

## Constructing a Discourse on Crime and 'Social Deviance' in Trinidad (1981)

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## Introduction

This work begins to show my realisation that there are grave limits to applying the ideas of Michel Foucault to an analysis of the social order of T&T in spite of the reality that we insist we are a western, capitalist liberal democracy. This realisation will eventually lead to the prominence of the ideas of Frantz Fanon in my analysis to date as we are a social order and a colonial people who are simply black skins, white masks but in no way western and capitalist as the North Atlantic just simply a people in denial. Foucault is a given for the dissecting the nature of the North Atlantic and there is no body of thought that does it as surgically as Foucault's and what is apparent in the work is by using Foucault's thought on T&T you begin to uncover what we are not even though we insist we are. Multiple personalities all in denial in a single body. But Foucault cannot explain it in our context only in the white world's context which cannot assault our malady for this you need to start at the source: Frantz Fanon and then build a new world!

The work points out that there is in 1981 a hegemonic discourse that drives the state: the discourse of political patronage and its Siamese twin joined at a single, common brain is corruption as they beget each other. In this discursive realm the state is simply not concerned with operating as a modern north Atlantic capitalist state as it simply does not produce scientific discourse. As a result, a specific social order has emerged to fit this hegemonic discourse but in 1995 for the first time an Indo Trinbagonian dominated political party since 1956 took control of the state as a result of changing demographics reflected in the politics of race voting. A new hegemonic discourse since 1995 has now arisen which has redefined the discourse of political patronage which is the discourse of racist hegemony. The social order has responded and the state has grown appreciably weaker as this discourse views the state only as a means to dominate an enemy race and to grant access to the resources of the state. In this reality the Ganstas rule. The illicit trades in T&T and the Caribbean is now in its fifth evolutionary stage of development, the hegemony of the Mexican Transnational Trafficking Organisations (MTTOs) and each stage has impacted the evolution of the lumpen-proletariat and its relationship with the state. The transnational trafficking organisations and their gangland affiliates have now changed forever the nature of the lumpen and its relationship with the state in T&T seen in the endemic gun violence and the inability of the state to restore its hegemony. All legacies of the

politics of political patronage/corruption as social control. The assault on the legitimacy of the state and the collapse of social control has impacted the frequency of crimes against women and children where sexual predators now seek out and harvest victims with impunity another legacy of the discourse of political patronage/corruption as social control. Whilst the politics remain in gridlock as the paramount discourse of racist hegemony ensures that electoral politics remain focused solely on capturing state power based on the race vote and rewarding members of your race to the exclusion of the enemy race. The overdetermination of the political structure caused by the politics of race and racism has now constituted a state that is incapable of ensuring its hegemony over the space termed Trinidad and Tobago and those who animate the political structure are unwilling and incapable of executing strategically vital action to project state power when there is a political price to pay as perceived. T&T is now in an existential crisis which is the premier legacy of the discourse of patronage/corruption which is the most potent proof that we are in no way a western, capitalist social order as exists in the North Atlantic.

## Constructing a Discourse on Crime and “Social Deviance” in Trinidad (1981)

It must be established from the outset that the essay is an attempt to present the basis of a discourse on crime in Trinidad specifically defined in relation to the lumpen-proletariat, crimes against women and crimes against property. The major focus on crimes against property would be on the lumpen-proletariat and the vital functions they execute in the interests of capital. Crimes against women especially rape and wife beating are most illuminative of the hidden reality of capitalist social relations especially the nature of power in capitalist society. The development of a Gay centred cultural ghetto in Trinidad would also be touched on primarily because of the illumination homosexuality provides in uncovering the realities of heterosexuality. One must attempt an overview of these phenomena in light of the ideas of Michel Foucault on power, state institutions and social control. M Foucault has formulated the once hidden dimension vital in uncovering or illuminating the structures of capitalist society.

Locally controlled monopolies have developed alongside multinational corporations, competitive capitalist enterprises and state enterprises in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T). The locally owned and controlled monopolies mirror the dependent structure of the mode of production for they are not manufacturing based monopolies as the multinational corporations. The major monopoly Neal & Massy Ltd is predominantly a monopoly involved in the assembly and marketing of commodities. All these monopolies dominate the service sector of the mode of production as the manufacturing/industrial enterprises are still predominantly owned by multinational corporations. The implications for the nature of the state is apparent when one recognises the demands made upon the state by monopolies.

It is apparent in T&T that there exists a growing contradiction between the state bureaucracies and the monopolies as the bureaucracies have not developed in tune with the intense demands of monopoly capital. Monopoly capital intensifies the class struggle through its acute demands it places upon the state and the working class. To date Neal & Massy has attempted to defuse the development of class struggle in its subsidiaries by consciously applying the sophisticated bourgeois management principles. The aim has been to develop in the worker the

concept of identifying with the enterprise coupled with schemes as profit sharing. In all reality the workers of these locally owned monopolies have little or no impact on the superstructural developments in the mode of production. They are effectively enmeshed in their petty-bourgeois ideological imagery. Of striking import is the need for these monopolies to grow increasing the inherent weaknesses of monopoly capital and the ability of the present state to answer to these pressing demands. The state has now found itself in the position where it's largely unable to satisfy these needs because of bureaucratic inertia and simple inadequacy. The rapid growth of these monopolies has left the state saddled with a level of political operation very inadequate to the demands of monopoly capital upon a state. The political superstructure continues to base its political discourse upon very antiquated discourses of social control. The state has never fully developed the agencies responsible for the formulation of scientific discourses that increases the knowledge of the state over the citizen/subject thus increasing their power over the subject, hence social control.

The state bureaucracies in T&T have not responded to the challenge of the "petro-dollar", a major reason being the structure of the authority inherited from the colonial legacy and the skilful use of the political actors of the legacy to their personal gain. The structure of the state in Trinidad and Tobago shows the over-determination of the political superstructure. This structural lop-sidedness was grudgingly adequate with its structural climax in February 1970 but 1973 and the OPEC's cartel rise to prominence has influenced an entirely different development in the mode of production-local monopolies. Monopoly capital demands the development of increased influence and powers of surveillance over the development of class struggle. This demand is usually envisioned through expansion of the state superstructure increasing the diversity of interests involving the state. State superstructural diversification exists in dialectical relationship to the need to produce scientific discourse. Scientific discourse is simply the levels of knowledge produced by state institutions which form the basis of social control. The need for scientific discourse is then influenced by the intensity of class struggle as it responds to changes in the mode of production. The state institutions in Trinidad responsible for the production of knowledge hence power are very underdeveloped and largely inadequate to the sophisticated demands of monopoly capital. The backward nature of the

University of the West Indies is the prime example of failure of the state to respond to the need for scientific discourse vital to the continued regeneration of the devices of social control. The University is constantly attacked and its graduates placed in archaic functional positions in the state bureaucracy. The monopolies have gone ahead and are attempting to provide the scientific discourse vital to its knowledge/power position in relation to its workers. This in itself is inadequate for the monopolies cannot replace the state as the determined instance of capital charged with these functions.

The main devices used by the state in social control are hinged on state policing/repression and political patronage for lack of a better word. The policing agencies of the state are by far the most backward of the agencies towards the needs of social control under monopoly capital. The backward and ramshackle conditions of the prisons and the visible lack of the operation of a theory of reformation of the offender all show that the discourse of the penal agencies is not even one developed in the twentieth century but nineteenth century England. The police continue to show a structure devised for the colonial period and the operation of discourse created in that period. The failure of the police in T&T since 1970 to bring itself into the twentieth century is seen in the growth of elite repressive agencies within the police charged with responding to the class struggle in a fascist manner. The police were armed and militarised in response to the class struggles since 1970 but they were not intellectualised indicated by the failure of the police to develop a scientific discourse on crime, criminology is still alien to them.

Perhaps the only state structure that has developed discourse on the political nature of the class struggle in T&T is the political superstructure. This structure because of this has been overdetermined and is the cause for the backward nature of the non-political structure of the state superstructure. The political structure has been dominated since independence by the PNM or more specifically by Eric Williams whose main devices in ensuring political continuity of the PNM are: (a) the all-encompassing web of state patronage highly tinged with corruption and (b) in the event of failure, police repression. The politics of patronage is primarily based on creating state structures geared towards dispensing patronage that enmesh the recipients in the political web of the ruling party. The state bureaucracy has been the basis for the creation of a new petty-

bourgeois class responsible for animating the state superstructure. The final addition to the economic basis of this new state employed petty-bourgeois was state acquisition of capitalist enterprises. To-date the state has total ownership in twenty-eight enterprises, majority ownership in thirteen enterprises and minority interests in twenty enterprises together forming the state enterprises sector. The most important capitalist enterprise in these state run companies is the Point Lisas project. The state has fully extended its web of patronage through its position as capitalist for it employs a mass of contractors, suppliers and workers who all depend upon the state or the PNM for their existence. The web of patronage extends primarily through the working class and to the marginal worker with the operation of D.E.W.D. or Special Works projects. The growth and entrenchment of D.E.W.D. as a bona fide state agency indicates the importance of patronage to the politics of the PNM. DEWD has grown from an urban project aimed at tying the Northern lumpen-proletariat to the PNM to an established state agency effectively commanding the support of the marginalised labour of the society. The structure of DEWD still shows its origin as former members of the lumpen-proletariat now hold middle level supervisory positions now effectively members of the aristocracy of labour.

Patronage has spun the supportive web of corruption for they are both dialectically supportive of each other in T&T. Corruption has become the basis of operative actions throughout the entire state bureaucracy stemming from the hub of the web to its outer fringes. In fact, corruption has been the discourse created by the political structure towards the creation of knowledge hence power relations in favour of the state structures. The development of corruption as a state discourse has had obvious effects on the continued need of the state to project the legality of its actions. The crisis of legality in T&T has now reached the stage of deep seated decay in the judicial structures of the state. The pronounced rate of resignation of agents of the judicial structures is indicative of the crisis of legality that is now affecting the state.

The police are unable to effectively hide behind the myth of legality and rule of law for their repressive and illegal acts are effectively recognised. The police as a state agency has also been enmeshed in web of patronage and corruption. Corruption has also been adopted as an effective means of control. Specifically, one sees this in relation to the lumpen-proletariat and the construction of a web

of police corruption and surveillance based upon links with the lumpen-proletariat. The lumpen-proletariat deemed most important by the police is the urban lumpen-proletariat for they are most vital to corruption and surveillance purposes. The urban lumpen-proletariat, the marginalised workers and the working class blossomed as the most politically important since 1970 with efforts to prevent another occurrence of civil revolt. With specific reference to the lumpen-proletariat the strategies of state policing agencies have been to enmesh the lumpen-proletariat in a web of patronage coupled with selected policing of the lumpen-proletariat. The marginal workers of the working class have received the brunt of the policing raids of the repressive agencies of the state. These workers who engage in illegal activities on a habitual basis such as playing “whe whe” and rolling dice are the constant targets of police raids. The kingpins or the operators are never effectively destroyed or arrested.

The economic basis of the growth of the lumpen-proletariat in Trinidad has been the widespread use of marijuana in the society. Illegal drug use has spawned the effective development of a well-developed network of cultivators, transporters and “pushers” effectively enmeshed in the web of police patronage hence open to political control. The protected drug operators effectively double as police informers as they develop a clique of dependents around them. These individuals have effectively developed influence in their respective communities attempting to cover their illegal operations through a legal business operation or a “front.” The growth of an effective illegal network governing the production and marketing of illegal drugs is itself indicative of the protection afforded to these operators by the “protective” agencies of the state. These operators have now added cocaine and other hard drugs to their operational network without the growth in effectiveness of the police as an effective preventative and detecting agent. The two most important contributions that lumpens consciously recognise that they make to the political structures are: the material returns paid to state agents in return for their compliance to the needs of this illegal activity and the information that they constantly pass on to the police in their bid to harass or have arrested un-protected drug traffickers or general criminals. The lumpen-proletariat were effective informers as to the activities of NUFF guerrilla forces in the post-1970 period. The lumpen-proletariat on the periphery of the drug trafficking lumpens continue to be the trusted arms of the PNM in the steel band

movement and in DEWD. The course of the steel band movement is of especial political importance to the ruling party as it dispenses patronage through the sponsoring capitalist companies to keep the movement within the web. The leadership of the movement continues to be the near preserve of lumpens who continue to serve the capitalist class as the present President and the Syrian sponsors of the steel band he is involved in.

The most interesting development within this parasitic class is the adoption of Rastafarianism as a covering for their illegal activities. The contradiction is most glaring and perhaps explainable in the lumpen's need to penetrate this new development among the working class very much feared by the new petty-bourgeoisie. Important lumpens have adopted Rastafarianism whilst expanding their control of the drug market and have now become involved in the organisations of the Rastafarians as the Brotherhood. These informers are highly respected and regularly visited by Rastafarian brethren of the West Indies whilst still being regularly visited by the police. What is the importance of these developments in the urban lumpen-proletariat of the Northern portion of Trinidad? From the outset the lumpens effectively increase the ravages of capital upon the working class. They intensify the drain of money out of the working class back into the coffers of the capitalist system as they collect vast sums through drug trafficking, gambling and prostitution which inevitably has to re-enter the circulatory system of capitalism. The lumpens either bank their profits, invest them or purchase consumer durables. The lumpen increase their material possessions through the intensified impoverishment of the urban marginal workers and the working class. This un-class in turn increases the surveillance of the state through the provision of information to the police. Whenever the working class in Trinidad rises out of its passivity they are faced with an effective non-police surveillance network. Politically the lumpens are enemies of the working class because they are enmeshed with the state far more effectively than the working class. They are the effective animators of the lumpen activities which create the legal reason for policing the working class: crime. The lumpens are supportive of the entire network of activities that are illegal and policed, they live off crime and are therefore vital to the police who use crime as the main excuse to police constantly working class areas.

The development of the relationship between the state and the lumpen-proletariat is the outcome of the previously discussed nature of the state in T&T. But the significance of the lumpens can always assume a political importance for in a state unable to develop scientific discourse its power/knowledge system is very inadequate to the demands of monopoly capital. The overdetermined nature of the political structure places the lumpen-proletariat as a possible key element to be used in resolving contradictions whenever the state structures go in crisis. For this crisis would effectively affect the political structures of the state creating a crisis of succession, reminiscent of other third world states in which the Army filled the breach.

Crime is never anathema to the state, it is supportive and of vital importance to the regulation of class struggle by state structures. The discourses adopted by the state structures towards the creation of knowledge of the persons or classes to be placed under constant surveillance are violently attacking the legal principle of right that the state hides behind. The state structures by establishing discourses of knowledge/power which are vital to the rule of capital and the bourgeois are colonising the domain of law. The basis of this has been the need of the power relations of capitalism to be clothed with the legal concept of the principles of sovereignty. The advance of capitalism raises the contradiction between the principles of sovereignty and the demands of the power relations for constant surveillance of the subjects of society. The means to constantly intensify surveillance is to establish discourses of knowledge of the subject hence power over the subject. **In T&T the need to intensify surveillance of the subjects of power led to the discourse that links crime to political patronage and ultimately corruption within the state structures.** The state structures have been unable to create a discourse that intensifies surveillance without the use of political patronage. The state structures have been unable to create a discourse that intensifies surveillance without the use of political patronage. The state structures have been unable to strike a medium between the principles of sovereignty and the discourse of power/knowledge. The result is apparent in the decay of the structures created to animate the principles of sovereignty: the judiciary. The mass exodus from the judicial structures is simply indicative of the fact that the agencies of surveillance have constantly curtailed the authority of the judicial structures especially since the state crisis of 1970. The legal structures could not

be allowed to curtail the power of the agencies of surveillance in the post 1970 period as the state was in the process of creating a new discourse vital to the improvement of surveillance over the subject of power thus the need for a new knowledge. The incapacity of the law making structures is also indicative of the retardation of the principles of sovereignty. Colonial laws formed the basis of the interaction between judicial structures and the agencies of surveillance for obvious reasons as colonial laws do not recognise the principles of sovereignty. Law reform was grudgingly practised except in cases where it was of political expediency. To date T&T constantly lags behind in the application of laws that are based on the theoretical principles of sovereignty. The failure of the state structures to strike this vitally necessary medium between the principles of sovereignty and the demand for power/knowledge by the state structures can only result in the final baring of the hidden nature of power and power relations.

### Crimes Against Women

The most striking characteristic of discourses utilised by the state structures on crimes against women is the apparent absence of a scientific discourse. The agencies of surveillance have in no way felt themselves to be pressured into the need to adopt a scientific discourse on women much less crimes against women. The discourses prevalent within the state structures on women show none of the psycho-medical sophistication of the bourgeois metropolitan centres. The discourses still operative in producing the power/knowledge situation over women are still discourses formulated in the late colonial period of T&T's history. The developments in the mode of production that affect women have been visibly unable to wrest changes in the nature of the ruling discourses on women. The discourses on crime against women are then the by-product of the operative discourses against women. In both discourses women are possessions or subjects to be surveilled and subjected in a most intense manner. Women have continued to be defined in a discourse that only slightly renovated the discourse of the slave in former days. The woman has embodied the most intense revelations of the power relations characteristic of capitalist society as she still is the ultimate subject.

Any attempt to analyse crimes against women in a medium that does not utilise the methodology of the theory of the archaeology of knowledge only leads to an

attempt to provide the state with a scientific discourse on women. The basis of constructing this discourse on women for the inadequate state structures is situated in any approach that attempts to “understand” phenomena linked to women through the application of a “scientific” methodology. In the case of crimes against women as rape, any attempt to “understand” rape through concepts as the relationship between economic position and rape, urbanisation and rape or “maleness” and rape can only add to the basis for a scientific discourse on phenomena in T&T **that the state structures are not interested in.** Rape has to be approached through the discourses that create knowledge hence power over the subjects of power relations. The formats for studying rape that are utilised by feminists are in themselves guilty of contributing to the continued development of scientific discourses vital to the control of women as subjects. The method of attempting to locate rape within specific geographical environments, within certain classes or races, within the psychology of the attacker have all made vital contributions to the continued supremacy of discourses vital to state surveillance of society. Rape has been effectively added to the list of crimes prevalent in working class areas necessitating continued intensified surveillance. The turn to the psychology of the attacker and the victim has inevitably drawn in the medical discourses which are the most powerful contributors to the creation of scientific discourses of the state agencies. All attempts in T&T to understand the phenomena of rape can therefore only follow the same path as research in the metropolitan societies. The crucial reality in T&T is the inability of the state agencies as they exist now to produce scientific discourse. **As it now exists the agencies of surveillance show little concern over the phenomena of crimes against women because the activity is of little importance in the operation of the discourse of patronage.** Power/knowledge’s position on crimes against women is of little importance to the discourse on patronage which is the basis of state power/knowledge. The position of the law on crime against women is supportive of this as the law continues to be uninterested in the situation in which women are not even granted the rights that accrue in the principles of sovereignty.

To attempt to create a genealogy of knowledge of women and crimes against them in T&T has then to be the basis of producing knowledge that is then contradictory to the needs for scientific discourse by the state agencies The basis

of this genealogy of knowledge would be the uncovering of the power relations- the operating mechanisms that constitute the woman as a subject of discourse. The most important element of the discourse is the powerlessness of the woman because she is woman. A “powerlessness” that is continually intensified, conformed and regenerated through the woman’s cellar position in the economy. The powerlessness of the woman in the colonial mode of production was vital to the discourse that developed under capitalism. The cellar position of women was of vital importance to capital and it was easily grounded into the discourse that arose under capitalism. In its continued need to render the person as objects of knowledge or subjects, the discourse has effectively utilised the powerlessness of women. The creation of a genealogy of women in T&T is a very difficult task because of the difficulty in gathering a genealogy in a society where **the state structures have not developed a scientific discourse on women.**

Another phenomenon which is of importance to the power relations of T&T society but the state is lacking a scientific discourse is homosexuality. In T&T the presence of homosexuals in the state structures is increasingly becoming apparent but there has not been the characteristic furore over the presence of homosexuals in the state structures. It is apparent that through the dominance of the politics of patronage/corruption the homosexuality of the individual is of little or no importance to the generation of power/knowledge of the individual for the involvement of the individual in the web of patronage/corruption is of much more importance. The all-pervading dominance of the discourse of patronage/corruption has apparently rendered the homosexuality of individuals in the state apparatus of little importance in the discourse of power. The apparent lack of a scientific discourse on homosexuality in T&T society has resulted in an environment in which the issue of gay rights and liberation would have difficulty in arising. Without a discourse the gay community would have no need to develop a counter discourse raising the issue of Gay liberation. Presently in T&T the Gay community is already structured according to class position as especially male homosexuals cling to their class culture. There are already the developments of cliques with the central personality of Duke present especially obvious in the Arts. The present nature of the power/knowledge structures allow especially male Gays the freedom to practise their sexual preference provided they are enmeshed in the web of patronage/corruption. The formation of Gay

cliques consisting of state bureaucrats, petty-bourgeois and the bourgeois are indicative of the freedom they are afforded because of their linkages with the web of patronage/corruption. This relative freedom to associate is not attacked because of the unimportance it has to the present power/knowledge structures. Individuals are created as objects of knowledge primarily through the operation of the patronage/corruption structures in T&T the homosexuality of the individual is only of concern whenever he/she attempts to break out of the hold of the patronage/corruption web. Homosexuality has not been designated a knowledge through its acquisition the individual would be designated as an object of knowledge. The operative discourse that is operative on homosexuals in advanced capitalist society has effectively turned homosexuals into an object of knowledge. This necessitated the development of counter discourse in opposition to the scientific discourse on homosexuality.

## Conclusion

The picture that emerges in relation to the scientific discourse on crime and “deviance” in the society of T&T is the varying degrees of development of discourse. Discourse vital to surveillance and the politics of patronage/corruption has been highly developed seen in the linkage of crime to the political structure. In other areas discourse is underdeveloped because of the relative unimportance of these phenomenon to the structures of surveillance.