HIERARCHY AND HETERODOXY IN A MAZE OF COLOR

(chapter two)

"Slavery has gone. But capitalism remains."
- Gordon K. Lewis (1968:225)

Located at the southeasternmost point of the great Antillean archipelago, just off the northeast coast of Venezuela, lies the twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad, the larger of the two and the Republic's seat of government, banking, import and trade, is the fifth largest island in the Caribbean region. Roughly equivalent in size to the U.S. State of Delaware, Trinidad and Tobago's population at the turn of the 21st century is approximately 1,400,000 according to the national census.

Here I consider the cultural history of religion in Trinidad and Tobago in order to refocus upon the two traditions at the heart of this study. Yet together, *Orisha Worship* and *Shakti Puja* represent only about half of the greater ecstatic spectrum within this twin-island nation. Comprehending the sociohistorical dialectics of hierarchy and heterodoxy at-large enables us to turn to the transculturating intricacies of African and Hindu spiritisms in following chapters.[1]

I develop an analytical distinction between Christianity as "visible" versus "invisible" interlocutor in relation to the development of African and Hindu religions. This approach gains traction in light of contrasting ideologies of racial subordination concerning Africans versus Indians that conditioned patterns of inequality and power throughout the colonial era, and continue to inflect understandings and debates about religion in the postcolonial period as well, albeit in reiterated and sometimes disguised or inverted forms.[2]

Precocious Modernity and the Caribbean as Alter-Native.

The Caribbean is a region of great and deeply poignant cultural and historical dynamism, in which most of the original inhabitants were expelled or exterminated, to be replaced by peoples from what are today sub-Saharan Africa, India, China, Indonesia, the Near East, and Europe. Compacted into social forms established by the economic enterprises of an expanding European capitalist system based on commerce, these peoples multiplied their social and cultural resources through complex, interactive, polyethnic processes of adaptation, accommodation, and resistance. The enforced proximity of diverse sociocultural streams in the midst of the greatest

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[1] I focus more on Trinidad versus Tobago, except where noted, because my research has been based primarily in and out of Trinidad and since, up to 1889, Tobago was a wholly separate entity within the British Empire, with no administrative links to what would eventually become its bigger sister. Indeed, some commentators justifiably see deeper sociohistorical resonances between Tobago and other islands of the Lesser Antilles than with Trinidad, per se. With an Anglicized name based on an Amerindian word for tobacco (*tabako*), Tobago has the dubious distinction of having changed colonial hands twenty-two times, more than any other regional territory (C. Levine, pers. comm., 2002). Tobago enters the story below in considering developments of the 20th century as well as extensions of the postcolonial Orisha Movement to the smaller island.

[2] I borrow the "maze of color" trope from Albert Gomes's autobiography, *Through a Maze of Colour* (1974). Gomes was an important early-to-mid-20th century Portuguese-creole who entered politics vociferously as a labor leader and public intellectual, then moved more deeply into the central halls of political power as Minister of Labour, Commerce and Industry in the transitional colonial government of 1950-6. My literary invocation of pluralist ideology is just that; I only wish to point to the complex experience and ambiguities of "imagined pluralism" (Segal 1994) among Trinbagonians in public culture, *not* overly reify that sense of heterogeneity.

demographic transformation in human history – slavery and indentureship in conjunction with native extirpation – produced a range of island and coastal mainland societies exhibiting underlying similarities as well as seemingly endless variations: Benítez Rojo's (1992) "Repeating Island."

The region has therefore stood in an awkward relation to anthropology due to the fact that it has no classically indigenous peoples to study (Horowitz 1971) and because it has been considered neither center nor periphery. Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1992a, 2003) emphasizes that Caribbean societies are inescapably heterogeneous and premised upon historical consciousness. They rule out engagement with "native" or "pure" cultures. Based on "nothing but contact" (Mintz 1974a:ix-xxi), they are variously colonial or postcolonial to their core.

As the oldest sphere of European colonialism, Caribbean societies are therefore only superficially "non-Western." Indeed, quite to the contrary, Sidney Mintz argues that the region's *precocious modernity* must be seen as the most westernized part of the so-called First World: the First World's First World (1971a, 1974a, 1977, 1987, 1996a, b, 1998). This is because the growth of colonial economies based on African slavery, the plantation system, and sugarcane was integral to the rise of European capitalism. Sugar, slaves, and plantations were introduced into the region within twenty years of its "Discovery" in 1492. Mintz observes: "The peoples of the Caribbean are the descendants of those ancestors dragged into European experiments, and of the Europeans who dragged them, at an early point in Western history. Indeed, those peoples and this region mark the moment when the 'West' became a conceptual entity – for these were the West's first genuine overseas colonies" (1974a:xxi). Edouard Glissant puts it, "the West is not in the West; it is a project, not a place" (1989:2). Trouillot (2003) argues that the place projected as the West is better understood as the North Atlantic, not only because it is more precise but also because it encourages us to remember that "the West" is always a fiction.

Several points regarding the history and development of regional patterns of social organization in relation to political economy are paramount. The swift extirpation of native populations and the early definition of the islands, and bits of the mainland, as a sphere of overseas agricultural capitalism based primarily on sugarcane, African slaves, and the plantation system spurred – and then continued to frame – the development of insular social structures in which local community organization was slight in relative terms, as well as managed by the state, and class stratification was paramount from the beginning. Overseas domination, sharply differentiated access to land, wealth and political power, and the use of racial differences as status markers and mechanisms of social control sustained these structural arrangements. Massive new foreign populations of diverse origins were successively introduced into the lower sectors of these insular societies under conditions of restricted opportunities for upward mobility. Moreover, the region has generally been characterized by the persistence of colonialism – and of the colonial ambiance – longer than any other area outside Western Europe, as well as the relative absence of compelling ideologies of nationalism mediating mass acculturation.

Mintz (1974a:xix) emphasizes that this shared conglomeration of experience did *not* generate anything remotely close to cultural homogeneity: "Because Europe itself was not a monolith, consisting instead of contending states, contending churches, contending cultures, contending peoples and classes, the resulting uniformity in the colonial societies of the Caribbean was of a sort that arose more out of the intentions of the conquerors, than out of the content of their cultures" (also see Mintz & Price 1992). By striving to fulfill those intentions the colonists achieved a uniformity that was more sociological and technological than cultural, per se. Forms of governance, political and legal order, as well as commerce resembled one

another from society to society because those in power had similar objectives. Thus the Caribbean's was a "diverse and yet homogeneous colonialism" with a "centrifugal legacy" (Knight & Palmer 1989).

The development of plantations to produce commodities for European markets was a vital first step in the history of overseas capitalism. Indeed, the growth of slave-based economies in the New World was not only an integral part of the rise of European commerce and industry, but also connected with the evolving political economy of labor in Europe as well (Mintz 1971a, 1974a, 1985b, 1987, 1992, 1996, 1998; Segal 1988, 1989; Solow 1991; Segal & Handler 1992; Handler & Segal 1993). Joseph Inikori (1998) highlights the critical contribution of slavery to the growth of large-scale industrial production in England through the growth of Atlantic commerce. The role of slavery in fueling the development of capitalism itself cannot be underappreciated: unfathomable "surplus value" was violently conjured into being and put magically into circulation.

Forced into large-scale commercial production, slaves demographically dominated the populations of all export-producing regions of tropical America. African slaves and their descendants produced about 75% of the total value of American products traded in the 17th-and 18th-century Atlantic World, all under the sign of Europe's "Age of Enlightenment." In turn, the growth of England's reexport trade from 1650 to 1750 laid the foundation for the growth of industrial production in the metropole from the mid-18th century onward. Indeed, the rapidly growing export of local manufactures to slave-based societies of the Americas was central for accelerating manufacturing in late 18th- and early 19th-century England. These processes accompanied the proletarianization of remaining peasant institutions at "home" in the metropole, sustaining considerable population expansion, and thus building a domestic market for the products of English industry. It is no understatement to view the enslavement of Africans as having been critical for the development of capitalism in Britain.

Such macro-scale processes had immediate as well as time-released effects for the various societies invented throughout the Antilles. As Mintz puts it: "The relatively highly developed industrial character of the plantation system meant a curious sort of 'Modernization' or 'Westernization' for the slaves – an aspect of their acculturation in the New World that has too often been missed because of the deceptively rural, agrarian, and pseudo-manorial quality of slave-based plantation production" (1974a:9). That Caribbean peoples have developed the habits and skills required of labor and capital in industrial and postindustrial societies has made them desirable as immigrant workers, undergirding a long tradition of transnational migration and return. They have always been modern: a "modernity that predated the modern" (Mintz 1985b, 1996b, 1998; Mintz & S. Price 1985; Richardson 1983, 1989, 1992; Miller 1994, 1996; R. T. Smith 1996; Maingot 1998; Trouillot 2003; Scott 2004).

Approximately 12 million Africans were forcibly brought to the New World in chains and compelled to work as chattel slaves (Eltis 1998). The British alone transferred at least 3.1 million slaves across the Atlantic to labor on tropical American plantations (Inikori 1992; Richardson & Behrendt 1995; Eltis 1995; Eltis & Richardson 1997). Based on technique pioneered by the Dutch in northeastern Brazil, the British West Indian sugar venture began in Barbados in the 1640s and then quickly spread throughout the region, especially in competition with French colonial expansion (Dunn 1972; Sheridan 1974; Higman 2000). Overall, "King Sugar" absorbed 90% of all African slaves from the 17th century up to the 1820s (Eltis & Richardson 1997).

Viewing slaves as proletarians in disguise, Mintz's framing of the plantation experience as agro-*industrial* in character compels us not to be fooled by any misleading rural-urban or temporal distinctions (1953, 1974a, b, 1977, 1985, 1996a, b, 1998). The features of this plantation system – which include monocrop production for export, strong monopolistic tendencies, a rigid and oppressive system of social stratification characterized by a correlation between racial and class hierarchies, and relatively weak community structure – contributed to the shared contours of Caribbean societies and cultures (also see Knight & Palmer 1989; Trouillot 1992a, 1992b; Bolland 1992a; Brereton 1993; R. T. Smith 1996; Levitt & Witter 1996). This system also gave rise to a range of reconstituted peasantries situated on and across the margins of the system, a mode of socioeconomic organization that has existed – even thrived – in tension with plantation domination (see Besson 1992, 1995).

Just as Caribbean peoples shared the experience of slavery from a range of positions, so too did they experience the transition to emancipation and freedom. Though emancipation brought legal freedom to the great majority of Caribbean peoples, it did *not* fundamentally change the grossly unequal distribution of socioeconomic resources and political power in the region's societies (Brereton 1989; Scarano 1989; R. T. Smith 1992, 1996; Olwig 1995). No longer "protected" as chattel in a paternalistic slave system that offered limited customary rights to subsistence and medical care, the newly emancipated were "left to fend for themselves" (Olwig 1995:4) and, therefore, left to blame for their "own" future failures. As Olwig observes: "The ability to absorb the contradictions of freedom may well be one of the most important legacies of emancipation for Caribbean societies" (1995:7). Raymond T. Smith (1982:143-64) shows how ideologies of liberalism in the postemancipation Caribbean incorporated racist elements, enabling elites and the socially mobile to maintain recontextualized positions in the postemancipation hierarchy – through Anglicization of concepts of achievement, for example.

Antillean society in the postslavery era was dominated by poverty and under-development. Elites dominated the good agricultural land; they controlled business enterprise and financial institutions; and its members dominated the professions and top ranks of colonial administration (Williams 1970; Mintz 1974a; Brereton 1989; Turner 1995). Many ex-slaves continued to work for the plantations as wage laborers in the postemancipation period, whether as full-time resident workers or temporary laborers during busy seasons, supplementing meager earnings from their own autonomous cultivations (Hall 1978). Some were even able to become independent farmers. Yet under-employment was the norm for the majority. Furthermore, some, but by no means all, in the postemancipation era began migrating to towns in order to escape low wages and seasonal employment on the plantations as well as impoverished existence on small peasant plots (Hall 1978; Lewis 1985; Stone 1985; Knight & Palmer 1989; Brereton 1989; Scarano 1989). This urbanization became increasingly significant. By the 1930s, it created serious problems, since the towns had fewer jobs than arrivants, and health and housing conditions frequently deteriorated as people crowded into slums and other poor areas.

To mitigate and manipulate difficulties precipitated by emancipation of the slaves, planters of the region and the colonial government resorted to the importation of nominally free laborers from India, China, Indonesia, and Africa under contracts of indenture. Apart from the condition that they had a legally defined term of service and were guaranteed a set wage, indentured servants were often treated not so differently from the ex-slaves they replaced in the fields and factories (Brereton 1974, 1989; Knight & Palmer 1989; Look Lai 1993; Khan 1996; Galenson 1998). Between 1838 and 1917, over half a million "East" Indians – from South Asia, that is – came to work on the British West Indian sugar plantations, the majority going to the

new sugar producers with fertile lands like Trinidad, which received about 144,000 indentured migrants. Between 1853 and 1879, more than 14,000 Chinese workers reached the shores of some of the very same territories; Cuba also imported more than 100,000 Chinese between 1847 and 1873 in order to facilitate the transition to free labor. South Asians also went to work on plantations in French Martinique and Guadeloupe as well as Dutch Surinam, with an equivalent number of Javanese joining them in the latter. And between 1841 and 1867, some 32,000 indentured or newly freed Africans also arrived throughout the British West Indies – the greatest number going to Jamaica, British Guiana, and Trinidad.[3]

Indentured labor servitude did not resolve intractable problems of economy and governance, but it did enable plantations to weather the transition from slave labor. Successive migrant streams continued to contribute to regional dynamism in social, economic, cultural, and ethnic terms, in ways partly dependent on the relative numbers and configurations that ended up in each colony and partly upon the sociohistorical idiosyncrasies of the local geocultural environment (Elder 1970; Brereton 1974; Trotman 1976, 1986; Brereton & Dookeran 1982; Birbalsingh 1989; Look Lai 1993; Dabydeen & Samaroo 1996).

This labyrinthine dialectic of power and differentiation manifests in relation to the challenges and contradictions of postcolonialism throughout the region as well. Anthony Maingot (1998) characterizes Caribbean societies as "modern-conservative" ones based on a peculiar mixture of political conservatism and radical individualism and skepticism. The Caribbean modern-conservative society is not only capable of social change, but also prone to calls or movements for it. Racial ideologies and other legacies of colonialism inhibit universalist approaches to politics in the region, simultaneously producing intense processes of continuity and change (pp. 443-4). These considerations help us understand why the region is home to the largest global concentration of territories that have voluntarily retained colonial status, reaping the benefits of imperial paternalism while postponing the burdens and responsibilities of independence. As the Jamaican political scientist Carl Stone observes: "This compromise between the impulse for sovereignty and a pragmatic sense of economic realism represents an interesting aspect of the complex patterns of ambivalence that underlie the colonial connections in the Caribbean" (1985:14).

It is important to appreciate, then, that the Caribbean is a region in which "tradition" grew directly out of the colonial order (Olwig 1993). It is an area whose first colonies were established three centuries before Europeans conquered Africa. Countries and territories throughout the region continue to import to survive, a precarious survival dependent upon the export of commodities running the gamut from sugar to coffee, bauxite to oil, and touristic memories to tax-free banking, not to mention its hemispheric significance for the transshipment of illicit substances (Hagelberg 1985; Stone 1985; Richardson 1992; Fernandez 1994; Pattullo 1996; Levitt & Witter 1996; Maurer 1997; Maingot 1998; Padilla 2007; Sheller 2003). Such considerations suggest that scholars may not have paid sufficient attention to the Caribbean as "Alter-Native," the West's hidden underbelly and perhaps even a crystal ball for the future (Glissant 1989; Mintz 1996b, 1998; R. T. Smith 1996; Trouillot 2003).

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[3] Constraints of space here disallow consideration of other significant minority communities that developed on respective islands as an outcrop of the 19th-century emancipation era, such as the "Potagee" (Portuguese) from Madeira, who took up a creolized path not unlike the Chinese; or the "Syrians," those Near Eastern Christians who became upwardly-mobile and have tended strongly toward endogamy. See Green (1976) for an overview of postemancipation demographic patterns to and within the British West Indies between 1830 and 1865.

From Colonial Backwater to Slave Society in the Southern Caribbean.

Trinidad and Tobago did not become an official, twin-island, political entity within the colonial British Empire until 1889, when Tobago first became a Ward of Trinidad. This development accelerated the eclipse of Franco-creole power and language, which was more or less complete by World War I. Though Trinidad was never officially French, French West Indian planters, free Coloreds, and patois-speaking Africans and Afro-creoles were central agents in the development of 19th-century society in the southern Caribbean – in spite of the fact that Britain had taken the island from Spain without a fight between 1797 and 1802.

Trinidad was a colonial Spanish backwater before the end of the 18th century. Spain's imperial vision focused on the rush for precious metals in the Andes as well as Mesoamerica, with the Caribbean valuable primarily as way-station to and from the mainland jackpots (Brereton 1981; Millette 1985). Christopher Columbus dubbed the island *La Trinidad* in commemoration of the Holy Trinity in 1498 on his third voyage to the New World, after spotting three small mountaintops on the southern coast from his ship (Carmichael 1961; Newson 1976). But Columbus did not, of course, "discover" Trinidad. That honor belongs more properly to Amerindian Arawak peoples who had lived there for centuries, and to the Island Caribs who began to raid the island long before 1498 and had established settlements on the north coast almost certainly before the end of the 16th century.

African slave labor was negligible until the 1780s since, up to that time, indigenous Amerindians supplied the labor for colonial estates and grew much of the island's food. Spanish colonists made requests for the importation of enslaved Africans early in the 17th century, but these went unheeded by the Crown, so they turned to illegal smuggling instead (Newson 1976). Meanwhile, two primary institutions developed with preferential access to Amerindian labor – the imperial *encomienda* land grant and the Capuchin missionary station – but these never became extensive and the number of Amerindians declined rapidly under Iberian rule along with their prospects for livelihood. With a population of approximately 30,000 to 40,000 at the time of Columbus, their numbers had declined precipitously by the end of the 16th century to probably no more than 20,000. Smallpox further depleted both the Spanish and the Amerindian communities in 1739. Thus transformation of the island two generations later sealed the fate of already disappearing indigenous settlements (Brereton 1981:4-7).

Although Trinidad was ceded by Spain to Britain in 1802, the real story of the time begins in the 1780s with the influx of French Catholic planters and their slaves under the Spanish imperial *Cédulas de Población* of 1776 and 1783. Despite being a colonial outpost, Spain did not want to abandon the island due to its strategic location near the South American continent. Trinidad's small 18th-century economy had stagnated until the accession of Carlos III to the Spanish throne and the advent of an era of imperial reform and revitalization under the Bourbon kings, beginning in the 1770s, characterized by a new spirit of enterprise and the liberalization of trade. Spain's rulers came to understand that its tropical islands would have to be developed along lines carved out in the British and French West Indian colonies, driven by the technical rationality of plantation agriculture and early capitalist adventurism. Trinidad would be transformed into a full-on slave colony (Wood 1968; Millette 1985; John 1988).

France and Spain had been closely allied since 1761 and, by 1776, the Spanish government accepted the reality of foreign immigration as essential for developing the island's economy. A policy was fostered with an eye toward attracting French planters from islands granted to Britain in 1763 after the Seven Years War, who were encouraged with various tax incentives, land grants, and the promise of protection under a Catholic power. The more slaves

one brought, the more land one received. And given the Spanish Crown's desire to prevent the spread of Protestantism, emigrants had to be Catholic subjects of a nation friendly to Spain.

Migrating planters were propelled by agricultural problems or, eventually, by fallout from the Napoleonic Wars in the French West Indian territories or by Revolution in Haiti, as well as by political problems for those in the group of recently-turned British Isles ceded by France such as Dominica, St. Vincent, Grenada, and Tobago. After the turn of the 19th century, refugees escaping revolutionary wars on the Spanish Main also made their way to the island. What began as an experimental trickle of foreign migration to Trinidad in 1777 soon became a flood engulfing the entire colony once the policies were fully accepted and formalized with the *Cédula* of 1783. Thus, although Spain ruled in theory, in practice it was the French who dominated the island in practice. Even after British succession, their influence was profound.

The early Bourbon reform period was pivotal for the southern Caribbean, since the effects of the *Cédulas* radically transformed the size, composition, and nature of Trinidad's colonial population by kick-starting its economy. As Brereton puts it: "The old Spanish and Indian population group gave way to a new and far more numerous African and French sector" (1981:15). Dominated by the plantocracy, Trinidad virtually became a French colony as early as 1784, after the first wave of immigration from Grenada, Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Lucia, and Cayenne (French Guiana). French planters were slave-owners whose wealth was based on the land. Afro-Franco-creole forms of language and culture came rapidly into ascendance – with a *patois* the lingua franca and Catholicism a broadly cast sacred net, and with Carnival alive and well initially among the elites, only to be appropriated by Blacks as part of their own festival tradition after emancipation in 1838.

Yet free "Coloreds" who came and adopted the island as home outnumbered the French planters in fact. "Colored" (British and West Indian spelling – *Coloured*) is an important and complex racial category regarding people of mixed Afro-Euro descent and cast in a variable idiom of "shade," discussed further below. The *Cédula* gave legal sanction to a colored property-owning class – although they received only half as much incentive land as their white counterparts – and made no distinction between white and colored immigrants in the article granting citizenship rights to settlers after five years residence. Thus free Coloreds from the French colonies and the formerly French isles responded enthusiastically by flocking to Trinidad in sizeable numbers. Some free black emigrants also came, becoming petty rural smallholders or artisans and domestic servants in towns or villages.

Even so, it was black slave labor that became the basis of the new society created in late 18th-century Trinidad, dramatized by slavery's negligible significance until the onset of Catholic immigration. The majority of slaves came to Trinidad with their owners, were *patois*-speaking and – like many of their owners – creole-born (that is, in the Americas), thus were at least nominally Roman Catholic. British merchants quickly entrenched themselves as purveyors of slaves for this late-blooming colony. In 1786, the exemption of the slave trade from import duties was made permanent (Carmichael 1961:393-9).

Between 1777 and 1783 Trinidad's population exploded from an initial 3,432 inhabitants to almost 19,000 persons, with the French far outnumbering the Spanish among Europeans, who together were nonetheless in the minority (John 1988). French planters brought their capital along with slave labor in order to exploit the island's rich resources. Plantation-based sugar production accelerated rapidly and rather lucratively. Yet instability roiled throughout the region in that volatile, turn-of-the-19th-century era of the North American, French, and Haitian Revolutions. Liberal democratic ideologies threatened the legitimacy of colonialism and slavery

at least in theory and elites feared political subversion. British West Indian planters, for example, had little to gain and much to lose from supporting the North American War for Independence (O'Shaughnessy 2000).

Thus Spain offered up only minimal resistance and then easily capitulated when the British sailed into Port-of-Spain harbor and took over in 1797. The new colony had a novel population in British imperial experience: Spanish and French Catholics comprised the majority of Trinidad's European inhabitants, with twice as many free Coloreds – many of whom owned both land and slaves – as Whites. Nonetheless, two-thirds of the colony were slaves. Those ideologically aligned with the new French Republic were deported upon arrival of the British. In 1800, the first British governor – Thomas Picton, a tyrannical ruler – put out a new slave code that turned back earlier legal advances made in 1789 as a result of the Bourbon reforms. The island was formally ceded in 1802 through the Treaty of Amiens.

But then the official British slave trade subsequently came to a halt in 1807. Yet, even though Trinidad experienced deceleration in the growth of its slave population as a result, plantation agro-business continued to expand profitably. Sugar production had become closely tied to British capitalism and planters were only just beginning to experience the economic advantages of slave labor at the time of emancipation. In 1813, the majority of slaves in Trinidad were African-born, at about 14,000, compared with just under 12,000 locally-born "creole" slaves (Brereton 1981:55). Slave mortality rates were high and not a few planters turned to illegal trading in order to replenish their pools of enslaved labor.

Creole Society and the Advent of Freedom.

Emancipation in the British colonies came about through the complex interplay of metropolitan and local forces. An antislavery lobby had emerged in London by the end of the 18th century, steadily gaining influence in governmental circles. This movement was driven by changing attitudes due to the spread of Enlightenment ideas concerning natural rights and political liberty as well as emergent Evangelical and Nonconformist Christian convictions pitting enslavement as contrary to the Gospel. Christianity had inherited the Roman position condoning slavery and more or less held that view until the late 18th century (Davis 1970). Abolitionism gained ground from the mid-1780s and British participation in the Atlantic slave trade was comprehensively abolished by 1807 (Temperley 1998).

Thereafter, West Indian planters suffered from the shortage of field labor as well as falling sugar prices, even though production continued to increase. Yet the sugar trade became less important to the overall economy by the early 1830s (Brereton & Yelvington 1999:4-5). Moreover, sugar interests in the East Indies had emerged by the early 1820s, making common cause with the abolitionists. Back in the Americas, the West India interest lost political clout as a result of their illegal slave smuggling, as well as recalcitrance in the face of amelioration ordinances imposed by London. Furthermore, local free Coloreds launched their own campaign for civil rights in 1823, gaining a sympathetic ear from the British government.

Thus the antislavery movement gathered intensifying momentum in the 1820s and was able to sway Parliament in 1833 toward the Act of Emancipation, which legislated the formal end of slavery in the British Empire on 1 August, 1834. A time of great liberal fervor, the final stages of the campaign against slavery coincided with excitement over the Great Reform Bill of 1832. The latter not only reapportioned political representation more equitably in Parliament, but also extended suffrage further down the national socioeconomic scale.

Yet, although the reformed House of Commons was prepared to end slavery, there was no hope of getting such a bill through the Lords without compensation for the slaveholders and a period of "apprenticeship" designed to allow for transitional adjustment. In exchange for their freedom, exslaves were required to devote three-quarters of their labor time in service of their former owners. Planters received compensation of twenty million pounds altogether: an enormous sum equivalent to half the nation's annual budget (Temperley 1998:13). Indeed, the cost of emancipation was considerable, given that it was ultimately paid by taxpayers, in addition to the fact that sugar prices increased sharply following the shift to free labor. Brereton writes: "The Act represented a compromise between the anti-slavery party and the West Indian interests; if anything it gave the West Indians more than the abolitionists" (1981:63).

Anti-slavery sentiment therefore was restrained by respect for wealth and property. Only a small minority of the former slaves actually received the full rights to life, land, and mobility promised to them (Blackburn 1998). While emancipation may have undermined legal property rights in humans, it granted only nominal freedom. Dominance did not substantially change. In many ways, elites managed to actually tighten the reins of social control after emancipation. The unequal struggle over labor and land fundamentally shaped postemancipation society. Without recourse to the whip or on-the-spot punishment, those in power quickly turned to the punitive and rehabilitative possibilities of law, policing, courts, and the prison. Elites were slow to embrace education as a mechanism for manufacturing consent (Trotman 1986).

The Emancipation Act of 1833 outlined six years of "apprenticeship" during which exslaves remained bound to plantations in order to "ease" the transition to freedom. But this period came to an end earlier than planned, in 1838. Emancipation met West Indian planters in "different postures and attitudes on the road to riches" (Munasinghe 2001a:50), precipitating widespread redefinition of labor relations throughout the region. Planters inherited the problem of compelling free individuals to labor steadily and cheaply on their estates. They sought simultaneously to constrain the economic alternatives of former slaves as well as increase the overall labor supply through immigration, thereby fostering competition among the laboring classes. At emancipation, the colonial state recorded a population of just under 21,000 Slaves, 16,300 Coloreds, 3,200 Whites, and only 750 Caribs. Trinidad's potential for further economic expansion was tremendous and the field labor force still relatively small.

The colonial government experimented with various schemes of labor importation – including from Madeira and the Azores, China, North America, and even West Africa in the form of newly freed Africans from foreign slave ships. Yet none of these strategies proved especially successful. Many migrants abandoned agriculture and joined the expanding service sector. Thus, in order to mitigate and manipulate the labor problems prompted by emancipation, those in power resorted to the importation of nominally free laborers from then British India under contracts of indenture. Apart from the condition that they had a legally defined term of service and were guaranteed a set wage, with the promise – neither always kept by the authorities, nor necessarily requested by the migrants – of return passage back to one's homeland, these indentured servants were not always treated so differently from those they replaced in the fields and factories (Brereton 1989; Galenson 1989; Knight & Palmer 1989; Scarano 1989; Look Lai 1993; Khan 1996, 2004; Munasinghe 2001a). Between 1838 and 1917, Trinidad received almost 144,000 indentured emigrants from South Asia, the majority of whom never opted to return back to their homeland.

Before continuing with the "East" Indians who came and forged lives for themselves in the "West" Indies, however, we must consider the complex *creole* social system whose

development had already been set in motion, and whose structure set the terms and constraints of – even as it accommodated to – successive waves of newcomers. This system was one in which all constituent groups were integrated into a coercive and hegemonic social order ranked by race and ostensible approximation to the "civilized" customs of the dominant European stratum – in Trinidad's case, a complex and contested mix of British and French, which superceded an initial layering of Spanish.

The Anglophone word "creole" bears an Iberian etymology – *criollo* in Spanish, *crioulo* in Portuguese (from the Latin root meaning "to raise" or "to bring up") – originally referring to persons of foreign descent born in the New World, as distinct from the European- or African-born. It referred to anyone – black or white – born in the West Indies and was extended to plants, goods, habits, and ideas arising from localization in the Americas (see Crowley 1957; Hoetink 1985; Mintz 1996b; Cashmore 1996; Balutansky 1997; Allen 2002; Palmié 2006, 2007a; Stewart 2007a, b). In this regard it is critical to note that "creole" did *not* originally refer to any sort of mixture, which came much later, though the extension in meaning makes semantic sense, referring to forms of "mixture" resulting specifically from New World conditions. Thus "creole" connotes locality and rootedness independent of autochthony and has therefore been subject to a dizzying range of meanings and politics (see appendix for more on the genealogy of "creolization" and "syncretism" and their pros and cons in scholarship).

Focusing upon kinship as dynamic nexus of both racial and class differentiation, Raymond T. Smith (1988, 1996) has shown how the logic of the emerging "dual marriage system" emerged at an early point in the development of West Indian colonies, binding everyone together: black and white, slave and free, mixed and pure (also see Mintz & Price 1992). This hierarchical creole social system was redundantly organized and finely regulated, animated by the contrastive meanings of different types of union – legitimate and Christian, or variously otherwise – that were widely recognized and differentially valued. These hierarchical principles of color and class have remained operative despite very real changes in the legal and overt bases of differentiation within the system over time.

For the upper class, marriage meant alliance between status equals and its values included permanence, religious sanction, and the reproduction of social position. The lower classes – originally enslaved Africans but over time their liberated descendants – practiced forms of conjugal relation and household organization that placed less emphasis upon official marital union. Thus the free colored population came to represent an intermediate level in this stratified cultural system, paradoxically embodying the structural opposition between legal and non-legal unions as well as white and black. Though the number of unions among Whites, Coloreds, and Blacks – as well as the number of offspring or families resulting from these unions – may have initially been small, their numbers grew and their significance was always important symbolically. Abolition of the slave trade led to an increase in the proportion of mixed-race people and, subsequently, the gradual emergence of a colored middle-class.

Smith (1996:72) observes that the convergence of an upwardly-mobile colored population with the downwardly-mobile remains of the white planter class resulted in the formation of the 19th-century Afro-West Indian middle classes, for whom Christian marriage was the quintessential index of "respectable" status. Thus the dual marriage system – fueled by a driving concern with hierarchy cast in terms of race and class – neither disappeared, nor radically changed with the demise of slavery. Rather, there was a dialectically evolving reallocation of positions within it over time in the face of changing socioeconomic stresses and strains. Indeed, these processes eventually led to the time-released growth of a black middle class as well.

The most important division within the white upper class in Trinidad's postemancipation decades was that between the French-Catholic and English-Protestant sectors. This tension was quite turbulent at the top of the social pyramid, filtering down among the masses in complex ways. It was fought out within the spheres of language, law, education, and church-state as well as inter-denominational relations. This unique Anglo-French dynamism within the colony generated pervasive effects – even where indirect – on the history of religion more broadly, and on the prism of Afro-creole religious differentiation in particular. In fact, the Anglican and Catholic Churches in mid-19th century Trinidad shared the rare experience of having been dually established for several generations. Ironically, the first Catholic Bishop of Trinidad was confirmed in 1820 by the head of the Anglican Church, George III. But by 1870, the Church of England was disestablished throughout the British West Indies except for Barbados, thereby bringing the same fate to the Catholic Church in Trinidad (Dayfoot 1999:143).

Relations between the English and French heated up especially after 1838, when London mounted a more systematic policy of Anglicization. Matters of power and privilege among Whites were played out within the sphere of religion and, by extension, education and language. This was because Christians agreed that school-based education as the best means for increasing their flocks and bettering their own position vis-à-vis rivals. Christianization continued apace throughout the 19th century, yet was anything but smooth, consistent, or unidirectional.

After emancipation, the majority of Trinidad's population was Catholic, but the Anglican Church was nevertheless very influential. The island initially fell under the auspices of the Anglican diocese headquartered in Barbados but, with the Ecclesiastical Ordinance of 1844, the Anglican Church became fully established with a formal base in Port-of-Spain, under a government with ready hostility toward Catholicism. For its part, and despite persistent turbulence over issues such as foreign appointments and marital ordinances, the Catholic Church managed not only to weather the mid-century storm but also even gain ground, securing its own local Archbishopric by papal announcement in 1850 (Harricharan 1981b, 1993). The Catholic Church maintained its tight interconnection with the French planter class and together they were able to project their values and influence.

These church-state problems and inter-denominational tensions were resolved with the passage of time as the communities coadapted to the local idiosyncrasies of colonial power. The last three decades of the 19th century brought diminution of Anglo-French tensions, characterized on the one hand by relatively untrammeled Catholic expansion and evangelization in the society at-large, culminating in Trinidad's first Catholic Governor in 1897; yet on the other hand, an increasingly systematic and effective policy of Anglicization in the civil spheres of education, law, and governance gradually gained traction more broadly. English and French Creoles formed a single power block by the turn of the 20th century, yet their position as the colony's effective ruling class was also slowly undermined – in turn – by the rise of educated colored and black middle classes, who became increasingly assertive in their own claims to power. Nonetheless, the stratified sociology of Christianity and related patterns of denominational affiliation had been firmly established within this dynamic society and its complex psyche.

Though Caribbean colonies were extensions of European Christian society, before the late 18th century there were too few clergy to proselytize an overworked slave population that was always changing and being grown by successively new infusions of people. Many in the plantocracy initially opposed Christianization of the slaves. The church line emphasized separation between earthly fate and heavenly reward as well as those aspects of Christian teaching upholding virtues of obedience, humility, and submission. With the turn of the 19th

century, however, the abolitionist doctrines of nonconformist Christianity benefited from "the ripening of the contradictions within the system of plantation slavery and mercantile capitalism which supported it" (Smith 1976:314).

Smith (1976) delineates the embrace of Christianity by exslaves in the emancipation era as having had less to do with any essential spirituality of Blacks in the Americas – though religious many of them no doubt were – than it did with earthly expectations in actual historical circumstances. The main attraction of Christianity was the promise of a better social order, since becoming Christian meant affiliation with the local representative of the abolition movement and the promise of social, as well as spiritual, transformation (also see Russell 1983; Austin-Broos 1992). Slaves displayed "little interest in Christianity (which was after all even less related to his social condition than African beliefs) until it came to symbolize an improvement in the condition of his daily life, or until he could see in it an expression of his own situation and a message of hope for the future" (Smith 1976:319). Thus, despite sporadic missionizing in the West Indies, it was not until after abolition of the slave trade that a real movement began to build, intimately linked with the development of evangelism in England itself. Imperial policy turned increasingly toward Anglican slave conversion after the turn of the 19th century in an effort to counter-balance the "radical" activities of nonconformists.[4]

Christianity therefore played a key role in the transition to a new social order after emancipation. It came to signify the integration of society around core elements of the colonial social order, whereas the development and differentiation of oppositional religious forms likewise indexed conflict. Thus, even though Christianity functioned for a short while as a vehicle of radical expectation and change, it soon became a major ideological support for colonialism. Churches operated as a pivotal locus of affiliation and mobility for the incipient middle and proletarian classes. "Christianity and church membership had come to symbolize progress and, in the West Indian vernacular, 'upliftment,' and it created avenues of social mobility for the exslaves – avenues which tied them in directly with the highest status levels of the total society" (p. 327). Yet the emancipation upsurge of interest in Christianity was neither uniform, nor totalizing. Not all exslaves were baptized, and not all of the baptized became full-fledged church members, although it is true at least nominal Christian adherence became widespread. Christian symbolism would prove to be a polysemically rich resource marshaled variously in political and cultural struggle.

It is within this complex and changing scenario that we may better appreciate the transoceanic transfer and reproduction of recontextualized religious beliefs and practices from Africa. Demographic factors such as a high ratio of Afros to Euros, work patterns which minimized interracial interaction, and constant pre- and post-emancipation infusions of native-born Africans were all at work. Africans and Afro-creoles were not only active interpreters of Christianity, but also of their own creolizing religious traditions cunningly reconstituted under subaltern conditions. Many among the grassroots and proletarian classes anchored their spiritual lives in resilient ceremonial communities offering spiritual kinship as well as alternative sources of sustenance and healing power.

To the extent that religious concepts and ritual practices were transported and reconstituted through the ordeal of the Middle Passage, Africans drew upon what they knew as

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[4] It is worth noting that missionaries and planters shared many of the same racial prejudices regarding the enslaved, differing mostly on the question of whether Africans were capable of ultimate redemption within the folds of the church. While not foreclosed completely by power and privilege, perhaps, the missionary effort would also never be able to truly divorce itself from the material and ideological interests of a transnational English bourgeoisie.

well as had access to in the context of life in the New World, a world as new to them as it was for Europeans. "Traditions" were reproduced and reinvented insofar as beliefs and practices dealt with problems of being and becoming rooted in new ground. The enduring significance of drumming and dancing in Afro-creole religious and aesthetic forms, for example, stems from reiterating shifts in the meaning of those practices over time in keeping with contexts of use and experience. A kaleidoscopic multitude of Afro-creole subaltern forms and hybrid reconfigurations proliferated in the colonial West Indies – albeit in idiosyncratically local ways – that run the gamut from ancestralism to Afrocentric cultism and Afro-Baptist traditions to herbalism and client-based sorcery.

It is important to appreciate just how heterogeneous and dynamic Trinidad's black and colored population was in the 19th century, since these demographic factors and sociocultural flows all contributed to the evolving Afro-creole grassroots matrix. Between 1841 and 1877, immigrants averaged about 42% of the total island population (Trotman 1976:11). Seven percent of the black populace was African-born in 1861, compared with only one percent in 1891 (Brereton 1979:152-3). This population included ex-slaves and their descendants, who were largely Roman Catholic and French patois-speaking; the descendants of free colored and free black peasants and laborers, many of whom were also Catholic; large numbers of mainly English-speaking, Protestant labor migrants from throughout the eastern Caribbean; ex-slaves from North America who had fought for Britain in the War of 1812 and were settled in a number of "Company Villages" throughout the southern part of the island, bringing their own form of Afro-American Baptism; black ex-soldiers of the British West India Regiment disbanded in 1815 and settled in various parts of the island; "peons" of Spanish-African-Amerindian background who came from Venezuela throughout the century to work in cocoa agriculture and as backwoodsmen; and a number of "liberated Africans" of many different tribal and ethnic West African backgrounds who had been freed from foreign slave ships by the British Royal Navy and sent to colonies such as Jamaica, British Guiana, and Trinidad. Brereton observes: "It would be difficult to establish that all these groups shared a common creole culture, for there were wide cultural, linguistic, and religious differences between them. All one can safely state is that they were rigorously excluded from political or civic life, their most characteristic cultural forms tended to be despised by the upper and middle classes, and they were in a low economic position: they were plantation laborers, smallholders, squatters, hunters, lumbermen, fishermen, artisans, longshoremen, domestic servants, vagrants, unemployed, and criminals" (1979:110).

Of particular significance here for the evolution of black religious forms in post-emancipation Trinidad is the fact that it received a significant infusion of Yoruba-speaking West Africans who came not as slaves, but indentured laborers between 1838 and 1870, carrying elements of continental Orisha Worship with them in their hearts and minds.[5] These were migrants who had been liberated from slave ships bound for Cuba, Brazil, and the United States by the Royal Navy, settled temporarily in Sierra Leone or Saint Helena, and then compelled to emigrate anyway as plantation laborers under contracts of indenture (Warner-Lewis 1994:5-7). Indeed, it was to such "liberated" Africans that the British government and plantocracy first looked to secure indentureds for work on the plantations after emancipation (Warner-Lewis 1996:29). The system was increasingly corrupted by the sway of economic interests. For example, the period of time required for newly liberated persons to be given to decide whether to indenture themselves while in port at Freetown, Sierra Leone, was progressively decreased at the

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[5] Compare with the fact that only 1% of the African-born slaves in 1819 were Yorubas (John 1988).

same time that the length of indentureship crept up from one year in 1842 to five years in 1863 (Warner-Lewis 1991:12-3). Overall, various factors militated against development of black indentureship on a truly large scale and very few of these Africans were repatriated back to Africa. Still, this thirty year labor experiment had considerable implications for the development of local culture and popular ritual traditions.

By the turn of the 19th century, increasing numbers of such displaced Africans were from Yorubaland due to collapse of the Oyo empire and endemic civil war and political conflict in the area, which facilitated the increased exportation of Yoruba, Dahomean, and related groups first as slaves, then later as "liberated" indentured migrants (Childs & Falola 2004). Yoruba refugees and war captives were channeled by the thousands through several ports on the "Slave Coast," a two hundred-mile stretch along the Bight of Benin between the mouth of the River Volta in today's Ghana and the island of Lagos in Nigeria. While significant numbers of Yorubas landed in Cuba and Brazil, where slavery was still active, a large number of them also found their way to the newly emancipated British colonies of the southern Caribbean. Approximately 14,000 indentured Africans went to British Guiana and about 9,000 arrived in Trinidad, large proportions of which were Yoruba (Trotman 1976). In Trinidad, they were able to cluster together in ethno-linguistic enclaves for a time, ensuring some degree of group solidarity, economic independence, coordinated family life, and symbolic reproduction (Elder 1970; Trotman 1976; Warner-Lewis 1991, 1994, 1996).

With regard to religion, several factors seem to have facilitated the reproduction of orisha-based forms of ecstatic worship in this context. Firstly, there are polytheistic resonances between the orisha pantheon and the array of saints within Catholicism. Indeed, historically many so-called "Shango" practitioners have not seen their religiosity as mutually exclusive with, or necessarily contradictory to, Catholicism. While the nature of this syncretic dynamism has been a source of contention among scholars as well as among practitioners more recently, it is incontrovertible that some kind of creolizing process unfolded incorporating elements of both Yoruba and Catholic religions. Secondly, longstanding intraclass conflict between the French plantocracy and English bureaucracy for control of colonial society in 19th-century Trinidad made convenient allies of Francophone planters and grassroots Blacks, benefiting Yoruba religious practices in various ways. In 1883, for example, Franco-creoles supported the fight against a colonial ordinance banning drumming and related activities central to African ritual life (Trotman 1976:11). Moreover, the demographic significance of free colored Catholics who came to Trinidad in response to the *Cédulas* – many with slaves – may well have facilitated the "retention" of Africanisms more than their European counterparts. Fourthly, the relative recency of Yoruba emigration into the colony bolstered the infusion of orisha ritualism in its diasporic home (Thompson 1983; Drewal et al. 1989; Mintz & Price 1992). Finally, Yoruba religious practices must have been buttressed and reinforced through resonance and cross-fertilization with Dahomeans, whose belief system was quite similar to the Yoruba and who were strongly represented among Afro-Franco-Catholic slave transfers to the island several generations before (Trotman 1976; Warner-Lewis 1991, 1994, 1996).[6] Yoruba religious concepts and practices

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[6] Dahomey was a West African kingdom formed by the Fon ethnic group in the southern third of what is today the independent country of Benin, just west of Nigeria, from the 17th to late 19th centuries and their language, Fongbe, is part of a larger family of *Gbe* languages. Together, Gbe- and Yoruba-speaking peoples were among the main groups exported into the trans-Atlantic slave trade along the Slave Coast. Indeed, a decidedly significant portion of the entire trade left the Slave Coast (Bight of Benin) between the mid-17th and mid-19th centuries, even rising in significance toward the closing years of the trade (Eltis & Richardson 1997). The religious systems of Fon and the

have exhibited an expansively adaptive element of flexibility across varying inter-African as well as Afro-Christian spaces of interface in local history, as we shall see. Yoruba religious culture has not only therefore had a profound influence well beyond its original, 19th-century parameters, but for many more recently, it has become the privileged paradigm for conceptualizing the African legacy in Trinidad and Tobago altogether.

Overall, the field of religion evolved into a complex and contested local continuum characterized by stratification rooted in race and class, with status and mobility measured vis-à-vis degrees of approximation to an idealized Euro-standard. African and Afro-creole religious forms – castigated as "primitive" and "backward" – were glossed as "obeah" and rebuked as demonology, witchcraft, or superstition by the plantocracy and colonial government. The etymology of *obeah* seems to derive from Akan (Ghanaian) concepts concerning magical or mystical power (Patterson 1967; Barrett 1974). Yet, as Dianne Stewart notes, "while the etymological origin of the term *obeah* situates it within the cultural context of the Asante and Fante Twi-speaking populations of Ghana, it is probable that obeah has evolved to include beliefs and practices from other West African ethnic groups" (2001:168). Even so, there is also a substantial gap between "obeah" understood as a complex of black practices on the ground and as a derogatory imperial discourse (see Richardson 1997 on the latter).

If elite suppression and regulation of non-Christian ritualism were important methods of social control, it is critical to appreciate that anti-obeah sentiments emerged most forcefully and punitively *after* emancipation. This development reflects the ever-deepening differentiation of Christianity as a hegemonizing sociocultural force in the wake of legal freedom. After all, sectarian evangelicals and nonconformists may have been abolitionists, but they were hardly anti-colonialists. Post-emancipation Christianization as a "civilizing" mission was intensified not only by competition between Catholicism and Anglicanism in Trinidad, but also by other competing groups as the century progressed such as Wesleyans, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Moravians, who trailed behind in numbers as well as complained about the moral laxity of the Catholic clergy and the unequal distribution of state funds for religious work.

Yet despite this missionary work and what appears to be somewhat rapid black conversion to Christianity in the emancipation period, complaints about the prevalence of African religious rites nonetheless mounted throughout the 19th century. Elites were uninterested in nuanced distinctions, viewing black religiosity with fear and suspicion. "Obeah" was legally defined in Ordinance 6 of 1868 as "every pretended assumption of supernatural power of knowledge whatever, for fraudulent or illicit purposes or for gain or for the injury of any person" (Trotman 1986:223). Though the legal code emphasized use of magic for the purpose of making money, in practice the word was used and abused much more broadly in reference to any religious or ritual practices considered "African." Those convicted of the crime were sentenced for up to six months in prison and/or subject to as many as thirty-six lashes with a whip. However, witnesses were difficult to solicit and the authorities relied on police entrapment or the possession of certain paraphernalia as "proof" of involvement in obeah, leading to unnecessary harassment and numerous miscarriages of justice (pp. 224-6). As Trotman observes, "describing all obeah as fraudulent and defining it so broadly that obeah included all rites of African origin criminalized African religion, made participation in the rites dangerous, undermined its authority

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Yoruba are similar, sharing a number of cognate deities and religious concepts that are either identical or quite resonant with one another.

and respect, and effectively reduced its potential as the organizing base for an attack on the hegemony of the planters" (p. 228).

Aside from obeah, colonial authorities also denigrated other aspects of black expressive culture. Wakes were often boisterous affairs and considered evidence of "primitivism" by the middle and upper classes. Similar sentiments prevailed in relation to "drum dances" as well as black celebration of Christian holidays such as Christmas and All Saints Day. Thus black musical practices became subject to cumulative legal restrictions throughout the 19th century. Laws passed in the 1870s made the playing of drums, gongs, tambours (bamboo percussive sticks), chac-chacs (gourd rattles), and several other instruments essential for black festivity illegal between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. without obtaining prior police permission. Moreover, "bongo" or "drum" dances were deemed illegal at any time without police license (Brereton 1979:160). Though aimed especially at repressing unruly lower-class black Carnival activity, Ordinance 11 of 1883struck a serious blow at Afro-creole religiosity by making it illegal for groups of people to assemble for drumming and singing (Trotman 1976:15). Two subsequent Ordinances passed early in 1884 then gave the colonial Governor power to prohibit by proclamation public processions, drum beating, and any "disorderly" assembly of ten or more persons wielding sticks or other paraphernalia that could ostensibly be construed as a weapon (Brereton 1979:173). Much of this anti-obeah legislation was consolidated in the Summary Offenses Act of 1921. These laws exerted dominating effects and became bones of serious political contention in the postcolonial era.

I approach the complex and evolving spectrum of local Afro-creole religiosity with an understanding of "Christian" and "African" as explicit – or visible – interlocutors in cultural history, however unjustly the cards were stacked in the Euro-Christian direction. African symbolism and ritual praxis have been historically subordinated and pushed to the ideological margins of social life, yet this seems to have been repression destined to return. Relatively independent cult activity such as Myalism, Kumina, and Revival Zion in Jamaica or Comfa in Guyana or Shango and Spiritual Baptism throughout the eastern Caribbean have flourished among the rural and urban proletariat as well as lower classes, while the more established denominational churches became the province of smallholders and the petty bourgeoisie.

Yet whereas "African" cultural forms came to represent the negative ideal, the "lowest" in colonial societies such as Jamaica, St. John, or Barbados; the playing field was given a complexifying twist in places like Guyana and Trinidad with the introduction of relatively massive numbers of South Asian indentured laborers for three-quarters of a century after emancipation, whose "Oriental" culture and "Heathen" religions symbolized the *lowest*-of-the-low – including Christian Blacks, for whom Indian religion became a convenient scapegoat for their own conflicted ambivalences. Indeed, it was only with time and much effort that Hinduism and Islam came to garner any alternatively respectable status in the southern Caribbean.

Enter the East/West Indians.

Thus we return to postemancipation labor schemes and the successive introduction of almost 144,000 East Indian migrants from South Asia to Trinidad between 1845 and 1917. Although many fell prey to unscrupulous and misleading recruiting tactics, most Indians willingly indentured themselves for a variety of reasons. The voyage by sea from South Asia took three months and the overall system was characterized by faults, abuses, and hypocrisies (see Tinker 1974; La Guerre 1985; Brereton 1974, 1981; Dabydeen & Samaroo 1987, 1996; Vertovec 1992; Munasinghe 2001a; Khan 2004).

The great majority of indentured laborers – roughly 90% – came from the Gangetic plains of northeastern India, having sailed through the Bengali port of Calcutta en route to the Americas. Bhojpuri Hindi became the predominant language among East Indian migrants, so much so that non-speakers learned it. A complex mix of people from varying caste backgrounds arrived, yet there is no clear consensus as to the exact nature of their demographics vis-à-vis caste distribution. Though a majority were Hindu, with a smaller but significant minority of Muslims among them, the most important early distinction made by and about the indentured Indians concerned whether one was a northerner who had sailed through Calcutta versus a southerner via the port of Madras on the coast of Tamil Nadu: i.e., *Kolkatiya* versus *Madrassi*.

Logistical problems were ironed out by 1854, establishing an indentureship system characterized by a long contract and maintained by criminal legal sanctions. Recruits were legally unfree during the period of indenture, and – after 1895 – a portion of the return passage to India had to be self-paid should one decide to quit the Caribbean once reaching the termination of contract. This system of indentureship finally came to an end only at the behest of the Indian government (Lewis 1968:200), just before the outbreak of World War I.[7]

Colonial discipline saturated the lives of indentured migrants, accompanied by frequent prosecution by employers, as well as wretched living conditions. These factors presented considerable challenges to establishing stable family life, initially exacerbated by a high male-to-female demographic ratio disparity – problems originally faced by Africans as well. The majority of immigrants ended up settling permanently and, as early as 1860, both indentured and – increasingly – free Indians became the backbone of Trinidad's plantation labor force. Indeed, economic survival of sugar in the 19th century was largely due to Indian labor. Thus, while they also eventually enriched the economy through non-agricultural means, the "special contribution" of Indians was in agriculture, with many leaving the plantations to become independent peasant farmers (Brereton 1985:27). Many also took up work in cocoa after 1880.

Thus an important overall dimension of Indian experience in late 19th and early 20th century Trinidadian society was the formation of a vibrant peasant class. They formed villages and have been characterized as pioneers in cultivation, although they were marginalized from important sectors of public culture and the emergent civil society. In spite of segregation and the lowly status of the Indian population, profound sociocultural changes nonetheless unfolded – including the loss of effective distinctions and patterns of social organization based on caste – as the population was brought within the framework of colonial social relations (Schwartz 1964; Smith & Jayawardena 1967; Jayawardena 1968; Ramesar 1994; Khan 1995, 2004; Munasinghe 2001a; Seesaran 2002). Smith (1959, 1996) observes that plantation labor proved itself compatible with markedly different patterns of domestic and familial organization, which is relevant for understanding the local history of religion as well.[8]

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[7] The expansion of European colonialism and march of industrializing capitalism in the 19th and early 20th centuries meant that Indians were not the only Asians swept up into the evolving world-system as transmigrant laborers. These "coolies" – as they were called by their colonial masters – originated in India, China, Indonesia, and Indo-China, as well as Japan and Oceania. Lydia Potts (1990:72-3) writes that "the total number of men, women and children sent abroad as coolies could not have been less than 12 million, and an estimate of 37 million or more would not be entirely without foundation." Jan Breman and E. Valentine Daniel (1992) observe that the Tamil term *kuuli* from which "coolie" derives denotes payment for menial work without customary rights, yet never refers to a person – by contrast with *coolie*, a transcultural modification reflecting cooptation into capitalism.

[8] Louis Dumont describes caste society in India as "divided into a large number of permanent groups which are at once specialized, hierarchized and separated (in matters of marriage, food, physical contact) in relation to each other. It is sufficient to add that the common basis of these three features is the opposition of pure and impure, an

The position Indians occupied in colonial society was an inherently antagonistic one vis-à-vis that of the black populace in structural terms. The goal of fostering "racially" segmented labor competition was explicit in the intentions of planters as well as the metropolitan Parliament members who legalized indentureship. Indeed, the massive infusion of Indian labor crushed whatever hopes and moderate privileges exslaves may have garnered with the end of apprenticeship. Colonial planters rationalized their legitimation of contract labor through an assault on the ills of "Negro" character.

Thus the entry of Indians into 19th-century Trinidad not only deflated wages but also diminished job opportunities for, and exacerbated negative stereotypes about, black laborers. Expansion of sugar supported by the indentured labor boost led not infrequently to Blacks being evicted from the land on which they squatted. Moreover, the problem of financing the system of indenture was another serious bone of contention, since local taxes were levied in order to subsidize the scheme. Afro-creole laborers saw Indians as "scavengers" who compromised their own leverage. Black frustration found a scapegoat in "Coolies," with their inferior culture and religion (Samaroo 1985; Look Lai 1993). For their part, the new migrant labor force was more easily manipulated and controlled by colonial elites than was the local labor force.

These structural dynamics were digested by the social system in the form of ideological prototypes. Munasinghe (2001a:64) writes: "Many of the stereotypes of Creoles [Africans] and East Indians that were propagated primarily by the plantocracy in the immediate aftermath of slavery were selectively internalized and used later by both Creoles and East Indians for their own purposes" (see also Brereton 1974, 1979). Such stereotypes were exacerbated by the legal differentiation and spatial isolation of Indians in relation to the wider society; a judicial system heavily weighted in favor of elites; by occupational segregation; and by prejudice and the ideological representation of Indians as outsiders, i.e., as "East" rather than "West" Indians. Daniel Segal (1989, 1993, 1994) has shown how Africans and Indians were subjected – and coadapted – to differing ideologies of racial subordination in colonial society, both of which have had long-term implications for the development of nationalism and the politics of colonial and postcolonial state power in the 20th century.

Trinidad's Indian community underwent fundamental growth and development during the final few decades of the 19th century. Whereas Indo-creoles made up only 16.5% of the total Indo-population in 1871, by 1901 they constituted 44.8% – nearly equivalent with the India-born. By the early years of the 20th century, most Indians were off of estates, living in villages and scattered settlements as small cultivators. The center of cultural gravity within the Indian population gradually shifted from indentured labor in sugar to peasant proprietorship, and a settled community emerged that was recognized as such by the rest of the society. "East

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opposition of its nature hierarchical which implies separation and, on the professional level, specialization of the occupations relevant to the opposition; that this basic opposition can segment itself without limit; finally, if one likes, that the conceptual reality of the system lies in this opposition, and not in the groups which it opposes – this accounts for the structural character of these groups, caste and sub-caste being the same thing seen from different points of view" (1961:34). Given the seemingly essential connection between caste and Hinduism for many commentators (see Appadurai 1986b, 1992 for critique), it is ironical that the institutions often regarded as the most deeply rooted and distinctive in Indian culture has undergone the most radical change abroad. Indeed, in none of the many societies that have received substantial emigrations of South Asians (Guyana, Trinidad, Surinam, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mauritius, Fiji) except Sri Lanka – and perhaps Malaysia – was a caste system reproduced in Dumont's sense within the Indian sector (Jayawardena 1968). See Khan (1994) for an examination of how the caste-derived notion of *juthaa* has been transformed in the Caribbean.

Indians" therefore established themselves as permanent even though they continued to be seen as outsiders by everyone else (Brereton 1981:ch. 6).

Aisha Khan (1995, 2004) tracks the 19th-century development of Indo-Trinidadian culture in subtle and not-so-subtle kinds of ways, driven especially by the distinction between free (time-expired) and unfree (indentured) labor dynamics. Particularly by the end of the 19th century, the Indo population exhibited signs of incipient social mobility and class-stratified differentiation, which unfolded within the context of an interdependent relationship between estate- and village-resident Indians, one characterized by a complex dialectic of cooperation and dissent as well as increasingly differentiated access to land, education, and occupation.

These developments were connected with the community's gradually accelerating experience in the field of formal education. Very few Indian children received any form of schooling before 1870, attributable not simply to their exclusion from the schools but also to parental reluctance in having their children converted to Christianity (Brereton 1985:28). This changed with the coming of the Canadian Presbyterian Mission to the island in 1868. The Presbyterian school system became a conduit for upwardly mobile socialization and partial integration with the rest of society. Indeed, most of the island's first Indian notables were affiliated with Presbyterianism (see Ramesar 1994; Seesaran 2002).

The official colonial posture toward Hinduism and Islam was one of bias and condescension: Indians were seen by elites as the "heathen" part of the population. Hence government subsidies were made exclusively to Christian denominations. Neither Muslim nor Hindu marriages were fully legalized until the 1930s and 1940s, respectively, which meant the vast majority of Indian children during the colonial era were technically "illegitimate."

It is only with this context in mind that we may appreciate the fact that most Indians in the late 19th and early 20th centuries actively resisted Christianization in the face of persistent prejudice against "inferior" Islam and – even more so – against "idolatrous" Hinduism. Despite the best efforts of missionaries, only about 12% of the local Indian population had converted to Christianity by 1921. "For the Indians, religion provided psychological protection, a sense of self-worth with which to arm themselves against the contempt of the society. The pundits and the imams became influential leaders of the Indian community because they could offer this kind of psychological aid" (Brereton 1981:112). The language of becoming here is crucial not only since the colonial environment did not facilitate non-Christian forms of religiosity or affiliation; but also because the communal roles of Hindu *Pandit* and Muslim *Imam* did not come fully into their own until well into the 20th century.

"In developing its power to tap its latent sources of cohesiveness and to assert itself against institutional obstacles" (Campbell 1985:119-20), Indian community development underwent two broad phases in the first half of the 20th century: a first, more straightforwardly political phase lasting until around 1930, followed by a second phase based more fundamentally upon religious identities. In other words, even though Hindu and Muslim religious figures were operative on the ground throughout the indentureship period, the explicitly "East Indian" organizations that emerged among the incipiently mobile after the turn of the 20th century were primarily political in nature and backgrounded the distinction between Hindu and Muslim, just as early migrants had also done in their privileging of Kolkatiya-Madrassi distinctions. Yet after 1930, the majority of Indocentric associations became more religious in orientation and differentiated by a mutually exclusive distinction obtaining between "Hindu" and "Muslim" (Khan 1995, 2004). Kusha Haraksingh (1985) emphasizes the influence of labor activism and trade unionist politics on the post-1930s efflorescence of Indian religious associations.

The complexity of such long-term processes of change and differentiation are exemplified by the transoceanic transfer and recontextualizing development of Hindu ritual traditions from both north and south India. From a society-wide historical perspective, ecstatic *Shakti Puja* has been transformed from an assortment of openly-practiced ritual performances observed on behalf of communities to a marginalized, somewhat clandestine therapeutic ritual carried out weekly on behalf of individuals and families in peripheral contemporary temples dedicated primarily to Mother Kali and her most important spiritual associates. During the period of indentureship (1845-1917), ritual supplications in honor of *de Mudda* – "the Mother," as she is often called – were an important aspect of village-based pujas within the sacred calendars of many local communities. But these forms of practice became progressively marginalized within the Indo-creole community throughout the 20th century and have come to be looked upon with mixed degrees of ambivalence, contempt and fear by the society at-large, both Hindus and non-Hindus alike. Despite the fact that Shakti Worship has undergone revitalization since the 1970s in a new form of temple devoted specifically to ecstatic puja, these are subaltern practices enacted on the margins of an ostensibly mainstream Caribbean Hinduism.

Contemporary temple-based Shakti Worship has many syncretic influences, including older, community-based, sacrificial Kali Puja brought by indentured migrants as well as the vintage Madrassi firewalking ceremony, among others. Specifying the heterogeneous and hybridized origins of contemporary temple-based Shakti Puja is important because it has most often been attributed to the low-caste, dark-skinned Madrassi emigrants from south India alone. This local origin ideology seems to reflect a scapegoating impulse in relation to the vested interests of an emergent 20th-century, "respectable" Hindu orthodoxy. To be sure, there is no question of an important Madrassi influence upon contemporary Shakti Puja on the island; but the complexities and partialness of this influence have been elided within the mystifying reductionism of the Madrassi origin ideology, as we will see.[9]

This ideology of Kali Puja's origin derives some of its biased historical force from anti-Madrassi prejudice prevalent among 19th-century planters. Yet more importantly, it was a product of the larger Hindu community's project of forging an orthodox or official Hinduism in response to critical Christian currents within colonial society that saw Indian religion as heathen idolatry. The disempowered diasporic situation of being a criticized minority religion within a heterogeneous, stratified, colonial island society seems to have precipitated a sense of insecurity and self-consciousness about beliefs and practices among Hindus in Trinidad, and this would have made them more inclined to dissociate themselves from ritual practices such as firewalking, animal sacrifice or spirit mediumship – deemed "primitive" or "pagan" and therefore despicable within a purportedly respectable frame of reference.

Steven Vertovec (1992, 1996) observes that the growth of an "orthodox" Hinduism was facilitated by attenuation of the caste system in the Caribbean, where caste could never be transplanted as a *system* of social structure, economic relations, and ritual hierarchy. What happened from the late 19th century onward was the gradual reorganization and consolidation of diverse beliefs and practices brought from various parts of India into a sort of generalized, more standardized type of Hindu sociocultural system in the New World. As Haraksingh (1986, 1988) emphasizes, the immigrant Indian population was more diverse than has usually been supposed

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[9] On the development of orthodox West Indian Hinduism, see Niehoff and Niehoff (1960); Klass (1961); Ramesar (1976, 1994); La Guerre (1985); Haraksingh (1986, 1987, 1988); Samaroo (1987, 1996); Forbes (1987); Guinee (1990, 1992); Maharaj (1991); van der Veer and Vertovec (1991); Vertovec (1992, 1996), Khan (1994, 1995, 2001, 2004); and Munasinghe (2001a).

but, in the "collapsed" space of Trinidad, people who would not normally have met each other in the ancestral land engaged in a highly compacted jostling for status and dominance. Instead of leveling, the result was a "leavening" process in which beliefs and practices from varying localities and communities in India were submerged and reformulated in relation to one another in their New World context.

But attenuation of the caste system in the West Indies did not produce the demise of "caste" altogether. Hinduism and caste ideology have been simplified under the rough, oppositional principles of 'high'/'low,' 'pure'/'impure,' and 'Brahmin'/'Chamar' (Vertovec 1992, 1996; Khan 1995, 2004; Samaroo 1996; Munasinghe 2001a): protean categories constrained and mediated by the contingencies of local power relations. "Chamar" originally refers to a demographically large, low-caste group in India who worked traditionally as cobblers in leather-working trades and were therefore considered ritually unclean. However, the term has been broadened throughout much of the Indian diaspora to refer derogatorily to low-caste persons more generally. Structural transformations reflected by these categorical modifications enabled aspiring Indians to take advantage of the overseas experience by shedding previous caste connections and elevating themselves as New World higher "castes" of a sort.

The overwhelming majority of indentured immigrants came from north – rather than south – India, and the evolution of Indo-creole culture is deeply conditioned by this fact. For example, earlier binarisms of high-low, Brahmin-Chamar, and Kolkatiya-Madrassi have been further condensed, as reflected in the contemporary discursive practice among Indians positing "Hindu" versus "Madrassi." When invoked, "Hindu" connotes high-caste, Brahmin, north Indian and respectable, whereas "Madrassi" is associated with low-caste, Chamar, and darker, south Indian primitivity.

The development of a standardized Hinduism took some time to get going, but accelerated in the 1920s – especially in response to reformist *Arya Samaj* missionaries from India – and consolidated much of its support among conservative rural Hindus. By mid-century, the *Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha* was formed out of two rival Sanatanist organizations and this body has exerted enormous sociopolitical influence through the course of the 20th century via temple-based and school-building efforts. A "Sanatanist" is a follower of *Sanatan Dharma*, usually translated as "eternal duty," "order," or "religion," and used in reference to a neo-Hindu paradigm that evolved through complex engagement with colonialism and globalization in South Asia and its diaspora (see Forbes 1987; Vertovec 1992; Khan 1995, 2004).

In their search for legitimacy and the gradual forging of a "respectable" orthodox Hinduism, it is perhaps not surprising that the larger Caribbean Hindu community – or at least a significantly influential group among them – internalized values espoused by colonial elites and adopted them as their own moral terms of reference. Most importantly for our purposes here, this orthodoxy has sought to dissociate itself from religious modalities that smack of morally suspect, "primitive" practices such as blood sacrifice and trance performance, or which fall under the aegis of a seemingly undomesticated, independent, female goddess. Where the elimination of these has not been feasible, the strategy seems to have been to marginalize them as "low" practices connected with the darker-skinned "Madrassi" legacy.

A larger point here is that religion became an important, if variable, idiom for refashioning community and culture within the wider contexts of class stratification and racial segmentation as well as in the intra-community forms of conflict and differentiation that emerged among Indo-creoles in Trinidad. These "fissiparous tendencies" – as Khan (1995:131) describes them – partly weakened the strength and potential of the Indian population, and were

exacerbated by factionalism and the emphasis community leaders came to place on religion. Paradoxically, then, the mobility and resourcefulness that facilitated the cultivation of a broader "East Indian" form of ethnic consciousness also facilitated further differentiation and conflict as well (Khan 2004).

All of this is complicated by the fact that Christianity retained hegemony as the dominating cultural barometer of legitimacy and social status throughout the colony. For example, an influential leader of one of the Maha Sabha's two institutional precursors – the Couva-based Sanatan Dharma Association, officially incorporated in 1932 but with roots stretching back to 1881 – was an Anglican, the Honourable Michael Sarran Teelucksingh (Samaroo 1987). In addition, the Secretary-General for the Maha Sabha, Satnarayan Maharaj, informed me that the organization's mid-century founders used the Catholic Church as an institutional role model from which to draw. And then there is Presbyterianism, the most dramatic early vehicle of Indian ascendance within the colonial social hierarchy. Even allowing for the fact that Christian acculturation was not always a cut-and-dried process, Presbyterianism is one of the least ambivalently embraced elements of local Indian history.

Thus there was deep, incipient class bias within the emergent consciousness of the colonial Indian community, based on a complex constellation of racial, religious, and political factors, and which entailed a failure on the part of "respectable" Christian Indians to forge links with village Imams and Pandits as grassroots leaders. Christianity has therefore exerted a centrifugal force vis-à-vis Indo-creoles, pulling ethnic traditions away from the early core of Indian experience in complex and recursive ways. Christianity has therefore operated historically more as "invisible interlocutor" (Khan 1995:141-2) in the constitution and reconstitution of Indo-Trinidadian culture and consciousness.

Colony into Nation.

In order to fully appreciate 20th-century developments, especially the cultural politics of nationalism and decolonization after WWII, we must return to the political economy of the postemancipation era. Because Trinidad developed so late compared with other British West Indian tropical plantation colonies, it was relatively "immature" as a slave society on the eve of emancipation and its demographics unique (Higman 1978).

Whereas the slave proportion of the population topped 90% in other West Indian societies by 1810, this percentage was 67% in Trinidad (Brereton 1981:77). An astonishing number of Coloreds and even some Blacks owned slaves. Moreover, whereas the ratio of free colored-to-slave in Barbados in 1786 was 1:74 and 1:63 in Jamaica in 1787, in Trinidad that figure was 1:2 by 1797 (Dhanda 2002:234). Additionally, slaves lived and worked in relatively small holdings. In 1834, the average owner held just seven slaves, with only one percent of the plantocracy holding over a hundred. An unusually high proportion of slaves lived and operated in urbanizing areas of the island. Just under 21,000 slaves were emancipated overall. Many of them were domestics, women, and children. This meant that a small force of field laborers contrasted with a vast abundance of uncultivated land at emancipation.

Legal freedom was largely nominal. Exslaves occupied a position of "virtual serfdom" (Brereton paraphrasing the American journalist William Sewell) in their postemancipation world. They experienced little economic security or political autonomy. This new dispensation encouraged departure from the estates in order to seek smallholding, yet also presented incentive for maintaining plantation connections via seasonal wage labor. By 1846, only 40% of the former slave group continued to reside on estates. Regardless of trajectory, however, the

majority of exslaves maintained their livelihood in agriculture: acquiring or squatting on land as well as engaging in part-time wage labor. Many lived in emergent circum-plantation villages throughout the agriculturally developed areas. Some left agriculture and a few became traders or petty shopkeepers, spurring further townification throughout the island.

Problems of land and squatting intensified in the decades after emancipation and came to a head in the late 1860s. Governor A. H. Gordon intervened by making the sale of Crown lands easier and much cheaper, adopting a policy of offering the sale of land to squatters residing on it. This development was inaugurated by a successful experiment in the central ward of Montserrat, where Afro-creoles, black West Indian migrants from Grenada and Barbados, indentured Yoruba, Ashanti, Mandingo and Kongo African migrants, as well as Spanish-creole *peones* from Venezuela either bought their holdings or were resettled on comparable land made available for purchase. Additionally, by 1869, Crown lands began to be offered to time-expired Indians in lieu of their return passage back to India. A vibrant black peasantry had been established by the mid-19th century, with an Indian analogue not far behind. As lands were sold, cultivation spread, progressively transforming Trinidad's untamed wilderness into increasingly wide swaths of agricultural lands, and in turn prompting further development of the island's infrastructure.

The changing political economic winds in 19th-century Trinidad produced demographic patterns in which an urban-based, female-biased population became more Afro-creole whereas the rural, circum-plantation population was more Indo-creole and male-biased (Trotman 1986). Lower-class urban conditions were hardly better than their rural counterparts. Both spawned disease and violence. Urbanization and slummification developed with rural-to-urban as well as immigrant-from-outside migration. The urban proletariat must therefore be seen as a corollary to the reconstituted peasantry of the countryside (Brereton & Yelvington 1999:10-3).

Thus social life through the 19th century became increasingly more complex and differentiated over time both horizontally and vertically, precipitating institutional diversification and therefore occupational differentiation in the civil service, professions, lower-level management, commerce, and the like. Continuity and change were both increasingly mediated by the development of education. Indeed, Trinidad's educational system would grow and expand, but only gradually and with conflicts as well as contradictions.

Education in the period from the 1870s until the 1920s was characterized by institutional expansion and curricular development. The century after emancipation saw considerable social mobility achieved through education, with public culture and political discourse increasingly animated by the changing social consciousness and confidence of those entitled by learning and literacy. This upward mobility of Coloreds, Blacks, and – eventually – Indians via schooling, along with the ability of the expanding educational system to simultaneously transform and reproduce class relations over time, meant that society remained stratified but never static.

Elementary education in the 19th century was valued for spreading Christianity and social control at-large, whereas secondary education was restricted to two elite schools in Port-of-Spain (Campbell 1992:54-5). St. Mary's College initially outran Queen's Royal College in enrollment since the Franco-creole Catholic community was more numerous than the Anglo-creole Protestant one early on. Indo-creoles were not brought fully into the mainstream of education and civil society until well after World War II. It is with this context in mind that we may understand the rise of Indian leaders from the late 1920s and 30s with a determination to establish separate Hindu and Muslim schools as well as halt the slow advance of Christianity.

Some of the earliest 20th-century proponents of self-government connected nationalistic strivings with educational reform and development – including a less imperial curriculum. What

distinguishes the developmental path of education in Trinidad and Tobago vis-à-vis the wider Commonwealth Caribbean since the mid-19th century has been the view that education be intentionally used as an "integrative" force in society. Indeed, it is in Trinidad more than anywhere else in the 19th-century British West Indies that government action in education was used specifically in pursuit of social integration (Campbell 1992:96).

The emergence of nationalism in the mid-20th century must therefore be seen in light of longer-term processes of class differentiation and social mobility facilitated by access to formal education. The gradual rise of first colored and then black middle classes increasingly challenged and eventually overtook Euro-creole monopoly on political power and intellectual leadership in the colony. The colonial governor appointed Trinidad and Tobago's first black member of the Legislative Council – C. P. David – in 1904.[10] Indeed, sympathizers of an incipiently new kind of black consciousness began to coalesce by the turn of the 20th century, whose outlook contrasted with preceding generations.

Alvin Magid (1988) examines developments in the immediate pre-WWI period as staging ground for the evolution of a decolonizing nationalism after WWII. A provisional sort of anticolonial political culture grew out of the parochial issue of municipal governance in Port-of-Spain. Crown Colony rule – in which the Legislative Council had no locally elected seats – had stimulated resentment and provoked increasingly confrontational political strategies. The economy was mostly extractive and foreign-dominated, characterized by chronically high levels of under- and unemployment, as well as high food prices. These conditions made for popular discontent concerning public welfare, health, sanitation, and education, triggering strikes and disturbances. Social mobility had begun to produce a revolution of rising expectations, while ethnic tensions simmered below the surface.

Until World War I, opposition politics revolved around the more conservative reformism promulgated by Whites and Coloreds from a privileged economic and professional base. Ironically, however, the deficiencies of their efforts only served to advance the radicalizing push for constitutional change (p. 217). Thus whites dominated political struggle less and less after WWI. As Gordon Lewis observes: "It was symptomatic of the absence of any deeply felt all-Trinidadian sense that it was not the plantocracy nor the mercantile-professional groups, but the colonial working class that became after 1918 the chief element leading the self-government movement" (1968:201). This evolving "urban nationalism" – to invoke Magid – fed into the decolonizing nationalism of the post-WWII era.

Seen in retrospect, Trinidad and Tobago's experience during the first half of the 20th century leading to independence from Britain in 1962 was characterized, firstly, by the rise and fall of politics centered on trade unionism and the labor movement and, secondly, by the emergence of party-based, mass electoral politics based on universal adult suffrage. These rollercoasterish years were punctuated by serious labor riots in 1937 – one giant wave in a larger sea of labor unrest throughout the region during the Great Depression – and then amplified by Trinidad's direct involvement in WWII.

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[10] This Council had been established in 1880, with the governor nominating all of its members until 1925, when constitutional reform following the Wood Commission led to the first elections for several newly constituted representative positions on the Legislative Council. However, suffrage was highly restricted by property and literacy, with only 6% of the total population qualified to vote. Yet constitutional change and modifications to the colonial Legislative and Executive Councils began accelerating from this time, culminating in the advent of universal adult suffrage in 1946 and a clear majority of electoral representation on both councils by 1950.

Mixed as they were, dynamics unleashed by the U.S. presence after 1940 helped usher the twin-island society into a new era of mass electoral politics. Indeed, the post-war period was a challenging transitional one in Trinidad and Tobago's sociopolitical evolution. The end of war in 1945 made way for new developments in the labor movement, as many thousands of workers were displaced by completion of the American bases in 1944. Moreover, the post-war period brought rapid inflation and worker dissatisfaction, generating considerable labor unrest as well as inter-union conflict and fragmentation.

Meanwhile, a debate had emerged over extending the franchise as well as candidacy for political election. Progress on each of these matters was accomplished by the end of the war, but not without intense debate over English-literacy restrictions on voting (which did not ultimately pass) as well as property and income restrictions for membership in the Legislative and Executive Councils (which, tellingly, did pass). The 1945 Order incorporating new constitutional changes extended the vote to all adults over 21 years of age without any language qualification, as the proposed English-only restriction had been exposed as a pernicious maneuver designed to marginalize older Indians. Thus TT entered an era of mass electoral politics with the 1946 elections, the first to be held under universal adult suffrage. These elections witnessed debilitating fragmentation of the labor vote, clearing the way for subsequent middle-class domination of the political sphere.

Progressive nationalists began arguing almost immediately for further reform. Through the efforts of a constitutional reform committee set up in 1947 and the workings of those involved in the 1948 Majority Report, a transitional, quasi-ministerial constitution bestowing elected members a clear majority in both councils for the first time was hammered out and became law in 1950. As in 1946, an assortment of politicians and organizations geared up for the 1950 elections, and the new constitution was attacked by an overlapping assortment of labor, radical, and nationalist factions. But again – as in 1946 – the elections of 1950 witnessed proliferating political fragmentation. The trade-unionist party of Tubal Uriah Butler – a black, charismatic, deeply religious, non-radical, Anglophilic, migrant Grenadian labor leader who emerged onto the political stage during the labor unrest of the 1930s – fared better than any other. Yet no united progressive coalition emerged.

Political maneuvering subsequently allowed the bourgeois establishment to marginalize Butler and his party's influence in politics during the 1950s, the very years in which Eric Williams launched his People's National Movement (PNM) onto center stage. And the contrast is instructive: Butler's was a fiery, grassroots worldview with religious overtones, whereas Williams was an Oxford-trained historian whose intellectual charisma and respectable style signaled the arrival of West Indian "Doctor Politics," a term coined by Lloyd Best in the late 1960s (Best 1985; Sutton 1991). Led by Williams, the PNM became the first party to gain a majority of elected seats in the Legislative Council and formed the first ministerial government. However, though the PNM campaigned on a platform of multiethnic nationalism – its charter claiming the PNM was "a convention of all for all, a mobilization of all the forces in the community, cutting across race and religion, class and color, with emphasis on united action by all the people in the common cause" (quoted in Brereton 1981:234) – the party's opponents frequently attacked it as the "Pure Negro Movement" (Segal 1989:15).

Relying heavily on the development policy ideas of W. Arthur Lewis (1950), Williams's government launched the first of its *Five Year Plans* in 1958, emphasizing new industrialization through foreign investment, "modernization" of the national infrastructure by the state, as well as secularization and expansion of the education system. From the 1950s to the 1980s, the political

story was almost singularly that of the PNM, first as a government under the modified post-WWII Crown Colony regime and then as the inaugural government of the independent postcolonial state in 1962.

Treating this plotline as a one-man-show is understandable: "A brilliant Island Scholar, an outstanding West Indian Oxonian as his autobiographical sketch – *A Colonial at Oxford* – shows, faculty member at Howard University and, later, research secretary of the Caribbean Commission, his academic record as the outstanding authority on Caribbean history fitted him perfectly for his final entry into politics; an entry partly the result of choice, partly something forced upon him by the hostility shown toward him, as a West Indian, by the expatriate officials of the imperialist body of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission, described in his public lecture of 1955, 'My Relations with the Caribbean Commission, 1943-1955'" (Lewis 1968:212). The "Doc" was a most compelling public intellectual, giving countless lectures and charismatically weaving critical scholarly insight with political rhetoric. His oratory transformed one of Port-of-Spain's most central plazas into the "University of Woodford Square" – which still operates to this day on a less focal, more organic basis. Indeed, as "Father of the Nation," Williams engineered a remarkable marriage between the colored Afro-creole intellectual and the colonial crowd, for whom he attained the status of demigod.[11]

Unlike other progressive West Indian political parties that began developing before the second World War in Jamaica and Barbados, the PNM emerged in the post-war environment, not only therefore influenced by English tradition, but also by the egalitarian and pragmatist American approach. This important difference along with his frustrating experiences in England helped Dr. Williams "call the bluff of British imperial manners because he did not share their underlying presumption about the moral preeminence of all things British" (Lewis, p. 214).

Though an embryonic national consciousness had long been in the making, the period between 1956 and 1962 catalyzed a fresh new mushrooming of nationalism. Winning first in 1956, the PNM consolidated its earlier victory in the election of 1961, by which time the anti-PNM posture of conservative French- and Portuguese-creoles, the British colonial enclave, the Chamber of Commerce, and even the Catholic Church had more or less subsided. Williams then turned his attention, David-and-Goliath-like, toward three main external opponents: the West Indian Federal government, the Colonial Office, and the Americans. Ironically, Williams's

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[11] It was Eric Williams's *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), published when he was thirty-three years old, which put the critical study of slavery in connection with the development of capitalism on the historiographical map. Williams received a colonial island scholarship and earned his PhD in 1938 at Oxford University, where he not only excelled but also felt the effects of racism in a rarefied intellectual sphere he had previously idealized (see his autobiography of 1969, *Inward Hunger: the Education of a Prime Minister*). Prior to entering politics, Williams was a professor at Howard University in Washington, D.C. His thesis concerning the role of slavery in financing the Industrial Revolution firmly established slavery within the study of economic history, subverting received wisdom about enlightened "Progress" in European historiography (see Solow & Engerman 1978; Palmer 1994; Cateau & Carrington 2000). Williams not only argued that slavery fueled the rise of capitalism, but also that industrialization in turn destroyed the system which had help build it, suggesting less than philanthropic motivation for metropolitan abolitionism. Seymour Drescher (1977, 1999) tempers this perspective by showing that abolition of the British slave trade preceded by several decades any general decline in the British West Indian economy. Drescher's challenge to overly economistic accounts of abolition has been elaborated by more recent comparative study across several colonial Atlantic vectors (see Brereton 2002). Still, Williams argued that Britain could *afford* to legislate against the slave trade only after that trade had helped to provide the surplus capital necessary for industrial "take-off." Moreover, Britain had lost much of its slave-owning territory as a result of the American Revolution, and – as the West's leading industrial power – found in abolition a way to work against the interests of its rivals, who were still heavily involved in slavery (Brantlinger 1985:2).

strong Hamiltonian federalism – as compared with the weak Jeffersonian federalism of Jamaica's Michael Manley – had the paradoxical effect of stirring up strong nationalist sentiment in TT (see chs. 14-15, *ibid.*, on the failed experiment in West Indian Federation after WWII). All three battles only served to fortify Williams.

Yet the end of colonialism resulted as much from accelerating British retreat from empire as it did from the PNM's nationalist offensive. Like emancipation more than a century before, formal independence may have been pivotal, yet it involved no especially radical transformation of life on the ground. In many ways the transition led quite directly from colonialism to neocolonialism. Independence must be seen as having transformed the nationalist struggle with an external metropolitan colonial power into an internal struggle in the midst of a continuing capitalist society dependent upon economic forces outside itself, in which local elites understood the machinations of politics even better than their former British masters.

Segal's (1989) study of the nationalism of decolonization is crucial here. He shows how nationalism in TT did not so much establish equality and eradicate differentiation based on race and color with the advent of independence as it *reconfigured* hierarchical distinctions inherited from the colonial era. "In consequence, this nationalism did not replace the authority of hierarchical superiors with the authority of 'the people at large,' and thus did not attain the fictive powers that allow metropolitan nationalisms to objectify 'the nation'" (p. 66). Colonial inequalities became transmuted into problems of "national development." If the most successful nationalisms are constructions that mythologize sovereign power as "self-rule" and establish an "egalitarian" model of citizenship and state sovereignty, then West Indian nationalisms – and especially that of TT – have been hobbled from the beginning. "Equality" has not served to objectify the "Nation" (see Ryan 1972 on electoral politics during the 1950s and 60s).

Compounding all of this is the fact that economies of the region's ex-British colonies remained squarely tied to absentee-capitalist industrialization and development, therefore subject to the changing external winds of global markets, foreign capital, and financial institutions. "The history of the Caribbean economies as overseas fiefs controlled by expatriate forces is thereby perpetuated, with the single difference that the forces are now those of the modern multi-national business combines. The capacity of the region to break out of the traditional system is, as a result, gravely compromised" (Lewis 1968:408). In effect, then, nationalist development schemes have proposed to cure the ills of economic colonialism by, in effect, perpetuating the very conditions that produced them.

This trend is quintessentially embodied in Trinidad and Tobago by the long-term shift from King Sugar to Black Gold. By the time of the 1937 labor disturbances, petroleum had become the colony's most valuable export. In 1932, oil accounted for 50% of export earnings. By the end of WWII, oil accounted for 80% of TT's national exports, whereas traditional forms of estate agriculture – especially sugar and cocoa – had suffered serious setbacks. "Trinidad became a classic petroleum economy, dangerously dependent on oil for export earnings and for government revenues" (Brereton 1981:214). In fact, the impetus for the 1937 agitation first arose among workers in the industrial oil belt of southern Trinidad, a concentrated proletariat easier to organize than agricultural laborers (pp. 179-80).

The island's oil industry functioned under a system of social organization defined by class- and ethnic-segmentation of labor. Administrative and technical staff was mostly European, drillers tended to be Americans, and the semi- and unskilled laborers were local or immigrant West Indians. It was not until the industry's second boom period during WWII that significant numbers of locals began to enter supervisory positions. By that time, oil had come to

dominate the national economy even though it employed far less people relative to those engaged in the agricultural sector. The post-war, pre-independence period (1946-62) became one of growth, with oil surging ahead of other industries due to new exploitation of marine fields.

Apart from oil, the most significant post-war economic development was the emergence of a local manufacturing sector resulting from state intervention, accompanied by significant growth in local financial institutions. The public sector played an increasingly central role in promoting growth, so much so that non-petroleum sectors grew faster than oil after WWII, in fact, even though the latter continued to dominate exports (Brereton 1981:221).

Before the 1950s, most goods were imported, leading the quasi-ministerial government of Albert Gomes preceding the PNM to adopt "development" plans for "modernization" based on a strategy of industrialization-by-invitation. This program was influenced heavily by the work of Sir Arthur Lewis and modeled upon the Puerto Rican "Operation Bootstrap" experiment. Despite the effort to distinguish himself from previous politics, Williams kept a steady rudder with these industrialization schemes. With the coming of political independence, policies of industrialization-by-invitation were modified from an emphasis on production for export to import-substitution, in which tariff protection facilitated production for the domestic market by new firms (Yelvington 1995:ch. 2). Import-substitution and the protection of local producers were supposed to cut into the power of elites as well as produce nontraditional members of the bourgeoisie. However, rather than undercut their interests, industrialization nonetheless enabled continued dominance by the commercial elite.

Despite economic growth after WWII, a number of industrialization programs had fallen short by 1962, generating neither expanded employment nor structural transformation of the economy. Indeed, industrialization of this sort placed a heavy burden on government finances and increased dependence upon foreign capital. Employment creation and foreign exchange earnings were disappointing and manufacturing stimulated little growth in local sectors since they created very few backward economic linkages. Under-employment, labor unrest, and income inequality all rose during the country's first decade of independence.

Thus TT exhibited wide disparities across various sectors upon independence from Britain. Under- and unemployment increased as the population grew. Manufacturing created relatively few jobs and oil and agriculture employed decreasing numbers. Additionally, while the importation of foreign services and capital increased, few interconnections were forged between varying sectors within the local economy. This was the reality facing the PNM, the ascendant nationalist party dominated by bourgeois Afro-creole interests that inherited the first democratic government as an independent nation-state in 1962. Revealingly, Trinidad and Tobago subsequently became a Republic fourteen years later during a spectacular oil boom.

Race and the Politics of Postcolonial Multiculturalism.

Colonial ideology presupposed the entrance of "pure" races into the evolving society, with "mixing" understood as a local phenomenon. Unlike the notion of hypodescent in North America, the West Indian system of racial classification encoded the mixture of blackness and whiteness within a differentiated lexicon of "color." Specific terms cast in an idiom of "shade" – such as "white," "yellow," "red," "brown," "light black," "black," "black black," etc. – circulated as ways of representing perceived phenotype in relation to relative proportions of "African" and "European" ancestral heritage. Segal writes: "This vocabulary gave a visible presence to the often unknown 'facts' of genealogy. It kept the elemental races of a person's

ancestors from disappearing into a vague and distant genealogical mix: it thus brought ancestral races visibly into the present" (1991:8).

"Mixing" emplotted whiteness through fragmentation and dilution via interaction with blackness, thereby displacing "local" whiteness at increasing levels of remove from an idealized epicenter abroad. Thus the notion of "local" or "Trinidad" Whites marks them as tainted ones who only pass superficially for white: shades of varying Afro-Euro mixture represented within the color spectrum pull whiteness centrifugally away from an essentialized metropolitan core. All of this is captured in the concept of "creole" as simultaneously local to the Caribbean and hybrid in origin, used polysemically in relation to Whites, Coloreds, and Blacks (Segal 1989, 1993, 1994). The lexicon of "creole" mixture dominated discourse about the local social order; it combined certain "races" but did not ultimately alter or eliminate them. Thus upwardly mobile attainment of "respectable" sociability – especially in relation to class and religion – became a compensatory source of "whiteness" for non-Whites. As Segal observes, "'respectability' extended the idiom of 'colour' beyond physiognomy to all aspects of personhood, but at the same time, it placed 'blackness' under symbolic erasure" (1989:112).

Colonial representations continually reshaped reality, reproducing racialized public consciousness about hierarchy and status. It is crucial to appreciate, then, how the "creole" symbolism of "color" memorialized interaction between Africans and Europeans while simultaneously representing Indians as unmixable. Indians were never placed on any sort of color continuum with Whites. No category was used to refer to persons of combined "Indian" and "European" descent and no idiom developed in which Indians and Europeans represented endpoints on a continuum of mixture, as with Africans and Europeans. This meant that Indian and non-Indian mixing remained unlexicalized and therefore culturally forgotten beyond the first generation, as compared with the black-white color continuum.

Segal (1989, 1993, 1994), Munasinghe (1997, 2001a, 2001b), and Khan (1995, 2001, 2004) explicate how the polymorphous symbolism of racial purity and mixture is ultimately rooted in differing colonial principles of subordination. Both "Africans" and "Indians" were deemed inferior to "Europeans" but they were inferior in distinct ways: Africans were seen as mixable, therefore partly recuperable, through their intermingling with the master race; whereas Indians were considered unmixable and beholden unto only themselves. These principles entailed differentiation in the contrasting symbolism of non-white mobility. Afro-creole achievements contested the inferiority of "Negro" but precluded affirmation of blackness, yet socioeconomic achievements did not make Indo-creoles anything other than "East Indians."

Underlying these principles of subordination were contrasting ideological stereotypes of the *culturally-naked African*, which permitted them to become "Creoles" via New World intermixture with whiteness, versus the *culturally-saturated Indian*, who possessed an ancient and inferior culture that made Indians ostensibly unmixable. The latter's inferior civilization turned the relatedness between "East Indians" and "Europeans" into an issue of either-or. Whereas – already coming ostensibly from civilizationlessness – Africans were seen within this construction as having been especially deracinated as a result of the Middle Passage.

Ideological exclusion of Indian "Coolie" from "Creole" status had considerable implications for the politics of the decolonization period, with the rise of a middle-class Afro-creole dominated nationalist movement that inherited political power and the apparatus of the state, and which appropriated various forms of black popular culture such as Carnival, Calypso and Steelband and promoted them as "national" culture (Stuempfle 1995). Domesticating black lower-class cultural forms to middle-class ethos enabled bourgeois Afro-creoles to figure

themselves as the legitimate representatives of all in staking claims to state power. Their nationalism had roots in varying surges of racialized consciousness and pride among Afro-Trinbagonians at home and abroad, stimulated by pan-Africanist response to the failure of Western democracies to support Ethiopia when invaded by fascist Italy in 1935 (Yelvington 1999), for example, as well as by a more general West Indian literary and cultural renaissance efflorescing since the 1930s (Brereton 1981:174-5).

Yet a parallel stream of racial consciousness surged among elite Indians in the 1930s as well. Though this vanguard vacillated at times between sectarian and wider nationalistic concerns throughout the first half of the 20th century, they generally adopted a more conservative stance and the majority of Indians did *not* identify with the nationalist movement (Munasinghe 2001b:13). Perceptions of "East" Indian foreignness were amplified by Indo-creole enthusiasm and support for India's own independence movement as well as by increasingly explicit diasporic identifications mediated by regular visits from a host of South Asian missionaries and performing artists, and later by the rise of Bollywood cinema and Indian popular musics.

Positioned oppositionally, then, "Creoles" and "East Indians" experienced polarizing political trajectories after the Second World War. Eric Williams and his People's National Movement won the 1956 elections, consolidating the momentum toward Afro-creole nationalist control of state power upon independence. Indeed, from their inception, "East Indian" political parties have been widely perceived as representing not simply communal interests, but those of Hindus in particular. The PNM's major opponent in 1956 was the People's Democratic Party (PDP), established in 1953 under Bhadase Sagan Maharaj and essentially the political arm of the Hindu community, since in Maharaj were combined the leaderships of the major sugar union, the PDP, and the Maha Sabha – by that time, the most powerful orthodox Hindu organization on the island (Brereton 1981:236).

An Afro-creole, Williams attacked the PDP and Maha Sabha intensely, sometimes unfairly. He succeeded in winning support from Muslim and Christian Indians as well as some urbanized Hindus. These tactics isolated the PDP in rural Indian districts, intensifying the trend in political culture toward division along racial lines driven by party politics. Opposition groups had to form coalitions to contest PNM ascendance, especially since Williams had sidelined the Indian political elite when forming the PNM's first government in 1956. Thus opposition rallied around the newly formed Trinidad Democratic Labor Party (DLP). But Indian leadership from the PDP faction took over the DLP's reins, making Maharaj party leader in 1958. With this, TT's new era of mass electoral politics became fully incarnate as a racially-polarized, two-party system. Indeed, the following elections in 1961 – just on the cusp of independence – have been described as the most racialized in history, constructed as an intensely fraught struggle between two non-white constituencies for political power (Bahadoorsingh 1968; Malik 1971; Ryan 1972; Oxaal 1982).

The fundamental problem has been that *no* West Indian social grouping has represented an image of the sovereign, national people at-large. TT elections produce occupants of political office who attempt to act and speak on behalf of the whole, yet in a context characterized by the absence of any clear and unambiguous democratic objectification of citizens as a national group. Electoral minorities are therefore objectified by elections, rather than the "nation" as a whole, making nationality a partisan spoil (Segal 1989:192-4).

Ideologically speaking, redemption of Indian subordination has been prefigured as exclusive to one ancestral kind, whereas redemption of African subordination has, in principle, been open-ended. This helped the PNM recruit many more Indian supporters than did the PDP

and DLP with black voters. Yet, in defining his public and appealing for its support in terms of the creole color continuum, Williams provided more a mode of mass identification and redemption for Africans than Indians: their "Racial Messiah" (Oxaal 1982). Thus the symbolic politics of "creole" permitted local Whites, Coloreds, and Blacks of respectable status to agitate for political power during the nationalist period based on the notion of their creolized autochthony, leading to the increasing appropriation of white power by Afro-creole groups and interests after WWII. "Williams's representation of 'the nation' as its Chief Minister had the effect of making Trinidadian nationality a distinction of the electoral grouping his campaign had instantiated – 'the Negro' – and concomitantly, its party – the PNM" (Segal 1989:216).

Indeed, Munasinghe (2001a) reports that the idea of an "East Indian" government or prime minister was unthinkable – even among Indians – as late as the 1980s. Yet an Indian dominated coalition – the United National Congress (UNC) – came to power in 1995 with an Indian, Basdeo Panday, at the helm as Prime Minister. A series of political and economic developments in the 1970s and 80s facilitated the emergence of an Indo-Trinidadian sociocultural renaissance of sorts, part of which included a shift in rhetoric and critique from expressing sectarian interests to targeting the formerly uncontested privilege of Afro-Trinbagonian political and cultural power (Munasinghe 2001a, b; Khan 2001, 2004).

Just as importantly, the 1970s brought monumental developments in the oil and gas sector leading to the country's "Oil Boom" of 1974-83. Relative to the size of its population, Trinidad possesses phenomenal petroleum resources, generating a high GNP and an abundance of capital for investment when compared with many other postcolonial societies (Segal 1989:314-5). Due to increases in the world price of oil, GNP and government revenues rose astronomically after 1973, with TT accumulating an enormous trade surplus held almost entirely in hard currency. Moreover, natural gas was discovered off the north coast in 1971, and 1975 saw both the establishment of the Point Lisas industrial estate and the formation of the National Gas Company. In 2000, revenue from crude oil, natural gas and petrochemicals accounted for a quarter of the country's GDP and three-quarters of its exports. Indeed, TT is now one of the world's leading exporters of ammonia and methanol in addition to natural gas. With state revenues shooting up in the 1970s and early 80s, capital accumulated from the petroleum sector was used to bring virtually the entire financial sector of the economy under national stewardship (Sutton 1984). By the 1980s, every bank and insurance company was locally owned and managed along with all infrastructural utilities.

The oil boom years facilitated diversification in the national opportunity structure, most notably, a steady rise in the average monthly income for both racial groups – with the Indian average surpassing the African one for the first time (Munasinghe 2001b:20). Yet Indians nevertheless perceived Africans to have been the main recipients of petrodollars and understood their own good fortune as having been due to their "culture" rather than the economy. Before the oil boom, there had been only a small Indian middle-class consisting primarily of Christians and Muslims, with the majority of East Indians still poor, rural, and under-educated. Thus the transformation of the boom years proved to be very considerable indeed, with Indians – relative to other groups – experiencing the most significant degree of overall socioeconomic mobility (Reddock 1991). This drove class differentiation and catalyzed heightened ethnic consciousness among Indo- as well as Afro-Trinbagonians. Munasinghe (2001b:22) writes: "Indo-Trinidadians' rapid incorporation into mainstream society and the decline of their traditional enclaves, such as agriculture, meant that their destinies would be fundamentally determined by the trajectories of the nation and the state."

The stakes were raised in the mid-1980s with increased competition for state resources resulting from steeply declining world oil prices and the traumatizing end of the boom. Dr. Williams died unexpectedly in a diabetic coma in 1981 on the cusp of his sixth consecutive term in office and was succeeded by an Afro-creole deputy leader of the PNM, George Chambers. Nonetheless, Indian confidence had been bolstered. Yet reticence about Indian political power surfaced in the politics of the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR), the coalition that delivered the PNM its first defeat in 1986 after thirty years of continuous rule. Despite its majority Indian support and the tenor of its "One Love" platform, the NAR chose A.N.R. Robinson – an Oxford-trained, black Tobagonian lawyer – as leader over Panday, then a leading sugar unionist. Internal power struggles exacerbated by deteriorating economic problems eventually pulled the alliance apart, with the most prominent Indian leaders being expelled from the Cabinet in 1988. The NAR's tenure in power under Robinson soon came to a dramatically conclusive close in 1991 with a clear victory for the resuscitated PNM under Patrick Manning, an Afro-creole Protestant from Trinidad, but not before enduring an insurrectionary attempt by a small, but high-profile Islamist group.
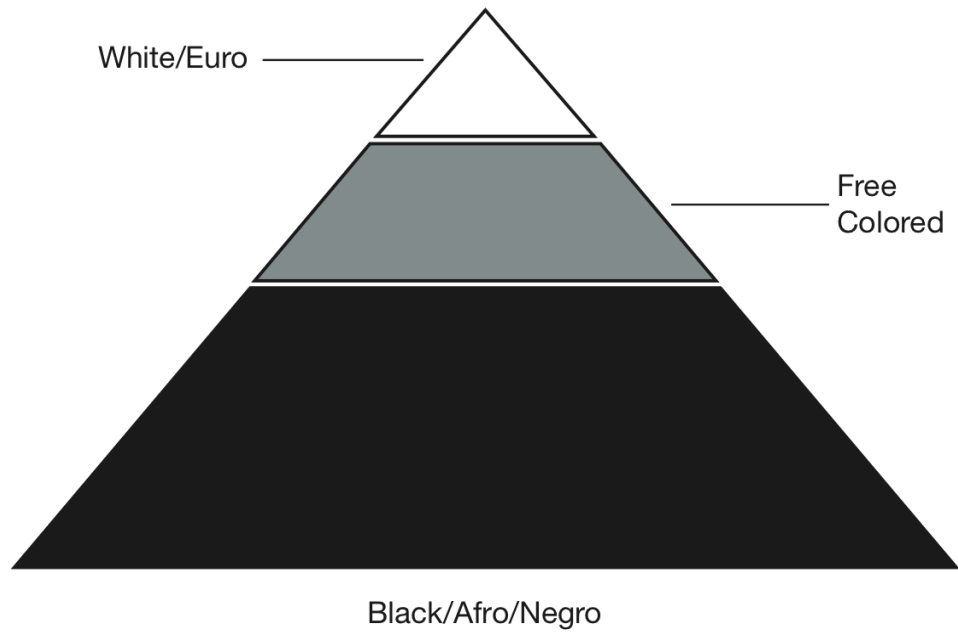
The experience of fallout with the NAR convinced many Indians that they would have to struggle for state power directly and exclusivistically in order to preclude their continued marginalization and relegation to second-class status in terms of political power. The United National Congress finally accomplished this with its carefully orchestrated ascendance in elections at the end of 1995, through a last-minute reprise coalition with the NAR. But this time it was Panday who took the lead as Prime Minister. As I returned to the U.S. after my longest period of fieldwork, elections were held again in December of 2000, but results favoring the UNC were contested by the PNM, leading to political stalemate until October, 2002, when a decisive victory brought the PNM back into power under Manning. Then the PNM was again reelected into power in the elections of 2007.

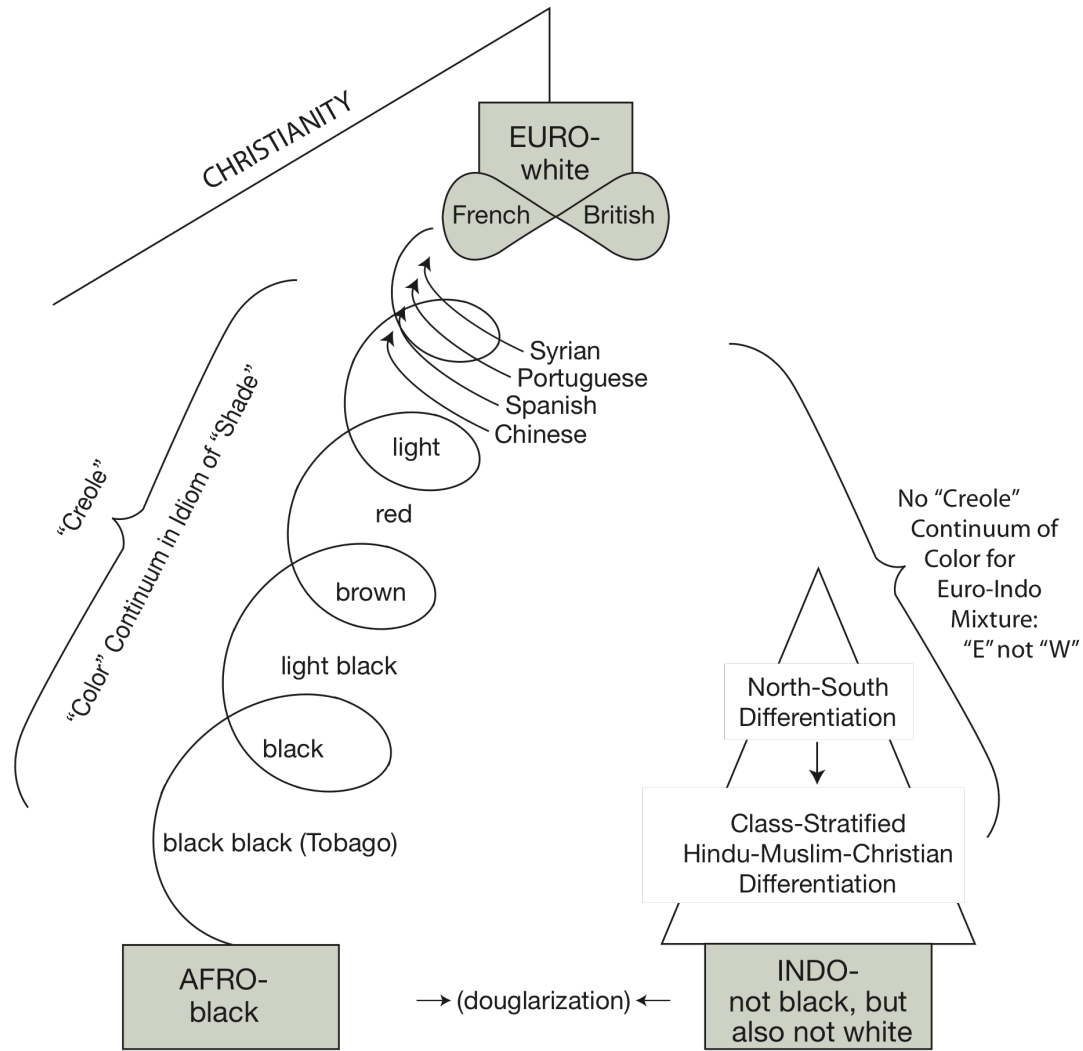*Ecstasy, Hierarchy, Heterodoxy.*

An abiding theme here concerns the significance of capitalism – itself a moving target and turbulent engine of change – in shaping the structures and conflicts of social life from economics and politics to religion and popular culture. The sociocultural field of religion evolved into contested local continua characterized by patterns of differentiation conditioned by interacting relations of race and class, with status based on idealized Eurocentric standards cast in an idiom of "respectability." Hierarchical principles have proven resilient despite changes in the overt bases of domination over time. The ability of economic and education systems to simultaneously transform and reproduce class relations has meant that society has remained stratified, but never static. Ecstatic religious forms have survived and even flourished at the popular level, yet they have been marginalized because of their "common" association with grassroots proletarian and impoverished classes.

In order to synopsize the ground covered here, I present the sequence of diagrams below mapping structural and ideological transformations from the colonial plantation slavery period to the postemancipation colonial period to the postcolonial period of nationalism and postcolonial multiculturalism. They are offered as heuristics.
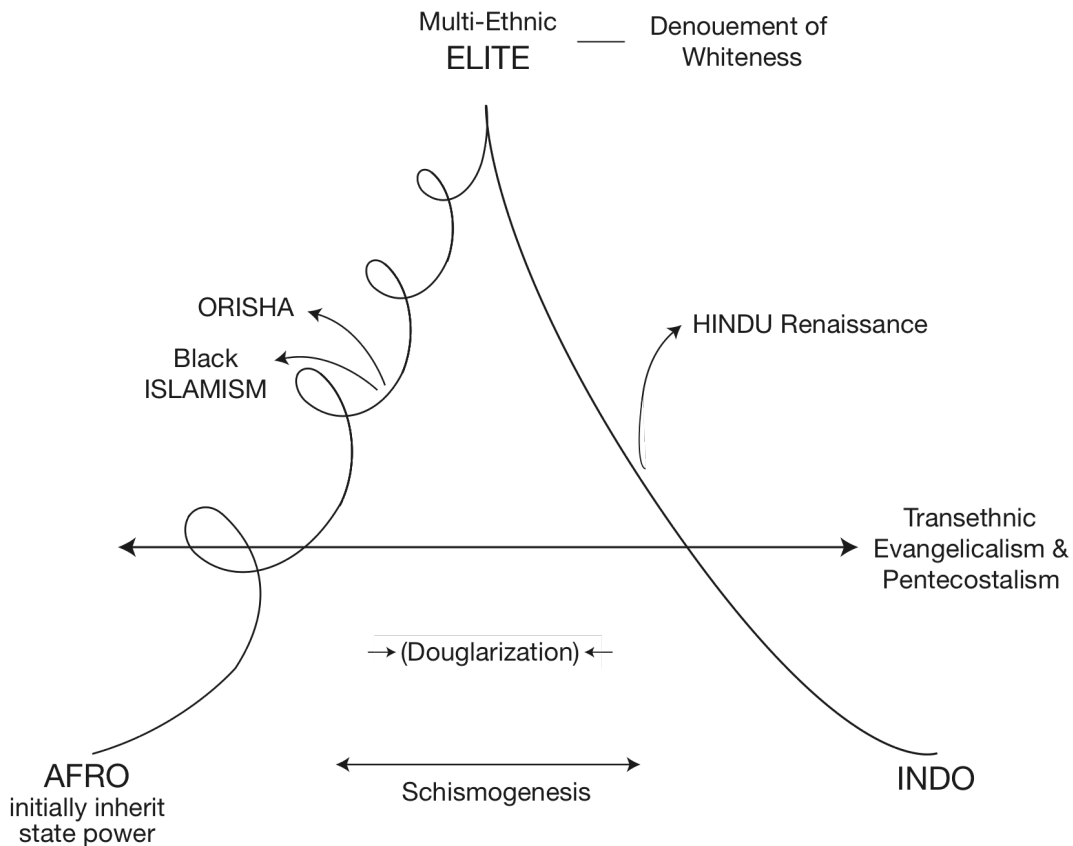
Colonial Plantation Slavery Period

White/Euro

Free
Colored

Black/Afro/Negro

Post-Emancipation into
Nationalist Colonial Period

CHRISTIANITY

EURO-
white

French   British

Syrian
Portuguese
Spanish
Chinese

light

red

brown

light black

black

black black (Tobago)

"Creole"

"Color" Continuum in Idiom of "Shade"

No "Creole"
Continuum of
Color for
Euro-Indo
Mixture:
"E" not "W"

North-South
Differentiation

Class-Stratified
Hindu-Muslim-Christian
Differentiation

AFRO-
black

→ (douglarization) ←

INDO-
not black, but
also not white

Ideology of "creole" as local +
mixture loads political bases
toward "colored" middle-class
vis-à-vis NATIONALISM

Nationalist into
Post-Colonial Multiculturalist Period

Multi-Ethnic ___ Denouement of
ELITE Whiteness

ORISHA

Black
ISLAMISM

HINDU Renaissance

Transethnic
Evangelicalism &
Pentecostalism

→ (Douglarization) ←

AFRO
initially inherit
state power

Schismogenesis

INDO

The ensuing analysis draws inspiration from R. T. Smith (1976), who emphasized the significance of context for the evolution of religious forms. He sought to counterweight reigning scholarly emphasis on searching for the origins of particular rituals or beliefs in New World studies, which ran the risk of diverting attention from "the creative use to which these items are put in the ongoing processes of social life" (pp. 337-8). Smith identified three major trends in West Indian religious development that include Hinduism and Islam: hierarchical paternalism; ethical and sectarian individualism; and lower-class participatory enthusiasm (pp. 338-41). These result from forces shaping social relations and public culture across the board. I bring this to bear upon the subaltern African and Hindu spiritisms examined below.

For one thing, the legacy of competition among French and British elites for the dynamics of religion and politics of culture in Trinidad must be fully appreciated. It not only

meant the relative restraint of each European sector, but also ensconced pluralism at the top even before the emancipation era. The Catholic Church fought hard for the right to denominational schooling, and their 19th-century victory set the stage – eventually – for the 20th-century movement for Hindu and Muslim schools. The mixed secular and religious education system was embraced over time intentionally as a mechanism for social and ethnic "integration," especially as compared with the rest of the British West Indies.

Christianity held paramount position as cultural barometer of legitimacy and status until recently, albeit in a range of competing institutional forms. This stratified sociology of Christianity had been firmly established by the arrival of Indians, Chinese, and other Africans. Portuguese and Syrian émigrés already had Christian roots to their credit and most Chinese adopted Christianity, dynamics that bolstered the strength of the religion. Christianity has also therefore operated as "visible interlocutor" with African religions within the complex and often paradoxical context of the Afro-creole "color" continuum.

The field of religion has been crosscut by differing colonial principles of subordination concerning the "culturally-naked African" and the "culturally-saturated Indian." These differentially racialized principles prefigured contrasting symbolism and meanings of mobility and achievement vis-à-vis the greater society. Whereas Afro-creole mobility may have contested the phylogenetic inferiority of "Negro," it nevertheless generally precluded the affirmation of blackness or Africanity until more recently. Socioeconomic mobility among Indo-creoles, by contrast, did not generally make them anything other than "East Indians." In the former, Christian respectability recontextualizes color beyond physiognomy, backgrounding blackness by placing it under erasure. But this interface and the space of Afro-Euro "mixture" has been a complex and protean one shot through with conflicts, ambiguities, and ambivalences.

Indian social mobility was first mediated by affiliation with the Presbyterian Church, their first vehicle of ascendance within the colonial hierarchy. Yet Indo-Christians found themselves on the horns of a dilemma: between a fear of their "racial" essence dissipating under the weight of Afro-creole Christian authority within the larger sociopolitical sphere and fear of the lowly "backwardness" of their own Indian masses. Class bias developed, motivating most among this emergent Indian elite away from close relations with village *Imams* and *Pandits*. Thus Christianity exerted centrifugal influence vis-à-vis Indo-creoles by pulling indigenous traditions away from the early core of Indian experience in complex and recursive ways. Christianity operated as a powerful, but "invisible" interlocutor for Indian ethnicity in general and Hinduism in particular.

Indeed, Indians differed from Africans in that they largely resisted conversion and explicit Christian acculturation throughout the colonial era. Muslims seem to have been especially strong in their resistance to Christianity, due to prior conditioning as a minority group on the Indian subcontinent as well as to the fact that the anti-idolatrous message of colonial Europeans and Christian evangelists packed less of a critical punch vis-à-vis their own form of monotheism. It is significant that the majority of Indo-creoles maintained identification and affiliation with their respective Hindu and Muslim traditions.

One encounters the logic of the "culturally-saturated Indian" here, but in no way are we dealing with static traditions. Indeed, Indo-Trinidadian Hinduism and Islam have been dynamic religious systems that have been remade in ways responsive to their New World contexts and changing interrelations with one another (Khan 2004). The postcolonial transformation of the oil boom years was especially profound for Indians, who experienced enormous mobility and especially reaped its benefits in the realms of political and cultural power.