

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

**THE MOCKERY OF LIBERTY:
CHOREOGRAPHING POWER, FLESH & CHOICE**

By

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A paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of
Arts degree in the Master of Arts Program in the Social Science

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ABSTRACT

The Mockery of Liberty: Choreographing Power, Flesh and Choice, examines the conditions and gendered realities of 20th century Trinidad and Tobago to investigate the pervasive logic of white hegemonic masculinity. Framing my analysis, I build on the work of Thomas Holt and Sylvia Wynter to articulate the success in which white hegemonic masculinity reconfigures itself into the image of a God. Underscoring this evolution, I used the term Ontological Sovereign to refer to the manifestation of white hegemonic masculinity in this post-colonial context. Furthermore, to interrogate the shape that it takes and the weight of its impact I analysis the emergence of national icons that emphasize the notions of national family and love for liberty in relationship to the violence and erasure experienced by Black girls. By examining these social-material conditions of Trinidadian society I argue that rather than liberty being realized it emerges as a mockery in which the colonial subject that emerges at the end of slavery becomes trapped in apparatus of the Ontological Sovereign.

“Even though the captive flesh/ body has been “liberated,” and no one need pretend that even the quotation marks do not matter, dominant symbolic activity, the ruling episteme that releases the dynamics of naming and valuation, remains grounded in the originating metaphors of captivity and mutilation so that it is as if neither time nor history, nor historiography and its topics, shows movement, as the human “subject is “murdered” over and over again by the passions of a bloodless and anonymous archaism, showing itself in endless disguise.” (Spillers 1987, 68)

“It is not a story that should be handed down or passed on, from mother to child, from generation to generation, because the pain embedded in the contradictory place of maternity under hereditary racial slavery cannot be told without reinscription. And finally, even as we prohibited its retelling, we inscribe it as told. We are faced here with a problem of meaning and history that strikes deeply and powerfully at the heart of what it means to be human.” (Morgan 2018, 16)

INTRODUCTION

In 1960's, Dr. Eric Williams, father of the nation of Trinidad and Tobago, reflecting on independence would say “Independence, unless it is a sham, and an imposture, means a clean slate, throwing off the burdens imposed on us by the imperialist power” (1960). Countries emerging in the global south during this decolonial period were profoundly concerned about what their nationalist narratives would be. Trinidad and Tobago, no different, began to cultivate a narrative around the patriotic identity of the National Family. This identity was a project ushered in by Williams with the goal of cultivating the perception of unity and stability in the face of western powers. For Williams, the core tenant that binds this family together is the love for liberty that was the driving force to eradicate colonialism and its corresponding structures of “racism, social inequality, illiteracy, and labour exploitation” (Johnson 2014, 670). Despite this, the late 60's and early 70's would be marked by a wave of youth rebellions fueled by the failures of the government to deliver on the ideals of a newly fledged nation-state (Johnson 2014)

These conditions would act as the backdrop for the murder of Beverley Jones, a member of the National United Freedom Fighters. On September 13th, 1973, Jones would be killed two weeks before her eighteenth birthday in a firefight between Trinidad and Tobago police regiment in the Caura-Lopinot hills. The days following her murder, Jones's mother would reflect on this loss. "To-day, I ask myself why did Beverley and others like her die? What is the meaning of all this suffering? As a mother I wanted the best for my children. I worked hard and like so many of us in this country I found I could not make my way here; I went to America. I wrote to Jen and Bev and begged them to come to America, and they asked me one question: Mummy, why is it that we have a country that is so rich in natural resources and talent, and we always have to go 'away' to make a living or develop our abilities as human being? I could not answer them and still cannot answer them."¹ Jones death while garnering the attention of the nation would be largely written out of the nation's collective memory (Johnson 2014).

The erasure and disposability of a Black girl's body for the maintenance of national identity begs the question of the conditions needed to construct and solidify what it means to be a free nation and recognized as a human. Thus, to interrogate this further I pose the following questions: "with the emergence of an independent country ruled by a Black government, why have Afro-Trinidadian women been forced to negotiate for their freedom? Furthermore, how can we understand these negotiations in conjunction with the country's emergence as an emancipated state founded on the notion of "love for liberty and country" and 'national family' in the twentieth century?"

¹ Ryan Cecil Jobson, "Why Don't We Say Her Name? The Police Murder of Beverly Jones in Trinidad- 50 Years Later," Medium, Clash! Voices For a Caribbean Federation From Below, 2023. [Why Don't We Say Her Name? The Police Murder of Beverly Jones in Trinidad — 50 Years Later | by Ryan Cecil Jobson | Clash! | Medium](#)

Like other Atlantic scholars, this thesis is largely concerned with the post-colonial conceptualization of freedom. Starting with Beverly Jones death acts as a site of entry to interrogate the fallacy of progress that is presented at a national level through the invoking of love for liberty and the national family. Examining the disposability of a Black girls' bodies in conjunction with these ideals allows for another frame of analysis that calls into question the preservation of colonial ideas as technologies of violence in the 20th century. This frame also serves to interrogate the normalization of violence against racialized-gendered bodies. Building out this frame of analysis, I argue that the true weight of white hegemonic masculinity has systematically halted any real sustainable progress as it relates to freedom of formerly enslaved people. In reality what emerges is a contortion and mockery of liberty in which the colonial subject becomes trapped in.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To construct this argument, I turn to the scholarship of Caribbean historians, postcolonial feminist and anti-humanism scholars. It is fundamentally important that we go back to understanding the conditions of post-colonial context. Thus, I argue that we must first examine white hegemonic masculinity as the ruling apparatus of slavery that constituted the dehumanization and social death of African people as articulated by Orlando Patterson. The disposability of a Black girl's body has historical precedence and is situated throughout colonial and post-colonial discourse by scholars who seek to provide a more comprehensive scope of the gendered realities of Caribbean historiography. This point is particularly illuminated by the body/flesh argument posed by Hortense Spillers. Scholars such as Sylvia Wynter, Jessica Marie Johnson, and Katherine McKittrick build upon this argument to demonstrate the unique context that Black women's bodies have been situated in because of the gendered experience of social

death. This logic of white hegemonic masculinity as the apparatus informing racialized-gendered experience also acts as the foundation for post-colonial feminist scholarship. Scholars like M. Jacqui Alexander would use this historical precedence to define who is a citizen in Trinidad and Tobago. In articulating this robust body of scholarship that is foundational in my own argument of post-colonial state-formation I have organized the scholarly arguments around the themes of colonial patriarchy and slavery, post-emancipation humanism and the subaltern, and nationalist masculinity.

COLONIAL PATRIARCHY AND SLAVERY

“Slavery broke the world in half, it broke it in every way. It broke Europe. It made them into something else, it made them slave masters, it made them crazy.” – Toni Morrison

Colonialism and the expansion of white hegemonic power starts with theft of the body, of a continent. The introduction of the transatlantic slave trade would lead to the systematic capture, dislocation, and reconfiguration of Africans into slaves and sites of enactment (Spillers 1987). Capture, dislocation and reconfiguration would be understood as actual stages in the dehumanization process of the African body (Morgan 2021). Each step intentional with the goal to reduce African bodies until they were commodities, a labor force created to produce for the consumption of colonial nations. This was a moment of rupture in which the socio-material world would forever be changed. Behind this rupture was the existence of colonial power exerted by white men. Dorothy Smith’s (2007) concept of “relations of ruling” focuses on this power dynamic that emerges between colonizers and those colonized. It emphasizes the process of ruling as active and complex rather than it being a static, unchanging process. Notably, in Caribbean plantation society the structure of rule was white hegemonic masculinity. It became the core defining ideology that reinforced this apparatus. White hegemonic masculinity was

defined by a “set of idealized, institutionalized, socio-economic, socio-cultural and political forms of [white]manhood” (Crichlow et. al 2014).

The structure of slavery that emerged in the Caribbean, and specifically Trinidad and Tobago would be a physical manifestation of the power of white hegemonic masculinity. It is this structure of slavery that Patterson’s analysis of social death is situated. Social death as an organizing framework interrogates the social dimension of slavery and the impact on enslaved bodies (Patterson 1985). Central to Patterson’s (1985) argument is that the creation of slave society took place through a profound rupture of social, psychological and culture dimensions. The impact of this is three-fold. It cast the enslaved in a position of alienation from all their “rights” and they ceased to belong to any legitimate social order. Secondly, slavery became a structure that legitimatizes colonial power and thirdly it created a Hegelian dynamic of hyper-dependency in which the slaveholder cannot exist without the enslaved (Patterson 1985, 38).

Through Patterson’s articulation of social death scholars such as Spillers (1987) and Morgan (2021) have contested and expanded this concept by adding a specific gendered framing of this phenomena that makes visible the vulnerability of Black women to the terrors of captivity and the violence of commodification. As a result, Spiller’s in her articulation of social death argues that there is a fourth condition in which the biological factors that constitute gender differences is loss. The African body becomes a blank slate, a territory of cultural and political maneuvers for white hegemonic masculinity to enact its power (Spillers 1987, 67). While gender differences are initially lost, it has been reshaped by the specific gender framing of slavery. The importance of a gendered frame is further reinforced by Morgan (2021) who similarly argues that Patterson definition of social death is an incomplete analysis because it does not engage the gendered realities of the maternal figure.

Situated at the intersection of gender and social death we encounter the African woman, whose body becomes the ‘birth canal’ for the Middle Passage due to its socio-economic value as a ‘natural’ reproductive core to maintain the enslaved labor force (Beckles 1998; Morgan 2021). African women’s positionality in this structure was based on the exploitation of their bodies. Despite the reproductive value of their bodies, Black women did not receive any special treatment for this positionality. According to Beckles (1998), their humanity was fully stripped away from them, and they were conformed to a “social object,” to be acted upon. A prime example of this can be seen through the distortion of the intimacies of parenthood. Kin is transformed into commodities as they are forcefully moved from the domestic sphere of the family to the marketplace to be sold (Morgan 2018, 11). Before giving birth, the expectation of labor remained the same. The Black woman was expected to continue laboring throughout those nine months to avoid severe punishment (Reddock 1986; Turner 2019). In all its distortion, Spillers (1987) argues that motherhood becomes suspended between denial of a woman’s ‘blood-rite’ and a binding social enactment of dual fatherhood split between the slave master and the denial and mocking of the African fatherhood. It is at this point where Spillers’ flesh/body argument emerges. As the body becomes dehumanized all that remains is a blank slate in which the skin, the flesh becomes marked. For Spillers, the Black women’s body under slavery is marked as mother and mother-dispossessed (1987, 80).

Beckles (1999) goes on to note that as her humanity was stripped from her, so was her femininity. The stripping of African women’s humanity and subjugation to a ‘social object’ was not only defined by the logic of slavery but also through the deconstruction of African traditional notions and practices of womanhood. Slaveholders, enacting this logic for the preservation of slavery would impose descriptors of ‘non-feminine’ physique on the African woman’s body (Beckles 1999). This deconstruction of her body made her equally equipped in this structure to

perform the same labor as Black men. The stripping of traditional gendered notions from the African body made African women vulnerable “to gendered violence against their bodies, minds and sense of self” (Johnson 2020, 8). The gendered framing that is illuminated by Morgan, Spillers and Beckles not only demonstrates the cruelty that Black women experienced during slavery but also demonstrates what is lost without it. The conceptual understanding of social death as previously articulated by Patterson does not demonstrate the nuisance reality of kinship structure and the degree in which the human body is reconfigured at a material and immaterial level for maximum profit of slavery.

POST-EMANCIPATION: GOD AND THE COLONIAL SUBJECT

African chattel slavery in the Caribbean would last for over three hundred years. This depth of time is not to be taken lightly as it is due to this longevity that would allow for the ideological conditioning of our material world. Gender, race, labor, humanness, and citizenship become disrupted at its very core. Thus, as society moved towards a post-emancipation logic the conditions of these ideals are once again brought into conversation. Scholars like Thomas Holt, Sylvia Winter, Hortense Spillers and Saidiya Hartman have been specifically concerned with how society grapples with these shifting paradigms.

The abolition of slavery would take place during the early nineteenth centuries that Holt would mark as the dual revolutions in which Europe was experiencing the rise in “secular philosophies and evangelical religions” (1991, 24). Therefore, during this era people would struggle with the boundaries between dependency on community versus the individual. They would also be equally concerned with defining their humanity against the religious definition of sin and corruption (1991). As a result of these changing dimensions of society “enlightened” people began to increasingly view slavery as “anachronistic and unprogressive.” It was believed

that it would prevent the moral progress of the slaveholder while brutalizing the enslaved (Holt 1991, 24). While this would play a role in increasing support for abolition, it is important to understand economic forces as being the key reason for abolition (Holt 1991, 22). Spearheading emancipation would be white abolitionists, composed of an elite ruling class of Anglo men who understood that slavery was becoming an unstable force. Therefore, to expand free trade and adopt a capitalistic laissez-faire economic system, the structure of labor had to change (Holt 1991).

A key component of this new structure would be the need for a free labor force. For the European elite it was not just about building a free labor force but the ideal colonial subject that they could still control (Holt 1991). Thus, as noted by Holt, they began a crusade of social, religious, and moral reforms by establishing “penitentiaries, mental hospitals, workhouses, schools, and reformatories” to “reform” the formerly enslaved (Holt 1991, 37). A key component of situating this ideal colonial subject was to define them against the European man. In doing so the European man defined themselves as a reflection of God, existing above the human subject who has been marked as impure and savage (Holt 1991). The ideal colonial subject would come to exist as an extension of this version of the European man. They would not just reconstitute their own mortality but also more importantly the very social fabric and organizing principles of society. Coupled with the capitalist logic of free labor, Hartman (2022) would describe this moment as elusive because the evolution in which enslaved are recognized as human did not happen. In this post-emancipated state, the formerly enslaved were now forced to make up a free labor class. There was no real separation from the institution of slavery and the emancipation of the enslaved (Hartman 2022).

As this supposed “new way” of organizing social life is being cultivated Wynter (1999) argues that a vital factor that is informing this moment for both the European men and the

racialized male subject is religion. Religion plays a key role in invoking God's word and presumed natural order that would constitute this new way of being. The manipulation of religion then is used to naturalized patriarchal discourse and erected itself around the women subject. Sheller (2012) argues that the racialized male subject, for example, Black men in post-colonial Jamaica, made an intentional choice to assert their gender differences and reconstitute the patriarchal family with the goal of being recognized as a full-fledged man. There was a belief that by organizing the bodies of women and children into the family structure it would allow Black men to have possessions of their own that they could essentially lord over. Their choices demonstrate the conditions of the colonial gender system and what freed men view as the avenue to power, freedom and recognition of manhood.

Sheller's illustration of Black men assimilation into the European social structures brings to light the existence of the sex/gender system which has existed for millennia (Rubin 1975, 32). Gayle Rubin describes this system as a gendered set of arrangements within society that emerge through the transformation of biological concept of sexuality into the social materiality and product of human activity with the goal of meeting the needs of men (1975). Within this sex/gender system European women have always been oppressed. Notably scholars such as Engles (1884) recognize women who became wives as slaves. In assimilating to this European social structure Black men emulate this gendered dynamic of the family and thus becomes a primary site of the materialization of Black women's oppression in a post-emancipated society.

Decolonial and Caribbean feminist in their attempt to articulate these post-emancipated realities focus their assessment on the logic of hegemonic masculinity. This was imperative as they began to witness the direct impact of the convergence of world powers and interest in direct conflict with the global south (Alexander 1994). Black Caribbean women were being erased (Davies 2003). Therefore, to bring awareness to this erasure and challenge it, feminist scholars

focused their energies on the main problem at hand: white hegemonic masculinity. Pasley (2001) defines hegemonic masculinity as the construction of gender roles around maintaining power that has been naturalized into society making them immutable. White hegemonic masculinity as previously defined by Crichlow et. al (2014) encompasses this definition but emphasizes that racialized element of hegemonic masculinity centering around white-manhood and is naturalized through institutions and culture. Despite the abolition of slavery, white hegemonic masculinity continues to reign over the Caribbean and has paved the way for Black patriarchy and the continuation of the sex/gender system as articulated by Rubin (1975).

Alexander (1994) argues that one reason why hegemonic masculinity continues to be the dominating force in the construction of post-colonial realities is due to the psychological impact of the plantation society dynamics. She also adds that the persistence is a result of Black nationalist men focusing on gaining power rather than dismantling the gender structures. As they have some control and are no longer subjects to be acted upon, they have taken up the position once completely held by white men. Thus, “Black masculinity continues the policing of sexualized bodies, drawing out the colonial fiction of locating subjectivity in the body (as a way of denying it), as if the colonial masters were still looking on, as if to convey legitimate claims to being civilized” (Alexander 1994, 14).

This argument is further underscored by Barriteau (1998) who argues that this was an intentional choice in which men have chosen to “maintain unjust gender systems because [they] satisfy specific [goals], indigenously denied objectives of state interests” (195). Since slavery, Black women have only been recognized for their reproductive potential because of the colonial power structure. This continued into the post-emancipated era, reflected in examinations of the construction of citizenship. For instance, Alexander (1994) argues that citizenship within Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago is marked by one’s perceived usefulness to the state. In the

case of women, their reproductive value is used to maintain and potentially increases the labor force, thus yielding economic gain for the nation. Alexander argues that the Sexual Offences Act of 1986 reflects this ideology. It was a tool of social control used to mark bodies that held reproductive value as citizens and those bodies that were considered non-procreative as a threat for the survival of the nation's political economy (Alexander 1994, 9).

ANTI HUMANISM: BLACK WOMEN GENDERED REALITIES

At the core of these post-emancipated events is the European man resituated as God and what it means to be human. Thus, to understand the full breath and width of this post-colonial reality scholars began to interrogate how the human becomes inscribed through an intersectional framework. Furthermore, in building this framework they engaged the fields of science, anthropology, sociology and philosophy, anthropological and theology (Weheliye 2014, 9). This field of study would be known as (anti)-humanism and defined by the scholarship of Spillers, Wynter, Fanon, Foucault and Marx to name a few. For this study's purpose, Spillers and Wynter act as foundation to understanding the emergence of the human subject as it relates to gender and race. Saidiya Hartman, who represents more recent scholarship on this topic also aids in illuminating this post-colonial dialogue and positionality of Black women.

The emergence of the European man as a God-like figure and those racialized as impure and savaged is further emphasized by Hortense Spillers and Saidiya Hartman. For Wynter (2016), European men reformulating who was human, subject, and other reflects that humanism is not just a biological concept but a social and ontological one as well. This line of thought was at the base of Spiller's work. In "Mama's Baby, Papa Maybe," Spillers (1987) takes up this metaphysical assessment of the human condition to make the distinction between the body and flesh in which the body becomes as a blanket slate, socially dead and the flesh "becomes a

marked site of the impact of slavery. Marking of the flesh emerges in two ways: the first being the physical injuries of torture inflicted on the enslaved body and then the psychological markings in which the racialized-gendered body is renamed through the technology of white hegemonic masculinity (Spillers 1987,67).

While women become subjugated to the boundaries of the sex/gender system and what constitutes a human, Wynter (1999) is very clear that from a racialized-gender perspective this has relocated Black women to “silenced grounds.” Wynter’s concept of “silenced grounds”, emerged from discussions in subaltern studies. The subaltern emerges as a location of “otherness” for those who are not white and is sustained through extreme level of violence inflicted by white hegemonic epistemology (Spivak 2010). Furthermore, the subaltern serves to reinforce and stabilize the category of white men. McKittrick (2006) also refers to this space as the “silence center” where the experience of the subject is both unacknowledged and hidden.

Black women’s positionality in these ‘silenced grounds’ forced them to move beyond traditional methods of freedom and definitions of humanism to cultivate their own way of being. They have created and engaged in new practices that emphasize kinship, intimacy, safety, and security (Johnson 2020). By doing this they have cultivated a new praxis of freedom called “Black femme freedom.” Importantly, Johnson (2020) notes that these practices of freedom did not necessarily mean freedom from the oppressive nature of the colonial system but about everyday survival. Everyday practices of freedom manifested in murky ways. Sometimes it meant denying access to their community and kinship ties and other times it meant exploiting labor of enslaved women. It is practices such as these that truly underscore what strategies of survival look like amid a violent institution.

The scholarly work and arguments established by the noted scholars throughout the literature review act as a foundation for the current argument within this paper by providing a structural analysis of colonial and postcolonial conditions. Colonialism and white hegemonic power become a common thread woven through the arguments of Beckles, Alexander, Wynter, Morgan and Spillers for example. It is this common thread that supports my own engagement in white hegemonic power. Building on their analysis I locate the lack of analysis for a more robust articulation of the God project which emerges out of the work of Holt and Wynter specifically. Thus, to fill the gap in literature I locate the God project as a central theme in my own analysis of post-colonial nation-state formation. I argue that this “God Project” facilitated the evolution of white supremacy that is reflected in post-colonial society. I refer to the success of this evolution as the Ontological Sovereign as it sets the precedence for a broader frame of analysis. Furthermore, I employ Spillers’ articulation of the body/flesh coupled with Wynter’s articulation of silenced grounds/subaltern realities to provide a framework for how bodies become gendered and situated against the backdrop of colonialism. Therefore, not only is the Ontological Sovereign supported by prior engagement with ideas of white supremacy/white hegemonic power it is proven through the ways in which racialized-gendered bodies are situated.

METHODOLOGY

“In the end, I could say no more about Venus than I had said about her friend: “I am unsure if it is possible to salvage an existence from a handful of words: the supposed murder of a negro girl.” - Saidiya Hartman

To construct a visible picture of Black women’s negotiation for full citizenship at the time of independence I argue that employing similar methods of Caribbean feminist scholars is necessary. Methodologically, Caribbean feminist scholars have utilized biographies of women as well archival sources from both state and personal records in crafting counter-narratives of

Caribbean historiography. Feminist scholars when engaging in archives often utilized fragments of archival material to interrogate how documents have shaped meaning (Fuentes 2016). These methodologies have allowed for the extraction of new information about Caribbean life as well as opening sites of interrogation for moments of neglect and gendered oppression (Brereton 2013). The utility of these methods can be seen through the emergence of Caribbean feminist scholars who have reconstructed Caribbean historiography to attend to the gender roles and ideologies that sustained society (Brereton 2013).

The challenge to Caribbean historiography is “how does one write a history of the impossible” as posed by Michel Trouillot (2015) in *Silencing the Past*. It is this same question that I have grappled with in this paper. There is an important point that needs to be understood. This paper highlights the forced positionality of Black women as the ‘silenced other,’ existing in a place of suspended reality. This point becomes even more visible by the lack of archival sources that highlights Black women and girls like Beverly Jones in Trinidadian history. In the first version of this paper, I was deeply interested in finding materials that would allow me to piece together the lives of Black women such as Marjorie Padmore who composed the national song and pledge and Beverly Jones an activist who fought against capitalism and western imperialist regimes. The inability to properly locate these relevant figures in Trinidad history is a direct result of the “otherness” in which they have been located during their lives. Because Black women and girls have been relocated to what Wynter’s calls ‘silenced grounds’ figures like Beverly Jones then only show up in fragments throughout the archive.

The limitation presented in this research called for a more creative approach to situate the lives of Black women to the extent it is possible. Thus, I have turned to methodological practices cultivated by scholars such as Marisa J. Fuentes who focused on navigating the fragmented way in which enslaved women’s bodies appear in the archive. Specifically, Fuentes called for

stretching of these fragments by “reading along the bias grain to eke out extinguished and invisible but no less historically important lives” (Fuentes 2016, 7). At the foundation of this practice is working with and against the archive to answer the question “what happened when?” By engaging with this practice, we can critically reimagine the lives lost in the archive records. While Fuentes’ methodology is geared towards archival documents, I argue that this methodology is vital and thus can be expanded to navigate public-facing nation-state documents. The main sources I have engaged with include the Constitution and address and speeches performed by Dr. Eric Williams between 1960 and 1973. I’ve also collected Tapia newspapers published by the Tapia House Publishing Company in Tunapuna with a date range of September 28, 1969- July 03, 1977. Tapia was a break-off of the New World Group at the University of West Indies, Mona, Jamaica with a goal of providing an anti-colonial and antinationalist perspective that allows for a fresh interpretation of the political, social, and economic conditions of Trinidadian society. This paper was spearheaded by Lloyd Taylor, the current director of the Tapia House Movement (Taylor 2018). Lloyd’s objective with Tapia was to provide an independent perspective from government narratives on issues of “political strategy, economic policy, transformation and post-independence democracy (Taylor 2018).

Additionally, I have utilized iconography to examine how Trinidad and Tobago’s national symbols; the national anthem, song and pledge have served the function of legitimatizing institutions, establishing power, and reproducing culture. Iconography as a methodology illustrates how symbols play an important role in legitimatizing institutions and establishing relations of power of the new government (Ganguly and Thomas 2004). Through engaging with iconography, I aim to interrogate how symbols allowed for a mapping of the gender ideologies and nationalist principles that have been reproduced throughout generations as well as accounting for “colonial histories, narratives of modernity and Marxism in the Third

World and the liminal pre-cariousness of being human” (Ganguly and Thomas 2004, 1). Through my engagement with these methodological approaches, I have attempted to problematize the formation of citizenship, definition of liberty and unity when reconciling with colonial history and Black women’s positionality as the “silenced other.”

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

Using the source materials available I have structured my findings and analysis as a performance to demonstrate how performativity is taken up as it relates to the human condition, citizenship, and state power. To articulate the shape of this performance this section was divided into three key acts. The first act “The Father” acts as foundation for the performance by illustrating the tension between the persistence of the colonial order and nationalist project. The second act “The Son: Scenes of Mutilation and Sacrifice” interrogates the gendered realities and the cost of the nationalist project. The third and final act “Locating God and the Trinity” examines the materiality and immateriality of nationhood realized.

Framing this section as a performance is a very intentional move. Not only am I invoking the imagery of performance described in the national symbols of Trinidad and Tobago. This is demonstrated with how aspirational ideals around liberty emerge. As we move throughout this performance it becomes clear the roles that are taken up. The actors (nationalist men and local people), the director (white hegemonic power) and the unseen crew (the subaltern) who are foundational for sustaining this new social reality. It is at the end of this performance that we return to the scene in which we began. The performance becomes disrupted by the murder of a Black girl who illustrate the mockery of liberty through the choregraphing of power, flesh and choice by white hegemonic power. Equally, if not more important, the choice of performance

illustrates the illusion of choice in which the actions of the supposed actors are bound to the writing and power of the director.

ACT 1: THE FATHER: NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN

Act 1: The Father Nothing New Under the Sun focuses on the contemporary realities of Trinidad and Tobago becoming a new nation-state that must contend with global power structure. A key point of entry for Act 1 is the presence of Dr. Eric Williams, father of the nation, who emerges as one of the key figures in defining the country's national identity and historical narrative. Over the course of thirteenth years, between 1960-1973, Williams key writings and speeches underscored the colonial logic that influenced contemporary realities and the urgency of the country to define itself as an independent state in the face of the convergence of international western regimes of Britain and America.

SCENE 1: PATERNALISTIC LOGIC & COLONIAL ORDER

Underlying the logic of the white hegemonic masculinity as the ruling apparatus of Caribbean slavery was a paternalism in which enslaved Africans were viewed in a child-like form that needed to be governed. This would be the first site in which Blackness becomes marked not only as inferior but as a child that would justify the need for metropolitan domination even after slavery was abolished. This point is particularly highlighted in Williams's piece *Approach to Freedom* published in 1960 by the People's National Movement publishing company. Specifically, he focuses on five governors and apologist at different colonial periods to underscore the persistent ideological strong hold of the Caribbean. One of the governors mentioned was Fenelon, the French Governor of Martinique during the eighteenth century and the other was Lord Harris, governor of Trinidad from a little over a hundred years ago. In Harris discussion of the immigrants from Africa and India being imported by the thousands to the Caribbean he would conclude that both racial groups "must be treated like children-and wayward

ones, too' (2). This opinion would not just be shared by governors but would be a general consensus. Williams goes on to note that even British literary apologists of the 19th century despised formerly enslaved people and considered them "lazy" and "unfit" for self-governance." Thus, in their eyes Black people would "would never be able to govern themselves like white colonies" could. The words of the governors and the apologist would represent the general attitudes towards the West Indies that would justify the continuation of colonial rule up until the 20th century.

The everlasting impact of colonial ideology relates to the inability to be separate from colonial powers. This colonial and western presence does not just loom over Trinidad at an ideological and economic level but holds physical grounds on Trinidad. Williams goes on to discuss the emergence of a U.S. military base in Chaguaramas of Trinidad. This base represents the expansion of American military power during a period in which the cold war was looming. Notably, the presence of this military base while Britain was still the head of state represented the alliance between the two powers during this war period. This alliance on the grounds of Trinidad would represent the convergence of power that would be a hinderance to Trinidad becoming a fully independent state. This point becomes explicitly clear as William goes on to describe that during negotiations for the Chaguaramas military base, Trinidad was left out and even 20 years later they were kept in the dark about what is happening. Williams argued that the lack of awareness placed the people of Trinidad in vulnerable position:

"The Chaguaramas problem. Chaguaramas is a base, developed by the Americans as a part of the defense system of America. What is that defense system? In 1941 it was one thing. In 1960 it is something vastly different. I shall give you three examples of the defense system of which Chaguaramas is a part. All this is well known to people all over the world where freedom of the press means freedom to inform and educate, and not freedom to keep people in ignorance and freedom to attack the PNM." (10)

Trinidad's government's lack of information of the dealing taking place in Chaguaramas demonstrates how this government is viewed in the broader context of the world system. It is almost like they are being treated like a dependent child by first world nations who claim the right to determine what policies are best for the developing world. Paternalism is invoked in this dynamic held together by racial domination in which whiteness in a post-colonial context is still considered superior and Blackness is inferior. Noting this inferiority, it would make no sense in the eyes of Britain and the USA to view Trinidad and Tobago as a relevant party in their negotiations. In addition to this William's goes on to elaborate the other conditions that would pose as a challenge for Trinidad and Tobago to gain its independence. He states:

All these other victims of imperialism have had decisive advantages over the West Indies. They had a language of their own, a culture of their own, a religion of their own, a philosophy of their own as in India, a family structure of their own as in Ghana, a sense of values of their own which they could oppose to western Imperialism. We in the West Indies have nothing of our own-a few artifacts and place names are all that remain of the aboriginal civilization. We are a people transplanted into slaver to a transplanted crop and we have remained political satellites of the metropolitan economy whose economic interests we have...invested to serve. We have become in the Martiniquan saying "bearti noir, masque blanc" a black skin with a white mask, a European culture in an Afro-Asian environment. Thus we have the absurdities of the Haitian Court with its Duke of Marmalade and Count of Lemonade. (4-5)

In laying out these disadvantages, Williams simultaneously highlights what is required of countries to maintain a sense of self. Culture becomes understood as a point of power that allows for nations to preserve oneself in the face of colonialism. It would be these ideals of religion, family, language and philosophy that make up a countries' culture that Williams would rely on as a template in his own distillation of ideas about Trinidad's national identity. Furthermore, William's comment about "black skin with a white mask" becomes important note when we consider the paternalistic logic of the colonial order. It is the compounding reality of this

paternalism and lack of sense of self that would fuel William's and the People's National Movement urgency for independence and a national identity.

The following year (1961) after Williams wrote *Approaches to Independence*, he would follow up by giving the address *Massa Day Done* at the University of Woodford Square. In this, he addresses the evils of colonialism which "believed in the inequality of races" as a defining point of what this nation would be. For Williams, post-emancipation needed to be the exact opposite of what the colonial order was and represented. Where there was oppression there would be freedom, where there was inequality of races there would be equality and interracial solidarity. This opposition to the colonial order would be taken up seriously as a part of the cultivation of the national identity for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Between 1956 to 1981 would be marked by Williams action that would allow for Trinidad and Tobago to not only become independent but also a Republic. Starting in 1956 with the formation of the People's National Movement with the leadership of Williams. That same year, Williams was Chief Minister until 1959 and then the Premier from 1959 to 1962. These positions would be the foundation for Williams to become the first Prime Minister from 1962 to 1981 and the Father of the Nation.²

SCENE 2: IDEALS OF A NATION

William's speeches and addresses along with the People's National movement's work would serve as the foundation for the national icons introduced by the independence committee. Thus, the national anthem, song and pledge sought to paint the evolution of Trinidad and Tobago. From an oppressed class subjected to violence by the colonial order to the spirit of

² "The Honourable Dr. Eric Williams," Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, 2024 [Dr. Eric Eustace Williams – Parliament \(tparliament.org\)](http://tparliament.org)

resistance and revolt that would usher in independence. Not only would it paint a story of the underdog it would also define people's pride and responsibility to the country. The national anthem and the national pledge specifically invoke the ideas of the national family and freedom as core tenants of the nationalist narrative.

The national anthem "Forged from the Love of Liberty" first composed by Patrick Castagne in 1962 would serve to tell the tale of freedom starting with the birth of a nation. "Forged from the love of liberty in the fires of hope and prayers" would make up the first two lines of the anthem. These lines invoke the imagery of a phoenix being reborn, which symbolizes the death of the old colonial order of Trinidad and Tobago by the hands of the people. Furthermore, a key component of liberation was the unification of the different races, particularly Indian and African. This is further highlighted by Castagne throughout the rest of the anthem but particularly in line five which states "Side by Side we Stand" and then line 11 and 12 which follows "Here every creed and race finds an equal place, And May God Bless our Nation."

As the national anthem invoked pride in the history of freedom struggle, the national pledge composed by Marjorie Padmore in 1962 would remind the public of its responsibility to maintain this narrative. Notably, it is also in the language of the national pledge that we encounter the national family more explicitly as a defining organizational structure of the nation and its corresponding rules. This is explicit in lines four through eight which states "I will honour my parents, my teachers, my leaders and my elders, and those in authority I will be clean and honest in all my thoughts, my words and my deeds." Lines 4-6 outline the members of the national family but from the perspective of the child. This child in question represents citizens and their relationship with one another. Furthermore, not only is the child invoked but the standards of existing within the nation-state and who must exist above the child "God, the country parents, teachers, leaders, and elders." Line 7-8 goes on to lay out the morality that the

child must have. They must be obedient, honorable and pure to be recognized as a "good" citizen. These national symbols would not only illustrate the national narrative but would unify the country under one banner to legitimize people's lives in this new socio-political reality. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, these emerging national symbols embodied the spirit of aspiration, love for country and the idea of 'keeping the flag of freedom high' (Padmore 1962).

Alongside the national anthem and national pledge that symbolizes family and freedom, is the national song. Trinidad and Tobago, alongside other Caribbean countries like Jamaica have a national anthem, a national song and a national pledge. Written by Marjorie Padmore, a Black woman, in 1962, the national song was a runner up in the contest hosted by the independence committee for the national anthem. As previously noted, the national anthem was composed by Patrick Castagne a man of mixed descent. From the jump the lyrics Padmore open with "God bless our nation" shapes the national song as a prayer, or more explicitly a Black woman's prayer. This prayer focuses on three major points. The first part of the prayer focuses on the people saying "God bless our nation of many varied races. May we possess that common love that binds and makes us One." Like the national anthem Padmore highlights the importance of interracial solidarity. The second part of the prayer was dedicated to the land and maintenance of its beauty. This section invokes very descriptive lines of the land's beauty. The beauty of the island for Padmore directly correlated to the liberty and unity of the country as she goes on to say, "God bless our isles of tropic beauty rare...beat out a tune that seem to tell we take a pride in our liberty". The final section highlighted by Padmore is a prayer for the leaders. She asks God to bless the leaders with grace, wisdom and sense of justice "to rule our land a[l]right." If God is to answer her prayers about unity, preservation of the beauty of the land and leaders then Trinidad would embody the perfect nation that William's have alluded to in his own writing.

ACT 2: THE SON: SCENES OF MUTLIATION & SACRIFICE

While Williams would champion the ideals of liberty not everyone would buy into these ideals. Opinions of Williams would be well documented in editorials published by the writers of Tapia newspapers. In newspaper publication God Help Our Gracious King dated Sunday May 23, 1971, this can be observed in the language used. Tapia goes on to describe Williams as a “slave to the conventional” who “judges himself and his behaviour by Britian’s professed values.” Tapia’s editorial about Williams disrupts the narrative that Williams pushes about having great discontent for the western power and intervention. Tapia's disruption also demonstrates how William’s despite being publicly against these powers becomes Black skin with white mask which is the essence of Black patriarchy. In addition to William’s own persona being disrupted by Tapia’s editorial, so is the narrative of national family. Tapia goes on to proclaim that William rather than loving has a “thorough contempt for and dislike of Trinidadian.” Tapia’s writings about Williams would force us to reconsider the motivation behind this nationalist agenda.

SCENE 3: LEGITIMZING THE SUBALTERN

While Tapia frames Williams as a slave, steering away from that language I do think it is important to recognize the impact of paternalist logic that has governed the Caribbean for centuries that would inform Williams actions. This is not to excuse the fact that behind these aspirations is a maneuver for power. Pushing this analysis further, William’s maneuver for power is an attempt to buy into the broader global power structure and to be recognized by the western powers that previously dismissed him. One way in which William’s maneuver for power is through the projection of the National family. Aspirational power becomes a strategy that allows for the facilitation of Black patriarchy. Framing William’s engagement with structuring

Trinidad's national narrative in this particular way allows calls for an interrogation of how gender oppression then emerges in the Trinidadian context.

To do this let I return to the national icons, particularly the national anthem to expand the first round of analysis. Starting on line 7 we encounter the claim that Trinidad is their "Native Land" The use of native land here is very interesting. Put in relationship with the broader colonial context of genocide, capture and reconfiguration of the body and land, those who inhabit at this point have been there through generations for decades thus allowing them to comfortably take up the notion of nativity especially when they fought and cultivated the land. A new relationship between land and being is forged under colonialism and the institution of slavery. This relationship between land emphasizes the physical ecosystem as interlocking with the social-material world and its history. This interlocking relationship which makes up the nation is sanctioned through God's Blessing. As the nation becomes realized this way, it is important to understand the place of citizenship there. Put more bluntly, when reading for who is absent in the lines "every creed and race" can finds an "equal place" standing "side by side" where then are the women and queer identifying people?

These levels of subjugation and the gender oppression that structures are what creates the boundaries of the subaltern and positions them as the 'silenced other.' In this larger projection they are positioned in this reality only to be seen and not heard. The emergence of the silenced other in a post-independent nation starts with the national family and is then solidified through the characterization of citizenship. Another prime location in which this is not only observed but naturalized is in the legal doctrine of Trinidadian society which defines citizenship. The Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago was published promulgated on January 22, 1974, by the Constitution Commission of Trinidad and Tobago. It opens with the first 20 articles that make up the declaration of human rights. Article 16-20 are Emergency Provisions. The Constitution is an

important document that lays out the human rights of the country's citizens. In defining who is citizens while it has been established through the national icons that everyone of all creed and race are citizens it does not make any specific reference to everyone across gender and sexuality also being considered citizens in the same way. Building on this gendered analysis of who constitutes as a citizen the gendered language in the constitution also alludes to how citizenship is being taken up.

“(1) Every person in Trinidad and Tobago, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, is entitled to the following fundamental rights, that is to say, the right to -

- (a) life, liberty, security of the person and the protection of the law;
- (b) freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association;
- (c) respect for his private and family life, protection for the privacy of his home and recognition of his human dignity; and
- (d) the enjoyment of property.

(2) This Chapter shall have effect for the purpose of protecting those rights subject to the limitations specified, being limitations designed to ensure that the enjoyment of his rights by any individual does not prejudice the rights of others or the public interest.”

The constitution starts by using more gender-neutral terms such as ‘every person’ or ‘any person’ but would later in the article would switch back to “he.” From Article 1; Fundamental rights this is evident. The use of gender-neutral terms in the beginning and the switch to masculine terms without reverting should be viewed as intentional choice. Furthermore, it demonstrates that citizenship and social culture are defined around manhood. When citizenship solely centers men it both facilitates the violence that women and girls are subjected. Black women and girls' subjugation is legitimized at a social/cultural level and then again at a legal level. The compounding impact of these forces is the subaltern in which Black women and girls

emerge as what Wynter (1999) refers to as the “silenced other.” The girls of the National Union of Freedom Fighters are an example of this vulnerability to violence.

SCENE 4: FRAGMENTS OF A MARTYR

As the late 60’s and early 70’s would be marked by a youth rebellion across the country, Tapia newspaper began to call out the government for their inability to fulfill the promise of freedom, provide economic opportunity and remove western imperialist regimes from the nation state. NUFF as an organization specifically engaged in guerrilla warfare from Trinidad’s northern mountain range and would rob and bomb banks, petrol stations and police outposts. Noting the dangers of this organization’s existence, Williams classifies them as a criminal organization who engaged in “deprived ideology” (Johnson 2014). He would go on to deploy a secret sector of police officers to eradicate this organization. This would be the backdrop to the war that would take place between NUFF and the state. Tapia’s news coverage of this would date the intensification of this battle from May to September 1973. The reporting of NUFF by Tapia takes on a very male centric lens. Throughout the newspaper articles that cover the emergence of NUFF and the tension between them and the police forces it mainly focuses on the males who are apart of NUFF. This form of reporting paints a picture that NUFF is a male dominant organization when scholars such as W. Chris Johnson (2014) in his own research of the organization found that despite this form of reporting that NUFF is primarily made up of Black girls. The only time we encounter the stories of these Black girls is through the case of Ruth Bayley, Beverly Jones and her sister Jennifer Jones and the violence inflicted on their bodies.

On August 5th, 1973, Tapia would report on the story of Bayley a 22-year-old student at the University of West Indies who was held in police custody since May 9th, 1973, without charge. Bayley would be “held in some undisclosed place by the police” after being taken from

her home in Curepe from “a party of policemen headed by Supt. Burroughs.” According to Tapia the police officers had no warrant as they “ransacked her home in a “pre-dawn raid” while “making threats to kill all “guerillas.” The article would go on to describe that Bayley would remain in police “protection” but would be free to leave at any point. While Tapia would dedicate a page to the story of police violence that Bayley would be subjected to, this article that was written three months later would be the first time that they cover this story.

The reporting of Beverley Jones death would fall a similar pattern of reporting. Jones’ death which would take place on the 13th September 1973 in the Caura-Lopinot hills would be mentioned more as a footnote in the September 23, 1973, article titled “Blood on Your Hands” in a larger story. Notably in the reporting of Beverly Jones not much more is mentioned in terms of her and even less is mentioned about her sister Jennifer Jones whose only real reference is the picture of her in handcuffs surrounded by police officers with the caption ‘Jennifer Jones, 19, branded a guerilla.’ Tapia was more concerned about the question of “how did we get to this?” In their speculation of the war between state violence and Trinidadian youth would focus argue that rather than focusing on “imperialism, Communism, the Cubans, the C.I.A.” we must turn to ourselves for an explanation. Jones death would only briefly gain national attention but would be overshadowed by larger implications of society and the focus on the loss of Black male life. Furthermore, the deaths of all NUFF members would die down after government actions frame these youth's deaths as justified and furthermore a national embarrassment (Johnson 2014).

Just like the silencing of Bayley experience with state violence, the government erased the death of Beverley Jones from the collective memory of Trinidad. The cases of these girls demonstrate another dimension of the silence grounds in which the forms of violence and marginalization that they experience are “not readily decipherable” (McKittrick 2006). The

inability to decipher the realities of Black girls and women at this moment would be fueled by Article 5 of the constitution. This article describes the protection of the citizen from inhuman treatment “No person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.” Based on the language of Article 5, those who are not citizens then are not protected from this inhuman treatment.

Furthermore, the existence of the NUFF organization from the history books (Johnson 2014). NUFF engagement in guerilla warfare tactics and the subsequent erasure of their story would be an intentional act that reflects a broader history of revolt and resistance in Caribbean historiography. From marron wars to the series of slave revolts that would mark the collapse of the institution of slavery, tactical violence has been used to denounce an even more violent institution of domination and dehumanization. Thus, for Williams and the government of Trinidad and Tobago this erasure serves as maintaining the fallacy of a national family united. Even more notably this erasure of the organization and even Tapia’s deflecting of larger structures of colonialism and imperialism served to disconnect the continual legacy of white hegemonic power. This would be important as Williams and the government continued to shape their nationalist histories.

ACT 3: LOCATING GOD & THE TRINITY

SCENE 5: ASPIRATIONS AND FALLACIES

Reframing liberty as a performance gives us a point of enter to interrogate what it means for a country to claim it’s ‘love for liberty’ while simultaneously casting those marked as ‘undesirable’ (i.e Black women and queer individuals) to the margins of society through legislative and social forms of violence. The idea of Trinidad and Tobago as an independent country that embodies the notion of love for liberty is a fallacy performed by nationalist men

whose true objective centered around aspirations to power in which they can contend with the larger global power structure that is white hegemonic masculinity.

The point of this paper is to examine the throughline that facilitated these events and the racial gender order of post-colonial order. To do this I build on the scholarship of Sylvia Wynter and Thomas Foster. In their own analysis have addressed that during the moment of emancipation Western Bourgeois men while transitioning to a free trade capitalistic structure were also concerned with the morality of themselves. Particularly, they had set their sights on making themselves in the image of God or what I refer to as the “God Project.” I argue that this “God Project” facilitated the evolution of white supremacy that is reflected in post-colonial society. I refer to this evolution as the Ontological Sovereign as it sets the precedence for this new broader frame of analysis of how white hegemonic power evolved through the execution of the ‘God Project.’

While at the surface level the goal of this aspiration is liberty and independence from colonial rule, I argue that it is an aspiration to power to operate within the global power structure. In Patterson’s *Slavery and Social Death* (1985) he argues that “people did not seek to be “free” (in the modern Western “bourgeois” sense of isolation from the influence of others) in such systems because, ironically, this was the surest path to slavery. Rather they sought to become embedded in a network of protective power” (28). Building on Patterson’s original assessment of power and Tapia’s editorial about Williams of power I argue that one of the defining dynamics of this moment is aspirational power. Aspirational power demonstrates the tension that protective power cannot. It gives credence to the birth of Black masculinity while simultaneously attempting to reject the white hegemonic patriarchy that gave birth to it. Aspirational power contends with what people must give up/do to buy into the global power structure.

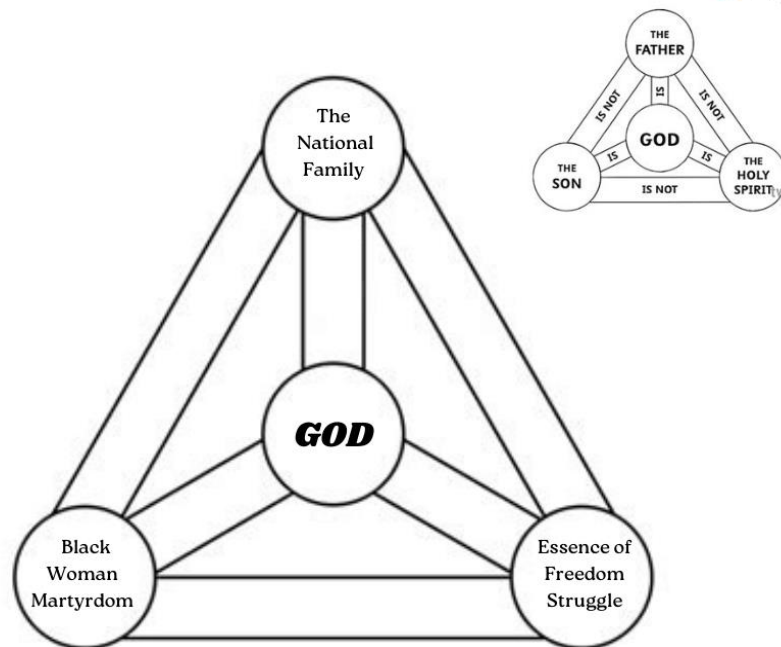
Aspirations towards power at its bases is fueled by an ancestral need to be recognized as a man, as a human. But it is important to note that aspirational power is not real power. It was constituted and bounded by white hegemonic power which at this moment has evolved from colonial power as it converges with western imperialism. Therefore, while nationalist men are under the illusion that because their 'hard work' was the reason why Trinidad and Tobago became independent and then a republic that could contend with global superpowers that is not actually the case. It is why Chaguaramas could exist, and why Britain and the United States viewed nationalist men as the human 'subject' who is to be treated as a child, with no place in the broader global power structure. While the child is traditionally seen as a sight of potential it is important to consider what it means for that same child to be completely socialized in colonial power and rule, not knowing anything else.

The extent of potential then becomes limited to the reality and power structure that has existed for centuries. Tapia's comments about Williams being a slave who hated his people and only cared about the opinion of Western power is an explicit example of the limitations of aspirational power and what it means to buy into the global power structure. It is this precise reason that I argue that the consequence of this strategy causes more harm than good in the grand scheme of it. At a material level aspirational power allows men to buy into the global power structure through the subjugation of Black women. At an immaterial level aspiration power can also be viewed as not just seeking to buy into the system but to be fully recognized on two levels. One that can contend with western powers and two more importantly it would be an attempt to rehabilitate the human after the 400 years of subjugation that was marked by social death, violence and exploitation. The reality of aspirational power is that by buying into a system in which the frozen embodiment of Blackness is this inferiority that has been stabilized and sustained by paternalistic logic of the colonial ruling apparatus.

At the beginning of this, I opened with a quote from Hortense Spiller in which she states that despite the liberation of the captive flesh/body that due to the ruling episteme the subject becomes embedded in this cycle of being repeatedly murdered “by the passions of a bloodless and anonymous archaism, showing itself in endless disguise” (1987, 68). The use of Trinidad and Tobago as a case study gives name to this “anonymous archaism” that Spillers refers to. Mutilated flesh lays bare the particular way in which Black women are reduced to scenes of martyrdom to maintain divine order of Trinidadian society. Black women become the cost for Black patriarchy to buy into the global power structure that is the ontological sovereign. Black women being the sacrifice is not an explicitly visible in society but a reflection of the underbelly of the social reality. Front facing this picture of perfect unity is composer Marjorie Padmore who as previously noted played a defining role in materializing the nationalist narrative approved by the father of the nation. Thus, Padmore serves as a stabilizing force in the maintenance of this fallacy.

Once the performance of nationalist ideals has been stripped bare the existence of the Ontological Sovereign at this post-emancipated moment comes into being at the center of these events. Using Hegelian logic of the Trinity³ I argue that the ontological sovereign exists at the center position that is traditionally held by the Christian God as seen in image 1.A.

³ Benson, Peter. “Hegel and the Trinity.” *Philosophy Now*. 2003. [Hegel and the Trinity | Issue 42 | Philosophy Now](#)



HOLY TRINITY RECONFIGURED

Image 1.A

Act 1: The Father lays the groundwork to understand the paternalistic logic behind the ruling apparatus of colonialism and what would subsequently give rise to key actors, Dr. Eric Williams, the People National Movement and the nationalist ideals that would define the nation. A key component of the nationalist ideals was the emphasize on Williams as the father and the country being vested in a national family. This dynamic would represent the father figure in the holy trinity. Act 1 also illustrates the role of national icons which would invoke a sense of patriotism in the people of the country. By doing this, I locate the Holy Spirit, from a Hegelian perspective of understanding love for freedom and family as the essence holding society together. Act 2: The Son: Scenes of Mutilation & Sacrifice would illuminate the particular gendered oppression that would emerge out of these ideals. This coupled with the role in which Padmore plays, Black women take up the position of the Son in the holy trinity who has been sent down to pay for the sins of society. A key component of Act 3: Nothing New Under the

Sun: Locating God aims to locate the ontological sovereign as the key figure behind the structure of this “post-colonial” society and the strategies used by men to maintain order and be recognized.

At the center of the holy trinity is God which is taken up by the ontological sovereign. The father, son and spirit each play a specific role in facilitating the function of the God figure and subsequently the ontological sovereign. Stripping this performance bare to the realities of society we are met with the emergence of this ‘new’ divine order that reinforces the notion of white hegemonic power as a Godlike figure that is deeply embedded into the very fabric of our sociomaterial reality. Trinidad and Tobago as a case study emphasizes the impact of this Godlike figure. But this is not enough, thus further research is necessary to paint a more robust analysis of the ontological sovereign as a ruling apparatus that continues to govern society, particularly how the human becomes situated in this reality.

CONCLUSION

The original questions of *The Mockery of Liberty: Choreographing Power, Flesh and Choice* were “with the emergence of an independent country ruled by a Black government, why have Afro-Trinidadian women been forced to negotiate for their freedom? Furthermore, how can we understand these negotiations in conjunction with the country’s emergence as an emancipated state founded on the notion of “love for liberty and country” and ‘national family’ in the twentieth century?” At the heart of this question was a deep concern for the calloused nature in which Black girls and women’s bodies becomes marked as disposable and insignificant in the grand scheme of nation formation. Thus, by focusing on their realities I highlight the attempts engaged to work in this nationalist structure as well as the opposition to it as strategies in which Black women and girls come to negotiate for their own freedom. The ontological sovereign

emerges as a frame not only to name the insidious nature of white hegemonic power but how bodies/flesh become situated and resituated to locate oneself.

APPENDIX A

NATIONAL ICONS	
<p>National Anthem "Forged From the Love of Liberty" by Patrick S. Castagne in 1962</p> <p>https://otp.tt/trinidad-and-tobago/anthem/</p>	<p>Forged from the love of liberty, In the fires of hope and prayer, With boundless faith in our Destiny, We solemnly declare, Side by side we stand, Islands of the blue Caribbean Sea, This our Native Land, We pledge our lives to Thee, Here every creed and race finds an equal place, And may God bless our Nation, Here every creed and race finds an equal place, And may God bless our Nation.</p>
	<p>God bless our nation, Of many varied races,</p>

<p>National Song " God Bless Our Nation" by Marjorie Padmore by 1962 https://www.aspiringmindstandt.com/thepledge</p>	<p>May we possess that common love, That binds and makes us One. Let it be known around the world, That we can boast of Unity, And take a pride in Our Liberty.</p> <p>God bless our isles of tropic beauty rare Of flaming Poinciana And shady immortelle The warm and sparkling waters That beat upon our shores Beat out a tune that seem to tell We take a pride in Our Liberty.</p> <p>God bless our leaders Give them grace to guide Bestow on them thy judgement wise To rule our land aright To keep the flag of freedom high, that we may sing most lustily We take a pride in Our Liberty.</p>
<p>The National Pledge by Marjorie Padmore in 1962 https://www.aspiringmindstandt.com/thepledge</p>	<p>I solemnly pledge to dedicate my life To the service of God And to my country. I will honour my parents, My teachers, my leaders and my elders, And those in authority I will be clean and honest in all my thoughts, My words and my deeds. I will strive, in everything I do To work together with my fellowmen Of every creed and race For the greater happiness of all And the honour and glory Of my country.</p>

APPENDIX B

<p>Newspaper: Tapia Place of Publication: Tunapuna Publisher: Tapia House Pub. Co. Date Range: Sept. 28, 1969 – July 03, 1977 Source Institution: University of Florida Holding Location; University of Florida Volumes: 50/ 272 pulled</p>	<p>NEWSPAPERS PULLED</p>
	<p>1969</p>
	<p>Title: Whose Republic? Date: Sunday November 16th, 1969 Permalink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00003/images Vol. No. 3</p>
	<p>1970</p>
	<p>Title: Power to the People Date: Sunday September 28th, 1970 Permalink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00010/images Vol. No. 9</p>
	<p>1971</p>
	<p>Title: National Crisis Date: Sunday May 9, 1971 Permalink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00016/images Vol. No.15</p>

	<p>Title: God Help Our Gracious King..! Date: Sunday May 23, 1971 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00017/images Vol. Empire Day Special No. 16</p>
	<p>Title: The People Must Talk Date: Sunday, July 25, 1971 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00019/images Vol. No. 18</p>
	<p>Title: Independence for Keepers Date: Sunday August 29, 1971 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00021/images Vol. No. 20</p>
	1972
	<p>Title: Let Us Block this Police State Date: Sunday April 2, 1972 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00026/images Vol. No. 25</p>
	<p>Title: People's Parliament or Civil War Date: Sunday 18th May 1972 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00028/images Vol. No. 27</p>
	1973
	<p>Title: Are You a Full Citizen Date: Sunday April 15th, 1973 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00054/images Vol. 3 No. 15</p>

	<p>Title: Second coming for the Messiah Date: Sunday April 22, 1973 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00055/images Vol. 3 No. 16</p>
	<p>Title: Where does Panday Stand? Date: Sunday May 13, 1973 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00058/images Vol. 3 No.19</p>
	<p>Title: Police Turn on Heat Date: Sunday May 20, 1973 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00059/images Vol. 3 No. 20</p>
	<p>Title: Guerrilla Mother' to Fight Date: Sunday June 17, 1973 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00063/images Vol. 3 No. 24</p>
	<p>Title: Release Ruth Bayley Now! Date: Sunday August 5, 1973 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00070/images Vol. 3 No. 31</p>
	<p>Title: Khan's 'Key' Opened Nothing Date: Sunday August 19, 1973 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00072/images Vol. 3 No. 33</p>
	<p>Title: Papadocracy Date: Sunday August 23, 1973 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00009/images</p>

	Vol. Special No.3
	Title: Invite Nuff to Political Assembly Date: Sunday September 2, 1973 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00074/images Vol. 3 No.35
	Title: Blood on Your Hands Date: Sunday September 23, 1973 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00077/images Vol. 3 No. 38
	Title: Act Now to Save the Nation Date: Sunday September 30, 1973 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00078/images Vol. 3 No. 39
	Title: One From PNM Leaves Nought: State of the Nation Date: Sunday October 14, 1973 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00080/images Vol. 3 No. 41
	Title: Williams May Not Go Date: Sunday November 4, 1973 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00083/images Vol. 3 No.44
	Title: Tapia says: Power to the People Date: November 18, 1973 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00085554/00001/images Vol. No.

	<p>Title: The Waiting Games Will End This Weekend Date: Sunday December 2, 1973 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00087/images Vol. 3 No. 48</p>
	<p>"Title: Williams on a Collision Course Date: Sunday December 8, 1973 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00088/images Vol. No."</p>
	<p>Title: Tapia Say Cite we and Relate We: Put Shell in Court Date: Sunday December 23, 1973 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00090/images/0 Vol. 3 No. 51</p>
	1974
	<p>Title: O.W.T.U. to fight Wooding Date: Sunday March 24, 1974 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00102/images Vol. 4 No. 12</p>
	<p>Title: Move as one to finish the fight Date: Sunday April 21, 1974 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00106/images Vol. 4 No. 16</p>
	<p>Title: Moves Afoot for Change of Govt Date: Sunday August 11, 1974 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00122/images Vol. 4 No. 32</p>

	<p>Title: Save Our Children Date: Sunday May 5, 1974 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00108/images Vol. 4 No. 18</p>
	<p>Title: Showdown in the Senate Date: Sunday October 20, 1974 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00132/images Vol. 4 No. 42</p>
	<p>Title: PNM Chuck Off Trinidad and Tobago Date: Sunday October 27, 1974 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00133/images Vol. 4 No. 43</p>
	1975
	<p>Title: Development for Whom? Date: Sunday March 9, 1975 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00152/images Vol. No.</p>
	<p>Title: Convene People's Parliament Now! Date: Sunday March 30, 1975 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00155/images Vol. 5 No. 13</p>
	<p>Title: The Messiahs Third Coming Date: Sunday April 13, 1975 Permlink: Vol. 5 No. 15</p>

	<p>Title: Who is the Damn Prime Minister? Date: Sunday May 11, 1975 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00161/images Vol. 5 No.</p>
	<p>Title: From Caricom to Caribbean Nation Date: Sunday July 13, 1975 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00170/images Vol. 5 No. 28</p>
	<p>Title: Politics in Trinidad and Tobago: The Last Quarter Century Date: Sunday August 31, 1975 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00177/images Vol. 5 No. 35</p>
	<p>Title: Towards a Participatory Republic Date: Sunday September 28, 1975 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00181/images Vol. No.</p>
	<p>Title: Time for a Radical Departure Date: Sunday October 5, 1975 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00182/images Vol. 5 No. 40</p>
	<p>Title: The Key to Our New Movement, A Rich and Abiding Faith Date: Sunday December 7, 1975 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00191/images Vol. 5 No. 49</p>
	1976

	<p>Title: Joint Action to Block PNM Date: Sunday March 21, 1976 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00205/images Vol. 6 No. 12</p>
	<p>Title: Williams Can't Win Date: Sunday April 4, , 1976 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00207/images Vol. 6 No. 14</p>
	<p>Title: Sir Ellis teaches BWIA girls Date: Sunday May 9, 1976 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00212/images Vol. 6 No. 19</p>
	<p>Title: Williams Uses Youth in Battle Date: Sunday June 6, 1976 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00216/images Vol. 6 No.23</p>
	<p>Title: PNM 'Rebels' Will Render Unto Caesar Date: Sunday June 13, 1976 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00217/images Vol. 6 No. 24</p>
	<p>Title: People right to fear the PM's republic Date: Sunday 8, 1976 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00225/images Vol. 6 No. 32</p>
	<p>Title: Our Manifesto Date: Sunday, August 29, 1976 Permlink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00228/images</p>

	Vol. 6 No. 35
	Title: Hail to the Chief Date: Sunday September 5, 1976 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00229/images Vol. 6 No. 36
	1977
	Title: Oga Did It, Sister, and so Can You Date: Sunday May 22, 1977 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00253/images Vol. 7 No. 21
	Title: A Deadly War on 'The Dreads' Date: Sunday May 29, 1977 PermLink: https://www.dloc.com/UF00072147/00252/images Vol. 7 No. 22

ARCHIVES & DATA-BASE

DLOC	Digital Library of the Caribbean
EEW	Eric Eustace Williams 1911-1981
OCLC	Ohio College Library Center, WorldCat
CNDC	Caribbean Newspaper Digital Collection

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