savings and remit large sums to India. In 1833, there were 6,274 Indian depositors in the Government Savings Bank in British Guiana; their deposits amounted to \$601,166. In 1911-1912, the number of depositors had increased to 8,214; the deposits amounted to £123,051 or \$590,645 ... Between 1891 and 1912, East Indian immigrants in British Guiana remitted £52,975 to India. The average remittance in 1911-1912 was over three pounds” (*From Columbus* 356).

<sup>38</sup> The colonial market system subscribed to what Ralph Premdas characterizes as an “economic ascriptive caste system” based on race (168). Under this market system, Europeans possessed both land and capital while Amerindians, Africans, and Indians along with other immigrant populations served as laborers. With the arrival of African slaves, Amerindians were no longer utilized as laborers but rather aided planters by

reproduces the colonial model of an ethno-economy by shoring up the chasm between Afro-Mayans as urbanites who almost exclusively hold beaurocratic positions and the Indo-Mayans whom he effectively marginalizes as agricultural workers.

In the Author's Note of her third novel, *For the Love of My Name*, Lakshmi Persaud writes, "This novel is based on the voices of the victims of tyranny, as well as those of its silent supporters, observers and bystanders" (n.p.). The novel is inspired by the story of Kowsilia, an Indo-Guyanese sugar cane worker who was killed while protesting low wages, and the refusal of the government to recognize the Guiana Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU), the labor union of the Indo-Guyanese agricultural workers.<sup>39</sup> She was cut in half by a tractor driven by an Afro-Guyanese while trying to prevent scabs from crossing the strike line to enter the sugar estates. She became a martyr for the cause of agricultural workers in Guyana.<sup>40</sup> Through the story of Kowsilia, reproduced early in the novel, and other acts of violence committed against Indians in Guyana, Persaud chronicles the psychic effect of ethnic violence on its victims and on the development of a newly independent nation.

The novel opens with a strike led by Country Mayans "seeking wages more akin to the value of their tasks" (23). The strike ensues as a result of the unwillingness of the government to recognize the worker's union of the Country Mayans, but the symbolism of the worker's stance means much more for the Country Mayans. For them it is the first step in reclaiming their dignity from a government that wields violence as a device to

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policing African slaves. After emancipation, African slaves fled the plantations and abandoned agricultural labor and began to dominate the public sector.

<sup>39</sup> GAWU, a union that petitioned for fair wages and working conditions for Indo-Guyanese who worked on the sugar estates, was supported by the People's Progressive Party (PPP) led by Indo-Guyanese politician Cheddi Jagan.

<sup>40</sup> For an account of the story of Kowsilia and her role in the struggle for worker's rights see Odeen Ishmael's *The Outbreak of Racial Disturbances in 1964*.

drive Country Mayans out of the country and to ensure that those who stay remain productive agricultural workers. Devonish, sees the strike as the perfect opportunity to,

send an important message to all, including his own supporters ... he will not tolerate interruptions in the productions of goods and services .... [It is] an opportunity to get across a valuable first lesson to the working man, who must be bridled to do his bidding. They must all see that he holds the reins of power and will use them. (20-1)

He realizes that his ability to strengthen the economy of Maya and in turn secure his political goals requires that he maintain agricultural production at minimal cost. His repeated animalistic references to the Indo-Mayan labor force, such as “bridled” and “holding the reins,” further consolidates Devonish’s eschewal of them as beasts of labor. The purple masks are instrumental in effecting a reign of terror on the Country Mayans as a means of ensuring their continued productivity. Seopaul Singh argues that the purple masks distributed by Devonish are used “to cover ... their barefaced atrocities against the Country Mayans who originated out of a different country from his motherland” (n.p.). The novel reiterates throughout that the masks are “disguises, covers, cloaks, a form of concealment” (11). However, the deployment of masks is more complex.

In *Masking and Power*, Gerard Aching provides a “critical evaluation of masking as tactical activities that go beyond romanticized notions of masks and masking practices,” that is particularly useful in interrogating Devonish’s implementation of masks to promote his political agenda (3). Aching calls attention to processes of masking in Caribbean popular culture that “call attention to rather than hide” (2). Like Aching, I read the masks as a practice whose primary function to commanding visibility. This visibility is integral to the usurping and maintaining of political power by mediating social, political, economic, and gendered relations in Maya. Robert Devonish’s

introduction of the masks into Mayan society seeks a level of visual recognition that goes beyond merely viewing the masks but a cognizance that unmistakably associates the mask with absolute power. Thus, the visibility of the mask seeks to render the Country Mayans invisible on the Mayan national stage. Thus, the Hope Bridge massacre is not simply about union representation of laborers, but also a decisive tactic used to secure and maintain power based on ethnic separatist ideologies.

The strike at Hope Bridge is the first time the reader encounters the mask. Seven women squat on Hope Bridge with the intentions of preventing scabs brought in from Bon Aire to break the strike. The men are behind the women positioned at the administrative offices, the brain of the sugar cane industry. The decision to place the women on the front line is guided by the belief that “they will find it harder to crush women” (25). But the wearer of the purple mask does not make such distinctions. Despite the presence of armed soldiers and high ranking police officers whose charge it is to get the scabs across the bridge, it is not until the tractor driver appears with a purple mask that “children stop and stare ... and adults become sculptured pieces” (28). Even though the tractor has a blade hoisted for attack, it is the sight of the mask that instills fear in the Country Mayans. In a final attempt to prevent the carnage, a young man pleads the case of the Country Mayans:

We'll never leave this hell hole if you break this strike ... Could you live as we? We drink the water strained from boiled rice to give us the energy we need to cut and load the canes, to dig the trenches, to maintain the land. Look at your boots. We can never afford those, working here. Is we bare feet face the sharp blades of canes, snakes in deep grass, alligators in trenches. We quick with our cutlass most of the time ... Most of the time.  
(29)

His plea falls on deaf ears and the officer continues with his order to carry out the wishes of the President. To the officer's consternation the women refuse to move from the bridge. Instead, Kamelia, the leader of the women, curses generations of Urban Mayans yet to be born if any harm should come to them. The officer asks himself: "Do they understand that the driver is doing his patriotic bidding? Do they understand that he has been given the cover of *no accountability*?" (30). The Country Mayans understand all too well the unaccountability that is assumed once the wearer puts on the mask. For Country Mayans, no accountability means that they remain unprotected and vulnerable to state sponsored violence. The perpetrators of violence committed against them don the mask of Devonish's party and thus will not be prosecuted for their crimes, as the purple masks come "without responsibility or accountability, without duties and obligations. It [is] privilege without boundaries" (47). Included in this number is the police force that is comprised of Urban Mayans that are supporters of Devonish and who provide no security for the Country Mayans.<sup>41</sup>

In Mayan society, the Afro-Mayan dominated police force, function much like the Tonton Macoutes of Duvalier's regime, depicted in the Edwidge Danticat's novels *Breath, Eyes, Memory* and *The Dew Breaker*. Ordered by Devonish, the acts of terror they commit, such as the fire of Bon Aire that irreparably damages thriving businesses established by Country Mayans, the killing of two Country Mayans who try to prevent the Opposition party from tampering with ballot boxes during the election, the murder of

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<sup>41</sup> In *Ethnic Conflict and Development*, Ralph Premdas characterizes the state violence levied against Indo Guyanese: "State ... in the rural areas where Indians predominated, it assumed a decidedly racist form. Rape, burglary and arbitrary arrests by the security forces had become so prevalent that Indian villages became places of terror. The police were viewed not as a solution, but as the source of the problem" (140).

the Urban Mayan Gavin who dares to speak out against Devonish's aggressive economic policies, the torture of Vasu Nash for spying on the commune in the Mayan hinterland to expose the atrocities occurring under the protection of the government to procure armed support from outsiders, and the plundering of Indian businesses and homes unleash a "psychic fear" that deters the Country Mayans attempts to position themselves politically and economically in Maya (11). The most notable of these attacks is the pogrom at Ica:

An orgy of violence from men who hacked and bled the earth ... these men were forced to witness the multiple rapes of their wives, sisters, daughters, the destruction of those tender bodies, ... Here these bloodied wet thighs trembled then quivered before becoming stilled for cremation. The broken bottles that probed, ... All this while the policemen, enforcers of the law, watched from behind purple masks. From horseback, they watched over Ica and stood still. They guarded the doors of the doomed to prevent escape. (68)<sup>42</sup>

The officers in the passage not only refuse to come to the aid of Country Mayan citizens, they stand by silently and witness the heinous atrocities performed during the massacre. Their complicity with the violent acts demonstrates the pervasiveness of the unaccountability for not only those who wear the mask, but for all Urban Mayans. However, their crime is not confined just to their complacency, but the police are also active agents in the violence as they guard the doors to ensure there is no escape for the victims. This horrific and calculated massacre occurs the day before the British transfer of power to Robert Augustus Devonish as the first prime minister of the newly independent country. It sends a clear message to the Country Mayans that there will be no end to their disenfranchisement in an independent Maya, as they will continue to be

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<sup>42</sup> The pogrom at Ica recounts the massacre of an Indo-Guyanese community in Wismar-Mackenzie. The entire community was either uprooted or massacred by the residents of the predominantly Afro-Guyanese village. The Afro-Guyanese police force did nothing to stop the massacre. Minister of Home Affairs, Janet Jagan, became so disillusioned with the refusal of the police force to enforce the law that she resigned from her position. The massacre at Wismar is also referenced in David Dabydeen's poem, "For Rohan Babulal Kanhai," in his collection *Coolie Odyssey* where he recalls the injustices committed against Indo-Guyanese under Burnham's administration.

denied access to political or economic power. Nor will they be afforded protection under the law. The masks comes to signify absolute power that leaves Country Mayans susceptible to unmitigated ethnic violence, strips away their ability to successfully prosper in economic ventures as merchants, and refuses to protect voting privileges for Country Mayans. Devonish's administration leaves no doubt of the consequences for Country Mayans who do not submit themselves to his ethno-economic plan. Country Mayans are ultimately excluded from Mayan nationalist projects despite their legitimate claims as citizens.

Persaud capitalizes on these acts of violence to demonstrate the psychic trauma they engender that results in crippling a vast majority of an ethnic population. However, Persaud, at times, seems to participate in the construction of "us" and "them" binaries that punctuate cultural nationalisms in Guyana further demonstrating the varied ways in which "ethnicity is socially constructed" (Spencer 13). She does so by not acknowledging acts of violence committed against Afro-Guyanese by Indo-Guyanese. For example, in recounting the story of Kowsilia, Persaud does not specify the ethnicity of the scabs. Historical accounts confirm that both Africans and Indians were included in this group. In addition, not all Indians who worked on the sugar estate agreed to strike; many showed up for work. While Kowsilia was cut into two and the other women were in fact injured, the violence was by no means one sided as portrayed in the novel. Strikers also exacted violence on scabs that resulted in two deaths including an Indo-Guyanese.<sup>43</sup> The Massacre at Wismar-Makenzie, while certainly not justified, was believed to be retaliation for the sinking of the ferry *Sun Chapman* by Indo-Guyanese in which twenty-

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<sup>43</sup> For more on the strike, see Odeen Ishmael's *Outbreak of Racial Disturbances in 1964*.

six Afro-Guyanese were killed. Even though this incident occurred shortly before the massacre, it receives no mention in the novel. It was one act out of many that were believed to be the culmination of reprisals by both Afro and Indo-Guyanese (Spencer 52). In *The Elusive El Dorado*, Basdeo Mangru counters the notion that ethnic violence was one-sided. In fact, he traces acts of violence against Creoles by Indians as far back as the nineteenth century (Mangru 71). Between 1962 to the elections of 1964, 700 out of a population of 700,000 were killed in Guyana (Spencer 45). Perry Mars contributes this violence to racial tensions that were politically exploited mainly through ethnic based organizations, which led to a kind of mutual elimination contest between African and Indian Guyanese” (*Ethnic Conflict* 79). By excluding acts of violence enacted against Afro-Guyanese by Indo-Guyanese, Persaud appears to contribute to the racial polarization that she seeks to critique. This seems to also be the case in her depiction of the Assorted University Luminaries (AUL).

In the novel, neither the AUL nor the collective nation-states of the Anglophone Caribbean respond to the reports of violence fueled by ethnic exclusion. Persaud writes that despite the region’s “*raison d’etre* [that] ‘all ah we is one brother. All ah we is one’ [t]hey ha[ve] to look outside the community for an understanding of this plight” (144). However, there were in fact a number of scholars who were vocal about the use of violence to further Burnham’s political aspirations, most notably Walter Rodney who is depicted in the novel as the Urban Mayan political activist, Gavin.

Walter Rodney’s return to Guyana during the latter portion of Burnham’s administration posed a tangible threat to Burnham’s instituted policies of ethnic exclusion. Despite being denied a position at the University of Guyana, Rodney returned

to Guyana to bolster opposition against the Burnham administration.<sup>44</sup> While Rodney is largely known for his work as an African historian and an advocate of the Black Power Movement, his conception of blackness is not limited to only persons of African descent. In *The Groundings with My Brothers*, he writes, “I maintain that it is obvious that it is the white world which has defined who are blacks—if you are not white then you are black ... we can talk of the most of the West Indian population as being black—either African or Indian” (28). Thus, Rodney did not support or subscribe to the ethnic separatist ideologies of Burnham. The Working People’s Alliance (WPA), an organization founded by Rodney and a collective of African and Indian activists, was founded to counter the ethnic separatism of the two major Guyanese political parties the PPP and the PNC, as they saw the “need for an organized nonracial, working class political movement in Guyana” (Fontaine 25). Through the WPA and his numerous scholarly publications, Rodney regularly expressed dissent against the ethnic violence that plagued the country. Other Caribbean and Pan-African scholars also expressed vociferous criticism against the political violence and ethnic polarization that had come to characterize Guyana such as C.L.R. James, Gordon Rohlehr, Sylvia Wynter, Kamau Brathwaite, George Lamming, and Martin Carter who once worked for Burnham and the PNC administration. Reflecting on Rodney’s murder, Lamming states, “no-one could recall, in the entire history of the country, so large and faithful gathering assembled to reflect on the horror that had been

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<sup>44</sup> Walter Rodney was offered the chairmanship of the history department at the University of Guyana. However, the government intervened and the university rescinded the offer. For an accounting of these events see Pierre-Michel Fontaine’s *Walter Rodney* Pg.24.

inflicted on the nation. For Guyana had become a land of horrors” (qtd. in Spencer 52).<sup>45</sup> These horrors have become the subject of a growing body of Guyanese literature.

Guyanese writers such as Fred D’ Aguiar, Narmala Shewcharan, and Jan Lo Shinebourne have drawn on the ethnic polarization and violence in Guyana in their literary works. More specifically, they explore and assert the need for a multi-ethnic response to practices of ethnic exclusion that have been carried over from colonialism in Guyanese and Caribbean nationalisms. In Fred D’ Aguiar’s *Dear Future*, for example, he points to the inadequacies of the labels “African” and “Indian” that have resulted from ethnic polarization for political purposes through the depiction of the multi-ethnic Santos family. The creolized Santos family, comprised of Portuguese, African, Amerindian, and Indian, represents the possibilities of multi-racial unity in combating politically motivated ethnic violence much in the same way as Rodney’s nonracial WPA organization. D’Aguiar articulates the need for an alternative identity politics in postcolonial Guyana as a response to ethnic violence through the voice of the patriarch of the Santos family when the home of an Indian family is burned:

Everyone shown under that moon. The demarcations of white, brown and black that were so apparent in daylight were softened by the moon to subtle gradations of tone. If people were intent on locating such differences they would have to look hard and long in this equalising light....Granddad spoke of men who’d married women they’d fallen in love with regardless of race and who had themselves been the products of various unions between the races. He pointed to the fact that he was Portuguese, his wife African, one daughter-in-law- half Amerindian, another Indian. Let them try and separate us. Let them try. (48)

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<sup>45</sup> For a more detailed account of responses to the political violence in Guyana after the assassination of Rodney see Rupert Lewis’ *Walter Rodney’s Intellectual and Political Thought* pp. 225-253.

The grandfather's appeal to his neighbors to reject ethnic divisions and hostility fostered by party politics is mirrored in the young narrator's observation of the "equalizing character of the moon's light. For him racial difference has no place in Guyana's future. In "One People, One Nation?" Lourdes Ropero argues that, "D'Aguiar attempts to break the circle of ethnic conflict and to offer a network of social relations based on creolization" (77). D'Aguiar recognizes that the ethnic polarization of Africans and Indians is inadequate in a postcolonial Guyanese society that is comprised of European, Portuguese, African, Amerindian, Indian, Chinese, and mixed race citizens. Ropero further argues that in Guyana, Africa and India are mythic cultural entities that do not reflect the creolized African and Indian of Guyana (76). For her, this is best illustrated by the wrestler who wants to be identified as a wrestler from India as opposed to an Indian wrestler to distinguish himself from the creolized Indians of Guyana. However, where D'Aguiar emphasizes the need for an identity politics that blurs racial lines and gives prominence to social relations that are grounded in discourses of creolization, many Guyanese women writers choose to emphasize the need for a feminist social network within Afro/Indo ethnic polarizations that is instead grounded in a dougla poetics.

Shalini Puri coins the term dougla poetics in her essay, "Canonized Hybridities, Resistant Hybridities." For Puri, dougla poetics articulates delegitimized or disallowed identities, specifically that of Indian women (28). The origins of the term dougla can be located in the Hindu lexicon of Trinidad. While its original usage means bastard, the pejorative term is later applied to persons of mixed African and Indian parentage.<sup>46</sup> Puri locates the term in its originary context to explore the possibilities of a dougla poetics

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<sup>46</sup> Puri contributes the evolution of the term to beliefs Indian beliefs concerning caste endogamy and uneven sex ratios within the Indian indenture population. For more on the history of the term see Puri's "Canonized Hybridities, Resistant Hybridities" p.25.

that seeks to validate or legitimize Indian women identities that have traditionally been disavowed by Indian cultural nationalisms. In *Diasporic (Dis)Locations*, Brinda Mehta expands on Puri's use of a dougla poetics to explore the possibilities of engendering Indo and Afro Caribbean feminist dialogues through literature. The literature of Indo-Caribbean women writers: Lakshmi Persaud, Narmala Shewcharan, and Jan Lo Shinebourne engage a dougla poetics that empowers women through mobility while emphasizing that Indian women do not have to abandon their cultural identities to progress economically and socially in multi-ethnic societies.<sup>47</sup>

Mehta observes that the “commonality of experience [shared between African and Indian women in the Caribbean] has often been skewed by partisan politics in favour of oppositional representation, whereby Indian and African women have been pitted against each other as rivals in the fight for legitimacy and subjective autonomy” (sic 64). However, as Mehta illustrates, both African and Indian Caribbean feminists have worked to expand Caribbean feminisms to give equal consideration to the subjectivity and autonomy of Indian women. While African and Indian feminists collaborations have at times been fraught with struggle for equal prominence in Caribbean feminist dialogues, cultural differences have often emerged as obstacles to these dialogues. However, Persaud suggests that inter-ethnic alliances between African and Indian Guyanese women can not only advance Indian women economically but also serve as a platform where these dialogues can be advanced. In *For the Love of My Name*, women almost always initiate inter-ethnic responses to ethno-economies. The relationship that ensues between

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<sup>47</sup> Brinda Mehta categorizes Jan Lo Shinebourne as an Indo-Caribbean writer despite the fact that her father is Chinese and her mother is bi-racial, Chinese and Indian. Shinebourne claims the right to a multi-ethnic subjectivity that resists her classification as a Chinese Caribbean writer. For more on his discussion see Mehta's *Diasporic (Dis)Locations* p. 16.

Dorothy, an Urban Mayan, and Subah, a Country Mayan, is illustrative of the economic and social possibilities that can be realized for both African and Indian women through inter-ethnic alliances facilitated through the assertion of mobility to traverse perceived boundaries.

Although the Indian women in Persaud's *For the Love of My Name*, Shewcharan's *Tomorrow is Another Day*, and Jan Lo Shinebourne's *The Last English Plantation*, benefit from their interactions with African women, they are by no means passive in their economic successes.<sup>48</sup> Rather their mobility is central to subverting their economic disenfranchisement. In *For the Love of My Name*, Indian women refuse spatial parameters that are policed by immigration officers and the threat of politically motivated ethnic violence. Although the novel makes the claim that the Country Mayans "just left," the migration of Indo-Mayan women to the island-nation of Santa Maria is by no means an exodus. Many of them have left behind spouses, children, and parents to whom they intend to return. Rather, the migration to Santa Maria is an effort to provide economic support for themselves and their families. They enter the country posing as tourists, facing humiliating interrogations by immigration officers in search of employment (166). However, employment is not the only motivation for migrating to Santa Maria. These women defiantly depart from Santa Maria overburdened with parcels of wheat flour and other items of contraband to provide proper nutrition for their families and to actively engage in informal economies in Maya despite the threat of illegal searches and violence.

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<sup>48</sup> These women by no means become wealthy as a result of their participation in informal economies fostered by inter-ethnic solidarities. However, they make a significant impact on their abilities to provide for their families. Chandi, for example, is grateful for the day's work at the cookshop despite the owner's insulting behavior and low wages as it allows her to buy her daughter a pair of shoes.

The reign of terror exacted against Indo-Mayans under Devonish's regime, is not limited to those who work in the agricultural sector. His wrath is equally felt by Indo-Mayans who dare to prosper economically by means other than agriculture. Businesses, shops, and stalls owned by Country Mayans who dare to expand their businesses in urban Bon Aire become the targets of a fire set by "two masked men...halogen-purple faces"(60). Businesses are burnt to the ground and goods and supplies destroyed. Those whose businesses are not destroyed in the fires are pressured in other ways such as the assessment of the Arbitrary Tax Assessment, lengthy and difficult applications for import licenses implemented to deter Country Mayans from opening businesses, and those who own businesses are required to make monthly monetary contributions to the party to remain in business. Despite these aggressive tactics, Subah makes the trip to Bon Air to see what prices produce is selling for in the urban markets so that she can negotiate knowledgeably with Dorothy to trade her produce for contraband goods. Furthermore, Subah masterly finds a way to subvert attempts to restrict her mobility by utilizing Dorothy to transport her goods to Bon Aire to sell much in the same way that Dorothy uses the van of the Women's Social Movement (WSM), the women's arm of Devonish's party, every Tuesday to transport her contraband goods to rural Maya. In *Tomorrow is Another Day*, Chandi's ambulatory circuits from her rural home to the urban center are central to her ability to provide for her family after her husband abandons them to dedicate himself to the cause of the Worker's Party. In fact, it is the journeys that Chandi makes to the urban center that places her in proximity with Kunti and ultimately brings about her meeting with Aunt Adee. In *The Last English Plantation*, mobility is strikingly central to ensuring a future for June Leehall that is not attainable in her village of New

Dam. Leehall's parents purchase a new bike for June to make the expansive journey from New Dam to New Amsterdam to begin instruction at one of the best schools in Guyana. They arm their daughter with a means of traversing culturally inscribed boundaries to receive a better education. Even when there is an impending strike on the plantation, they send June to stay the night at a friend's home on the plantation so that she can get a head start to school the following morning. In turn, June seeks to ensure the same opportunities for her Afro-Guyanese friend Lavendar who lives in Lucius village. The protective posture June assumes over Lavendar is embodied in the simple gesture of giving her a ride on her bike on their first day at the new school. Shinebourne effaces race/space binaries by illustrating the presence of Afro-Guyanese in rural spaces and Indo-Guyanese in urban spaces. In New Amsterdam High School, race is not the axis on which exclusionary practices hinge. Instead, they are based on class; poor rural Indians are heckled by upper class Indians and social circles are informed by economic status. It is a result of this class-based stratification that June aligns herself with Lavendar even going as far as to urge her mother to help Lavendar's mom get her a new uniform and new books. In fact, the relationship between June and Lavendar is distinguished from other Afro/Indo female relationships that engage a dougla poetics, as it is the only relationship understudy where an Indian is in a position to aid and protect an African in an urban space. However, this relationship is not free of tension. Despite June's efforts, Lavendar eventually rejects June's help.

The suspicion or distrust that Lavendar seems to have regarding June is not uncommon in the African/Indian female relationships that engage a dougla poetics in these novels. Instead, distrust and suspicion have been fostered by an ethnically polarized

system that has encouraged suspicion and at times hostilities between African and Indian women and emphasized cultural differences. In *For the Love of My Name*, cultural difference is palpable in the interactions between Country and Urban Mayan women. The wife of Rohan Mistry, an Indian merchant targeted by Devonish, regularly pulls her orhni, a head covering worn by Indian women as a sign of their modesty, closer to her. This “traditional protective gesture ... become[s] so much a part of her,” that she is not aware that it becomes more pronounced whenever the Afro-Mayan women from the WSM come to collect taxes. The initial meetings between Subah and Dorothy and Chandi and Adee in *Tomorrow is Another Day*, are also marked with suspicion and distrust. In the case of the latter, Chandi is put off by Aunt Adee’s strange appearance but is warmed by her smile. However, based on the historical circumstances that inform the text, she is most likely willing to approach her because Kunti, an Indian woman, has told her that Aunt Adee will help her. Similarly, Subah is not willing to align herself with Dorothy until her Indian neighbor Ramlakhan has vouched for her. However, once these women overcome their suspicions, they establish relationships that result in their socio-economic advancement.

Despite Devonish’s continued attempts to further marginalize Country Mayans as agricultural laborers to drive production of nationalized agricultural and bauxite industries after banning imported goods such as oil, wheat flour, butter, salt, garlic, and onion, Subah and Dorothy assert their subversive agency by establishing an informal economy where even purple masks become commodities. Dorothy, under the cover of the WSM and the purple mask, establishes a firm footing in a thriving informal economy that provides goods to both Country and Urban Mayans. The ensuing friendship that she

pursues with Subah also provides Subah with a means to sell her goods in Bon Aire without risking violent attacks that have become more frequent against Indian merchants since the burning of Bon Aire shortly before elections. Subah trades her produce for the banned goods provided by Dorothy who in turn is able to sell the goods in the city. Although Dorothy, as an Urban Mayan and member of the WSM, has access to opportunities not available to Subah such as access to a government van to help her reach a larger market to sell her goods, their alliance reveals the economic possibilities for Maya if ethnic divisions are dissolved and an economy established that “re[lied] on the maximum utilisation of human resources” (Premdas 168). Drawing upon a shared Mayan experience of devastating economic decline, the friendship established by the two women suggests that for the nation to recover from ethnic divisions systematically implemented by Devonish’s government these divisions must be dissolved and new manifestations of nationalism based on capitalist models must be allowed to emerge. Even the coveted purple masks become a commodity that can be bought and sold as a means of protection. And although these instances of Country and Urban Mayans uniting are very limited in scope to the dominating action of the novel, they are integral in understanding nuanced responses to the perilous form of nationalism propagated by Robert Augustus Devonish. Similarly in Shewcharan’s *Tomorrow is Another Day*, Chandi benefits from her relationship with Aunt Adee who helps her to navigate the urban landscape and establish herself as a market vendor and Kunti an Indo-Guyanese woman whom benefits from her son’s position as a minister of the Official Party. However, it is important to note that Indian women are not the only ones who suffer under an ethnically divisive political system.

While Persaud largely focuses on the social and economic disenfranchisement of Indian women and the brutal violence exacted against them in independent Guyana, she also makes it clear that Afro-Guyanese women are also disenfranchised as a result of cultural politics that identify power and status with masculinity. Devonish reproduces the gendered hierarchy that informs African cultural practices of masking within his opposition party through the distribution of masks varying in size and intensities of purple. Devonish establishes a hierarchy that not only determines who will receive what mask but who will have the authority to promote party members to a higher grade mask based on their loyalty and service to the party. He selects three “stalwarts of the party” to serve directly under him and for their service awards them the grade four mask (grade one being the lowest) to assist with distributing the masks appropriately (57). His second act of business is to elect two “young ladies” to wear the grade three masks to “[pay] tribute to women, beauty, and youth” (57). Per his instructions, “two very attractive young ladies were nominated, one a fashion model, ... the other a former beauty queen” (57). The decision to place women on the Purple Mask Committee is a calculated one. His emphasis on attractiveness seems to speak volumes about his attitude towards women in politics. In fact, when Devonish’s sister, Marguerite, expresses an interest in running for a seat in the Mayan parliament, he scoffs at the idea not because of her political inexperience but on account that, “she is ugly... and [has] a club foot to boot” (52). While women initially do not have access to executive authority in Devonish’s party, their contributions are paramount in advancing the economic and social agenda of the party despite his emphasis on superficial characteristics.

The transparent designation of grade one masks, a small mask “made of such cheap quality cotton” that is in fact not purple but a faded blue, for members of the WSM, seems to further emphasize the limited role women play in Devonish’s attainment of his political aspirations. While the grade one mask worn by the WSM denotes party membership it does not hold the privileges of the other masks. Yet, members of the WSM play an integral role in convincing Mayans to support the President’s socialist policies (179). For example, the women of the WSM go from house to house convincing women that the rice and cassava flour produced in Maya is far superior to that of the wheat flour previously imported and subsequently banned.

When Dorothy first knocks on Subah’s door, she is loaded with banned items such as flour, butter, salt, pepper, and lentils. Her presence in the novel is indicative that Devonish’s practice of exclusion and social policies are not only affecting the livelihood of Country Mayans, but of Urban Mayans as well. In attempt to gain Subah’s trust, it is important for Dorothy to impress on Subah that black women also suffer under Devonish’s regime. Dorothy explains to Subah how the government has left her:

This government never provided for us... It does not help us ordinary people. I always had to look out for myself... begging for a lift, a job, standing where I think there might be something I could pick up. I had to. This Government behaved like the father of my children. He just picked himself up one day and left ... Now I is alone with the children. (184)

While Persaud rejects cultural nationalisms that seek to exclude populations of citizens from national projects on the premise of ethnic difference, she along with the other writers understudy emphasize that Indian culture must be granted legitimacy for inter-racial feminist collaborations to be successful. The orhni that protects Mistry’s wife in the presence of Urban Mayans, in *For the Love of My Name*, becomes a prideful

display of Indian culture on a national stage in *Tomorrow is Another Day*. Kunti who does not wear her orhni on a regular basis proudly adorns it at an extravagant party hosted by her son for the higher order of the Official Party. In *the Last English Plantation*, June refuses to end her relationship with Nani Dharamada Misr as part of her social ascent through her admission to New Amsterdam High School despite her mother's admonishments. Instead, she finds comfort in Nani's use of Hindi and the poojas she performs. The emphasis placed on the necessity of Indian culture as an integral part of national culture is paramount for these writers, particularly in discourses concerning dougla poetics.

Persaud contributes to discourses concerning a dougla poetics by insisting that processes of douglarization must be reciprocal. Much of the scholarship that engages a dougla poetics cites examples that are realized in a creole space; Indian culture is injected in creolized spaces and ultimately cultural nationalisms.<sup>49</sup> However, the relationship that ensues between Dorothy and Subah is premised on Dorothy's willingness to enter an Indian/rural space and to not only express her knowledge of Indian culture but also more dynamically to declare it as her own—Guyanese culture. After Subah finally agrees to purchase a bag of contraband flour, Dorothy tells her,

I don't know when last you had a good hot paratha rotie, flaky and breaking up in your hands. I can see that nice honey-looking ghee you have up there on the top shelf, home made; good quality that ghee is. Now that would make them roties soft and nice, and with pumpkin or your own fresh chowrai bhagee or bygan chokha and bird-pepper, you will be having a feast, Subah.

How come you know bout chowrai bhajee and bygan chokha?

But eh!eh! You living here and I living here. I copying from you, you copying from me. We pretending that not happening. We playing hide-

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<sup>49</sup> Puri's analysis of a dougla poetics is largely located in the Creole space of the calypso tent. Similarly, the literary engagements addressed by Mehta in Shewcharan's *Tomorrow is Another Day* and Merle Hodge's *For the Life of Laetitia* are located in urban creolized spaces.

and-see. You know where I hiding. I know where you hiding ...But we pretending—grownups playing children’s game. I trust we will soon get tired and come out of hiding, and walk this road together, Subah, because if we do, we will create the next best thing to heaven right here. And, by the way, I know bout tomato chokha too. (177-8)

Through her display of Indo-Caribbean culinary culture, Dorothy seeks to bridge the cultural divide forged by Devonish. Her knowledge of paratha and ghee, her ability to distinguish between homemade ghee and store bought ghee on account of its color and her use of Indian names for local produce and the ingredients to make Indian dishes suggests not only that she is aware of Indo-Caribbean culture but also partakes in it. This is further suggested when she states, “I copying you.” Her implication that they are playing children’s games emphasizes the transparency of Mayan citizens to blindly accept Devonish’s narratives of cultural difference—African and Indian alike. Indeed, Dorothy posits that when Mayan citizens decide to “walk this road together” by embracing the cultures of both Afro and Indo Mayans as *Mayan* culture they “will create the next best thing to heaven.” Persaud’s selection of Dorothy to articulate these sentiments is a calculated one. It seems to suggest that Afro and Indo inter-ethnic relations that engage a dougla poetics often involve Indians entering Creole spaces. However, Dorothy’s willingness to enter Indian/rural space and embrace Indo-Mayan culture as Mayan culture implies that to create “heaven right here” requires a de-centering of a dougla poetics from a creolized space to a national space where Indian culture can be granted equal prominence and disavowed Indo/Afro feminists dialogues can flourish.

The cultural contradictions that emerge from the exclusion of Indo-Guyanese from national collectives on account of their refusal to abandon Indian cultural and

religious practices lays bare the role that carefully constructed traditions play in the governing of cultural politics. The emergence of national identities grounded in African cultural retentions in the post-independent Caribbean establish traditions that are employed as political technologies that deny multiple senses of national belonging and formations of alternative national identities. This denial is not limited to ethnic exclusions but class as well. Because many of these cultural traditions emerge from black working poor communities, efforts for social and economic mobility are often unwelcome and viewed as a disavowal of national values. However, new emerging cultural performances suggest a rejection of the resultant alienation and assert the right to economic advancement without forgoing cultural and national values.

### Chapter Three: Casting off the Shackles of Respectability: National Identity and the Politics of Culture

You see calypso is about life. It is about sex, violence, love, social and political commentary, it is about jobs, about shelter, about world issues. And you have different kinds of people singing it, people from different backgrounds, from different levels of education, giving the art all its infinite variety...And to think it all started ...way back in the days of slavery. (Lord Kitchener)<sup>50</sup>

It has always been rebellion. It wasn't anything else. Kaiso always in a fighting mood. The people were also on a revolution. Always on a change. Black Stalin, "Notting Eh Strange" (Winthrop 145).

In her groundbreaking work on governing of cultural politics in Trinidad's carnival music, Jocelyn Guilbalt identifies the markers of a "true, true" calypsonian. That is, "there appear to be particular patterns about whom and what defines 'national culture' through calypso," presupposed on indices of race, gender, and class—black, male, working class—as well as lyrical content and melodic structure (94). Guilbalt observes that both Lord Kitchener and Black Stalin, quoted in the opening epigraphs, are often categorized as "true, true" calypsonians by self-description, the Trinidad populace, journalists, and scholars alike. This ascription is due largely to the fact that they both adhere to and embrace the particular patterns and formulas that have become synonymous with traditional calypso. On a superficial level, social commentary imbued by race, gender, and class (Kitchener and Stalin are both black, male, and members of the working class) identifies them in the Trinidadian popular imagination as quintessential calypsonians. For calypsonian connoisseurs, the authenticity of both Kitchener and Stalin is also palpable in their "melodic structure, pace of delivery, and style of performance" (Rohlehr "Calypso Artist" 11).

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<sup>50</sup> Qtd in Jocelyn Guilbalt's *Governing Sound* Pg.155. Originally found in Holly Betaudier's, "The Story of Jean and Dinah."

In Trinidadian parlance, the phrase “true, true” evokes authenticity and originary status often through an established tradition. However, specifically in regards to the formation of national culture and the performance of national identity, tradition, is a carefully crafted construct that seeks to govern cultural politics.<sup>51</sup> My use of the term, tradition, parallels Guilbalt whose “vision [of] tradition is not a passive cultural inheritance, but rather an operative force shaping the past, present, and future” (40). In the case of calypso, tradition—established by the black, male, working class—dictates content, tone, melody and delivery. This tradition is constructed in the interest of establishing and preserving a national identity that is shaped by Afro-Trinidadian resistance to British colonialism.

Through a discussion of masculinity and nationalism in Earl Lovelace’s *The Dragon Can’t Dance*, I consider how “tradition” is employed as a political technology that at times denies the multiple origins and functions of calypso to police the formation of national identities that simultaneously deny what Guilbalt terms, “multiple senses of belonging,” specifically in relation to class (Guilbalt 211). Furthermore, I examine how in this milieu, calypso competitions, a political technology once utilized by the colonial administration to control the content and performance of calypsos, can provide an avenue for artistic freedom, economic advancement, and alternative approaches to rebellion that are at times disavowed by the nationalist ideologies that inform the African warriorhood—a coterie of Afro-Trinidadian men who draw upon African cultural

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<sup>51</sup> In *Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon critically examines how national cultural politics in post-colonial nation-states can alienate citizens by limiting discourses of national culture by working within binaries established by former colonizers. He argues that the recuperation of pre-colonial history to encounter colonial devaluations of that history has “dialectical significance” in the formation of national culture, as these recuperative processes revolve around the same axis as the devaluation of pre-colonial history—that of race (210).

retentions as the foundation for the construction of national culture—of Calvary Hill, the fictitious setting of Lovelace’s novel. This is not to deny the restrictive and, at times, intrusive qualities of calypso competitions.<sup>52</sup> Rather I seek to illuminate the creative and economic possibilities that emerge as a result of these competitions. Thus, the title of this chapter “Casting off the Shackles of Respectability” employs the calypsonians’ tactical device of double entendre to call into question colonial and middle class values of respectability that are linked to moral codes of decency. The title also highlights emergent coda of respectability associated with a tradition of rebellion grounded in an African warriorhood that at times seeks to repress the performance of national identities that do not subscribe to established models in the interest of policing national culture.

In the opening epigraphs, both Lord Kitchener and Black Stalin engage and contribute to the assertion of calypso as national culture rooted in an African ancestral tradition. Lord Kitchener asserts that the characteristic that makes calypso emblematic of Trinidad nationalism is its ability to absorb and mark change in all its variety. However, his final statement, “And to think it all started ... way back in the days of slavery” punctuates an African ancestral lineage of resistance that must be preserved despite its malleable character. He engages in what Guilbalt terms, “the changing same,” or change to the art form is acceptable as long as longstanding prescriptions established through tradition are preserved (271).

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<sup>52</sup> Calypsonians, most notably Chalkdust and Black Stalin, have argued that social commentary is frowned upon by national competition judges. At various junctures of his career, Black Stalin has elected not to participate in the annual competition, but as he admits, at the expense of his success (Guilbalt 97). David Rudder has remained successful despite his unwillingness to participate in the annual competitions. However, it is important to note that his career as a calypsonian was propelled in 1986 when he won all three competitions: the Calypso Monarch, the Junior King, and the Road March.

Lord Kitchener revolutionized calypso by composing his calypsos to be adaptable to the steel pan, the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago. And while this points to Kitchener's embracing of change, it also highlights his strict adherence to the tradition of calypso as a legacy of African slave resistance and a proponent of national culture. The steel pan was born out of a history of resistance that can be traced to slavery and emerged from a line of alternative instruments, such as the "tamboo bamboo," a percussive instrument made out of bamboo, that were created by slaves and their descendants in response to the colonial administration's ban on the use of drums as a means of inhibiting rebellions.<sup>53</sup> What Kitchener successfully affected, then, is a seamless marriage between the "voice" of the nation and the national instrument both of which share an ancestral lineage grounded in Afro-Trinidadian resistance to colonialism. However, despite the manner in which he revolutionized calypso, his limited notion of change became evident in his 1967 song "No More Calypsong." Directed at the Mighty Sparrow, the calypso chastises the latter for changing the melodic structure and content of calypso to resemble more closely foreign music, specifically rhythm and blues from the United States. Kitchener's keen interest in determining which changes to the art form were or were not acceptable speaks to his investment in preserving calypso and national identity as part of a greater Afro-Trinidadian tradition. His investment in policing the authenticity of

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<sup>53</sup> Tamboo or Tambour bamboo is a percussive instrument made out of bamboo. Pieces of bamboo, in varying sizes, were tied together and struck on the ground to create a percussive sound. In *Calypso & Society*, Gordon Rohlehr describes the tamboo bamboo as "stamping tubes" of varying length, thickness and diameter which, pounded on the ground or hit against each other, produced a range of rhythm and tone" (40). For more on class origins of the tamboo bamboo and its significance in the lineage of percussive instruments in Trinidad and Tobago see Errol Hill's *The Trinidad Carnival* p.46. See also Rohlehr's *Calypso & Society* for a detailed discussion of the relationship between the tamboo bamboo and yard space, further locating the drum in Afro-Trinidadian working class cultural traditions and resistance to British colonialism.

calypso is mirrored, perhaps—more explicitly, in the example of his protégé, Black Stalin.

Despite his insistence that people are “always on a change,” for Black Stalin the only acceptable change in calypso is that of revolution. His assertion that calypso “has always been rebellion” inextricably and ultimately links it to a history that too begins with slavery. In the interview “Notting Eh Strange” with Winthrop Holder, Black Stalin follows the statement in the opening epigraph by lauding the ability of kaiso, believed to be the original term for calypso used by slaves, to “tak[e] care of itself” (145).<sup>54</sup> He cites Blackie’s 1957 calypso “Too Much Smut,” a 1965 calypso by Terror urging for a return to “clean” kaiso, and a calypso performed by Shorty in the late 1990’s continuing the call to clean up the music. Stalin maps a historical trajectory of calypsonians who function as “watchdogs” to protect the character of the music. What is important is the underlying message of the call for “cleanness.” It does not just entail the prohibition of profanity or lewd content, but it is also a call to retain the rebellious character of the music, not only in terms of lyrical content and tone but in musical arrangement as well. Black Stalin is so committed to the tradition of kaiso that he dismisses contemporary calypsos that do not adhere to the prescriptions of traditional calypso music as a passing phase, because he believes that kaisonians will bring those who have strayed back into line (Winthrop 145). Together Lord Kitchener and Black Stalin construct a genealogy of calypso as a rebellious tradition that begins with slavery. However, their parallel statements, found in the opening epigraphs, do not only point to their determination to situate calypso in an

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<sup>54</sup> His preference for the term “kaiso” as opposed to calypso is important to note. In fact, we could replace the use of “true true” with kaiso. The significance of the term lies in its African origins of which its etymology will be further discussed later in the chapter.

African ancestral tradition; their desire to assert calypso as an authentic, national art form further emphasizes the politics of culture in the formation of Trinidadian national identity.

The shared concerns for the reification of Trinidadian national identity and the politics of culture expressed by Lord Kitchener and Black Stalin can be discerned in Earl Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance*. The cultural performances associated with an ancestral African warriorhood expressed through masculinity and marked by rebellion and resistance lie at the center of a socio-economic struggle faced by the characters in the novel. These traditions, embodied in carnival performances such as stick fighting, steel pan, the dragon dance, and calypso, come under threat by the encroaching middle-class and a seemingly incipient commercial culture. However, there is much more at stake than the continuance of a corpus of resistant traditions. What ultimately is at stake is determining who has the ability or authority to shape Trinidadian national identity and under what auspices. In *Masculinity and the Dance*, Linden Lewis asserts that embedded in these constructions of masculinity the struggles for national identity are revealed (164). That is, for the African warriorhood the struggle is to ensure that the cultural performances of carnival conform and retain a resistant character that is informed by an African ancestral tradition as a reflection of national identity. The carefully constructed warriorhood present in the novel is threatened by multiple foreign entities interpolated into the national landscape that seek to depose African ancestral culture as the sole marker of Trinidadian national identity. My use of the term "foreign" does not solely reference entities outside of the geographical borders of Trinidad, although it encompasses this meaning as well. Rather, I am referencing any entity that can be read as

alien to the African warriorhood of the black, male, working class and the resistant ideologies it espouses. In the novel, sponsors that represent both local and foreign businesses that buy their way into the national festival, the values of the emergent middle-class that are injected in carnival through competition, and the presence of the East Indian, Pariag, can all be read as foreign in the context of Calvary Hill.

Philo's role as a calypsonian becomes central to this socio-cultural struggle, as his chosen art form cannot be neatly traced to Africa. Rather its genesis can be located in multiple origins including that of the former colonial administration. The variegated character of his art form calls into question his methodologies in constructing his manhood in a manner that is at times oppositional to that of the deeply entrenched sense of African warriorhood.

In a cast of characters whose significance to Calvary Hill is embodied in their carnival personas, Philo is uniquely positioned. Lovelace firmly situates his male characters in a tradition of African resistance and culture. He reasserts the primordial presence of West African culture and laments the effacement of this culture by the emerging presence of the Creole middle class in carnival. Fisheye is descended from a line of stick fighters that "came direct from Africa" (120). Aldrick dons the sacred mask "that goes back centuries for its beginnings, back across the Middle Passage, back to Mali and to Guinea and Dahomey and Congo, back to Africa when Maskers were sacred and revered" (120). He likens Aldrick to the sacred African maskers "who would dance and make terrible cries, affirming for the village, the tribe, warriorhood and femininity, linking the villagers to their ancestors, their God" (120). Lovelace's description of Aldrick's dragon dance reverberates of Chinua Achebe's description, in his novel *Things*

*Fall Apart*, of the dance of the sacred maskers and the position that they occupy in Igbo society as administrators of tribal law and protectors of their way of life. This rootedness in an African warriorhood imbues these male characters with “an ancestral authority” that is not only evidenced in their carnival personas but their everyday lives (120). Fisheye enforces his authority through brutality that reaches its apogee during his tenure as a member of Calvary Hill steel band. Aldrick’s authority is affirmed in his menacing dragon dance and is palpable in the valued role he plays in Calvary Hill. The residents rely on him to maintain order by adjudicating over conflicts in the yard preserving their way of life. However, despite this careful crafting of ancestral lineages for Fisheye and Aldrick, no such lineage is provided for Philo the calypsonian. This is because while the calypsonian bears characteristics that have been associated with West African cultural practices, a direct and inextricable link cannot be drawn between calypso and Africa. Unlike the retentions of African culture located in Aldrick’s dragon costume and Fisheye’s stick fighting, “remembered even now, so long after the Crossing, if not in the brain, certainly in the blood,” Philo’s carnival persona is marked by multiple origins and New World innovation and creativity (120). In order to understand the significance of Philo’s status as a calypsonian to Lovelace’s text, specifically in relation to masculinity and the African warriorhood, it is important to consider the role that the calypsonian plays in the context of Trinidadian society and why this figure has become a cornerstone of cultural expression in Trinidad.

Illustrated in the assertions of Kitchener and Stalin, calypso certainly engages ancestral African musical traditions. Errol Hill traces the original term used for calypso, *kaiso*, to the Hausa language of West Africa. In *Guinea’s Other Suns*, where Maureen

Warner-Lewis examines the influence of Yoruba music on calypso, she locates the etymology of the term in the Igbo lexicon, which means, “good continue” (151).<sup>55</sup> The West African presence in calypso has also been analyzed by Gordon Rohlehr (1990, 1998), Keith Warner (1993), and Shannon Dudley (2004), to name a few. Rohlehr not only grounds calypso in a West African tradition, but situates it in the context of a larger black Diaspora arguing that calypso “is related to all Black diaspora musics, regardless of language, and shares with them traditional African functions of affirmation, celebration, protest, satire, praise, blame and conflict of all varieties” (“Calypso & Society” 5). He also cites the connections between calypso and the Yoruba traditions of *picong* (provocation) and *mepris* (scorn) described by Warner-Lewis. He concludes that, “such hubristic boasting-songs no doubt have their roots in ancient African and European traditions of the praise-song and the boasting speeches that are so prominent in epic poetry” (“The State” 34).<sup>56</sup> In *Carnival Music of Trinidad*, Dudley recognizes that the calypsonian’s use of masking and double entendre “has a precedence in West African tradition and was reinforced during slavery, when songs were used to convey secret messages that the masters could not understand” (31). But as Rohlehr indicates, the origins of calypso cannot be located solely in an African musical tradition.

In *Calypso Calaloo*, Donald Hill traces the origins of calypso to both West Africa and France, as well as acknowledging the influence of songs brought to Trinidad by migrants: “Many tunes and lyrics came from other islands or from the South American

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<sup>55</sup> The origins of the term have been located in multiple African lexicons. This ambiguity, however, speaks directly to the new world experience and the coalescing of distinct African cultures in the new world space. For more on the etymology of the terms see F.G. Cassidy and R.B. Le Page’s *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*.

<sup>56</sup> For a more detailed explanation of the practice of *picong* and *mepris*, see Richard Allsop’s *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*.

mainland. [...] Afro-French songs drifted in from Grenada, Carriacou, St. Lucia, Dominica, and Guadeloupe. British Creole migrants brought songs from Barbados, St. Vincent, and Tobago” (8).<sup>57</sup> And while it is widely accepted that many cultures have contributed to the musical genre, it is in Trinidad that calypso has reached its pinnacle. Errol Hill notes that

[i]f special claims are made for the minstrel art in the small country of Trinidad and Tobago, it is because that art has flourished, on both the national and the international scene, to a degree unparalleled by minstrel songs from other parts of the world. (55)

He credits its role in the country’s annual carnival for the success of the musical genre, as carnival provides a stage from which calypsonians can comment on the affairs of the island either through direct commentary, or through the shifts and changes that the genre undergoes more often than not reflecting shifts in the Trinidadian national landscape.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, calypso chronicles the island’s complex history. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than in the political arena of Trinidad.

Since the inception of calypso, the art form has served as an outlet for expressing dissention with the upper and middle classes, political factions, and hegemonic structures, and much like Lovelace’s *Dragon*, it has served as a marker of the political climate in Trinidad, leaving “us a priceless archive of social history” (Regis ix).<sup>59</sup> In *Trinidad Carnival, Calypso & Society*, and *Governing Sound*, Errol Hill, Gordon Rohlehr, and Jocelyn Guilbalt, respectively, chronicle the role that calypso played in resisting British

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<sup>57</sup> For more on the origins and evolution of calypso, see also Errol Hill’s *The Trinidad Carnival: Mandate for a National Theatre*, John Cowley’s *Carnival, Canboulay and Calypso: Traditions in the Making*, and Gordon Rohlehr’s *Calypso & Society: Pre-Independence Trinidad*.

<sup>58</sup> Errol Hill traces the connection between Trinidad’s carnival and calypso to 1838, the year slaves were emancipated in Trinidad.

<sup>59</sup> See Errol Hill’s discussion on the history of calypso.

colonial rule. Guilbalt explores the boasting and derisive songs that accompanied stick-fighting performances as pre-cursors to the calypsos sung in jamette carnivals in the early 1900's that were anchored in "form[s] of protest against colonial administration's repressive measures" (31).<sup>60</sup> Rohlehr contributes to this discussion by noting that in the 1930's, "calypso would also become the major forum for the expression of working class dissent and ... would see the paradox of a formalisation of state censorship of the performance of calypso" (*Calypso & Society* 125). The increased repression of calypso by colonial administrations confirmed and acknowledged the pivotal role calypso played in Afro-Trinidadian resistance to British colonialism and even more significant, the role it would continue to play. State censorship not only failed to silence calypsonians but instead it also fueled them to "express themselves with remarkable freedom and continue to be the bearers of and commentators on a living folklore, most of which had become forbidden by laws passed" (Rohlehr *Calypso & Society* 125). Guilbalt notes that this resistance was not only palpable in the lyrics of calypso but also in linguistic style (58). In the early 1930's, calypsonians abandoned the use of British English for the local dialects and idioms that were used by the working class.

In *The Political Calypsonian*, Louis Regis recognizes the calypsonian's role in the struggle for independence, praising him as the articulator of independence: "[I]t was fitting that the calypsonian be the herald of independence because he had long championed the national forces and movements agitating for self-rule and statehood" (ix). Atilla the Hun, Growling Tiger, The Mighty Chalkdust, and Black Stalin are all known

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<sup>60</sup> The jamette carnival was the festival of the working poor African descendants. It was marked by ribaldry, vulgar dances, and derisive songs that directly contrasted the French Creole upper-class carnival. In *Trinidad Carnival*, Errol Hill writes that the term comes from the "French *diameter*, the 'other half,' or underworld character" (26).

for their political commentary. In the case of the Mighty Sparrow, he joined forces with the PNM (People's National Movement) to help push their political agenda. In his assessment of "The Sparrow Factor," Regis identifies the famed calypsonian "as one of the major planks of [the] PNM public relations campaign" (4). Sparrow demonstrated his support for the prime minister and party leader of the PNM, Dr. Eric Williams, through calypsos such as "William the Conqueror" (1956), PAYE (1958) "Leave the Dam Doctor" (1959), and "Present Government" (1961). But remaining true to the character of the calypsonian, Sparrow also wrote calypsos such as "No Doctor No" (1957) and "We Like It So" (1982), expressing his dissatisfaction with the prime minister and the PNM. This shift reflected a changing sentiment amongst the people expressing their growing disillusionment with the policies of the Williams' administration, thus functioning as a recorder of political and social movements on the island. Sparrow is also credited with forever changing the genre in his determination to push boundaries with his explicit sexual lyrics, his direct and often scathing criticism of the social conditions of Trinidad, his incisive support of party politics in the country, as well as his sexually charged performances. Rohlehr addresses the manner in which Sparrow has left his mark on the art form noting that,

calypso freedom was practically rewritten, the boundaries redefined by Sparrow, whose risqué calypsos were more risqué than any had ever been before. His political calypsos, blending raw vitality with pointed commentary [...] also set new boundaries for incisive criticism at a time when Dr. Eric Williams held the nation spellbound in the palm of his hand. His gyrations on the stage, the truly grotesque, macabre laughter of something like the 'Congo Man,' would certainly not have been possible and, if possible, would not have been permitted in the 1930's. ("The Calypsonian as Artist" 10)

Sparrow's success was possible because the people of Trinidad were willing to embrace the new direction in which he propelled calypso music. His willingness to break away from tradition demonstrated and encouraged new possibilities for expressing national identities and articulating national subjectivities, particularly in relation to performances of masculinity. Sparrow championed male promiscuity as a marker of his masculinity, even going as far as to discuss openly sexual acts in his calypsos that were and still are illegal in Trinidad such as oral sex. Songs such as "May May," a song about oral sex, served as direct challenges to the shaping of a national subjectivity around moral standards of decency both by colonial and national administrations.

His insistence on artistic freedom made a clear statement against the cultural politics employed in nationalist agendas and helped to expand notions of national belonging in a political landscape agitating for self-rule and self-identity. Sparrow challenged the notions of social control and national policing of cultural art forms, most pointedly in his criticism of Eric Williams. In "The Sparrow Factor," Regis suggests that The Mighty Sparrow's relationship to Dr. Eric Williams and the PNM extended beyond mere admiration and support. He cites an interview with Sparrow where he states that he was "called in 'for consultations'" alluding to the opinion that he was possibly commissioned to write his pro-Williams calypsos. In *Inward Hunger*, Eric Williams also acknowledges Sparrow's unwavering support of the PNM and the vital role he played in furthering the agenda of the party.<sup>61</sup> Despite this support, as previously mentioned, he also used his calypsos to express dissatisfaction with certain policies of the Williams' administration. As Rohlehr illustrates, this expressed dissent opened up the

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<sup>61</sup> See p. 201 and 248.

possibilities of direct challenge to Williams' aspirations for the country and a particular brand of nationalism delineated by the Williams administration.

The Mighty Sparrow also effectively renounced the perpetuation of a monolithic depiction of nation that sought to dictate his evolution as an artist. I mention this because the subject matter of Sparrow's calypsos, ranging from socio-political calypsos such as "Jean and Dinah" (1956) and "Present Government" (1961), to sexually charged calypsos like "Mr. Rake and Scrape" (1961) and "The Village Ram" (1964), and calypsos against "Badjohns" (1974), bears an uncanny resemblance to that of Lovelace's fictional character Philo. Much like The Mighty Sparrow, Philo's calypsos cover a broad range of subjects, constantly changing in a manner that reflects the attitudes and temperament of the people. But more importantly, Philo's most striking similarity to Sparrow is in the manner in which he makes "a bluffing mockery at himself and those who punished him" (228). Rohlehr refers to this strategy as an "attempt at rebellion [...]": that of accepting and according heroic status to the very quality and values that are rejected as antiheroic, antisocial and damnable by 'respectable' society" ("The Calypsonian as Artist" 11). And while this is in no way considered an identifying marker of political commentary, it is in fact a political act in that it denies censure and control over their careers as artists. Philo changes the lyrical content of his calypsos from political to sexual, despite the negative reaction he knows it will garner from the members of the hill who uphold the African warriorhood as a marker of national identity. He does so to win national competitions and, in turn, propel his success in the industry.

Calypso competitions played a pivotal role in the professionalization of the musical genre by greatly increasing the earning potential of calypsonians who were

successful in these competitions. This is not only because of the monetary prizes awarded but because national competitions “serve as a passport for regional and international tours” (Guilbalt 71). That is, those calypsonians selected for performances and recordings abroad are inevitably those who have been successful at home as evidenced by their ability to win state sponsored competitions. This knowledge prompts Philo to alter his calypsos to meet the demands of the rapidly emerging middle class and ultimately that of the calypso judges.<sup>62</sup> He is aware of an expanding audience that does not necessarily subscribe to the monolithic representation of national identity that informs the masculine performances associated with the African warriorhood that Lovelace has so carefully delineated. As a result, he abandons his political calypsos because “the people,” do not want to hear them. It is important to note that when Philo refers to “the people” he is referring to the rapidly growing middle-class of Trinidad. It is this audience that he is targeting in his decision to alter the contents of his calypsos as his political calypsos could possibly ostracize those who do not necessarily subscribe to the particular brand of nationalism championed by the African warriorhood. Philo explains to Aldrick:

I know you must be saying that I change, that this is not my style, my kinda song, that I ain't protesting again, I ain't singing against the bad things in the place. But, man you have to sing what the people want to hear[...] Man year in year out, I singing about how people hungry, how officials ain't doing their duty, and what I get, man? What I get? (112-3)

Philo understands that if he is ever going to position himself as a competitive calypsonian, he must “adjust his tune and tone to conditions within his home circle, within calypsodom and within the larger society” (Regis xiii). Although Philo tries to convince Aldrick that he is making a necessary change, he is unsure of his decision. This

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<sup>62</sup> See Dudley's *Carnival Music in Trinidad* and Oxaal's *Race and Revolutionary Consciousness*.

is evident in the fact that he decides to test “The Axe-Man” on a rainy night when there are not many people in the tent. Lovelace writes, “And maybe if it wasn’t for the rain that night he might never have sung it. But that night the crowd wasn’t big and the MC wasn’t good at all” (229). Philo chooses to test his new calypso at this time because he knows that if the people do not like it, the damage will be minimal.

His decision to test his calypso is not an uncommon practice among calypsonians. Rohlehr notes the importance of testing in a musical genre that has become commodified by the global market, recognizing that the “home community ... is the laboratory in which each new [calypso] is tested” (“The State” 38). This testing is important because it allows Philo to assess his understanding of the sentiments of the people, and his assessment is correct. Not until he performs “The Axe-Man” does he succeed in making it to the finals in the competition. As Lovelace observes in the novel, this calypso helps him to “survive” in a cutthroat competitive market (231). But the significance of Philo’s change in subject matter does not end there. The implications are much greater. In abandoning his politically charged calypsos for that of “The Axe Man,” “Women Running Me Down,” and “I am the Ape Man Not Tarzan,” Philo is not only catering to an expanding market, but he is also continuing to act in the capacity of a recorder of the social conditions in Trinidad. Indeed, he is chronicling the social decline of the hill that Aldrick laments. When Philo tells Aldrick that he must sing what the people want to hear, Aldrick replies, “ ‘I understand, man,’ Aldrick said. ‘Yeh.’ And indeed he understood too well” (113). Although Aldrick is bothered by Philo’s new calypso, what bothers him even more is that he fully understands that through his calypso, Philo is describing a movement that is sweeping through Trinidad. That is, the African warriorhood that so

critically informs his dragon mas is collectively being abandoned for more expansive conceptions of how national subjectivity and identity are constructed and performed.

In *Governing Sound*, Guilbalt cogently argues “calypso has been simultaneously the target of several competing powers and the terrain through which the production of national subjects has been instantiated and intensely debated” (Guilbalt 5). Of particular interest is the role that competitions play in governing the cultural politics of calypso. While calypso competitions were by no means an invention of the colonial administration, along with the upper and middle classes, it was able to assume control of these competitions as a means of controlling the content of the calypsos. They did so by offering monetary and material awards to attract the most talented pool of calypsonians.<sup>63</sup>

As Errol Hill notes, there have been many attempts to enforce the contents of calypsos. As early as 1868 an ordinance was passed banning “the singing of any profane song or ballad”(Hill 60). However, as he points out, this only resulted in the increase of vulgar calypsos. By gaining control of the competitions by offering prizes and the promise of international fame, the colonial administration and the bourgeoisie were able to use calypso competitions as a political technology not only to control their content by requiring the lyrics of calypso be submitted prior to the competition but to begin shaping a racialized national subjectivity. By 1939, the Calypso King competition was formed. Despite the use of competitions as a restrictive device, calypso competitions provided opportunities for calypsonians that previously were not available to them, namely international exposure, industry recordings, and performances. Calypso competitions also

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<sup>63</sup> Calypso competitions began in the 1920’s with the advent of the Calypso Tent. As the popularity of the tents grew and admission fees were accessed, competitions were instituted as a way to draw crowds. For more on the genesis of the calypso competition see Errol Hill’s *The Trinidad Carnival* and Jocelyn Guilbalt’s *Governing Sound*.

allowed for new methodologies of creativity and innovation that at one time were not possible.

Calypsonians were not completely at the mercy of competition judges as recognized by the Mighty Sparrow who not only transformed the art of calypso but the practices associated with the competition as well. In particular, he recognized the judges and by extension the state's need to appease calypsonians if calypso were to be effectively utilized as a political technology of the state in perpetuating a national identity. In 1957, a year after winning the title of Calypso Monarch, the Mighty Sparrow and Lord Melody, another popular calypsonian of the time, boycotted the Dimanche Gras, the national competition where the Calypso Monarch is decided. The boycott was a direct response to the inequitable disparity between the monetary awards and prizes awarded to the Calypso Monarch and that of the Queen of carnival.<sup>64</sup> This action directly affected the national competition as the Carnival Development Committee's (CDC) ability to attract a sizeable audience, and subsequent revenue was hindered without the cooperation of the headlining calypsonians. At this juncture the CDC began to take steps to sufficiently reward the winner of the annual Calypso Monarch Competition. This moment in the history of Trinidad's calypso greatly contributed to the push for the professionalization of the art form, which Rohlehr argues began in the 1930's with Attila the Hun and the Roaring Lion (*Calypso & Society* 456).

Historically, the decision by artists to push the genre into new terrain with provocative lyrics can be read as an alternative response to the state's attempt to control the lyrical content of calypsos. If state sponsored carnival committees, such as the

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<sup>64</sup> For an account of this boycott, see Natasha Barnes' *Cultural Conundrums*.

National Carnival Committee (NCC formerly the CDC), disavow socio-political commentary, then new methodologies of offending and challenging the status quo are pursued. Like Sparrow, Philo is heralded for his ability to subvert society's standards of decency by the emergent middle-class, and yet he is ostracized for contributing to what the members of the hill perceive as the denigration of a national art form and by extension national identity as expressed through the art form. Philo's precarious positioning engages discourses surrounding questions of national identity and multiple belongings within the national landscape. The choices he makes in altering his lyrics assert not only his artistic freedom but freedom in exploring new ways of expressing his masculinity and national identity that are not confined by tradition.

Like Philo, calypso competitions played a formative role in the development of Sparrow's career. Often referred to as the King of Calypso, this moniker references the numerous calypso competitions won by the Mighty Sparrow. Guilbalt acknowledges that he "has acquired his reputation as the king of the kings of calypso by winning not only a series of Calypso Monarch and Road March competitions, but also by winning the Calypso King of the World competition both times it was held" (Guilbalt 78). While Sparrow's success is in part owing to his performance in state sponsored calypso competitions, his success in Road March competitions is also notable. Unlike state sponsored competitions, the Road March is not adjudicated by a panel of middle-class judges but by the Trinidad populace. In this competition, the winner is determined by the number of times a calypso is played on the road, indicating the opinion of the largely working-class populace.

Philo's survivability in the profession then depends on his ability to strike a delicate balance between state sponsored competitions and capturing the sentiments of the people. This latter characteristic of the calypso is vital in understanding the significance of the calypso tent and the role that the audience plays in the degree of success that Philo attains. Although judges select the title of Calypso Monarch, the audience has a considerable influence on the popularity of a calypsonian. Guilbalt emphasizes the audience's pivotal role in determining the winner of the Calypso Monarch by pointing out that the National Carnival Committee (NCC) jury, that is the panel of judges who will ultimately decide who will be crowned the Calypso Monarch, will attend the calypso tents to determine which calypsonians will advance to the semi-finals. Through this exposure to the tent, the judges will certainly be aware of the public's choice often through a display of vociferous support that "the jury can hardly ignore" (Guilbalt 77). A successful calypsonian is called back to the stage several times, an honor that is bestowed upon a select few. When Philo first sings "The Axe Man," he "get[s] three encores for it" (112).

I am the axe man cutting forests down  
 I am the axe man working all over town  
 If you have a tree to cut I am the man to call  
 I never put my axe on a tree and it didn't break and fall. (230)

The next year he would win the Calypso King Crown for his calypso "Women Running Me Down."

All over town, I can't get a rest  
 Ah never thought I would meet the day  
 when woman is a pest  
 But I stand up to the test  
 Because I is the axe man, I is the best. (230)

While these calypsos are a far cry from his former political calypsos, they still bear the distinctive marking of the genre. The use of double entendre, the double meaning of the phallic axe, is a distinctive characteristic of the Trinidad calypso that dates back to the early nineteenth century. The comic nature of these calypsos appeals to Philo's audience, and they reward him with their reception. Philo acknowledges the importance of singing what the people want to hear if he is to distinguish himself in the musical genre. As Philo approaches the age of forty-two, he realizes that he must alter his style and musical content as the measures of success have changed. It is not until he makes these changes that Philo begins to experience success as a calypsonian.

In "The Calypsonian as Artist," Gordon Rohlehr traces the use of "more pronounced ... sexual themes" in the calypso to "the Yankee invasion between 1941 and 1945" (9), but he attributes "the grotesque excesses in sexuality" to Sparrow (9, 10). Despite the criticism that Sparrow received and still receives today for transforming the genre in this way, this shift has gained momentum. It has done so because sexuality has become a standard by which to measure manhood. This inundation of sexual themes is not only confined to calypso but is also present in other genres of Caribbean music such as Trinidad's soca and Jamaica's dancehall. In societies where the majority are poor and confined to jungles, shanties, and barrack yards, where a man is stripped of his ability to help himself, it can be argued that sexual potency becomes one form of currency in which to negotiate his manhood. My use of the term "sexual potency" does not refer to the ability to procreate, although Lovelace's character Ms. Olive demonstrates that this too is

a form of currency for the dispossessed.<sup>65</sup> Rather, my use of the term refers directly to what Philo's calypso "The Axe Man" terms "cutting forests down," celebrating male sexual promiscuity.

As much as Philo's "The Axe Man" appeals to the people of Trinidad, the calypso that takes the country by storm is "Hooligans in Port of Spain:"

Hooligans in Port of Spain messing up the place  
 Last night one of them slap my girl in she face  
 The next time they see me, they better beware  
 I have an axe in my hand, a pistol in my waist  
 When my gun shoot off the police could make their case

Why they so jealous I really don't know  
 I was their friend no so long ago  
 Since I start to get fame they grinding their teeth  
 They ready to eat me up like salmon meat  
 The next time they see me they better come straight  
 I have a dagger in my hand, a pistol in my waist,  
 When I protect myself, the police could make their case. (163)

It is this calypso that earns him countless encores and ultimately "consolidate[s] his position as a top singer" (231). The success of this calypso, played incessantly on radio stations and jukeboxes, is indicative of Road March success. Philo is inspired to write this song after he is literally and figuratively struck down by Fisheye on the corner of Calvary Hill. When Philo comes to the hill in a new car, wearing new clothes, a bottle of scotch in hand, and two women on his arms, his perfidious abandonment of the hill is confirmed in the eyes of his former friends as he has abandoned the unspoken code of non-possession. At the onset of the novel Lovelace introduces the inhabitants of Alice Road as those who "[hold] their poverty as a possession...making a religion of laziness and neglect and stupidity and waste" (10). This symbolic act of resistance, their eschewment of

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<sup>65</sup> I borrow this term from Gerard Aching's "Dispossession, Nonpossession, and Self-Possession" in *Masking and Power* (53).

possessions, becomes central to their rebellion against the machinations that have contributed to their economic disenfranchisement. Although Lovelace imparts the significance that possession plays in the narrative of *Dragon*, in *Masking and Power*, Gerard Aching interrogates the role that nonpossession plays in the manifestation of social protest during carnival (Aching 52). He argues that the ideology of non-possession entails “a historical practice and ideology ... [that gives] rise to a proud aristocracy...and generates a humanism that runs counter to the country’s particular post independence initiatives to gain economic strength” (53). By virtue of this ideology, Philo’s success as a calypsonian and his subsequent ability to possess women, fancy clothes, and a new car forfeits his right to rebellion on the hill. But as Diana Brydon points out in *Trusting the Contradictions* that, “their rebellion is doubly self defeating: not only does it compel them to behave in ways that maintain their poverty, but, more importantly, it also condemns them to continue thinking within the terms of reference established by their oppressors” (322).

Fisheye’s resultant physical intimidation of Philo is not only evidence of their unwillingness to discard outmoded binaristic thinking established by their oppressors, but it is also symbolic of the warriorhood’s unwillingness to accept national subjectivities that do not conform to markers of national identity embraced by the warriorhood. The violent act is an attempt to deny Philo multiple senses of belonging within the national space by sending a clear message that he cannot belong to both Calvary Hill and the emergent middle- class simultaneously. It also reemphasizes the centrality of cultural politics to the formation of national identities. The rejection of Philo by his peers on the corner reveals the ways in which Philo’s performances are enmeshed in the struggle over

cultural politics in a vexed national landscape. Their disavowal of him cannot simply be reduced to a visceral rejection of his fame and material markers of his monetary success. Rather it is his perceived abandonment of a national identity that is distinguished by rebellion that prompts his comrades on the hill to abandon him.

Unlike “The Axe Man,” “Hooligans in Port of Spain” does not grab the people’s attention because of its elements of fantasy or comedy, but because it expresses their growing resentment of the bad johns on the corner. The calypso marks the moment when Philo begins to incorporate new ways of expressing his manhood as a direct response to his former friends’ denial of his multiple national subjectivities. Ultimately what he is defending is his right to have the ability to function in his chosen career as a professional artist without the mandate of projecting a specific or finite national subjectivity. Thus, Philo’s axe begins to incorporate additional nuances of phallic symbolism, becoming a weapon against the bad johns of Trinidad who are resistant to the notion of multiple belongings within the national landscape.

At this crucial juncture Philo’s “people” begin to encompass the members of Calvary Hill and like communities who have abandoned the ideology of non-possession in hopes of joining Trinidad’s middle-class. Much like Philo, “these were people who had inherited the rebellion bequeathed them by their parents, upheld by Bad Johns, Dragons, Stickmen, bursting forth in the steel bands, crowning warriors in Calvary Hill, Laventille, John John, Belmont, St. James, Morvant, but people for whom times had changed” (163).<sup>66</sup> For the members of these communities, their very way of life is changing,

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<sup>66</sup> Along with Lovelace’s fictitious Calvary Hill, he cites communities that surround Port of Spain. These communities indeed provide a blue print for Calvary Hill, but more importantly, they serve as the center

prompting the abandonment of their rebellion for the promise of economic advancement and stability. Just as Philo is forced into recognizing that he cannot occupy both spaces, comrade on the hill and internationally renowned calypsonian “singing calypso all over the world, going to America and England. ... a big shot” (197), the people of Trinidad reach the same conclusion:

Philo’s attack on the Corner had come at a time when multitudes of people keenly felt the need to cut their ties with the Corners in their own communities. ... Something had happened. They had jobs now, had responsibility now for the surviving of their families, they could no longer afford rebellion at the Corner. They felt guilty turning away from it. Yet, they needed to move on. They had to move on. But they could not move on with that guilt. They could not move on, with the Corner still part of them. They had to choose, they felt; and, it was because they were unable to hold in their minds the two contradictory ideas – their resistance and surviving, their rebellion and their decency; because they felt that they had to be one or the other in order to move on, they needed to cut ties with the Corner. So it was that Philo’s calypso became a statement for them all. This would be the epitaph to their rebellion. (163-4)

Although Lovelace makes it very clear that the “people” of Trinidad have nothing to gain and too much to lose by turning their backs on “the rebellion bequeathed them,” he acknowledges the struggle of a newly independent nation to manage conflicting ideologies, conflicting constructions of national identity—that of rebellion grounded in a history of slavery and resistance and that of economic progress (163). Embedded in these competing ideologies are binaristic constructions of national identity and national subjectivity. The construction of the African warriorhood present in the novel draws upon recuperated traditions that no longer have relevancy for the citizens of the post-colonial state. In *Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon notes that, “the desire to attach oneself to

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from which the growing demands for social justice and recognition were fostered and provided the steam that would propel the Black Power Revolt in Trinidad which is reproduced in the novel.

tradition or bring abandoned traditions to life again does not only mean going against the current of history but also opposing one own's people" (224). The citizens of the nation-state are seemingly confronted with a choice that denies multiple senses of belonging—the ability to remain a member of their communities while simultaneously advancing themselves, their families, and their nation economically as illustrated in the case of Philo. Upon achieving fame, Philo considers his success to be the success of Calvary Hill. However, the ideology of non-possession championed by the African warriorhood embodied by Fisheye and Aldrick disavows multiple senses of belonging in the national landscape. This is apparent in the manner in which Lovelace addresses class and mobility. His repeated references to “moving on” indicates that he is keenly aware that for the people that embrace Philo's calypso, mobility is a key element not only in their ascension to middle-class status, but in their survival as well. Therefore the people of the hill and surrounding communities feel that they have no other option but to relinquish their claims to rebellion and tradition in order to survive in a society where class mobility seems to be their only chance for survival. Their rebellion then becomes one positioned in opposition to the ideology of non-possession and a brand of national subjectivity that condemns them to poverty. Philo's calypso indeed marks an important juncture in the laborious birthing of a new nation.

In “Authenticity, Commerce, and Nostalgia,” Garth Green writes, “what may have been a form of resistance in the past may no longer hold much political or symbolic power in the present. Clinging to such forms may be a form of oppression itself” (79). The insistence of Lord Kitchener and Black Stalin, in the opening epigraphs, to assert calypso as an art form that contributes greatly to the shaping of a national identity rooted

in an African ancestry is mirrored in the cultural politics of the African warriorhood in Lovelace's *Dragon*. As Green acknowledges, their insistence on clinging to outmoded and anachronistic methods of rebellion that have lost their political and symbolic power in a rapidly evolving national landscape results in their attempts to oppress those who are incorporating new markers of national subjectivity. Thus, Philo comes to champion those that are seeking a national subjectivity that is tolerant of multiple national belongings, particularly in relation to class.

### **Drawing Parallels: The Cultural Politics of Indian Nationalisms and the Performance of Female Sexuality**

Even though calypso has been established as a black, male, working class tradition, women have asserted themselves within the calypso arena. Women's participation in calypso tradition dates back to the jayette carnival where women sang derisive and vulgar songs in the streets. However, as calypso took on a more formal structure and performances were no longer performed in the streets but calypso tents, women became further marginalized. In the 1960's, Calypso Rose struggled to gain recognition in the calypso arena. However, male calypsonians were not the only ones to challenge her presence in the calypso tent. Women's groups and religious organizations also criticized her participation in calypso particularly her use of sexually implicit double entendres. In 1978, she won the Dimanche Gras, which resulted in "redesignat[ing] the title Calypso King as Calypso Monarch, thereby conceding that women as well as men could be leading figures in the national forum of calypso competitions" (Guilbalt 103).<sup>67</sup> While the example of Calypso Rose and others such as Denyse Plummer, Crazy and Drupatee Ramgoonai suggest that parameters in calypso forged around race, gender, and class have certainly been obscured, the participation of Indo-Trinidadian women in calypso and the Indian influenced chutney-soca has received vociferous criticism not

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<sup>67</sup> For more on Calypso Rose see Guilbalt's "Calypso Rose: Challenging Male Hegemony in Calypso" (102-11). In *Governing Sound*, Guilbalt also chronicles the careers of calypsonians that have firmly established themselves as practitioners of calypso even though they do not meet the criteria of "true, true" calypsonians.

from Afro-Trinidadians but Indo-Trinidadians who object to public displays of Indian female sexuality in the interest of preserving Indian nationalisms.<sup>68</sup>

In *Mobilizing India*, Tejaswini Niranjana expresses her discomfort at the attempts of East Indians in Trinidad to claim her, an Indian national, as their own and position her “*against* the dominant ‘African’ culture” (20). She explains,

one of the main causes of my discomfort in Trinidad was the encounter with ‘modern Indians’ whose modernity did not seem to have been formed by the narratives of nation and citizenship that were part of my own interpretive and existential horizon in India. (20)

Indeed, to speak of Indian nationalisms in Trinidad encompasses a conundrum, as Indian nationalisms in Trinidad are mobilized not around notions of nation-state and citizenship but rather cultural difference. This difference is embodied in Emancipation and Arrival Day celebrations. These two national holidays mark the genesis of the two dominant ethnic group’s respective relationships to the nation, more specifically, the manner in which they came to the island.

The emancipation of African slaves is commemorated by the celebration of Emancipation Day. In contrast, Arrival Day does not mark the end of indentureship but rather the arrival of Indians to the colony signifying that they were not enslaved like their African counterparts. This difference has been formative in shaping inter-ethnic relationships in Trinidad on the basis of cultural difference. While emancipation signals the liberation of African slaves, it also serves as a reminder that slaves were forcefully removed from their homelands and cut off from their ancestral culture. Indian nationalist narratives emphasize the “arrival” as evidence that Indians came willingly with religion,

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<sup>68</sup> While the term “Indian Nationalisms” seemingly refers to the nationalisms in the nation-state of India, I co-opt Tejaswini Niranjana’s use of the term to emphasize the ways India gets recreated or is recuperated in Indo-Trinidadian cultural spaces.

culture, and language intact. However, these narratives occlude the deceitful practices engaged to entice Indians to come to the Caribbean as indentures as well as the slave-like conditions they experienced under the indentured system as discussed in the previous chapter. Instead, these narratives are constructed to not only emphasize difference between Africans and Indians but also to establish and maintain separate cultural spaces within the nation-state.

In May 2005, during an Arrival Day Address at the El Dorado Shiv Mandir (Hindu temple), Dr. Elizabeth Rosabelle Sieusarran lamented the perceived westernization of East Indians in Trinidad that she argues, “has resulted in the prevalence of inter-caste, inter-religious and inter-racial marriages” (Bowman n.p.). She continues,

The Indian community has to decide how to handle the offspring of this significant group locally referred to as Douglas. Do we accept them or ostracize them? Whatever course is adopted, the fragmentation of the Indian community must be avoided. (Bowman n.p.)

The import of Sieusarran’s implicit rejection of the dougla figure at a Hindu temple on Arrival Day is multivalent. Her anxiety concerning the dougla is not only grounded in biological discourses but also more importantly cultural discourses. Douglas pose a threat to Indian nationalisms because they symbolically represent the perceived dilution of Indian culture that results in East Indians “imitating” Creole culture (Bowman n.p.). Sieusarran’s warning hinges on the misconception encompassed in Arrival Day, that Indian culture, specifically Hindu culture, is pure, as it did not experience the same quality of fragmentation and ruptures of African culture as a result of forced migration. However, many scholars have chronicled the fragmentation of Indian culture in the Caribbean, particularly in regards to caste.

In *Caste in Overseas Indian Communities*, Artur Niehoff and Barton Schwartz argue that the caste system of India was abandoned in Trinidad for class hierarchies marked by education and economics. There are several factors that contributed to the breakdown of the caste system in Trinidad: physical contact between members of different castes, food from common rations, crowded accommodations and the general impossibility of segregation of any kind” (Niranjana 39). Niranjana also notes that due to scarcity of female indentures, cast endogamy could not be practiced which resulted in inter-caste, inter-religious, and inter-racial unions. However, the erosion of the caste system was not the only place where Indian customs were altered to accommodate their new world experiences. Niranjana observes that Hosay, traditionally a Muslim observance became an Indian festival in which Indian Muslims, Hindus, and Christians participated. Thus, a large body of scholarship exists that demonstrates that Sieusseran’s warnings against inter-caste, inter-religious, and inter-relationships relationships are not only divisive but also anachronistic as these practices were actively being abandoned during indentureship and are not the result of the creolization or westernization of East Indians but rather an adaptation to a new space. Responding to Sieusseran’s anxieties concerning the dougla in Trinidad society and the dilution of Indian culture, Sheila Rampersad argues:

Culture is not a collection of rusty heirlooms that one generation passes to another. Culture adapts to survive. Indian cultures are composites of some datable and many undatable historical movements of peoples. Something called Indian Culture has survived this long in Trinidad and Tobago because it is dynamic, malleable, and adaptable not because it is static and immutable. (Rampersad n.p.)

The statement made by Sieusseran does not reflect or acknowledge the dynamicism or malleability of Indian culture in Trinidad. Instead she operates from the premise that

Indian culture is authentic and preserved. She participates in the construction of an Indian identity not as a model for national identity as discussed in chapter two but as a counter-identity that emphasizes difference from national identities grounded in Afro-Caribbean culture. Her concern for young East Indians “imitating” certain behavior is indeed a concern that Indian cultural difference will be effaced in a national landscape that has embraced African culture as a marker for national identities. The question of “imitating” behaviors has been especially salient when it comes to the expression of Indian female sexual identity through calypso and chutney-soca.

Puri, Niranjana, and Mehta have engaged the cultural debates surrounding the public performance of Indian female sexual identity in the musical of genres of calypso and chutney-soca. More specifically, they call attention to the virulent opposition Indian women have faced from the Hindu bourgeoisie class, most notably men, in response to their emergence on a national stage. Collectively, they document the charges made by Indian scholars and religious organizations such as the Hindu Women’s Organization (HWO) and the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha that accuses these women of vulgarity and the denigration of Indian culture. Similar to the statements made by Siusseran, these charges are couched in discourses concerning the creolization of Indian women and by extension Indian culture.

The inextricable linkages drawn between Indian female subjectivity and Indian culture can be traced to Indian colonial history. In “The Nationalist Resolution of the Women’s Question,” Partha Chatterjee discusses the dual response to British colonialism emphasizing how gender and space are salient to the formation of Indian nationalism. Chatterjee notes that while Indian men were forced to assume western customs in the

public sphere, women maintained and preserved Indian culture in the domestic sphere. Because the locus of Indian culture became confined to the home, women became the bearers of Indian culture. Niranjana contributes that, “[t]he new woman envisaged by nationalism was ‘modern’ but not heedlessly westernized” (75). Indian expression of women’s sexuality thus was also confined to the home. In contemporary Indian culture, the public display of women’s sexuality is notably discouraged and policed. For example, movies made by the Bollywood industry, which is saturated by films with romantic themes do not include intimate contact between men and women. When American film star Richard Gere kissed Indian Bollywood star Shilpa Shetty in a public forum, they were both initially charged with breaking anti-obscenity laws and their images were burned in the streets of Mumbai. However, in Trinidad where Indian nationalisms are not tied to the nation-state and thus cannot be policed, the argument for cultural purity becomes salient in preserving Indian nationalisms in a plural society.

Mehta, Puri, and Niranjana trace the policing of Indian female sexuality in Trinidad to the uneven sex ratio amongst indentures as well as religious ideology. Because men far outnumbered women, female indentured servants were able, to some extent, abandon restrictive cultural practices that they would have been subjected to in India. Not only were they able to marry outside their caste, but also they often abandoned their husbands for suitors who were better able to provide for them and some even married as many as four husbands at a time. Mehta argues that these practices threatened the masculinity of male indentures as they were unable to restrict and control the mobility and by extension the sexuality of these women. The unprecedented control Indian women maintained over their bodies and sexuality was met with opposition from

both colonial authorities and Indian men. While colonial authorities often turned to religion in attempt to control Indian women's sexuality, Indian men often turned to more violent alternatives that included rape and wife murders.<sup>69</sup> The confinement of Indian women to the domestic sphere and the sometimes violent suppression of Indo-Trinidadian women's sexuality provide a cultural context for understanding the virile response of the Hindu community generally and Indo-Trinidadian men specifically to the participation of Indo-Trinidadian women in calypso and chutney-soca on a national stage.

Chutney is a local term for an Indo-Trinidadian style of music and dance. Traditionally, chutney, which involves sexually suggestive pelvic movements referred to as wining, was confined to exclusively female spaces referred to as *matikor* space. Mehta defines *matikor* as a, "woman-centered and woman-dominated ceremony of sexual ribaldry on the eve of a Hindu wedding ceremony" (97). She argues that the *matikor* space is marked by female empowerment and offers a liberating alternative space for Indo-Trinidad women to assert their sexuality. However, the practice of *matikor* is bound up in Indian nationalist concepts that restrict women to culturally defined spaces—an extension of *purdah*, which secludes Indian women from outside influences and more specifically the male gaze.<sup>70</sup> And while *matikor* functions as a space where Indo-

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<sup>69</sup> Wife murders refer to the practice of Indian indentured men killing their wives for sexual immorality with other men or abandoning the conjugal home for another lover/husband. The colonial administration took these murders seriously as they decreased the already low presence of Indian women on sugar plantations. However, colonial administrations did not address the immorality of these murders; rather they emphasized the sexual immorality of Indian women and implemented religious instruction to correct their immoral practices. For more on the sexual and marital practices of indentured women in Trinidad and Guyana, see Niranjana's *Mobilizing India* and Basdeo Mangru's *The Elusive El Dorado*.

<sup>70</sup> The term *purdah* literally means veil or curtain and was practiced in South Asia, which includes Northern India, the region were many Trinidadian and Caribbean indentured servants originated from. *Purdah* is practiced in two ways: the veiling of a woman's face and body or the physical seclusion of women through structures, walls, and screen. The overriding purpose of *purdah* is to prevent women from interacting with men other than her husband and to demonstrate respect to her in-laws. Thus, a woman does not begin to

Trinidadian women can freely express their sexuality, its purpose serves to ready the bride for her conjugal responsibilities within her impending marriage. Chutney-soca relocates these chutney performances from the confined female space of the Hindu religious ceremony to the national stage. This shift from private to public sphere lies at the center of debates surrounding chutney-soca and has been heavily associated with the chutney-soca artist Drupatee Ramgoonai.<sup>71</sup>

Drupatee caused a maelstrom when she entered the calypso tent with her song “Lick Down Mih Nani.” Her performance earned the immediate rebuke of the Hindu/Indian community for a number of reasons: the sexual double entendre for the term “nani,” which in Hindi means maternal grandmother but is also used as an expletive to reference the vagina; wearing a traditional Indo-Trinidadian wardrobe in an ‘African’ space; and her sexually suggestive performance. However, as Niranjana argues, her greatest transgression

has to do with the display in a public space of a cultural form that used to be confined to the home. The public sphere here is considered to be an ‘African’ realm, so the making public of chutney (and its rendering in English) necessarily involves making it available to the gaze of Afro-Trinidadians. (112)

The anxiety articulated is not just for the devaluing of a cultural art form but also the perceived access it grants Afro-Trinidadian men into the private realm of Indian women. In more specific terms, Indo-Trinidadian performances of female sexuality are perceived as invitations to African men opening a pathway for the “douglarization” of Indian culture. The Hindu patriarchal response and the attempt to prevent Indo-Trinidadian women’s participation in chutney-soca parallels the cultural politics that inform Philo’s

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practice *purdah* until she is married. This practice informs the *matikor* space where the bride is secluded from men.

<sup>71</sup> For a more exhaustive account of the controversy surrounding Drupatee, see Niranjana and Puri.

performance in *Dragon* as the participation of Indo-Trinidadian women in calypso and chutney-soca refuses attempts of Indian nationalists to deny them multiple senses of belonging on a national stage. Instead, these women assert themselves not only as Indians but also citizens of the nation-state. They refuse notions of cultural difference advanced by Indian nationalists and instead proclaim Indian culture as a part of national culture much in the same way that Dorothy embraces Indian culture as Guyanese culture in *For the Love of My Name*. Most importantly, they resist the construction of Indian cultural practices that marginalize Indian women in the interest of preserving tradition and fail to acknowledge and account for the dynamic processes that Indian culture has undergone in order to adapt to the Indo-Caribbean experience. The participation and artistic freedom of women in the musical genre seek to devalue these performances on a national landscape to preserve cultural difference that has been defined by Hindu religious traditions.

#### **Chapter 4: Who Seh Ah Not a Gentleman: Mashing up the Boundary of a Colonial Inheritance**

Sport has been more than just a mirror to society; it has also been an active engine in the creation and preservation of power relationships (McDevitt 3).

While the previous chapters interrogate economies that are specific to “local” nation-states, this chapter expands the discussion to interrogate regional economies of identity, through the lens of West Indies cricket, to demonstrate that the centrality of gender to the formation of national identities in the Anglophone Caribbean is not confined to insular nation-states but is endemic to the region. West Indian cricket has always been more than just a sport. From its inception it has served as an ideological battleground where power dynamics could be established, enforced, and contested. Cricket as a cultural practice is bound up in the dialectical entanglements of colonizer and colonized, oppressor and oppressed. These entanglements, therefore, lie at the core of a vast corpus of scholarship that is concerned with the role of cricket in the socialization of West Indians, the establishment and preservation of race and class hierarchies in cricket, the symbolic liberation inherent in the performance of the game, and the formation of West Indian national identities through the cultural performance of cricket. This chapter contributes to this body of scholarship by interrogating how cricket becomes a cultural commodity in the perpetuation of a national identity that is based on a regional collective and dependent on gender constructs. West Indian masculinity, as performed through cricket, is dependent on constructions of the female as the abject Other. Furthermore, I will show how the sport has symbolically contributed and maintained the marginalization of women in the formation of national identity as it has received nominal attention in discourses concerning West Indian cricket and its inextricable relationship to cricket.

That is, while women remain “beyond the boundary” of West Indian cricket, they are central to the formation of West Indian masculinity through the cultural performance of cricket as supporters and interpreters of these performances.

In West Indian literature, cricket has emerged as a literary trope for interrogating power dynamics that are informed largely by colonialism and race in West Indian society. Embedded in and inextricable from these discourses are the construction of masculinity and the ways these constructions shape national identities. In her discussion of cricket as a negotiator of masculinity in pre-independent literature, Claire Westall observes that, “men and male identities are at once established and undermined, performed, and revealed as performance” (n.p.). She attributes the instability of these masculine performances to the legacy of colonialism. While cricket as a colonial inheritance inculcates West Indian males with a set of cultural values inherent in the game, it also serves as a vivid reminder of their colonized status and that their masculine performances via cricket do not extend into the quotidian routines of life. Their masculinity is in turn “undermined” or devalued, which results in alternative performances of masculinity that establish power and authority on the basis of gender dynamics. In her discussion of V.S. Naipaul’s *Miguel Street* and Errol John’s play *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl*, Westall pays particular attention to the perversion of the cricket bat as an instrument of play to a weapon used “to suppress, control and emasculate men of color before they re-direct it against their women folk” (Westall, n.p.). The resultant violence against women serves to reassert the masculinity of its perpetrators in a colonial society where they are confronted with daily reminders of their social and economic emasculation. In these texts, however, it is important to note that women are denied access to the cricket action in the novel.

Instead, they are excluded completely and contribute to the construction of masculinity in the domesticated space of the yard. However, in post-independence literature, the women's domestic space is expanded to the cricket grounds as affirmers of the masculine performance of cricket in a national landscape.

In post-independent West Indian literature, cricket remains an important literary trope. Cricket is employed as a critical tool to examine the formation of national identities through cultural performances that are directly informed by West Indian resistance to British colonialism.<sup>72</sup> However, the power dynamics that informs these contemporary masculine performances no longer engage dialectics between colonizer and colonized but rather male and female. These power dynamics produced along gender lines are formative in shaping hierarchies in the national landscape—ultimately granting men the governing power over shaping national identities. Masculine performances, from which these identities are produced, are instantiated by women who act as signifiers to these cultural performances. And while the focus has shifted from power relationships that are informed by colonialism, masculinity remains central to these cricket performances and the shaping of gendered hierarchies in the national landscape.

The relationship between national identity, masculinity, and cricket as a cultural practice is inextricable. Its genesis is located in the formation of English nationalism where national identities were firmly rooted in notions of English manhood. In “The Local and the Global,” Stuart Hall emphasizes the centrality of notions of masculinity to English nationalism through cultural practices. In observing the exclusion of women, Hall comments that, “a freeborn English person was clearly a freeborn English *man*. And

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<sup>72</sup> National identity as expressed through West Indian cricket is not confined to insular nation-states. Instead it encompasses a national identity whose locus is regional embracing a shared identity on the basis of resistance to colonialism.

the notion of fully buttoned-up, stiff upper-lip, corseted English masculinity is one of the means by which this particular cultural identity was very firmly stitched into place” (174). Cricket as the gentleman’s sport was vital in not only the espousal of markers of English masculinity but also the inculcation of English boys in the adaptation of English cultural practices that would prepare them for English manhood. In his scholarship on colonialism and cricket culture, Brian Moore writes that

cricket was not just seen as a sport for amusement and recreation, but as an instrument of socialisation: to train young disciplined men in the virtues of honour, fair play and honesty, decorum and etiquette, loyalty to one’s fellow ..., unquestioned obedience to authority ..., and hardiness in the face of adversity. (60-1)

While Moore is referring to the socialization of young English boys in the English public school system, the role of cricket in socializing colonial subjects to obedience was imperative in maintaining a productive work force as it was viewed as a panacea to social ills. In *May the Best Man Win*, Patrick McDevitt emphasizes the centrality of sport “within imperial contexts as a means for disseminating British ideals of masculinity” to its colonized subjects. Cricket came to serve as a conveyor of the social values that dictated English culture and behavior. In CLR James’ *Beyond A Boundary*, he reads the sport and culture of cricket as national allegory and a productive means for understanding the role the sport has played in the formation of West Indian national identity. Central to his musings is the role that masculinity played in his understanding of himself as a British

subject and a West Indian. Embedded in the autobiographical framework of James' narrative lies his testimony of the completeness in which cricket inculcated West Indians to the notions of British masculinity:

Before very long I acquired a discipline for which the only name is Puritan. I never cheated, I never appealed for a decision unless I thought the batsman was out, I never argued with the umpire, I never jeered at a defeated opponent, I never gave a friend a vote or a place by which any stretch of the imagination could be seen as belonging to the enemy or to a stranger. My defeats and disappointments I took as stoically as I could. If I caught myself complaining or making excuses I pulled up. If afterwards I remembered doing it I took an inward decision to try not to do it again. From the eight years of my existence. It has never left me. I learnt it as a boy, I have obeyed it as a man. (26-27)

The ethical code that governs cricket taught James the values of honesty, fair play, and stoicism. Ironically, it is this same ethical code that provided James and the colonized of the West Indies with a value system and lexicon that fueled their desire for social justice. Cricket was appropriated by West Indians and became “an integral part of the cultural practices which they absorbed as they grew into manhood” (Manley 20). Evidence of this appropriation can be located in such occasions as the 1950's defeat of England at Lord's and the installation of Frank Worrell as the first black captain of the West Indies team in 1960. Cricket served as a cultural and political terrain where social justice could be championed. Adhering to the British masculine values of fair play, cricket provided the opportunity for “constructing alternate and contrasting masculinities around which colonial subjects could mobilize” (McDevitt 4). Thus, the sport became an idiom of West Indian masculinity and cultural identity.

In Earl Lovelace's *Salt*, cricket emerges as a trope for exploring the complex involvement of the island of Trinidad from colony to nation highlighting its varied stages

in this multiracial society. For the protagonist Alford George, cricket serves as a hard fought rite of passage into village life. His initial exclusion from cricket is a direct reflection of his awkward development into boyhood and ultimately manhood. He is an anomaly not only within his family but also in his village of Cascadu, which serves as a microcosm for the developing nation. Alford's childhood development is not congruent with that of the typical West Indian male child. Instead, it is directly contrasted with that of his four older brothers who the village has "baptized ... all with the same name" (9). As soon as they were able to walk, his brothers engaged in the accepted patterns and activities associated with West Indian boyhood,

racing into the vast serene smallness of the landscape, traversing the tiny rivers, scaling the little hills, exploring the forest, setting traps for crabs, for doves, for singing birds, capturing with gleeful ingeniousness fish and iguana and small game, their weapons slingshots from tube rubber, harpoons from sharpened bicycle spokes and knives from flattened nails, to return at dusk with the harsh tangle of their speech and the grenades of their laughter. (9-10)

The childhood of his brothers is in direct contrast to that of Alford who never strays far from the front steps of his home, the safety of his yard, and the protection of his mother. He is content exploring the small wonders that can be found outside his doorstep. Most notably, Alford remains mute for the first seven years of his life. His ineptitude in participating in his brother's world confirms that "he [is] indeed an alien, an inferior" and earns him the disapproval of both his brothers and his father (28). This gaping difference is amplified when he begins infant school at the age of nine. Alford immediately stands out, too large for his infant school uniform, and even though his classmates are younger than Alford, they too reject him on account of his difference.

Alford's ostracization at school is most tenable in his exclusion from play in the schoolyard, particularly from the sport of cricket. The yard in West Indian literature is particularly salient in the development of West Indian society especially in regards to masculinity. Alford's peripheral relationship to the schoolyard is formative in his socialization as he actively seeks a path of inclusion. He even supplies wickets and a ball in hopes that he will be selected to play. And while this does not convince the other children in his school to allow him to play, it prompts them to ask him to umpire, which he readily accepts. The narrator chronicles this important juncture in Alford's childhood that is formative in his development:

It was here, in this role, that for the first time in his life he had a taste of the exercise of power. There were those who, thinking him still the diffident apologetic Alford, wanted to challenge his decisions; and for a time he tried his best to please. He wanted to be fair, to give correct decisions. And in the beginning, what errors he made stemmed from this concern, but then he discovered that he was the power, that his was the final authority. He established his control by his recitation of the rules which nobody else had read and by an inflexibility of will. All timidity had left him.

... He worked himself into the drama of the game, signaling boundaries with the elegance of a dancer, redrawing the bowling crease, calling no-balls, turning down appeals, making a theatre of his adjudication until he became as much of an attraction as the star batsman or bowler at the school. (32)

Alford begins his tenure as umpire with the same uncertainty and displacement that marks his sojourn in school. It stems from the fact that he has never quite belonged and mirrors the manner in which he has internalized his peripheral relationship to his school and community. However, his role as umpire convinces Alford not necessarily that he belongs so much as it is the trappings in which he can find authority. His role as umpire grants him not only access to the yard but authority and power over the space and game

from which he was previously excluded. His size is no longer awkward and instead becomes an outward manifestation of his authority much like his physical performance. He no longer aims to please but to demonstrate his vast knowledge of the game.

Although Alford's role as umpire grants him access to the sport and the yard, it also nurtures his belief that the island of Trinidad is too "small" for him, prompting his obsessive desire to master everything British in preparation for his migration to England. Like James, cricket is instrumental in his socialization to the values and culture of British manhood. The zeal with which he approaches the mastery of cricket as a demonstration of his masculinity, demarcated by his mastery of Englishness, is mirrored in the obsessive manner in which he studies language and proper British pronunciation of words with the help of the *Concise English Oxford Dictionary* and the BBC, maps, Greek philosophy and literature, and wines. Alford anticipates that his diligent study of British culture will pay off when he migrates to England. However, when he learns that the land his family lives on is up for sale, he gives his father the money that he has saved to purchase the land.

Despite having to abandon or at least postpone his dreams of migrating, Alford's careful study of cricket is not for naught. Like James, his socialization in the British cultural performance of masculinity, embodied in cricket, provides him with a foundation that is pivotal in his subsequent embrace of national politics. His performance as umpire impresses the people of Cascadu to such an extent that they begin to embrace the boy they once shunned. It even earns him a position as a student-teacher at the Cunaripo Government School at the age of sixteen. His obsession with the rules of cricket instills in him the values of fair play that propels him to strive for social justice against an unfair

educational system established by the colonial government, which is designed to procure futures for only a select few and ultimately lead him to realize the need to stay and contribute to the formation of the nation.

The relationship between West Indian nationalism and the cultural practice of cricket was very much bound up in a dialectical relationship between colonizer and colonized. It embraced anti-systemic ideals and produced symbolic performances that were aimed in opposition to colonial oppression through social protest. These performances included but were not limited to the 1950's defeat of England at Lords and subsequent victories against their former colonizer, the aggressive panache of West Indian cricketers that included an explosive style of bowling, powerfully deft batsmen, and the integration of social protest in their performances. This social protest includes the refusal to play in apartheid South Africa and the vocal identification with pan-African ideologies embodied in Black Power and Rastafarian movements.<sup>73</sup> These performances invested West Indies cricket with a cultural currency that was salient in the manipulation of West Indies cricket as a cultural commodity in the interest of advancing a regional national identity grounded in a shared colonial history. Central to these symbolic performances is the construction of West Indian masculinity that countered English notions of manhood through the sport of cricket as it challenged the notions of imperial authority and superiority. Manley (1988), Nettleford (1998), Beckles (1998), Burton (1995 and 1997) and McDevitt (2004) call attention to the specific ways in which West

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<sup>73</sup> Most notably, Viv Richards was viewed as an icon in the championing of pan-africanism in West Indies cricket. See Beckles *The Development of West Indies Cricket* vol.1, Hector's "Pan-Africanism, West Indies Cricket and Viv Richards," and Baksh's "The Conquering Lion."

Indian masculinity came to be defined by the demand for social justice and liberation from colonial oppression and racial inequalities that were manifested in the domination of the sport by the West Indies.

In Lovelace's *Salt*, the demand for social justice is embodied in Bango Durity.

Bango is a descendant of Guinea John, who flew back to Africa, and is the great-great grandson of the African Slave Jo-Jo

who was one of thirty persons they arrest and flog when on Emancipation Day he stand up in Brunswick Square and curse the governor for granting him a half-way freedom instead of giving him the liberation that was his due, and who out of spite and pride refused the opportunity that others take to run away to squat a piece of land in Arouca, remaining instead working on Carabon plantation, deciding not to leave and not to dead until they compensate him for the more than seventy years they had him held in unlawful captivity. (45)

The “half-way freedom” that Jo-Jo protest speaks directly to the unwillingness of the colonial government to provide reparations for those enslaved on the island. Discourses concerning reparations become salient to the project of nation building, which is a primary concern of the novel as it speaks directly to the issues of labor and compensation in capital markets that in the novel are further exacerbated by questions of land ownership. In *Diasporic Roots*, Supriya Nair argues that “in the novel, home and land involve more tangible issues of dispossession...This legacy continues long after the end of slavery, as Bango's family tree suggests in recurrent themes of work, compensation, land, and housing” (275). Bango seeks to transcend this dispossession manifested in his lack of land ownership generations after Guinea John has flown back to Africa, and Jo-Jo

has rooted himself to the Carabon plantation through the formation of a national collective. Cricket becomes a cultural commodity around which Bango mobilizes the village.

The action of the novel finds Bango still living on the Carabon plantation dedicated to the Cascadu village cricket team of which he is the captain. For Bango, cricket is much more than a sport. Rather, it is a unifying force around which the people of Cascadu can rally and form an identity that is distinct from their colonial condition. And it is to this end that Bango has wedded his self to the Cascadu cricket team.

His life was not just his own. He was captain of the cricket team and that alone was not just authority, it was responsibility. He was the man to conduct the practice, to roll the cricket pitch before the match, to buy the cricket ball and pick the cricket team and find an umpire if Fats Alexis wasn't there, to get somebody to keep score; and when they had to play outside of the village to make arrangements for the transportation of the players. Everything. Nothing was done without him. (143)

Unlike Alford George, Bango's attraction to cricket does not lie in his authority as captain of the team but in his responsibility as the leader of the team. In many ways, Bango serves as a foil to Alford. Although they both share parallel relationships to land (Alford's family also resides on the Carabon plantation), Bango's investment in the cricket team mirrors his commitment to the edification of Trinidad. Unlike Alford who sees only the smallness of the island, for Bango, the Trinidad landscape confirms, "that they coulda never hold people here surrendered to unfreedom" (5). This contrast is evident in their respective selection of cricket teams/clubs. As an adult, Alford chooses to join the Wanderers Cricket Club. The club appellation is appropriate. His tenure on the team suggests transiency as Alford joins only to keep himself occupied until it is time to migrate to the England. The other members of the club cling to Alford making him vice-

captain, as he would later learn because, “they saw him as not so much leaving them as taking them with him” (36). In James’ *Beyond A Boundary*, he stresses the social implications of joining a cricket club when he describes his agony in selecting a cricket club. Questions of identity lie at the core of James’s decision. He understands fully that a choice between Shannon Cricket Club—“black lower middle-class”—and Maple Cricket Club—“brown-skinned middle class” bears the implication of color and class that he more readily identifies with. But as McDevitt cogently notes, the implications of James’s decision extends beyond codifications of color and class because “he was clearly making a statement of the type of man he perceived himself to be” (10).<sup>74</sup>

Alford’s cricket club selection posits him as a man who refuses rootedness in his natal land of Trinidad. More importantly, it is indicative that his masculinity is constructed around notions of English masculinity and manhood. Bango’s selection of the “local” Cascadu village team is also indicative of the type of man that he intends to be—a man whose greatest responsibility is not to himself but to his community, to his nation. James emphasizes the inextricable relationship between cricket clubs and nationalism in Trinidad. Reflecting on his decision to join the Maple Cricket Club, he writes: “My decision cost me a great deal ... Faced with the fundamental divisions in the island, I had gone to the right and, by cutting myself off from the popular side, delayed my political development for years. But no one could see that then, least of all me” (53). Bango chooses the popular. He chooses to directly influence the formation of the nation—a project that for Bango is heavily dependent on the establishment and preservation of gender roles and gender difference.

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<sup>74</sup> See *Beyond a Boundary*, Ch. 4 “Light and the Dark.” For more on the social implications of his selection see Grant Farred’s “The Maple Man: How Cricket Made a Postcolonial Intellectual” in *Rethinking C.L.R. James*.

In the novel, cricket serves as a medium for establishing gendered power dynamics, as exemplified in Bango's relationship to his wife Myrtle. Bango and Myrtle's relationship begins with a cricket match. He initially encounters Myrtle on the way to a cricket match and invites her and her daughter to come and watch. Their meeting extends beyond mere attraction as it is through this encounter that "he had stumbled upon himself in her...very much as she had spied herself in him" (136). Their self-discovery is linked to gender identification as gender difference plays a pivotal role in defining their individual relationships to each other, the cricket team, and the community. For Bango and Myrtle, gender difference plays a pivotal role in their self-discovery, as it is the assuming of prescribed gender roles that comes to define their relationship both to each other and the cricket team.

Just as their relationship begins with cricket, the sport remains central to their life as man and wife. When Bango moves Myrtle into his home littered with cricket implements, she begins to fully comprehend that "his life was not just his own" (143). Bango's life belongs to the cricket team and, more specifically, to the Cascadu community at large. His investment and the extent to which he allows cricket to consume his life parallels his commitment to bring the people of the village together as a united community despite differences in ethnicity, religion, and diasporic origins. For Bango, prescribed gender roles are central to the forging of community through the masculine performance of cricket.

As Bango's wife, Myrtle is expected to support her husband by embracing his vision for the Cascadu cricket team and, by extension, Cascadu village. In so doing, she affirms his authority through her loyal and unwavering support.

She had realized that in taking her to live with him he was not taking a wife as something to put aside and adore as much as a mate, a pardner, someone who do for him what he was doing for the village. He didn't even see her as someone separate to him. What he expected of himself is what he expected of her. She was a part of him and he expected her to give herself with the same completeness that he gave himself to the village. (144)

While Bango receives Myrtle as a “pardner,” it is clear that she is expected to shed her former identity and to embrace his identity as her own. This becomes apparent in her ostracization from her natal family, as the life Bango has built for himself and Myrtle is diametrical to her family origins. Myrtle's family rejects Bango. They do so because they view his inability to own land as evidence that he is unable to provide for his wife and family. They do not understand that Bango's loyalty and responsibility extend beyond his family to embrace the entire community. The hierarchy of responsibility established in this triad between Myrtle, Bango, and the village establishes and enforces power dynamics in the project of nation building. It is Myrtle's duty as Bango's wife to give herself completely to Bango and he in turn to the village. Myrtle's connection to the village then is established through Bango as he has denied her direct access to the community as demonstrated through her peripheral relationship to the cricket team.

Myrtle's dedication to Bango and his cause is evidenced in her constant presence at the matches. She travels everywhere the team goes providing food and drinks as well as unwavering support. Her life is granted meaning and value by her ability to fulfill her responsibilities as Bango's wife. In fact, she does not resent Bango's commitment to the cricket team nor for the expectations he has placed on her for supporting his vision. For Myrtle, it was worth it.

She would feel tears just watching him on a Saturday afternoon lead the Cascadu team on to the field, all of them in baptismal white, leisurely like

princes dismounted from horses, throwing the ball and catching it and flinging it backwards and flinging it high into the air, time belonging to them, time to check the direction of the wind, the hardness of the pitch to be concerned whether it suited pace or spin, time for tea—really a drink of water or a cup of juice or an ice cream from one of the ladies selling around the ground—this space and stage creating out of estate labourers and watchmen on government projects, cutlassmen and stonebreakers, knights of the weekend.

She would feel full to see him set the field, the players shifting into their positions like kites in the sky of the field moved by the invisible strings that he was holding to crouch like hunters around the batsman, the huge gloved and padded medieval beast himself waiting with his own breathlessness for their attack. (143-4)

Myrtle recognizes the performance of the team as much more than simply a game. For Myrtle, as well as for Bango, the cricket field becomes a stage where the men's commonality as laborers is discarded for a more regal performance. The donning of the cricket whites elevates them to royalty, no longer laborers benefitting white estate owners symbolic of colonial power; their labor on the pitch is for their personal benefit. The cricket ground becomes a battlefield where the playing field is leveled. However, these symbolic performances do not extend to Myrtle or the women surrounding the cricket ground. Instead, their presence instantiates the masculine performance and becomes pivotal to the construction of identity through cricket culture.

The depiction of Myrtle's relationship to the Cascadu cricket team is not an anomaly. Rather, it is representative of the peripheral relationship that women are relegated to in West Indies cricket. While the issue of gender difference in the shaping of West Indian nationalism does not emerge as a prominent concern of James, the marginalized role women share in the play of West Indian cricket can certainly be discerned. James is first introduced to the sport of cricket from his aunt's window. But unlike his aunts, James is able to make his way onto the pitch as he becomes older. His

aunts, however, are socialized to remain on the periphery as supporters and commentators of the sport. As with James's mother, they know the game very well and are able to comment on the play of the sport. However, the extent of the women's role in cricket as supporters is most discernable in the example of James's aunt Judith. The first chapter of *Boundary* "The Window" familiarizes the reader with James's introduction to cricket as well as his genealogy. In the midst of this genealogy, James inserts the story of his aunt Judith whose life remains foremost in James's memory for fulfilling her gendered role as a woman. That is, he praises her for raising her three children alone after the untimely death of her husband and even notes that despite her loathing of Matthew Bondman, "had [he] been stricken with a loathsome disease she would have prayed for him and nursed him to the end, because it was her duty" (11). However, what seems to stand out the most to James in remembrance of his aunt's life is the supportive role she played in the cricketing life of Tunapuna. She was responsible for feeding the men after the cricket matches. In recalling her death immediately after serving the meal following a local cricket match, James writes,

Judith worked as usual from early morning in preparation for the day, doing everything that was needed. The friends came, the match was played and then all trooped in to eat, hungry, noisy and happy. Judith was serving when suddenly she sat down saying, 'I am not feeling so well.' She leaned her head on the table. When they bent over her to find out what was wrong she was dead. I would guess that she had been 'not feeling so well' for days, but she was not one to let that turn her aside from doing what she had to do. ... I know that it was the fitting crown to her life, that it signified something to me above all people, and, curiously enough, I thought it appropriate that her death should be so closely associated with a cricket match. (12)

That the circumstances of Judith's death are so closely associated with a cricket match attests to the completeness in which cricket in the West Indies contributes to the

establishment of gender hierarchies in West Indian society. Her commitment to her gendered role in the cricketing culture of Tunapuna was so complete that despite the fact that she probably was “not feeling well for days,” Judith put the needs of the male cricketers before her own. The example of both Judith and Myrtle highlight the marginalization of women from the sport.

The peripheral relationship of women to the play of West Indian cricket is edified in their historical distance from the action on the pitch. Learie Constantine, noted West Indian batsman who was socially active in the call for social justice for blacks both in cricket and larger society in the United Kingdom and friend of CLR James, demonstrates how the exclusion of West Indian women from official cricket was an acceptable practice in the West Indies. Constantine acknowledges that his “sister Leonora was able to hit a ball so that many a first-class cricketer, seeing her, would have felt like giving up the game” (Howat 28-29). Recounting family cricket matches, he acknowledges the skill of his mother and, in particular, his sister Leonora in making him a great West Indian player, and yet he is not bothered that “her only role ... was to play in the yard and shame men into being better or giving up the game because they could not be better than a woman” (McDevitt 118). As McDevitt points out, although Constantine championed the cause for social injustice against blacks, he had no problem accepting his sister’s contradictory relationship to cricket in the West Indies despite her skill and knowledge. And although women now have their own cricket league and “national” team, their performances do not carry the symbolic meaning that has so clearly shaped West Indian male cricket and West Indian national identities. The symbolic marginalization of women to the ritualistic play of cricket mirrors their peripheral relationship to the shaping of

nationalist ideologies. While the demand for social justice through the lens of cricket has largely focused on injustices against black men, the marginalization of women has not received equal attention. Hilary Beckles has contributed to this discourse by noting that in West Indies cricket, “the social consumption and reproduction of its practice is guarded by gendered ideological boundaries that indicate the limits and nature of female involvement” (“Natural Extension” 223). An essential component of the “consumption and reproduction” of this cultural practice is the role of women in West Indies cricket audiences.

In “The Ritual of Cricket,” Orlando Patterson writes that cricket “is not so much a game as a collective ritual” (141). It is in this “collective ritual” where the reification of the gendered ideological boundaries that Beckles speaks of can be ascertained. While the presence of women in West Indian cricket audiences is essential to the collective performance, “women’s absence on the cricket field is understood to be compensated by their function as spectators and interpreters of male action” (Barnes 38). As spectators, they become relegated as edifiers of the masculine cultural performance.

In Garfield Ellis’s *Such As I Have*, the role of women as spectators and interpreters of masculine performance is central to the action of the narrative. Through the cultural performance of cricket, the novel engages the espousal of a West Indian national identity that is marked by responsibility to the region and is dependent on gender constructs. The action of the novel charts the development of Headly, the local cricket star of Slygoville.

Headly’s life revolves around two axes—that of cricket and women. He does not have a job like his friend Dezzy or any responsibilities to family or community. His

mother provides for his domestic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing while his father sends him the latest cricketing gear from England. Headly's only responsibility is to play cricket. He devotes his time to honing his skills as the star batsman of the Slygoville team with the eventual hope of making the Jamaican national team and ultimately the West Indies convinced that he can earn a good living playing cricket. As star batsman of the cricket team, he holds a place of prominence in the village and is, "pampered and loved by the women of Slygoville and ... worshipped by the young boys who jammed the Puddin' Pan to see him bat on Sundays. He could eat from any pot in Slygovile, stop at any yard anytime of night if he got too tired to go home and no one would deny him a place to sleep" (1). He is introduced as not only an extremely good-looking man, but also as a champion of the village and loved by all. His performance is central to the village's reception of him:

One had to see him strut across the field with his ass cocked off into the air ... neat and beautiful even when he dived onto the grass to stop a ball. One had to see him lean back to stroke a ball across the field or stretch forward to stop one on the pitch...and then see how he posed after the stroke and rocked back and forth or skipped stylishly before settling back to bat again. (1-2)

Headly's performance is characteristic of the stylish performance that has become associated with West Indies cricket and West Indian masculinity as performed through cricket. Scholars have noted the specific West Indian masculinity that was palpable in the distinct way West Indian cricketers played the game, more specifically through the performance of the body. The rapid bowling style usually distinguished by a long dramatic run to the crease and powerful batting style is often cited as physical markers of West Indian masculinity located in the game of cricket. In "Cricket and the Artistic Tradition," Nettleford writes that West Indian cricket embodies

the celebration of the male body as hot-blooded power and authority in itself, as icon of athleticism, line and form became a psychic threat to opponents in colder climes but a source of visual joy for West Indians, and especially for the tens of thousands of West Indian women whose love for, and expertise in the understanding of, this chauvinistically manly sport is nothing if not astounding. Many will confess to be totally bowled over or caught silly (or mid on) by the arrogant sensuality of the striding men in white against dark skins advancing with stylish swagger towards the crease. (89)

Nettleford highlights the centrality of the West Indian male body in the affirmation of masculinity and the performance of national identity through cricket. Moreover, he recognizes the integral role that women have played in the instantiation of West Indian masculinity as receivers and interpreters of these masculine performances. While they have largely remained purveyors of the sport; despite their “expertise in understanding,” women validate these performances by their marginalization as the gendered Other. This is illustrated in the manner that Headly engages the women before he takes to the pitch to bat.

One had to see him play the crowd, trotting up and down before he went in to bat, charming the ladies with his smile, stretching his bat out to each of them as they called his name, dazzling them with his smile and his sparkling eyes, almost hazel in the sun, and saying as he passed: ‘How much runs you want today?’ and they screaming at him: ‘Fifty, Headly.’ ‘One hundred, Headly.’ ‘Twenty-five, Headly.’ ‘Two hundred, Headly,’ and he pretending to frown and lifting his eyebrows, replying: ‘That’s all you want? Ask for more than that, man. That’s all you want? Is me this, this is me. Just tell me how much you want, man, I will go out and make it for you.’ (2)

Women are central to Headly’s performance. While the crowd is comprised of men, women, and children, it is the women that Headly actively engages as a necessary component of his masculine performance. By having them touch his bat and taking requests for the number of runs they want him to make, Headly makes it clear that his performance is for their benefit. Because of their role as spectators “women bec[o]me

important because they are the target audience for much of the performance being enacted on the field and in the crowd” (Beckles “Nationalism” 118).

Headly’s masculinity is not only expressed through his cricketing performance but also mirrored through his demonstration of his sexual prowess. Indeed, his masculine performance on the pitch seems to make a seamless transition to the women of Slygoville. For Headly, the pursuit of women is a sport much like cricket. In fact he refers to the chase as ketchie shubbie, a child’s game of tag. The time and dedication he invests in cricket is paralleled only by his sexual appetite for women. He does not discriminate when it comes to his sexual behavior. He “slept with a woman in the bush, slept with Maizy, with the wife of every Tom, Dick, and Harry on the hill, had sex with three, four of them in the same day, sometimes in the same place, for the fun of it, for the conquest, too” (117). The satisfaction that he receives from each “conquest” parallels his victory on the cricket pitch. Not until Pam returns home from school are Headly’s methods for constructing his masculinity called into question.

Pam is the daughter of the local obeah woman who is ostracized and ridiculed as a child due to their poverty, her status as an obeah woman’s daughter, and her blackness. She is in direct contrast to her friend Maizy, Headly’s girlfriend at the beginning of the novel. Maizy is bi-racial (Indian and African) distinguished by her long curly hair and brown skin. She comes from a well-to-do family that owns their own business. Pam’s mother often works in Maizy’s home as a domestic, but the differences do not stop there. Maizy is content being Headly’s girlfriend as he is the star batsman of the cricket team and the golden boy of the village. Her aspirations do not extend beyond her status as

Headly's girlfriend. Pam, on the other hand, is attending a teacher's college and has no intentions of becoming sexually objectified by any man, least of all Headly.

When Pam returns to Slygville, she attends the inaugural cricket match with Maizy. When Headly begins his ritual performance of requesting runs from the ladies in the stand, Pam catches him off guard by asking for only one run. Unlike previous instances, Headly does not have to feign disbelief at the meager number of runs requested. He is so rattled by her perceived brazenness that he is consumed with thoughts of her as he walks out to the pitch, "*You mad to rass, ... Black like tar and mad to rass... One run? Where them get you from? ... One run? She mus' mean one hundred to rass*" (4-5). Headly gets out for a duck.<sup>75</sup> While the insinuation is that Pam, the daughter of an obeah woman, black like tar, works obeah on Headly, his impotent performance can be read as a direct result of Pam's refusal to support his masculine charade. This unwillingness extends to her determination not to engage in a sexual relationship with Headly.

After his shocking performance at the cricket match, Headly begins to pursue Pam, casting Maizy aside. His pursuit of Pam has more to do with her rejection of him than his physical attraction to her and he seeks to reassert his masculinity after his dismal performance in the cricket match. Because Pam is unresponsive to his advances, Headly spends more time with her, and as a result a mutual respect begins to grow between them, if not a friendship. During this time in their relationship, Pam begins to question Headly's masculine performances and his ineptitude in representing the people of Slygville despite their unwavering loyalty to him. For Pam, Headly is not deserving of the village's

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<sup>75</sup> In cricket, a player is out for a duck when he gets out without scoring any runs. The term duck refers to the zero on the scoreboard. It is said to resemble a duck's egg.

loyalty and admiration, as he has no sense of responsibility to anyone other than himself. She points to his treatment of Slygoville people to illustrate her observation that Headly does not like Slygoville people:

You walk and slap your chest like some god. You screw off the people—them young girls, and you use the boys to help you play cricket then slap them in their heads—and they still worship you. That is what you like. You like the attention. You like the worship. But you have never given them anything. I mean, what you ever do for Slygoville people?. (33-34)

Pam calls attention to the empty gesture behind Headly's performance. She recognizes that it is self-aggrandizing and does little for the people of Slygoville. For Pam, the impotence of his performance lies in his lack of a sense of responsibility to the people of his village. Headly is caught off guard and does not understand the hopes that the people of Slygoville have invested in him. Not until his team reaches the finals does he begin to comprehend the significance of his performance to Slygoville people. It is Dezzy, his best friend, who brings to his attention that the "People proud, man, them proud" (44). It is Dezzy who helps him to see how their success on the pitch is viewed as a victory for all Slygoville people "bring history to this place...put it on the map" (44). It is at the final match that Headly makes the ultimate sacrifice of the match.

Headly is hurt early in the match when his finger is hit by a ball as a result of his opponent's fast bowling skills. His finger swells to the point where he can no longer fit his hand in his glove and the captain takes him out of the game. When the last player is bowled out, the Slygoville's team is down by five runs. At this juncture Headly begins to understand in part what Pam means when she questions what he has done for the people of Slygoville. The seemingly inevitable defeat reminds him of the shame he experiences when he is out for a duck: "For Headly it was the duck all over again. There were the

same drooping shoulders and embarrassed looks of the men, the same shame-faced boys, the same silence, the same empty, unexplained feeling in his gut” (61). Headly decides to bat for his team to prove that he is not selfish. However, his heroic attempt at clinching the game is marked by the same self-importance that has characterized his previous performances. Furthermore, the performance is dependent on Pam’s presence as a spectator. Headly takes the pitch too enveloped in the frenzy of the crowd. He is unsure of himself and “for the first time in his life he began to accept the possibility of failure” (63). He looks to the periphery of the boundary, where he has left Pam, for reassurance and is distracted when he discovers she has left. Despite the fact that Headly hits a six, the performance means nothing to him without Pam’s presence to edify his performance.

Not until Pam becomes terminally ill does Headly begin to come to terms with what responsibility means. Pam’s mother immediately puts him to work in assisting with the care of Pam. Initially, he resents the responsibility she places on him questioning, “Was that his responsibility? When did that become his ... When did the whole thing become his responsibility?” (83). Gradually he begins to accept the responsibility and, with the prodding of Dezzy, leads his cricket team to build a toilet for people to use when they are visiting Pam. Through this project, Headly begins to see the importance of being responsible for others. More importantly, he begins to understand how accepting responsibility for Pam encourages the community that once shuns her to embrace her in her final days. They become inspired by Headly’s devotion to Pam, and it is then that “the little project soon became the project of the cricket club and, as the news filtered down, it became the Slygville project” (89). His decision to finally accept responsibility

for someone else allows him to construct his masculinity more concretely than his symbolic ritualistic performance in cricket.

This lesson extends to cricket as well. Headly mistakenly grabs a worn copy of Michael Manley's *A History of the West Indies Cricket* to read to Pam thinking it is a Bible. Realizing his mistake, he puts it aside, but Pam encourages him to read from it. Headly knows the history of West Indies cricket all the way back to 1906. It is the first time that she sees Headly speak "with such love and passion that would never be matched in his life again" (102). In the introduction to the book, Clive Lloyd comments, "cricket remains the instrument of Caribbean cohesion—the remover of arid insularity and nationalistic prejudice" (v). Throughout the book, Manley posits cricket as a cultural commodity that emphasizes the importance of a cohesive national identity for "the member states of the Caribbean community" (xii). This message resonates with the lessons of responsibility that he learns while taking care of Pam in her final days.

In her last moments of life Pam begs Headly to make love to her, but he declines. He has finally accepted responsibility for Pam and will not allow her to sacrifice her values out of fear. After her death, Headly is able to return to cricket after almost a year with a new sense of responsibility to his team, his community, his country and the West Indies.

### Redefining the Boundary

I eh'n negotiating ah told them  
 If they get money we can't control them  
 A West Indian cricketer must always be broke  
 Is then he does bowl fast and make pretty stroke  
 Sparrow "Kerry Packer" (1978)

In his 1978 calypso "Kerry Packer," The Mighty Sparrow assumes the persona of Jeffrey Stollmeyer, white West Indian cricketer and president of the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) during the Kerry Packer World Series, to reify the continuance of economic exploitative practices of colonial class hierarchies employed by the West Indian Cricket Board (WICB). The unwillingness of the WICB to negotiate remuneration packages and their attempts to block West Indies cricketers from participating in the lucrative World Series were evidence to Sparrow that West Indian cricketers were still being exploited even after independence. In "Calypso and Cricket," Rohlehr acknowledges that the calypso points to a continuance "of old plantocracy ... Their tradition is all cricket, no pay" (281). In the West Indies, the dialogue surrounding issues of remuneration remains vexed and have become inextricable from discourses that contemplate the continued viability of the sport as a sign of cultural nationalism.

In *Such As I Have*, Headly asserts to his best friend Dezzy that he can indeed earn a living by playing cricket. However, the defensive manner in which he questions his friend as to whether or not he believes Headly in fact can make a living playing cricket suggests that he too is not fully convinced. The writings of West Indian cricket legends such as Learie Constantine, Sir Garfield Sobers, Sir Frank Worrell, and Deryck Murray illuminate the historical incongruity between the pivotal role that West Indies cricket has played in the formation of national identity and the inability of the region—WICB and the private sector—to adequately remunerate its players for their services. This is

particularly a problem for regional first class cricket. Because there is no professional league in the region, players are not only denied remuneration but most often forgo pursuing a career in cricket to secure employment and maintain a family. Brian Breese, CEO of the Jamaica Cricket Association, indicates that this is still a problem for Jamaican cricketers: “most companies are not understanding and will not give players the time off they need to develop their skills at cricket” (personal interview). The difficulties of earning a living and playing cricket full time are distinguishing factors for Dezy and Headly. Dezy’s time to practice cricket is limited by his need for employment. In contrast, Headly is unable and unwilling to maintain steady employment, as cricket is his priority. However, Headly realizes that to earn a living playing cricket he must make it to the West Indies team, a task that requires his full devotion to developing his skill at the game.

The demand for adequate remuneration packages by West Indies cricketers has become more vocal and insistent in recent years with the revival of the West Indian Players Association (WIPA) under the stewardship of former West Indies cricketer Dinanath Ramnarine. This is evidenced in the five arbitrations held to resolve differences between the WICB and WIPA. At the core of these arbitrations are disputes concerning remuneration and players’ intellectual property rights. West Indian players have become keenly aware of their value as sought after commodities in a viable market. This awareness is largely a result of opportunities to play in foreign leagues and the Kerry Packer World Series, a capitalist venture for media mogul and entrepreneur Kerry

Packer.<sup>76</sup> He packaged and marketed cricket for a television audience allowing him to revolutionize salary levels and forever altering the history of professional cricket.<sup>77</sup> Cricket journalist Vaneisa Baksh asserts that the Packer World Series made players aware of pecuniary possibilities through the procurement of endorsements which “was taken to maturity by [Brian] Lara’s success and his close attention to maximizing revenue ... his firm grasp on his value as a player and his demands for payment reflecting that scale, it rippled through the cricket community” (Baksh “To the Edge” n.p).

The formation of the Indian Premiere League (IPL) and even the Indian Cricket League (ICL), considered a rebel league by the international cricket governing body the International Cricket Council (ICC), has provided another opportunity for West Indian cricketers to maximize their earning potential and place them in a stronger position to negotiate with the WICB as West Indies cricket is no longer the most viable means of play in professional cricket.<sup>78</sup> For example, after a tumultuous relationship with the WICB, Brian Lara retired from the Windies and signed with the ICL, which is not recognized by the ICC or the WICB. At the center of the discord between Lara and the WICB were questions concerning his ability to properly represent West Indies tradition. Lara’s personal lifestyle was often under attack as it was characterized by many as emblematic of a lack of commitment to the team and by extension West Indian

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<sup>76</sup> English county cricket has been paramount in the development of West Indies cricket. Because there is no professional league in the West Indies, many West Indies players play for the English county teams. This opportunity did not only allow them to earn a living by playing cricket but also allowed them to develop their skills. The Stanford 20/20 tournament (now in jeopardy as a result of criminal charges brought against Allen Stanford), the Indian Premiere League (IPL) and the Indian Cricket League (ICL) continue to provide similar opportunities for West Indies players.

<sup>77</sup> For a detailed account of the Packer World Series and its impact on West Indies Cricket see K.H.L. Marshall’s “The Packer World Series and the Professionalization of West Indies Cricket.”

<sup>78</sup> Historically, West Indian cricketers have played in English league and county cricket to supplement their incomes. However, after restrictions were placed on the number of foreign players each county team could contract, the possibility of county cricket became increasingly more limited for West Indian players.

nationalism. By retiring from the Windies and joining a league that has no national affiliation, Lara made a bold move that refused popular dictates of how West Indian nationalism should be represented and performed through cricket.

Unlike the ICL, the IPL is sanctioned by the ICC. However, players must be able to present No Objection Certificates from their local/national cricket boards in order to play in the league. This has in some cases resulted in a power struggle between players and cricket boards. For example, England cricketers were denied release from their governing boards due to scheduling conflicts with the IPL. Several other boards such as Australia, Pakistan, New Zealand, and the West Indies have also experienced scheduling conflicts with the IPL, which only became exacerbated when the ICC refused to schedule a defined season for the IPL that would not conflict with international tests or one-day matches. This decision has particularly caused difficulties for West Indies cricket. Since the WICB is often unable to pay lucrative salaries to Windies players, the ability to play in the IPL is especially salient.

West Indies players have sent a clear message to the WICB that they will not be denied the opportunity to play in the IPL and earn lucrative salaries. Most notably, West Indies cricketers have threatened to strike if the WICB continues to schedule international matches that conflict with the IPL schedule and ultimately their ability to make money. Most recently, in March 2009, first class players refused to take the field in the four-day regional tournament, which resulted in the suspension of the start of three matches. Similarly, in a match against England, Windies international players covered the West Indies sponsor's Digicel logos and threatened to strike during the final one-day match in St. Lucia. They also refused to attend Digicel team sponsored functions. The action taken

by the players has resulted in salary increases of 300% and up to 500% for some players depending on the length of their career with West Indies cricket. Contracted IPL players will also be compensated for loss of wages should the Windies schedule conflict with the IPL schedule resulting in their inability to play for their respective IPL teams. However, the ability of players to greatly increase their potential earning has not always been viewed as positive. Some have viewed player's potential earning power as a major contributor to the decline of West Indies cricket and its subsequent ability to continue to act as a definitive marker of a national identity.

In *The Age of Globalization*, Hilary Beckles identifies what he terms as the third paradigm of West Indies Cricket, an epoch marked by rising individualism and the decline of West Indies cricket. For Beckles, the infamous Hall report, submitted by then cricket manager Wes Hall and leaked to the *Trinidad Guardian*, capitulates the cause for this shift in West Indies cricket and its perceived break from nationalism. Hall "speaks of the weakening of West Indian identity, penetrations of global mass media, availability of multimillion dollar sponsorships, [and] transnational commercialization of cricketer's images" (qtd. in Beckles "Globalization" 4). His plan called for a re-socialization of West Indies cricketers through education.<sup>79</sup> What the Hall report points to more directly though is a perceived lack of identification of contemporary West Indies cricketers with a regional national identity as opposed to the West Indies cricketers who ushered in independence. Beckles writes that for this generation of West Indies cricketers: "national representation, and love of the game, were the main sources of motivation and energy. For them it was a passionate, epic journey that reflected the very making of a nation"

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<sup>79</sup> In *The Age of Globalization*, Beckles lays out a similar plan for a re-socialization of West Indies cricketers in an effort to restore West Indies cricket to its former status as a cultural icon in the construction of West Indian national identity.

(“Globalization 5). While his statement emphasizes the political epoch in which West Indies cricket as a cultural nationalism emerged, it seems to suggest that the emphasis placed on remuneration by current players is indeed something new. Although he acknowledges the failure of independence to alleviate the financial strains that burdened the Anglophone Caribbean, his characterization of the past generation of West Indies cricketers falls into the category of heroic mythology. While this generation of cricketers certainly championed national movements, they also bemoaned the inability or unwillingness of the WICB to pay them satisfactorily for their services.

WIPA has sought to bridge the seemingly disparate gap between the desire for adequate remuneration and the fostering of a continued collective national identity through West Indies cricket. In its *Proposal for the West Indies Players Association Institution Strengthening*, it acknowledges the role of “the sport [as] a unifying force for the disparate Caribbean islands” (n.p.). The proposal emphasizes the salient need to preserve this collective national identity while simultaneously ensuring the financial security of the players. WIPA professes as an integral part of its vision the desire “to have a large impact on the region’s collective identity and economic development” (n.p.). Articulated in this statement is the need for a dialectic relationship between economics and cultural nationalisms in the region. However, while WIPA has championed this cause, the structural organization of WIPA reveals a continued pattern of the institutional exclusion of women from the “action” of West Indies Cricket.

The WIPA executive administration much like that of the WICB is exclusively male. Beckles locates the genesis of the institutional discrimination of women in club cricket culture. Cricket journalist Vaneisa Baksh brought attention to the discriminatory

practices of club cricket in the Caribbean that have been preserved far beyond independence. Baksh single-handedly waged an eight-year war against Queen's Park Cricket Club in her native Trinidad for its refusal to allow female membership in the club. Cricket Clubs that managed test venues in Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad maintained century old policies that forbid women the use of their facilities including members of the West Indies Women's Cricket Team. In the 1980's, the Pickwick Cricket Club that manages the members' facilities at the Kensington Oval in Barbados relaxed these rules, followed in the late 90's by Kingston Cricket Club, which manages Sabina Park. However, despite the dissolution of these archaic rules in cricket clubs throughout the region, the Queen's Park Cricket Club refused to alter their membership guidelines remaining the last prestigious Cricket Club in the region that denied women membership until October 2004.<sup>80</sup> Although these are not the only cricket clubs that denied women membership, I highlight these in particular because of their historical roles in class and race discriminatory practices.<sup>81</sup> While the integration of non-white members into these cricket clubs, established by the ruling elite and whose origins lie in plantocratic social organization, served as a beacon of a new epoch in West Indies Cricket much in the same way as Frank Worrell's appointment as the first black captain of the West Indies, members of these clubs failed to view their denial of admittance of women as an "area of social exchange desperately in need of political struggle and social redress" (Beckles "Purely Natural" 232).

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<sup>80</sup> The first women members were inducted in 2005. Vaneisa Baksh was granted membership in August 2007.

<sup>81</sup> King's Cricket Club, Pickwick Cricket Club, and Queen's Park Cricket Club were founded in 1863, 1871, and 1891 respectively. For more on the roles of the establishment of these clubs see Stoddart's "Cricket and Colonialism in the English-speaking Caribbean to 1914."

There are also financial implications to the institutional discrimination of women. They do not stand to benefit economically as they are denied access to higher-level managerial positions within the vestige of the WICB. Beckles writes,

the bottom, for women, historically, has been those “special” places where social services are rendered with little or no social honour and financial remuneration. Not surprisingly, the “bottom” within the cricket culture has been disproportionately inhabited by women. The tea ladies, the nut sellers, the honorary treasurer/ secretaries, scorers, [and] commentators...The number of women’s roles, then, have increased considerably, but their general locations remain the same. (“Purely Natural” 234)

During the staging of the 2007 World Cup, the Jamaica Gleaner published “The Women Behind the Game,” an article featuring women that held positions that were central to the staging of the World Cup. While the purpose of the article was to highlight “major players behind the scenes” in a man’s game, none of the women featured held posts that were directly related to the game itself, nor the administration of the West Indies Cricket Team (n.p). Instead, they worked in the capacity of communication specialists, human resources, and ticket sales. The women, all held positions that are associated with women and hardly seem to position them as “major players” in the Cricket World Cup or West Indies cricket in general. They remain “behind the scenes.” In fact, without such an article, these women would have remained anonymous to the greater West Indies public. In comparison to the inroads made by women in other national art forms, such as calypso discussed in the previous chapter, West Indies cricket continues to factor prominently in the marginalization of women’s participation in constructing national identities. Furthermore, it emphasizes the marginalization of women in shaping national identities is not specific to any one particular nation in the Anglophone Caribbean, but is symptomatic of the entire region.

## **Performing Difference: Visibility and Representation in National Culture**

The performances of masculinity discussed here vary in mode and practice; however, they are all heavily invested in shaping and articulating national identities by mobilizing citizens in the interest of production whether economically or in the interest of advancing cultural nationalisms. Some mobilize national collectives while others are individually focused. All are dependent on the marginalization of sectors of the population based either on race and ethnicity, gender, or class. The literary and cultural representations of masculine performances of national identity are examined within the context of multiple and varied economies—sexual, ethnic, political and regional—which are always gendered. The gendered character of these economies is salient as gender and sexual difference inform the alienation of citizens from the formation and performance of national identities and the denial of representation in national culture.

I have chosen cultural performances of masculinity as a point of intersection for this study because the construction of masculinity has been central to identity formation in the Caribbean and because the revisionary processes that Caribbean masculinity has undergone to distinguish itself from colonial constructions of masculinity mirrors efforts to extricate national identities from economic and social institutions of colonialism. Thus the performances of masculinity under study in this project refashion colonial constructions to correlate with their own epistemological registers. The selection of texts reflects the complex negotiations that nationalisms have undergone in the Anglophone Caribbean, but more importantly, these texts suggest that the paradigms of Caribbean masculinity being mobilized in the name of national identities are unstable and inadequate.

The performances of masculinity in this study are specifically Afro-Caribbean. Race and Afro-Caribbean heritage are central to the formation of alternative epistemes for constructing Caribbean masculinity. Limiting the frame of reference to Afro-Caribbean performances of masculinity serves multiple purposes. It reveals the continuation of colonial practices of exclusion and marginalization in Caribbean nationalisms that is occluded by rhetoric of racial pride and the advancement of Afro-Caribbean peoples. Focusing on Afro-Caribbean expressions of masculinity also provides a context for interrogating gendered, ethnic, and class responses that challenge the viability and authority of these performances to exclusively propagate national identities that do not adequately represent all segments of plural nation-states.

The promulgation of national identities through performances of masculinity is dependent on the reception of their intended audiences, as these performances play an active role in socializing citizens. They do so by establishing hierarchies of production that inform economies of power. When these masculine performances of national identity fail to elicit the desired response from intended audiences, previously perceived systems of power become disrupted. In the texts selected, citizens refuse to validate these representations of national identity because they actively engage colonial practices of exclusion and marginalization. Instead, they refuse dictated performances for more modern or progressive forms of nationalism that do not deny them representation in national and cultural landscapes. Thus challenges to these performances undermine their ability to articulate national identities.

The most direct challenge to these representations of national identity comes from women. While this study began as a project about the performance of masculinity,

women's refusal to validate attempts to marginalize their ability to actively contribute to the construction of national identities has quickly moved to the forefront. This is because the efficacy of these performances to mobilize national collectives is dependent on the affirmation and preservation of gender and sexual difference.

In Wynter's *The Hills of Hebron* and Patterson's *The Children of Sisyphus*, religious communities espouse patriarchal doctrines of black liberationist theology central to the formation of national identities that subvert racial hierarchies of labor and production in post emancipation Jamaica. This theology, however, paves the way for the establishment of gendered citizenships that are vigorously maintained creating new hierarchies of labor and production that revolve on axes of gender and sexual difference. However, when women lay claim to their sexual identities and the capital that is produced by their labor, gendered citizenships are dismantled. Their refusal to adhere to prescribed gender roles directly undermines the patriarchal foundations on which these national collectives are built.

Persaud's novel chronicles the promulgation of Afro-Caribbean patriarchal authority through Afro-Caribbean cultural traditions of masking in Guyana. In, *For the Love of My Name*, ethno-economies are continued and ensured by acts of ethnic violence that emerge at the cusps of independence as a demonstration of Afro-Caribbean authority. In the novel, along with Narmala Shewcharan's *Tomorrow is Another Day* and Jan Lo Shinebourne's *The Last English Plantation*, relationships forged between Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean women provide a model for inter-ethnic responses to ethnic political polarization. By embracing cultural and social difference within national paradigms, Indo and Afro-Caribbean women are able to establish informal economies that disrupt ethno-

economies established by the Afro-Mayan government. This feminist response poses a direct challenge to the perpetuation of Maya as an Afro-Caribbean cultural space and instead emphasizes cultural plurality in the formation of national identities.

In Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance*, Afro-Trinidadian cultural practices of masking, stick fighting, kaiso, and steel pans provide the foundation for an "African warriorhood" that is enacted in carnival and spills out into the everyday lives of Lovelace's protagonists. These cultural traditions are actively policed as a domain of the black working class. More specifically, in Lovelace's novel, when Philo the calypsonian begins writing songs explicitly for the purpose of marketing and winning prizes, anxieties are aroused concerning the commodification of cultural practices. By rejecting the cultural prescriptions established by the warriorhood, Philo poses a direct threat to the communal authority of "warriorhood" and its ability to govern cultural politics in a Trinidadian national landscape. This perceived threat is mirrored by audience response, as intended audiences fail to respond according to scripted national narratives. The efficacy of the performances of the African warriorhood is thus challenged due to its inability to socialize citizens to embrace the ideologies of the warriorhood. Similarly, a discussion of the cultural politics of Indo-Trinidadian nationalisms in Trinidad and the performance of Indo-Caribbean female sexuality in popular music provides the opportunity to assess cultural responses to Afro-Caribbean nationalisms as well as draw parallels found in these responses. By performing calypso and soca-chutney, Indo-Trinidadian women reject cultural nationalisms that marginalize them from national spaces and seek to maintain control over their sexuality.

In Lovelace's *Salt* and Ellis's *Such As I Have*, women remain marginalized to the socio-cultural performance of cricket, and yet the ability of the sport to mobilize citizens relies on a favorable response from female spectators. In Ellis's novel, the star cricketer abandons the sport when his performance fails to command the attention of the woman he is pursuing. This is because cricket as a national sport and expression of national identity loses its symbolic meaning in the absence of validation from the marginalized and yet central group of female spectators. Similarly, the institution of cricket has had to meet the demands of women in order to play a more formative role in the development of West Indies sports and culture. The admittance of women into the elite cricket clubs across the region and a more visible role of women in staging West Indies cricket ensure the continuance of the sport as a viable mobilizer of West Indian national collectives.

National identity and queer performances of nationalist cultural traditions have not been a central part of this study; however, we cannot deny the extent to which anxieties about homosexuality governs most debates about national identity in the Caribbean. Further expansions of this study will examine literary engagements with complex negotiations made by queer citizens to navigate hostile national and cultural landscapes. Jamaica Kincaid's *My Brother* and Patricia Powell's *Small Gathering of Bones* and *The Pagoda* provide an opportunity to interrogate how queer citizens often *perform* hetero-normative sexual and gender identities in order to actively contribute to the formation of national cultural identities. These texts, along with Staceyann Chinn's *The Other Side of Paradise*, call attention to the very tangible challenges that the cloaking of queer identities can have on the nation-state. These challenges include the spread of AIDS and "corrective" acts of violence, most notably rape, committed against

homosexuals to enforce heterosexual/normative behaviors and representations. Novels by Claude McKay, Lawrence Scott, and Robert Antoni also provide an opportunity to explore gendered approaches to literary engagements with national identity and queer performances of national cultural traditions.

Future research will also examine how texts “perform” as a way of socializing citizens, particularly in regards to children’s literature. The current project ends with an examination of Jamaican writer Garfield Ellis’ *Such As I Have*, a children’s novel. As is the case with his second novel *For Nothing At All*, “play” in the form of sport and children’s games is not only central to the plot of the novel but also in socializing and cultivating models of masculinity while also shaping what it means for young men to be productive citizens. Responsibility can take many forms. In *Such As I Have*, responsibility requires young cricketers to embrace the ideologies championed by West Indies cricket that emphasize duty to the collective nation as opposed to a culture of individuality and materialism. In *For Nothing At All*, responsibility compels adolescent Jamaican males to seek an alternative to gun posses that emerge as a result of and response to party politics that fail to meet the basic needs of citizens. These novels, as well as novels by Guyanese author Fred D’ Aguiar and Tobagonian/Canadian author M. Nourbese Philip, provide the opportunity to explore how through the literary device of play literature, children’s literature in particular, can play an active role in the socialization of Caribbean citizens.

The implications of this project extend beyond conflicts between social and economic values in the performance of national identities. It suggests that we read gender and nationalism in the Anglophone Caribbean with a more nuanced critical lens.

Masculine performances of identity are rapidly losing their symbolic meanings and are at best insufficient in the project of forging national identities that are inclusive of all citizens. This is because they have reproduced colonial practices of exclusion and marginalization that emergent Caribbean nationalisms proclaimed to challenge, and they have done little to advance the region economically. Further, it suggests that masculinity has not been and continues to fall short as a stable categorical foundation on which Caribbean nationalisms can be founded. Rather they have produced colonial practices that they purported to challenge and eschew. These performances of masculinity, when challenged, are unable to sustain their efficacy. Collectively, the inability of these performances to mobilize citizens while simultaneously dissolving exclusionary practices is evidence that performances of masculinity in the Anglophone Caribbean are steadily losing their prominence in advancing national identities in the region. This study recognizes the need for a new economy in the formation of Caribbean nationalisms; however, it does not call for or desire the dissolution of gender and sexual difference. Such an erasure does not lessen practices of exclusion and marginalization, but rather contributes to the occlusion of these practices, as they are often perceived to no longer exist. This study urges for a new economy that eschews the distribution of power on the axes of sexual and gender difference and instead mobilizes citizens productively in the interest of modernizing Caribbean nationalisms.

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